

Eugene Ormandy and the Minneapolis Symphony *Complete Recordings · Volume 2*

This volume is the second in a series presenting the complete recordings of Eugene Ormandy and the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra (now the Minnesota Orchestra) that were issued on 78 rpm discs, originally made for the Victor label in 1934 and 1935 and never before re-released in their entirety. It includes many disc premières, including the Schoenberg work featured in the present release.

Our second volume, rounding out his 1934 sessions, begins as the first one did with Mozart. While Ormandy's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* presented earlier was found by some critics to be somewhat brusque and aggressive, the overture to *Le nozze di Figaro* here is appropriately effervescent, and his sequence of German Dances idiomatically charming and characterful.

During his long career, Ormandy made only two Schumann symphony recordings – the Fourth presented here, and the Second which he recorded in Philadelphia three years later (Pristine PASC 578). The Fourth has a single-minded forward momentum which contrasts with the languid arrangement of the composer's *Träumerei* which follows it. With the Smetana and Dvořák works, we enter prime repertoire for this Middle European-born conductor; and the Minneapolis players convey the music's infectious high spirits with impressive ensemble.

Another composer central to Ormandy was Tchaikovsky, and the *Andante cantabile* from his first string quartet was a favorite encore which the conductor went on to record twice more in Philadelphia. Italian-born Riccardo Drigo spent much of his career in St. Petersburg during the same period that Tchaikovsky was active, composing and conducting his own ballet scores, from which the once-popular *Valse bluette* derives. This is the only work of his that Ormandy recorded.

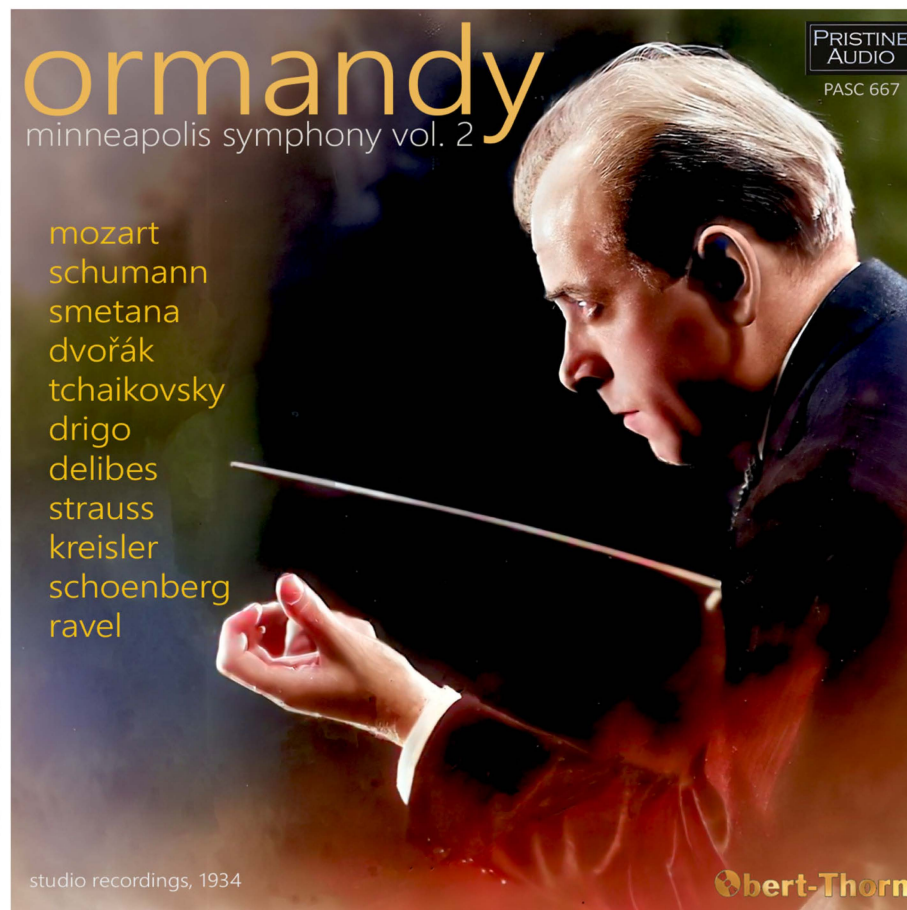
The ballet thread continues with excerpts from two Delibes' scores. While Ormandy would go on to revisit the *Sylvia* excerpts on disc with the Philadelphia, this was his only recording of music from the lesser-known *La Source*. The famous *Pizzicato Polka* by the Strauss brothers was another favorite Ormandy encore on disc, and serves as a bridge between Delibes' "Pizzicato" in *Sylvia* and the Viennese works which follow.

