The Richard Strauss Festival in London June 1903: what the papers said.

Huw Dixon

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Richard Strauss Society

A. Schmidhammer (München)

Für seine nächste Oper hat Richard Strauß bereits ein ganz eigenartiges neues Riesenorchester zusammengestellt.

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The Richard Strauss Festival, London, June 1903 (Huw Dixon).

In the previous newsletter, we reported on Strauss's debut as conductor in London in 1897 and also his December 1903 tour of London, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Birmingham. However, the Strauss Festival in June 1903 marked the most significant milestone in letting the British music lover become acquainted with him. He had found a patron and supporter in Sir Edgar Speyer, London based banker and financier who was willing to put up the money needed to ensure that Strauss's music could be heard. Speyer was the man behind the financing of the modernisation and extension of the London Underground (including parts of the Northern and Bakerloo Lines) and also provided funds to keep Henry Wood's Proms afloat in the years 1902-1914. The Concertgebouw orchestra was brought over for the Festival, with its conductor Willem Mengelberg. Orchestra and conductor were both well acquainted with all of Strauss's works.

The big hit of 1903 was undoubtedly Ein Heldenleben*, which had been dedicated to "Wilhelm" Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw orchestra. The British premier had been conducted by Strauss in a one-off concert the previous year on December 6th 1902. In the festival it was performed twice: once conducted by Mengelberg and again on the final night (by popular demand) under Strauss. In September, Henry Wood was to conduct it three times in his promenade concerts. The festival also launched* Don Quixote *(The British premier) and it was the first time Strauss conducted* Also Sprach Zarathustra *in London (the British premier had been a few years previously). Originally the Strauss Festival was to consist of three concerts on June 3-5th, but due to popular demand a fourth concert was added for June 9th.*

The first concert was Wednesday June 3rd, which included Till Eulenspeigel*,* Also Sprach Zarathustra *and* Tod und Verklärung *along with songs with orchestral and piano accompaniment. The second concert on Thursday was* Don Juan, Don Quixote*, songs and the love scene from* Feuersnot*. The third concert was* Macbeth, Zarathustra *again and* Heldenleben*. The extra concert on June 9th included two movements of* Aus Italien, Burleske*, excerpts from* Guntram *and a repeat of* Heldenleben*.*

Just a note on the venue, St James's Hall. The 1903 festival was held in the old Hall located on the corner of the meeting of Regents Street and Piccadilly (it had entrances on both). It had been the main concert Hall in London since its opening in 1858. The festival occurred near to the end of the building's life: it

was demolished in 1905 as the more recent Queens Hall became the main concert venue in London. The Piccadilly Hotel now occupies the site. This is not to be confused with the later "New" St James's Hall built at Great Portland Street in 1908 which was also functioned as a concert venue. The new St James's changed its name to the Philharmonic Hall in 1914 and eventually became the BBC's Brock House.

I will leave the critics' comments to speak for themselves. However, the critic "EAB" is none other than Edward Algernon Baughan, who was caricatured as "Vaughan" the critic in "Fanny's first play" by George Bernard Shaw (1911). The rest are mainly anonymous. Now, however, we journey back in time to London in 1903, where the British concert goers got their first chance to hear the full range of Strauss's symphonic works to date. I have kept as close to the original typography and punctuation as possible (yes, they did often spell today as "to-day" then). The papers are mostly covering individual concerts, after which there "retrospective" reviews of the whole festival and evaluations of Strauss's standing as a composer. For me, the greatest discovery was a unique interview of Strauss: one of the very rare times when he speaks about music and composition. I would like to thank historian Dr Neil Ashcroft for his help in compiling this collection from the archives. Neil is also an author of historical fiction and I can recommend his compelling first novel "Bring Him in Mad" under the pen name Russel Croft.

St James's Hall, Piccadilly (1858-1905)

The Daily News, Monday June 1st 1903.

THE RICHARD STRAUSS FESTIVAL

The Richard Strauss Festival, which begins on Wednesday next, will be the most interesting event of the musical season. It is true that we are acquainted, more or less well, with most of Richard Strauss's compositions, but those that we know will be heard under exceptionally favourable circumstances, for the Amsterdam Concertgebouw orchestra has made a speciality of Strauss, and the programmes will contain several symphonic poems which the London amateur does not know. "Also Sprach Zarathustra" was performed at the Crystal Palace some years ago, but "Don Quixote", "Macbeth" and the music of the opera "Guntram" are practically new works to London.

There will be plenty of opportunities for coming to a definite opinion concerning Strauss's genius during this week, and therefore there is no need to write much concerning him now. All I would say to those who know something of his music, and to those that are ignorant of it, is just this – Listen with open ears and unprejudiced mind! Above all, pay no attention to writers who claim that Strauss has not this or the other quality, is not equal to this or that composer, and is a musical revolutionist who has cut himself off from the past. I must say that it would interest me very much to have the impression which Strauss's music makes on those who hear it for the first time or are not very conversant with it.

Next Saturday will see the first performance in London of Elgar's "The Dream of Gerontius" which will be given at the Westminster Cathedral. EAB.

The Daily News, Thursday June 4th

"ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA".

In the year 1913 a Richard Strauss Festival will doubtless draw the London amateur to whatever hall is then in existence. The London amateur is very slow in recognising any new musician, whether he be composer or executant. Still, considering that for some years Richard Strauss and his music have been publicly discussed, until there is quite a respectable Strauss literature, it was disappointing yesterday to see so many empty seats at St James Hall. In the phrase of the veteran reporter, however, the audience made up by its enthusiasm what it lacked in numbers. Strauss himself received an ovation on appearing on the platform, and at the end of the concert he was called as many times as a pianist who has struggled with Beethoven, Chopin,

and Liszt for a whole afternoon and butchered them. The Concertgebouw Symphony Orchestra of Amsterdam was, perhaps, partly the cause of the enthusiasm. The tone of the band is very mellow and soft; it plays with a finish and yet with electric vigour, and it knows its Strauss. Herr Willem Mengelberg only conducted one composition "Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks," but the playing was a revelation. The rest of the concert was conducted by Herr Strauss himself.

The chief interest centred on the symphonic poem, "Also Sprach Zarathustra," which has only been performed once at the Crystal Palace, and never in London itself. To most of us it is absolutely new. Written some seven years ago, it is considered one of the most characteristic of the composers later works. "Don Quixote," which we Londoners also do not know, separates it from "Ein Heldenleben." It would be absurd to give a very definitive opinion of so gigantic a work after one hearing. I am as ready as another to form opinions which, of course, seem to me incontrovertible; but, frankly, in the face of this symphonic poem my mind is in a state of suspension. But not as to the genius of the music as a whole. Nothing Strauss has done so incontestably proves his right to be hailed as a master singer. Passage after passage glows with the emotion and inspired workmanship of the creator of music. As in "Ein Heldenleben" – nay as in all Strauss's symphonic poems, in "Till Eulenspiegel," in "Don Juan," in "Tod und Verklarung" – the composer musically depicts … himself. Outwardly, he has founded his composition on Nietzsche's ideas; inwardly, he has expressed Strauss. The German philosopher induced the mood, supplied the motive force. Strauss is a poet, and the true poet fashions the concrete from the abstract. Thus, in the "Zarathustra" there is a backbone of realism, but it is only as a means by which Strauss can express his soul-battle in a concrete form.

Others may connect this, that or the other theme with definite ideas, or rather with emotions which can be definitely explained; but, for my part, I was content to listen to the music as a poem meaning more (at least to me) than any verbal explanations. Music to those who feel it is far more direct than words. In Carlyle's words, "it leads us to the verge of the infinite," and expresses that which speech can but suggest. And here is the power of Strauss, making him, in spite of what at first seem eccentricities, a composer who attracts as keenly as he repels. He can cause you to lay your mind and soul bare to his music: to follow every twist and turn of the expression of himself. Here and there one is conscious of some slight failure in making that meaning

clear; it is as if there were a check on the electrical current between the composer and yourself. But the check is only momentary, and sometimes is caused by a too analytical appreciation of some daring musical innovation. I found more of these lapses in complete sympathy in listening to "Also Sprach Zarathustra" than when I heard "Ein Heldenleben" for the first time. Partly they were due, I think, to the earlier work being not quite so sure in workmanship – the affects do not always justify themselves – and partly due to the subject matter being less obvious in its appeal. Strauss has chosen a big canvas for his picture, but I rather feel that his subject is almost too big for any one canvas. The result is a sort of crowding together of ideas, so that the main design is difficult to discern. The grand elemental music of nature which opens the poem, the great longing of the human soul, its joys and passions, the noble grad-song of Zarathustra's youth, and the panacea of knowledge for the soul's ills (what an extraordinary fugue it is, proving once more as Bach and Beethoven in his "Eroica" have already proved, that the fugue is one of the most emotional forms of music!), all these were in their musical expression clear to me. The strength and beauty of the themes, their wonderful treatment, and the significance of the harmony and instrumental colouring lit the inner chamber of my heart. But Zarathustra-Strauss catching in despair at material pleasure, typified by a dance, seemed to me poor and purposely eccentric. Interest dwindled: the climax had passed and even the sublime song of the night wanderer left me unmoved. Perhaps a second hearing will remove this impression.

The concert, apart from this great work gave me, gave one an idea of the variety of the composer's moods. Frau Pauline Strauss sang a number of his songs with intelligence. Three of them had been given an orchestral accompaniment, and the taste and simplicity of the scoring was always in accord with the character of the poems. E.A.B

Globe June 4 1903.

THE STRAUSS FESTIVAL.

