

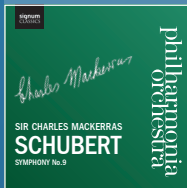
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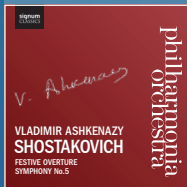
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CHRISTOPH VON DOHNÁNYI  
**STRAUSS**  
TILL EULENSPIEGELS LUSTIGE STREICHE  
EIN HELDENLEBEN

# STRAUSS

TILL EULENSPIEGELS LUSTIGE STREICHE • EIN HELDENLEBEN

**Richard Strauss** (1864-1949)

1	Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, Op. 28	15.19
	Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40 (Radoslaw Szulc - solo violin)	
2	<i>Der Held</i> (The Hero)	4.15
3	<i>Des Helden Widersacher</i> (The Hero's Adversaries)	2.58
4	<i>Des Helden Gefährtin</i> (The Hero's Companion)	11.26
5	<i>Des Helden Walstatt</i> (The Hero at Battle)	5.54
6	<i>Des Helden Friedenswerke</i> (The Hero's Works of Peace)	8.02
7	<i>Des Helden Weltflucht und Vollendung</i> (The Hero's Retirement from this World and Consummation)	11.13
	Total timings	59.08

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# STRAUSS

TILL EULENSPIEGELS LUSTIGE STREICHE  
EIN HELDENLEBEN

## Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche Ein Heldenleben

'If Strauss, give me Johann; if Richard, give me Wagner' was an aphoristic put-down employed by many a lesser composer, critic or journalist in times past to position Richard Strauss firmly into an also-ran circle of composers. Strauss himself, never shy to blow his own trumpet, gave a gnomic analysis of his standing later in life, commenting at a Philharmonia Orchestra rehearsal in 1947, 'No, I know what I want, and I know what I meant when I wrote this. After all, I may not be a first-rate composer, but I am a first-class, second-rate composer.' This could be a light-hearted chiding of a recently formed ensemble rehearsing an unfamiliar work or a brutally honest assessment of his career by a composer in his ninth decade. With Richard Strauss, separating the man and his music is never an easy option.

By far the most significant influence on Strauss's early career was his father, Franz. Strauss senior was a horn player of no little renown as well as a respected conductor.

Thus, his talented son was granted rarefied access to orchestral rehearsals and hand-picked tutors. Franz Strauss reared Richard on the classics from Haydn to Mendelssohn, but despite playing in several Wagner premières and being consulted by the composer himself on Siegfried's horn call, had no love for Wagner's music and, perhaps surprisingly, was equally dismissive of Brahms's output. It is little wonder, then, that two of the great loves and influences on Richard's first independent compositions were indeed Brahms and Wagner.

By 1894, the 29 year-old Strauss had his first operatic disaster under his belt. *Guntram*, a Wagner-infused tale of love and redemption of sorts, was a project that was dear to Strauss and he, lifelong, held its critics in the utmost contempt and, at the same time, held the opera close to his heart, revising, in vain, some 46 years later. His ire even led him to ceremonially bury the opera in his garden, replete with tombstone inscribed, 'Here rests the honourable and virtuous young man, Guntram – Minnensinger – who was horribly slain by the symphony orchestra of his own father. May he rest in peace.' Whether *Guntram*,

the composer's father's influence, or both were being psychologically rested in peace is a matter for conjecture, but Strauss, as tenacious as his father, was already developing a second operatic project based on the subject of the mediaeval, legendary rogue, Till Eulenspiegel. Still smarting from the utter rejection of *Guntram*, Strauss soon abandoned the idea, and for the meantime opera itself, and instead returned to the concert hall with one of his most witty, entertaining and successful tone poems, *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, the title in full being *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche, nach alter Schelmenweise—in Rondeauform Op. 28* (Till Eulenspiegel's merry pranks, in the manner of an old rogue—in Rondo form). Despite Strauss's use of the antiquated term, Rondeau, the form of the work is not strictly that of a repeating rondo structure, the glue instead being in the variation and repetition of the two main themes. The first performance was conducted by Franz Wüllner in Cologne on 5 Nov 1895, Strauss having been detained in Munich by a prior engagement.

