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ALC 1103 Tchaikovsky Symphonies no.2 "Little Russian" & 3 "Polish" / Rozhdestvensky
ALC 1104 Tchaikovsky Symphony no.4 /Serenade / Moscow / Rozhdestvensky
ALC 1105 Tchaikovsky Symphony no.5 / Moscow Cantata / Rozhdestvensky / Cherkasov
ALC 1106 Tchaikovsky Symphony no.6 /Nutcracker Suite / Moscow / Rozhdestvensky/Kogan
ALC 1005 Shostakovich & Tchaikovsky Piano Trios / Rosamunde Trio (new rec.)
ALC 1023 Myaskovsky: Symphonies 17, 21 etc / Russian Academic F.O / Svetlanov
ALC 1030 Rachmaninov Symphony 3/ Slavonic Dances/ Moscow State Orch/ Pavel Kogan
ALC 1032 Rachmaninov Symphony 1/ Isle of the Dead / Moscow State Orch/ Pavel Kogan
ALC 1033 Tchaikovsky: Romeo & Juliet/ Francesca Rimini/ etc/ Moscow State/ Pavel Kogan
ALC 1036 Weinberg: Chamber syms 1 & 4 / Umea Symphony Orch/ Thord Svedlund
ALC 1062 Shostakovich: Symphony 15/ Violin Conc 2/ David Oistrakh / Moscow/ Kondrashin
ALC 1064 Berlioz: Symphonie Fantastique/3 Overtures incl Carnaval Romain/RPO/ Mackerras
ALC 1066 Davydov Cello Concertos 1,2 & Duo pieces inc At The Fountain / Marina Tarasova
ALC 1067 Shostakovich: 5th Symphony / Excerpts Gadfly Suite/ LSO/Maxim Shostakovich
ALC 1068 Scriabin: Preludes & Mazurkas / Artur Pizarro
ALC 1072 Rachmaninov Preludes & Etudes-Tableaux / Sviatoslav Richter (Penguin 3*)
ALC 1075 Myaskovsky Cello Concerto & Sonatas / Marina Tarasova / Sym Orch Russia
ALC 1080 Khachaturian Ballet Suites Spartacus, Gayaneh, Maskarade / RPO/ Simonov
ALC 1083 Shostakovich: Symphony 10 in E min or / LSO / Maxim Shostakovich
ALC 1084 Kabalevsky 24 Preludes, Sonatina, Sonata no.3 / Murray McLachlan (Penguin 3*)
ALC 1093 Tchaikovsky Piano Music incl The Seasons, Waltz, Romance / Sviatoslav Richter
ALC 1094 Khachaturian Cello Conc/ Rhapsody-Concerto for Cello & Orch/ Marina Tarasova
ALC 1099 Smetana "Má Vlast" / Czech Philharmonic Orchestra / Libor Pešek
ALC 1116 Kabalevsky Cello Concertos 1,2 etc / Marina Tarasova
ALC 1130 Walton: 1st Symphony / Violin Concerto (Accardo) / Phil/ Fremaux/ LSO/Hickox
ALC 1132 Rachmaninov: Cello Sonata/Vocalise/ Elegy/ Romance / Marina Tarasova
ALC 2007 Tchaikovsky: Eugene Onegin / Nesterenko / Atlantov / Milashkina/ Bolshoi (2CD)

Piotyr Tchaikovsky (1840-93)
"Manfred" Symphony Op.58

*Large Symphony Orchestra of the Ministry of Culture,
Russian Federation / Gennadi Rozhdestvensky*

Overture in C minor

Moscow Symphony Orchestra

Sergei Skripka

"Manfred" Symphony Op.58

[1] I. <i>Lento lugubre - Moderato con moto</i>	16:01
[2] II. <i>Vivace con spirito</i>	9:38
[3] III. <i>Andante con moto</i>	10:35
[4] IV. <i>Allegro con fuoco</i>	18:31

[5] **Overture in C minor (no Op.no)** 13:50

TOTAL TIME 68:45

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Tchaikovsky

'Manfred' Symphony

Overture in C minor

Russian Federation
Large Symphony Orchestra
Rozhdestvensky
Moscow Symphony Orchestra
Skripka



Rozhdestvensky
Tchaikovsky

alto

By 1885 it seemed to Tchaikovsky's closest friends that he had finally managed to put the crisis years of the 1870s well behind him. Having been accustomed to travelling across Europe and staying with friends and relatives, in February 1885 he rented a property at Maidanovo near Klin, close enough to Moscow to be able to travel there if required. There Tchaikovsky quickly settled into a daily routine of composing morning and evening, and taking lengthy walks during the afternoon.

Some time before, during the autumn of 1882, the composer Mily Balakirev (1837-1910) had sent Tchaikovsky a scenario for a new symphonic work based on Lord Byron's poem *Manfred*. The scenario was the work of academic and critic Vladimir Stasov who had sent it to Balakirev in 1868. Balakirev had immediately brought it to the attention of Berlioz who the previous season had conducted his four movement symphony *Harold In Italy* (based on Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*) in St Petersburg. Berlioz had declined to set the work to music, pleading old age and infirmity (he died not long after) whereupon Balakirev shelved it until 1882 when he sent it to Tchaikovsky. Never averse to proffering advice whether sought or not, Balakirev suggested that Tchaikovsky might follow Berlioz' lead in writing a symphony with an *idée fixe* motif, associated with Manfred himself, appearing in each movement.