The British public is proverbially slow to accept new talent, and it is only during the last few months that it has really begun to awaken to the fact of Herr Richard Strauss' existence. Even now his name has not the power that it deserves, and St. James's Hall might well have been better filled for the first of the Strauss Festival concerts, which took place last night. There was a real need

for some such series as this, for, up to the present, Herr Strauss has only been known here by isolated performances of a few of his works, and no systematic attempt has been made to acquaint English musicians with his aims, his theories, and his achievements. Consequently the idea still prevails that Herr Strauss is a clever musician, but so eccentric that it is totally impossible to take him seriously, and the truth is not always realised that he does not break the bonds of convention merely for the love of mischief, but because he feels it be the only possible means whereby he can attain the end that he has in view. In his efforts express such abstract ideas as those contained in “Also sprach Zarathustra,” which was finely played last night by the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Symphonic Orchestra, conducted by the composer, he had to practically carve out a new way for himself, and invent a new musical phraseology to give expression to the idea which he had in his mind. His surpassing success becomes more and more evident to the hearer as he becomes better acquainted with the music. It is, of course, almost impossible to grasp all the intricacies of such work as “Also sprach Zarathustra” at a first hearing, though the main outline is clear enough. But even on the shortest acquaintance it is possible to see how marvellously he has succeeded in conveying through his music the abstract ideas which formed the basis of his programme. The more familiar “Till Eulenspiegel,” which headed the programme last night, and was finely played by the orchestra, under Herr Willem Mengelberg, is a less successful a piece of work, and even the wierdest harmonies and progressions only seem the more appropriate and inevitable on a closer acquaintance with the music. Other points must be left till later in the Festival, but it is impossible to leave last night’s concert without touching on the charming singing by Frau Pauline Strauss de Ahna of some her husband’s songs. Three of the most beautiful—“Das Rosenband,” “Morgen,” and “Cäcilie” —have recently been given orchestral accompaniments, and proved even more attractive than before, while “Ein Obdach,” “Traum durch die Dammerung,” and “Standchen,” also most charming songs, were admirably sung to the pianoforte accompaniment of the composer.

Contemporary portraits of Strauss and Mengelberg (1871-1951), both sporting splendid moustaches and bow ties.

The Daily Telegraph, Thursday June 4th

RICHARD STRAUSS FESTIVAL.

A musician of the strangest and most varied moods, Richard Strauss seems to be provocative of fickleness in his public. It is easy to remember how, only a few short months ago, musical London flocked to Langham-Place (*Ed. The address of the Queen's Hall)* to witness the first unfolding in our country of the enormous scroll of "Ein Heldenleben." And yet last evening, when Richard Strauss made a beginning of a widely-heralded "Festival," St. James's Hall was not nearly filled. It is curious – this attitude on the part of those amateurs who

always seek to be in the advance-guard of any new musical movement. Perhaps the week of Whitsuntide has been ill-chosen for an enterprise of this weight: perhaps concert-goers, having drunk fairly deep of the Strauss brew, find the draught but little to their liking. These speculations may resolve themselves into a clearer solution before another work has passed over our heads. In the meantime, one must needs chronicle the fact that Mr. Strauss and the Amsterdam orchestra had to rest content last night with the applause of a comparatively small audience. In the heart of the programme the tone-poem, "Also sprach Zarathustra," had the place of honour. It was not quite new to larger London, for Mr. Manns gave the work at Crystal Palace some six years ago. At the time, we did not know our Strauss well, and the outlandish music, with its quasi-philosophical programme, interested but the very few. One cannot say that, after the passage of six years, "Also sprach Zarathustra" brings the listener much nearer to rapture. In this case, Mr. Strauss has burdened himself with a programme in which there is as much dead-weight as vital matter. Those responsible for the "Festival," however, evidently realise that the tone-poem in question does not adapt to quick digestion: and, accordingly this work will be played again tomorrow evening. As likely as not, it may prove as stimulating as last night it was somniferous, for, as we have said on former occasions, with this provoking, elusive Strauss, the mood of the moment in the hearer counts for much. One thing is certain, that the Amsterdam band played "Zarathustra" with very full appreciation of the work's elaborate purport. We will not venture on the assertion that no wrong notes were played, as the tone-poem's complicated embroidery would at almost any point conceal a good number of slips. But, seriously, the orchestra seemed to bring their best gifts – and they are evidently many – to their task; and, if "Zarathustra" does not reveal more engaging qualities to-morrow evening, Mr. Strauss will have no cause to blame his band. In "Till Eulenspiegel" and the love-scene from "Feuersnot" the composer made himself more welcome last night than he did by his more cumbrous essay. Both examples are marked by the best features of Strauss's sometimes mistaken genius. So, too, it was a pleasure to hear Madame Pauline Strauss de Ahna in a group of her husband's songs. Many of these have a clarity and charm that prove the composer agreeably independent when he chooses to be so, of those tangled idioms which he loves to bring to the orchestra.

The Standard, Thursday June 4th 1903.

RICHARD STRAUSS FESTIVAL.

Peculiar interest attaches to the series of performances, begun last night, at St. James's Hall, devoted to the works of Herr Richard Strauss, for whatever opinions may be held concerning the artistic merits of his music, there can be no question that he is the most advanced composer, in an evolutionary sense, of today, and that his methods challenge controversy with a force that compels attention and careful consideration. The scheme, moreover, includes important works not previously heard in London, notably the tone poems *Don Quixote* and *Macbeth*, and the concerts for the most part will be conducted by the composer. A good deal of Herr Strauss's music has been heard of late, and his works have occasionally been produced in this country for some years past. As far back as 1889 Mr. Henschel conducted at St. James's Hall two movements from the "Symphonic Phantasy" *Aus Italien*; in 1896 Dr August Manns introduced at one of the Crystal Palace concerts the humoresque *Till Eulenspiegel,* and the following year he produced the tone poem, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. The present festival, however, affords a unique opportunity for arriving at an estimation of Herr Strauss's compositions, their characteristics and tendencies, which few serious minded music-lovers can afford to miss. Under these conditions, it would, obviously be a mistake to attempt to pronounce an opinion on the art work of Herr Strauss - further than has already been expressed in these columns – until the conclusion of the festival on Tuesday next; but it may be said, for the benefit of those who are not acquainted with his music, that it should be listened to with a wider mind than that of an attitude of mere comparison with the classics. Herr Strauss is manifestly endeavouring to break new ground, as Liszt did when he evolved the symphonic poem from the symphony, and Wagner when he developed the music-drama from the opera; and his productions, to be rightly estimated, must be measured by a higher standard of truth, of expression, appropriateness of form, and of effect.

Before criticising yesterday's concert, it should be noted that the orchestra is the highly-esteemed body from Amsterdam conducted by Herr Wilhelm Mengelberg. Its employment instead of an English orchestra is justified by its instrumentalists being familiar with Herr Strauss's works, an enormous amount of rehearsal being thus obviated. The strings are somewhat

lacking in volume, but in other respects the balance of tone was excellent, and the precision and fluency with which the most difficult passages were rendered testified to perfect training. After the preliminary performance of the National Anthem, the first work was the humoresque "Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks" Op.28, which was directed by Herr Mengelberg. It may be premised that "Till" is the typical scapegrace of old German tales and ballads, and it is the type, rather than the individual, that Herr Strauss has attempted to portray. He is presented in various guises, but always as the light-hearted cynic and scoffer at conventionality, a humourist, callous of the consequences to himself and others. The humour of the music is distinctly German, often of a gruesome grotesque and clown-like comic rather than highly witty, but the principle theme is wonderfully significant of the half-demented trickster, and its treatment is so clever that, although many passages are uncompromisingly ugly, their dramatic intention is clear, and the attention is held. This last great merit can scarcely be said of the tone poem "Thus Spake Zarathustra," which is the second principle work of last night's selection, and, along with the "Love scene" from *Feuersnot*, was conducted by the composer. The tone poem was composed in 1896, two years later than *Till Eulenspiegel*, and is a much more serious effort. This is at once apparent in the opening of the work, and in the second section described as "The Great Longing" – noble and impressive music. The other sections, severally headed "Of Joys and Passions," "The Grave Song," "Of Science," "The Convalescence," "The Song of the Dance," and "The Song of the Night Wanderer," may be better understood if taken to represent the mental struggles of humanity to solve the mysteries of life, rather than by endeavouring to connect them with the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, the title of whose ambiguous "prose poem," "Also Sprach Zarathustra," Herr Strauss has adopted for his composition. As it is to be performed again at Friday's concert, further critical remarks may be better with-held until the second hearing, for it is a work that can scarcely be treated with too much earnest consideration. The excerpt from *Feuersnot* can only be judged as a concert piece. As such, its chief theme possesses character, individuality, and significance. Their treatment is masterly, the scoring most brilliant, and the climax very fine. A very pleasing feature of the concert was the singing of the composer's wife, Frau Pauline Strauss de Ahna. This lady has a mezzo-soprano voice of rich quality, which is easily produced, and manifestly dominated by artistic intuition, and her renderings of six of her husband's songs presented them most favourably. The most attractive were "Das Rosenband," Op.36,

No.1, possessing peculiar grace; “Morgen,” Op. 27, No. 4, a lyrical gem; and “Traum durch die Dämmerung,” in which a very successful effort has been made to suggest the mysticism of the text. Tomorrow evening the first performance in England will be given of the tone poem *Don Quixote*.

The Westminster Gazette, Thursday June 4th 1903.

THE STRAUSS FESTIVAL

In all respects save one the Richard Strauss Festival made a highly successful start at St. James’s Hall last night. There ought to have been a bigger audience, but otherwise the opening performance of the five which are to be given altogether was all that could be wished. An excellent programme had been arranged, the “Concertgebouw Symphonic Orchestra” from Amsterdam proved admirable exponents of Mr. Strauss’s exacting music. Madame Strauss-de-Ahna charmed all hearers by her most beautiful and artistic singing of her husband’s songs, so that altogether the concert was one of the most interesting and enjoyable which we have heard in London for many years. It was in truth, considered from any point of view, an occasion of quite exceptional interest, and it is frankly impossible to understand why the hall was not absolutely crowded. Still, as it was, there was at least a fair attendance, and if more might have been present their enthusiasm could hardly have been greater. Mr Strauss must have been gratified by the warmth of his reception, which left no doubt as to the effect produced by his music, of which we had on this occasion two symphonic poems “Till Eulenspiegel” and “Also sprach Zarathustra,” half a dozen songs (three new and three already known). And the beautiful orchestral Love Scene from the young master’s opera or “vocal poem” “Feuersnot.”

