



CHANDOS
SUPER AUDIO CD

STRAUSS

Josephslegende (complete ballet)

Love Scene from 'Feuersnot'

Festmarsch

Royal Scottish National Orchestra

NEEME JÄRVI



Portrait by K. Bauer (dates unknown) / © Richard Strauss & Arts Photo Library

Richard Strauss, in Garmisch,
summer 1910

Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949)

Josephslegende, Op. 63, TrV 231 (1912 – 14)

58:16

Action in One Act

by Harry Graf Kessler and Hugo von Hofmannsthal

Meinem Freunde Édouard Hermann

1	Allegro moderato –	2:16
2	Zug und Tanz der Frauen. Allegretto –	1:22
3	Erste Tanzfigur. Allegro moderato –	0:25
4	Zweite Tanzfigur. Dasselbe Zeitmaß –	1:50
5	Dritte Tanzfigur. Allegro – Molto agitato – Tempo I – Schneller als das erste Mal – Langsam –	3:17
6	Ziemlich langsam – Allegretto –	3:28
7	Allegro moderato –	0:43
8	Ziemlich langsam – Ziemlich lebhaft – Molto allegro –	3:32
9	Etwas ruhiger – Schnell –	2:34
10	Ziemlich lebhaft – Zweite Tanzfigur. [Ziemlich lebhaft] –	1:24
11	Etwas mäßiger – Tempo I –	1:44
12	Dritte Tanzfigur. Lebhaft, in erregtem, aber stets gemessenem Schreiten – Etwas breiter – Allmählich bewegter – Sehr lebhaft – Immer schwungvoller – Immer lebhafter – Tempo I – Lebhafter –	4:24
13	Vierte Tanzfigur. Viel ruhiger, leicht schwebend – Più mosso – Früheres Zeitmaß (leicht schwebend) – Ziemlich ruhig –	2:42
14	Etwas lebhafter – Ruhig im Vortrag –	2:54

15	Schneller – Ziemlich lebhaft – Allmählich fließender –	1:41
16	Der Abend bricht herein. [] – Allmählich fließender – Doppelt so langsam –	3:56
17	Schnell –	0:55
18	Schnell und hastig – Agitato – Ziemlich lebhaft – Molto agitato – Immer lebhafter – Festes Zeitmaß –	4:57
19	Viel ruhiger, stets alla breve – Allmählich etwas bewegter –	1:44
20	L'istesso tempo – Schneller – Noch schneller – Molto agitato –	0:53
21	Mäßig schnell – Erste Tanzfigur – Allmählich bewegter – Zweite Tanzfigur. Sehr Schnell – Immer schneller –	2:05
22	Mäßig bewegt – Schnell – Immer lebhafter – Tempo I, mäßig bewegt –	2:02
23	Sehr lebhaft – Äußerst lebhaft – Prestissimo –	2:05
24	Allmählich etwas ruhiger – Ruhiger – Fast doppelt so langsam beginnen, dann sofort wieder bewegter – Molto appassionato – Etwas breiter, maestoso – Schneller –	2:54
25	Bewegt – Noch lebhafter – Etwas breit	2:17

26	Love Scene from 'Feuersnot', Op. 50, TrV 203 (1900 – 01) Langsam – Sehr ruhig – Bewegt – Wiederum sehr ruhig – Bewegt – Agitato – Sehr leidenschaftlich bewegt – Immer lebhafter – Mäßig – Etwas bewegter	5:40
27	Festmarsch, Op. 1, TrV 43 (1876) in E flat major • in Es-Dur • en mi bémol majeur Seinem lieben Onkel Herrn Georg Pschorr gewidmet Allegro maestoso – Trio – [Allegro maestoso]	6:17
		TT 70:38

Royal Scottish National Orchestra
Maya Iwabuchi leader
Neeme Järvi

Richard Strauss: Josephslegende and other works

Festmarsch

Written in 1876 at the age of only twelve, the *Festmarsch* (Festive March) by Richard Strauss was the first orchestral work to be completed by the budding composer, and he dedicated it to his uncle, Georg Pschorr. Five years later, while still at school, Strauss attempted to interest the publisher Breitkopf & Härtel in the score: they initially declined to adopt it, but relented when Pschorr indicated that he would pay for the printing costs himself. Strauss's father, Franz, duly launched the piece at a concert given by his amateur Wilde Gung'l orchestra on 26 March 1881. Remarkably confident given the tender age at which it was written, the *Festmarsch* was cast in Beethoven's heroic key of E flat major, and the influence of Beethoven is particularly to be felt in its swirling semiquaver motif, reminiscent of the finale of the earlier composer's Seventh Symphony. In 1884, Strauss wrote another *Festmarsch* for the Pschorr family, in D major, for piano quartet, and an orchestral *Festmarsch* in the same key followed soon afterwards; a further work with this title, this time in C major, was written to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of his father's orchestra in 1889.

Love Scene from 'Feuersnot'

Pschorr died in June 1894, having recently paid for his nephew to take an extended convalescent holiday in Egypt, Greece, and Sicily so that he could recover properly from a debilitating bout of pleurisy and bronchitis. This Mediterranean vacation also gave Strauss the opportunity to complete his first opera, *Guntram*, premiered to general acclaim in Weimar in May 1894. Four months later, he married his fiancée, Pauline – a happy event that may have been responsible for the *joie-de-vivre* expressed in his symphonic poem *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* (Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks), first performed at Cologne in the following year. Far less congenial was the fate of *Guntram* in Munich, however, which flopped catastrophically when receiving its first airing in Strauss's native city in November 1895, on which occasion the singers and orchestral players proved to be unpleasantly belligerent about both the music and its composer. Incensed by what he viewed as petty bourgeois philistinism on the part of the local community, Strauss harboured a keen desire for revenge. It finally came in the shape of his second opera, *Feuersnot* (Trial by Fire), a

one-act work first performed at the Dresden Court Opera on 21 November 1901 under the baton of Ernst von Schuch.

Some years before, Strauss had drafted a (later abandoned) libretto for a possible one-act opera about Till Eulenspiegel's clash with the philistines of Schilda in legendary times, as recounted in a folk text published in 1510, but after the composer met the satirist Ernst von Wolzogen in 1898 the anti-philistine impulse bore more lasting fruit in the shape of a new 'poem for singing' (*Singgedicht*), which Wolzogen based on the mediaeval Flemish tale 'The Extinguished Fires of Audenaarde'. The original plot concerned the humiliation and rejection of a youth by the woman he loves; publicly spurned, he persuades a sorcerer to extinguish all the fires in the vicinity, after which they can only be relit from a magic flame issuing from the woman's backside. For the purposes of *Feuersnot*, the story's setting was transferred to mediaeval Munich on Midsummer Eve, and the Chaucer-like bawdy elements had to be toned down in the process (although the libretto's content still met with objections): in the operatic version, the woman (Diemut) eventually sacrifices her virginity to the youth in order to release the spell on the fires. The sorcerer, whom the audience never sees, was intended to represent Wagner, while the boy hero

(Kunrad, now transformed into the sorcerer's apprentice) represented Strauss himself. *Feuersnot* was an immediate success at the Dresden premiere, but met with critical hostility when subsequently staged at the Vienna Court Opera, in early 1902: the first three performances there were conducted by Gustav Mahler, who also conducted the opening night of a Viennese revival three years later.

The score of *Feuersnot* contains plentiful quotations from Wagner's operas, and the work is imbued with the aura of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Two of the themes on which the music is based were recycled by Strauss from an abandoned ballet score inspired by Watteau's painting *L'Embarquement pour Cythère* (also the inspiration for Debussy's effervescent piano piece *L'Isle joyeuse* in 1908); the jettisoned ballet score was later to bequeath a further theme to *Josephslegende*. The opera culminates in a love scene that satisfyingly brings together seminal themes from earlier in the score as Diemut finally yields to Kunrad's amorous advances and in direct consequence the 'Feuersnot' is ended; this portion of the score became a concert item in its own right, popularised in particular by Strauss's British champion, Sir Thomas Beecham, who conducted the opera's London premiere in 1910.

Josephslegende

Strauss first met the ballet impresario Serge Diaghilev in Munich in August 1897, while the composer was at work on his symphonic poem *Don Quixote*. But it was not until June 1912 that his librettist, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, managed to persuade the composer to write a work for Diaghilev's celebrated Ballets russes, proposing that an ideal subject would be the Biblical tale of the adventures of Joseph in Egypt after he has been sold into slavery by his brothers. A one-act scenario for *Josephslegende* was duly co-authored by the dilettante Count Harry von Kessler and Hofmannsthal himself. Strauss was not fired with enthusiasm by either the subject matter or its highly symbolic treatment, however, regarding the chaste and god-seeking boy Joseph as exceptionally dull, and characteristically showing far more interest in the sensual elements of the story – strongly reminiscent of his opera *Salome* (1905) – in which Potiphar's wife attempts to seduce Joseph and eventually commits suicide. In September 1913, Hofmannsthal wrote to Strauss to express his pleasure that the composer was at long last hard at work on the score:

early in the summer I was somewhat
grieved and vexed when you spoke of this

work as 'boring', so that I could not help
asking myself why, in that case, you had
taken it on at all.

