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Eugene Ormandy Appreciation Day, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Eugene Ormandy was a consummate musician and a masterly conductor, as well as a father figure and an inspiration to generations of gifted American musicians.

As music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra for 44 years, he brought that ensemble to a point of such polish and perfection that many esteemed it the very greatest in the world. No one could mistake the "Philadelphia Sound," a perfectly pitched and artfully blended miracle of sonorities that was at once lush and supple. Virgil Thomson, the noted critic, has described Ormandy's goal as "beauty of sound and virtuosity of execution . . . at the service of the music in complete humility."

Maestro Ormandy achieved that goal by dint of patience, persuasion, and example. He persuaded his musicians to do it his way without taunts or tantrums. They knew how much he loved the music, how much he loved the audiences, and how much he loved them. They could not fail him—they did not. And he never stinted in giving his musicians the credit. "They play," he said once "as one great Stradivarius, not as individual musicians."

It was an accurate description and a supreme tribute from a child prodigy whose musical genius first found expression on the violin—at the age of three! Born in Budapest on November 18, 1899, Eugene Ormandy came to the United States in 1921. His first job was as a violinist with the orchestra of the Capitol motion picture theater in New York City. Soon he became its conductor. Then, after a brief stint with the Minneapolis Symphony, Ormandy succeeded the legendary Leopold Stokowski as director of the Philadelphia Orchestra. It would be his true home for the rest of his life. Under the magic of his baton, conductor and orchestra entered the musical pantheon of the United States and of the world.

Eugene Ormandy brought widespread acclaim to his adopted nation, which he loved with the passion of a patriot. He served as an ambassador of goodwill through the Philadelphia Orchestra's tours of China, the Soviet Union, South America, Europe, and Japan.

To commemorate these magnificent and enduring contributions of Eugene Ormandy to the rich cultural traditions of the United States, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 174, has authorized and requested the President to declare the anniversary of the birth of Eugene Ormandy as "Eugene Ormandy Appreciation Day" and called upon the American people to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby declare November 18, 1985, Eugene Ormandy Appreciation Day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of November, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan