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R. STRAUSS

EIN HELDENLEBEN, Op. 40

ROYAL CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA
CONDUCTED BY WILLEM MENGELBERG

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1: Der Held (<i>The Hero</i>) | 4:16 |
| 2: Des Helden Widersacher (<i>The Hero's Adversaries</i>) | 3:47 |
| 3: Des Helden Gefährtin (<i>The Hero's female Companion</i>) | 10:41 |
| 4: Des Helden Walstatt (<i>The Hero's Battlefield</i>) | 8:40 |
| 5: Des Helden Friedenswerke (<i>The Hero's Works of Peace</i>) | 4:13 |
| 6: Des Helden Weltflucht und Vollendung
(<i>The Hero's Retreat from the World and Consummation</i>) | 10:35 |

Recorded in 21st April, 1941

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Total duration: 42:13 © 2007 Pristine Audio.

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MENGELBERG



STRAUSS; EIN HELDENLEBEN

CONCERTGEBOUW ORCHESTRA, 1941

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1. The Hero - The Hero has a soaring quality that evokes the theme from Beethoven's Eroica. Blazing trumpets sound a herald as the hero rides off into the adventure to the sound of a dominant seventh chord.

2. The Hero's Adversaries - The Adversaries are announced with squeaks and snarls from the woodwinds and have a sound of pettiness difficult to ignore. The hero's theme is all that can silence them, if only for a moment.

3. The Hero's Companion - A tender melody played by a solo violin depicts the wife of our Hero. Her precious moment with her husband is broken by the Adversaries as they snarl and goad the Hero into battle. Fanfares sound the beginning of the battle.

4. The Hero's Battlefield - The percussion section sounds the advancement of the troops and the solo trumpet blares a call of war. A calamity of motives and themes ensues as the battle wages. The sweet sound of the violins remind the Hero that his beloved is waiting for his return. The clamorous (and extremely challenging) trumpet work brings the calamity of battle to the listener. In the end, the Hero's theme prevails over the hastily retreating adversaries. Strauss had created a chaotic scene of battle not depicted before.

5. The Hero's Works of Peace - The Hero's victory is celebrated via themes of other previous works such as Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks, Macbeth, Also sprach Zarathustra, Don Juan and Don Quixote. The peaceful and soaring melodies lead into the final section, assuaging the unrest building in our Hero.

6. The Hero's Retreat from the World and Consummation - Shirking off worldly ideas and motives, the Hero envisions larger and more extravagant adventures and searches for a release from his fears. The violin theme of his beloved consoles the unrest of his soul while the solo French horn fuels the melancholy felt by the Hero as he renounces his life of adventure. The trumpets sound one final fanfare for the Hero as he retreats from his life, building the beginnings of another tone poem (Also Sprach Zarathustra) which is frequently coupled with Ein Heldenleben.

In *Ein Heldenleben* Strauss employs the technique of leitmotif that Richard Wagner used so liberally. Each character has a pronounced theme that gives insight to the character. The solo violin theme evokes the warm loving feeling of the Hero's wife, while the capricious snarling of woodwinds labels the Adversaries. 19th century Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick is memorably written into the score with an ominous four note leitmotif played by the tuba. This culminates in the battle when all the themes play together in a seemingly chaotic fashion.

The key of the outer sections, E-flat major, was deliberately chosen by Strauss as a reference to Ludwig van Beethoven's Third Symphony, the "*Eroica*".

The solo violin heard in the third section is representative of the hero's female companion. In "*Des Helden Friedenswerke*", Strauss quotes from his own earlier tone poems, including *Don Juan*, *Tod und Verklärung*, *Don Quixote*, etc.

It was also his last tone poem that he ever composed and is considered his autobiography.

Notes from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ein_Heldenleben

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