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RICHARD RODGERS

The Symphonic Richard Rodgers

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Producer's Note

This release presents the works of one of America's most popular and enduring music theater composers as performed by three of America's premiere symphony orchestras. On November 15, 1954, Rodgers conducted the New York Philharmonic in a benefit concert of his own music. So enthusiastic was the reaction that Columbia Masterworks head Goddard Lieberson arranged for a studio recording to be made the following month.

The first selection, "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue," had originally been choreographed by George Balanchine as the ballet finale of the 1936 Rodgers and Hart Broadway show, *On Your Toes*. (In an interesting coincidence, the lead actress and dancer of the 1939 film version of the show was Vera Zorina, who was Lieberson's wife at the time of this recording.) Rodgers leads an electrifying reading of the score, aided by such distinguished Philharmonic soloists as cellist Laszlo Varga and flutist John Wummer.

For the 1952 NBC television World War II documentary series *Victory at Sea*, Rodgers contributed twelve themes which were then expanded and orchestrated by longtime Broadway arranger Robert Russell Bennett to fill out 26 half-hour long episodes. The music proved to be quite popular in its own right: Bennett went on to conduct four LPs' worth of its soundtrack for RCA; and one of the themes became a hit song ("No Other Love") after it was given lyrics and interpolated into the 1953 Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, *Me and Juliet*.

The waltz sequence that follows is drawn mainly from the Rodgers and Hart catalog, save for the final selection from the first Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, *Oklahoma!*, and well-known orchestral excerpts from two more R&H musicals follow.

Three years to the day before Rodgers recorded his LP, light music specialist Andre Kostelanetz led the Philadelphia Orchestra "Pops" (which, according to the original liner notes, "is nothing less than the peerless Philadelphia Orchestra in holiday mood") in a recording session which included a suite from *South Pacific* and a shortened, much differently orchestrated version of "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue". (Note the use of string pizzicati in the jazzy, upbeat section toward the end, rather than the brass used on the Philharmonic recording, a choice perhaps intended to play to the strengths of the famous Philadelphia strings).

The final selection presents legendary conductor Fritz Reiner in a rare foray (on disc, at least) into American repertoire. While his dynamic reading of the *Carousel Waltz* is more than a minute faster than the composer's recording, he shows a perfect understanding of the Broadway style. Surprisingly, neither Columbia nor its successors ever reissued this recording in any long-playing format, and it is transferred here from a shellac 78 rpm disc.

Mark Obert-Thorn

FULL PROGRAMME NOTES CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM
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PRISTINE
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RODGERS

The Symphonic Richard Rodgers

Slaughter on Tenth Avenue

Victory at Sea

Richard Rodgers Waltzes

The March of the Siamese Children

The Carousel Waltz

New York Philharmonic

Richard Rodgers

*with additional music by Rodgers
conducted by Andre Kostelanetz
and Fritz Reiner*

COLUMBIA STUDIO RECORDINGS, 1946-54

Obert-Thorn

The Symphonic Richard Rodgers

1 Slaughter on Tenth Avenue (8:28)

Ballet finale from the 1936 musical *On Your Toes*

2 Victory at Sea (12:35)

Symphonic Scenario from the 1952 television documentary
(Arranged by Robert Russell Bennett)

3 Richard Rodgers Waltzes (8:51)

"Lover" from the 1932 film *Love Me Tonight*; "The Most Beautiful Girl in the World" from the 1935 Broadway musical *Jumbo*; "Falling in Love with Love" from the 1938 Broadway musical *The Boys from Syracuse*; and "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" from the 1943 Broadway musical *Oklahoma!*

4 The March of the Siamese Children (3:38)

From the 1951 Broadway musical *The King and I* (Arranged by Robert Russell Bennett)

5 The Carousel Waltz (8:02)

From the 1945 Broadway musical *Carousel*

New York Philharmonic *Richard Rodgers*

6 South Pacific (9:49)

Symphonic Scenario for Concert Orchestra (Arranged by Robert Russell Bennett)
Dites-moi; Some Enchanted Evening; Bali Ha'i; A Wonderful Guy;
Younger than Springtime; Happy Talk

7 Slaughter on Tenth Avenue (4:26)

Philadelphia Orchestra 'Pops' *Andre Kostelanetz*

8 The Carousel Waltz (6:53)

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra *Fritz Reiner*

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

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of **Richard Rodgers**

Tracks 1-5

Recorded 27 December 1954
in the Columbia 30th Street Studios
First issued on Columbia CL-810

Tracks 6 - 7

Recorded 27 December 1951
in the Academy of Music, Philadelphia
First issued on Columbia ML-4514

Track 8

Recorded 4 February 1946
in the Syria Mosque, Pittsburgh
Matrix nos.: XCO 35791/2
First issued on Columbia 12322-D

Total duration: **62:42**

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