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soundstream

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY
(1840-1893)

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36

SACD-60563

- 1 I. Andante sostenuto-Moderato con anima-Moderato assai, quasi Andante-Allegro vivo [17:03]
- 2 II. Andantino in modo di canzone [9:30]
- 3 III. Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato-Allegro [5:52]
- 4 IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco [9:01]



Lorin Maazel • The Cleveland Orchestra



IGOR STRAVINSKY
(1906-1975)

The Rite of Spring

PART ONE:
The Adoration
of the Earth

- 5 Introduction [3:15]
- 6 The Auguries of Spring /
Dances of the Adolescent
Girls [3:22]
- 7 Game of Abduction [1:22]
- 8 Spring Rounds [3:53]
- 9 Games of Rival Tribes [1:55]
- 10 Procession of the Sage [0:41]
- 11 The Sage [0:19]
- 12 Dance of the Earth [1:18]

PART TWO:
The Sacrifice

- 13 Introduction
("Pagan Night") [3:55]
- 14 Mystic Circles of
the Young Girls [3:17]
- 15 Glorification of
the Chosen One [1:44]
- 16 Evocation of the Elders [0:53]
- 17 Ritual Action
of the Elders [3:22]
- 18 Sacrificial Dance
(The Chosen One) [4:42]

Total Playing Time [75:48]

STRAVINSKY
The Rite of Spring



TCHAIKOVSKY
Symphony No. 4



Lorin Maazel
The Cleveland Orchestra

50kHz Master Transfer To DSD

Direct Stream Digital

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 4

Less than two years separate the composition of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony from his Third. An entire decade elapsed before he wrote the Fifth. Yet, as far as the composer's stylistic development is concerned, the gap comes between the Third and the Fourth. Conductors and audiences seem to agree on this point. Despite the fact that the first three symphonies display the Tchaikovskian strengths of ingratiating melody and elegant orchestration, they are heard but rarely. The last three, as familiar as any symphonies in the repertory, add a new intensity of emotional expression, a characteristic that was to be the hallmark of his greatest music for the rest of his life.

It is always dangerous to seek reasons for such development in a composer's biography. Musical expression is far more than simply a transcription of emotions, and often enough is not directly related to a composer's emotional state at all. But in the case of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony, a great deal of evidence documents the connection of this music with the crisis that befell the composer precisely in the period between the Third and Fourth symphonies. It is a story of Tchaikovsky's relations with two women who played a central role in his life at this time, one for good, one for ill.

Nadezhda von Meck, at age forty-five the recently widowed mother of eleven children, was a passionate devotee of music. Left a wealthy woman at her husband's death, she devoted the remainder of her life to musical activities. About 1873 she heard, and at once fell in love with, Tchaikovsky's music. Later, upon hiring as music tutor in her household a young violinist who had been in Tchaikovsky's composition class, she pumped him for information about her favorite composer. Upon thus learning that he was continually hard-pressed for money, she sent the astonished composer a modest commission in December of 1876. Thus began fourteen years of an extraordinary relationship, one in which — at the lady's insistence — they never met and never even saw each other (except at a distance by accident)! During this time, Mme. von Meck provided the composer with a handsome subsidy through letters and messengers, and he responded gratefully with dedications. The long-distance friendship, which produced over 700 letters, some of great length and intimacy, turned out to be the most intense emotional relationship that either of them ever experienced.

Tchaikovsky may have been surprised by her stipulation that they were not to meet, but he was surely not unhappy about it. If they remained physically separate, she could never make demands on him that he would be unwilling to meet. At this time Tchaikovsky was wrestling

with the personal torment of his homosexuality, worried about discovery and concerned at the possibility of blackmail. The last thing he needed at this time was a complicated relationship with a woman.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what he got. In May of 1877 he received a letter from a young pupil at the Conservatory, Antonina Ivanovna Milyukova, expressing her passionate and undying devotion to him. As luck would have it, the composer had just become obsessed with the idea of turning Pushkin's poetic novel, *Eugene Onegin*, into an opera, and the details of the literary work seemed to be repeating themselves in real life. In the poem, the young Tatiana writes a passionately personal letter declaring her love to Onegin; his callous response triggers the ultimate tragedy. Tchaikovsky had no desire to be cast in the role of the unfeeling Onegin, so he responded to Antonina's letter as gently as possible. She refused to accept dark hints as to the true state of his emotional makeup.

