

Guild

Guild GmbH
Switzerland

GHCD 2403

© 2013 Guild GmbH
© 2013 Guild GmbH

Nikolai RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (1844-1908)

Scheherazade, Op.35

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | I. The Sea and Sinbad's Ship | 9:15 |
| | (Largo e maestoso – Lento – Allegro non troppo – Tranquillo) | |
| 2 | II. The Kalendar Prince | 11:02 |
| | (Lento – Andantino – Allegro molto – Vivace scherzando
– Moderato assai – Allegro molto ed animato) | |
| 3 | III. The Young Prince and The Young Princess | 9:55 |
| | (Andantino quasi allegretto – Pochissimo più mosso
– Come prima – Pochissimo più animato) | |
| 4 | IV. Festival at Baghdad – The Sea – The Ship Breaks
against a cliff surmounted by a Bronze Horseman | 12:32 |
| | (Allegro molto – Lento – Vivo – Allegro non troppo e maestoso
– Tempo come I) | |

Pyotr TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 5 | Fantasy Overture 'Romeo and Juliet' | 19:41 |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------|

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI

Recorded 'live' – Academy of Music, Philadelphia, 6 February 1962 – STEREO

Guild
HISTORICAL

**LEOPOLD
STOKOWSKI**

**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV
Scheherazade**

**TCHAIKOVSKY
Romeo and Juliet**

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
Academy of Music, Philadelphia

6 February 1962





A GUILD HISTORICAL RELEASE

- Master source: Recordings from the collection of Enno Riekens
- Remastering: Peter Reynolds
- Final master preparation: Reynolds Mastering, Colchester, England
- Photographs: Edward Johnson
- Design: Paul Brooks, Design and Print, Oxford
- Art direction: Guild GmbH
- Executive co-ordination: Guild GmbH

- **Guild GmbH, Moskau 314b, 8262 Ramsen, Switzerland**
Tel: +41 (0) 52 742 85 00 Fax: +41 (0) 52 742 85 09 (Head Office)
- **Guild GmbH, PO Box 5092, Colchester, Essex CO1 1FN, Great Britain**
- **e-mail: info@guildmusic.com World WideWeb-Site: <http://www.guildmusic.com>**

WARNING: Copyright subsists in all recordings under this label. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording thereof in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. In the United Kingdom licences for the use of recordings for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performances Ltd., 1 Upper James Street, London W1F 9EE.

this great orchestra played for their one-time long-serving music director to their highest standard. When Stokowski first conducted the works of Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov in Philadelphia, fifty years before, both works were relatively new to America: half a century later, through the range of expression and inherent vitality Stokowski brought to this music, it must have been as if the intervening years had simply fallen away.

© Robert Matthew-Walker, 2013

Anyone studying the long career of Leopold Stokowski cannot but be astonished first at its range, and then impressed by the commensurate depth of his musicianship. To the superficial listener, however, his appearance in Walt Disney's *Fantasia* with Mickey Mouse and in other Hollywood dramatic movies, his experimentation with the presentation of classical music in the concert hall – the orchestra playing virtually in the dark, reseating of orchestral players, spoken introductions – and in the recording studio (he made the first-ever commercial electrical orchestral recordings in April 1925, and supervised several other later technological innovations), together with his occasionally colourful private life made public, such factors - and others – would appear to have handed a loaded gun to his critics.

Stokowski's life never aspired to being that of an ascetic monk, and getting on for 40 years after his death the range of his achievements as a conductor is more widely appreciated than it may have been during his lifetime – aside from those who always recognised the extent of his genius.

This is not to claim that every performance he gave was in the highest class – but it was always based upon the highest artistic principles as he saw them. André Previn's appearance on the 'Morecambe and Wise Show', Jascha Heifetz appearing with Jack Benny, James Galway with the Muppets or Yehudi Menuhin playing with Stephane Grappelli – these not only reveal a lighter side to life but also show to the general public the humanity of the finest classical musicians – removing, at a stroke, the common misconception of classical music's 'elitism', itself an almost psychotic denial of the essential universality of art.

It was such a broad-based attitude to life and art that impelled Stokowski throughout his career. His birth and early life virtually guaranteed that. He was of mixed Irish-Polish extraction, born in London in 1882 into a broadly Protestant family. Growing up, comfortable within his heritage, his gifts led him, aged just 13, to enter the Royal College of Music in London where his progress was exceptional. At 18, he became a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists (one of the youngest ever to receive the distinction), to add to his RCM achievements and concurrent degree from Oxford University, supported by Sir Hubert Parry.

