

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.



Famous MARCHES

SOUSA
MEYERBEER
BEETHOVEN
GOUNOD
GOULD
VERDI
BIZET
HERBERT
SHUBERT
PROKOFIEV
JOHANN STRAUSS
ELGAR

EUGENE ORMANDY

PHILADELPHIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

*"Those Fabulous Philadelphians" who perform for Eugene Ormandy (1899-1985) provide a sonic spectacular in the series of 13 marches collated from CBS archives. Derived from Columbia 4-track tape, each of the marches in turn highlights the brilliant discipline of the finest color ensemble in American orchestras of the period. Each of the first-chair men of the Philadelphia Orchestra--some originally selected by Leopold Stokowski even before the advent of Eugene Ormandy, 1938-1982--delivers a resounding individual line to the collective impact of the various works. William Kincaid's flute shines in Sousa's *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. Bernard Garfield's throaty bassoon colors the popular Gounod *Funeral March for the Marionette*, made famous via Alfred Hitchcock Presents on television. The stunning trumpet work of Samuel Krauss and his battery colleagues rocks us in Meyerbeer's *Coronation March*, Beethoven's *Turkish March*, and most unabashedly in Morton Gould's *American Salute*, with its militant cavalcade based on "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again." Essentially a glorified "Pops Program," *The Grand March* from Verdi's *Aida* will serve as well as any to illustrate the peerless, singular resonance of the Philadelphia brass with Samuel*

*Krauss against the streamlined Philadelphia strings, that choir much admired by conductors Fritz Reiner and Arturo Toscanini, and which for years defined "the Stokowski sound." The sheer élan in such staples as *March of the Toreadors* from *Carmen*, Elgar's regal *D Major Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1*, and Prokofiev's almost savage *March* from *The Love of Three Oranges* should delight any music lover while simultaneously rousing him from any "dogmatic slumbers." The bristling strings in Victor Herbert's *March of the Toys* from *Babes in Toyland* will bring back memories of *Laurel in Hardy* in full battle regalia. We can savor Anthony Gigliotti's luster in the clarinet, John de Lancie's sterling oboe, and the French horn of Mason Jones in virtually every piece. It was Richard Strauss who ironically proclaimed Eugene Ormandy the supreme conductor of Johann Strauss, so it is no slight to hear the Philadelphia's rendition of the traditional *Radetzky March*. *The Russian (or Soviet) Meadowlands March* enjoys a superb patina, especially in the strings, snares, and trumpet. Whatever your militant sentiments, they should find visceral expression in these energetically crafted performances.*

Famous Marches

MARCHES

Eugene Ormandy
Philadelphia Orchestra

- 1) SOUSA: THE STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER
- 2) MEYERBEER: CORONATION MARCH FROM "LE PROPHETE"
- 3) BEETHOVEN: TURKISH MARCH FROM "THE RUINS OF ATHENS"
- 4) GOUNOD: FUNERAL MARCH OF THE MARIONETTE
- 5) GOULD: AMERICAN SALUTE
- 6) VERDI: GRAND MARCH FROM "AIDA"
- 7) BIZET: MARCH OF THE TOREADORS FROM "CARMEN"
- 8) HERBERT: MARCH OF THE TOYS
- 9) SHUBERT: MARCHE MILITAIRE
- 10) PROKOFIEV: MARCH FROM "THE LOVE FOR THREE ORANGES"
- 11) JOHANN STRAUSS: RADEZKY MARCH
- 12) MEADOWLANDS MARCH *traditional*
- 13) ELGAR: POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE MARCH NO. 1

Source used for Transfer: Columbia 4-track tape

Producer - Thomas Frost

Venue: Academy of Music, Philadelphia, PA

Please Note: In the interest of preserving the superb sound quality of these historic recordings, they have been preserved in their original, pristine state for maximum fidelity. Transferred from commercially released, analog reel-to-reel tapes (some of which are more than 50 years old), the recordings themselves can be subject to certain "artifacts" which are an inseparable part of the original analog recording process, such as tape "hiss" or other defects, and these may be audible on certain music tracks.

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