

Herbert von Karajan was among the most famous conductors of all time -- a man whose talent and autocratic bearing lifted him to a position of unprecedented dominance in European musical circles. He was born on April 5, 1908 in Salzburg, Austria, to a cultured Austrian family of Greek descent (their original name was Karajannis). His musical training began at the Mozarteum Conservatory in Salzburg where he studied piano with Franz Ledwenke, theory with Franz Zauer, and composition with Bernhard Paumgartner, who encouraged Karajan to pursue conducting. Karajan graduated from the conservatory in 1926, and continued his studies at the Vienna Academy of Music and Performing Arts, where he studied piano with Josef Hofman and conducting with Alexander Wunderer and Franz Schalk. Karajan's conducting debut came on January 22, 1929, with the Mozarteum Orchestra in Salzburg. Consequently, the young maestro directed a performance of Strauss' Salome at the Salzburg Festspielhaus, and was named principal conductor of the Ulm Stadttheater, where he remained in that capacity until 1934.

The next fourteen years saw the young conductor's reputation grow rapidly. He was named music director of the Aachen Stadttheater (1934-1942), had his debut at the Vienna State Opera (1937), and accepted a position with the Deutsch Grammophon Gesellschaft (1938-1943). In 1939, Karajan was appointed conductor of the Berlin State Opera, and director of the Preussische Staatskapelle Symphony concerts. In 1948, he was appointed for life, to the position of director of the Chorale Society at the Society of the Friends of Music, in Vienna.

In 1948, Herbert von Karajan also served at the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra, and La Scala, before succeeding Wilhelm Furtwängler as the music director of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra -- a union that would cement his reputation as one of the world's premier conductors. In 1955, Karajan brought that orchestra to the United States on the first of many international tours. The decade that followed saw Karajan accept several appointments, including those to the Salzburg Festival and the Vienna State Opera. In 1967, Karajan had his Metropolitan Opera debut, conducting a performance of Wagner's Die Walküre, and the same year, founded the Salzburg Easter Festival. In 1968, the Herbert von Karajan Foundation was founded to support the research of "conscious musical perception."

Herbert von Karajan was awarded the "Ring of the Province of Salzburg," Golden Gramophone, Arts Prize (Lucerne), Grand Prix International du Disque, Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society, German Golden Disc Prize, UNESCO International Music Prize, Olympia Prize of the Onassis Foundation, and multiple Gramophone awards, among others. He was elected to an honorary senate seat at the University of Salzburg. The maestro was also recognized with honorary degrees from a host of universities.

Karajan, along with Akio Morita and Norio Ohga (president and vice-president respectively, of Japanese Sony Group), unveiled and presented the Compact Disc Digital Audio System in 1981. In 1982, Karajan founded Telemondial S.A.M. with Uli Markle, in an effort to document the maestro's illustrious legacy on videotape and laser disc, and to help broaden the scope of "musical expression," through the use of modern technology. In 1984, Karajan recorded the complete Beethoven symphonies with film adaptation, made possible by his own Telemondial. In 1988, Deutsch Grammophone released a collection of one hundred "masterworks" recordings made by the conductor. Herbert von Karajan's discography is impressive to say the least, and will certainly endure in musical arenas, as some of the most valued interpretations of the repertoire available. Herbert von Karajan, often referred to as "general music director of Europe," died in Salzburg of heart failure July 16, 1989.

RICHARD STRAUSS TILL EULENSPIEGEL'S MERRY PRANKS ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA VIENNA PHILHARMONIC/KARAJAN



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

Like many of his contemporaries, the young Richard Strauss was enthralled with Wagner; indeed, a number of his compositions, especially the early opera *Guntram* (1887–1893), reveal an intent on Strauss' part to re-create the spirit of the older composer's works. However, as evidenced by his adoption of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Also sprach Zarathustra* as the subject of a tone poem, Strauss' music soon took on a distinct identity. By this time, Nietzsche, though a former Wagner devotee, had become the most vocal and articulate critic of Wagner's philosophy and art. By aligning his artistic vision with that of Nietzsche, Strauss forever removed himself from the camp of "true" Wagnerians.

Also sprach Zarathustra (Thus Spoke Zarathustra), one of the high points of Strauss' early career, was completed in the summer of 1896 and premiered in November of the same year. Sandwiched between *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* (1894–1895) and *Don Quixote* (1896–1897), it was among the works that forever solidified the composer's reputation and distilled the essence of his singular orchestral language.

Also sprach Zarathustra has nine sections. The introduction -- which has gained a peculiar immortality from its prominent use in Stanley Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey* -- is followed by these distinctive episodes, each of which explores an element of Nietzsche's text, from "Von den Hinterweltlern" (From the Back-world People) to an expression of intense yearning ("Von der großen Sehnsucht") and a portrayal of joy and passion (*Von den Freuden und Leidenschaften*). At the center of the work is "Das Grablied" (Song of the Grave), which sets the stage for the clever and ironic "Von der Wissenschaft," in which a truncated fugue gently pokes fun at science by -- perhaps prophetically -- including all twelve chromatic pitches in its subject. "Der Genesende" (The Convalescent) slowly regains its strength, bursting forth into the energetic "Das Tanzlied" (Dance-Song), led by a solo fiddle.

