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STOKOWSKI

CD & Digital Premieres

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Producer's Note

With the publication this month of a Music & Arts set devoted to all of Stokowski's recordings with the All-American Youth Orchestra and Hollywood Bowl Symphony Orchestra that had not yet been reissued on CD, the number of the conductor's post-acoustic era output in that category has been greatly reduced. The present release brings together all but one of the remaining such recordings, and adds a first release. (The single holdout is Stokowski's 1970 Unicorn LP of Panufnik's *Universal Prayer*, which will not enter the public domain until 2041.)

The original labels of most of the items featured here credited "Leopold Stokowski and his Symphony Orchestra", a pickup ensemble with which the conductor recorded almost exclusively for his RCA sessions from 1947 through 1953. It has always been known that during these years, it consisted of members of the New York Philharmonic (which recorded exclusively for rival label Columbia at the time), the NBC Symphony, and top New York freelancers. But what critic and discographer James H. North brought to light in an article published in the Spring, 2013 issue of the *ARSC Journal* was the actual mix of personnel: Philharmonic members and freelancers far outweighed NBC players in participation. The *Tannhäuser* selections which begin our program provide a case in point: All of the players came from the New York Philharmonic except freelance oboist Robert Bloom.

For all the various arrangements of music from *Tristan* that Stokowski recorded over his career, it is remarkable that he made only a single published version of the "standard" Prelude and Liebestod, and that only in 1973, toward the end of his career. The previously unissued recording presented here was made with the New York City Symphony, an ensemble that Stokowski created in 1944. Only the first and last sides of the set survive in test pressings, but they are enough to indicate the white-hot intensity of Stokowski's performance.

The cello soloist in Stokowski's deeply-felt Purcell transcription is most likely Leonard Rose, who was listed as the first chair at that session. The foreshortened single movement from the Tchaikovsky Fifth is a souvenir of the conductor's appearance in the 1947 film, *Carnegie Hall*, in which he led this music. The recording of the "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" which was issued on single 78 and 45 rpm discs coupled with Mozart's "Sleigh Ride" has often incorrectly been thought to come from Stokowski's 1950 recording of the entire *Nutcracker* Suite, but it predates it by a year. The celesta soloist here is future conductor Walter Hendl.

The Prokofiev selections with the NBC Symphony were originally recorded on three separate 12-inch matrices and then were dubbed to two sides. I was lucky to be able to work from undubbed vinyl test pressings for the "Infernal Scene" and "March", but had to use the sonically-compromised dubbed shellac release for "The Prince and the Princess". While the March has appeared on CD previously, it is now joined to the other movements to conclude our program of "firsts".

Mark Obert-Thorn
April 2015

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HIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA • NEW YORK CITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA • NBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Music by

PROKOFIEV
PURCELL
TCHAIKOVSKY
WAGNER

Studio recordings, 1941-1950

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STOKOWSKI CD AND DIGITAL PREMIÈRES
STOKOWSKI - VARIOUS ORCHESTRAS, 1941-1950

WAGNER Tannhäuser

- 1 Overture and Venusberg Music (23:21)
- 2 Prelude to Act 3* (9:09)

Recorded 1 and 15 February 1950 in Manhattan Center, New York City
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1066 and *WDM-1383

WAGNER Tristan und Isolde

- 3 Prelude to Act 1 (beginning) (3:55)
- 4 Liebestod (conclusion) (3:31)

Recorded 2 March 1945 in Manhattan Center, New York City
Matrix nos.: D5-RC-866-2A & 869-1A
Previously unpublished

- 5 PURCELL (trans. Stokowski) "When I am laid in earth" from *Dido and Aeneas* (5:04)

Recorded 8 August 1950 in Manhattan Center, New York City
First issued on RCA Victor LM-1875

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

2nd Mvt. - Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza (abridged) (3:52)
Recorded 26 February 1947 in the Lotos Club, New York City
Matrix nos.: D7-RC-7330 and 7331
First issued on RCA Victor 11-9574

- 7 TCHAIKOVSKY Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy from *The Nutcracker* (2:19)

Recorded 2 March 1949 in Manhattan Center, New York City
Matrix no.: D9-RB-244
First issued on RCA Victor 10-1487

PROKOFIEV The Love for Three Oranges, Op. 33

- 8 Infernal Scene (2:55)
- 9 The Prince and the Princess (4:15)
- 10 March (1:35)

Recorded 27 November 1941 in the Cosmopolitan Opera House, New York City
Matrix nos.: CS-071264-1, 071266-1R & 071265-1A
First issued on Victor 18497

Tracks 1, 2, 5 – 7: *Leopold Stokowski and his Symphony Orchestra*
Tracks 3 - 4: *New York City Symphony Orchestra · Leopold Stokowski*
Tracks 8 – 10: *NBC Symphony Orchestra · Leopold Stokowski*

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Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer:
Mark Obert-Thorn

Additional pitch stabilisation:
Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of
Leopold Stokowski in *Carnegie Hall*, 1947

Special thanks to Jim Cartwright of
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for providing the source
disc for Track 7

Total duration: 65:02

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