



## P. I. Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto & Symphony No. 4

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Rafael Kubelik recorded a good if not spectacular Tchaikovsky Fourth for EMI with the Vienna Philharmonic, and this one is even better. The high points consist of the two final movements: a zippy scherzo full of fun, and a racy finale with one of the best-conducted codas you'll ever hear. The Andantino features an appealing simplicity, while the first movement, a touch underplayed at the climaxes, nevertheless has no dead spots at all and an impressive continuity of line. Excellent playing, with especially distinguished winds, and impressively full recorded sound (also in the concerto) caps a fine issue.

If anything, the performance of the Violin Concerto is even better. This was Pinchas Zukerman's German debut (24 April 1969; the symphony was on the same program), back when he was one of the most exciting young violinists around. And let's not forget that Kubelik's father was a highly celebrated Czech violinist (Jan Kubelik), so the son undoubtedly knew this work like the back of his hand. It's a reading of high drama and tremendous conviction, with Zukerman taking risks all over the place in the outer movements and offering a sweetly sung Canzonetta in between. Despite moments of coarse tone (especially in the finale), the whole thing has the feeling of a spontaneous event, and it's easy to imagine the audience leaping to its feet at the close. This is a fine disc, but more importantly, a really fun one with a genuine sense of occasion.