

Richard Strauss

Four Last Songs (Spring) *Renee Fleming* 3:45

Horn Concerto No.1 In E Flat Major Op11 *Barry Tuckwell, RPO & Ashkenazy* 15min

Romance for Cello & Orchestra *Cello Alexander Rudin, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland & Gerhard Markson* 10min

String Quartet (I. Allegro) *Enso String Quartet* 8 min

Excerpt from 2001

Also Sprach Zarathustra Op30 *Violin David Frisina, The Los Angeles Philharmonic Orch. & Zubin Mehta* 32 min

Richard Georg Strauss 11 June 1864 – 8 September 1949) was a leading German composer of the late Romantic and early modern eras. He is known for his operas, which include *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Elektra*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *Salomé*; his Lieder, especially his Four Last Songs; his tone poems, including *Don Juan*, *Death and Transfiguration*, *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, *Ein Heldenleben*, *Symphonia Domestica*, and *An Alpine Symphony*; and other instrumental works such as *Metamorphosen* and his Oboe Concerto. Strauss was also a prominent conductor in Western Europe and the Americas, enjoying quasi-celebrity status as his compositions became standards of orchestral and operatic repertoire.

Strauss, along with Gustav Mahler, represents the late flowering of German Romanticism after Richard Wagner, in which pioneering subtleties of orchestration are combined with an advanced harmonic style.

Four Last Songs (Spring) Renee Fleming 3:45

The Four Last Songs for soprano and orchestra are amongst the final completed works of Richard Strauss. They were composed in 1948 when the composer was 84.

The songs are "Frühling" (Spring), "September", "Beim Schlafengehen" (When Falling Asleep) and "Im Abendrot" (At Sunset). The title Four Last Songs was provided posthumously by Strauss's friend Ernst Roth, who published the four songs as a single unit in 1950 after Strauss's death.

In shadowy crypts
I dreamt long
of your trees and blue skies,
of your fragrance and birdsong.

Now you appear
in all your finery,
drenched in light
like a miracle before me.

You recognize me,
you entice me tenderly.
All my limbs tremble at
your blessed presence!

Horn Concerto No.1 In E Flat Major Op11 *Barry Tuckwell, RPO & Ashkenazy 15min*

In 1882–3 Richard Strauss wrote his Horn Concerto No. 1 in E-flat major, Op. 11, in two versions, one for piano accompaniment and one with an orchestra (the horn part is the same). The horn concerto has become the most frequently performed horn concerto written in the 19th Century.

At the age of 18 whilst a philosophy student at Munich University, having recently completed his Violin Concerto and Cello Sonata, Strauss wrote his first horn concerto. His father Franz Strauss was one of the leading horn players of his day, and the fact that Richard grew up with the sound of the horn in his house led to his exploration of the great potential of the horn as both a solo and orchestral instrument. The concerto was the first substantial piece he chose to write for the horn.

The early public performances would have been made using the valved F single horn, which was indicated in the score in later editions (although the orchestral horns were still specified as E-flat natural horns). In practice, all of the modern performances and recordings are played on the valved F double-horn which was developed at the end of the 19th century. When the concerto was written, the use of natural horns was still common. Strauss himself went on to fully exploit the possibilities of the valved horn in his tone poems starting with *Don Juan*, written just a few years later.

The concerto is in three movements (Allegro, Andante, Allegro) which are played continuously and lasts about 15-18 minutes. The composition is typical of Strauss' music at this time in being Romantic in style, showing the

influence of Mendelssohn. The orchestral version uses a classical orchestra: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, and strings.

Romance for Cello & Orchestra Alexander Rudin, Lars Andes Tomter, Alan Smale, National Symphony

A further composition for the Cello, with orchestral accompaniment, also belongs to this period, a most attractive Romanze which has unfortunately remained unpublished. It is a gentle 3/8 movement, similar in type to the slow movements of the violin and Horn concertos, both of which precede it by date of composition.