The final section, "Nachtwandlerlied" (Song of the Night Wanderer), makes subtle use of tonal and thematic cues (most notably, a return to the tonality of the opening section) to suggest that the journey of the unnamed Night Wanderer is cyclic -- eternally returning to its beginning. This lack of resolution is mirrored in the lingering dissonance, the half step between B and C, which ends the work, capturing the questioning and unsettling nature of Nietzsche's own conclusion.

The whole of *Also sprach Zarathustra* is through-composed; though some suggest that it contains aspects of both sonata and rondo forms, no structural analysis is sustainable without reference to Nietzsche's text. Like most of Strauss' tone poems, *Also sprach Zarathustra* employs massive instrumental forces; however, it provides a contrast to Strauss' more strongly narrative works in its deployment of the orchestra in a more subtle and deft manner. Here, short, transformable motives take the place of the long, sinuous tunes that emerge in works like *Ein Heldenleben* (1898). The relative concision of its musical material suggests the composer's attempt to mirror the nature and

character of his literary source.

One of Strauss' most popular symphonic poems is *Till Eulenspiegel*, a single-movement work for orchestra. It was composed between 1894 and 1895, shortly after the premiere and critical debacle of his first opera *Guntram*. In choosing the popular tale of *Till Eulenspiegel* as the basis for the tone poem, Strauss found an effective vehicle for responding to his critics, who treated his first opera unfavorably.

The character of *Till Eulenspiegel* is a chronic prankster, whose unrelenting sense of the sardonic continually challenges his peers and lands him in trouble. *Till* would never learn from his mistakes and constantly thumbed his nose at convention and any criticism. The tone poem is based on a German folktale that has appeared in various versions since its first appearance in the fourteenth century. Some have found a historical basis for the character, but he is best understood as a kind of folk hero who challenges the establishment. While no single source contains all the adventures of *Till Eulenspiegel*, the character is recognizable in various adaptations, just as Strauss' musical depiction in the rondo theme is apparent throughout the musical compositions.

The musical form of *Till Eulenspiegel* is a large-scale rondo. By identifying the character of *Till* with the rondo theme, Strauss found a way to demonstrate the recalcitrant nature of the protagonist and also to unify the work. After a brief introduction, often interpreted as an expression of "once upon a time," Strauss states the theme at the very beginning in a bravura passage for horn. The theme recurs between episodes of the rondo, and it is in those episodes that *Till Eulenspiegel* has his adventures. In terms of musical structure, the rondo-episodes provide contrast and, as they depart further from the main idea, they also set the stage for the return of the familiar rondo theme. The subsequent episodes show *Till* at odds with the peasants, railing at preachers, wooing a woman and being rejected by her, and making fun of the intelligentsia. Within these sections, Strauss allowed his theme for *Till* to return in various guises, yet still remain recognizable. Ultimately, *Till* finds himself brought before judges, who review his career and sentence him to death. Even then *Till* cannot depart without a mocking gesture, and the piece ends with his theme fully transformed with all its permutations exhausted.

Till Eulenspiegel contains some of Strauss' most brilliant orchestration and makes use of various instruments, including the clarinet in D. Strauss approached the orchestration of this work with a kaleidoscopic hand, often abruptly shifting between instrumental groups. This gives the work its appealing color and also makes it a virtuoso piece for orchestra. In writing program music, Strauss chose a still-new approach to composition and aligned himself with the avant-garde. His brilliantly orchestrated score with its virtuosic instrumentation and colorful dissonances showed Strauss as a modernist. It remains a popular concert piece and one of Strauss' best-known compositions.

Richard Strauss

Also sprach Zarathustra • Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks

Herbert von Karajan Wiener Philharmoniker

- 1 Also Sprach Zarathustra Prelude (Sonnenaufgang) 1:47
 - 2 Also Sprach Zarathustra Von den Hinterweltlern 3:35
 - 3 Also Sprach Zarathustra Von der großen Sehnsucht 1:56
 - 4 Also Sprach Zarathustra Von den Freuden und Leidenschaften 1:54
 - 5 Also Sprach Zarathustra Das Grablied 2:23
 - 6 Also Sprach Zarathustra Von der Wissenschaft 4:19
 - 7 Also Sprach Zarathustra Der Genesende 5:11
 - 8 Also SprachhZarathustra Das Tanzlied - Das Nachtlid 7:42
 - 9 Also Sprach Zarathustra Das Nachtwandlerlied 4:37
 - 10 Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks 15:06
- Total Time: 48:30

Also Sprach Zarathustra: Producer: John Culshaw Engineer: James Brown
Recorded March 1959 Sofiensaal, Vienna by Decca Records

Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks: Producer: Erik Smith Engineer: James Brown
Recorded June 1960 Sofiensaal, Vienna by Decca Records



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