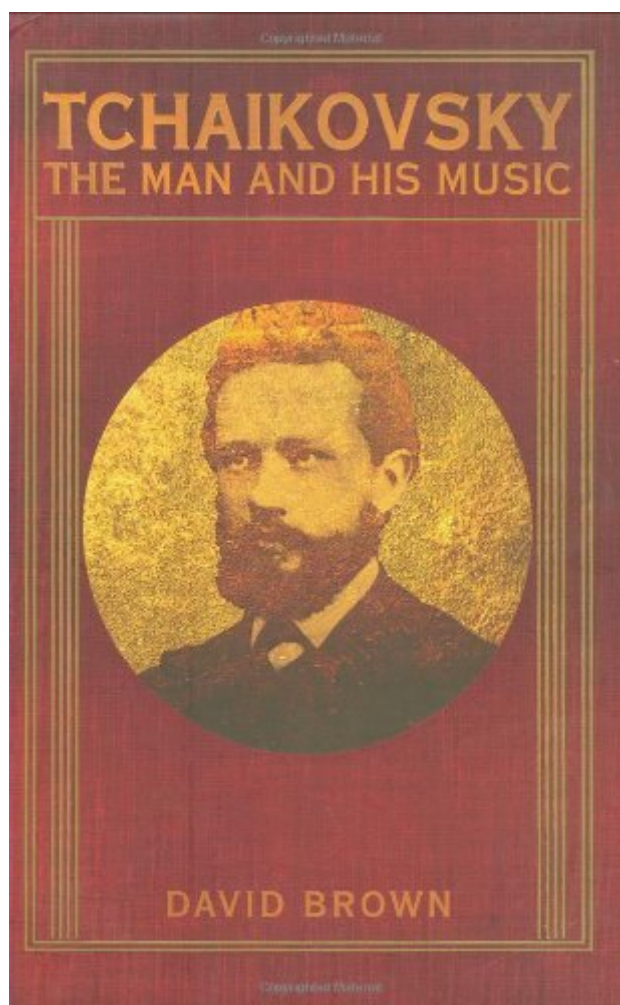


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Tchaikovsky: The Man And His Music



Synopsis

"In any language, it is definitive."-The Sunday Telegraph"A magnificent achievement, and one which can only deepen our appreciation and understanding of this great composer."-The Sunday Times (London) This very distinctive new work on Tchaikovsky uniquely combines a lively biography of Russia's best-loved composer with a chronological guide to his music, ranging from the popular symphonies and concertos to his operas and ballets. David Brown skillfully guides the reader through Tchaikovsky's music within the context of his life, and the result is a book that will be of particular interest to those who, knowing little or nothing of classic music, might wish to become acquainted with some of the greatest and most moving music ever composed. As for Tchaikovsky himself, he emerges as a man dogged with bouts of depression but capable of great and sustained kindness, devoted to his family, and unstinting with his time and money, even on behalf of virtual strangers. It is no wonder, then, when he died he was given a state funeral, nor that the massive crowds lining the streets delayed the procession to the cemetery by five hours. David Brown, professor of musicology at Southampton University, is an international authority on both Russian and nineteenth-century music. He is the author of a previous four-volume biographical study on Tchaikovsky, which, taken with this new book, makes Brown arguably the most renowned expert on the composer in the world.

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Customer Reviews

I feel like the author had readers like me in mind when he wrote this biography. I have more passion for music than knowledge of it. I buy classical CDs and attend concerts, but generally, I let the music roll over me rather than try to analyze it. Tchaikovsky's music is my favorite of all, and I thought I'd like to learn a little more about both the composer and the works. Between the author's credentials and the 425 page length, I was afraid I'd immediately be over my head, but that never happened. The book is written in such a way that you can learn when and what was going on in Tchaikovsky's life when he created a piece and what makes each piece great; yet you can pass over more detailed musical descriptions and return to the biography if and when you wish. I want to quickly say, however, for more musically knowledgeable readers than myself, there is plenty of discussion and intellectual opinion to recommend this work, and so it is not a beginners book by any stretch. In summary, due to David Brown's style, the book is easily accessible and a very enjoyable (and quick) read about a genius who had a fascinating life; yet you will learn so much you will feel like you took a course by the time you are done. I am now enjoying Tchaikovsky's music more than ever.

The author has arranged his material between biography facts and technical musical information. This is very helpful when you are not a technical musician, since you can skip over or just glance at the technical part

I first heard of this book via Cincinnati's One City, One Symphony program of outreach. The speaker at the session I attended was so enthusiastic and well versed on the two artists that were being featured that I had to ask about his source material. I enjoy learning the inspiration of music and this was very informative.

This is a beautifully written and comprehensive biography of Tchaikovsky. The book is written in a very conversational yet authoritative style, and draws the reader in to what Tchaikovsky may have been thinking during his compositional periods. Clearly the author is extraordinarily knowledgeable about his subject, having written a four volume biography years earlier. This is a far more manageable read, yet conveys the essentials. By juxtaposing Tchaikovsky's life with his compositions, it is much easier to understand the meaning behind so many of his recondite works. I

particularly enjoyed the in-depth analyses of his compositions, as well as the author's editorial comments about their quality. Although it seems there is little about Tchaikovsky that he doesn't like, the author uses a rating system to point the reader to the most important of works, such as the late symphonies, the violin and first piano concertos, and the ballets (especially Sleeping Beauty). I was left wishing how interesting it would have been to talk to the composer in person: he was a complex man who divulged his soul through his music. Understanding the background of the Tchaikovsky works, and understanding his state of mind against the backdrop of the tribulations of his personal life when composing, vastly enhances the listening of his music; in this regard Tchaikovsky is almost unique because the man, his life, and his music become inseparable. All the book lacked for me were recommendations for specific recordings that the author felt were exalted. Nevertheless - Bravo!

Very interesting and comprehensive biography.

This is certainly the best Tchaikovsky's biography I encounter! It provides not only detailed account of Tchaikovsky's life but a catalog and analysis of his works. The only draw back for an average reader (like me) - writing is a little dry. Thus 4 stars from me

I may have been expecting a more casual read, but found all the characters hard to keep up with. It was a little academic for me in some spots. I did not finish the book.

I wanted the full 4-volume edition, which I could not locate. This abridged edition has been revised for musically-illiterate people, with long prose commentaries on selected works by Tchaikovsky. There is no list of available or recommended recordings of the works discussed. The biography and historical background are severely reduced from what was probably included in the original edition. If D. Brown did the revision, he should be relegated to Siberia under the Tsars!

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