Tchaikovsky felt himself, against his will, forced into marriage, though evidently so uncertain of the step he was taking that he did not reveal it in advance either to Mme. von Meck or to the members of his family, with whom he maintained a steady, close correspondence. Only after he and Antonina had set off on their honeymoon did he fully realize the folly of his actions. "As the train started," he wrote to his brother two days later, "I was on the point of screaming." A loan from Mme. von Meck gave him the opportunity to make a temporary escape to the Caucasus, leaving behind his bride, the marriage still unconsummated. By late September he returned to Moscow to face her, but within a few days he vainly attempted suicide by walking into the Moscow River and standing in the frigid water in hopes of catching a fatal case of pneumonia.

In desperation he escaped to Switzerland and finally to Italy, where he spent the winter composing his Fourth Symphony. Though some sketches go back to the previous spring, the bulk of the work took shape at the end of 1877, and he finished it on January 19, 1878. Nikolai Rubinstein conducted the first performance, in Moscow, less than two months later. The score bears the dedication, "To my best friend," who, as the composer's correspondence makes clear, was Mme. von Meck.

Tchaikovsky wrote her a long letter describing the meaning of his symphony. There he described the "program" of the symphony as proceeding from the introductory fanfare, "the seed of the whole symphony," of which he declared flatly, "this is fate, this is that fateful force which prevents the impulse to happiness from attaining its goal." The various themes of the first

movement, then, represent a fruitless languishing under this fate and a retreat into vain hopes and daydreams, from which the clarion call of fate awakens one. "Thus all life is an unbroken alternation of hard reality with swiftly passing dreams and visions of happiness . . . No haven exists." The second movement, wrote Tchaikovsky, expresses a weary regret for all that is hopelessly gone. The third movement "is made up of capricious arabesques, of the elusive images which rush past in the imagination when you have drunk a little wine and experience the first stage of intoxication." It suddenly alternates with visions of "drunken peasants and a street song." The finale proposes a return to active life: "If within yourself you find no reasons for joy, look at others. Go among the people. Observe how they can enjoy themselves, surrendering themselves wholeheartedly to joyful feelings." But even here, "the irrepressible fate again appears and reminds you of yourself . . . But others . . . have not even turned around, they have not glanced at you, and they have not noticed that you are solitary and sad."

Reading the entire letter (which goes on at great length in this perfervid style), it is easy to conclude that Tchaikovsky's music is nothing more than the accompaniment to some kind of romantic film, a tearjerker translating heart-on-sleeve emotion into corny musical effects. But how different were Tchaikovsky's words when addressing another composer! Responding to some mild criticisms by his former pupil Taneyev, he replied, "Of course my symphony is programmatic, but this program is such that it cannot be formulated in words . . . Should [a symphony] not express everything for which there are no words, but which the soul wishes to express? . . . In essence my symphony imitates Beethoven's Fifth; that is, I was not imitating its musical thoughts, but the fundamental idea . . . My symphony rests upon a foundation that is nearly the same, and if you haven't understood me, it follows only that I am not a Beethoven, a fact which I have never doubted."

Here we encounter Tchaikovsky discussing matters with a peer, rather than "explaining" his music for an interested amateur. The letter to Taneyev insists equally on the emotional character of the symphony, but it gives us a far clearer view of the composer as a trained professional. In his Fifth Symphony, Beethoven had created a powerful musical structure moving from tragedy to triumph. Tchaikovsky was by no means the first composer to take this symphony as a model. Using the basic floor plan of Beethoven's work, Tchaikovsky created a symphony of rich expressive force, one with a more effective architecture than he ever achieved again, moving from the thunderous blows of "fate" to a kind of triumph, though a triumph less overwhelming than Beethoven's. Certainly the character of the symphony owes something to the composer's emotional state while working on it. At the end of the letter in which he described the program to Mme. von Meck, Tchaikovsky added, "I was terribly

depressed last winter when I was composing this symphony, and it serves as a true echo of what I was going through at the time. But it is merely an *echo*." The feelings, in other words, have been transmuted into art.

Certainly it is easy to hear "fate" in the opening fanfare, particularly when it returns later on, interrupting the proceedings more than once with unusual violence. And it is easy to hear "frustration" in the first movement's waltz-like main theme, which keeps circling around in a limited space, extending itself but never really changing. Yet this emphasis on the "expressive" quality of the first movement overlooks two remarkable features: the almost organic growth of the melodic ideas, and the original formal and harmonic shape that Tchaikovsky created for it.

