

Fritz Reiner was one of the most acclaimed conductors of the 20th century -- noted for the vast range of his repertoire, which included both symphonic and operatic pieces spanning from the traditional canon to contemporary material, he was also an influential educator who counted among his pupils Leonard Bernstein. Reiner was born in Budapest, Hungary, on December 19, 1888; despite earning a law degree from the University of Bucharest, he pursued a career in music, and at age 21 was named chormaster of the Budapest Opera. A stint as conductor with the Budapest Volksoper followed before Reiner was chosen in 1914 to serve as principal conductor of the Royal Opera in Dresden, where he collaborated with Richard Strauss on productions of several of the composer's early operas.

In 1922 Reiner left Europe to relocate to America, settling in Cincinnati, OH, and signing on as conductor with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra; a decade later he was tapped to head the orchestral and opera departments at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music, where his students included Bernstein. After next serving as the music director of the Pittsburgh Symphony between 1938 and 1948, he served five years with the Metropolitan Opera. While Reiner's frequent migration might have been attributed largely to a restless creativity, he was also a notoriously difficult personality who frequently alienated those around him -- many of the musicians under his command openly loathed him, although he inevitably inspired the best work of their careers.

Reiner's own best work was undoubtedly his tenure with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, which he elevated into one of the most celebrated ensembles in the world. Moving over to the CSO in 1953, he not only established the orchestra as a top-flight live attraction but also as a popular recording entity -- the countless albums they made for RCA's Living Stereo series during Reiner's decade-long tenure were much acclaimed by collectors for both the power of the performances and the unusually high fidelity of the recordings themselves. Releases like Fritz Reiner Conducts Richard Strauss and Fritz Reiner Conducts Bartók in particular remain definitive interpretations of the composers in question. Health problems forced Reiner to resign his position in 1962, and he died in New York City on November 15 of the following year.



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS



**RICHARD STRAUSS**  
**ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA**  
**FRITZ REINER CONDUCTING THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

After completing the whimsical tone poem *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*, and his first opera, *Guntram*, Strauss turned his attention to German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's weighty, passionate, occasionally obscure discourse, *Also sprach Zarathustra* (Thus Spoke Zarathustra). In it, Nietzsche (1844–1900) used the sixth-century-B.C. Persian philosopher Zarathustra (or Zoroaster, as he was known to the Greeks) as the medium to express his own views on the deeper meanings of life. He believed modern man to be merely one step in the evolutionary process. One day he will be followed by a “super-man,” a being who will retain the better qualities of contemporary society but will have been purged of the ignoble ones.

In his autobiography, Nietzsche stated that his *Zarathustra* might be considered in musical terms. Gustav Mahler and Frederick Delius took him at his word, setting portions of the text in *Symphony No. 3* (1896) and *A Mass of Life* (1905), respectively. Strauss, by this time established as a brilliant composer and master orchestrator, set himself the even greater challenge of a purely instrumental approach. He composed his tone poem between February 1895 and August 1896, taking

care to subtitle it “freely after Nietzsche,” implying the lack of a detailed programmatic link between source and score.

He conducted the première in Frankfurt on November 27, 1896. Shortly afterwards, he outlined his reasons for creating it: “I did not intend to write philosophical music. I meant rather to convey an idea of the evolution of the human race, from its origins, through the various phases of development, religious as well as scientific, up to Nietzsche's idea of the ‘super-man.’” Filmmaker Stanley Kubrick's choice of the majestic opening sequence as the “theme” in his movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), which deals with similar ideas, thus represents a masterstroke of musical and conceptual insight.

Whether it is possible to achieve in music such ends as Strauss set himself here is open to debate. Few listeners would deny that his *Zarathustra* displays an unsurpassed mastery of orchestral possibilities, and a stirring, thought-provoking sequence of moods.

# RICHARD STRAUSS

# ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA

**FRITZ REINER CONDUCTING**  
**THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

**Part I 16:06**

**(Introduction, or Sunrise)**

**(Of the Backworldsmen)**

**(Of the Great Longing)**

**(Of Joys and Passions)**

**(The Song of the Grave)**

**(Of Science and Learning)**

**Part II 15:43**

**(The Convalescent)**

**(The Dance Song)**

**(Song of the Night Wanderer)**

Transferred from an RCA Victor Red Seal 2-track tape #ECS-1

The first stereo reel to reel tape ever released by RCA

Producer – John Pfeiffer Recording Engineer – Leslie Chase

Recorded March 8, 1954 at Orchestra Hall, Chicago by RCA



For more info e-mail us:  
[admin@highdeftapetransfers.com](mailto:admin@highdeftapetransfers.com)  
or visit our website:  
[www.highdeftapetransfers.com](http://www.highdeftapetransfers.com)