



## STOKOWSKI

RCA VICTOR SYMPHONY

LISZT HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY No. 2 IN C-SHARP MINOR  
ENESCO ROUMANIAN RHAPSODY No. 1 IN A, Op. 11  
SMETANA THE MOLDAU • THE BARTERED BRIDE: Overture

Produced by Peter Dellheim • Recording Engineer: Robert Simpson

Smetana was truly the Poet Laureate of his country, expressing the joys and sorrows of his people, but instead of writing in a language familiar only to his countrymen, he wrote in the international language of Music. The same is true of Liszt for Hungary, and Enesco for Rumania.

Smetana was a fiery Bohemian patriot, and in the atmosphere of suspicion and danger after the attempt of freedom in the revolution of 1848 he accepted the position of conductor of the orchestra at Gothenburg in Sweden. After five years he returned to Bohemia, and his opera *The Bartered Bride* brought him instant fame. In this period of his stormy life he enjoyed the friendship of Mendelssohn, Schumann and Liszt. Smetana knew well, and loved intensely, the landscape and villages of Bohemia, and in the *Bartered Bride* overture he has pictured the robust rustic dances and the romantic beauty of the life of the simple people of his country. This music is neither folk nor classical music. It is completely original and unique in its gaiety and spontaneity—sparkling, witty, spontaneous, vital.

In addition to his operas, Smetana composed a string quartet called *Aus meinem Leben* and a cycle of symphonic poems called *Má Vlast (My Country)*. One of the most delightful is *Vltava or The Moldau*. Smetana wrote a program to *Vltava*, describing how the river began from two springs, one warm, the other cold, that flowed together into a brook which later became the Moldau. He paints with tones, rhythms, melodic lines and orchestral textures the birth of the river, beginning as a narrow stream in the mountains, flowing through the forests of Sumava where we hear the horns of huntsmen, flowing past the colorful scene of a peasant wedding, followed by a mysterious moonlight scene of water-nymphs dancing. The river dashes violently over the rapids of St. John and arrives at the place of its greatest breadth, passing the great city of Praha with its ancient monuments. We hear the noble, chivalric Vytsehrad motive, evoking memories of Bohemia's past glories, and then the river fades into the distance.

Smetana's friend Liszt had similar deep feeling for Hungary, the country of his birth. Although Liszt traveled constantly, he loved the typical music of Hungary, with its savage impetuosity and constant change of feeling and tempo and rhythm. He admired the subtle, flexible rhythm of the Hungarian gypsies, and in his Hungarian rhapsodies fused all these tonal elements into a lasting form. His Second Hungarian

Rhapsody begins in slow broad rhythm, followed by quick impulsive tempi. This follows the eighteenth-century tradition of the *Verbunkoche*, danced by soldiers in uniforms with swords and spears—beginning slow and ending fast with a *Friska*. Another characteristic is the virtuoso treatment of the cadenzas for clarinet and flute, with the rubato improvisation beloved by the gypsies of Hungary. The general form is similar to the *Czardas (Tschardache)*, including the *alla-zoppa* or syncopated rhythm.

Enesco is another artist who traveled constantly and yet always was dreaming of his native Rumania. In all music he is unique in that he excelled in four musical media—as violinist, pianist, conductor and composer. His *Rapsodie* is original music in which the themes have the picturesque quality of the folk music of his country, but yet have the authentic direct character of inspired creation. Like Liszt he enjoyed the freedom and improvisational talents of the gypsies, and has introduced the long glissando downwards from the traditional *Doyna* of the Rumanian shepherd's song. He also gives the impression of the primitive instruments of Rumania in one passage.

Smetana was a lover of Nature and the folklore of Bohemia. Liszt was an aristocrat, cultured, a citizen of the world. Enesco was a versatile artist, shy, retiring, with a noble character. But these three personalities, so different, had one thing in common: love of country and the gift of expressing the passions, nostalgia and capricious impulses of their compatriots through the international language of Music.

Enesco

## STOKOWSKI

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# Rhapsodies

Liszt HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY No. 2  
Enesco ROUMANIAN RHAPSODY No. 1  
Smetana THE MOLDAU/"THE BARTERED BRIDE" OVERTURE

Leopold Anthony Stokowski, one of the true conducting luminaries of the twentieth century, was born in London in 1882. His father was Polish, his mother Irish, but he was raised as an Englishman. His famous, vaguely foreign, accent somehow appeared later in his life. The young Stokowski was a precocious musician, and as a child learned to play the violin, piano, and organ with apparently little effort. At the age of 13, he became the youngest person to have been admitted to the Royal College of Music.

By 18, Stokowski had been appointed organist and choirmaster at St. James', Piccadilly. He attended Queen's College, Oxford, receiving a Bachelor of Music degree in 1903. He moved to the United States in 1905, but returned to Europe each summer for further musical studies in Berlin, Munich, and Paris. When a conductor fell ill in Paris in 1908, he made his debut as an emergency substitute. The impression he made led to a position with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in which he quickly achieved notable success. However, a more tempting prospect faced him when he was asked to take over the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1912. It was during his long and fruitful association with this ensemble that Stokowski established himself as one of the leading musicians of his day.

Stokowski gave the orchestra an entirely new sound, popularly known as the "Philadelphia Sound" or the "Stokowski Sound." Its foundation was a luxuriant, sonorous tone and an exacting attention to color. He pioneered the use of "free" bowing, which produced a rich, homogenized string tone. A relentless innovator, Stokowski experimented with orchestral seating, famously lining up the string basses across the rear of the stage and, in an early instance, massing all the violins on the left side of the orchestra and

the cellos on the right. He also had spotlights directed on his hands and his impressively prominent hair to enhance his dramatic, theatrical aura. One of the first modern conductors to give up the use of the baton, Stokowski employed graceful, almost hypnotic, hand gestures to work his magic.

Indeed, Stokowski was the first conductor to become a true superstar. He was regarded as something of a matinee idol, an image aided by his appearances in such films as the Deanna Durbin spectacle *One Hundred Men and a Girl* (1937) and, most famously, as the flesh-and-blood leader of the Philadelphia Orchestra in Walt Disney's animated classic *Fantasia* (1940). In one memorable instance, he appears to be talking to the cartoon figure of Mickey Mouse, the "star" of a sequence featuring Dukas' *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. In a clever parody, when the slumbering apprentice dreams of himself directing the forces of Nature with the masterful sweep of his hands, Disney artists copied Stokowski's own conducting gestures.

Following his tenure in Philadelphia, Stokowski directed several other ensembles, including the All-American Youth Orchestra (which he founded), the NBC Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic (both as co-conductor), the Houston Symphony Orchestra (1955-1960), and the American Symphony Orchestra, which he organized in 1962. He continued to make concert appearances and studio recordings of both standard works and unusual repertoire (including the first performance and recording of Charles Ives' decades-old *Symphony No. 4*) well into his nineties. He made his last public appearance as conductor in Venice in 1975, remaining active in the recording studio through 1977. He died on September 13, 1977, in Nether Wallop, Hampshire, England.

# Rhapsodies

Liszt HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY No. 2  
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Smetana THE MOLDAU/"THE BARTERED BRIDE" OVERTURE

- 1 Hungarian Rhapsody No.2 In C-Sharp Minor 8:41**
- 2 Roumanian Rhapsody No.1 In A Op.11 11:33**
- 3 Ma Vlast - The Moldau 12:21**
- 4 The Bartered Bride - Overture 7:04**

Engineer – Robert Simpson    Producer – Peter Dellheim  
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