Balakirev had previously guided Tchaikovsky through the composition of the *Romeo and Juliet Overture* but in the intervening period he had fallen on hard times. Tchaikovsky was undoubtedly pleased to hear from his old friend but he was unenthusiastic about the new project writing to Balakirev in November 1882: 'I thought that your programme would awaken in me a burning desire to set it to music...but when I received it I was disappointed'. Tchaikovsky had no wish to imitate Berlioz and had too much respect for Schumann's music for his Manfred composed some 30 years earlier.

The idea lay dormant until October 1884 when Tchaikovsky and Balakirev met in St Petersburg. Balakirev again suggested Stasov's scenario and added further suggestions. This time Tchaikovsky did not dismiss the matter out of hand but told his colleague that he would purchase a copy of the poem before his next trip outside Russia, a journey which included a visit to the Alps. He was back at Maidanovo in April 1885 but had only sketched a few ideas whilst in Switzerland, being also at work on a new opera. During the summer months however he worked on *Manfred*, at first regarding the task as something of a chore, but gradually becoming more enthused until he became

exhausted by the sheer scale of the symphony. By the end of September 1885 Tchaikovsky was able to announce to Balakirev that the symphony was fully scored.

The first movement depicts Manfred's wandering in the Alps, his life in ruins. He is obsessed by hopeless memories, and that of Astarte, whom he once passionately loved, lies uppermost in his heart. Seeking to alleviate his torment he seeks solace in the occult but this has no effect on his despair. The second movement (forming the scherzo section of the symphony) has Manfred encountering an Alpine fairy who appears to him in the form of a rainbow seen through the spray of a waterfall. In the pastoral third movement, Manfred finds solace among the alpine farmers and hunters but as with the previous movement, he is unable to forget the harsh reality of the outside world. The final movement (generally considered the weakest of the four) finds Manfred seeking relief in the hellish atmosphere of the bacchanalian celebrations held in the cave of Arimanes. The spirit of his beloved Astarte foretells his imminent death and, satisfied that he will at last find peace and forgiveness, Manfred dies.

The *Manfred Symphony*, dedicated to Balakirev, was premiered in March 1886 under Max Erdmannsdörfer. Tchaikovsky was awarded some acclaim at the end of the piece and as so often, at the time he considered it his greatest work to date. Three years later, whilst working on the *Fifth Symphony*, he changed his mind and considered destroying all but the first movement. Several years had passed since his *Fourth Symphony* (completed in 1878, the year following his disastrous marriage) which had at its centre an implacable motif depicting the cruel hand of fate, as felt so strongly by Tchaikovsky at that time. Musicologists have commented that he surely felt some kinship with the lonely Manfred, who longs for relief from his despair.

Despite the weakness of the overlong final movement, acknowledged by Tchaikovsky himself, it is difficult to explain the relative neglect of this symphony. However, it does require a larger than average orchestra (complete with harmonium or organ) and it is also the longest of the Tchaikovsky symphonies. It should be noted though that it is of a fairly modest scale when placed alongside either Mahler or Bruckner.

If the *Manfred Symphony* is unfairly neglected, then the youthful *Overture in C minor* is barely known to present-day audiences. The *Overture in C minor* presents a fascinating contrast to the mature symphony which displays the composer at the height of his powers in terms of orchestration.

It was composed in 1866 and in it Tchaikovsky used material from his overture to *The Storm*, composed a couple of years earlier. He also made use of it shortly afterwards in his opera *The Voyevoda*

Gennadi Rozhdestvensky's (b Moscow 1931) father was the famous conductor Nikolai Anosov (1900 -62) and his mother was the soprano Natalya Rozhdestvenskaya. He studied conducting with his father and piano with Lev Oborin at the Moscow Conservatory. Between 1951 and 1961 Rozhdestvensky was a staff conductor at the Bolshoy. Appointed artistic director of the USSR Radio and TV orchestra in 1961, in 1964 he became the youngest ever principal conductor of the Bolshoy.

Rozhdestvensky was frequently allowed to conduct outside the USSR, making his Covent Garden debut in 1970, conducting at the Proms (1971) and toured the USA in 1973. During the 1970s he held posts with the Stockholm Philharmonic, the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. In the USSR he promoted twentieth century works by Hindemith, Poulenc, Orff and Britten, programming them alongside contemporary Soviet and Eastern-bloc compositions. Having concluded his first period at the Bolshoy in 1970, Rozhdestvensky became Principal Conductor of the Moscow Chamber Orchestra and in 1982 he founded the USSR Ministry of Culture Orchestra. He subsequently returned to the Bolshoy, although his relationship with the company came to an abrupt end in 2001. His appearances outside Russia have included many noteworthy opera productions and concert engagements. He has made over five hundred recordings and teaches conducting in Moscow. He is married to the pianist Victoria Postnikova with whom he often performs.

Sergei Skripka (b 1949) trained in Kharkov and Moscow before being appointed Principal Conductor of the Russian State Symphony Cinema Orchestra in 1993. He has conducted at many venues in Russia and on tour in Germany and Africa and has also guest conducted several orchestras outside Russia. He has collaborated with numerous acclaimed soloists, and is currently Professor of Conducting at the Gnessin Academy, Moscow.

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