

Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36.
London Symphony Orchestra / Igor Markevitch.
Speakers Corner/Philips (P) (C) 835 249AY.
Recorded Wembley Town Hall, London,
19-21/11/63.

Igor Markevitch's interpretations of the complete Tchaikovsky symphonies (including *Manfred*) with the London Symphony Orchestra, recorded in the mid-1960s, must have been considered good enough for Philips to reissue them all together in a box later on (C) SBAL50). For the Fourth Symphony, Speakers Corner have opted for the AY catalogue numbering system instead of using SAL3581 – the other original number – but it is none the worse for that, since both numbers were often quoted on LP labels from this era. The performance of the symphony is very exciting right from the opening fanfares, and holds the attention throughout – though the final few pages of the last movement are conducted at such a breakneck speed that the orchestra can only just about manage to keep up.

The recorded stereo sound is spacious, with a close and slightly murky balance which was typical of early Philips stereo orchestral issues. The basses and timpani tend to be over-loud in places. The middle frequencies are well defined, but the extreme upper and lower ends of the frequency spectrum are less well recorded. Overall, however, this is an extremely good version of the symphony and offers lots of enjoyment. **Bruce Latham**