

2002-2003 Season



DAYTON
PHILHARMONIC

As we approach the end of the DPO concert season, you might say “Things are winding down.” But you’d be wrong. In fact, things are gearing up. May is the busiest month of our season, with 26 services (a service is a rehearsal or a concert) packed into 31 days.

May is also the most exciting month of our season, the culmination of our musical celebration of the centennial of the Wright Brothers’ first powered flight. Since our Wright Brothers Commissioning Project took off in January we have presented three new Wilbur-and-Orville-themed works: Steve Winteregg’s *To Fly Unbounded*, Michael Schelle’s *Wright Flight* and Robert Xavier Rodriguez’ *Flight*. And that’s just the beginning.

We shift into high-gear on Mother’s Day, May 11th, with our special “Inventing Flight” concert. That night we’ll reprise the Winteregg and Rodriguez pieces and unveil two new ones: *Inventing Flight* by William Bolcom and “. . . on the Wings of Angels” by Ronald Foster.

The Bolcom is a co-commission by the DPO and the North Carolina Symphony.

“Hey, how’d North Carolina get in on this thing?” you might shout, in a fit of righteous Daytonian indignation. When we conceived of the Wright Brothers Commissioning Project we spoke to the North Carolina Symphony to see if they’d be interested in joining in. They decided to “go halvesies” on the Bolcom piece. In fact, they performed the world premiere a few weeks ago, and I went down to Raleigh to check it out. It’s a wonderful piece, comprised of brief musical portraits of great names in aviation: Daedalus and

Icarus, Leonardo da Vinci and the Wright Brothers. It’s also a delightful case of history repeating itself: A brilliant idea is hatched in Dayton. It’s tried out in North Carolina. It comes back home to Dayton to be perfected!

“. . . on the Wings of Angels” is an extraordinary story. It’s a piece for (are you sitting down?) the Dayton Philharmonic and Wright-Patt’s Air Force Band of Flight. For us to play together! It came about because composer Ron Foster is a friend of both me and the Band of Flight’s commander, Lt. Col. Alan Sierichs. We all wanted to do something—something really grand—together. And the Wright Brothers’ centennial gave us the opportunity. The result is an extraordinary 13-minute piece that you won’t forget. Ron uses the more than 130 musicians and two conductors at his disposal to create amazing sounds, with brass players in the hall, dueling electric guitars in the side boxes and Air Force percussionists playing on airplane propellers (metal ones—apparently the composite ones just “thud”) and brake disks from C-130s and C-141s. The piece ends with a grand fantasia on the Air Force Hymn, “Lord, Guard and Guide” that will fill the Mead Theatre with the grandest sounds it has yet witnessed. Everything about “. . . on the Wings of Angels” is big. Including the score. The manuscript measures 23-by-35 inches. That’s until you turn the first page. Then it measures 46-by-35 inches! A slightly smaller printed score is in-process. Good thing, too. Otherwise Burt Saidel would have to build a new super-sized music stand for me (and one for Alan Sierichs, too)!



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Neal's Notes on Acoustics continued from page 21.

And the Wright stuff continues after Mothers' Day, too. Bill Bolcom's piece opens our classical concerts on May 15th and 17th. Then, in the last week of May, we turn the Schuster Center into a recording studio as we record the DPO's second compact disc recording. The

Winteregg, Schelle, Rodriguez and Bolcom pieces will all be recorded for commercial release later this year, bringing our "Wright Brothers Season" to a thrilling conclusion.

Think we'll all be tired but happy when it's all over? You might not be Wilbur or Orville, but you're right!



Hank Dahlman continued from page 26.

Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Master of Music degree from the University of South Florida, and a Bachelor of Music Education degree from Longwood College. He has prepared choruses for prominent conductors such as Robert Shaw, William McLaughlin, and Neal Gittleman. Recently, he was one of six conductors chosen internationally to study with Jon

Washburn and conduct the Vancouver Chamber Choir as part of that ensemble's National Conductors Symposium.

Prior to his appointment at Wright State University, Dahlman has held conducting, teaching, and administrative positions at the University of Akron, University of Missouri-Kansas City, University of Kentucky, and Hillsborough County Public Schools in Florida.



William Bolcom continued from page 29.

San Francisco Opera Orchestra; Pacific Northwest Ballet; and numerous soloists and chamber music organizations. He can be heard on numerous recordings both as a pianist and as a composer.

Bolcom outlined the plan for his new work, *Inventing Flight*: Three thumbnail sketches for orchestra:

1) *Daedalus and Icarus*. Daedalus warns Icarus not to fly too near the sun, and Icarus, heedless, plunges to the ground

when the wax that held the feathers together melts.

2) *Leonardo*. Leonardo, the genius, invents flying machine after flying machine, each more clever and brilliant than the last. None work.

3) *Wilbur and Orville*. Two brothers from Dayton — not gods, not internationally celebrated intellects — work very hard and actually fly!

Classical Concert

Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra

Neal Gittleman, Music Director

Thursday
May 15
2003

8 PM
Schuster Center

Saturday
May 17
2003

8 PM
Schuster Center

Concert Sponsors:

Thursday night co-sponsored by Danis Building Construction Company and Merrill Lynch

Saturday night is the NCR/William S. Anderson Concert

Frederica von Stade, mezzo-soprano

Ms. Von Stade's appearance made possible in part by NCR

William Bolcom
(b.1938)

Inventing Flight*
Daedalus and Icarus
Leonardo
Wilbur and Orville

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

Shéhérazade
Asie
La flûte enchantée
L'indifférent

Frederica von Stade, mezzo-soprano

INTERMISSION

George Gershwin
(1898-1937)

Four Songs:
"Fascinating Rhythm"
"How Long Has This Been Going On"
"The Man I Love"
"I Got Rhythm"

Frederica von Stade, mezzo-soprano

Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)

Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks

*This commission project is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts



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hosted by Lloyd Bryant
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Sunday, August 17, 2003, at 7:00 pm

Ross Motorcars and Bob Ross Buick/GMC are the official automobile dealerships of the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra.

Frederica von Stade

A Biography



Described by the *New York Times* as "one of America's finest artists and singers," Frederica von Stade remains at the peak of her extraordinary career and continues to be extolled as one of the music world's most beloved figures.

Miss von Stade's career has taken her to the stages of the world's great opera houses and concert halls. She began at the top, when she received a contract from Sir Rudolf Bing during the Metropolitan Opera auditions, and since her debut in 1970 she has sung nearly all of her great roles with that company. In January 2000, the company celebrated the 30th anniversary of her debut with a new production of *The Merry Widow* specifically for her, and in 1995, as a celebration of her 25th anniversary, the Metropolitan Opera created for her a new production of *Pelléas et Mélisande*. In addition, Miss von Stade has appeared with every leading American opera company, including San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Los Angeles Opera. Her career in Europe has been no less spectacular, with new productions mounted for her at Teatro alla Scala, Covent Garden, the Vienna State Opera, and the Paris Opera. She is invited regularly by the finest conductors, among them Claudio Abbado, Charles Dutoit, James Levine, Kurt Masur, Riccardo Muti, Seiji Ozawa, André Previn, Leonard Slatkin, and Michael Tilson Thomas, to appear in concert with the world's leading orchestras, including the Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland

Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, London Symphony, Washington's National Symphony, and the Orchestra of La Scala.

She has made over sixty recordings with every major label, including complete operas, aria albums, symphonic works, solo recital programs, and popular crossover albums. Her recordings have garnered six Grammy nominations, two Grand Prix du Disc awards, the Deutsche Schallplattenpreis, Italy's Premio della Critica Discografica, and "Best of the Year" citations by *Stereo Review* and *Opera News*. She has enjoyed the distinction of holding simultaneously the first and second places on national sales charts for Angel/EMI's *Show Boat* and Telarc's *The Sound of Music*.

Frederica von Stade is the holder of honorary doctorates from Yale University, Boston University, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (which holds a Frederica von Stade Distinguished Chair in Voice), the Georgetown University School of Medicine, and her alma mater, the Mannes School of Music. In 1998 Miss von Stade was awarded France's highest honor in the Arts when she was appointed as an officer of *L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*, and in 1983 she was honored with an award given at The White House by President Reagan in recognition of her significant contribution to the arts.

