

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791)

- 1 The Marriage of Figaro** Overture 4:12
PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
12 February 1960 – 'Live' broadcast from the Academy of Music, Philadelphia STEREO

Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor K.466

- 2** I. Allegro 14:52 **4** III. Allegro assai 7:46
3 II. Romanze 7:53

MARIA ISABELLA DE CARLI, piano

THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA

31 August 1969 – Non-commercial 'souvenir' recording made in the ballroom of the Hotel Reine Victoria, St. Moritz, Switzerland STEREO

- 5 Sleigh Ride** (German Dance No. 3, K.605) 3:06
LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI AND HIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
2 March 1949 – RCA recording made in New York and issued on LM-1238

Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor K.491

- 6** I. Allegro 13:42 **8** III. Allegretto 8:21
7 II. Larghetto 7:07

EZRA RACHLIN, piano

HOUSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

24 October 1960 – 'Live' broadcast from the Music Hall, Houston

- 9 Turkish March** (*Rondo alla Turca* from Piano Sonata No. 11 in A, K.331) 2:44
(Orchestrated by Stokowski)
NBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
9 February 1955 – RCA recording made in New York and issued on LM-2042 but labelled as being by 'Leopold Stokowski and his Symphony Orchestra'



LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI

MOZART

Piano Concerto No.20

Piano Concerto No.24

The Marriage of Figaro
Overture

Sleigh Ride

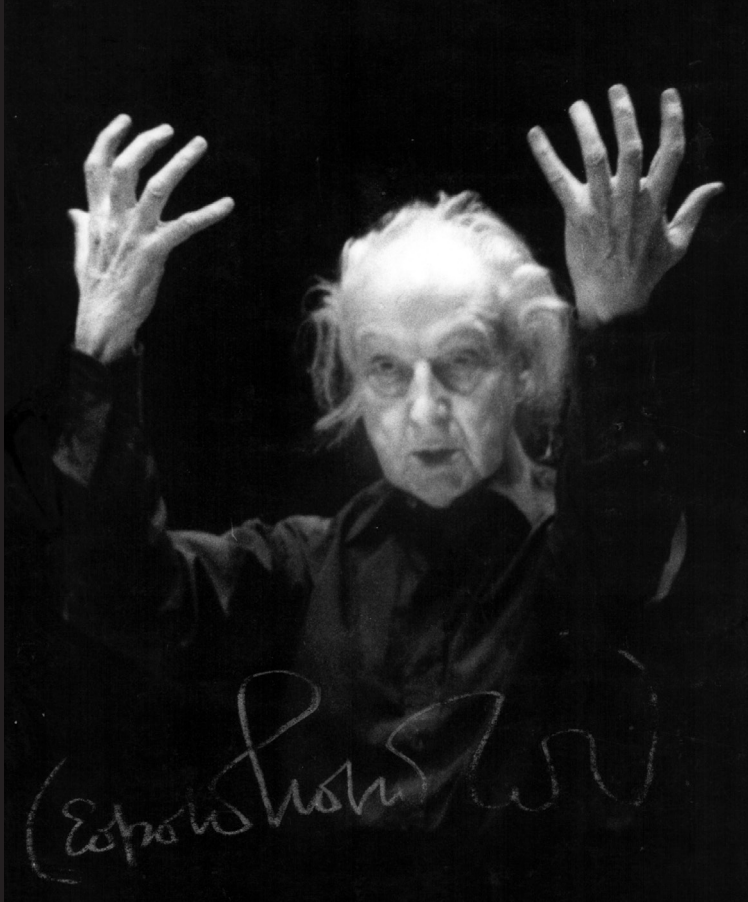
Turkish March

MARIA ISABELLA DE CARLI
EZRA RACHLIN

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
YOUTH ORCHESTRA

HOUSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
NBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Recorded: 1949-1969



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

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STOKOWSKI

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HISTORICAL



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HISTORICAL

LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI

BRAHMS
Symphony No. 1

**WAGNER/
STOKOWSKI**
Symphonic
Synthesis from
'Tristan und Isolde'

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
Academy of Music, Philadelphia
23 February 1960



Guild
HISTORICAL

LEOPOLD STOKOWSKI

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV
Scheherazade

TCHAIKOVSKY
Romeo and Juliet

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
Academy of Music, Philadelphia
6 February 1962

GHCD 2403

Guild
HISTORICAL

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

GHCD 2392

In 1905, Leopold Stokowski, then a young man of 23, left London, where he had been born and largely educated, and where he had been organist and choirmaster of St James's Church in Piccadilly, for the United States, preparing to take up a similar position at St Bartholomew's church in Manhattan.

In our earlier notes for the on-going series of Leopold Stokowski recordings on the Guild label, we have outlined the demographic history of the USA in the first decade or so of the 20th-century, and how Stokowski found himself to be but one of many millions of Europeans who settled in America during that period, some to escape pogroms and other privations, others – like him – to take up offers of employment, all seeking a new life in the New World.

Stokowski's emigration to the USA was not, therefore, at all unusual; and neither was that of the family of Ezra Rachlin, who had been born to Jewish immigrant parents on the other side of the north American continent in 1915, in Hollywood, California. Like Stokowski, Rachlin's musicality manifested itself in early childhood; the boy was particularly drawn to the piano. His family took him to Germany to receive a fine musical education, and they returned to the United States in 1927, when the 11-year-old first met Stokowski, having been chosen as piano soloist for the first of the conductor's children's concerts in Philadelphia.

