

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.



RESPIGHI THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME THE PINES OF ROME FESTE ROMANE

The Philadelphia Orchestra
Eugene Ormandy, conducting



Pines of Rome, Italian Pini di Roma, tone poem for orchestra in four movements by Ottorino Respighi, premiered in 1924 in Rome. It is the Italian composer's tribute to scenes around his country's capital, some contemporary and some recalling the glory of the Roman Empire. It is Respighi's most frequently performed work.

Pines of Rome is the second in a series of three tone poems by Respighi known as the Roman trilogy. It was preceded by Fountains of Rome (1914-16) and followed by Roman Festivals (1929). In his own notes for Pines of Rome, Respighi wrote:

While in Fountains of Rome the composer sought to reproduce by means of tones an impression of nature, in Pines of Rome he uses nature as a point of departure, to recall memories and visions. The century-old trees which dominate so characteristically the Roman landscape become testimony for the principal events in Roman life.

Pines of Rome is structured in four movements played without pause so that the music flows uninterrupted from beginning to end. The first movement, The Pines of Villa Borghese, features rambunctious tunes that depict children at play in the pine groves. For contrast, the second movement Pines near a Catacomb, sets hymnlike phrases against a dark tapestry of mostly string tones. A lighter mood returns for the third movement, The Pines of the Janiculum, in which Respighi imagines a moonlit scene with nightingales singing. Respighi asked that a specific recording of a nightingale be played at the end of the movement. The final movement, The Pines of the Appian Way, closes the piece with a depiction of the Roman army marching into the city accompanied by trumpet fanfares and a pounding timpani beat.

Ottorino Respighi explained that he composed his symphonic poem Fontane di Roma (The Fountains of Rome), "to reproduce by means of tone an expression of nature," and to impart a feeling for the "principal events of Roman life." Based upon the sentiments and visions suggested to him by four of Rome's fountains, he noted in the score that each movement was "contemplated at the hour in which their character is most in harmony with the surrounding landscape or in which their beauty appears most impressive to the observer." The poem is remembered as his most creative turning point, as it constituted his first great success as an orchestral composer and has become his best known work.

Respighi arrived in Rome in 1913, when it was becoming Italy's most vigorous center of orchestral concert-giving, thus providing stimulation for Fontane di Roma. Prior to his arrival there, he taught at the Bologna Liceo Musicale. While in Bologna, he associated with the lega dei Cinque, an anti-establishment pressure-group, whose members included Pizzetti, Malipiero, Bastianelli, and Renzo Bossi. Although he had studied violin as a child, during this time he was more active as a piano accompanist than as a string player. When he was denied a permanent post in Bologna, he applied elsewhere, gaining a position as professor of composition at the Liceo Musicale di S Cecilia, Rome. He flourished there as a teacher. His students included Elsa Olivieri, whom he married in 1919. Rome, in its positive stage of musical development, provided

Respighi with the perfect opportunity to present Fontane di Roma, which, although not immediately accepted, eventually brought him enormous success, wealth, and reputation.

In Rome, where the water has been good since ancient times, fountains carrying public water are an attraction in nearly every square. The fountains about which Respighi wrote, as well as many others in the area, were actually created in the Baroque style in the seventeenth century by the sculptor Bernini. The first part of the poem is inspired by the "Fountain of Valle Giulia" and depicts its peaceful pastoral landscape, where cattle pass at dawn. Blasts of horns and trills from the orchestra conjure up the image of joyful tritons and water-nymphs mingling and splashing at the "Triton Fountain." The "Fountain of Trevi" at midday, with a solemn theme, assumes a triumphal character depicting Neptune's chariot passing across the water, drawn by seahorses, followed by tritons and sirens. Finally, birds sing and bells toll to close the day at the "Villa Medici Fountain."

The work had its first performance in Rome on March 11, 1917, and in the United States on February 13, 1919. Shortly thereafter, Respighi was appointed director of the now state-funded Conservatorio di S Cecilia. Fontane di Roma has become inseparably linked with two additional symphonic poems, Pini di Roma (1923-1924) and Feste romane (1929), which were intentionally written as sequels. These works continue to have international success.

As angular, dissonant, and jazz-steeped breezes swept through the musical climate of Europe following World War I, Ottorino Respighi confidently braced himself against the whipping storm with a salvo of his own. He wrote in 1932:

"We take the stand against this art which cannot have and does not possess any human content and tends to be only a mechanical experiment and a cerebral conundrum. In the musical world today there reigns the biblical babel. For 20 years the most diverse and disparate trends have been consolidated in an uninterrupted revolutionary chaos.... A logical connection must bind the past with the future, and the romanticism of yesterday must become the romanticism of tomorrow."

Respighi's steadfast sensibilities included most notably a particular sense of orchestral gigantism and real-as-life color, features abundantly on display in the Feste Romane (1928). This work, the last in the composer's trilogy of "Roman" tone poems (the previous two having celebrated the city's fountains and ancient sites) calls for, in addition to a standard configuration of instruments, a number of others intended to evoke those that might have been heard in earlier times: an organ, a mandolin, two tavolette (a sort of drum), and three buccine (a trumpet-like military instrument)

RESPIGHI

THE FOUNTAINS OF ROME

THE PINES OF ROME

FESTE ROMANE

The Philadelphia Orchestra
Eugene Ormandy, conducting

1 Pines Of Rome 20:06

2 The Fountains Of Rome 15:37

3 Feste Romane 23:06

Total Time: 58:49

Transferred from a 15ips 2 track tape
Pines & Fountains released 1958 by Columbia Records
Feste Romane recorded 1961 by Columbia Records



For more info e-mail us:
admin@highdeftapetransfers.com
or visit our website:
www.highdeftapetransfers.com