When pitching his idea for the ballet to Strauss, Hofmannsthal had emphasised as selling points not only the dramatic clash between the two central characters but also the plan to update the story to a lush Renaissance Venice. Sumptuous décor inspired by Tintoretto, Veronese, and Tiepolo was indeed a notable feature of the premiere staging, which opened at the Paris Opéra on 14 May 1914, with the dancing (choreographed by Michel Fokine) presented against a backdrop of a vast columned hall in the style of Palladio. The role of Joseph, who wore white while all around him was drenched in opulent shades of gold, had been intended for Nijinsky, but the impresario had by this stage sacked his former star, and instead the part was taken by Léonide Massine, with Marie Kuznetsova appearing as Potiphar's wife. The décor was by José-Maria Sert and costumes by Léon Bakst, and the ballet was presented as part of a triple bill, alongside danced interpretations of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade* and Schumann's *Papillons*. Strauss, who conducted the premiere of *Josephslegende* himself, had scored the music for a huge orchestra including quintuple woodwind, six horns, quadruple

trumpets and trombones, two timpanists, four harps, and thirty violins divided into three rather than the customary two sections. (He dedicated the published score to the Parisian banker Édouard Hermann, the friend who looked after him during his time in the French capital.) Rehearsals were fraught: Stravinsky, who sat in on them, recalled that Strauss's conducting was excellent but that Strauss himself was greatly disliked by the French orchestral players.

Josephslegende was also staged at London's Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, shortly afterwards, in sell-out performances conducted by Beecham. Strauss, who attended, wrote to Hofmannsthal on 5 July to say that the British performances were

a great success, in spite of the fact that most of the press was angry and even the most sophisticated Englishwomen found the piece indecent.

In a review published in *The Nation* on 27 June 1914, Ernest Newman admired the 'almost insolent magnificence of colour' of the ballet's Venetian setting, and praised the Russian troupe for its heroic choreographic efforts, but pitilessly lambasted the score as 'a mass of unredeemed banalities' and felt the occasion was 'like attending the funeral of a lost leader'. He declared that the music by Strauss was 'bad enough to ruin any

man's reputation but his', and pronounced his verdict that the perpetrator was

now one of the dullest and at the same time one of the most pretentious composers in Germany... a tired and disillusioned mediocrity lagging behind his fellows and behind us and beckoning us back to the road that leads nowhere.

Throughout July and August the paper published a heated correspondence between Strauss's high-profile admirer, George Bernard Shaw, and Newman, who had already crossed swords publicly over *Elektra*. Now Shaw took Newman to task for being 'intentionally offensive' towards a 'foreign visitor of great distinction'. During the unseemly and protracted slanging match that ensued between the two critics – which embraced their differing opinions of Wagner, Strauss, and modern music, and was full of much unpleasant personal invective on both sides – Shaw pronounced his own opinion that *Josephslegende* was 'a magnificent piece of work' and

any lover of music among your readers who has been prevented from hearing it by Mr Newman has been very cruelly deprived of one of the rare opportunities of a lifetime.

Newman was not the only commentator disappointed by Strauss's music: even

Beecham felt the ballet was beset by what he termed its 'heavy and plodding gait'. Strauss and Hofmannsthal had themselves been concerned by longueurs in the score, especially the 'excess of music' identified by the librettist in Joseph's solo dance. After its initial runs, which were closely followed by the outbreak of the First World War, the full ballet was rarely performed during its composer's lifetime; but in 1947 Strauss arranged a half-hour 'Symphonic Fragment' from its music, which was premiered in 1949 by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra under Fritz Reiner (and is recorded on CHAN 9506 by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra under Neeme Järvi).

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Scenario

1 A mighty hall with pillars in Palladian style. In front of the loggia, tables lain with sumptuous dishes. On the left side of the throne sit Potiphar and his wife, at her feet a young slave girl.

The tables are attended to by eight Negro slaves. Behind the throne stand giant mulattos: Potiphar's bodyguard.

As the curtain rises, an Oriental with a white beard, a Sheikh, stands in the centre of the stage; his right hand holds a silver

weighing scale into which gold dust is poured by a white servant with fair hair from a leather sack embroidered with gold threads. Behind him stand eight younger Orientals, also bearded.

A young, beardless Oriental is on top of the loggia; he bends down to the Sheikh as though to anticipate a command. Three young mulattos, Potiphar's slaves, are busy carrying recently bought precious objects to the throne: the first one brings a heap of jewels and jewellery in a large dish with a tall foot, the second one a huge carpet that drags on the floor, the third one two white greyhounds with golden chains.

Each one of them steps up to the throne, kneels before Potiphar's wife, touching the floor with his forehead, and offers her the treasures that he has brought:

the slave with the jewels,
the slave with the carpet,
the slave with the two white greyhounds.

Meanwhile the gold dust continues to sparkle as it is poured into the Sheikh's dish.

The first slave places the dish with the jewels next to Potiphar's wife on the topmost step of the throne; the second slave spreads the carpet on the two bottom steps next to the young slave girl, and the third takes his place behind with the two greyhounds.

Potiphar's wife sits rigidly upright. She does not move. Her posture expresses icy disdain and a brooding, almost passionate boredom. She does not give a single glance at the three slaves who approach her.

When the paying of the gold dust is concluded the Sheikh bows to Potiphar and appears to wait.

Procession and Dance of the Women

[2] Potiphar makes an imperious, yet gracious gesture of command; the Sheikh stands up straight, turns toward his young escort on top of the loggia, and raises his arm. The young man looks to the left, waves, and a procession of three litters appears, each carried by four copper-coloured Oriental slaves. On each litter repose two women in Oriental costume; one is veiled, the other is unveiled; still, the unveiled women cover their faces with their hands. Servant women, costumed like the unveiled women, walk behind the litters. The last in the procession are two tall overseers.

The procession moves slowly on the loggia to the right side, until the first litter reaches the stairs. Then they are lowered to the ground, the women dismount, and shyly, hesitantly descend the stairs, being harried and pushed from behind by the two overseers.

Thus, like a flock, they reach the centre of the hall.

There they stand for a moment, crowded together; then the women without veils, who still, until then, have held their hands in front of their faces, suddenly remove them and the dance of the women, the wedding dance, commences. With symbolic gestures it describes how the bridegroom unveils the bride on the wedding night.

First Dance Figure

[3] Each of the unveiled women starts slowly to dance round her veiled companion by leaning forward, extending her hands, and creeping round her softly, like a cat. Throughout, the veiled women stand motionless, like mummies.

Second Dance Figure

[4] Gradually the hand movements of the unveiled women develop into gestures of unveiling. They uncover the women's feet. At that very moment the veiled women begin to sway their hips.

Then the unveiled women suddenly cover the feet of the veiled women once again, and these stand motionless. Once more the unveiled women creep round the veiled women like cats.

Third Dance Figure

[5] Presently they begin lasciviously to uncover the upper body, the breasts and the

belly, of the veiled women. These resume their swaying, but more slowly and sensually than in the second dance figure.

Suddenly the unveiled women again cover the upper bodies of the veiled ones; these immediately stand motionless, as though dead.

Once more the unveiled women move round the veiled ones like cats.

Then, with the utmost slow and sensual gestures, they unveil the faces of the veiled women. These continue meanwhile to sway in a very slow rhythm that expresses the most intense sensuality. The servant women join in this dance from the very beginning.

[6] But suddenly from the centre a dancer emerges, who alone, while the others gradually stop, performs a dance of the most passionate erotic longing, the dance of Shulamit.

The dance of Shulamit ceases. The unveiled women rapidly veil themselves again and kneel before the veiled women, covering their faces with their hands.

The veiled women immediately stand motionless like dead, after their swaying to and fro, which has gradually become slower, has come to a complete stop, and they stand as though in rigid ecstasy.

The Sheikh bows to Potiphar and dispatches two mulattos to take possession

of the women. Approaching them, they do this, one by grabbing the arms of the woman standing farthest to the right, the other those of the woman standing farthest to the left, after which they lead the entire procession to the throne where the women kneel before Potiphar's wife.

The woman nearest to the throne stretches out her hand with a humble yet noble gesture and touches the hand of Potiphar's wife as though asking for protection.

With the back of her hand, briefly and swiftly, but hard, as though warding off a fly, the latter strikes the woman's face and immediately assumes her imposing icy rigidity again.

The women rise up and, with the mulattos, disappear on the left in the interior of the palace.

[7] The Sheikh once again motions to the young Oriental on top of the loggia: a procession of men appears up above: first six Turkish pugilists with bare chests, small, tight turbans, and colourful loincloths made of atlas; behind them their escort, a larger number, dressed in Turkish clothing. The procession descends the stairs and at the bottom divides into two sections. Consisting of three pugilists, each steps to the right and to the left; their escort surrounds them,

squatting on the floor *à la turque*. Thus two circles are created, in each of which three of the pugilists are standing.

[8] The boxers begin a kind of round dance during which they circle with slow, heavy, and enraged steps, performing thereby a manner of violent gymnastic exercises which have the additional purpose of exciting them and arousing a belligerent mood. Their boxing movements are violent, jerky, and rapid and mimic the hitting of the opponent.

One can feel that the boxers, under the influence of these movements and the shouting and encouragement of their companions, gradually are afflicted by a kind of fury and ecstasy, like fighting cocks. Now the two circles open, the companions step or rush back to the right or left and clear the area for the fighters. These charge suddenly at one another and start to box. Their movements are still entirely rhythmical, there is no chaos.

