

LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
CARNEGIE HALL, SUNDAY, 2ND APRIL 1950

[1] Introduction to CBS radio broadcast - announcer: John Baird (1:17)

THOMSON The Mother of Us All Suite

- [2] 1 - *Prelude* (6:44)
- [3] 2 - *Cold Weather* (3:25)
- [4] 3 - *Political Meeting* (3:40)

[5] Introduction to Brahms - announcer: John Baird (2:10)

BRAHMS Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 73

- [6] 1st mvt. - *Allegro non troppo* (12:53)
- [7] 2nd mvt. - *Adagio non troppo* (9:09)
- [8] 3rd mvt. - *Allegretto grazioso* (5:01)
- [9] 4th mvt. - *Allegro con spirito* (8:38)

[10] CHABRIER Joyeuse marche - marche française (4:32)

Source material provided by Edward Johnson from his private collection
Transfer and 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 a photograph of Leopold Stokowski
Total duration: 57:29 ©2010 Pristine Audio.

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STOKOWSKI



THOMSON THE MOTHER OF US ALL SUITE
BRAHMS SYMPHONY No. 2 IN D, Op. 73
CHABRIER JOYEUSE MARCH - MARCHÉ FRANÇAISE

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, CARNEGIE HALL, 2ND APRIL 1950



THOMSON THE MOTHER OF US ALL SUITE

BRAHMS SYMPHONY No. 2

CHABRIER MARCHE JOYEUSE - MARCHE FRANÇAISE



Virgil Thomson (November 25, 1896 - September 30, 1989) was an American composer and critic from Kansas City, Missouri. He was instrumental in the development of the "American Sound" in classical music. He has been described as a modernist, a neoclassicist, a composer of "an Olympian blend of humanity and detachment" whose, "expressive voice was always carefully muted," until his late opera *Lord Byron* which, in contrast to all his previous work, exhibited an emotional content that rises to, "moments of real passion", and a neoromantic.

Thomson displayed an extraordinary intelligence at an early age. As a child, he befriended Alice Smith, granddaughter of Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon faith. He attended Harvard University, and his tours of Europe with the Harvard Glee Club helped nurture his desire to return there. He eventually studied with Nadia Boulanger and became a fixture of "Paris in the twenties." His most important friend from this period was Gertrude Stein, who was an artistic collaborator and mentor to him. Following the publication of his book *The State of Music* he established himself in New York City as a peer of Aaron Copland and was also a music critic for the *New York Herald-Tribune* from 1937 through 1951. His writings on music, and his reviews of performances in particular, are noted for their wit and their independent judgments. His definition of music was famously "that which musicians do," and his views on music are radical in their insistence on reducing the rarefied aesthetics of music to market activity. He even went so far as to claim that the style a piece was written in could be most effectively understood as a consequence of its income source.

In the 1930s, he worked as a theater and film composer. His most famous works for theater are two operas with libretti by Gertrude Stein, *Four Saints in Three Acts*, especially famous for its use of an all-black cast, and *The Mother of Us All*, as well as incidental music for Orson Welles' Depression-era production of *Macbeth*, set in the Caribbean. He collaborated closely with "Chick" Austin of Hartford's Wadsworth Atheneum in these early productions. His first film commission was *The Plow That Broke the Plains*, sponsored by the United States Resettlement Administration, which also sponsored the film *The River* with music by Thomson. He won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1949 with his film score for *Louisiana Story*. In addition, Thomson was famous for his revival of the rare technique of composing "musical portraits" of living subjects, often spending hours in a room with them before rushing off to finish the piece on his own. Many subjects reported feeling that the pieces did capture something unique about their identities even though nearly all of the portraits were absent of any clearly representational content.

A Pristine Audio SI Release: Technical Note

The source recording for this release was a reel to reel copy of an acetate disc recording. The location of the original is currently unknown, if indeed it has survived. Alas the tape copy, believed to have come from Stokowski's assistant Jack Baumgarten and the only one we've been able to find, has suffered its own damage due to "sticky shed" syndrome, resulting in some at-times inconsistent treble response. Fortunately the condition was diagnosed and the tape treated prior to the present transfer in order to prevent further magnetic oxide loss, however some damage had already been done. The recording is also subject to occasional peak level blasting. It is unclear whether this was caused by the tape or the original discs. Much of this has been tamed, and overall the recording is certainly very listenable. As such, post-restoration it is very much a "borderline" case for the "SI" categorisation - an older recording of the same audio quality would not have been graded in this way. However, there are inconsistencies in it, and the overall quality is perhaps slightly lower than one expect from a 1950 recording.

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