Each section of the movement contains thematic ideas that grow from some part of the preceding themes, like trees in the spring, burgeoning with new shoots. These ideas constantly intertwine, commenting on one another with an extraordinary generosity of invention. In harmonic terms, the movement is unique. Tchaikovsky bypasses the outworn conventions of the early nineteenth century — contrasting tonic to dominant (or, in the minor key, relative major) — with a consistent pattern of modulations upward by a minor third. In fact, this *begins* like a traditional harmonic plan, moving from F to A-flat (where, in the minor mode, we hear contrasting material). But then Tchaikovsky continues up to B major — an astonishing choice of key for a symphony in F — to present a lulling, rocking new theme. Its course is violently interrupted by "fate" to begin the development. Still the harmonic plan continues to be played out consistently: the development ends in D, another step of a minor-third from the preceding section; the recapitulation begins in that unexpected key, so that by echoing the modulation of the exposition, it lands quite naturally in F-minor. Thus, Tchaikovsky evaded the traditional harmonic plan, familiar since Beethoven and long since overly predictable, and shaped his work to an entirely original map perfectly suited to his expressive needs, yet consistent and strong in architecture.

We do not hear the "fate" motive at the beginning of the recapitulation. Perhaps it has been vanquished? No, it thunderously interrupts the close of the recapitulation and sets off the powerful coda. Throughout the course of this extraordinary movement, Tchaikovsky gauges with wonderful finesse the ebb and flow of expressive tension.

The two middle movements function essentially as relief from the energy and complexity of the first. At the same time, they are superb examples of Tchaikovsky's inventiveness in dressing charming lyrical ideas with striking orchestral color. Both movements are in a simple ternary

form. The slow movement sings its plaintive song, but with progressively more colorful embellishments. The scherzo offers a delightful game between the orchestral sections. First the strings (pizzicato) play the opening section entirely alone. As it ends, the woodwinds begin the scherzo, alternating with a different idea in the brass instruments. The strings return for a restatement — alone at first, but eventually, joined by brass and woodwinds in rapid-fire alternation of instrumental sonorities. As Tchaikovsky wrote to Mme. von Meck, “I think this sound effect will be interesting,” and in that he was entirely correct. The third movement was an instant hit with the first audience.

The finale is once again a large movement, though not nearly so complex as the first. It is a kind of brilliant rondo opening with a fiery orchestral outburst leading to a Russian folksong on which Tchaikovsky rings many changes. Less passionate in character than the first movement, it nonetheless builds a wonderfully sonorous conclusion when the “fate” motive intervenes again — at a point precisely comparable to a similar gesture in Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. It is put to rout through a final outburst of high energy and orchestral virtuosity.

However much the conception of the Fourth Symphony grew out of the unhappy events of Tchaikovsky’s life during the months preceding its composition, it is certainly true that at some point the power of the music itself took over and dominated any purely biographical impulse. Certainly the musical force and imaginative qualities of the Fourth project Tchaikovsky’s artistic ideas without the aid of the “program” that he sent to the dedicatee, the “beloved friend” who had made the symphony possible.

— Steven Ledbetter

STRAVINSKY: The Rite of Spring

The attempts of humankind to relate itself to the universe are an endless source of fascination and study. Ancient religious beliefs and practices again and again fertilize modern works of art, from Milhaud’s ballet *La Création du monde* to the film *A Man Called Horse*, from Botticelli’s painting *La primavera* to Auel’s novel *Clan of the Cave Bear*. The extraordinary ferment that animated intellectual and artistic circles in Russia during the years leading up to the 1917 Revolution focused in part on the primitive tribal origins of the Russian people. Such studies held a special fascination for the painter Nikolai Roerich (1874-1947), who had designed settings for productions of Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade* and Borodin’s *Polovtsian Dances*. It was apparently he who conceived the idea for *The Rite of Spring* (whose original Russian title is *Vesna svayashchennaya*, “Sacred Spring”). Although Stravinsky took credit for

originating the concept of “a scene of pagan ritual in which a chosen sacrificial virgin danced herself to death,” the subject was reportedly suggested to him by Roerich in 1910, after the Paris triumph of *The Firebird*. Roerich designed the barbaric, colorful sets and costumes for *The Rite of Spring*, and he influenced Vaslav Nijinsky’s controversial choreography for the ballet by showing him examples of ancient Slavic painting and sculpture.