Save one performance at the Crystal Palace six years ago, “Also sprach Zarathustra” had not been previously heard in this country, and its presentation under the direction of the composer himself, was consequently the most interesting feature of yesterday’s proceedings from the critical point of view. Beyond a doubt it is a tremendous composition, and it is only a pity that this work, instead of the infinitely more laboured and less satisfactory “Heldenleben,” was not introduced earlier to the London public as an example of Strauss’s more advanced manner. Certainly it has its hard places, and certainly it would be idle to hope to completely understand or enjoy it after a single hearing. But it leaves one in no doubt about its originality and power as

a whole, whilst quite a number of its pages could be positively enjoyed even on a first acquaintance. Since, however, the work is to be given on Friday, further remarks on the subject may be prudently held over for the moment – in the interests less of Strauss, who may be considered quite able to take care of himself, than of his critic. In the case of music of this order second thoughts are almost certainly the best.

Who, for instance, that heard "Till Eulenspiegel" when it was given for the first time in London a few short years ago, would ever have believed that he could have come so soon to find it one of the blithest, brightest – indeed most tenderly beautiful and most fascinating pieces ever penned? Not I, for one. That love-scene from "Feuersnot" again, fell flat as a pancake when it was first performed in London last year under Mr. Wood's thoroughly capable direction at Queen's Hall. Last night when the composer directed affairs it seemed compact of beauty and significance from the first note to the last. Wherefore it is the merest justice – to one's self – to suspend judgement – to sit in other words firmly on the fence – in the case of these astonishing compositions. Who knows? Perhaps one may come to like them in time even the battle pages of the "Ein Heldenleben." Nearly all must have agreed, however, as to the rare beauty of and individuality of Strauss's songs. Nothing more exquisite of their kind can be imagined than the three new ones, "Das Rosenband," "Morgen," and "Cacilie," which Madame Strauss-de-Ahna sang with such rare intelligence and charm last night.

It remains only to add a word of praise in regard to the Amsterdam orchestra, which under the guidance of its permanent conductor Mr. Willem Mengelberg and of Mr. Strauss himself, completely justified by its splendid tone and brilliant execution the high reputation which it enjoys. H.A.S.

The Yorkshire Post, Thursday June 4rd 1903.

From our Special correspondent (London, Wednesday).

Whether Richard Strauss is or is not to be reckoned among the masters whose work is of enduring excellence, the individuality, force and originality of his music are such that it is necessary to give it thoughtful, even anxious, consideration. It is undesirable to over-praise a charlatan, it is far worse to under-value a genius, and history shows plenty of both errors. Richard Strauss, however, cannot complain of the hearing he has met with in this country up to now; perhaps, indeed, recollections of the absolute reversal of judgements

passed, 50 years ago by the most prominent critics and musicians, upon another Richard, have made those of today unduly reticent, lest they should stultify themselves as did their predecessors. In the case of Strauss, however, we have not, as yet, had material for a complete judgement. Out of his eight most characteristic works - the Symphonic Poems – only half have been heard, even in London, so that the idea of giving a series of concerts at which all these works should be given under the special superintendence of the composer and by an orchestra which has made a speciality of his music, was opportune.

At the first of the four concerts, which took place at St. James's Hall this evening, the programme included – in addition to "Till Eulenspiegel," and the love scene from "Feuersnot," both of which are tolerably familiar in this country, the important Symphonic Poem, "Also sprach Zarathustra," which is one of the most ambitious of Strauss's orchestral works. The title itself is somewhat obscure, and the fact that it is borrowed from the work of a philosophic mystic like Nietzsche is hardly a recommendation for a work of imaginative art, but it should be remembered that the essay which furnished the suggestion for the music has its distinctive poetical side and it is this which the composer has chosen to illustrate. Still, there remains a sufficient – perhaps a too great – allowance of philosophy, for one to resent the introduction of philosophy into a work of art…The idea underlying the work is that of a philosopher – Nietzsche's "Zarathustra" to wit – who sets himself to solve the problems of existence, like another Faust. The various phases of his research obviously suggest a sequence of mood pictures, sufficiently abstract for musical treatment, and the impression left after a single hearing is that Strauss, if he has erred at all, has erred in the too scrupulous fidelity with which he has followed the elaborate arguments into all its implications. Fortunately, a second opportunity will be afforded during the present festival of becoming acquainted with this complex work, and it will be interesting to note whether a second hearing confirms the initial impression that the details overpower the greater lines of the composition. Of the brilliant patches it contains there can be no doubt, nor yet of the wealth and character of melodic ideas, though some of these may seem less spontaneous than they might be.

Willem Mengelberg, the conductor of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra from 1895 to 1945. Ein Heldenleben was dedicated to him and the Concertgebouw and they played it often. Prior to the Strauss festival in London they had performed it 11 times. After the festival they were to perform it with Strauss once again in 1907 and with Mengelberg over 100 times. Mengelberg recorded it twice: once with the New York Philharmonic in 1928 and again in 1941 with the Concertgebouw.

What one desires is a more sustained beauty, greater breadth in the proportions of the work. But time, and a closer acquaintance, will show whether the fault lies with the music or with the auditor. The advantage of engaging the Amsterdam Orchestra was made obvious by its first-rate playing of music with which it has the familiarity necessary in the case of such terribly exacting works, and which demands more rehearsals than is easily obtainable in this country. Under the composer, they played with fine effect the brilliant "Love Scene" from his latest opera, and under their own conductor, Mr Mengelberg, were heard in the freakish "Till Eulenspiegel".

Frau Strauss sang several of her husband's songs, which are always full of delicate charm and fancy, and made a great impression by her artistic and unaffected singing.

The Globe, Friday, June 5, 1903.

YESTERDAY'S CONCERT.

He would be a daring man, indeed, who, after hearing a single performance of Richard Strauss' "Don Quixote," which was played for the first time in England at St James's Hall, last night, would deliver a final pronouncement upon its merits. For, in the whole literature of music there is nothing that is in the least like it, even among Strauss' own compositions. It is not at all difficult to understand that such a work can arouse opposition of the most violent order, for from beginning to end it is one magnificent holocaust of all the rules that were ever invented by pedants for the hindering of the development of music. It need hardly be said that to the unaccustomed ear many of the effects in "Don Quixote" seem excessively harsh and displeasing, and that, if it were to be judged by the standard of pure music such as that of Beethoven and his contemporaries, it would, rightly enough be condemned to oblivion. But it is obvious that it was never Herr Strauss' intention, in this particular instance, to write music which would claim attention by means of its properties as absolute music, and we have rather to judge whether he succeeded in reaching the standard he set himself. Herr Strauss is, above all, a realist before all else, and it has always been his endeavour to portray in his music human characteristics, human emotions, human joys and sorrows, and, indeed, all the varying moods and phases of humanity. To achieve this end by the old methods was an impossibility, and he was consequently obliged to evolve new methods for himself. His ideas naturally provoked opposition, so, to vindicate himself and to prove that music can do more than has ever been asked of it before, he wrote his wonderful series of tone poems, of which "Don Quixote" is, in many ways, the most remarkable, since in it realism has been carried to an unprecedented point. No subject could have been more suitable for the purpose than that of Cervantes' hero, whose dreamings soften his brain and lead him through a series of strange adventures to his disillusionment and death.

In Herr Strauss' tone poem we find him pondering on the old romances till he determines himself to lead the life of a knight errant, tilting against windmills,

fighting with sheep, riding through the air, sailing in an enchanted boat, and, in the end, dying with the bitter knowledge that all his life was an illusion. It is highly improbable that Herr Strauss intended all of it too seriously, and the expression on his face as he conducted seemed to show that he himself considered the episode with the sheep a very good joke. But, even if we regard much of it as a brilliant jeu d'esprit, there can be no doubt that it was written with the serious purpose of showing to what lengths realism in music can be carried, and, though we should not care to have too much of our music written upon exactly the same level, it serves a very useful purpose, and is certainly a monumental piece of work. It was brilliantly played last night by the Amsterdam orchestra, conducted by the composer, who also directed a fine performance of his own noble "Tod und Verklärung," while Herr Willem Mengelberg was responsible for a splendid rendition of "Don Juan." Frau Pauline Strauss de Ahna contributed a number of songs in excellent style, being notably successful in the delightful "Wiegenlied."

THE DAILY NEWS, FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 1903

THE STRAUSS FESTIVAL "DON QUIXOTE"

The temptation to pronounce a verdict on Richard Strauss's music shall be resisted until after the close of the present festival. I will not emulate a writer in "The Times" who has stated that "by this time those who can form opinions independently of their fellow-creatures have formed them, and it is not likely that many of them will see reason to alter that opinion." And then I read, "At present the mere fact that these larger compositions are a great deal uglier than anything else in music does not in itself constitute what is called individuality of style". That is all the chief newspaper of Great Britain has to say on Strauss! The perpetual discussion of the ugly and beautiful in art is only worthy of a juvenile debating society. Character is what we want in music as in a woman's face. No two people will agree about beauty; all feel the influence of character. Strauss is seldom ugly for the sake of ugliness. An idea which cannot be otherwise expressed must be illustrated by what would be called ugly music if it were torn from its context. In its place it is beautiful in its appropriateness. The fact is, the bulk of those who clamour for what they think is beauty are lovers of the sensuous. They bring no mind to the hearing of music. They do not understand the language.

Isaäc Mossel (1870-1923), the Cellist in the British premier of Don Quixote in a portrait from 1913. He had previously played the part five times (two of these under Strauss in Amsterdam in January 1903). He was the lead Cello of the Concertgebouw from 1888-1905. The London performance was his last time as the Don. After leaving the Concertgebouw he became a senior teacher of cello at the Amsterdam Conservatoire and the Amsterdam Music School, concentrating on his solo career.

These remarks are by the way of a preface to a brief consideration of “Don Quixote.” Most of it is ugly, eccentric and laboured. Strauss is laughing at himself and his “Zarathustra,” surely! It is a wonderful piece of invention in instrumental effects; a sketch book crammed full of strange grotesque devices. But they become wearisome in the end. The composer has written a deal of sly musical humour, but almost in the spirit of cynical disgust with his own ideas of music – at least so it seems to me. The character of “Don Quixote” is treated too pathologically. It is as if the demented idealist himself had turned composer and written some of the craziest music in existence. True, the end is noble and entrancing; but the calculated madness of the music wearies the ear and brain. Future Strauss Festivals should commence with “Don Quixote” as a preparation for the minor eccentricities of the other symphonic poems. After it, “Tod und Verklärung” sounded quite ordinary, normal music.

The composer conducted “Don Quixote” and “Tod und Verklärung” with the grasp of the rhythm and main character of his music which makes his conducting so exhilarating. How “The Times” critic, after hearing the last of these two works and then the extraordinarily fine performance of “Don Juan,” under Herr Mengelberg, can write as if ugliness were the main characteristic of Strauss’s music passes my understanding. The “Transfiguration” music is a lofty work of genius in original thematic material and its sublime treatment. Mention any score except Wagner’s in modern music worthy to be put by its side! A leading critic should abstain from shallow and prejudiced generalities, and not make himself ridiculous in the eyes of the world of music. For the rest, Frau Pauline Strauss sang two groups of her husband’s songs. Some of them are ordinary in feeling and rather too sketchy, but “Befreit” and “Heimliche Aufforderung” are informed with subtle beauty and individuality. There was rather a larger audience than at the first concert. E.A.B

THE STANDARD, FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 1903.

RICHARD STRAUSS FESTIVAL

The feature of last night’s concert at St. James’s Hall was the first performance in England of the tone poem “Don Quixote,” Op. 35. This work is considered by many admirers to be Strauss’s most characteristic and advanced composition, which may be admitted with regard to his power to express the humorous in music. “Don Quixote” was written in 1897, and thus in order of production,

comes between the humoresque, “Till Eulenspiegel,” and the tone poem “Ein Heldenleben,” his latest important composition. It is described by the composer as “Fantastic variations on a theme of a knightly character,” which may be said to give the form and design of the work. Its avowed purpose is to musically illustrate well-known incidents in Cervantes’s famous novel, and in order that the listener may understand the music, each variation is headed with a reference to the incident treated. The introduction represents the old Don reading old romances of chivalry and the daintiness of the music at once enchains attention. This leads to a companion section, intended to suggest chivalrous gallantry of less lucid character, and ultimately culminates in a variation of the opening theme headed “The knight reading romances of knight-errantry and losing his reason”. In this occurs the theme of his “Ideal Woman,” a graceful phrase which, however, is soon dispelled by another fierce character, as “a giant attacks her and a knight gallops to her rescue.” After this some mysterious effects produced by all the instruments being “muted,” including the tuba, represents the Don gradually becoming prey to delusions. The introduction ending with the most dire cacophony ever penned by a musician, but leaving no possible doubt concerning the Don’s mental state. The theme of “The knight of the doleful Visage” is now introduced on the violoncello. It can scarcely be said to suggest dolefulness, but it is whimsical and possesses character, but not so much as Sancho Panza, which is decidedly humorous. This is given, but on a bass clarinet and bass tuba, a combination in itself remarkable, but subsequently Sancho is chiefly associated with the solo viola. “The Knight and the Squire set out on their journey,” with Variation I. The music here is clever and comic, especially the treatment of the Don’s tilting at windmills. Variation II is concerned with “The Victorious Battle against the host of Great Emperor Alifanferon.” The combat is very fierce indeed and the bleats of the unfortunate sheep, whom the Don has mistaken for the Army, are imitated with a realism that excites laughter. Variation III contains “Dialogues of the Knight with his Squire” and its comparative tranquillity comes as a relief after what has gone before. Variation IV is headed “The Adventures with the Penitents,” who sing an ecclesiastical theme in fourths and fifths. The hurly burly of the Don’s fight with them is graphically set forth, and no less, the Knight’s snore after he has fallen asleep. Variation V, “The Knight’s vigil,” is restful and melodious, but the humorous returns with Variation VI, in which Sancho introduces the peasant girl as the Don’s ideal Dulcinea. Variation VII illustrates the Don’s fancied ride through the air, the

effect of the rush of the wind being supplied by the device used in theatres. After this comes “The memorable journey in the Enchanted Boat,” which forms Variation VIII. In the next section, the Don fights with two monks, whom he takes for robbers, and after this comes Variation X, in which the Don is finally and completely defeated. The finale treats the “The Death of Don Quixote,” and in this music leaves the grotesque and soars to a higher plane. There is genuine pathos in the strains, and the wildest and most fantastic work of modern times thus comes to an impressive close. The interpretation was wonderfully vivid, and the musical, as well as the most appallingly discordant passages were rendered with manifest clear apprehension of the composer’s requirements. The audience was obviously entertained and amused, and heartily applauded Herr Strauss, who conducted.

The other orchestral works on the programme, the tone poems “Don Juan” and “Tod und Verklarung,” have so recently been played at the Queens Hall that comment on them is unnecessary, save that familiarity with them increases esteem and admiration. Frau Strauss de Ahna’s choice of songs was not so happy as on Wednesday, but it included the beautiful “Wiegenlied” and the impassioned “Heimliche Aufforderung,” both of which were repeated in answer to prolonged applause.

Sheffield Daily Telegraph - Saturday 06 June 1903

THE RICHARD STRAUSS FESTIVAL. TONE POEMS AND SONGS (From Our Special Correspondent. By Private Wire.) LONDON, Friday Night.

One advantage to be derived from a series of concerts devoted to the works of a single composer, is the opportunity afforded for a comprehensive view of his progress or deterioration, as the case may be, and an instructive comparison of the various stages of his artistic development and the evolution of his methods. Especially is this so in the case of Richard Strauss, for probably no great composer has had so many "periods," nor reflected them so definitely in his creations. In such a survey a curious and significant fact is brought to light. Taking for example the series of orchestral works commencing with the early Symphony in F Minor, and passing through the tone poems, "Macbeth," "Don Juan," "Death and Transfiguration," "Thus spake Zarathustra," and “Hero's Life," the fact irresistibly asserts itself that as the technical dramatic and realistic sides his art have been gradually perfected, so concurrently has the

quality and sheer abstract musical beauty been over-shadowed and displaced. Of the works named, the Symphony, if judged by the old criterions of beauty, the standpoint of Mozart, Schubert, and Beethoven, immeasurably the finest, and so through the series named formal beauty is never allowed to stand in the way of the descriptive and philosophic requirements of the musical scheme. This, it is claimed, is an element of strength. It left unfettered considerations of sheer self-existent beauty, and so unhampered can work out the more intellectual side of his creations, supplying a place of one quality or another which it may well more than compensate for what is missing. To-night's concert has furnished an admirable, though a necessarily incomplete, " illustration of this argument." "Macbeth," Op. 23 (composed in 1887), "Thus spake Zarathustra," Op. 30 (dated 1896), and " A Hero's Life," Op. 40 (1898), have been performed in the order stated, and so hearing them it was easy to notice the displacing of his imaginative poetry by a grave and superb prose. Not that the two later works do not possess passages of exquisite beauty; on the contrary, the realm of music contains nothing more inherently beautiful than the tender “longing" theme of Zarathustra, or the closing passages (for horn and violin solo) of "A Hero's Life."

But, speaking generally, we find Strauss over intellectual, the philosophic, the dramatic, the realistic (using the word in its highest sense) triumphing over Strauss the imaginative, the inspired. "Macbeth," written prior to "Don Juan," aims at depicting the character of the man rather than incidents of the tragedy. The dedication of the work is significant as indicating the composer's final conversion to the gospel of "music as expression," that is to say, to programme music. The purport of the tone-poem has been well stated by Dr. Arthur Seidl, the well known German critic, who says:—"ln 'Macbeth' he strives to depict in tones the demonic horror of this terrible character. No colour is too crude for his purpose, no manner of expression too harsh. Those who admire creative impulse of elemental strength, and complete independence, will know how to appreciate its true value in the genius of this strong, ruthless, incisive piece of poetry in tones." A curious feature of the work is the treatment of the character of Lady Macbeth. She is not depicted as a virago, with no instinct but that of cruelty, but rather as a calculating schemer, and yet capable of great tenderness. The theme associated with her might quite suitably fit half-a-dozen Shakespearean heroines. The work, strong, picturesque, and compact as it is, made a great impression. Its manner

of performance was more than adequate, and composer and orchestra were enthusiastically greeted.

"Thus spake Zarathustra " is not new to English audiences, but its inclusion twice in the festival scheme was fully justified. To many this is regarded as the composer's finest work, but I should not put it on so high a plane as " Don Quixote." In it he aims at symbolising the whole inner character of a human soul. It is a marvellous work, poetically, and musically it is one long succession of wonders. Its beauties, especially of treatment and conception, are undeniable, and its audacities are no less manifold. The close is remarkable. The reiterated succession of the choral B natural is followed by the tonic of C natural—a strikingly novel yet convincing ending. After Mr. Ffrangcon Davies had sung with surprising success of tone and enthusiasm two songs, “Hymnus" and "Pilgers Morgenlied " —heard at the last Sheffield Festival—Mr. Willem Mengelberg appeared to conduct "A Hero's Life." This great work—heard at Queen's Hall three times during the past winter—served to confirm the impression formed Thursday that, fine conductor as Richard Strauss is, his works are heard to better advantage under the permanent conductor of the Amsterdam Orchestra. The difference to-night was very noticeable. The orchestra played the terrific score of " A Hero's Life" like one infallible machine, and the dash, precision, and range of expression were truly marvellous. The violin solo was expressively treated by Mr. Zimmermann, and at the close composer and conductor were recalled many times, and applauded.