They interrupt the fighting and circle round one another once more like beasts of prey, only suddenly to attack one another with renewed violence.

The fight now intensifies rapidly to maximum ferocity. One can feel that unless someone intervenes the fighters will kill one another.

Therefore the companions rise, first singly, then all of them, and hurry to separate the fighters.

But they are so enraged that it is impossible to separate them because they cling to one another like mad dogs.

Then Potiphar gives a sign and his armed men enter. They proceed to the circle of fighters, raise their whips, and wave them in huge circles above their heads. Everybody immediately moves back from the boxers, who continue to fight. The mulattos wave the whips two or three times above the heads of the boxers, then they raise them high up to strike. At that moment the six boxers fall to their knees at the same time, in order to cringe from the whips. Each one of them is grabbed by a mulatto who ties his arms behind his back with the whip, seizes him by the neck, and leads him off left into the palace.

Like a frieze in relief the six groups of pugilists and armed men move one after the other with regular, heavy, slow steps into the palace, the boxers bending their backs to the front like bulls. Throughout this whole insane scene Potiphar's wife has been sitting rigid and motionless while, in contrast, her young slave girl has displayed terrible fright and agitation.

[9] The Sheikh bows again and raises his hand once more.

First there appears on the loggia a golden hammock, carried by two brown slaves. It

is carried slowly and carefully across the loggia and down the stairs, followed by two young harpists with small golden harps, two flautists with double flutes, and two boys with cymbals. In the centre of the room the hammock is laid down. As it touches the floor it opens and reveals Joseph, resting in deep sleep, like a flower, wrapped in a golden-yellow silken shepherd's cloak. The boy smiles in his sleep.

The Sheikh approaches him, bends down, takes him by the hand and allows him to stand up. The cloak is left behind, the boy stands there in a brief white goat's skin and looks around, surprised but by no means frightened, rather magisterially, as though supported by higher powers. An invisible halo surrounds his head. The harpists, the flautists, and the boys with cymbals sit down on the floor next to the hammock.

The harpists, the flautists, and the boys with cymbals begin to play and to their music Joseph commences to dance slowly and as though in a mystic ecstasy.

[10] The first dance figure expresses the innocence and naivety of the shepherd boy Joseph. The movements indicate that the pious boy steps before the face of his God and shows him all his limbs by turn, head, chest, hands, feet, and that they are clean. He seems to say to God: 'Behold, Lord: my

body and my heart are innocent before you.' The movements are slow and a little hesitant, as though those of a pious, shy little child full of foreboding.

Second Dance Figure

[11] In between he makes four leaps in the direction of the compass points and thereby more or less marks out the territory in which the next dance figure is to be executed.

Third Dance Figure

[12] The third dance figure expresses the search and struggle for God, interspersed by some moments of despair. This figure consists mainly of great leaps (like David leaping in front of the Ark of the Covenant); as though Joseph were seeking to leap into Heaven.

Suddenly his leaps acquire a certain heaviness, something earth-bound, and he falls down once or twice like one who has missed his goal.

The character of the rhythm is heavy and irregular, but not in the least hysterical or sickly. Joseph's seeking for God is that of a healthy, normal, childlike spirit.

Fourth Dance Figure

[13] Joseph has found God: now his movements are a glorification of God. They

differ from those of the previous figure by their lightness. Now Joseph leaps with 'light feet'.

He seems to be flying. Effortlessly he executes high, air-borne leaps that express the most sublime joy; he seems to embody divine laughter. During the dance all the guests indicate tremendous amazement and admiration by leaning over the table, and with the expressions on their faces. A young man, the third guest from the corner on the right, suddenly bursts into tears and buries his head in his hands, knocking over a bowl of fruit before him, the fruits rolling all across the table.

During the dance Potiphar's wife gradually abandons her rigidity in favour, first, of interest, then of passionate amazement and admiration: a new world of emotions is revealed to her. She sits as though in a trance, breathless, with glowing eyes, and leaning forward.

After Joseph has expressed the utmost lightness and joy, he suddenly stands still and is once again a simple shepherd boy.

Potiphar gives a sign, and the two mulattos who removed the women advance, approach Joseph, and place their hands on his shoulders to take possession of him.

The major domo, dressed in silver, approaches the Sheikh and, as in the

beginning, starts to pour gold dust into the weighing scale.

[14] At the moment when the two mulattos touch Joseph, Potiphar's wife flinches as though in a dream; she shudders, straightens herself in her seat, picks a necklace from the dish with precious jewels that the slave has placed on the top step of the throne, and motions Joseph to approach. On seeing this motion, the mulattos stand back from Joseph, but Joseph has either not seen the mistress's gesture or disregards it.

She then sends her young slave girl to fetch him. She slides modestly, with tightly closed feet, to Joseph and touches him. He turns kindly but seriously to her and follows her to the throne.

Potiphar's wife still holds the necklace aloft; as Joseph approaches the throne she slowly puts it down and watches him for a long time, expectantly, quietly, and seriously, as though she were anxious to enter into the secret of his nature.

Then she places the necklace, which she is still holding, with her right hand round the neck of Joseph, while her left hand briefly touches his bare nape. [15] Immediately she turns away from him with a brief, almost abrupt movement and from then on until her exit she never looks at him again. Joseph stands back.

Potiphar indicates that the meal is over. The procession of guests, headed by Potiphar and his wife, moves obliquely across the stage, ascends the flight of stairs, and exit right through the loggia. Joseph stands in front, between the procession and the audience, and turns his face towards the procession. He bows neither to the Sheikh nor to his escort but remains firmly yet modestly upright. As Potiphar's wife passes Joseph she looks away. As soon as the procession has mounted the steps Potiphar's servants, who have remained motionless during the procession, hurry to the tables and clear them hastily and clumsily, with much noise, and carry crockery and tables left into the palace. One or the other drops bowls, golden dishes, and fruit and hastily snatches them up again.

Evening falls

[16] For a moment Joseph is left entirely alone on the stage.

From the right, two of the servants, dressed in green and silver, come with torches; they hoist up the large unfurled Oriental carpet on a string; behind the carpet in the base of the loggia there appears a cubicle rather like a cellar, lit from above by an invisible skylight. The moon shines through the skylight into the cubicle. This little room is used to store items to lay the table, and

valuable objects; on the left one sees rows of silver plates; on a shelf on the back wall there stand large bowls with fruit, on the right the moonlight displays a low truckle bed covered in white. One of the servants comes down the staircase, his torch aloft, and bearing Joseph's yellow coat over his arm, taps Joseph on his shoulder, enters the cubicle, throws the colourful coat on the bed, and motions Joseph to enter and to lie down. Then both servants exeunt. As soon as Joseph is alone he kneels down, facing the loggia, and prays.

Then he rises, enters the cubicle, lies down on the bed, wraps himself into his coat, and goes to sleep:

[17] The music describes his dream, in which Joseph sees an angel who approaches his bed to protect him.

[18] The door on the right of the entrance then opens and Potiphar's wife creeps in, wearing a white flowing robe, the strings of pearls still in her hair. In her hand she carries an antique lamp. She approaches the bed on which Joseph is lying, shines the light for a moment on his face, and places her left hand on his bare neck in exactly the same place where she had touched him when she put the necklace on him.

As she touches him she flinches and hastily extinguishes the lamp, as though not to behold the boy's innocence.

She rises up and stands for a moment in the moonlight as though made of ice, hard and straight.

Just then Joseph wakes up, opens his eyes, and, seriously and calmly, gazes at the woman, who looks like a spectre; then he unfolds his hands towards her, as though towards a kind guardian angel. She sinks to her knees, loosens her hair by removing the strings of pearls, and buries her face in it at Joseph's feet.

She immediately recovers herself, jumps up, wants to flee, looks around, and returns in order to stroke the hair of the boy, who still stares motionlessly at her with wide open eyes; she bends over him, gives way to temptation, and touches his lips with her mouth.

Then Joseph is released from his rigour; he leaps up, gathers panic-stricken his coat about him, runs past her out of the cubicle, crouches down, and wraps his head in his coat.

The woman approaches him, bends down to him, seeks to raise him up, and caresses his head with her hand.

Joseph remains on the floor for a moment, then he rises and stands beside her, perfectly straight, his head still concealed.

She embraces him with both arms, cuddles him increasingly passionately, and

fumbles with the coat in order to reveal his face, while making movements that, with their lascivious passion, recall those of the unveiled women in the earlier dance.

At first Joseph does not move, then his body starts to tremble with ever increasing violence. Suddenly the trembling stops and with a single calm step sideways he frees himself from her, dropping the coat which until then he had held in front of his face, looks at the woman, and with a grand, contemptuous gesture extends his left hand against her.

¶ He stands in front of her, bare from shoulder to hips.

She sinks on to her knees, as though blinded by his nakedness, creeps towards him, and repeats more emphatically the gesture of spreading her hair over his feet; now she is the sinner who is pleading for forgiveness.

In vain; he does not bend down to her again; stern and relentless, just like a boy, he remains standing motionless, his left hand stretched out above her head.

Then she suddenly rears up before him, gazes at him briefly full of hatred and contempt, and hurls herself at him to throttle him, just as she earlier suddenly extinguished her lamp. She grips his neck with both hands; Joseph catches hold of her arms to free

himself, then, with a calm movement, he forces her, effortlessly, backwards on to her knees. Looking towards the floor, she tries to hide her face from him.

