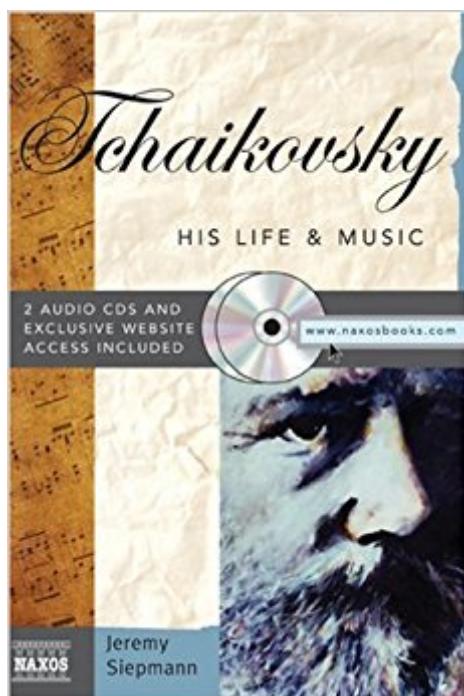


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Tchaikovsky: His Life & Music (Naxos Books)



Synopsis

Sourcebooks MediaFusion and Naxos proudly present this fascinating biography of composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Acclaimed music writer Jeremy Siepmann follows Tchaikovsky's development as man and composer, and sets out the experiences—the personal joys and sorrows as well as the broader cultural forces—that formed him and made him one of the most widely loved composers in classical music. Tchaikovsky was a man of neurotic diffidence, his self-doubt increased by his homosexuality. His music is thoroughly Russian in character, but he embraced Western and international elements and opened his works to a wider audience. Included are two CDs of carefully chosen Tchaikovsky pieces. Readers also gain access to an exclusive website that offers new essays, the musical works in full and more. This revolutionary biography utilizes traditional and new media to provide a uniquely rounded portrait of the composer and his music.

Book Information

Series: Naxos Books

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: Sourcebooks MediaFusion; 1 Har/Com edition (November 1, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1402210019

ISBN-13: 978-1402210013

Product Dimensions: 9 x 6.5 x 0.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #394,167 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #91 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Biographies > Classical #1167 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Classical #1177 in Books > Arts & Photography > Music > History & Criticism

Customer Reviews

Jeremy Siepmann is a writer, musician, teacher and broadcaster, and editor of Piano magazine. He has contributed articles, reviews and interviews to numerous journals and reference works. Previously he wrote biographies of Chopin, Brahms, and Beethoven. He lives in London, England.

Even from the earliest age, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, like so many other musically precocious world-class composers, displayed an emotional insecurity that was to develop into a string of

personal crises, depression and even suicidal tendencies as an adult. Perhaps it was the overwhelming fear of the exposure of his stifled homosexuality that led to his marriage being an utter disaster even from its very first day. Even his long-standing relationship with his only true friend, the widowed Nadezhda von Meck, might be classed as considerably off the beaten track of normal friendships. This wealthy woman, who for much of Tchaikovsky's life was a generous patron, insisted that the only condition on their relationship be that they never meet. Their entire friendship was conducted through correspondence and it hurt Tchaikovsky deeply when she unilaterally terminated that relationship for no reason that Tchaikovsky could fathom. While the world did not lose Tchaikovsky quite as early as we saw Mozart pass away, his untimely death at the age of 53 was deeply mourned. To this day it is an open question as to whether he died of cholera or suicide. But, of course, it is the music - the symphonies, ballets ("Swan Lake" and "The Nutcracker" are arguably the best known ballets in the entire classical repertoire), chamber music and operas such as the lyrical "Eugene Onegin" - that is the reason we are so interested in the story of the man as well. Jeremy Siepmann and Naxos Records have created a truly winning recipe with their "Life and Works" series. The combination of an audio book with music is an extraordinarily powerful and compelling way of bringing the biography of a classical musician to life and, at the same time, making the music accessible to a wide audience who may never have had the privilege of listening to some of the greatest music ever written. Siepmann's narrative voice is truly enchanting. Not only does he do a masterful job narrating Tchaikovsky's story in a most compelling manner but he does a magnificent job of relating Tchaikovsky's mercurial moods and the events in his life to the very nature of the music that he was producing at different periods in his life. Highly recommended for lovers of music and music history alike. Paul Weiss

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