

A hand holding a glowing globe of the Earth against a starry night sky. The globe is illuminated from within, showing a vibrant green and yellow core, and is surrounded by a red ring. A bright purple lightning bolt strikes the globe from the top. The background is a deep blue night sky filled with stars and a bright sun or star in the distance. The foreground shows a green field with a plowed path leading towards the horizon.

RICHARD
STRAUSS

ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA

SALOME'S TANZ — DER ROSENKAVALIER: WALTZES

Slovak Philharmonic
Zdeněk Košler

Richard Strauss (1864 - 1949)

Also sprach Zarathustra, Opus 30

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Von den Hinterweltlern | (Of the Afterworldsmen) |
| Von der grossen Sehnsucht | (Of the Great Longing) |
| Von den Freuden und Leidenschaften | (Of Joys and Passions) |
| Das Grablied | (The Funeral Song) |
| Von den Wissenschaften | (Of Science) |
| Der Genesende | (The Convalescent) |
| Das Nachtlied | (The Night Song) |
| Das Nachtwanderlied | (The Night-wanderer's Song) |

Dance of Salome

Waltz Sequence from Der Rosenkavalier

Writing in 1857, seven years before the birth of Richard Strauss, the Viennese critic Eduard Hanslick had poured scorn on the new form of music pioneered by Liszt, the symphonic poem, a creation with "intelligence, poetry and imagery in abundance, but no musical essence". Programme music has always had its detractors, but Hanslick's objections were primarily towards what he saw as the attempted inclusion of unmusical "meaning" in a work, and that of such a vast kind that the very effort to convey it in contemporary musical terms seemed an act of impudent effrontery.

Richard Strauss was an early convert to the views of Liszt and Wagner, in spite of his father's prohibitions. He maintained that there was no valid distinction to be made between programme music and abstract music, the best forms being the most expressive. He saw no limit to what could be expressed, either in outward detail or in subtler psychological terms.

Born in Munich in 1864, the son of a leading horn-player and his second wife, the daughter of a well-to-do brewing family, Strauss enjoyed a comfortable enough childhood and a good general and musical education. He followed this with an early career as a conductor, at first under Hans von Bülow at Meiningen and later in Munich, in Berlin and in extensive tours abroad. His compositions, which had provided him with his introduction to Meiningen, explored, once he had accepted the influence of Wagner, the symphonic poem, a form of which he made much use between *Don Juan*, which he finished in 1889, and *Ein Heldenleben*, which he completed in 1898. The new century brought the period of his great operas, until 1929 in collaboration with the writer Hugo von Hoffmansthal, and a reputation that survived the political difficulties he encountered through his supposed acquiescence in the National Socialist régime in Germany. After 1945 he took refuge in Switzerland until 1949, when he was able to return home to his villa at Garmisch-Partenkirchen, where he died four months later.

Also sprach Zarathustra (Thus spoke Zarathustra), a tone poem after Friedrich Nietzsche, was written in 1896, during the period Strauss spent as conductor at the opera in his native city of Munich. It is based on the rhapsodic expression of Nietzsche's highly personal philosophy, finally published in 1892, in which Christian virtues are rejected in favour of the power of the Superman (Übermensch), a concept that with his notions of die blonde Bestie, Herrenmoral and Christian Sklavenmoral, proved useful to later political extremists.

Zarathustra, a mouthpiece for Nietzsche, took himself to the mountains, staying there for ten years in solitude. Then, one morning, he arose and addressed the Sun, seeking his blessing, as he proposes to descend once more among men to impart to them his wisdom, setting as the Sun sets and pouring out to mankind his accumulated understanding.

Strauss makes use of an unusually large orchestra, deployed in the most varied way, while there is a tonal ambiguity that remains to the final bars. The work opens with the rising of the sun and emergent nature, over a note sustained by double basses, organ and double bassoon. The climax of the rising sun is followed by *Von den Hinterweltlern*, the inhabitants of the unseen world, a mysterious theme, leading to the sound of the Credo and song of faith, scored for strings and organ. The great longing brings together a theme of yearning, briefly touched on before, and the nature theme, the Credo, and now, from the organ, the Magnificat. This material, with a stormier element, leads to a passage *Von den Freuden und Leidenschaften*. *Das Grablied*, employs two of the preceding motifs and leads, in the section *Von den Wissenschaften*, to a fugue, its development interrupted by the appearance of another, triumphant theme, and resuming with a motif representing satiety. These motifs and the fugue combine in the convalescent, *Der Genesende*. The dance-song brings together the earlier motifs, dwindling to the night-song, a preparation for the song of the night-wanderer. The final epilogue leaves unresolved the conflict of tonality and the conflict of nature and spirit.

The complex process of the tone poem takes Zarathustra from the splendour of sunrise through a rejection of those who look to the past, to longing, joys and passions. He turns from satiety and despair, in the funeral song, and finds no comfort in science. Falling as one dead, he is revived and finds joy in the dance of laughter, in which all human aspirations may be combined. Night comes and the song of the watcher, as midnight renews its eternal enigma.

The opera *Salome*, based on Oscar Wilde's play, was first staged in Dresden in 1905 and won immediate favour, although the censors in Vienna prevented its performance until 1918. *Salome's* dance, in return for which she demands from Herod the head of John the Baptist, was, as Strauss suggested, the dance of a chaste oriental princess, to be performed with the most simple and

restrained gestures. His wishes have not always been respected in the theatre. *Der Rosenkavalier*, with a libretto by Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, was completed in 1910 and staged in Dresden the following year. The drama centres on the Marschallin and her unselfish renunciation of her young lover Oktavian in a work that seems filled with bitter-sweet nostalgia, a feeling that is perceptible in the waltz sequence from the opera that Strauss arranged in 1944, to which he added further thematic development. Nevertheless the concert version must make much of its effect in reminding us of the opera itself.

The Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra

The Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra has benefited considerably from the work of its distinguished conductors. These included Vaclav Talich (1949 - 1952), Ludovit Rajter and Ladislav Slovak. The Czech conductor Libor Pešek was appointed resident conductor in 1981, and the present Principal Conductor is the Slovak musician Bystrik Režucha. Zdeněk Košler has also had a long and distinguished association with the orchestra and has conducted many of its most successful recordings, among them the complete symphonies of Dvořák.

During the years of its professional existence the Slovak Philharmonic has worked under the direction of many of the most distinguished conductors from abroad, from Eugene Goossens and Malcolm Sargent to Claudio Abbado, Antal Dorati and Riccardo Muti.

The orchestra has undertaken many tours abroad, including visits to Germany and Japan, and has made a large number of recordings for the Czech Opus label, for Supraphon, for Hungaroton and, in recent years, for the Marco Polo and Naxos labels. These recordings have brought the orchestra a growing international reputation and praise from the critics of leading international publications.

Zdeněk Košler

The Czech conductor Zdeněk Košler studied under Karel Ancerl at the Prague Academy of Arts, and distinguished himself early in his career at the Besançon Conductors' Competition and in the Dimitri Mitropoulos Competition in New York. The first prize in the second of these enabled him to work as assistant conductor with Leonard Bernstein for one year.

In Czechoslovakia Košler began as conductor of the Prague opera ensemble, before becoming chief conductor and music director of the opera in Olomouc and Ostrava. He spent a short time as permanent conductor of the Prague Symphony Orchestra, before moving to Berlin, where he was appointed Music Director of the Komische Oper in 1965. In 1971 he became chief conductor of the Slovak National Theatre Opera, undertaking engagements at the same time with the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, and conducting the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra in Prague, in addition to guest appearances with major orchestras abroad, in Europe, Canada and the Far East.

From 1980 until 1985 he was chief conductor and artistic director of the Prague National Theatre Opera. Košler has received the highest national honour, the title National Artist from the Czechoslovakian government, while winning awards abroad for his recordings.

RICHARD STRAUSS

Also sprach Zarathustra Thus Spoke Zarathustra

Salome's Tanz
Salome's Dance

Der Rosenkavalier: Waltzes
The Knight of the Rose: Waltzes

Slovak Philharmonic
Zdeněk Košler

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|---------------------------------------|------|----------------------------------|-------|
| Also sprach Zarathustra Op. 30 | | | |
| 1. Prelude | 1:49 | 7. The Convalescent | 5:34 |
| 2. Of the Afterworldsmen | 3:06 | 8. The Dance Song | 4:11 |
| 3. Of the Great Longing | 1:59 | 9. The Night Song | 3:49 |
| 4. Of Joys and Passions | 2:10 | 10. The Night-wanderer's Song | 4:05 |
| 5. The Funeral | 2:25 | 11. Salome's Dance | 9:45 |
| 6. Song of Science | 4:08 | 12. Der Rosenkavalier | 12:05 |
| | | Op. 59 (Waltz Sequence I) | |

Recorded at the Reduta Hall in Bratislava from 18th to 20th October, 1988 and on 23rd January, 1989.

Producer: Martin Sauer

Music Notes: Keith Anderson

2xHD Mastering: René Laflamme and Anne-Marie Sylvestre

2xHD Executive Producer: André Perry

Graphics: André Perry and Sylvie Labelle

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