Acomodation for the Dayton Philharmonic's Classical guest artists are provided by DoubleTree Hotel-Downtown Dayton.

Maurice Ravel

Shéhérazade

Program Notes by Dr. Richard Benedum

Program Note for Inventing Flight by William Byrd can be found on page 29.

Ravel was born on March 7, 1875, in Ciboure in the Basses-Pyrénées, and died on December 28, 1937. *Shéhérazade* was composed in 1903 and premiered by Jane Hatto, soprano with Alfred Cortot conducting on May 17, 1904, at a concert of the Société Nationale in the Salle du Nouveau Théâtre in Paris. The most recent performance by the Dayton Philharmonic was on January 18th, 1984 with Charles Wendelken-Wilson conducting and vocal soloist Tatiana Troyanos.

As a child, when Ravel began to show musical talent, his parents secured good teachers for him, and ultimately enrolled him in a preparatory piano class at the Paris Conservatoire. However, in his early years there (1889-95) his record as a student of harmony and piano was less than stellar. The authorities considered him something of an *enfant terrible*. In 1897 Ravel became a member of the composition class taught by Gabriel Fauré, whose sympathetic tutelage he acknowledged in the dedications of several early compositions.

Ravel tried several times for the coveted *Prix de Rome* granted by the French Academy in Rome, which offered official recognition of a young artist of promise, together with a stipend which provided financial independence while the artist lived for seven years at the Villa Medici in Rome.

The situation in 1904 was an especially blatant case of favoritism for students of a particular jury member. Ravel had

established his reputation with the *Pavane pour une infante defunte*, *Jeux d'eau*, and his String Quartet, but he failed to pass the preliminary round for the competition. Indignation at this personal prejudice shown by the jury erupted in the "*affaire Ravel*"—the kind of quarrel which the French love—a controversy debated in cultural circles and carried to the public by the newspapers. The matter was resolved only when the philistine leadership of the Conservatoire was replaced by the more enlightened directorship of Fauré.

The song cycle *Shéhérazade* was written during this time, just before the "*affaire Ravel*." The composer chose three poems of Tristan Klingsor (a Wagnerian disguise for Leon Leclère). The poet was also a composer and painter and a member of Ravel's band of artistic allies, "*Les Apaches*." The poems Ravel chose are rich in descriptive possibilities rather than the more obvious lyrical choices:

"My poems are like sketches . . . A poem should be that already; a point of departure for a song, or a melody . . . Perhaps that is why I have had the good fortune to please musicians. You see, I attempted not to be merely a rhymist. I attempted to be a rhythmist. Rhythm, in poetry, music, and in painting, is the artist's foremost resource."

Klingsor describes Ravel's attitude to composition:

"For Ravel, setting a poem meant transforming it into expressive recitative, to exalt the inflections of speech to the state of song, to exalt all the possibilities of



Instrumentation:

- 2 Flutes and piccolo
- 2 Oboes and English Horn
- 2 Clarinets
- 2 Bassoons
- 4 Horns
- 2 Trumpets
- 3 Trombones
- Tuba
- Timpani
- Percussion
- Harp
- Celeste
- Strings

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Maurice Ravel continued from page 41.

the word, but not to subjugate it. Ravel made himself the servant of the poet.”

The first song, *Asie*, is the longest of the three. It is a sweeping panorama of oriental fantasy as the poet visits isles of flowers, Damascus and the Persian cities. When China is mentioned, the music becomes evocative of the Chinese milieu. The poet sees smiling executioners, beggars, queens, and—as the music rises to its biggest climax—those who die for love or for hate. With the high B-flat of this climactic phrase, the opening music

returns as the poet dreams of telling his tale.

The second song is of a young slave girl who hears the sound of her lover's flute while her master is asleep. The flute obbligato entwines its duet around the vocal line.

The third song is Ravel's most exquisite and self-revealing song. It tells of a handsome young stranger who turns away from proffered hospitality and passes on his way.

Program note by Julane Rodgers.

Shéhérazade (1903)

[Text: Tristan Klingsor]

Asie

Asie, Asie, Asie,
Vieux pays merveilleux des contes de nourrice,
Où dort la fantaisie comme une impératrice,
En sa forêt tout emplie de mystère.

