

ORMANDY

CONDUCTS STRAVINSKY AND RACHMANINOV

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□ Stravinsky - Petrushka Suite (2:34:4)

Recorded 7th November, 1954

Transfer from Columbia LP ML5030 by Edward Johnson

Stravinsky - The Rite of Spring

▢ 1. The Adoration of the Earth (14:08)

▢ 2. The Sacrifice (16:12)

Recorded 24th April and 14th May, 1955

Transfer from Columbia LP ML5030 by Edward Johnson

Rachmaninov - Preludes (orch. Cailliet)

▢ Prelude in C sharp minor, Op. 3 No. 2 (4:56)

▢ Prelude in G major, Op. 32 No. 5 (3:27)

▢ Prelude in G minor, Op. 23 No. 5 (3:43)

Recorded 4th February 1950

Transfer from Columbia LP ML2158 by Edward Johnson

The Philadelphia Orchestra

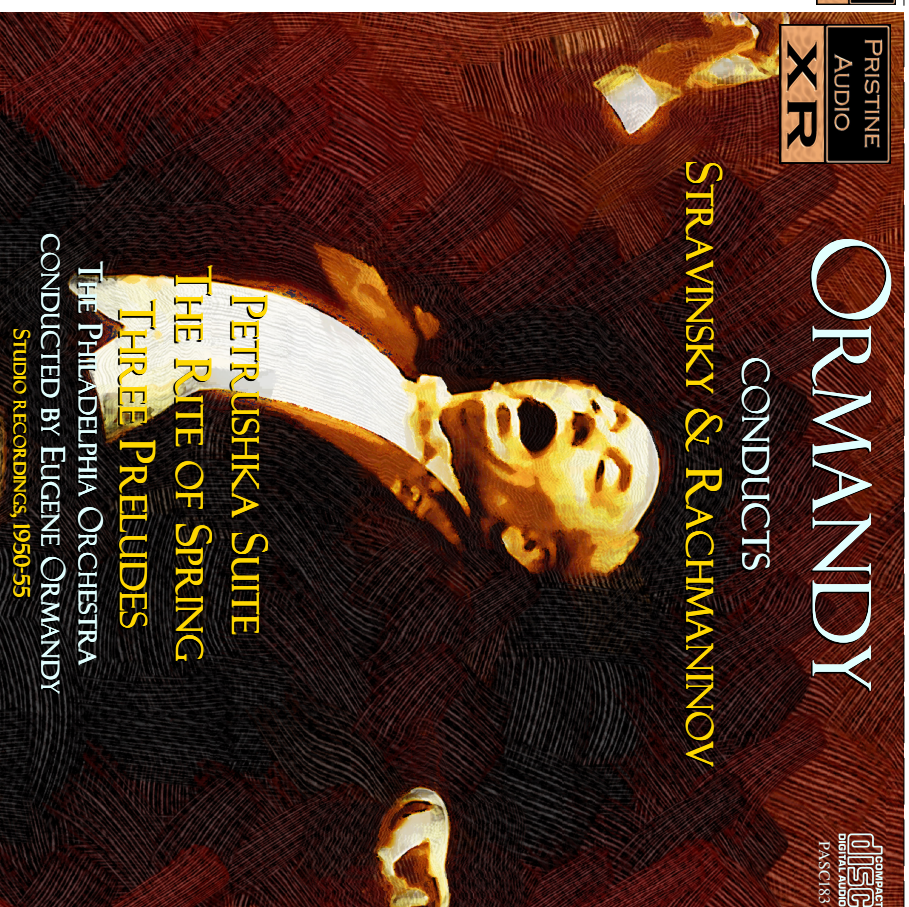
conducted by Eugene Ormandy

Restoration and XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, August 2009

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Eugene Ormandy

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Eugene Ormandy (November 18, 1899–March 12, 1985) was a Hungarian-born Jewish conductor and violinist. Born Jenő Blau in Budapest, Hungary, Ormandy began studying violin at the National Hungarian Royal Academy of Music (now the Franz Liszt Academy of Music) at the age of five. He gave his first concerts as a violinist at age seven and graduated at 14 with a master's degree. In 1920, he obtained a university degree in philosophy. In 1921 he moved to the United States of America. Around this time Blau changed his name to "Eugene Ormandy," "Eugene" being the equivalent of the Hungarian "Jenő." Accounts differ on the origin of "Ormandy"; it may have either been Blau's own middle name at birth, or his mother's. He worked first as a violinist in the Major Bowes Capitol Theater Orchestra in New York City. He became the concertmaster within five days of joining and became the conductor of this group which accompanied silent movies. Ormandy also made 16 recordings as a violinist between 1923 and 1929, half of them using the acoustic process.

