

Eugene Ormandy
Born: November 18, 1899 - Budapest, Hungary
Died: March 12, 1985 - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

The musical career of the outstanding Hungarian-born American conductor, Eugene Ormandy (real name, Jenő Blau), began at a surprisingly young age. He could identify symphonies at the age of 3 and could play the violin at the age of 4. When he was 5, he became the youngest pupil in the history of the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest. By the time he was 10, he was performing for the royal family of Austria-Hungary. Ormandy's early musical experiences were made possible by his father, who wanted his son to become a world-renowned violinist.

In 1936, Eugene Ormandy was asked to conduct the Budapest Orchestra, much to his father's disappointment. Ormandy once said that his father did not realize how much more important it was to be a great conductor than a great violinist.

Eugene Ormandy was invited to undertake a concert tour of the USA, playing violin, but when he arrived he discovered he had been misled and the tour had fallen through. Down to his last nickel, Ormandy happened to run into an old friend, who was also a musician from Budapest, in a New York coffee shop near Broadway. The friend advised Ormandy to call Erno Rapee, who conducted the Capitol Theater Symphony.

Following his friend's advice Eugene Ormandy auditioned for Rapee, who responded, "You are much too good to play in a movie house. You should be playing in Carnegie Hall!" Ormandy played in the Capitol Theater Symphony orchestra, then made his conducting debut in 1924. During this time, Ormandy was greatly influenced by Arturo Toscanini at the New York Philharmonic. This influence would later show in Ormandy's precision and balance with the Philadelphia Orchestra, resulting in a totally unique sound.

Later, as a member of the CBS Radio conducting staff, Eugene Ormandy became one of radio's first important conductors. His work conducting symphonic music for commercial programs was hailed for its "finish, spirit, and accuracy."

The turning point in Eugene Ormandy's career came in 1931 when he was invited to replace Toscanini, who was slated for a guest performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra, but had suddenly become ill. Although his manager, Arthur Judson, advised him against it, Ormandy chose to do it and became an overnight sensation. He would later state, when asked what was his greatest single moment, "When I replaced Toscanini to conduct this orchestra."

In 1936, Eugene Ormandy became associate conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski, then in 1938, he was promoted to permanent conductor. It was during his time with the Philadelphia Orchestra that he became known as the "modest little maestro." He created an orchestra renowned for its warm romantic sound and developed an ensemble rapport that has been compared to a good varsity team. He personally hired every one of the 104 musicians who played under his baton.

In 1970, Eugene Ormandy cried as he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom "for bringing to each performance something more precious than his great gifts--himself and the rich experiences of his life." His sound was heard throughout the world for they toured extensively. In 1973, Ormandy's orchestra became the first American symphony to visit the People's Republic of China.

Eugene Ormandy conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra for an unprecedented 44 years. He retired from full-time music-making in 1980 and became conductor emeritus. Appropriately, his last concert was with the Philadelphia Orchestra at Carnegie Hall on January 10, 1984. He died in 1985, of pneumonia, at the age of 85.



Carl Orff: CARMINA BURANA

The Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, Conductor

Janice Harsanyi, soprano / Rudolph Petrak, tenor / Harve Presnell, baritone

The Rutgers University Choir F. Austin Walter, director



Already 38 when he began composing *Carmina Burana* -- Songs from Benediktbeuern -- Orff was nearly 42 when it finally was produced. Despite the co-title "Secular Songs," he designed the work as a theater piece, a "scenic cantata" to be danced as well as sung and played. In addition to soprano, tenor, and baritone soloists, large, small, and boys' choruses, *Carmina Burana* is scored for triple winds and brass, five timpani, percussion for six players, celesta, two pianos, and strings. Bertil Wetzelsberger conducted the premiere on June 8, 1937, at Frankfurt am Main.

The texts were written mostly by goliards, itinerant scholars, and lapsed clerics during the Middle Ages -- medieval hippies, as it were, with skinheads mixed in. Preserved in a thirteenth century manuscript, these were discovered at a Bavarian monastery near the Passion Play town of Oberammergau in 1803 (*Burana* is a Latin neologism for *Beuern*, later *Bayern*: Bavaria in English). Written in low Latin, old German, and medieval French, most of the texts -- variously bawdy, sensuous, comic, mock-tragic, but usually erotic -- mock government and the church.

Carmina Burana is comprised of 26 sections in mostly major keys. A two-song choral Prolog, "Fortuna imperatrix mundi" (Fortune, Empress of the World), is about the ever-turning Wheel of Fortune that lifts man up only to cast him down. The next 22 sections are divided into three unequal parts.

First comes "Primo vere" (In springtime), nine frolicsome numbers that begin with small choir, then baritone solo, then full chorus. The concluding six are subtitled "Uf dem Anger" (On the lawn), commencing with a dance for orchestra; then a languorous waltz in for large and small choruses; another

amatory adventure for both choruses to the accompaniment of sleigh bells and plucked violas; an ABA round dance that becomes *Allegro molto* midway, and finally a brief *Allegro* introduced by brass fanfares.

Next the music moves indoors -- "In taberna" (In the tavern) -- for a quartet of secular songs in praise of gluttony and drunkenness. A besotted goliard enumerates his amatory history, followed by a swan bewailing its mortality (in the person of a high tenor) while roasting on a spit. A tipsy abbot comes forward next, leading to a seditious melee for tipsy male choristers.

The concluding third is "Cour d'amours" (The court of love), whose ten parts tend to brevity; yet even when the music seems chaste, texts or subtexts are sexual, beginning with boys' chorus and a lovelorn soprano. After them, the solo baritone voices a courtier's despair. The soprano follows with "Stetit puella," about a pretty girl in a red tunic. The baritone sings a tale of planned seduction with choral punctuation, setting up the comedic encounter of male choristers and a maiden, a cappella. A lovestruck double chorus follows with piano/percussion accompaniment. The soprano's "In trutina" is torn between love and modesty, only to be overwhelmed by an erotic concatenation of everyone (excepting roasted solo tenor), pierced by the soprano's stratospheric "Dulcissime" (most sweet one, I give my all to you). The culmination of "Cour d'amours" is "Banziflor et Helena," another paean to Venus triumphant over virtue. Finally there's the repetition of "Fortuna, imperatrix mundi."

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Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi
 1 O Fortuna 2:44
 2 Fortune Plango Vulnera 2:39
 I - Primo Vere
 3 Veris Leta Facis 3:26
 4 Omnia Sol Temperat 1:47
 5 Ecce Gratum 2:35
 Uf Dem Anger
 6 Tanz 1:36
 7 Floret Silva 3:15
 8 Chramer, Gip Die Varwe Mir 3:11
 9 Reie 1:49
 10a Swaz Hie Gat Umbe 2:31
 10b Chume, Chum, Geselle Min!
 10c Swaz Hie Gat Umbe
 11 Were Diu Wertt Alle Min 0:55

II - In Taberna
 12 Estuans Interius 2:12
 13 Olim Lacus Colueram 3:29
 14 Ego Sum Abbas 1:37
 15 In Taberna Quando Sumus 3:11
 III - Cour D'Amours
 16 Amor Volat Undique 3:01
 17 Dies, Nox Et Omnia 2:09
 18 Stetit Puella 1:49
 19 Circa Mea Pectora 2:09
 20 Si Puer Cum Puellula 1:00
 21 Veni, Veni, Venias 1:02
 22 In Trituna 2:07
 23 Tempus Est Iocundum 2:15
 24 Dulcissime 0:38
 Blanziflor Et Helena
 25 Ave Formosissima 1:48
 Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi
 26 O Fortuna 2:44

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