Asie,
Je voudrais m'en aller avec la goëlette
Qui se berce ce soir dans le port,
Mystérieuse et solitaire,
Et qui déploie enfin ses voiles violettes,
Comme un immense oiseau de nuit dans le ciel d'or.

Je voudrais m'en aller vers des îles de fleurs,
En écoutant chanter la mer perverse,
Sur en vieux rythme ensorceleur.

Je voudrais voir Damas et les villes de Perse,
Avec des minarets légers dans l'air.
Je voudrais voir de beaux turbans de soie,
Sur de visages noirs aux dents claires.

Je voudrais voir des yeux sombres d'amour,
Et de prunelles brillantes de joie,
En des peaux jaunes comme des oranges.
Je voudrais voir des vêtements de velours
Et des habits à longues franges.

Je voudrais voir des calumets, entre des bouches
Tout entourées de barbe blanche.
Je voudrais voir d'âpres marchands aux regards
louches,
Et des cadis, et des vizirs
Qui de seul mouvement de leur doigt qui se penche,
Accordent vie ou mort, au gré de leur désir.

Je voudrais voir la Perse, et l'Inde, et puis la Chine,
Les mandarins ventrus sous les ombrelles,
Et les princesses aux mains fines,
Et les lettrés qui se querrelent
Sur la poésie et sur la beauté.

Je voudrais m'attarder au palais enchanté,
Et comme un voyageur étranger
Contempler à loisir des paysages peints
Sur des étoffes en des cadres de sapin,
Avec un personnage au milieu d'un verger.

Asia

Asia, Asia, Asia,
ancient, marvelous country of fairy tales,
where fantasy sleeps like an empress
in her forest full of mystery.

Asia,
I would like to go with the schooner
which is rocking this evening in the port
mysterious and solitary,
and which finally spreads its violet sails
like a huge bird of night in the golden sky.

I would like to go away to the islands of flowers,
while listening to the song of the wayward sea,
with its old, bewitching rhythm.

I would like to see Damascus and the cities of Persia,
with airy minarets in the sky.
I would like to see beautiful silken turbans
above black faces with shining teeth.

I would like to see eyes dark with love
and pupils sparkling with joy,
in skins yellow as oranges.
I would like to see garments of velvet
and robes with long fringes.

I would like to see calumets, held between lips
fringed with white beards.
I would like to see avaricious
merchants with shifty glances,
and cadis, and viziers
who, with a single movement of their bending finger,
decree life or death, just as they wish.

I would like to see Persia, and India, and then China,
the portly mandarins beneath their sunshades,
and the princesses with their delicate hands,
and the scholars who dispute
over poetry and beauty;

I would like to linger in the enchanted palace,
and like a foreign traveler
gaze at leisure upon countrysides painted
on fabrics in pinewood frames,
with a figure in the midst of an orchard.

Je voudrais voir des assassins souriant
Du bourreau qui coupe un cou d'innocent,
Avec son grand sabre courbé d'Orient.
Je voudrais voir des pauvres et des reines,
Je voudrais voir des roses et du sang,
Je voudrais voir mourir d'amour ou bien de haine.

Et puis m'en revenir plus tard
Narrer mon aventure aux curieux de rêves,
En élevant comme Sindbad ma vieille tasse arabe
De temps en temps jusqu'à mes lèvres,
Pour interrompre le conte avec art . . .

La flûte enchantée

L'ombre est douce et mon maître dort
Coiffé d'un bonnet conique de soie,
Et son long nez jaune en sa barbe blanche.
Mais moi, je suis éveillée encor
Et j'écoute au dehors
Une chanson de flûte où s'épanche
Tour à tour la tristesse ou la joie.
Un air tour à tour languoureux ou frivole
Que mon amoureux chéri joue.
Et quand je m'approche de la croisée,
Il me semble que chaque note s'envole
De la flûte vers ma joue,
Comme un mystérieux baiser.