London Daily News - Monday 08 June 1903

Richard Strauss. The Shelley of music. By E. A. Baughan

No doubt a prudent critic would abstain from writing anything approaching final of Strauss. He cannot at present see the wood for the trees. But I do not agree with that prudence. It does not interest me to imagine what may be said of Strauss fifty years hence. What does he say to us now is the main point for us, and most of his critics shirk it. Some are so shocked by the “ugliness” of his music and his daring defiance of rules that all else has escaped them; others are so pre-occupied by the cleverness of his polyphony and his ingenious use of the orchestra that they see in him an amazing technician and no more. Both views are unjust to Strauss. All his innovations, all his

“eccentricities,” all his strange uses of instrumental timbre are a means to an end. Indeed, his desire to express ideas (I use the word as a convenient symbol for the mixed and interesting processes of thought and emotion) conditions his workmanship. It is useless to criticise the fugue in “Zarathustra” or the snarling and sneering of the wood-wind antagonists in “Ein Heldenleben” as if they meant nothing and had no poetic intention. That is the mistake the old critics made in their estimate of Wagner, and it was less excusable, inasmuch as in his works the drama obviously conditioned the music.

Accepting this view of Strauss, three questions arise: Does the composer really move his hearers as a tone-poet? Does he keep within the limits of music? and has he the broad view of a seer? As to the first question, the most important of all as a justification of his methods, I think there cannot be two opinions. No estimate of Strauss is at all complete that ignores him as tone-poet. One might as well offer a parsing and analysis of Shelley’s poems as a criticism of them, as single out this, that, or the other technical detail in Strauss’s symphonic-poems for praise or blame the score its technique. Praise is as much a misunderstanding as blame in this respect.

The Limits of Music.

Although Strauss's music affects me as tone poetry, I cannot listen to any one of his works without moments of irritation. As almost all composers, with the exception of Wagner, Strauss’s aesthetic sense is muddled. On the whole he expresses himself. All that he is, all that has felt and suffered, all that the world means to him, he has expressed in his music. But for some reason which I do not understand, he has invariably chosen a realistic background. It is clearly so in “Don Juan," “Don Quixote,” “Zarathustra," and “Ein Heldenleben, but, least all, in “Tod und Verklärung.” And it is precisely these occasional realistic touches, this desire to paint outside phenomena, whether of character or action, which have resulted in his obscurities. Out-and-out admirers of Strauss praise this realism in his works, and they put “Don Quixote” before “Tod und Verklärung" and “Ein Heldenleben” for that very reason. I do not think that in this special admiration they do justice to Strauss, for those realistic passages mar the nobility of the composer's feeling by descending from the subjective and abstract to the objective and concrete.

Yet, strangely enough, the composer's adherence to a realism inappropriate to his main thought has resulted in his removing many of the boundary stones of art. In some of his efforts to extend the musical language as a description of individual character and action he has undoubtedly gone beyond the limitations of music. "Don Quixote" is the most glaring instance of this; it epitomises all his other attempts in the same direction, and yet much of it is very happy. It is impossible in a brief space to set out the limitations of music as a descriptive medium, but roughly it may be said that nothing beyond moods and feelings can be described unless it has qualities common to the qualities of music. The whole world of natural sound is subject to musical illustration, and anything that has movement can be expressed by rhythm. Then there is the more subtle connection of harmony and instrumental timbre with light and colour. More than this cannot be done, as "Don Quixote" proves. But when you look at Strauss's symphonic-poems as a whole you must admit that, in spite of many failures, he has succeeded in extending the musical language. He has, at least, proved that it is possible to depict individual moods and feelings, and that the old idea of the necessity of music being purely abstract was too hard-and-fast a limit.

Strauss as Seer.

It has been claimed for the composer that his music represents the spirit of the times. Its restlessness, its sardonic humour, the reiterated note of interrogation, are certainly to be found in much of the literature of the day. But ought a music-seer to be the mouthpiece of passing mental fashions? Ought he to represent the weaklings, the over-sensitive? I am sorry to say that I find Strauss's music neurotic in its frenzied restlessness. At first his symphonic-poems seem full of an almost elemental force, but with familiarity one sees that the force is largely due to his power of building up an instrumental climax, terrific in its blinding white light. He is a musical demon, wizard, and when he pipes we must perforce follow - at first. To change the metaphor, his frenetic nerve storms are as potent as drugs. The system becomes familiar with them, and craves for stronger and stronger doses. As an indication of his temperament, it is curious that in none of his works does he show any power of writing big, strenuously growing slow movements. Beautiful they are, indeed! The love music of the " Heldenleben" and its sublime close, the ending of "Zarathustra" and of "Don Quixote," are among the most beautiful pages of all music. In this mood Strauss brings tears to the eyes; in no other mood is he so much the poet. But the music, full as it is of

romance, charm, and a curiously intimate sincerity, of soul laid bare, is not big. On the other hand, it has the merit of not attempting to be big. Strauss is always himself. The beautiful lyricism of some of his songs finds its way into the slow music of his symphonic-poems. In direct contrast we have those frenetic outbursts, and then there is the sardonic, humorous Strauss. The composer has a piquantly paradoxical individuality.

A Few Musical Considerations.

I leave detailed criticism of Strauss's musical offences to those who have written pseudo-Brahms compositions, and those who admire them. No doubt they are fully equipped for the task. For myself, while admiring Strauss's astonishing inventive genius, I cannot join the chorus of those who look on him as a perfect god of musical composition. To begin with, he has a strange incapacity for writing interesting development sections, unless he has some idea of movement or of action to carry him on. The "Works of Peace" in "Ein Heldenleben" and the "Convalescence" section in " Zarathustra" are rich in polyphonic devices, but they are not effective to my ears. They seem to me, to be frank, an unemotional and unmeaning tangle of polyphony. I fancy the composer's method of writing his long symphonic-poems in one movement is the cause of a good deal of uninteresting ''bridge" stuff. Whether he has a subject to illustrate or not, a composer must give variety to his music. Strauss recognises this, and he also recognises that musical form is essential. These exigencies mar his compositions as symphonic-poems. Apart from this, his music does not always make the effect he evidently intends. Much of the polyphony is paper work, and does not come out as suggestive of atmosphere or colour, and Strauss certainly works chromaticism so ceaselessly that his music has often an anaemic complexion.

But the festival has shown me that this Shelley of music has by no means arrived at the height of his creative growth. One must keep in mind the nobility of the early "Tod und Verklärung" and the directness of the late "Ein Heldenleben." Between these works he has given himself up to experiments. What will his future be? That depends on the nature of the man. He is still young, and his earlier symphonic-poems, even " Zarathustra," although old in workmanship, are young and almost crude in feeling. Will he grow out of the pestilent pessimism which whines through the music of so many of the young men? Will his mind be cured of that modern sickness which takes refuge, or pretends to take refuge, in negation – a secondhand, European Buddhism? In

the case of Strauss these questions are important, for the actual design and colour of his music is conditioned by his mental life.

London Daily News - Wednesday 10 June 1903

THE STRAUSS FESTIVAL. CONCLUDING CONCERT

At the end of “Ein Heldenleben “ last night Herr Richard Strauss was called again and again to the platform amid genuine enthusiasm. Before the performance of that symphonic poem the orchestra presented the composer with a gigantic laurel wreath, and in acknowledging applause Herr Strauss included the Amsterdam band and its conductor, Herr Mengelberg. I have dealt as completely as possible with Strauss’s music during the festival. So many concerts consisting entirely of his compositions have been an unnecessarily severe test. The individual impression of any composer is apt to seem mannered under such circumstances.

In the festival, the violin soloist for the Hero’s Companion was Leader Louis Zimmermann (1873-1954). From 1899 to 1904 he was the leader with the Concertgebouw. Soon after the festival, he joined the London Royal College of music from 1904-1911 before returning to his position as leader with the Concertgebouw. By the time he retired in march 1940, he had played the Hero’s Companion over 50 times with Mengelberg and twice with Strauss.	

Last night had a couple of movements from the “Aus Italien’’ symphonic-fantasia, the “Burleske’’ for pianoforte and or orchestra, and a lengthy selection from “Guntram,” as well as “Ein Heldenleben.’’ The movement from “Aus Italien’’ is full of delicate and beautiful colour; the “Burleske’’ owes something to Brahms, and though splendidly played by Herr Backhaus it failed

to interest me once again. The “Guntram’’ music, written ten years ago, would hardly have existed without Wagner, especially in the treatment of the voice, but at the same time it has many interesting features and much strength of feeling. Mr. Harrison, the tenor, sang with a sense of dramatic emphasis one had not expected from him, and at the same time the quality of his voice was good. It is the fashion to say that the early orchestral works of Strauss do not at all suggest the late composer. We are to believe that his style radically changed with the “ Don Juan.” But it is not so. From the “Aus Italien’’ to “Heldenleben,” the greatest work of all, the composer’s development has been gradual and his power of expressing himself has naturally grown stronger and fuller of variety. But even the early music has Straussian phraseology, and there is attempt after attempt to obtain new orchestral colour. As to the Aesthetic discussion of Strauss's outlook music readers may be interested to know that the composer has expressed his ideas to a representative of “The Daily News." and that the interview will be published in to-morrow's issue. EAB

London Evening Standard - Wednesday 10 June 1903

RICHARD STRAUSS FESTIVAL. APPRECIATION.