Till Eulenspiegel springs from Low German folklore, legend having it that he was born near the city of Braunschweig around the beginning of the Fourteenth Century. Travelling through Europe, Till is a prankster without peer or fear, playing the fool whilst exposing vice, corruption, greed and folly as he moves from city to city. Nobody is immune to his irrational impudence:

craftsmen, merchants, clergy, nobility, the judiciary and even the pope are lampooned. Strauss sticks to the spirit of the many popular editions of our anti-hero's mis-adventures by presenting Till's picaresque tale as a series of episodes strung together a light touch. The work famously opens with the short, dreamy 'Once upon a time' phrase from the strings before our little tinker Till enters, represented by a sprightly horn. The theme is absorbed into the whole orchestra until Till's second, more mischievous motif is sounded on the high clarinet and the devil is let loose in a dazzling, dizzying display of orchestral brilliance. Our loveable rogue rides roughshod through a marketplace, creating havoc; mocks the clergy whilst dressed as a priest; falls for a girl and rages as he is sent on his way; and finally cocks a snook at some po-faced academics. But the frolics are over as Till is captured and sent for trial. Sombre charges are delivered by the orchestra, with Till whimpering pitifully, before the doom-laden trombones deliver the verdict - death by hanging. A funeral march takes him to the gallows where, his doom set, he yet tries to cajole and wheedle his way to freedom. Too late - a trilling flute announces his last breath as the deadly lever is pulled. In the enchanting epilogue we are gently reminded of the 'Once upon a time' theme before the irrepressibly irreverent spirit of Till returns for one final musical gag. Strauss had for some years been gradually

abandoning the classical Viennese model of presenting themes, developing them and then restating them to create a satisfying whole and turning to a rather more free-form, momentary compositional style that moved closer to narrative story-telling on a scale that became both monumental and intricate. Years of honing his skills in this purely orchestral arena were spurred on by the influence of Berlioz and the so-called 'music of the future' of Liszt and Wagner. His understanding of instrumentation and orchestration deepened during these years and the formal constructions of his pieces became more fantastical and further removed from the classical 'ideal' – though there is rarely an outright rejection of larger binding principles. The narrative aspect of these tone poems naturally feeds into Strauss's later emergence as one of the Twentieth Century's great opera composers.

Just how much Strauss was donning Till's character and cocking his own snook at the critical naysayers and the philistine bourgeois he so greatly detested, most notably after the failure of *Guntram* is perhaps moot, but this was not to be the last time he might appear as a protagonist in his own compositions. The *Symphonia Domestica Op. 53*, in particular, has the composer depicting the minutest details of his home life, wife and family. More controversially, *Ein Heldenleben Op. 40*, first

performed in Frankfurt am Main on March 3, contains long episodes depicting or reflecting upon the composer's personal life. The tone poem received a barrage of criticism when it appeared, portraying Strauss as a monstrous egotist, a shameless self-promoter, portraying himself as the hero of the piece. Such critics may well have been also smarting at the outrageous caricature of their kind as being shrill, spiteful and complacent, in the second movement. The Nobel Prize-winning French dramatist, Romain Rolland quotes Strauss thus, 'I do not see why I should not compose a symphony about myself; I find myself quite as interesting as Napoleon or Alexander.' Perhaps this is tongue-in-cheek or perhaps there is a hint of the serious in here, too. He further mentioned to Rolland that, 'I am not a hero. I haven't got the necessary strength; I am not cut out for battle; I prefer to withdraw, to be quiet, to have peace.' Strauss could be pompous, but he certainly also had a sense of humour; the truth may well lie somewhere between these two qualities. The work is cast in six sections and although he ultimately refrained from including explicit programs in his published work, numerous sources agree on the naming of the movements:

1. *Der Held* (The Hero)
2. *Des Helden Widersacher* (The Hero's Adversary)

3. *Des Helden Gefährtin*  
(The Hero's Companion)
4. *Des Helden Walstatt*  
(The Hero at Battle)
5. *Des Helden Friedenswerke*  
(The Hero's Works of Peace)
6. *Des Helden Weltflucht und Vollendung*  
(The Hero's Retirement from  
this World and Consummation)

No formal information is forthcoming from the composer's score, but, in the most general fashion, *Ein Heldenleben* might be thought of as an extended and expanded version of a symphonic first movement. *Der Held* is all about our hero - a character study. He strides forth, horns and cellos soaring, the orchestra, thrusting and surging, yet noble and dignified. The ignoble critics are up for a bashing in *Des Helden Widersacher*. Caviling clarinets, squawking oboes, petty flutes and grumbling low brass make for a rather personal attack on Strauss's perceived enemies. The hero rises above all of this clamour, eventually silencing their spiteful attacks. *Des Helden Gefährtin* is a portrait of Strauss's wife, the singer Pauline de Ahna, represented by the solo violin in a series of long cadenzas. When challenged about some of the less than flattering sounding moments of the portrait Strauss commented, 'It's my wife