L'indifférent

Tes yeux sont doux comme ceux d'une fille,
Jeune étranger, et la corbe fine
De ton beau visage de duvet ombragé,
Est plus séduisante encore de ligne.
Ta lèvre chante sur le pas de ma porte
Une langue inconnue et charmante,
Comme une musique fausse.
Entre! Et que mon vin te reconforte . . .
Mais non, tu passes,
Et de mon seuil je te vois t'éloigner,
Me faisant un dernier geste avec grâce,
Et la hanche légèrement ployée
Par ta démarche féminine et lasse . . .

I would like to see assassins smiling
at the executioner who cuts off an innocent head
with his grand curved oriental saber.
I would like to see beggars and queens,
I would like to see roses and blood,
I would like to see dying in the name of love- or hate.

And then returning later,
to narrate my adventure to those interested in dreams,
while raising like Sinbad my old Arabian cup
from time to time to my lips,
to interrupt the tale with artistry . . .

The enchanted flute

The shade is soft and my master is sleeping
with his conical silken cap on his head,
and his long yellow nose in his white beard,
But I, I am still awake
and I hear outside
the melody of a flute pouring forth
sadness and joy in turn.
An air now languorous, now gay,
that my darling lover plays,
and when I draw near the casement,
it seems as though each note flies
from the flute toward my cheek
like a mysterious kiss.

The indifferent one

Your eyes are gentle like those of a girl,
young stranger, and the delicate curve
of your handsome face, shaded with down,
is still more attractive in its contour.
On my doorstep your lips chant
an unknown, charming tongue,
like false music.
Enter! And let my wine refresh you . . .
but no—you pass by,
and I see you departing from my threshold,
gracefully waving farewell to me,
your hips lightly swaying
with your languid, feminine gait . . .



George Gershwin

Songs

Instrumentation:

- 3 Flutes (incl. piccolo)
- 2 Oboes
- 3 Clarinets (incl. bass clarinet)
- 2 Bassoons
- 4 Saxaphones (2 altos, 2 tenors)
- 2 Horns
- 3 Trumpets
- 3 Trombones
- Timpani
- Percussion
- Harp
- Piano
- Strings

Gershwin was born on September 28, 1898, in Brooklyn and died of a brain tumor on July 11, 1937, in Hollywood.

This is the first performance of these songs by the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestra on a Classical Subscription series concert.

Gershwin described himself as a “natural-born composer.” His boyhood was marked by an interest in athletics and indifference to school. Music was seldom heard at home until the family bought their first piano in 1910. Although the instrument had been intended for his brother Ira, George quickly took it over and progressed rapidly. After early music studies centering around “the classics,” he got his first job at sixteen as a “song plugger” at Remick’s Music House. He had composed his first song at fourteen and his first musical comedy, *La, La, Lucille* before he was twenty. He was catapulted into national prominence with his song *Swanee* (1919), sung by Al Jolson in theatres throughout the country. Songs flowed from his pen. In 1930 Ira described his working method:

“I have known him to write four tunes in an afternoon, tunes I thought he would put down for future use, only to find next day that he had discarded them.

Once we returned from *Funny Face*, which was playing the road prior to the New York opening when George discovered that he had left two notebooks containing at least forty tunes in the hotel in Wilmington. After calling the hotel and learning the notebooks could not be

located, he did not seem greatly perturbed. His attitude is that he can always write new ones.”

The turning point in Gershwin’s career—an “experiment in modern music”—took place on February 12, 1924, in New York City’s Aeolian Hall: in a historic “jazz concert” Paul Whiteman led his Palais Royal Orchestra in a program which included George Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*. The lanky twenty-five year-old Gershwin strode across the stage, took his place at the piano, and earned a tumultuous ovation. Many in the audience rightly understood the true significance of this moment in American music history. Others maintained, however, that “symphonic jazz” was impossible, since true jazz was improvisatory and could never be captured in printed notes.

The varying critical opinions about *Rhapsody in Blue*, however, could not halt Gershwin’s growing fame and affluence (between 1924 and 1934 he received more than a quarter of a million dollars from performances, recordings, and rental fees for his *Rhapsody* alone). He moved to a five-story town house in a fashionable neighborhood in New York’s upper west side, began to develop his interest in the visual arts by collecting paintings, sculptures, prints, and drawings (including works by Picasso, Modigliani, Utrillo, and Thomas Hart Benton; in December, 1937, several months after his death, 39 of his own paintings were exhibited in New York), and also became

Continued on page 76



George Gershwin continued from page 44.

an important figure in New York theatrical and literary society. Playwright George S. Kaufman once remarked, "I'd bet on George any time in a 100-yard dash to the piano."

"Fascinatin' Rhythm" and "The Man I Love" both come from *Lady Be Good*,

George and Ira's first musical together, written in 1924. "How Long Has This Been Goin' On?" is from *Rosalie* (1928), and "I Got Rhythm" is from *Girl Crazy* (1930). Each is, in its own way, vintage Gershwin. Enjoy!

Fascinating rhythm, from *Lady, be Good!* (1924)

[Text: Ira Gershwin]

Got a little rhythm, a rhythm, a rhythm
That pit-apats through my brain;
So darn persistent,
The day isn't distant
When it'll drive me insane.
Comes in the morning
Without any warning,
And hangs around me all day.
I'll have to sneak up to it
Someday, and speak up to it.
I hope it listens when I say:

Fascinating Rhythm,
You've got me on the go!
Fascinating Rhythm,
I'm all a-quiver.

What a mess you're making!
The neighbors want to know
Why I'm always shaking
Just like a flivver.

Each morning I get up with the sun –
Start a-hopping, Never stopping –
To find at night no work has been done.

I know that Once it didn't matter –
But now you're doing wrong;
When you start to patter
I'm so unhappy.

Won't you take a day off?
Decide to run along
Somewhere far away off –
And make it snappy!

Oh, how I long to be the [wo]man I used
to be!
Fascinating Rhythm,
Oh, won't you stop picking on me?

I Got Rhythm, from *Crazy Girl*

GEORGE GERSHWIN

Days can be sunny, with never a sigh;
Don't need what money can buy.
Birds in the tree sing their dayful of song,
Why shouldn't we sing along?

I'm chipper all day, Happy with my lot.
How do I get that way? Look at what I've
got:

I got rhythm, I got music,
I got my man,
Who could ask for anything more?

I got daisies, In green pastures,
I got my man,
Who could ask for anything more?

Old man trouble, I don't mind him,
You won't find him 'round my door.
I got starlight, I got sweet dreams,
I got my man,
Who could ask for anything more?
Who could ask for anything more?

Continued on page 46

The Man I Love from *Lady Be Good* (1924)

[Lyrics: Ira Gershwin]

When the mellow moon begins to beam
Ev'ry night I dream a little dream
And of course Prince Charming is the theme,
The he for me.

I'll understand,
And in a little while
He'll take my hand
And though it seems absurd
I know we both won't say a word.

Although I realize as well as you
It is seldom that a dream comes true,
To me it's clear
That he'll appear.

Maybe I shall meet him Sunday,
Maybe Monday,
Maybe not;
Still I'm sure to meet him one day,
Maybe Tuesday will be my good news day.

Some day he'll come along,
the man I love,
And he'll be big and strong,
the man I love,
And when he comes my way,
I'll do my best to make him stay.

He'll build a little home
Just meant for two,
From which I'll never roam,
Who would, would you?
And so all else above
I'm waiting for the man I love.

He'll look at me and smile,

How long has this been going on?, from *Funny Face*

I was taught that I ought
not expose my inner senses.
Had no plan for man;
I was full of self-defences.
Now I feel that I really
should face the consequences.
My philosophic search
has left me in the lurch.
I must find why my mind
is behaving like a dancer.
What's the clue to pursue?
For I have to have the answer.
I could cry
salty tears.
Where have I been
all these years?
Is it fun?
Or should I run?
How long has this been going on?
There were chills
up my spine,

And some thrills
I can't define.
Does it show?
And who would know?
How long has this been going on?
Oh, I feel
like I could melt.
Into heaven I'm hurled.
I know how Columbus felt
finding another world.
Can I trust how I feel?
Is this my Achilles heel?
Look at me:
I'm all at sea.
How long has this been going on?
This is grand!
This is great!
I'm in such a
lovely state!
Can one kiss do
all of this?