As a violinist himself, Ormandy was particularly suited to appreciate the compositions of Fritz Kreisler, and he orchestrated several of the most popular ones for an album whose name cheekily alluded to Schumann's famous piano suite. Presented here is the only recording he made of the grouping, although he did later return to *Liebesfreud* on disc with the Philadelphia in a different arrangement.

Although active in Vienna at the same time as Kreisler, one could hardly think of a composer more distant from him in style than the rigorous dodecaphonian, Arnold Schoenberg. Yet, his early works like *Gurrelieder* and *Verklärte Nacht* were the apotheosis of the high Romanticism initiated by Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. While *Verklärte Nacht* had been recorded once before in its original chamber music guise, Ormandy's Minneapolis set was the first issued version of the string orchestra arrangement. He would go on to re-record it once more in Philadelphia in 1950, with both performances marked by expansive tempi.

Our program concludes with Ravel's *Alborada del Gracioso*, in which the Minneapolitans play like a virtuoso orchestra, with stunning precision and high energy, led by a 34-year-old who was clearly destined for a highly successful career.

Mark Obert-Thorn



disc one (75:50)

1. MOZART Le nozze di Figaro, K. 492 - Overture (3:56)

MOZART Eight German Dances

2. K. 600, No. 1 in C major - Im Ländler Tempo (1:38)
3. K. 600, No. 2 in F major - Poco più moderato (1:43)
4. K. 600, No. 3 in B flat major - Un poco più allegro (1:41)
5. K. 600, No. 4 in E flat major - Allegro moderato (1:40)
6. K. 600, No. 5 in G major - Trio: The Canary (1:35)
7. K. 602, No. 3 in C major - Trio: The Organ-Grinder (1:46)
8. K. 605, No. 2 in G major - Allegretto (1:24)
9. K. 605, No. 3 in C major - Trio: The Sleigh-ride - Coda (2:10)

SCHUMANN Symphony No. 4 in D minor, Op. 120

10. 1st mvt. - Ziemlich langsam - Lebhaft (8:35)
11. 2nd mvt. - Romanze (Ziemlich langsam) (4:03)
12. 3rd mvt. - Scherzo (Lebhaft) & Trio (4:21)
13. 4th mvt. - Langsam - Lebhaft (7:18)

14. **SCHUMANN** (arr. B. Godard) Träumerei, Op. 15, No. 7 (4:30)

SMETANA (arr. H. Riesenfeld) Three Dances

from *The Bartered Bride*

15. Polka (Moderato) (4:25)
16. Furiant (Allegro energico) (2:04)
17. Dance of the Comedians (Vivace) (4:00)

18. **DVORÁK** Scherzo Capriccioso, Op. 66 (8:57)

19. **TCHAIKOVSKY** Andante cantabile

from String Quartet No. 1 in D major, Op. 11 (7:16)

20. **DRIGO** (arr. L. Auer) Valse bluette

from *Les Millions d'Arlequin* (2:48)

Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra
conducted by Eugene Ormandy

disc two (76:46)

DELIBES (arr. R. Jungnickel) Sylvia

1. Cortège de Bacchus (5:39)
2. Pizzicato (2:16)

DELIBES (arr. R. Jungnickel) La Source

3. Pas des écharpes (Allegro - Allegretto) (2:34)
4. Scène d'amour (Andante sostenuto) (2:09)
5. Variations (Moderato - Allegro moderato) (0:52)
6. Scherzo-Polka (Allegro moderato) (2:22)

7. **JOHANN STRAUSS II AND JOSEF STRAUSS**

Pizzicato Polka (3:10)

KREISLER (arr. Ormandy) Kreisleriana

8. Caprice viennois, Op. 2* (4:42)
9. Tambourin chinois, Op. 3 (4:02)
10. Liebesfreud (3:53)
11. Liebesleid (3:21)
12. Schön Rosmarin (1:59)
- *Harold Ayres (violin)

SCHOENBERG Verklärte Nacht, Op. 4

13. Sehr langsam (2:45)
14. Etwas bewegter (11:24)
15. Schwer betont (2:40)
16. Sehr breit und langsam (10:38)
17. Sehr ruhig (5:10)

18. **RAVEL** Alborada del gracioso (7:10)

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn
Special thanks to Nathan Brown, Frederick P. Fellers, Richard A. Kaplan and Charles Niss for providing source material.
All recordings made in the Cyrus Northrop Memorial Auditorium, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Total duration: 2hr 32:37 © 2022 Pristine Audio - www.pristineclassical.com