Though captivated by the vision of primitive Slavic ritual, Stravinsky found that musical ideas for its expression came slowly, and he was soon distracted by the conception and composition of *Petrushka*. Only after that ballet was presented in 1911 did he get back to *The Rite of Spring*, meeting in Russia with Roerich to plan the scenario and then moving his family to Clarens, Switzerland, where most of the new ballet was composed. He later explained, “I composed from the ‘Augures printanières’ to the end of the first part and then wrote the prelude [Introduction] afterward. . . . The dances of the second part were composed in the order in which they now appear, and composed very quickly, too, until the ‘Danse sacrale,’ which I could play, but did not at first know how to write. The composition of the whole of *Le Sacre* was completed, in a state of exaltation and exhaustion, at the beginning of 1912, and most of the instrumentation . . . was written in score form by the late spring.”

The artistic collaborators had been brought together by Sergei Diaghilev, the flamboyant impresario of the legendary Ballets Russes. Diaghilev’s reaction was irony when Stravinsky first played for him the pounding, repetitive chords of the “Auguries of Spring” section, but he understood immediately the power of the conception and its likelihood of arousing excitement in the public. In Stravinsky’s estimation, “Diaghilev did not have so much a good musical judgment as an immense flair for recognizing the potentiality of success in a piece of music or work of art in general.”

Various writers have speculated that Diaghilev may have planned or at least hoped for the famous riot of outrage that greeted the first performance of *Le Sacre du printemps*, with Pierre Monteux conducting the orchestra in the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées on May 29, 1913. Before the performance, as related by the company’s stage director, Diaghilev “warned that there might be a demonstration against [Stravinsky’s music]. He entreated the dancers, if so, to keep calm and carry on, and asked Monteux on no account to cease playing. ‘Whatever happens,’ he said, ‘the ballet must be performed to the end.’”

The composer reported that he and Nijinsky went afterward to a restaurant with Diaghilev. “So far from weeping and reciting Pushkin in the Bois de Boulogne as the legend is, Diaghilev’s only comment was: ‘Exactly as I wanted.’ He certainly looked contented. No one could have

been quicker to understand the publicity value . . . Quite probably he had already thought about the possibility of such a scandal when I first played him the score, months before. . . ."

Stravinsky himself was astonished at the audience's reception. He knew the original intent was worthy: "What I was trying to convey was the surge of spring, the magnificent upsurge of nature reborn." Though the score was revolutionary in many ways and had given the dancers great difficulty in their preparation, the orchestra members had not complained about the music, and he saw nothing offensive in the stage spectacle. When the whistling and shouting at the premiere became too overpowering, he abandoned his seat and went backstage, where Nijinsky was standing on a chair shouting numbers ("like a coxwain") to the hapless dancers and Diaghilev was flicking the audience lights on and off in a vain attempt to restore order.

The roots of the public outrage lie as much in Nijinsky's tradition-breaking dance movements as in Stravinsky's music. Only a year before, the brilliant dancer-turned-choreographer had scandalized Paris with his rendition of *The Afternoon of a Faun*, concluding with what many considered an obscene pantomime. Now, here in the home of classical ballet, he presented dancers in uncouth movements with toes turned in, to another sex-saturated scenario. The first sight presented to the audience was, in Stravinsky's delicious phrase, "a group of knock-kneed and long-braided Lolitas jumping up and down." Further, judging from the accounts of panicky, conflict-ridden rehearsals, the dancers were probably not at their polished best.

The score of *Petrushka* had been ground-breaking in its own way. Parisian ballet lovers had had some foretaste of Stravinsky's methods. Still, *The Rite of Spring* was a major leap forward for the modern age. It has frequently been hailed as the "beginning" of twentieth-century music, and the shock waves it created are still being felt today. To this score Stravinsky brought the rich orchestral palette he received from his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov, and he made use of the greatly expanded pit orchestra Diaghilev had promised him for the 1913 season.

After a 1921 attempt to revive *The Rite of Spring* as a ballet, this time with choreography by Leonide Massine, Stravinsky wrote that he preferred the work as a concert piece, and music lovers have largely agreed with him, although many eyes were opened by the 1987 production by the Joffrey Ballet, with the original choreography recreated by dance historian Millicent Hodson and Roerich's original designs recreated by art historian Kenneth Archer.

