

The present release is the fourth 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 (the *Nutcracker* Suite presented here) 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. Among the items included in the present program, only the Tchaikovsky "Pathétique" has seen previous reissue on both LP and CD. The *Nutcracker* Suite was last offered on a 10-inch LP in the early 1950s; the Tchaikovsky Fifth has been unavailable since the 78-rpm era; and the two Rimsky-Korsakov items are seeing their first release here.

The *Nutcracker* Suite might rightly be called the Philadelphia Orchestra's "contractual obligation album." Ormandy had first recorded the work with them in December, 1941; but like many Victors of that period (including the Philadelphia sides conducted by Toscanini), the matrices suffered from processing problems that rendered them too noisy to release. By the end of the first Petrillo recording ban (1942-44), the orchestra had switched to Columbia, making their first records for that label in November, 1944. However, under their contract, they were allowed to re-make existing Victor sides that were awaiting release. And so, in January of 1945, this single album was made for RCA. The Overture is taken at a notably broader tempo than Ormandy would use in his 1952/3 Columbia LP remake, although for that later recording, he would still have the violins play an octave higher in repeated phrases in the "Waltz of the Flowers."

Although he inherited Stokowski's orchestra, Ormandy's conducting idol was Toscanini, whose influence can be heard in the two Tchaikovsky symphony recordings. While the Fifth Symphony was not in the Italian Maestro's repertoire, Ormandy's 1941 recording reflects a Toscanini-like approach, with swift tempi and ever-forward movement (e.g., the end of the first movement). Ormandy restores the big cut in the fourth movement taken by Mengelberg (Pristine PASC 511) and Stock (PASC 684), as well as smaller ones imposed by Stokowski, like the lead-in to the final peroration in the fourth movement. A similar aesthetic is evident in the "Pathétique", which dates from Ormandy's first recording session with the Philadelphians in December, 1936 (with the first and last sides remade a month later). Ormandy would go on to re-record these two symphonies four more times over his long career, in increasingly more expansive readings.

The arrangement Ormandy made of a short, atmospheric scene from Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, *Christmas Eve*, begins with music reminiscent of the Eastern Orthodox hymn Tchaikovsky used to open his *1812* Overture. No coupling for this side was recorded at the time, so it has remained unissued until now.

Ormandy's Philadelphia recordings of Russian repertoire during this period are sparse; the only other work taken down in the studio was Lucien Cailliet's transcription of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* (already reissued on PASC 444). To conclude our program, we turn to a previously unpublished live performance. On the same Easter Sunday that Marian Anderson's historic recital on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial captured the attention of American radio listeners, Ormandy and his Philadelphians offered a broadcast concert on NBC's "Magic Key of RCA" program, concluding with a blazing performance of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Russian Easter Overture*, which had to be abridged to fit the one-hour time constraint of the program.

Mark Obert-Thorn

ormandy

and the philadelphia orchestra

the early years volume 4

tchaikovsky

symphony no. 5

symphony no. 6 'pathétique'

nutcracker suite

rimsky-korsakov

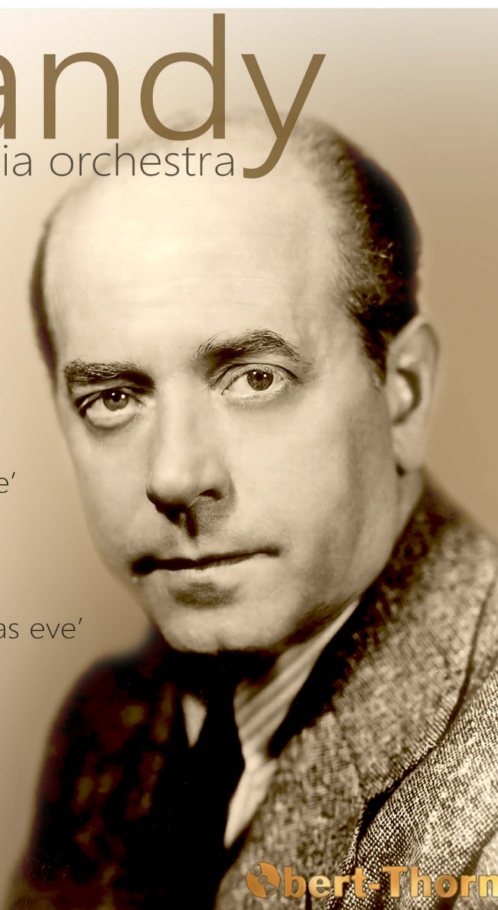
church scene from 'christmas eve'

russian easter overture

(both previously unreleased)

studio & live recordings · 1936 - 1945

bert-Thorn



disc one
(66:10)

TCHAIKOVSKY The Nutcracker - Suite, Op. 71a

1. Miniature Overture (3:30)
2. March (2:14)
3. Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairy (1:45)
4. Russian Dance (1:07)
5. Arabian Dance (3:46)
6. Chinese Dance (1:07)
7. Dance of the Flutes (2:07)
8. Waltz of the Flowers (6:32)

Recorded 10 January 1945 - Matrices: D5-RC-643/8 - First issued on RCA Victor 11-8912/4 in album M-1020

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

9. 1st mvt. - Andante - Allegro con anima (13:25)
10. 2nd mvt. - Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza (13:09)
11. 3rd mvt. - Valse: Allegro moderato (5:59)
12. 4th mvt. - Andante maestoso - Allegro vivace (11:29)

Recorded 15 March 1941 - Matrices: CS 062550-1, 062551-1A, 062552-1A, 062553-2, 062554-1A, 062555-1A, 062556-1A, 062557-1A, 062558-1A & 062559-1A - First issued on Victor 18177/81 in album M-828

disc two
(55:25)

TCHAIKOVSKY Symphony No. 6 in B minor, Op. 74, "Pathétique"

1. 1st mvt. - Adagio - Allegro non troppo (16:21)
 2. 2nd mvt. - Allegro con grazia (7:41)
 3. 3rd mvt. - Allegro molto vivace (8:20)
 4. 4th mvt. - Finale: Adagio lamentoso (8:35)
- Recorded 13 December 1936 and *9 January 1937 - Matrices: CS 03131-4A*, 03132-1, 03133-1, 03134-1, 03135-2, 03136-1, 03137-1, 03138-1, 03139-1 & 03140-2* - First issued on Victor 14264/8 in album M-337

5. RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (arr. Ormandy) Church Scene from *Christmas Eve* (3:47)

Recorded 20 December 1941 - Matrices: CS 071291-1 - Previously unpublished

6. RIMSKY-KORSAKOV Russian Easter Overture, Op. 36 (*abridged*) (10:41)

From the NBC "Magic Key of RCA" broadcast of 9 April 1939 - Previously unpublished

The Philadelphia Orchestra
conducted by Eugene Ormandy

PRISTINE
AUDIO

PASC 693

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Restoration Engineer:
Mark Obert-Thorn

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All recordings made in the
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Philadelphia

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