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# ORMANDY

## CONDUCTS SIBELIUS

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- 1 SIBELIUS *En Saga*, Op.9 (15:47)
- 2 SIBELIUS *Pohjola's Daughter*, Op.49 (11:50)
- 3 SIBELIUS *Oceanides*, Op.73 (8:24)
- 4 SIBELIUS *Tapiola*, Op.112 (18:10)
- 5 ALFVÉN *Swedish Rhapsody No.1*, Op.19 ("Midsommarvaka") (11:47)

**Eugene Ormandy**  
**The Philadelphia Orchestra**

Recorded 10th March, 1955 (1, 2) and 24th December, 1955 (3, 4) and 15th February, 1953 (5) in the Academy of Music, Philadelphia.

First issued on AL-35 (Alfvén) and ML-5249 (Sibelius)

Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Eugene Ormandy

Total duration: 65:58 ©2009 Pristine Audio.

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## THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA



# SIBELIUS

EN SAGA • POHJOLA'S DAUGHTER • OCEANIDES • TAPIOLA  
PLUS  
ALFVÉN SWEDISH RHAPSODY No. 1

 **bert-Thorn**

RECORDED 1953 & 1955

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## CONDUCTS SIBELIUS

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ORMANDY, PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

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**Eugene Ormandy's 44-year tenure with the Philadelphia Orchestra began in 1936** and became the source of much of his lasting reputation and fame. Two years after his appointment as associate conductor under Leopold Stokowski, he became its music director. (Stokowski continued to conduct some concerts in Philadelphia until 1941; he returned as a guest conductor in 1960.) As music director, Ormandy conducted from 100 to 180 concerts each year in Philadelphia. Upon his retirement in 1980, he was made conductor laureate.

Ormandy was a quick learner of scores, often conducting from memory and without a baton. He demonstrated exceptional musical and personal integrity, exceptional leadership skills, and a formal and reserved podium manner in the style of his idol and friend, Arturo Toscanini. One orchestra musician complimented him by saying: "He doesn't try to conduct every note as some conductors do." Under Ormandy's direction the Philadelphia Orchestra continued the lush, legato style originated by Stokowski and for which the orchestra was well known. Ormandy's conducting style was praised for its opulent sound, but also was criticized for supposedly lacking any real individual touch.

Ormandy's orchestral seating plan was a standard one. The violins were not divided and therefore antiphonal effects were not enhanced. The first and second violins and harps were on the left. Woodwinds were in the center, with the horns behind them. The basses, cellos, and violas were on the right, along with the rest of the brass instruments. Percussion was in the center of the back.

Ormandy was particularly noted for conducting late Romantic and early 20th century music. He particularly favored Bruckner, Debussy, Dvořák, Ravel, Richard Strauss, Tchaikovsky, and transcriptions of Bach. His performances of Beethoven, Brahms, Haydn, and Mozart were considered less successful by some critics, especially when he applied the lush, so-called "Philadelphia Sound" to them. He was particularly noted as a champion of Sergei Rachmaninoff's music, conducting the premiere of his Symphonic Dances and leading the orchestra in the composer's own recordings of three of his piano concertos in 1939-40. He also directed the American premiere of several symphonies by Dmitri Shostakovich. He made the first recording of Deryck Cooke's first performing edition of the complete Mahler Tenth Symphony, which many critics praised. He also performed a great deal of American music and gave many premières of works by Samuel Barber, Paul Creston, David Diamond, Howard Hanson, Walter Piston, Ned Rorem, William Schuman, Roger Sessions, Virgil Thompson, and Richard Yardumian.

The Philadelphia Orchestra under Ormandy's direction frequently performed outside of Philadelphia, in New York and other American cities, and undertook a number of foreign tours. During a 1955 tour of Finland, Ormandy and many of the Orchestra's members visited the elderly composer Jean Sibelius at his country estate; Ormandy was photographed with Sibelius and the picture later appeared on the cover of his 1962 stereo recording of the composer's first symphony. During a 1973 tour of the People's Republic of China, the Orchestra performed to enthusiastic audiences that had been isolated from Western classical music for many decades.

### Producer's Note

The Alfvén was transferred from its 12-inch reissue on ML-5181. I have not heard the original 10-inch release (AL-35), but on this LP, it is plagued by severe pitch instability. The work starts more than a half-tone flat, and gets progressively flatter as it goes on. Through careful pitch checking, I have corrected the playback speed so that, perhaps for the first time, it may be heard at the proper pitch throughout.

*Mark Obert-Thorn*

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ORMANDY NOTES FROM WIKIPEDIA - FULL NOTES ON THIS RECORDING CAN BE FOUND AT [WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM](http://WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM)