

R. STRAUSS

EN HEIDENLEBEN, DER ROSENKAVALLIER SUITE

Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40

- 1. Der Held (The Hero) (4:04)
- 2. Des Helden Widersacher (The Hero's Adversaries) (3:38)
- 3. Des Helden Gefährtin (The Hero's female Companion) (11:13)
- 4. Des Helden Walstatt (The Hero's Battlefield) (8:30)
- 5. Des Helden Friedenswerke (The Hero's Works of Peace) (4:23)
- 6. Des Helden Weirucht und Vollendung (The Hero's Retreat from the World and Consummation) (10:21)

Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Antal Doráti

Recorded Northrop Auditorium, Minneapolis, 12-14 December 1952
Issued as Mercury LP MG50012

Der Rosenkavalier Suite (arr. Doráti) (25:15)

The Philadelphia Orchestra*, conducted by Antal Doráti

Recorded 8 July 1950, Philadelphia
Issued as RCA Victor Red Seal, Nos M 1 475 (78); WDM 1475 (45); LM 48 & LM 9033 (LP)
** Billed under the pseudonym "Robin Hood Dell Orchestra" for this release*

Transfers from the archives of the Antal Doráti Centenary Society
XR remastering by Andrew Rose at Pristine Audio, July 2009
Cover artwork based on a photograph of Antal Doráti
Total duration: 67:24 ©2009 Pristine Audio.





DORÁTI CONDUCTS R. STRAUSS



PASC 179

Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40, (literally A Heroic Life, but usually more loosely translated as A Hero's Life) is a tone poem by Richard Strauss. The work was completed in 1898, and heralds the composer's more mature period in this genre. Strauss dedicated the piece to the 27-year old Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra. It was premiered by the Frankfurter Museumsorchester.

Ein Heldenleben is a through-composed, circa fifty-minute work, performed without pauses, except for a dramatic general pause at the end of the first movement. The movements are titled as follows (later editions of the score may not show these titles, owing to the composer's request that they be removed):

1. Der Held (The Hero)
2. Des Helden Widersacher (The Hero's Adversaries)
3. Des Helden Gefährtin (The Hero's Companion)
4. Des Helden Walsstatt (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)

Throughout Ein Heldenleben Strauss employs the technique of leitmotif that Richard Wagner used so liberally, but most always as elements of its enlarged sonata-rondo symphonic structure.

1. **The Hero:** The principal Hero theme, first appearing in unison horns and cello, has a soaring quality that evokes the initial theme from Ludwig van Beethoven's Third Symphony, the "Eroica": E-flat major triads ascending through an almost four-octave span, which the horn transverses throughout the entire theme. A contrasting lyrical theme first appears in high strings and winds in B major. A second heroic motive appears, outlining a stepwise descending fourth. Blazing trumpets sound a herald as the hero rides off to his adventures to the sound of a dominant seventh chord followed by a rather unexpected grand pause, the only prolonged silence throughout the entire piece.

2. **The Hero's Adversaries:** The adversaries are announced with chromatic and angular squeaks and snarls from the woodwinds (commencing with flute) and low brass: multiple motives in contrasting registers and timbres convey a sound of pettiness and mocking difficult to ignore. It is said that the adversaries represented by the sarcastic woodwinds are Strauss' critics, such as 19th-century Viennese music critic Eduard Hanslick, who is memorably written into the score with an ominous four note leitmotif played by tenor and bass tubas in parallel fifths. 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 companion—most likely the wife—of the Hero. In an extended accompanied cadenza filled with extremely detailed performance instructions by Strauss, after the fashion of an operatic recitative, the violin presents new motivic material, alternating with brief interjections in low strings, winds, and brass; a spacious third motive for the hero. During this section, the violin briefly foreshadows a theme which will appear fully later. The cadenza concludes and the new thematic material is combined in a cantabile episode commencing in G flat: the hero has found his romantic voice, and a blissful atmosphere is established. Fragments of the adversary motives briefly appear amid the somnolent hush. A fresh fanfare motive in offstage trumpets, repeated onstage, announces the beginning of the battle; the hero's supporters bid him awaken.

These three initial sections comprise an elaborate exposition, with elements of a multiple-movement symphony evident in their contrasting character and tempo. The remainder of the work will comprise development, recapitulation, and coda, with occasional new thematic material.

4. **The Hero's Battlefield:** In this first extended development section of the work, percussion sounds the advancement of the troops as the solo trumpet blares a call of war in the first appearance of "perfect" 3/4 time: a bizarre variation of the first "adversary" motive. A calamity of the foregoing motives and themes ensues as the conflict drags on. The sweet sound of the violins remind the Hero that his beloved is waiting for his return. A sequence of clamorous (and extremely challenging) trumpet fanfares suggest a turning point in the struggle, as the music approaches a harmonic climax in G flat, and the related E flat minor. Percussion is pervasive throughout the movement, which effectively depicts a vivid, militaristic battle sequence. In the end, the Hero's theme prevails over the hastily retreating adversaries, in an unprecedented compositional tapestry of human conflict. Victory is now depicted (as 4/4 time returns) in a modified recapitulation of the Hero theme as it appeared at the beginning of the piece, this time with a majestic repeated quaver accompaniment. A new cantabile theme makes its appearance in the trumpet, and an extended elaboration of this serves to preface the next section.

5. **The Hero's Works of Peace:** The Hero's victory is celebrated via themes of previous works, including Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks, Macbeth, Also sprach Zarathustra, Don Juan (the first to appear) and Don Quixote, and many other Strauss, including tone poems and Lieder. The peaceful and soaring melodies lead into the final section, assuaging the unrest building in our Hero.

6. **The Hero's Retirement from this World and Consummation:** Yet another new motive appears, commencing in a rapid descending E-flat triad, which introduces a new development of the hero theme: an elegy featuring harp, bassoon, English horn, and strings. The hero's previous works appear again in counterpoint. Shaking off worldly ideas and motivations, the Hero envisions larger and more extravagant adventures and searches for a release from his fears. The reappearance of the previous "Hanslick" motive brings in an agitato episode, as the Hero remembers the battles of his past, but is once again comforted by his companion. This is followed by a distinctly pastoral interlude featuring English horn, reminiscent of Rossini's William Tell Overture. The descending triad now appears slowly, cantabile, as the head of a new, peaceful theme in E flat: this is the theme foreshadowed during the violin cadenza. In a solemn final variation of the initial hero motive, the brass intones the last fanfare for the Hero as he retreats from his life, suggesting the beginnings of another tone poem (Also Sprach Zarathustra), a work often coupled with Ein Heldenleben.

NOTES FROM WIKIPEDIA - FURTHER NOTES ONLINE AT WWW.PRISTINECLASSICAL.COM