The young man's ambitions were broad and were soon being fulfilled. In 1905, he became music director of St Bartholomew's Church in New York City, having been chosen (it seems) by the rector



STOKOWSKI

on



LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI

BRAHMS
Symphony No.1

WAGNER/STOKOWSKI
Symphonic
Synthesis from
'Tristan und Isolde'

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
Academy of Music, Philadelphia
23 February 1960



STOKOWSKI

THE BLUE DANUBE WALTZ
AND
MUSIC FOR STRINGS

RACHMANINOFF
TCHAIKOVSKY
BOCCHERINI
PAGANINI
BORODIN
PURCELL
GLUCK

LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI
AND HIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Recorded 1957-1958

of the church who had come to London to seek a suitable person for the post. At the age of 23, therefore, Stokowski made his first transatlantic crossing, to the land where he would win fame as a great conductor. Within ten years, by 1915, he served as music director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and, in 1912, he was appointed chief conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra: that same year, back in London, he had given his first concert with the London Symphony Orchestra (a programme he would repeat 60 years later), and in September, 1910, he had attended the world premiere of Mahler's Eighth Symphony in Munich conducted by the composer – four-and-a-half years later, Stokowski gave the United States premiere of the Symphony in Philadelphia, with over 1,000 musicians taking part.

The years 1905-15 were remarkable in Stokowski's life: his fame had been established without radio or television, without newsreels or recordings of any kind, and without air travel. It was an astonishing achievement, underpinned throughout by his innate and consummate musicianship. Even today, a century later, the speed at which Stokowski's reputation was established remains remarkable, but is an indication of the inherent nature of the country in which it took place, for the United States was, in the first decades of the 20th-century, transformed into a world power for the first time, epitomised by the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor, 'the golden door', through which all immigrants metaphorically passed.

The rate of transformation of the USA at that time was accelerated by the vast number of immigrants who had left their homelands: from 1905-15 over 11 million people had left Europe for America – by 1915 more than one in ten of the population had actually been born outside of the USA. By that time Stokowski had been Music Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra for three seasons, transforming the Orchestra's fortunes. His programmes were remarkable for the catholicity of their content, and whilst he always championed new music and unjustly neglected scores, he never abandoned the masters, amongst whom was Tchaikovsky, who had died in St Petersburg in November 1893 at the age of 53.

On April 19th 1891 Tchaikovsky sailed to America from Le Havre for New York on board the ship *La Bretagne*. The trip took eight days, and during the following month Tchaikovsky conducted in several cities in the north-eastern USA, most famously at the opening of New York's

Carnegie Hall. Following those inaugural concerts, Tchaikovsky visited Baltimore and Washington and arrived in Philadelphia on May 18, where he conducted his First Piano Concerto with soloist Adele aus der Ohe, in the city's theatre, before departing for New York that same evening. Adele aus der Ohe was a remarkable female pianist – German-born and a pupil of Liszt, she played the Tchaikovsky First Concerto under the composer's baton throughout his American tour, and was the soloist at the composer's final concert in 1893, when in the second half he conducted the premiere of his *Pathétique* Symphony.

The orchestra Tchaikovsky conducted in Philadelphia, however, was not the organisation to which Stokowski had been appointed in 1912: the body we know as the Philadelphia Orchestra had been founded in 1900 by Fritz Scheel, but there can be no doubt that many older Philadelphian concert-goers would have remembered Tchaikovsky's visit to the 'City of Brotherly Love' two decades before Stokowski first conducted the composer's fantasy-overture *Romeo and Juliet* in his first season in Philadelphia. During Stokowski's tenure in Philadelphia, he conducted this work more than any other by Tchaikovsky – programming it in 16 concert seasons there, making the first American recording of the work in 1928. On that recording, as here, we can hear the conductor's reconstruction of the closing bars, ending in quiet tragedy, as does Shakespeare's play.

Rimsky-Korsakov's Symphonic Suite *Scheherazade* was another of Stokowski's most frequently performed and recorded interpretations. The work was completed in 1888, and soon travelled throughout the orchestral world: it received its American premiere in the 1896-7 season in Boston under Emil Paur, and when Stokowski brought it to Philadelphia (not the first time the city heard the score – Fritz Scheel had introduced it in the 1906-7 season) he had already conducted it in Cincinnati. Stokowski was to programme *Scheherazade* on no fewer than 22 occasions between 1912-34 in Philadelphia, recording it commercially five times (twice with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and three times in London with the Philharmonia, London Symphony and Royal Philharmonic orchestras), preceded by two abridged movements in the acoustic process, recorded in Philadelphia in 1919 and 1921.

And so, in February 1962, during a return visit to Philadelphia, the performances of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Scheherazade* could be likened to a meeting of old friends, and we can sense that