Arthur Judson, the most powerful manager of American classical music during the 1930s, greatly assisted Ormandy's career. When Arturo Toscanini was too ill to conduct the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1931, Judson asked Ormandy to stand in. This led to Ormandy's first major appointment as a conductor, in Minneapolis.

Ormandy served until 1936 as conductor of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, now the Minnesota Orchestra. During the height of the Great Depression, RCA Victor contracted Ormandy and the Minneapolis Symphony for many recordings. A unique clause in the musicians' contract required them to earn their salaries by performing a certain number of hours each week (whether it be rehearsals, concerts, broadcasts, or recording). Since Victor did not need to pay the musicians, it could afford to send its best technicians and equipment to record in Minneapolis. Recordings were made between January 16, 1934, and January 16, 1935. There were several premiere recordings made in Minneapolis: John Alden Carpenter's *Adventures in a Perambulator*; Zoltán Kodály's *Háry János Suite*; Arnold Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* and, specially commissioned for recording Roy Harris' *American Overture* based on "When Johnny Comes Marching Home". Ormandy's recordings also included readings of Anton Bruckner's *Symphony No. 7* and Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* which became extremely well known. The high technical and interpretive quality of these records contributed to Ormandy's musical reputation.

Ormandy's 44-year tenure with the Philadelphia Orchestra began in 1936 and became the source of much of his lasting reputation and fame. Two years after his appointment as associate conductor under Leopold Stokowski, he became its music director. (Stokowski continued to conduct some concerts in Philadelphia until 1941; he returned as a guest conductor in 1960.) As music director, Ormandy conducted from 100 to 180 concerts each year in Philadelphia. Upon his retirement in 1980, he was made conductor laureate.

Ormandy was a quick learner of scores, often conducting from memory and without a baton. He demonstrated exceptional musical and personal integrity, exceptional leadership skills, and a formal and reserved podium manner in the style of his idol and friend, Arturo Toscanini. One orchestra musician complimented him by saying: "He doesn't try to conduct every note as some conductors do." Under Ormandy's direction the Philadelphia Orchestra continued the lush, legato style originated by Stokowski and for which the orchestra was well known. Ormandy's conducting style was praised for its opulent sound, but also was criticized for supposedly lacking any real individual touch.

Ormandy's orchestral seating plan was a standard one. The violins were not divided and therefore antiphonal effects were not enhanced. The first and second violins and harps were on the left. Woodwinds were in the center, with the horns behind them. The basses, cellos, and violas were on the right, along with the rest of the brass instruments. Percussion was in the center of the back.

Ormandy was particularly noted for conducting late Romantic and early 20th century music. He particularly favored Bruckner, Debussy, Dvořák, Ravel, Richard Strauss, Tchaikovsky, and transcriptions of Bach. His performances of Beethoven, Brahms, Haydn, and Mozart were considered less successful by some critics, especially when he applied the lush, so-called "Philadelphia Sound" to them. He was particularly noted as a champion of Sergei Rachmaninoff's music, conducting the premiere of his *Symphonic Dances* and leading the orchestra in the composer's own recordings of three of his piano concertos in 1939-40. He also directed the American premiere of several symphonies by Dmitri Shostakovich. He made the first recording of Deryck Cooke's first performing edition of the complete Mahler Tenth Symphony, which many critics praised. He also performed a great deal of American music and gave many premières of works by Samuel Barber, Paul Creston, David Diamond, Howard Hanson, Walter Piston, Ned Rorem, William Schuman, Roger Sessions, Virgil Thompson, and Richard Yardumian.

The Philadelphia Orchestra under Ormandy's direction frequently performed outside of Philadelphia, in New York and other American cities, and undertook a number of foreign tours. During a 1955 tour of Finland, Ormandy and many of the Orchestra's members visited the elderly composer Jean Sibelius at his country estate; Ormandy was photographed with Sibelius and the picture later appeared on the cover of his 1962 stereo recording of the composer's first symphony. During a 1973 tour of the People's Republic of China, the Orchestra performed to enthusiastic audiences that had been isolated from Western classical music for many decades.

After Ormandy officially retired as music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1980, he served as a guest conductor of other orchestras and made a few recordings.

Ormandy died in Philadelphia on March 12, 1985. His papers, including his marked scores and complete arrangements, fill 501 boxes in the archives of the University of Pennsylvania Library.

NOTES FROM WIKIPEDIA - FURTHER NOTES ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM