

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.



THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA • EUGENE ORMANDY, CONDUCTOR

Tchaikovsky • Symphony No.7



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's Symphony in E-flat, was commenced after the Symphony No. 5, and was intended initially to be the composer's next (i.e. sixth) symphony. Tchaikovsky abandoned this work in 1892, only to reuse the first movement in the single-movement Third Piano Concerto, Op. 75, first performed and published after his death in 1895. Two other movements were reworked for piano and orchestra by Sergei Taneyev as the Andante and Finale, which was published as Tchaikovsky's Op. posth. 79 in 1897.

Between 1951 and 1955, Soviet composer Semyon Bogatyrev reconstructed the symphony from Tchaikovsky's sketches and various re-workings. This version was premiered on February 7, 1957, in Moscow by the Moscow Region Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Mikhail Terian, and was published by the State Music Publishers in Moscow in 1961. It was first recorded by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy in 1962, soon after they gave the U.S. premiere of the work (February 16, 1962).

The Bogatyrev reconstruction follows the traditional four-movement pattern:

Allegro brillante (in E flat major)

This movement was used for the Third Piano Concerto, Op. posth. 75.

Andante (in B-flat major)

Bogatyrev used the Andante from the Andante and Finale for Piano and Orchestra, Op. posth. 79, which had been constructed from Tchaikovsky's sketches by Sergei Taneyev. More recently, it was reused as the slow movement of a projected Cello Concerto.

Scherzo: Vivace assai (in E-flat minor)

Perceiving that Tchaikovsky would have written a scherzo for this symphony, Bogatyrev orchestrated this piece from Tchaikovsky's Scherzo-Fantaisie, Op. 72, No. 10.

Finale: Allegro maestoso (in E-flat major)

Bogatyrev used the Finale from the Andante and Finale.

Bogatyrev Reconstruction

A reconstruction of the original symphony from the sketches and various reworkings was accomplished during 1951-1955 by the Soviet composer Semyon Bogatyrev, who brought the symphony into finished, fully orchestrated form and issued the score as Tchaikovsky's "Symphony No 7 in E-flat major."

Bogatyrev utilized primary sources, including Tchaikovsky's initial rough sketches, the full orchestral manuscript of about half of the first movement, and the manuscript and printed score of the 3rd Piano Concerto. The one-movement piano concerto was fully orchestrated by the composer, while the second and fourth movements were later orchestrated by Sergei Taneyev, Tchaikovsky's friend and fellow composer.

While the first movement sketches and completed version for piano and orchestra were essentially complete, Bogatyrev found that only 81 of the 204 bars of the second movement were in Tchaikovsky's hand. Here he utilized Tchaikovsky's piano score for the Andante for Piano and Orchestra, Taneyev's orchestration, and a very rough draft by Tchaikovsky.

For the third movement, Bogatyrev followed the insistence of the composer's brother Modest that this should be a scherzo, and orchestrated a scherzo from Tchaikovsky's Op. 72 piano pieces, as well as more sketches by the composer. Remarkably, the piece fits neatly between the second and fourth movements and even includes final chords that are echoed by the beginning of the fourth movement.

The reconstruction of the fourth movement was based on the piano score for the Finale for Piano and Orchestra, the composer's sketches, and the published orchestration by Taneyev.

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1. Allegro brillante 12:03
2. Andante 11:11
3. Scherzo, Vivace assai 6:33
4. Allegro maestoso 7:36

Recorded by Columbia Records 1962 • Transferred from a 4-track tape



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