Rachlin received advanced tuition from Leopold Godowsky and Josef Lhévinne and enrolled at the Curtis Institute as a pupil of Josef Hoffmann. Following his graduation, his career in America (and Europe) grew gradually, to the point where in the late 1930s he turned to conducting, returning to Curtis to study under Fritz Reiner. He eventually became guest conductor of the Houston Symphony at Stokowski's invitation, during which time Rachlin had settled in Texas as chief conductor of the Austin and Fort Worth Symphony Orchestras.

But Rachlin never abandoned the piano, his association with the Houston Symphony naturally drawing him further into Stokowski's orbit. In 1960, as we hear on this CD, Rachlin was the soloist in Mozart's C minor Piano Concerto K.491, with Stokowski on the podium in his sixth season as the orchestra's Music Director.

In January and February, 1915, then in charge of the Philadelphia Orchestra (after three seasons in a similar position in Cincinnati), Stokowski programmed Mozart's two Piano Concertos in a

minor key: the D minor K.466 with Ossip Gabrilowitsch and K.491 with Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler as respective soloists. This was adventurous programming, for at the time Mozart's piano concertos were hardly known in the United States (or much in Europe, for that matter); it was the Austrian-born (naturalised American) Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler who had given the US premiere of K.491 a few years earlier in the 1910-11 season with the Chicago Symphony under Frederick Stock. A pupil in Vienna of Theodor Leschetizsky, she was described in that city by no less than Eduard Hanslick as 'a powerful master of the keyboard'. She was to die in 1927, so it is unlikely she actually met the young Ezra Rachlin, but we may wonder if she left a passing memory for Stokowski to mention to the soloists we hear on this disc, 45 and 54 years later, respectively, or if he beguiled them with the fact that Mozart's great librettist, Lorenzo Da Ponte, had died and was buried in New York in 1838, probably not so far from St Bartholomew's, the church which had first brought the conductor to the United States.

Such was Stokowski's active longevity that at times we have to remind ourselves that it began well over 100 years ago, ending a little over thirty years ago – the latter date being well within living memory for many music-lovers – making Stokowski a musician who saw Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897 and witnessed Mahler conducting the premiere of his Eighth Symphony in Munich 13 years later, yet was to hear John Williams's score for *Star Wars* a few months before he died. Whilst Stokowski's appointments as music director of several major American symphony orchestras were legendary – at Cincinnati, Philadelphia and Houston – the great conductor's energy and commitment to young people was no less profound.

Whilst in Philadelphia, in the late 1920s and early 1930s – as we have noted – Stokowski began a series of 'Youth Concerts' for younger audiences, which are still continued by the orchestra and were subsequently taken up by other American orchestras. When his contract with the Philadelphia Orchestra expired in 1940, Stokowski immediately formed the All-American Youth Orchestra, one of the first (if not the first) such organizations in the world, the ages of the members ranging from 18 to 25. Almost at once, Stokowski took the All-American Youth Orchestra on tour, to South America in 1940 and across North America in 1941, making a number of commercial recordings with them for Columbia, but the Orchestra was obliged to disband when America entered the war later in 1941 and the young men became eligible for military conscription.

When Stokowski returned to Europe some years after the end of World War II, his association with youth orchestras may have been put on hold, so to speak, but his tenure at Houston, from 1955-61, saw the Texas orchestra expand its children's and young peoples' concerts significantly, so that when in the late 1960s the British team of Blyth Major, Music Director of the Midland Youth Orchestra, and Lionel Bryer, Chairman of the International Youth Foundation, together with Bryer's wife Joy, conceived the idea of bringing together members of youth orchestras from across the world to promote international understanding, Leopold Stokowski readily accepted their invitation to conduct the final concert of what was called the International Festival of Youth Orchestras, in St Moritz in Switzerland.

The rehearsals and concerts took place between August 18-30, 1969, in the large ballroom of the Grand Hotel Kurhaus in St Moritz, the players participating having been drawn from more than a dozen international youth orchestras. Stokowski had described the International Festival of Youth Orchestras as "ideal, far-seeing and thrilling" and willingly flew to St Moritz where he inspired the most talented young musicians in their rehearsals and final concert together. His programme consisted of his own transcription of Bach's Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, Beethoven's 7th Symphony, Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*, and the Mozart Piano Concerto heard here. It was also recorded the following day as part of a 'souvenir' LP, a memento of a great occasion spent by the young players with an illustrious Maestro.

Not quite nine years, therefore, after Ezra Rachlin had performed Mozart's Piano Concerto K.491 with Stokowski in Houston, Stokowski directed his only other surviving recording of a Mozart piano concerto, with the young Italian pianist Maria Isabella De Carli as the soloist. She was based in Milan – just 2½ hours from St Moritz by train - and has continued to have distinguished careers as professor at the city's Giuseppe Verdi Conservatoire and as a much-admired concert and recording pianist and harpsichordist. Thus, on this one disc, we can hear two exceptionally rare recordings of the great conductor in Mozart concertos, together with a group of other recordings of him conducting three of Mozart's shorter purely orchestral works, covering no fewer than five different orchestras over a twenty-year period from Leopold Stokowski's long and illustrious career.