I wanted to show. She is very complex, very feminine, a little perverse, a little coquettish...at every minute different from how she had been the moment before.' Nonetheless, it is soon clear that the hero is smitten by her. The hero is soon bidden by off-stage trumpets to leave his love-bed and prepare for battle. *Des Helden Walstatt* opens with brutal, militaristic drums and a trumpet emerges as the harbinger of the fight to come. The battle scene is an extended development section where the hero repels attack after attack until his theme emerges triumphant. *Des Helden Friedenswerke* enters peacefully via a pair of lugubrious tubas but soon broadens out into a calm reverie where the hero looks back on his good works. Strauss is considering his own achievements here by interweaving quotations from all of his previous tone poems (except *Aus Italien*) throughout the symphonic texture. Notable here is his generous use of material from his beloved *Guntram*. *Des Helden Weltflucht und Vollendung* is effectively the coda to the piece, where previous works appear again in the counterpoint and battles past recalled with a return of the critics opening motif. The calming influence of the solo violin re-appears to sooth these nightmares and return the world to rights. A solemn last variant of the opening hero theme in the full brass builds a final fanfare to a life fulfilled.

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## BIOGRAPHIES

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### CHRISTOPH VON DOHNÁNYI

Christoph von Dohnányi held the position of Principal Conductor of the Philharmonia from 1997 to 2008, prior to which he served for three years as their Principal Guest Conductor. His relationship with the orchestra continues from the 2008/09 season, when he becomes Honorary Conductor for life.

Christoph von Dohnányi has also held the position of Chief Conductor of the NDR Symphony Orchestra since September 2004. As well as giving concerts in major venues throughout Europe (including Lucerne, Cologne, Frankfurt, Bonn, Warsaw and Luxembourg), Dohnányi and the orchestra toured South America in 2005, and were subsequently voted Best Orchestra 2005 and Best Conductor 2005 by the Association of Critics of Buenos Aires.

Born in Berlin, Christoph von Dohnányi began to study law in Munich. After two years he chose to join the Munich Academy of Music to study composition, piano and conducting. At the end of his studies he was awarded the Richard Strauss Prize

for conducting by the City of Munich and continued to study with his grandfather, Ernst von Dohnányi, at Florida State University.

In 1953 Christoph von Dohnányi was hired as repetiteur and conductor at the Frankfurt Opera by Sir Georg Solti. At the age of 27 he moved to Lübeck where he became Germany's youngest General Music Director, before becoming Chief Conductor first in Kassel and then of the Westdeutsche Rundfunk Symphony Orchestra in Cologne. From 1968 he served as General Music Director in Frankfurt and, from 1972, as Director of the Frankfurt Opera. From 1977 to 1984 he was Intendant and Chief Conductor of Hamburg Opera. In Frankfurt and Hamburg he aimed to balance traditional opera productions with innovative music theatre.

Christoph von Dohnányi made his debut with The Cleveland Orchestra in December 1981. He was Music Director Designate from 1982 to 1984 and served as its sixth Music Director from September 1984 to August 2002, becoming the orchestra's first Music Director Laureate in September 2002. During Dohnányi's tenure, they toured extensively

around the USA, Asia and Europe, performing concerts for the Salzburg Festival, BBC Proms and Edinburgh Festival and were in residence at Carnegie Hall, New York a number of times. In 1998, they performed in China for the first time in the orchestra's history. His many recordings with the orchestra include the complete symphonies of Beethoven, Brahms and Schumann, and Wagner's *Die Walküre* and *Das Rheingold*, as well as symphonies by Mahler, Bruckner, Dvořák, R. Strauss, Mozart and works by Adams, Ives and Webern. During his tenure, the Cleveland Orchestra's home, Severance Hall, was renovated and extended to bring back one of America's biggest organs

into the musical life of Cleveland. Since 2002 he has been guest conducting the orchestras of Boston, Chicago, Pittsburgh, New York, Philadelphia and Los Angeles.

Christoph von Dohnányi's discography with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra includes *Fidelio*, *Wozzeck*, *Lulu*, *Erwartung*, *Salome*, *Der fliegende Holländer* and symphonic works by Mendelssohn, R. Strauss and Tchaikovsky. He has recorded the violin concertos of Glass and Schnittke with Gidon Kremer, the Dvořák Piano Concerto with András Schiff and orchestral transcriptions of chamber music by Brahms and Mahler.