[20] At that moment two servants with torches, hastily and excited as though they had heard a noise, come down left from the loggia, shine their lights down, observe their mistress with Joseph, and hurry down in order to free her.

Potiphar's wife rises passionately, points to Joseph with an imperial, grand gesture, and commands that he be apprehended. Her face expresses mortal hatred and wild agitation.

One servant grabs Joseph from behind and holds his hands tightly behind his back; the other one runs right, into the palace.

Now the young slave girl who at the beginning had been sitting on the steps of the throne hurries from the palace entrance on the right, and runs with raised hands to her mistress who is still standing majestically upright, her arm stretched out in command. At the moment the slave girl touches her she sinks, eyes closed, into her arms in a faint. The young servant girl supports her with one arm, looks at her, concerned, and gently strokes her forehead and cheeks, like a child her sick mother.

[21] Now, also out of the palace entrance on the right, several more slave women rush

forward, like a startled herd of deer. On the loggia, on all the galleries, and right up to the battlements of the palace, women and female palace staff appear, draped in dark, fluttering veils and with lights and torches – but only for a split second, like lightning, like a ghastly dream. Then the whole crowd of women force their way into the hall and concern themselves about Potiphar's wife, howling in Oriental fashion, almost like dogs. Their mourning gestures, which they carry out while circling round their mistress, produce a kind of rough rhythmic dance. Whenever she passes between Potiphar's wife and Joseph, each one of the slave women waves her arms towards Joseph in a kind of superstitious defensive gesture.

First Dance Figure

One woman quickly runs up to Joseph and seems to spit him in the face; then she hurries back to Potiphar's wife and disappears in the flood of women.

The dance figures must swish past with the speed of a dream. The rhythm of the mourning gestures, which at first had been rough and irregular, becomes firmer and gradually develops into regular gestures – performed simultaneously by all the women – which look like imprecations, giving the impression of some manner of black magic.

Second Dance Figure

Finally the gestures culminate in an Oriental witches' dance of hysterical wildness like that of dancing dervishes.

All the while the young slave girl holds Potiphar's wife in her arms and, quite unconcerned at what is going on all around her, lovingly gazes into her pale, unconscious face which is lightly bent backwards.

Joseph stands motionless, as though gradually drifting into a state of ecstasy.

[22] Suddenly a heavy silence falls.

Potiphar appears at the left palace entrance, attended by torch bearers and armed men.

At a stroke all the women lie on the ground, facing Potiphar.

Potiphar instructs the armed men to apprehend Joseph.

Servants bring heavy chains. The armed men place them round Joseph's feet and hands.

Joseph does not move; he stands weighted down with chains, white and naked, facing Potiphar.

Now the young slave girl brings Potiphar's wife, still unconscious in her arms, to Potiphar. He turns to his wife, kindly and concerned.

Then one of the slave women who have just performed the witches' dance comes

hastily and fawningly forward with Joseph's coat, which she has picked up from the ground, and hands it to Potiphar's wife.

For a moment, the latter holds the coat absent-mindedly in her hands.

Suddenly and forcefully she overcomes her inner feelings, rises to full height, stands straight and hard as though made of stone; then she bends to the left and, smiling and with closed eyes, offers her mouth to Potiphar to kiss. The gesture is somehow ingratiating and false but certainly grand, like that of a tigress.

Potiphar looks briefly first at her, then at Joseph, then he slowly bends down to her as if to touch her forehead with his lips.

She withdraws from him with a slight shudder and an almost unnoticeable movement of her head: she smiles no longer; on the contrary, her face is distorted by pain; she strokes his shoulder with her left hand, as though caressing him, then grips his arm and, without opening her eyes, points with increasing passion to Joseph. Potiphar stamps in a rage, turns to the back, and motions into the palace. She opens her eyes, looks at Joseph with incandescent hate, tears Joseph's coat in half, and throws it away.

[23] For a moment she stands as though she has conquered the force of her passion.

A number of henchmen come out of the palace, bearing a huge, red-glowing blazing brazier which they place at the very front of the stage between Potiphar's group and Joseph. The glowing fire immediately becomes the focus of the nocturnal scene on the stage and illuminates Potiphar's wife, who with the aid of her immense passion outgrows herself, as though with blood and the fire of hell.

Then two henchmen grab Joseph and turn him, so that he faces Potiphar.

Others bring pincers that are placed in the fire and turned back and forth.

Just as the two henchmen get hold of Joseph, Potiphar's wife shudders, the moment of her passionate self-liberation is past; Joseph regains his power over her.

As the henchmen turn him towards Potiphar, Joseph throws a brief but majestic glance at her; then he stands, looking up, while the preparations for his torture continue, as though carried aloft by a distant dream. Potiphar's wife now gazes at his face with passionate attention. She seems to want to delve into his soul.

Gradually her emotion changes from the fury of hatred to at first an unwilling, then a bewildered admiration, then into desire, finally into fear.

Fear and, ultimately, horror prevail.

At the same time, quite mysteriously, the fire shining on the face of Joseph changes into a whiter light that falls on him like a reflection of heaven.

This light grows slowly in intensity and Joseph seems to rise towards it on the tips of his toes.

In the end his whole body is bathed, like that of a blessed martyr, in heavenly brightness.

Suddenly the fire flares up high once again, then gradually more and more, until it dies down altogether. At that very moment a star shines in the sky behind the pillars.

[24] A ray emanates from the star, and glaringly pierces the darkness of the hall which is only lit by a few torches. It settles on Joseph and throws a blinding light on him, while the group surrounding Potiphar stands in a feeble reddish torch light. The ray spreads rapidly, its light creating the effect of a veil between the front-most pillars of the loggia on the left.

Behind this veil of light and right through it, as though descending on the ray, an archangel clad entirely in golden armour now flies in rapidly, full of energy.

His appearance is superhuman in size and noble and altogether manly and heroic. Seemingly in flight he passes across the

loggia without his feet touching the ground, floats down to hover before Joseph, and touches him with his right index finger.

The face of Potiphar's wife shows ever increasing terror and remorse.

At the same moment the chains fall from Joseph; the angel takes him by his left hand and, like Gabriel the young Tobias, leads him to the staircase.

Potiphar's wife extends both arms violently forward as though she wanted to join Joseph and the angel; then she quickly removes the strings of pearls and strangles herself by pulling them tight round her neck. Dead, she collapses into the arms of her female attendants. Her young favourite slave girl bends over her, looks into her eyes, and flings herself over her, touching her mouth with her own.

^[25] At this moment Joseph and the angel are still at the bottom half of the staircase. The sky brightens with the approach of morning and between rosy morning clouds young angels appear, playing musical instruments or waving golden banners.

Momentarily the other women once again raise their arms wildly in the manner of Oriental professional mourners. Then the oldest and ugliest of the women removes her black veil and with a demonic-seeming gesture throws it over the face of

Potiphar's wife. The other women swaddle her completely, lift her up, and carry her to the right into the palace. As the group progresses, her favourite slave girl holds the head of Potiphar's wife, and bends forward in a wide arch over her.

Potiphar shrinks slowly back appalled. At the moment when the cortège with the corpse of Potiphar's wife starts to move, Joseph and the angel have reached the loggia. As the cortège crosses the stage towards the right they walk to the left across the loggia towards the open.

Joseph and the angel continue to walk, reach the exit of the loggia, and disappear behind it in the open air.

Harry Count Kessler (1869 – 1937)
and Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874 – 1929)

Translation: Gery Bramall

One of Europe's leading symphony orchestras, the **Royal Scottish National Orchestra** was formed in 1891 as the Scottish Orchestra, became the Scottish National Orchestra in 1950, and was awarded Royal Patronage in 1991. Throughout its proud history, it has played an important part in Scotland's musical life, among much else performing at the opening ceremony of the Scottish Parliament building in 2004.

Renowned conductors such as Walter Susskind, Sir Alexander Gibson, Bryden Thomson, Neeme Järvi (Conductor Laureate), Walter Weller (Conductor Emeritus), Alexander Lazarev (Conductor Emeritus), and Stéphane Denève have contributed to its success. The 2012/13 season marks the beginning of a new era for the Orchestra as the celebrated British-Canadian musician and conductor Peter Oundjian takes up his position as Music Director and the Dane Thomas Søndergård begins his tenure as Principal Guest Conductor. The Orchestra has a worldwide reputation for the quality of its recordings, having received the Diapason d'or de l'année as well as eight Grammy Award nominations over the last decade. More than 200 releases are available, the Orchestra's discography including recordings of the complete symphonies of Sibelius (Gibson), Prokofiev (Järvi), Nielsen (Thomson), Martinů (Thomson), and Roussel (Denève), and the major orchestral works of Debussy (Denève). The Royal Scottish National Orchestra is one of Scotland's National Performing Companies, supported by the Scottish Government. www.rsno.org.uk

The head of a musical dynasty, **Neeme Järvi** is one of today's most respected maestros. He is Music and Artistic Director of the Orchestre

de la Suisse Romande, Artistic Director of the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, and Chief Conductor Emeritus of the Residentie Orchestra The Hague, as well as Music Director Emeritus of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Principal Conductor Emeritus of the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, and Conductor Laureate of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. He has appeared as guest conductor with the Berliner Philharmoniker, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, and Wiener Symphoniker, as well as, in the US, the Los Angeles Philharmonic and National Symphony Orchestra in Washington D.C., among others. He has collaborated with soloists such as Janine Jansen, Martha Argerich, Mischa Maisky, Vadim Repin, Evgeny Kissin, Truls Mørk, Hélène Grimaud, and Vadim Gluzman.

Highlights of an impressive discography of more than 450 recordings include critically acclaimed cycles of the complete symphonies of Prokofiev, Sibelius, Nielsen, and Brahms, as well as recent series of orchestral works by Halvorsen and Svendsen, and a cycle of symphonic arrangements by Henk de Vlieger of operas by Wagner.

Neeme Järvi has also championed less widely known Nordic composers such as Wilhelm Stenhammar, Hugo Alfvén, and Niels W. Gade, and composers from his native Estonia, including Rudolf Tobias, Eduard Tubin, and Arvo Pärt. Among many international awards and accolades, he has received an honorary doctorate from the Music Academy of Estonia in Tallinn, the Order of the National Coat

of Arms from the President of the Republic of Estonia, honorary doctorates of Humane Letters from Wayne State University in Detroit and the University of Michigan, as well as honorary doctorates from the University of Aberdeen and the Royal Swedish Academy of Music. He has also been appointed Commander of the North Star Order by King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden.

Richard Strauss: Josephslegende und andere Werke

Festmarsch

Richard Strauss war erst zwölf Jahre alt, als er 1876 seinen *Festmarsch* komponierte, und der angehende Komponist widmete sein erstes fertiggestelltes Orchesterwerk seinem Onkel, Georg Pschorr. Fünf Jahre später, während er noch zur Schule ging, bemühte sich Strauss darum, den Verlag Breitkopf & Härtel für die Partitur zu interessieren. Dieser lehnte sie zunächst ab, lenkte schließlich aber doch ein, als Pschorr signalisierte, dass er die Druckkosten selber übernehmen würde. Daraufhin präsentierte Strauss' Vater Franz das Stück bei einem Konzert seines Laienorchesters "Wilde Gungl" am 26. März 1881. Bedenkt man das zarte Alter des Komponisten, weist der in Beethovens heroischer Tonart Es-Dur angelegte *Festmarsch* erstaunlich selbstbewusste Züge auf, und der Einfluss Beethovens ist besonders in dem wirbelnden Sechzehntelmotiv spürbar, welches an das Finale der siebten Sinfonie des älteren Komponisten erinnert. 1884 schrieb Strauss einen weiteren *Festmarsch* für die Familie Pschorr, in D-Dur und für Klavierquartett, und es folgte bald ein *Festmarsch* für

Orchester in der gleichen Tonart. Ein weiteres gleichnamiges Werk, diesmal in C-Dur, entstand im Jahr 1889 zur Feier des fünfundzwanzigsten Jubiläums des Orchesters seines Vaters.

Liebeszene aus "Feuersnot"

Pschorr starb im Juni 1894, nachdem er kurz zuvor seinem Neffen eine Genesungsreise nach Ägypten, Griechenland und Sizilien spendiert hatte, wobei sich dieser gründlich von einer kräftezehrenden Rippenfellentzündung und Bronchitis erholen sollte. Der Mittelmeerurlaub ermöglichte es Strauss auch, seine erste Oper, *Guntram*, fertigzustellen, die im Mai 1894 mit sehr positiver Resonanz in Weimar uraufgeführt wurde. Vier Monate später heiratete er seine Verlobte, Pauline – ein freudiges Ereignis, dem möglicherweise die Lebenslust, welche in dem im folgenden Jahr in Köln uraufgeführten sinfonischen Gedicht *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* zum Ausdruck gebracht wird, zu verdanken ist. *Guntram* dagegen ereilte in München ein viel weniger erfreuliches Schicksal: Die Erstaufführung in Strauss' Heimatstadt im November

1895 war ein katastrophaler Misserfolg, bei welcher Gelegenheit sich sowohl die Sänger als auch die Orchestermusiker der Musik und dem Komponisten gegenüber gleichermaßen unangenehm angriffslustig zeigten. Dieses in seinen Augen kleinlich-spießige Banausentum seitens der Münchner Gesellschaft erboste Strauss und ließ ihn ein starkes Bedürfnis nach Rache hegen. Die Gelegenheit dazu bot sich schließlich in Gestalt seiner zweiten Oper, *Feuersnot*, einem Einakter, der am 21. November 1901 an der Dresdener Hofoper unter der Leitung von Ernst von Schuch uraufgeführt wurde.

Einige Jahre zuvor hatte Strauss ein (später verworfenes) Textbuch für einen Einakter über Till Eulenspiegels Streit mit den sagenhaften Schildbürgern verfasst, nach einem 1510 veröffentlichten volkstümlichen Text. Doch als der Komponist 1898 den Satiriker Ernst von Wolzogen traf, trug der gegen alles Spießbürgerliche gerichtete Impuls in Form eines neuen "Singgedichts", welches Wolzogen auf die mittelalterliche flämische Erzählung "Das erloschene Feuer zu Audenaerde" basierte, auf nachhaltigere Art und Weise Früchte. In der ursprünglichen Handlung ging es um die Demütigung und Zurückweisung eines jungen Mannes durch die Frau, die er liebt; nachdem er öffentlich abgewiesen wurde, überredet er einen

Zauberer, alle Feuer in der Gegend erlöschen zu lassen, welche dann nur durch eine aus dem Hinterteil der Frau hervortretende magische Flamme wieder entzündet werden können. Für *Feuersnot* wurde der Ort der Handlung ins mittelalterliche München am Sonnwendtag verlegt, und die derben, an Chaucer erinnernden Elemente mussten dabei etwas abgemildert werden (obwohl der Inhalt des Librettos immer noch auf Einwände stieß): In der Oper opfert schließlich die Frau (Diemut) ihre Unschuld dem jungen Mann, um so den Bann, der auf den Feuern liegt, zu brechen. Der Zauberer, den das Publikum nie zu sehen bekommt, sollte Wagner verkörpern, während der junge Held (Kunrad, jetzt zum Zauberlehrling verwandelt) Strauss selbst darstellte. *Feuersnot* war bei der Dresdner Premiere sofort erfolgreich, erntete aber, als das Werk Anfang 1902 an der Wiener Hofoper inszeniert wurde, Anfeindungen seitens der Kritik: Die ersten drei Vorstellungen wurden von Gustav Mahler dirigiert, der auch die erste Aufführung einer Wiener Wiederaufnahme drei Jahre später leitete.

In der Partitur von *Feuersnot* finden sich zahlreiche Zitate aus den Opern Wagners, und das Werk ist vom Geist der *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* durchdrungen. Zwei der Themen, die der Musik zugrunde liegen, entnahm Strauss einer nicht verwendeten Ballettpartitur, die

durch Watteaus Gemälde *L'Embarquement pour Cythère* (das ebenfalls als Inspiration für Debussys sprudelndes Klavierstück *L'Isle joyeuse* aus dem Jahr 1908 diente) angeregt worden war; die verworfene Ballettpartitur sollte später der *Josephslegende* ein weiteres Thema vermachen. Die Oper gipfelt in einer Liebesszene, welche die grundlegenden Themen aus früheren Teilen der Partitur überzeugend zusammenführt, während Diemut schließlich Kunrads amourösen Avancen nachgibt, womit dann die "Feuersnot" auch sofort beendet ist. Dieser Teil des Werks wurde zu einem eigenständigen Konzertstück, dem besonders der britische Streiter für die Musik Strauss', Sir Thomas Beecham, der 1910 die Londoner Erstaufführung der Oper dirigierte, zu großer Beliebtheit verhalf.

Josephslegende

Strauss begegnete dem Ballettimpresario Sergej Diaghilew zum ersten Mal im August 1897 in München, als der Komponist an seinem sinfonischen Gedicht *Don Quixote* arbeitete. Doch erst im Juni 1912 gelang es seinem Librettisten Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Strauss dazu zu überreden, ein Werk für Diaghilews berühmte Ballets russes zu schreiben, und als ideales Sujet schlug Hofmannsthal die biblische Erzählung der Abenteuer Josephs

in Ägypten vor, nachdem dieser von seinen Brüdern in die Sklaverei verkauft wurde. Daraufhin fertigten der Kunstmäzen Harry Graf von Kessler und Hofmannsthal gemeinsam ein einaktiges Szenario für *Josephslegende* an; bei Strauss lösten jedoch weder das Thema noch dessen höchst symbolische Behandlung Begeisterungstürme aus, und er fand den keuschen und gottsuchenden Jüngling Joseph äußerst fade; bezeichnenderweise hatte er viel größeres Interesse an den sinnlichen Elementen der Geschichte (welche stark an seine Oper *Salome* [1905] erinnern), in der Potiphars Ehefrau Joseph zu verführen versucht und schließlich Selbstmord begeht. Im September 1913 schrieb Hofmannsthal an Strauss, um seiner Freude Ausdruck zu verleihen, dass der Komponist endlich ernsthaft an der Partitur arbeitete:

ich war im Frühsommer einigermaßen
verdrossen, als Sie mir von dieser Arbeit als
von einer "langweiligen" sprachen und
ich mich fragte, warum Sie sie dann auf
sich genommen hätten?¹

