



Stokowski

conducts Russian Music



"I'm very fond of Russian music" Stokowski would often say in interviews and, as with so many contemporary composers during his long career, he was a foremost champion of the Russians, frequently performing works by Rachmaninoff, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Khachaturian, Scriabin and many others. He was also an advocate of Stravinsky's music, with *The Rite of Spring*, *Les Noces*, *Oedipus Rex*, *The Song of the Nightingale* and the *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* all receiving their US premieres under his direction.

On Philadelphia Orchestra 78s too, he made the first US recordings of *The Rite of Spring* and *Petrushka*, from which he devised the colourful Suite heard here. However, it was *The Firebird Suite* which appealed to Stokowski the most. He recorded this work no fewer than eight times, starting with an acoustic set in 1924 (PASC192, also featuring Fireworks). Incidentally, he occasionally added the effective clang of a tubular bell at the start of the "Infernal Dance," as in the brilliantly played NBC performance on this CD.

Tchaikovsky's 4th Symphony also featured in Stokowski's list of numerous disc premieres, its first American recording having been made with the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1928. He was to re-record it for Victor two days after the broadcast heard here in a 78rpm set that has been described as "fiery and impetuous" and even "wilful," words that are also applicable to the preceding live performance.

Rimsky-Korsakov was also much in Stokowski's repertoire, with *Scheherazade* excerpted on acoustics (PASC476) and recorded five times thereafter. He made the first American 78s of the *Russian Easter Festival Overture* in 1929 and this he also re-recorded with the NBC Symphony for Victor shortly after its 1942 broadcast. However, for this performance he made a colourful emendation. About half-way through, Rimsky-Korsakov directs a solo trombone to depict the chanting of a Russian Orthodox priest during an Easter service. At this point, Stokowski decided on what might be called the "authentic" touch and engaged Nicola Moscona to intone the Old Slavonic text instead. On the other hand, in the case of the dazzling *Spanish Caprice*, Stokowski rather curiously didn't get round to recording this work commercially until 1973, a few months before his 91st birthday!

However, it is Tchaikovsky who occupies a major portion of Stokowski's discography and we conclude with the 5th Symphony. He recorded the second movement acoustically in 1923 (PASC441) and one of his commercial LPs - taped in 1953 with his own special team of top-flight New York musicians - can be found on PASC188. The same adjectives that have described Stokowski's reading of the 4th Symphony can also be applied to the 5th. Small cuts in both will be noted, though abridging Tchaikovsky in those days was quite common - witness Toscanini's deletion of over 100 bars from the *Manfred* Symphony's finale! Nevertheless, in Stokowski's hands, the NBC Symphony gives these Tchaikovsky symphonies virtuosic performances as visceral, intense and as passionate as they come.

Edward Johnson

PASC 596

stokowski

conducts russian music

tchaikovsky
symphony no. 4
symphony no. 5

rimsky-korsakov
russian easter festival overture
capriccio espagnol

stravinsky
firebird suite
petrushka suite

nbc symphony orchestra

live broadcast recordings, 1941-1944

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STOKOWSKI CONDUCTS RUSSIAN MUSIC: STRAVINSKY, RIMSKY-KORSAKOV, TCHAIKOVSKY
STOKOWSKI, NBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

stokowski

conducts russian music

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
PASC 596

disc one

1. STOKOWSKI Introduction to Firebird Suite (1:06)

STRAVINSKY The Firebird - Suite

2. I. Introduction (3:08)
 3. II. The Firebird and its Dance (1:15)
 4. III. The Princesses' Round (5:33)
 5. IV. Infernal Dance of King Kashchei (3:46)
 6. V. Lullaby (3:58)
 7. VI. Finale (2:37)
- Concert of 7 April 1942

8. STRAVINSKY (arr. Stokowski) Petrushka - Suite (15:33)

Eduard Steuermann, piano

Concert of 20 February 1944

9. STOKOWSKI Introduction to Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 4 (1:32)

TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 4 in F minor, Op. 36

10. 1st mvt. - Andante sostenuto - Moderato con anima (15:52)
11. 2nd mvt. - Andantino in modo di Canzona (10:01)
12. 3rd mvt. - Scherzo. Pizzicato ostinato. Allegro (5:09)
13. 4th mvt. - Finale. Allegro con fuoco (9:31)

Concert of 25 November 1941*

XR Remastered by **Andrew Rose**

Live broadcast recordings from NBC Studio 8H, Radio City, New York
except *Cosmopolitan Opera House, New York

Cover artwork based on a photograph of **Leopold Stokowski**

Total duration: **2hr 32:06**

CD1: 79:00 CD2: 73:06

disc two

1. STOKOWSKI Introduction to Russian Easter Overture (0:35)

2. RIMSKY-KORSAKOV Russian Easter Festival Overture, Op. 36 (12:39)

Nicola Moscona, bass

Concert of 31 March 1942

3. RADIO Introduction to Capriccio Espagnol (0:15)

4. RIMSKY-KORSAKOV Capriccio Espagnol, Op. 34 (14:21)

Concert of 20 February 1944

5. RADIO Introduction to Tchaikovsky Symphony No. 5 (0:43)

TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 64

6. 1st mvt. - Andante - Allegro con anima (14:04)
7. 2nd mvt. - Andante cantabile con alcuna licenza (13:08)
8. 3rd mvt. - Valse. Allegro moderato (5:56)
9. 4th mvt. - Finale. Andante maestoso - Allegro vivace (11:25)

Concert of 29 November 1942

NBC Symphony Orchestra

conducted by **Leopold Stokowski**

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