Despite Stravinsky's claims that the score was written as absolute music, with images and story line added later, we know that he first worked out a detailed scenario with Roerich. He outlined the stage action at length in his autobiography, as quoted in the description that follows.

PART ONE: The Adoration of the Earth

Introduction. Before the curtain rises, I have given to the orchestra alone the idea of that great sense of fear which weighs upon all sensitive spirits before a controlled power . . . a profound mystic sensation which comes to all things at the hour when nature seeks to renew its various forms of life; it is this vague, yet profound discord which affects all at puberty.

Playing at the very top of its range, the solo bassoon states a sinuous melody, derived from a Lithuanian folk tune. One by one, other woodwinds join in, followed by strings in harmonically-derived chords, all sprouting and flowering in chaotic profusion. After the trumpet joins the counterpoint, a sudden silence leaves the bassoon to repeat its opening theme.

Auguries of spring. Some adolescents are seen with an old, old woman . . . who understands the secrets of nature and who is teaching their meaning to her sons. She runs, bowed down toward the ground, as if neither woman nor animal.

Strings constantly repeat a short bitonal chord in ritualistic fashion, with irregular punctuation from the horns, interspersed with fanfares and ostinatos from the winds.

Dances of the adolescent girls. During this time the adolescent girls come down to the river. They form a circle which mixes with that of the boys.

The chugging chords from strings leave off, as the concatenation of ostinatos and trills continues. Fragments of an ecstatic melody are played by solo horn and echoed by alto flute. Trumpets, trombones and percussion are added to the growing frenzy.

Game of abduction. The groups merge; but in their rhythm one feels a straining toward the formation of new groups; and they divide to right and left.

The dance becomes quite wound up, bringing a trumpet melody with each note double-tongued. The full orchestra joins in an emphatic dance of irregular meter. The solo horn proclaims a new fanfare, and further statements lead to climactic wind chords over tremolo strings.

Spring rounds. Now a new form has been realized, a synthesis of rhythms, and then from this a new rhythm is produced.

Flute trills span the sudden quiet. Slowly, laboriously, a new accompaniment figure begins, then flutes and violas introduce the fragments of a new theme in parallel harmonies. Gradually the whole orchestra is involved, building to a dragging, triple-forte climax. A lively new dance breaks out, with skirling woodwinds over a stamping ostinato for strings. Tranquility is restored by woodwind trills and a return to the first melody of this section.

Games of rival tribes. The groups separate and begin to fight. Messengers go from one to another and struggle . . . signifying, so to speak, that aspect of brute force which is also play.

Fierce, combative motives from brasses and timpani dominate this portion, in music that is playful but in deadly earnest.

Procession of the Sage. The arrival of a procession is heard. It is the Sage, the oldest man of the clan. A great fear surges through the crowd.

An insistent ostinato has already begun from Wagner and bass tubas. As horns join in with a simple fanfare, the other instruments fall silent, then resume their headlong rush with renewed intensity.

The Sage. Then the Sage, face down on the ground, becoming one with the soil, gives a blessing to the earth.

Everything is abruptly cut off in mid-phrase, and the stillness for the blessing is accompanied only by bass instruments and string harmonics.

Dance of the earth. Then all cover their heads, run in spirals, and leap as though endowed with renewed energy from nature.

Violent eruptions herald even greater frenzy, as the orchestra mounts a terrific din of fragments, ostinatos and cross-rhythms, to be once more cut off unexpectedly.

PART TWO: The Sacrifice

Introduction. The second tableau begins with quiet and obscure play among the adolescent girls.

Stravinsky also described this introduction as "Pagan Night." Subdivided strings state a tender theme. Soft winds and muted trumpets contribute to the eerie stillness.

Mystic circles of the young girls. At the opening, the music is based on a mysterious song which accompanies the dance of the young girls. They mark within their circle the signs showing where the Glorified One will finally be enclosed, never to come out again. She is who will be consecrated to the Spring, and who will return to Spring the vitality which Youth has taken from it.

Six solo violas sing the strange new theme, then hand it over to solo woodwinds. Sometimes pausing, then moving forward, the music maintains its magical mood and calm dignity.

Glorification of the Chosen One. Around the Chosen One, who is immobile, the young girls dance a ritual of glorification.

Savage, repeated blows to bass drum and four timpani are colored by massed string chords, as the fatal selection is made. The lively dance that follows is broken and wild, with frequent sweeping glissandos.

