

Clemens Krauss

Richard Strauss Radio Recordings



Richard Georg Strauss (11 June 1864 – 8 September 1949) was a leading German composer of the late Romantic and early modern eras. He is known for his operas, which include *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Salome*, his lieder, especially his *Four Last Songs*, and his tone poems and orchestral works, such as *Don Quixote* and *Transfiguration*. *Will-Eulenspiegel*, *Merry Pranks*, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, *An Alpine Symphony*, and *Metamorphosen*, Strauss, along with Gustav Mahler, represents the late flowering of German Romanticism after Richard Wagner, in which pioneering subtleties of orchestration are combined with an advanced harmonic style.

Strauss completed the composer of **Metamorphosen**, a work for 23 solo strings, in 1945. The title and inspiration for the work comes from a profoundly self-examining poem by Goethe, which Strauss had considered setting as a choral work. Generally regarded as one of the masterpieces of the string repertoire, *Metamorphosen* contains Strauss's most sustained outpouring of tragic emotion. Conceived and written during the blackest days of World War II, the piece expresses in music Strauss's mourning of, among other things, the destruction of German culture – including the bombing of every great opera house in the nation. At the end of the war, Strauss wrote in his private diary: "The most terrible period of human history is at an end, the twelve year reign of bestiality, ignorance and anti-culture under the greatest criminals, during which Germany's 2000 years of cultural evolution meet its doom."

Der Rosenkavalier premiered in 1911 in Dresden under the baton of Ernst von Schuch, who had previously conducted the premieres of Strauss's *Feenrind*, *Salome* and *Elektra*. The reaction to the 1911 premiere was nothing short of triumphant. The opera was a complete success with the public and was a great financial boon for the house; it is reported that at the time of the premiere, tickets were sold out almost immediately. The response from music critics was overall very positive, although some responded negatively to Strauss's use of waltzes, a music form out of fashion at that present moment. Of the **Rosenkavalier** Waltzes Strauss wrote on October 29, 1944 to Krauss's wife, the singer Verena Ursleuter: "I have just finished a new arrangement of my own of the '*Rosenkavalier*' waltzes, as the existing version, with those atrocious transitions, has been getting on my nerves for some time."

Strauss' second Suite based on clavier pieces by François Couperin appeared as Opus 86, and entitled **Divertimento**. Its very existence is due to Krauss who first performed it in Munich in 1941 as a ballet called "*Voluntary Fugue*". A concert performance, with Krauss conducting the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, followed in Vienna in 1943. On January 4, 1941 Krauss wrote to Strauss: "Just back from Vienna to find the first Couperin installment, and the second followed today. I am so glad you have augmented the Suite for us, and I think you with all my heart for all the trouble you have taken over it. The scoring of the individual pieces is absolutely masterly, and their contrasted sequence is most effective."

Notes derived from W. Knappe and Philip's U. Steinhilber

Notes on the transfers

These recordings were made in the studios of Bavarian Radio for broadcast in the early 1950s, and emerged on 1960s LPs from Philips. The notes to one of these discs includes the following text: "These recordings *(sic)* were not made expressly for the gramophone, yet even if the recording quality does not come up to the standard of perfection one is accustomed to nowadays, it seemed well worth while rescuing them from the oblivion of radio archives, in the belief that the public will be eager to appreciate the authenticity of performances by a conductor so intimately connected with Richard Strauss." My aim in applying modern 32-bit XR remastering techniques to these recordings, was to do away with Philips' "recording quality" caveat as much as is now possible, and I'm glad to say that in all three cases major improvements in sound quality have been achieved. Gone is the boxy, veiled tone of the originals, and in its place is a full, clear sound that would bear comparison to the finest recordings of the era. **AR**

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Metamorphosen

Waltzes from 'Der Rosenkavalier' • Divertimento, Op. 86

Bamberg Symphony Orchestra

Bavarian Radio studio recordings, 1953/54