String Quartet (I. Allegro) Enso String Quartet 8 min

The Quartet is classical in form. The first movement, in the expected tripartite structure, allows the second violin to introduce the second subject, and after a conventional development the material returns again in a recapitulation. The second movement is a scherzo, with an A minor trio, and the B minor slow movement entrusts the first statement of the principal theme to the cello, followed by the first violin. The quartet ends with a movement that clearly owes much to Haydn.

Also Sprach Zarathustra Op30 David Frisina, The Los Angeles Philharmonic Orch. & Zubin Mehta

Known from Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film 2001: A Space Odyssey.

Instrumentation

The work is orchestrated for piccolo, 3 flutes (3rd doubling piccolo), 3 oboes, English horn, clarinet in E-flat, 2 clarinets in B-flat, bass clarinet in B-flat, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 6 horns in F and E, 4 trumpets in C and E, 3 trombones, 2 tubas, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, glockenspiel, bell on low E, organ, and strings: 2 harps, violins I, II (16 each), violas (12), cellos (12), and double basses (8) (with low C string).

Structure

The piece is divided into nine sections played with only three definite pauses. Strauss named the sections after selected chapters of Friedrich Nietzsche's novel *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*:

Introduction, or Sunrise

1. Of Those in the Background World
2. Of the Great Longing
3. Of Joys and Passions
4. The Song of the Grave
5. Of Science and Learning
6. The Convalescent
7. The Dance Song

8. Song of the Night Wanderer

These selected chapters from Nietzsche's novel highlight major moments of the character Zarathustra's philosophical journey in the novel. The general storylines and ideas in these chapters were the inspiration used to build the tone poem's structure.

The piece starts with a sustained double low C on the double basses, contrabassoon and organ. This transforms into the brass fanfare of the Introduction and introduces the "dawn" motif (from "Zarathustra's Prologue", the text of which is included in the printed score) that is common throughout the work: the motif includes three notes, in intervals of a fifth and octave, as C–G–C[2] (known also as the Nature-motif). On its first appearance, the motif is a part of the first five notes of the natural overtone series: octave, octave and fifth, two octaves, two octaves and major third (played as part of a C major chord with the third doubled). The major third is immediately changed to a minor third, which is the first note played in the work (E flat) that is not part of the overtone series.[2]

"Of Those in the Background World" begins with cellos, double-basses and organ pedal before changing into a lyrical passage for the entire section.[2] The next two sections, "Of the Great Yearning" and "Of Joys and Passions", both introduce motifs that are more chromatic in nature.[2]

"Of Science" features an unusual fugue beginning at measure 201 in the double-basses and cellos, which consists of all twelve notes of the chromatic scale.[2] Measure 223 contains one of the very few sections in the orchestral literature where the basses must play a contra B (the lowest B on a piano),

which is only possible on a 5-string bass or (less frequently) on a 4-string bass with a low-B extension.0:00

"The Convalescent" acts as a reprise of the original motif, and ends with the entire orchestra climaxing on a massive chord.

"The Dance Song" features a very prominent violin solo throughout the section.

The end of the "Song of the Night Wanderer" leaves the piece half resolved, with high flutes, piccolos and violins playing a B major chord, while the lower strings pluck a C

One of the major compositional themes of the piece is the contrast between the keys of B major, representing humanity, and C major, representing the universe. Because B and C are adjacent notes, these keys are tonally dissimilar: B major uses five sharps, while C major has none.

World riddle theme There are two opinions about the World riddle theme. Some sources denote the fifth/octave intervals (C–G–C8va) as the World riddle motif. However, other sources refer to the two conflicting keys in the final section as representing the World riddle (C–G–C B–F♯–B8va), with the unresolved harmonic progression being an unfinished or unsolved riddle: the melody does not conclude with a well-defined tonic note as being either C or B, hence it is unfinished.

But the riddle is not solved. The tone-poem ends enigmatically in two keys, the Nature-motif plucked softly, by the basses in its original key of C and above the woodwinds, in the key of B major. The unsolvable end of the

universe: for Strauss was not pacified by Nietzsche's solution. Neither C major nor B major is established as the tonic at the end of the composition.