Als Hofmannsthal Strauss seine Idee
für das Ballett unterbreitete, hatte er

¹ Franz und Alice Strauss (Hrsg.), Willi Schuh (bearb.), *Briefwechsel [zwischen] Richard Strauss [und] Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Gesamtausgabe* (Atlantis Verlag, Zürich, 1952), S. 243

als besondere Merkmale nicht nur den dramatischen Konflikt zwischen den beiden Protagonisten hervorgehoben, sondern auch das Vorhaben, die Geschichte in das prächtige Venedig der Renaissance zu übertragen. Das Bühnenbild der Uraufführung an der Pariser Oper am 14. Mai 1914 zeichnete sich in der Tat durch eine üppige, durch Tintoretto, Veronese und Tiepolo inspirierte Ausstattung aus, und die Choreographie (von Michel Fokine) wurde vor der Kulisse einer riesigen Säulenhalle im Stile Palladios präsentiert. Die Rolle des Joseph, der inmitten eines Meeres von opulenten Goldtönen weiß trug, war ursprünglich für Nijinsky vorgesehen gewesen, doch in der Zwischenzeit hatte der Impresario seinen ehemaligen Star-Tänzer gefeuert, und die Partie wurde stattdessen von Léonide Massine getanzt, mit Maria Kusnetsowa als Potiphars Weib. Das Bühnenbild stammte von José-Maria Sert, mit Kostümen von Léon Bakst, und das Ballett wurde in einem dreiteiligen Programm gemeinsam mit Choreographien von Rimski-Korsakows *Scheherazade* und Schumanns *Papillons* präsentiert. Strauss, der die Uraufführung von *Josephslegende* selbst dirigierte, hatte die Musik für ein riesiges Orchester instrumentiert, mit jeweils fünfmal besetzten Holzbläsern, sechs Hörnern,

vielfach besetzten Trompeten und Posaunen, zwei Paukern, vier Harfen und dreißig Geigen, die unüblicherweise in drei statt zwei Gruppen unterteilt waren. (Er widmete die veröffentlichte Partitur dem Pariser Bankier Édouard Hermann, jenem Freund, der sich während seines Aufenthalts in der französischen Hauptstadt um ihn gekümmert hatte.) Die Proben war nervenaufreibend: Strawinsky, der ihnen beiwohnte, erinnerte sich, dass Strauss ausgezeichnet dirigierte, bei den französischen Musikern aber auf große Abneigung stieß.

Wenig später kam *Josephslegende* auch im Theatre Royal in der Londoner Drury Lane auf die Bühne, und die von Beecham dirigierten Vorstellungen waren allesamt ausverkauft. Strauss, der anwesend war, schrieb am 5. Juli in einem Brief an Hofmannsthal, die britischen Vorstellungen seien,

trotzdem der größte Teil der Presse geschimpft hat und auch die verdorbensten Engländerinnen das Stück indezent gefunden haben, ein großer Erfolg gewesen.²

In einer am 27. Juni 1914 in *The Nation* erschienenen Rezension bewunderte Ernest

² Franz und Alice Strauss (Hrsg.), Willi Schuh (bearb.), *Briefwechsel [zwischen] Richard Strauss [und] Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Gesamtausgabe* (Atlantis Verlag, Zürich, 1952), S. 261

Newman die "fast unverflorene Farbenpracht" der venezianischen Kulisse des Balletts und lobte die russische Compagnie für ihre heldenhaften choreographischen Anstrengungen, die Partitur aber verriss er gnadenlos als "einen Haufen unsäglicher Banalitäten" und meinte, das Ereignis hätte den Anschein, man würde "der Beerdigung eines geschlagenen Anführers beiwohnen". Er erklärte, die Musik Strauss' sei "schlecht genug, um den Ruf eines jeden Mannes außer dem seinem zu ruinieren" und urteilte über den Schuldigen, er sei

nun einer der geistlosesten und gleichzeitig überheblichsten Komponisten Deutschlands ... eine müde und desillusionierte Mittelmäßigkeit, die hinter seinen Kollegen und hinter uns her hinkt und uns zu dem Weg zurück lockt, der nirgendwo hinführt.

Den ganzen Juli und August hindurch veröffentlichte die Zeitschrift einen erhitzten Briefwechsel zwischen George Bernard Shaw, dem prominenten Bewunderer Strauss', und Newman, die bereits wegen *Elektra* öffentlich die Klängen gekreuzt hatten. Jetzt warf Shaw Newman vor, er wäre "absichtlich beleidigend gegenüber einem ausländischen Gast von hohem Ruf". Während des ungehörigen und lang hingezogenen Schlagabtauschs, der zwischen den beiden Kritikern folgte – in dem

es um ihre unterschiedliche Meinungen über Wagner, Strauss und die moderne Musik ging und der auf beiden Seiten voll vieler unangenehmer persönlicher Schmähungen war –, äußerte Shaw seine eigene Meinung, *Josephslegende* sei eine "hervorragende Arbeit" und

falls ein Musikliebhaber unter Ihrer Leserschaft von Herrn Newman daran gehindert worden sein sollte, dieses Stück zu hören, dann ist er auf grausamste Weise um einen der kostbarsten Momente seines Lebens gebracht worden.

Nicht nur Newman war von Strauss' Musik enttäuscht: Sogar Beecham fand, das Ballett leide unter seiner, wie er sich ausdrückte, "schweren und mühseligen Gangart". Strauss und Hofmannsthal selbst waren wegen Längen der Partitur besorgt gewesen, besonders was das – nach Meinung des Librettisten – Übermaß an Musik in Josephs Solotanz anging. Nach den ersten Aufführungen unmittelbar vor Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkriegs kam das vollständige Ballett zu Lebzeiten des Komponisten nur selten zur Aufführung; 1947 richtete Strauss jedoch aus der Ballettmusik ein halbstündiges "Sinfonisches Fragment" ein, das 1949 durch das Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra unter der Leitung von Fritz Reiner uraufgeführt wurde (und das als CHAN 9506

in einer Aufnahme des Detroit Symphony Orchestra unter Neeme Järvi vorliegt).

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Übersetzung: Bettina Reinke-Welsh

Das **Royal Scottish National Orchestra**, eines der führenden Sinfonieorchester Europas, wurde 1891 unter dem Namen Scottish Orchestra gegründet, 1950 in Scottish National Orchestra umbenannt und 1991 mit der Königlichen Schirmherrschaft (Royal Patronage) bedacht. Im Laufe seiner stolzen Geschichte hat es eine bedeutende Rolle im Musikleben Schottlands gespielt, unter anderem im Jahre 2004 mit einer Aufführung bei der Eröffnungszeremonie des schottischen Parlamentsgebäudes. Renommiertere Dirigenten wie Walter Susskind, Sir Alexander Gibson, Bryden Thomson, Neeme Järvi (Laureat), Walter Weller (Emeritus), Alexander Lasarew (Emeritus) und Stéphane Denève haben zu seinem Erfolg beigetragen. Die Saison 2012/13 stellt den Beginn einer neuen Ära für das Orchester dar, wenn der berühmte britisch-kanadische Musiker und Dirigent Peter Oundjian seinen Posten als Musikdirektor antritt und der Däne Thomas Søndergård seine Amtszeit als Erster Gastdirigent beginnt. Das Orchester hat sich weltweit einen Namen für die

Qualität seiner Tonaufnahmen gemacht und über die vergangenen zehn Jahre sowohl den Diapason d'or de l'année gewonnen als auch acht Nominierungen für den Grammy Award erhalten. Es sind derzeit mehr als 200 Einspielungen erhältlich, denn die Diskographie des Orchesters umfasst Aufnahmen sämtlicher Sinfonien von Sibelius (Gibson), Prokofjew (Järvi), Nielsen (Thomson), Martinů (Thomson) und Roussel (Denève) sowie der bedeutenden Orchesterwerke von Debussy (Denève). Das Royal Scottish National Orchestra gehört zur Gruppe der nationalen Ensembles der darstellenden Künste Schottlands (National Performing Companies), unterstützt von der schottischen Regierung. www.rsno.org.uk

Neeme Järvi ist das Haupt einer Musikedynastie und einer der renommiertesten Maestri unserer Zeit. Er ist Musikdirektor und Künstlerischer Leiter des Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Künstlerischer Leiter des Eesti Riiklik Sümfooniaorkester und emeritierter Chefdirigent des Residentie Orkest Den Haag, außerdem emeritierter Musikdirektor des Detroit Symphony Orchestra, emeritierter Chefdirigent der Göteborgs Symfoniker und Conductor Laureate des Royal Scottish National Orchestra. Als Gastdirigent ist er mit

den Berliner Philharmonikern, dem Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest, dem Orchestre de Paris, dem Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, dem Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, dem London Philharmonic Orchestra, dem BBC Symphony Orchestra, dem Bergen Filharmoniske Orkester und den Wiener Symphonikern aufgetreten, daneben in den USA unter anderem mit dem Los Angeles Philharmonic und dem National Symphony Orchestra in Washington D.C. Er hat mit Solisten wie Janine Jansen, Martha Argerich, Mischa Maisky, Vadim Repin, Jewgeni Kissin, Truls Mørk, Hélène Grimaud und Vadim Gluzman zusammengearbeitet.

Zu den Höhepunkten einer eindrucksvollen Diskographie mit über 450 Einspielungen gehören von der Kritik gelobte Zyklen sämtlicher Sinfonien von Prokofjew, Sibelius, Nielsen und Brahms, außerdem eine jüngst erschienene Serie mit Orchesterwerken von

Halvorsen und Svendsen sowie ein Zyklus sinfonischer Arrangements von Wagner-Opern des Komponisten Henk de Vlieger. Neeme Järvi hat sich auch für weniger bekannte nordische Komponisten wie Wilhelm Stenhammar, Hugo Alfvén und Niels W. Gade eingesetzt, sowie für Komponisten seiner estnischen Heimat, darunter Rudolf Tobias, Eduard Tubin und Arvo Pärt. Neben zahlreichen anderen internationalen Preisen und Ehrungen ist ihm die Ehrendoktorwürde der Estnischen Musikakademie in Tallinn verliehen worden, ebenso der Orden des Nationalen Wappens vom Präsidenten der Republik Estland; erhalten hat er auch die Ehrendoktorwürde der Wayne State University in Detroit und der University of Michigan in den USA, der University of Aberdeen in Schottland und der Königlich Schwedischen Musikakademie. König Carl XVI. Gustaf von Schweden ernannte ihn zum Kommandeur des Nordstern-Ordens.

Richard Strauss: La Légende de Joseph et autres œuvres

Festmarsch

Écrite en 1876, à l'âge de douze ans seulement, la *Festmarsch* (Marche de fête) de Richard Strauss fut la première œuvre pour orchestre achevée par le compositeur en herbe; il la dédia à son oncle, Georg Pschorr. Cinq ans plus tard, alors qu'il était encore étudiant, Strauss tenta d'intéresser l'éditeur Breitkopf & Härtel à cette partition: après avoir refusé de la prendre, il céda lorsque Pschorr offrit de payer lui-même les frais d'impression. Le père de Strauss, Franz, lança cette œuvre, comme prévu, lors d'un concert donné par son orchestre amateur Wilde Gung'l, le 26 mars 1881. D'une assurance remarquable pour un compositeur de cet âge, la *Festmarsch* est coulée dans la tonalité héroïque de Beethoven, mi bémol majeur, et l'influence de Beethoven se ressent particulièrement dans son motif tourbillonnant en doubles croches, qui évoque le finale de la Septième Symphonie de son prédécesseur. En 1884, Strauss écrivit une autre *Festmarsch* pour la famille Pschorr, en ré majeur, pour quatuor avec piano, et peu après, une *Festmarsch* pour orchestre dans la même tonalité; une autre œuvre portant ce

titre, cette fois en ut majeur, fut composée pour le vingt-cinquième anniversaire de l'orchestre de son père en 1889.

Scène d'amour de "Feuersnot"

Pschorr mourut en juin 1894, après avoir offert à son neveu un long séjour de convalescence en Égypte, en Grèce et en Sicile afin qu'il récupère dans de bonnes conditions d'une pleurésie et d'une bronchite débilitantes. Ces vacances méditerranéennes donnèrent aussi à Strauss l'occasion d'achever son premier opéra, *Guntram*, créé avec un immense succès à Weimar, en mai 1894. Quatre mois plus tard, il épousa sa fiancée Pauline – heureux événement sans doute à l'origine de la "joie de vivre" qui s'exprime dans son poème symphonique *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* (Les Joyeuses Équipées de Till l'espiègle), créé à Cologne l'année suivante.

Mais le destin de *Guntram* à Munich ne fut pas aussi positif, puisque ce fut un fiasco lors de la première exécution dans la ville natale de Strauss en novembre 1895; à cette occasion, les chanteurs et les instrumentistes d'orchestre firent preuve d'une agressivité

désagréable envers la musique et son compositeur. Révolté par ce qu'il considérait comme un philistinisme bourgeois mesquin de la part de la communauté locale, Strauss nourrit un ardent désir de revanche. Celle-ci prit finalement la forme d'un deuxième opéra, *Feuersnot* (Les Feux de la Saint-Jean), ouvrage en un acte créé à l'Opéra de la cour de Dresde, le 21 novembre 1901, sous la direction d'Ernst von Schuch.

Quelques années plus tôt, Strauss avait fait l'avant-projet d'un livret (ensuite abandonné) pour un éventuel opéra en un acte sur l'affrontement de Till Eulenspiegel avec les philistins de Schilda à une époque légendaire, que retrace un texte folklorique publié en 1510; mais lorsque le compositeur eut rencontré le satiriste Ernst von Wolzogen en 1898, son élan contre les philistins se concrétisa, de manière plus durable, sous la forme d'un nouveau "poème à chanter" (*Singgedicht*), que Wolzogen tira de la légende flamande médiévale "Les Feux éteints d'Audenaerde". L'intrigue originale concernait l'humiliation et le rejet d'un jeune homme par la femme qu'il aime; éconduit en public, il convainc une sorcière d'éteindre tous les feux du voisinage, après quoi ils ne pourront être rallumés que par une flamme magique émanant du derrière de la femme. Dans l'optique de *Feuersnot*, le cadre de

cette histoire fut transféré à Munich, au Moyen-Âge, la veille de la Saint-Jean, et les éléments grivois dans le style de Chaucer durent être atténués (le contenu du livret souleva néanmoins des objections): dans la version lyrique, la femme (Diemut) sacrifie finalement sa virginité au jeune homme afin de rompre le sortilège jeté sur les feux. La sorcière, que le public ne voit jamais, était destinée à représenter Wagner, alors que le jeune héros (Kunrad, transformé en apprenti de la sorcière) représentait Strauss lui-même. *Feuersnot* remporta un succès immédiat lors de sa création à Dresde, mais dut faire face à l'hostilité de la critique lorsque l'ouvrage fut ensuite représenté à l'Opéra de la cour de Vienne, au début de l'année 1902: les trois premières représentations y furent dirigées par Gustav Mahler, qui conduisit aussi la première lors de la reprise viennoise, trois ans plus tard.

La partition de *Feuersnot* contient beaucoup de citations des opéras de Wagner et l'ouvrage est imprégné de l'atmosphère de *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Les Maîtres chanteurs de Nuremberg). Deux des thèmes sur lesquels repose la musique furent recyclés par Strauss d'après une partition de ballet abandonnée, inspirée par *L'Embarquement pour Cythère* de Watteau (qui est aussi à l'origine de l'exubérante

pièce pour piano de Debussy *L'Isle joyeuse* en 1908); la musique de ballet abandonnée allait ensuite transmettre un autre thème à la *Josephslegende*. L'opéra culmine dans une scène d'amour qui réunit agréablement des thèmes déterminants entendus auparavant dans la partition lorsque Diemut cède enfin aux avances amoureuses de Kunrad et, conséquence directe, le "Feuersnot" s'achève; cette partie de la partition devint un morceau de concert à part entière, vulgarisé en particulier par le défenseur britannique de Strauss, Sir Thomas Beecham, qui dirigea la création londonienne de l'opéra en 1910.

Josephslegende

Strauss rencontra pour la première fois l'impresario de ballet Serge Diaghilev à Munich, en août 1897, lorsque le compositeur travaillait à son poème symphonique *Don Quixote* (Don Quichotte). Mais c'est seulement en 1912 que son librettiste, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, réussit à convaincre le compositeur d'écrire une œuvre pour les célèbres Ballets russes de Diaghilev; un sujet idéal serait, à son avis, l'histoire biblique des aventures de Joseph en Égypte après qu'il ait été vendu comme esclave par ses frères. Un scénario en un acte pour la *Josephslegende* (La Légende de Joseph) fut dûment rédigé par un dilettante, le Comte Harry von Kessler,

et Hofmannsthal lui-même. Toutefois, Strauss ne s'enthousiasma ni pour le sujet, ni pour son traitement symbolique: le chaste personnage de Joseph en quête de Dieu l'ennuyait prodigieusement et il s'intéressait bien davantage aux éléments sensuels de l'histoire – qui font fortement penser à son opéra *Salome* (1905) – où la femme de Putiphar tente de séduire Joseph et finit par se suicider. En septembre 1913, Hofmannsthal écrivit à Strauss pour lui dire combien il était heureux que le compositeur travaille enfin durablement à la partition:

Au début de l'été, j'ai été peiné et contrarié
lorsque vous avez dit que vous trouviez
cette œuvre ennuyeuse, et je ne pouvais
m'empêcher de me demander pourquoi,
dans ce cas, vous l'aviez acceptée.