Evocation of the Elders. Then follows the purification of the soil . . . [and an appeal to the spirits of the dead].

Even shorter than the preceding section, this one features loud block chords from the winds, echoed by soft strings, with swelling timpani rolls between.

Ritual Action of the Elders. The Ancestors group themselves around the Chosen One.

They arrive in solemn procession. It begins softly, with tambourine off-beats and ornate figures in the woodwinds creating an oriental effect. Following several soft and loud sections, the music grows quiet again with expectation.

Sacrificial dance (the Chosen One). She commences the Sacrificial dance. As she is about to fall exhausted, the Ancestors glide toward her like rapacious monsters. So that she should not touch the soil as she falls, they seize her and raise her towards the sky.

The eruptions and paroxysms are described in music that shifts meter with almost every measure. The hypnotic intensity mounts, aided at the end by accelerating tempo. A sudden silence permits a rising glissando from the flutes and a general orchestral shudder, before a last triumphal stroke from brasses and strings.

— Nick Jones

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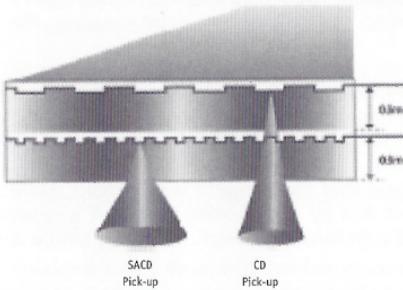
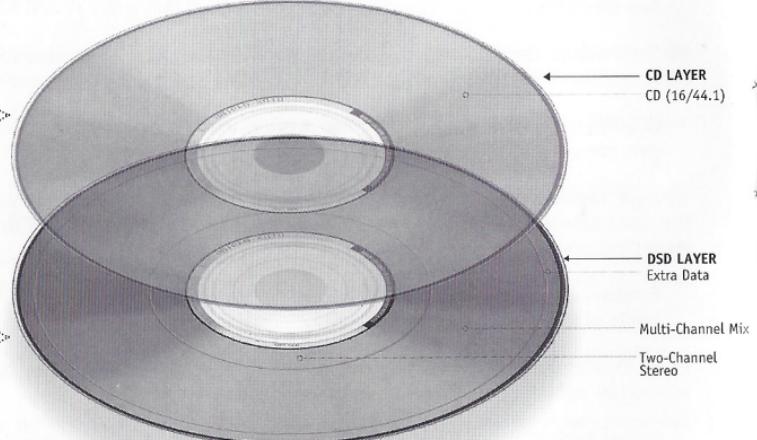
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SACD-60541
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Discrete Surround

Technical Information

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STRAVINSKY: Recorded in Severance Hall, Cleveland, Ohio, May 14, 1980

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Digital Recording Processor: Soundstream

Console: Neotek

Monitor Speakers: ADS Model 1530 (bi-amplified), ADS Model C2000 Crossover

Power Amplifiers: Threshold Model 4000

Interconnecting Cables: Audio Technica

Soundstream to DSD Conversion: dCS 972 Sample Rate Converter with custom software

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PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY

(1840-1893)

Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36

- 1 I. Andante sostenuto-Moderato con anima-Moderato assai,
quasi Andante-Allegro vivo [17:03]
- 2 II. Andantino in modo di canzone [9:30]
- 3 III. Scherzo: Pizzicato ostinato-Allegro [5:52]
- 4 IV. Finale: Allegro con fuoco [9:01]



Lorin Maazel • The Cleveland Orchestra



IGOR STRAVINSKY

(1906-1975)

The Rite of Spring

**PART ONE:
The Adoration
of the Earth**

- 5 Introduction [3:15]
- 6 The Auguries of Spring /
Dances of the Adolescent
Girls [3:22]
- 7 Game of Abduction [1:22]
- 8 Spring Rounds [3:53]
- 9 Games of Rival Tribes [1:55]
- 10 Procession of the Sage [0:41]
- 11 The Sage [0:19]
- 12 Dance of the Earth [1:18]

**PART TWO:
The Sacrifice**

- 13 Introduction
("Pagan Night") [3:55]
- 14 Mystic Circles of
the Young Girls [3:17]
- 15 Glorification of
the Chosen One [1:44]
- 16 Evocation of the Elders [0:53]
- 17 Ritual Action
of the Elders [3:22]
- 18 Sacrificial Dance
(The Chosen One) [4:42]



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