Today, the Philharmonia has the greatest claim of any orchestra to be the UK's National Orchestra. It is committed to presenting the same quality, live music-making in venues throughout the country as it brings to London and the great concert halls of the world. Every year the Orchestra performs more than 200 concerts, as well as presenting chamber performances by the Soloists of the Philharmonia Orchestra, and recording scores for films, CDs and computer games. Since 1995 the Orchestra's work has been underpinned by its much admired UK Residency Programme, which began with the launch of its residencies at the Bedford Corn Exchange and London's Southbank Centre, and now also includes De Montfort Hall in Leicester, the Anvil in Basingstoke and a series of partnerships across Kent and the Thames Gateway, based in Canterbury. The Orchestra's international extensive touring schedule each season involves appearances at the finest concert halls across Europe, the USA and Asia.

Conductors, and other great names have included Lorin Maazel (Associate Principal Conductor), Riccardo Muti (Principal Conductor and Music Director) and Giuseppe Sinopoli (Music Director). As well as Esa-Pekka Salonen, current titled conductors are Christoph von Dohnányi (Honorary Conductor for Life), Sir Charles Mackerras (Principal Guest Conductor), Kurt Sanderling (Conductor Emeritus) and Vladimir Ashkenazy (Conductor Laureate).

The Philharmonia Orchestra continues to pride itself on its long-term collaborations with the finest musicians of our day, supporting new as well as established artists. This policy extends into the Orchestra itself, where many of the players have solo or chamber music careers as well as their work with the Orchestra. The Philharmonia's Martin Musical Scholarship Fund has for many years supported talented musicians at the start of their careers and a new Orchestral Award, inaugurated in 2005, allows two young players every year to gain performing experience within the Orchestra.

The Orchestra is also recognised for its innovative programming policy, at the heart of which is a commitment to performing and commissioning new works by leading composers, among them the Artistic Director of its Music of Today series, Julian Anderson.

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## philharmonia orchestra

The Philharmonia Orchestra is one of the world's great orchestras. Acknowledged as the UK's foremost musical pioneer, with an extraordinary recording legacy, the Philharmonia leads the field for its quality of playing, and for its innovative approach to audience development, residencies,

music education and the use of new technologies in reaching a global audience. Together with its relationships with the world's most sought-after artists, most importantly its Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor Esa-Pekka Salonen, the Philharmonia Orchestra is at the heart of British musical life.

During its first six decades, the Philharmonia Orchestra has collaborated with most of the great classical artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Conductors associated with the Orchestra include Furtwängler, Richard Strauss, Toscanini, Cantelli, Karajan and Giulini. Otto Klemperer was the first of many outstanding Principal



Since 1945 the Philharmonia Orchestra has commissioned more than 100 new works from composers including Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Mark-Anthony Turnage and James MacMillan. The Philharmonia Orchestra's joint series with SBC, *Clocks and Clouds: The Music of György Ligeti*, won the Royal Philharmonic Society's Best Concert Series Award in 1997 and *Related Rocks: The Music of Magnus Lindberg*, was nominated for an RPS Award. Other recent awards for the Orchestra include the RPS Large Ensemble

Award and two *Evening Standard* Awards for Outstanding Artistic Achievement and Outstanding Ensemble. In May 2007 PLAY. orchestra, a 'virtual Philharmonia Orchestra' created in partnership with Southbank Centre and Central St Martin's College of Art, won the RPS Education Award.

Throughout its history, the Philharmonia Orchestra has been committed to finding new ways to bring its top quality live performance to audiences worldwide, and to using new

technologies to achieve this. Many millions of people since 1945 have enjoyed their first experience of classical music through a Philharmonia recording, and in 2008/9 audiences can engage with the Orchestra through webcasts, podcasts, downloads, computer games and film scores as well as through its unique interactive music education website launched in 2005, The Sound Exchange ([www.philharmonia.co.uk/thesoundexchange](http://www.philharmonia.co.uk/thesoundexchange)), which is now visited by almost 2 million people a year. In 2005 the Philharmonia became the first ever classical music organisation to be shortlisted for a

BT Digital Music Award, and in the same year the Orchestra presented the first ever concert webcast. Now more than 3500 people a month download free monthly Philharmonia video podcasts, which include artist interviews and features on repertoire and projects; these films are also watched by more than 60,000 people on YouTube. Recording and broadcasting both continue to play a significant part in the Orchestra's activities: since 2003 the Philharmonia has enjoyed a major partnership with Classic FM, as The Classic FM Orchestra on Tour, as well as continuing to broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

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Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche recorded live at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall Hall, London, 30 June 2001

Engineer - Mike Hatch, Floating Earth Ltd  
 Producer - Misha Donat  
 Recording and Editing facilities - Floating Earth Ltd

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Ein Heldenleben recorded live at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, London, 4 October 2007

Engineer - Jonathan Stokes, Classic Sound Ltd  
 Producer - Misha Donat  
 Recording and Editing facilities - Classic Sound Ltd

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