Lorsqu'il avait présenté son idée de ballet à Strauss, Hofmannsthal avait insisté, comme argument de vente, non seulement sur l'affrontement dramatique entre les deux personnages centraux, mais également sur l'idée de moderniser l'histoire en la transposant dans la luxueuse Venise de la Renaissance. Un décor somptueux inspiré par le Tintoret, Véronèse et Tiepolo constitua en fait un élément important de la première mise en scène, à l'Opéra de Paris, le 14 mai 1914, la danse (dans une chorégraphie de Michel Fokine) évoluant devant une toile

de fond qui représentait une vaste salle à colonnes dans le style de Palladio. Le rôle de Joseph vêtu de blanc, alors que tous ceux qui l'entouraient étaient baignés d'or somptueux, était destiné à Nijinski, mais comme celui-ci avait rompu avec Diaghilev, le rôle fut confié à Léonide Massine, avec Marie Kuznetsova dans celui de la femme de Putiphar. Dans un décor de José-Maria Sert et des costumes de Léon Bakst, le ballet fut présenté au sein d'un programme en trois volets où figuraient aussi des chorégraphies de *Schéhérazade* de Rimski-Korsakov et des *Papillons* de Schumann. Strauss, qui dirigeait lui-même la création de la *Josephslegende*, avait écrit sa musique pour un orchestre gigantesque avec les bois par cinq, les cors par six, les trompettes et les trombones par quatre, deux timbaliers, quatre harpes et trente violons divisés en trois au lieu des deux pupitres habituels (il dédia la partition publiée au banquier parisien Édouard Hermann, l'ami qui veillait sur lui pendant son séjour dans la capitale française). Les répétitions furent tendues: Stravinsky, qui y assista, raconta que la direction de Strauss était excellente, mais que Strauss lui-même était détesté par les instrumentistes d'orchestre français.

Peu après, la *Josephslegende* fut aussi donnée à guichets fermés au Théâtre royal

de Drury Lane à Londres, sous la direction de Beecham. Strauss, qui y assistait, écrivit à Hofmannsthal le 5 juillet pour lui dire que les représentations britanniques étaient

un grand succès, bien que la majeure partie de la presse ait été furieuse et que même les Anglaises les plus raffinées aient trouvé la pièce indécente.

Dans une critique publiée dans *The Nation* le 27 juin 1914, Ernest Newman admira la "magnificence de couleur presque insolente" du plateau et chanta les louanges de la troupe russe pour ses efforts chorégraphiques héroïques, mais il vilipenda la partition comme "un amas de banalités irrécupérables" et estima que l'événement était "comme d'assister aux funérailles d'un ancien maître". Il déclara que la musique de Strauss était "assez mauvaise pour ruiner la réputation de n'importe qui à part lui" et prononça ce verdict que l'auteur était

aujourd'hui l'un des compositeurs les plus assommants et, en même temps, les plus prétentieux d'Allemagne... une médiocrité fatiguée et désabusée, qui s'attarde derrière ses confrères et derrière nous, en nous faisant signe de regagner la route qui ne mène nulle part.

Tout au long des mois de juillet et août, le journal publia une correspondance animée entre l'admirateur très influent de Strauss,

George Bernard Shaw, et Newman, qui avaient déjà croisé le fer en public au sujet d'*Elektra*. Shaw reprocha à Newman sa "méchanceté délibérée" envers un "visiteur étranger si distingué". Au cours de la prise de bec pas très élégante et prolongée qui suivit entre les deux critiques – englobant aussi leurs différences d'opinion sur Wagner, Strauss et la musique moderne, et regorgeant d'invectives personnelles désagréables des deux côtés – Shaw déclara que la *Josephslegende* était "un ouvrage magnifique" et

s'il y a parmi vos lecteurs un mélomane que Mr Newman a dissuadé d'aller l'entendre, il a été fort cruellement privé d'une occasion comme on en a peu au cours d'une vie.

Newman ne fut pas le seul journaliste déçu par la musique de Strauss: même Beecham trouvait que le ballet était émaillé de ce qu'il appelait "son allure lourde et laborieuse". Strauss et Hofmannsthal s'étaient eux-mêmes sentis concernés par des longueurs dans la partition, notamment "l'excès de musique" identifié par le librettiste dans le solo de Joseph. Après les premières séries de représentations, suivies de près par le déclenchement de la Première Guerre mondiale, la totalité du ballet fut rarement jouée du vivant du compositeur; mais, en 1947, Strauss tira de sa musique un

"Fragment symphonique" d'une demi-heure qu'il arrangea et qui fut créé en 1949 par le Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra sous la direction de Fritz Reiner (et enregistré sous la référence CHAN 9506 par le Detroit Symphony Orchestra sous la baguette de Neeme Järvi).

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Traduction: Marie-Stella Pâris

Le **Royal Scottish National Orchestra** est l'un des plus grands orchestres symphoniques d'Europe. Il fut formé en 1891 sous le nom de Scottish Orchestra; il devint le Scottish National Orchestra en 1950 et se vit accorder le patronage royal en 1991. Tout au long de sa grande histoire, il a occupé une place importante dans la vie musicale de l'Écosse, jouant notamment à la cérémonie d'ouverture du bâtiment du Parlement écossais en 2004. Des chefs d'orchestre célèbres tels Walter Susskind, Sir Alexander Gibson, Bryden Thomson, Neeme Järvi (chef d'orchestre lauréat), Walter Weller (chef d'orchestre émérite), Alexander Lazarev (chef d'orchestre émérite) et Stéphane Denève ont contribué à son succès. La saison 2012 – 2013 marque le début d'une ère nouvelle pour cet orchestre avec le célèbre musicien et chef d'orchestre canadien anglais Peter Oundjian qui devient

directeur musical et le Danois Thomas Søndergård principal chef invité. L'orchestre jouit d'une réputation internationale pour la qualité de ses enregistrements: il a reçu un Diapason d'or de l'année, ainsi que huit nominations au Grammy Awards au cours des dix dernières années. Plus de deux cents CD sont disponibles, la discographie de l'orchestre comprenant des enregistrements de l'intégrale des symphonies de Sibelius (Gibson), Prokofiev (Järvi), Nielsen (Thomson), Martinů (Thomson) et Roussel (Denève), ainsi que des œuvres orchestrales majeures de Debussy (Denève). Le Royal Scottish National Orchestra est l'une des formations nationales d'Écosse, subventionnée par le Gouvernement écossais dans le domaine du spectacle. www.rsno.org.uk

À la tête d'une véritable dynastie musicale, **Neeme Järvi** est un des chefs d'orchestre les plus respectés d'aujourd'hui. Il est directeur musical et artistique de l'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, directeur artistique de l'Orchestre symphonique national d'Estonie, chef principal émérite de l'Orchestre de la Résidence de la Haye, ainsi que directeur musical émérite du Detroit Symphony Orchestra, chef principal émérite de l'Orchestre symphonique de Göteborg et "Conductor Laureate" du Royal

Scottish National Orchestra. Il s'est aussi produit en tant que chef invité avec les Berliner Philharmoniker, l'Orchestre royal du Concertgebouw, l'Orchestre de Paris, le Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, le Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, le London Philharmonic Orchestra, le BBC Symphony Orchestra, l'Orchestre philharmonique de Bergen et les Wiener Symphoniker, et également aux USA, avec le Los Angeles Philharmonic et le National Symphony Orchestra de Washington D.C., entre autres. Il a travaillé avec des solistes tels que Janine Jansen, Martha Argerich, Mischa Maisky, Vadim Repin, Evgeny Kissin, Truls Mørk, Hélène Grimaud et Vadim Gluzman.

Parmi les grands moments d'une impressionnante discographie comptant plus de 450 enregistrements, figurent des cycles salués par la critique – les intégrales des symphonies de Prokofiev, Sibelius, Nielsen et Brahms – ainsi que des séries récentes consacrées aux œuvres orchestrales de Halvorsen et de Svendsen, sans oublier un cycle consacré aux arrangements symphoniques d'opéras de Wagner effectués par Henk de Vlieger. Neeme Järvi s'est également fait le défenseur de la musique de compositeurs nordiques moins connus du grand public, tels Wilhelm Stenhammar, Hugo Alfvén et Niels W. Gade, et de compositeurs

originaires de son Estonie natale, dont Rudolf Tobias, Eduard Tubin et Arvo Pärt. Parmi les nombreuses récompenses et distinctions dont il a fait l'objet sur le plan international, Neeme Järvi a été fait docteur *honoris causa* de l'Académie de Musique d'Estonie à Tallinn, a reçu l'Ordre du Blason national des mains du président de la république

d'Estonie, des doctorats *honoris causa* en Lettres de la Wayne State University de Detroit et de l'université du Michigan, ainsi que des doctorats *honoris causa* de l'université d'Aberdeen et de l'Académie royale de musique de Suède. Il a aussi été fait commandeur de l'Ordre de l'étoile polaire par le roi Carl XVI Gustaf de Suède.



H. Frederick Stucker

Neeme Järvi

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Sound engineer Ralph Couzens

Assistant engineer Jonathan Cooper

Editor Jonathan Cooper

A & R administrator Sue Shortridge

Recording venue Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow; 18 and 19 September 2012

Front cover *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* (c. 1626) by Guido Reni (1575 – 1642) © Collection of the Earl of Leicester, Holkham Hall, Norfolk / The Bridgeman Art Library

Back cover Photograph of Neeme Järvi by Simon van Boxtel

Design and typesetting Cassidy Rayne Creative (www.cassidyrayne.co.uk)

Booklet editor Finn S. Gundersen

Publishers Breitkopf & Härtel (*Festmarsch*), Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd (other works)

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Chandos Records Ltd, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX, England

Country of origin UK



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RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)

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Action in One Act
by Harry Graf Kessler and Hugo von Hofmannsthal

26 Love Scene from 'Feuersnot', Op. 50, TrV 203
(1900–01) 5:40

27 Festmarsch, Op. 1, TrV 43 (1876) 6:17
in E flat major • in Es-Dur • en mi bémol majeur

TT 70:38

Royal Scottish National Orchestra
Maya Iwabuchi leader

NEEME JÄRVI



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