

THE MAGIC KEY OF RCA

AS BROADCAST ON 18 APRIL 1937

- 1 Introduction (Milton Cross) (1:57)
- 2 BACH (arr. Cailliet) Prelude & Fugue in F minor (cond. Ormandy) (6:03)
- 3 DEBUSSY Nocturnes - *Fêtes* (cond. Iturbi) (6:26)
- 4 Ben Grauer speaks for RCA Victor (1:34)
- 5 BIZET Carmen - *Prelude* (cond. O'Connell) (2:22)
- 6 FRANCK (arr. O'Connell) Grand Pièce Symphonique - *Andante* (cond. O'Connell) (4:37)
- 7 Ben Grauer on the Orchestra's tour (1:49)
- 8 Stokowski on sound reproduction and Bach and Debussy (3:03)
- 9 BACH (arr. Stokowski) My Jesus in Gethsemane (cond. Stokowski) (5:01)
- 10 DEBUSSY (arr. Stokowski) Clair de Lune (cond. Stokowski) (6:26)
- 11 VERDI Don Carlos - *O don fatale* (Marian Anderson, cond. Ormandy) (6:16)
- 12 CHOPIN Waltz No. 2 in A flat, Op. 34, No. 1 (Iturbi) (5:20)
- 13 WAGNER Die Walküre - *Ride of the Valkyries* (cond. Ormandy) (5:11)
- 14 Ben Grauer on the tour and Victor (1:21)
- 15 Closing - Cross and Grauer over BACH Suite No 3 - *Aria* (2:10)

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Marian Anderson - contralto

José Iturbi - conductor, solo piano

Charles O'Connell - conductor, arranger

Eugene Ormandy - conductor

Leopold Stokowski - conductor, arranger

Programme introduced by Milton Cross and Ben Grauer

XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, February 2010

This is designated a Pristine Audio SI (Special Interest) release due to compromised audio quality

Cover artwork based on photographs of Ormandy, Stokowski, Iturbi & Anderson

Total duration: 59:36 ©2010 Pristine Audio.

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THE MAGIC KEY OF RCA

THE PHILADELPHIA
ORCHESTRA
APRIL 18, 1937



THE MAGIC KEY OF RCA

AS BROADCAST ON 18 APRIL 1937

The **Magic Key of RCA** ran as an hour-long musical variety programme on an almost-weekly basis for 204 episodes over four years, between 29th September 1935 and 18th September 1939. The broadcasts went out on Sunday afternoons between 2pm and 3pm on NBC's Blue network, and featured a very wide range of artists and guests - the very first broadcast, for example, included contributions not only from conductor Walter Damrosch and singer Paul Whiteman, but also Walt Disney and radio comedians Amos 'n' Andy.

The 79th broadcast of 18th April 1937 came live from the Philadelphia Academy of Music, on the eve of the Philadelphia Orchestra's five-week "coast-to-coast tour of 11,000 miles with stops at twenty-four cities" under Ormandy and Iturbi, travelling on a "special de-luxe 9-car Pullman train". The broadcast carefully promotes not only the tour, but also RCA Victor's long association with the orchestra, and of course RCA's own electrical products.

In fact the "Magic Key" series came about as a means of promoting an electronic tuning aid developed by RCA for its radios in 1935, and was one of a number of 'magic' references dreamed up by RCA's PR department, as this excerpt from a technical website makes clear:

"RCA registered their first electron-ray tube, the 6E5, on June 27, 1935. This tube initially appeared in RCA's console-model product line that same year. RCA was fearing a loss of market share to competitors' new lines of very small and midget radios, many of which were designed and produced in Los Angeles. RCA's promotion touted the "Magic Eye" as an elegant feature of their upper product line - where profit margins were greatest. Not surprisingly, the 6E5 wouldn't fit inside the competitors' smallest sets. The name "Magic Eye" quickly gained acceptance with the public as the standard identity for the electron ray tube and tuning eye feature in consumer radio sets, regardless of manufacturer.

RCA's marketing department went on a bit of a binge with the "Magic" theme as it popped up in a variety of other radio features. This included the "Magic Brain" tuning unit, the "Magic Voice" sound system, the "Magic Wave" antenna, and the "Magic Key" station programming system. Two of RCA's 1936 model year console sets introduced in late 1935, Models 9K and 13K, were really "Magic". Along with the "Magic Eye", they were equipped with a combination of the other "Magic" features. The public however was not as impressed with these other "Magic" promotions as none of them gained the lasting familiarity of the "Magic Eye."

(from http://home.pachell.net/philbert/tuning_eye/eyintro.htm)

A Pristine Audio SI Release: Technical Note

The source recording for this release, supplied to me by Edward Johnson of the Stokowski Society, appeared to have originated from an AM broadcast recording captured on acetate discs. However, it had already received some quite strong noise processing which I was unable to undo, hence the release's designation as an "SI" release, meaning of "Special Interest" - but of reduced fidelity. It has been fully restored and XR-remastered, greatly improving the sound quality over the original as supplied, but several aspects of the audio had already been compromised beyond restoration. We believe that, for many collectors, this will prove secondary to simply having this remarkable recording available to listen to.

Notes by Andrew Rose - Further notes online at www.pristineclassical.com