



Eugene Ormandy



and The Philadelphia Orchestra - Early Years, Volume 3

The present release is the third in a series devoted to Eugene Ormandy's early recordings with the Philadelphia Orchestra for the Victor and World's Greatest Music labels from 1936 through 1942, with one additional Victor recording from 1945. While the recordings he made during this period with such legendary soloists as Rachmaninov, Kreisler, Heifetz, Feuermann, Rubinstein, Flagstad, Melchior and others have deservedly remained in the catalog for decades, this series focuses on his purely orchestral recordings, which have been rather overlooked in reissues. Except for the *Symphonia Domestica*, which was previously reissued on LP (Camden) and CD (Biddulph), none of the recordings presented here have been available since the 78 rpm era.

Leopold Stokowski left a formidable legacy of Wagner recordings during the years of his directorship of the Philadelphia Orchestra, enough to fill more than four CDs; so it is rather surprising that Ormandy's 10-inch disc of *Meistersinger* excerpts presented here is his only example of orchestral Wagner on record during this period, although he also provided several vocal accompaniments for Flagstad and Melchior.

Ormandy had first recorded the Brahms Second Symphony with the Philadelphians anonymously for the World's Greatest Music series nine months before the version presented here (to be released in Volume 5 of this series). The earlier version was on ten sides, while this one was on twelve, like the 1929 Stokowski version (reissued on Pristine PASC 562) it was intended to replace. Apparently, this was not due to a more expansive interpretation; indeed, according to Richard Kaplan's Philadelphia Orchestra discography, the 12-sided version is 11 seconds faster than the ten-sided one. Victor's decision made the set rather uncompetitive in a field which otherwise had ten- or even eight-sided Brahms Seconds. (Interestingly, the earlier version was reissued on RCA's Camden LP series, the only World's Greatest Music release to be so chosen.)

Ormandy had already recorded a best-selling album of Johann Strauss overtures and waltzes with the Minneapolis Symphony before setting down the three waltzes heard here. While he remade the *Emperor* Waltz ten years later for a Columbia LP, the other two had to wait until the stereo era for another Ormandy/Philadelphia version. Richard Strauss' *Rosenkavalier* Waltzes had also already been set down by Ormandy in Minneapolis on three ten-inch sides. Here, he was able to take advantage of longer recording times to re-record it on a single 12-inch disc.

Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* Symphony was a mere six years old when Ormandy made the recording included here. It was only the second version on disc, following the composer's own 1934 recording; and the two would go on to become the only sets available during the 78 rpm era. As so often when they were playing what was then "new music", Ormandy and his Philadelphians bring an almost missionary zeal to the performance, which blazes with intensity, particularly in the brass.

For his first Richard Strauss tone poem on disc, Ormandy chose the then lesser-known *Symphonia Domestica* for what became its first electrical recording. (There had been a late acoustic set with Eduard Mörke; and the only other 78-era recording would be Carl Schuricht's version from three years later, on PASC 320.) For the next couple years, Ormandy would be Victor's "go-to" conductor for Strauss tone poems, setting down *Ein Heldenleben* in 1939 (in Volume 1 of our series, PASC 578) and *Don Quixote* with Feuermann the following year (PASC 168). While he continued to record and re-record most of the major Strauss orchestral works until the end of his career, he never returned to the *Domestica*, leaving this his sole statement on the work.

Mark Obert-Thorn

ormandy

and the philadelphia orchestra



PASC 634

the early years volume 3

wagner
brahms
j strauss ii
r strauss
hindemith

studio recordings · 1937 - 1941



bert-Thorn

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and the philadelphia orchestra the early years volume 3

disc one

WAGNER Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg (Act 3)

1. Dance of the Apprentices (2:59)
2. Entrance of the Mastersingers (3:12)

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

3. 1st mvt. - Allegro non troppo (14:02)
4. 2nd mvt. - Adagio non troppo (10:38)
5. 3rd mvt. - Allegretto grazioso (5:29)
6. 4th mvt. - Allegro con spirito (9:16)

J. STRAUSS II Waltzes

7. Wiener Blut (Vienna Blood) - Waltz, Op. 354 (5:02)
8. Frühlingsstimmen (Voices of Spring) - Waltz Op. 410 (5:00)
9. Kaiser-Walzer (Emperor Waltz), Op. 437 (10:05)

The Philadelphia Orchestra

conducted by Eugene Ormandy

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: **Mark Obert-Thorn**

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All recordings made in the Academy of Music, Philadelphia

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Eugene Ormandy from the Tully Potter Collection

Full discographic information available online

Total duration: 2hr 19:12

CD1: 65:44 CD2: 73:28

disc two

HINDEMITH Symphony "Mathis der Maler"

1. 1st mvt. - *Engelkonzert* (Ruhig bewegt) (7:35)
2. 2nd mvt. - *Grablegung* (Sehr langsam) (4:09)
3. 3rd mvt. - *Versuchung des heiligen Antonius* (Sehr langsam frei im Zeitmaß - Sehr lebhaft) (11:47)

4. R. STRAUSS Waltzes from *Der Rosenkavalier* (10:15)

R. STRAUSS Symphonia Domestica, Op. 53

5. Thema I (Bewegt) (0:56)
6. Thema II (Sehr lebhaft) (2:06)
7. Thema III (Ruhig) (1:45)
8. Scherzo (Munter) (5:54)
9. Mässig langsam (Wiegenlied) (5:34)
10. Adagio (Langsam) (10:57)
11. Finale (Sehr lebhaft) (12:30)