Owing to compliance with a request for a repetition of *Ein Heldenleben*, only two movements of the symphonic fantasia, *Aus Italien*, were included in the concluding concert last night in the recent Festival in James's Hall. The numbers selected were the third and fourth, which were played in reverse order, which seemed a mistake, but the work is an early composition, and although the third number contains some attractive music, immaturity is prominent. It may be added that the first and third movements were introduced to England at one of Mr. Menschel’s symphony concerts on November 20,1889. The succeeding work, *Burleske* for pianoforte .and orchestra, is also an early effort dating from 1885. This was first performed in London at the Royal Academy students' concert on March 15 last, when we said “ the themes seem over-developed, many passages appear to possess little connection with the context, and to be in themselves unmeaning,” and this opinion was confirmed yesterday, in spite of the solo part being rendered with great brilliancy by Herr Wilhelm Baekhaus. The *Burleske* was followed by four excerpts from the opera *Guntram*, composed in 1892-3. The numbers selected were the Preludes to the first and second acts and the two principal tenor solos, which were finely sung by Mr. John Harrison. Operatic music

cannot fairly be judged by performance in the concert-room, but it may be said that the excerpts showed the influence of Wagner in a marked manner, that the Prelude of the second act is vigorous and stirring, and that the tenor solo, “Ewig Einsam,” from the act, is instinct with deep feeling, convincingly expressed. At the conclusion of this portion of the concert Herr Strauss, amidst enthusiastic applause from the numerous audience, was presented with a gigantic laurel wreath, apparently from the orchestral players.

In our first notice of this Festival we pointed out that for obvious reasons it would be best to defer until its conclusion any opinion on the artistic value of Herr Strauss’s music, but with the last note of yesterday’s concert we may claim to be in a position to do so with authority, for we have heard the composer's principal works performed under his direction by an orchestra for which he has expressed his fullest confidence. Before, however, summarising the result of his labours, it will be well to consider a few facts which seem to be overlooked by many in the controversy which has been raised by the German composer’s methods.

Throughout the history of music, all endeavours to enlarge the scope of the art have been discouraged by contemporary musicians, and in some notable instances to an extent that has attained to pronounced opposition. This, at first sight, may seem paradoxical, since the objectors were devotees of the art who were those most keenly appreciative of the benefits accruing themselves from the developments effected in the previous generations; but the real cause of this opposition is, that true development inevitably entails more or less detraction of what is considered ideal, and the jealousy of the ardent music-lover concerning the perfection of his favourite works is akin to that of a lover to his mistress. Added to this, the expressive power of music depends to far greater extent than is commonly supposed on associations which have gone to build the soul of each listener. Thus any departures from accepted forms and methods raise up strong, almost instinctive, feelings of opposition in all, save those who recognise that there can be no finality in art as a whole, only in those branches which have attained perfection, and that as soon that perfection is arrived at there must inevitably be a pushing forth in a new direction.

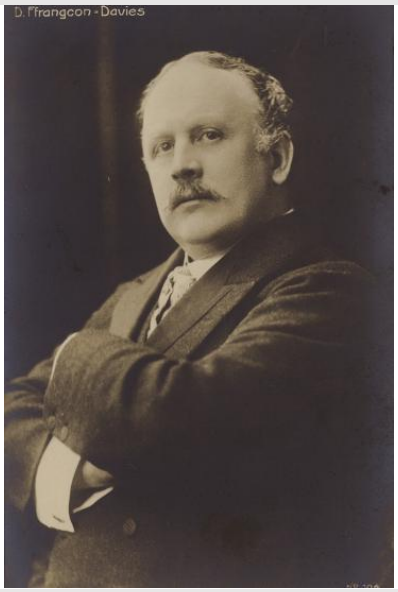
Herr Strauss’s tone poems have raised in some quarters as great an opposition akin to that excited by Wagner’s music dramas, but that they have done so is strong evidence that his music has come to stay. Herr Strauss’s

innovations start from the symphonic poem created by Liszt, a development arrested in its progress by the advent of Wagner. The radical difference between the Symphony and the symphonic poem, that, whereas the form of the Symphony is dictated by desire to secure due balance at sections and symmetry, the design of the symphonic poem Is governed by the form of the subject musically illustrated. In the latter, realism is a more important factor than in the former, and it is this realism which is the distinguishing feature of Herr Strauss's music. As pointed out recently in these columns, there are, however, two kinds of realism, the one which is content with suggestion, the other that is bent on imitating as closely as possible sounds not hitherto regarded as strictly musical. Herr Strauss is master of the former, and this being so it is to be regretted that he often employs the methods of the latter. We write "regretted" advisedly, because thereby he quite unnecessarily lowers the art-value of his compositions. In *Don Quixote*, for instance, he employs the stage wind machine to represent the rush of air in the Don's imaginary ride, but this effect would have been secured just as well by adept division of the strings of the orchestra, which would have been artistic proceeding, wheras in the other there is no art whatever. In like manner there is no merit in suggesting a battle scene by creating noise, but it requires a gifted and skilful musician to convey the idea of the emotional significance of life's struggle. It is by the employment of means thus distinctly outside the domain of art that Herr Strauss mars his compositions, displays want of perception of the appropriate verging on insanity.

With regard to the want of symmetry, and effect of patchiness noticeable in some of Herr Strauss's works, it should be remembered that this is inevitable when these attributes are found in the subject illustrated. The subject may not have been a judicious choice, but whatever it be, the value of the music must be gauged by its faithfulness to the literary matter, and its expression of its emotional import. Still greater latitude must be extended to Herr Strauss's harmonic schemes. There is good reason to believe that the use of harmony to express the variety of emotional phases is but now emerging from infancy. These not only manifest affinity between the sequence of certain chords and phases of thought, but also between mind and matter. The idea of removal or distance is conveyed to most by following, say, the chord of C by that of A flat, while a sense of opposition is engendered by striking consecutively two unrelated chords, such as C major and B sharp major (*Editor: this was how it was published. I assume a printer's joke. Presumably he meant*

F Sharp Major). That Herr Strauss is keenly alive to these phenomena is manifest, and it is on this line that he is really extending the expressive power of music. It is not too much to say that he has already gone farther in this direction than his contemporaries in the transfiguration music of *Tod und Verklärung* and in sections of *Ein Heldenleben*, and when it is remembered that these works extend over a period of ten years, from 1889 to 1899, and his intermediate productions, *Guntram*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, and *Don Quixote*, are considered, it must be admitted that here is no ordinary composer, but a "man of many parts," who has at his command "the speech of the gods and the groans of the nether world."

David Ffrangcon-Davies (1855-1918), Welsh operatic Baritone. Starting his career as a clergyman, he became a professional singer in 1888. He toured in the US and Germany and at the time of the festival was based in Berlin. He returned to Britain in 1904 when he was appointed a Professor at the Royal Academy of Music. He performed Hymnus *and* Pilgers Morgenlied *in the Friday June 5th Concert.*



John Harrison (1868-1929), one of the most prominent English Tenors of the period. Known as "The English Caruso" due to his later success as a recording artist, which had only just started in 1902. Evidently, the Strauss interview was made during the Guntram *rehearsal for the final Tuesday 9th concert. His career took off after the festival with frequent appearances at the Proms, Royal Opera House and elsewhere.*

London Daily News - Friday 12 June 1903

Richard Strauss: A Special Interview.

Herr Richard Strauss does not as a rule accede to a request for an interview. Although a composer who has made a world-wide fame at a comparatively early age, he is very modest concerning his achievements, preferring to let his music speak to the world. Moreover, since the Strauss Festival began, he has been one of the busiest men in London. But, with characteristic courtesy, he readily complied with a request for an interview on behalf of "The Daily News." The venue was St. James's Hall, during the rehearsal for the last concert of the festival, which came to a brilliant conclusion on Tuesday night.

At Rehearsal.

He was most considerate and encouraging. Not a trace of impatience did he show, although several untoward little incidents occurred which might have been avoided with a little more care and attention. Herr Strauss pleasantly addressed the orchestra: ''You must not expect me to mark every bar. I may miss a beat now and then, I am used to that from conducting operas. This not a symphony, you know. There is a singer here. You must accommodate yourself." After a little while he stopped the orchestra again. "Piano means pianissimo: yours is a concerted-pianissimo. I want an accompaniment pianissimo: there is a great difference between the two." All his explanations and corrections were made in a reassuring, helpful manner, very different from the impatient methods of some conductors. After the conclusion of the piece Herr Strauss extricated himself with some difficulty from the people lying in wait for a word with him, and led the way to the green-room for half-an hour's chat.

"You must be weary of this continuous bustle," I began, by way of opening. "Yes, I am somewhat tired. I was booked for Basel on Wednesday to attend a meeting of the Society of Tonal Artists, but I was not well enough to go. I have had so much to do." Nevertheless, Herr Strauss was alert and bright. He speaks High German, but now and then drops into the Munich dialect, a soft, comfortable, lilting kind of speech. His talk is rapid, but eloquent, and as he speaks his face lights and his large, clear eyes vividly express his thoughts and emotions. In the expression of opinion he decides, and immediately divines what one wishes to know, grasps the point at once, and in general belies the time-honoured idea that German humour is ponderous.

Asked as to his impression of the reception of his music in London, he replied: "I have been greatly pleased by it, especially that of *Quixote*. It was remarkable, and astonished me. Everywhere else there has been so much ominous shaking of heads at that work."

"I suppose the bleating of the sheep was too realistic?" I suggested.

"Yes," he laughed, "I went for a walk in Hyde Park yesterday and saw several flocks of them. The sheep seems a popular animal in England, and as far as that goes, *Don Quixote* appears quite genuinely English." With quick transition to seriousness, Herr Strauss continued, "I am struck with the progress of the appreciation of modern orchestral music here, especially when one considers the course of musical development in England." Herr Strauss was not aware that a great number of our younger composers and musical students are deeply interested in his music. "I know little of musical taste in England," he said, "but I am very glad to find I have many friends."