Richard Strauss

Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks

Program Notes by Dr. Richard Benedum

Strauss was born on June 11th, 1864, in Munich, and died on September 8th, 1949, at Garmisch-Partenkirchen. *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*, after the Old Rogue's Tale, set for Large Orchestra in Rondo-Form (the full title in English), Op. 28, occupied Strauss during the winter of 1894-95. It was finished on May 6, 1895, and first performed by Franz Wülner in Cologne on November 5th. The most recent performance by the Dayton Philharmonic was on November 11th and 12th, 1987, with Isaiah Jackson conducting.

The idea of expressing a poetic or programmatic element in music was particularly congenial to the Romantic mind and it manifests itself early in the nineteenth century in the descriptive concert overtures of Beethoven, Berlioz, and Mendelssohn, and later on in the symphonic poems of Liszt. This genre culminates in the tone poems of Strauss, single movement orchestral works accompanied by a poetic or narrative text.

Chief protagonist of tonight's work is the folk character Till Eulenspiegel, a tramp and jokester who wandered about Europe in the 14th century and whose escapades are chronicled by the Franciscan Thomas Murner of Strasbourg, some 150 years later.

Although at first reluctant to provide a detailed program for *Till*, Strauss later marked some of the most important references in the score. The work begins with a gentle phrase, "Once upon a time there was a roguish jester"; while the horn solo which follows—one of the most famous in the repertoire—is inscribed "whose name was Till Eulenspiegel."

[Sehr lebhaft]

Solo Horn

cresc.

The music builds to a climax, after which the first Till theme is heard again, depicting the "arch-mocker of mankind—thumb to nose and supremely devil-may-care," in the words of Strauss biographer and conductor Norman Del Mar.

An upward rush of clarinets, a violent cymbal crash, and "Hop! On horseback straight through the market women" Till rides, creating pandemonium and havoc as he goes. But he escapes the confusion, "Off and away in seven-league boots." There is a moment's pause as Till hides in a mouse-hole and cautiously pokes his head out to see if the coast is clear. A series of jabbing minor seconds suggest his gradual emergence.

In his next adventure he is "dressed as a priest and oozes unction and morality. Yet the rogue peeps out of the big toe." In the midst of his sermon, however, "he is seized with a horrid premonition as to the outcome of his mockery of religion," and he shudders with fear. He banishes his fear with difficulty and after a headlong violin glissando, Till is into another activity. Now we see "Till the cavalier, exchanging sweet courtesies with beautiful girls." Before long he is head-over-heels in love, as evidenced by a romantic version of the horn theme. But the girl of his choice will have none of him. Outraged, Till's first theme strides about the orchestra in a fury.

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Instrumentation:

- 4 Flutes (incl. piccolo)
- 4 Oboes (incl. English horn)
- 4 Clarinets (incl. E-flat clarinet)
- 4 Bassoons (incl. contrabassoon)
- 4 Horns
- 3 Trumpets
- 3 Trombones
- Tuba
- Timpani
- Percussion
- Strings

Richard Strauss continued from page 47.



The next adventure finds Till among the pedagogues. With a series of jerky statements of his second theme, Till “pose[s] a few atrocious theses to the philistines, [and] leaves them to their fate dumbfounded.” They flounder in the academic, professorial mire of endless intellectual deliberations until Till, from a safe distance, hurls derision at them with a sharp-edged orchestral trill which Strauss called the “*grosse grimasse*” (great grimace). (Strauss must have taken particular satisfaction in his depiction of the pedagogues and particularly in the *grosse Grimasse* which depicts not only Till’s antics, but also represents Strauss thumbing his nose at the Munich pedants whom he blamed for the failure of his opera *Guntram*.)

A drum-roll signals Till’s arraignment before the judges. The charge: blasphemy. This time Till has gone too far; the sentence is “*der Tod*” (Death).



The final events are depicted graphically in the orchestra. “Up the ladder with him! There he dangles, the breath leaves his body, the last convulsion and Till’s mortal self is finished.” Strauss concludes with a whimsical ending with the motive that opened the work, suggesting that for all his malicious practical jokes, Till was a good and lovable fellow at heart. In the end, Till has the last laugh.