



## **"To My Best Friend": Correspondence between Tchaikovsky and Nadezhda von Meck, 1876-1878**

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Tchaikovsky dedicated his original and emotionally vibrant Fourth Symphony to his newly found correspondent Nadezhda von Meck. This correspondence started at the end of 1876, when Tchaikovsky was in need of funds. On the recommendation of Nikolii Rubinstein, Director of the Moscow Conservatoire where Tchaikovsky was a professor, Nadezhda before the other, Nadezhda von Meck sincerely and increasingly gushingly, Tchaikovsky less sincerely to begin with, but much more so before the elapse of many months. Each was determined never to meet the other in the flesh for fear of destroying their very special relationship. The years covered by the present book are by far the most important in the correspondence. They cover the period of Tchaikovsky's tempestuously abortive marriage, about which he is surprisingly candid; in addition to the Fourth Symphony, the compositions of the period include his finest and most sensitive opera, *Eugene Onegin*, and the ever popular Violin Concerto, as well as numerous other smaller works. Their views on many musical, literary, philosophical, and other matters are stated frankly and, though they are often in accord, they are not afraid to agree to differ either. Not only giving a unique insight into Tchaikovsky the composer, these letters are perhaps as fascinating as any ever printed. Many are published in English for the first time. The translations, by a native-born Russian who lived the latter part of her life in England, and edited by a music scholar who reads Russian and a Slavist who is qualified in music, are as close to the letter and spirit of the original as it is possible to get. The correspondence will be of interest both to musicians and music lovers, and to all who are interested in the arts and culture of the nineteenth century.

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