Ugliness In Music.

"Do you think the trend of modem music is towards the ugly?" I asked, breaking new ground. "For me," replied Herr Strauss, "absolute beauty or ugliness does not exist in music. What is truly and sincerely felt, and then faithfully and properly reproduced, is beautiful. Ideas of beauty are constantly changing. I may now directly aim at expressing the ugly in music; the achievement may be considered beautiful ten or fifty years hence. Who knows, for instance, if the listeners of the future may not think the music of the Antagonists in my "Heldenleben" beautiful?"

"What we consider dissonance to-day," continued Herr Strauss, "may seem smooth beauty to some of those who will come after us, or appear tame and pallid to others. Nowadays even many of the dissonances of Wagner do not hear as such. The taste of the ear varies and changes in development; an amalgamation takes place. Remember also that there is music quite different from ours. The Japanese and Egyptians, for instance, delight in musical language that is to us but a confused jabbering."

"What is art, then? It is a complicated question, chiefly for those who look on! It is all very simple and self evident," said Herr Strauss, in answer to this question. "Art springs from being able to do things (kunst kommt vom können). A musician must be a master of his craft, and he who has inspiration, something to say, and knows how to say it truly and well, is an artist. The

question is, does the composer succeed in musically representing what aims at, even that which ugly? Therein lies aesthetic justification. Amateurishness Is ugly."

Programme Music.

Some musical reporters have hazarded the suggestion that all Strauss's symphonic-poems are a huge joke. I asked the composer if that was the spirit in which he wrote them. "Not in any sense, not even 'Till Eulenspiegel,'" he replied. "They are musical problems if you like. The poetical programme serves but to give an impulse to find new forms. The programme is a poetical help to create new shapes. To use an extreme illustration, one might draw inspiration from this pianoforte stool. You have to find the musical equivalent for the poetical programme. But the musical poem must have hands and feet, so to speak; must ship-shape musically considered. Let him who likes look on it merely as musical work of art. In 'Don Quixote,' for instance, I show how a man goes mad over vain imaginings. But I do not wish to compel any listener to think of Don Quixote when he hears it. He may conceive it as absolute music if it suits him."

"Do you sketch a definite programme?"

"Yes, with a view to give it musical shape. You must not forget, however, that it is a musician who casts the programme. After all, poetry and music work hand in hand; music may represent any feature of life." These ideas, uttered with deep and sincere conviction, may be much discussed, but it should be understood that the composer means the representation of life in a strictly musical sense. With the classical composers the motive force in the building of compositions was mainly, and in some instances entirely, drawn from the art itself. Strauss draws his inspiration from life, translating into tone the feelings which the contemplation of ideas arouses in his mind. On the realistic side he appears to find that most natural phenomena have musical equivalents. His passing example of the music stool opens the question of the relation of line in design to form in music.

As to New Works.

"Were those delightful orchestral accompaniments to your songs recently composed?" I asked.

“No; but they are still in manuscript. One must reserve something for one’s wife, you know,” added Herr Strauss, humorously. “Some critics,” he went on. “persist in blaming me for writing songs with orchestral accompaniment. Schubert’s example ought to be followed, they say. He was content with the pianoforte. But the orchestra gives so much more scope for the imagination: so much more colour and so much more support for the singer.” Herr Strauss has finished a choral work suitable for a musical festival. It is the subject of Uhland’s ballad “Taillefer,” William the Conqueror’s bard and champion at the battle of Hastings. Another symphonic poem is almost completed. It is a “symphonia domestica.” and illustrates a day in the family life of Madame, Monsieur, et Bébé.” More than this bare outline Herr would not give. He is happiest when speaking of anything but himself and his own music. Many other questions were on my lips, but I had already taken much of the composer’s time, and, waving aside my thanks with genial diffidence, he was soon hard at work again. During the interview I was particularly struck with the unassuming simplicity of this famous composer. He is far indeed from the type of man who poses in art. Indeed, he has the large-minded simplicity and personal charms of a great nature. C.K.

THE GRAPHIC, June 13, 1903.

The Strauss Festival

To many old concert-goers the Strauss Festival which came to an end on Tuesday of this week will recall the run on Raff in the seventies, and the Wagner and Berlioz cycles of the eighties. In each case London heard for the first time the principal works of the composer, and it was left for the public to judge how long any of the compositions in question should live. Raff has now almost entirely dropped out, Berlioz survives chiefly by a few works, of which Faust is the chief, while Wagner is still the most popular of all. It is probable that Richard Strauss will experience much the same fate as Berlioz. We shall hear *Heldenlehen*, *Eulenspiegel*, *Don Quixote*, and *Zarathustra* more or less often in the immediate future, while *Macbeth*, *Aus Italien*, and *Don Juan* are shelved. Yet, despite the disdain for forms and rules which must have sorely tried the ears of music-lovers of the old school, there is much to interest and admire in all these works. Even non-musicians may gather how original is the musical plan, by the novel view taken by Strauss of the subjects he illustrates. We find Macbeth depicted as mad in his relentless ferocity, though almost

pathetically affectionate towards his wife; while Lady Macbeth, self-willed though she may be, is tenderly loving when her husband is in question. The introduction of the Scotch "snap" may be taken as one of Strauss's little jokes. So, too, may be the funny imitations of the baa-ing of sheep in *Don Quixote*, and the employment of a theatrical storm-machine to illustrate the mad knight's supposed passage through the air. But in these comic or satirical subjects Strauss seems to be at his happiest, for he is essentially a humorist in music, as his *Eulenspiegel* and portions of his *Heldenleben* amply show. In *Don Juan* he adopts the story of Lenau, of a philosophical libertine, who follows his calling solely with the object of discovering the ideal in womanhood, and who in dying (he is killed in a duel by a jealous husband) leaves ample fortunes to all of his victims. The irony of the situation must have appealed strongly to Richard Strauss. The performances were good when the composer himself conducted and caused the intricacies to be unravelled with the utmost clearness.

On the other hand, Herr Mengelberg was, to London minds, rather noisy, while his Amsterdam band, although they may know their Strauss by heart, and therefore were spared long rehearsals of this difficult music, were not in many ways comparable with the best of our own London orchestras. Herr Richard Strauss, the central figure of the Strauss Festival, is the son of a horn player of Munich, and is in his fortieth year. He was a pupil of Meyer, and began to compose early, for when his first symphony was produced in 1881 by the late Herr Levi at Munich, Strauss, although only seventeen, had already written a dozen works, including concertos for horn, for violin, and for piano, a serenade for wind, and a string quartet. He was taken up by Dr. von Bülow, whom he succeeded as conductor at Meiningen in 1885, and thence he went as conductor to Weimar, and Munich, and finally to Berlin, where he is conductor of the Philharmonic, and since 1898 of the Royal Opera. His originality as a composer has caused much discussion, but he is now acknowledged to be the leader of the advanced school of modem Germany. His published works comprise a symphony, eight tone poems, two operas, some male choruses, and upwards of a hundred songs, some of which his wife, Frau Strauss Ahna, interprets so artistically.

The Era, June 13 1903.

RICHARD STRAUSS FESTIVAL.

Although Herr Richard Strauss may not be the "coming man of the future," he is certainly the "man of the hour," for one cannot mix in any musical society without being asked "What do you think of Richard Strauss." Some of this excitement will inevitably subside, but meanwhile It must put the musician himself on his mettle. He has certainly in *Don Quixote* produced, if not his greatest, his most elaborate and eccentric work, and the gift expressing humour in music so rare and in a German composer unexpected that we do not wonder that the hosts of musical people who are seeking some "new thing" jump at Herr Strauss and pronounce him the "Second Beethoven." We can dismiss with a smile this preposterous claim. Beethoven was a composer of a very different type. It Is true that when quite young Beethoven startled the musical world by his gifts as a pianist and his wonderful improvisations, which carried his name over Europe. He made his last journey as virtuoso in 1796, and the deafness which continued to increase until he became totally incapable of hearing any sound whatever cut him off from all society, and embittered his life that more than once he meditated suicide. But he was a poet in the highest sense of the term, and bore his affliction like the true Christian he was. His works amounted to 138, many of them masterpieces, which have never been equalled, and certainly destitute of the extravagant and fantastic whimsicality Richard Strauss, who, nevertheless, claims, and we doubt not will eventually obtain, whatever justice is due to him. His *Macbeth*, composed in 1887, although harsh in harmonies and general character which even the witches themselves could desire, shows an earnest intention to deal artistically with the great author of that sublime tragedy, and the orchestral combinations are frequently remarkable. Compared with Verdi's *Macbeth*, it is unquestionably a work of genius. Returning to *Don Quixote* we may speak of the death of the Don as pathetic and natural. Beethoven himself would have appreciated this portion of the tone poem. The songs given from time to time by Madame Strauss will add to the composer's popularity more than some of his orchestral works.

The Musical Times, July 1st 1903.

THE RICHARD STRAUSS FESTIVAL (Herbert Thompson)

There can be little doubt that the Richard Strauss Festival held in St. James's Hall, June 3-9, was among the most interesting events of the London musical season. Whether it was also to be reckoned among the most enjoyable depended very much upon the hearer's degree of receptivity. There is much in Strauss's music that runs counter to all one's preconceptions, yet the slightest knowledge of musical history suffices to convince us that this is no valid reason for condemning the composer. Indeed, the reticence with which many of the London critics have written of Strauss suggests that they have a wholesome dread of imitating their predecessors who made themselves ridiculous for all time by their blind denunciation of Wagner, or the still earlier generation who declared that Beethoven's influences upon the music of his time had been more or less pernicious. To think of this makes one careful, but of course it should not prevent a critic from foregoing all criticism.

Until this Festival we have had little opportunity of judging the work of Richard Strauss in its entirety. Even now his two operas are known to us, as Wagner's chief works were up till 1882, merely through the medium of concert performances of extracts; but he differs from Wagner in that his most typical works are intended primarily for the concert-room - the eight Symphonic Poems, all of which, save only a couple of movements of the early 'Aus Italien,' were given at the Festival. It may therefore be said that the material now exists for forming a more or less comprehensive judgment on the composer's work, though it must be allowed that in many cases a single hearing is by no means sufficient for forming an opinion on music which in complexity and elaboration exceeds anything that has gone before it. In endeavouring to record one's impressions it is well to begin by making one's standpoint clear. Of one thing I have for some time been clearly convinced, that Strauss possesses genius; he has not only an unsurpassed technique, but he has ideas which are original and beautiful, sometimes “beautiful” in the generally accepted sense of sensually pleasing, sometimes in the more modern sense of expressing character. This being the case, I approach his work in a different mood from that in which I

should regard the efforts of a fluent utterer of things not worth saying, or even of a well-meaning stammerer of things beyond his reach.

The witty compilers of a bogus Encyclopaedia introduced into their skit a suggestive cross-reference: 'Wagner, the late Richard: see Strauss, Richard,' and there is no doubt that the younger composer does, in his thematic development, his glowing orchestral colouring, and his passionate climaxes, owe much to Wagner; yet I incline to think that his art is, if not so obviously, very essentially akin to Beethoven, and owes not a little to Bach. One is often reminded of the Beethoven whose determination to be characteristic, even at the expense of the beautiful, made him indulge in the strenuous and insistent discords in the first movement of the “Eroica,” and the premature return of the first subject which Sir George Grove loved, though he humorously said it was “as wrong as stealing or lying” ; or again, the unmitigated cacophony which precedes the final movement of the Choral Symphony. These are, however, like the shadows in a picture, which take their proper relative place in the whole scheme of chiaroscuro, and though they afford precedent for even the discords in which Strauss indulges, the question of degree remains to be considered, and one has yet to determine whether these ' shadows ' bear the right artistic relation to their context.

In another point Strauss has gone beyond the limits laid down by Beethoven in his famous axiom that music should be an expression of the emotions rather than painting; but even here it must be remembered that Beethoven himself whimsically transgressed this rule in the very work in which he laid it down, while Strauss, where he has diverged into realism, has generally the excuse of a fantastic subject, and it must be admitted that there is a legitimate place in art for the grotesque. Of course Liszt, whose influence upon this generation will probably turn out to be greater than has hitherto been generally allowed, is the immediate artistic ancestor of Strauss, but I need hardly insist upon a point which will be evident to even the most casual hearer. As to Bach's influence, it may be felt in the licence which Strauss allows himself in his counterpoint, in which the carrying out of a melodic idea to its logical conclusion is regarded as of far more importance than the jarring discords which are produced in its course. As a matter of fact, I think it is rather a mistake to make too much of discords. The discords of one generation are the concords of another, and it is hardly safe to say that an harmonic

combination is wrong because it sounds strange to our unaccustomed ears. What seems to me to be a greater weakness is the composer's inclination to make so much of details that the main lines of his music are neglected, a sort of pre-Raphaelitism in music which, like its prototype in painting, one admires for its dexterity while feeling that the gain is overbalanced by the corresponding loss, for after all the whole is greater than any of its parts.

Let us now turn to the actual compositions, taking them in chronological order. First there was the 'Aus Italien' (Op. 16), the only one broken up into movements, after the pattern of the classical symphony. Of this two movements were played, one of which, the slow movement, "Sorrento," shows a sense of delicate orchestral colour which is as fine in its way as anything Strauss has ever done. Much in advance of this is the 'Don Juan' (Op. 20), a work which carries conviction with it. It glows with colour and passion, it is continuous and broad in its lines, and it is always musical. 'Macbeth' (Op. 23) is not superficially attractive, but it is a profound study of character, rugged and barbaric, but not going beyond the hitherto recognised bounds of art. Its power is tremendous, and, as a matter of detail, there is a distinct flavour of the first few bars of the Choral Symphony in the opening. 'Tod und Verklärung' (Op. 24) is more truly "musical," especially in the really noble *coda* in which the work culminates, while the freakish 'Till Eulenspiegel' (Op. 28) is equally happy as a musical grotesque, in which the touches of burlesque do not obscure the glimpses of real beauty. And here I may say that Strauss seems to me to have genuine melodic invention; his themes often have distinction and are never vulgar or sentimental.

The next symphonic. poem is 'Also sprach Zarathustra' (Op 30), and here we come to much more debateable ground. The subject itself has been objected to, but it is not quite fair to style it "a system of philosophy set to music," for it is rather a musical commentary on Nietzsche's work bearing that title, which, as it has been said, is not so much "the building up of a system of thought as of a world of feeling." At the same time it may be doubted whether Strauss has not attempted more than music can express without losing its ideal character. And here one certainly is inclined to doubt whether his anxiety to express each minute phase of his complex subject has not resulted in the pre-Raphaelite insistence on details to which reference has already been made. The riddle of existence is, in a word, the gigantic theme of the wonderful

production, and Strauss expresses its insolubility by ending his work with the alternated chords of C major and B major. It is done so deftly that the effect is not nearly so barbarously crude as might be expected,- not much worse than Schumann's ‘Question' - but this serves to show how relentlessly Strauss follows out his “programme” to its logical conclusion.

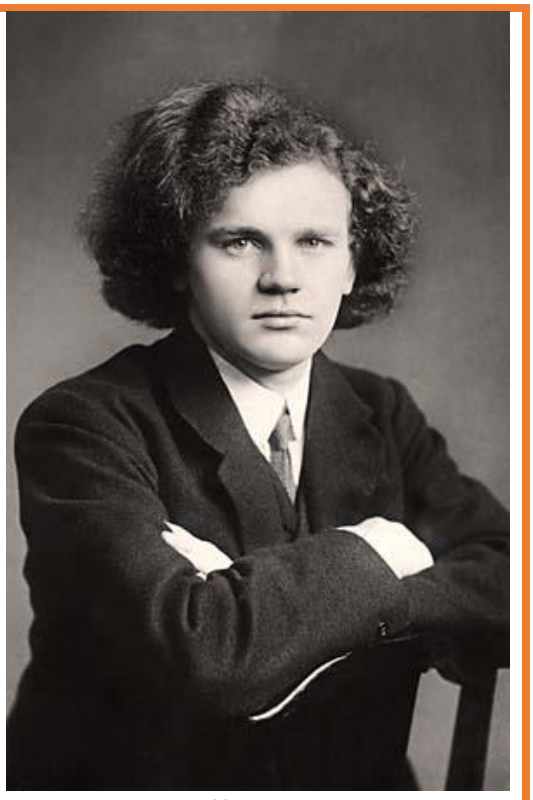
Still more realistic is ‘Don Quixote’ (Op. 35), but here the composer has the excuse of a subject grotesque and fantastical in character. This is a most remarkable work, ingeniously and happily planned. In a prelude the character of the hero is built up, his native chivalry, his assiduous study of romances, and the growing aberration of his intellect are all depicted, and then out of these materials is formed the chief theme representing the Knight of the Doleful Visage, accompanied by his homely squire Sancho. On this a series of ten variations is based each representing an adventure in which the protagonists take part, while the finale represents Don Quixote's retirement and death. The realism culminates in the adventure with the flock of sheep, whose “baas” are as free from the trammels of rhythm and harmony as is Nature itself. Here again the question arises: Is this passage of imitation which in itself cannot by any stretch of courtesy be styled “music” admissible as a shadow in the picture? For my part I incline to think that it is too extended to be quite “in the picture,” though it serves to set off the unmistakable beauty of the next variation, in which Don Quixote expounds his ideas of chivalry. This is one of the glowing episodes, which glows all the more by contrast with the grotesque ugliness of what has gone before.

Last of all comes the ‘Heldenleben’ (Op. 40), which has been so much discussed of late that it need not be considered at length. Here again there is some unmitigated cacophony in the battle scene, yet as a who!e the impression left is of tremendous power and brilliance. It has vitality, and this covers a multitude of sins.

The scheme also included a large number of songs, in which Strauss shows the truly lyrical charm of which he is capable. They were sung by Frau Strauss-de Ahna and Mr. Ffrancgon-Davies most sympathetically, and Mr. John Harrison sang two tenor scenes from ‘Guntram.’ The early ‘Burleske’ for Pianoforte and Orchestra, in which the influence of Brahms is very marked, was played with the utmost clearness and charm by Mr. Backhaus. The 'Concertgebouw Symphonic Orchestra' from Amsterdam was engaged for the

Festival, not from any want of confidence in the powers of English players, but because they happen to have made a speciality of Strauss's music, which with a London band would have involved an impracticable amount of rehearsal. It is a fine well-disciplined band, not too refined in quality, but possessing a good ensemble. Mr. Zimmermann's fine playing of the fantastic violin solo in the 'Heldenleben' and Mr. Mossel's execution of the corresponding violoncello part in 'Don Quixote' deserve more than a conventional word of acknowledgment. The work of conducting was shared by the composer and Mr. Mengelberg, the conductor of the Amsterdam Orchestra, a very able artist, whose reading of the 'Heldenleben' was most forceful and brilliant.

Wilhem Backhaus (1884-1969), German pianist who started playing concerts in England regularly in 1900. In 1904 he was to become a Professor of at the Royal Manchester College of Music. In 1905 he beat Bela Bartok to become the winner of the Anton Rubenstien piano competition in Paris. After his performance at the Strauss festival in London, he went on to perform Burleske *several times, including twice under Strauss (Berlin 1905 and Munich 1910). Strauss also conducted with him performing various piano concerti. The two remained friends, and their last meeting was in 1947 when Backhaus was an invited guest to a Strauss concert in Lugano. Backhaus also had a highly successful recording career (mainly Brahms and Beethoven).*



Backhaus in 1907