



Richard Strauss (1864-1949), had a distinguished career as a conductor, beginning with an appointment to the Meiningen court at 21 (1885), going on to Munich (1886-9), Weimar (1889-94), Munich again (1894-8), Berlin (*Generalmusikdirektor*, 1898-1919), and Vienna (Staatsoper, 1919-24). In 1933 he was appointed president of the *Reichsmusikkammer*, but he dissented from the racial policies of Nazism, and by 1935 was under suspicion. Strauss wrote much orchestral music, beginning with a violin concerto in 1883. He became especially known for his illustrative orchestral works, which he called *Tondichtungen*. These were intended to convey visual (*Aus Italien*, 1887), or literary impressions (*Don Juan*, 1889, based on Lenau's poem; *Macbeth*, 1890; *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, 1895; *Also sprach Zarathustra*, after Nietzsche, 1896; *Don Quichote*, 1898). *Ein Heldenleben* (1899) and *Sinfonia domestica* (1904) were intended as works of musical autobiography. *Eine Alpensymphonie* (1915) reverted to visual impression. Strauss's own individuality was first evident in the short opera *Feuers-not* (libretto by E. von Wolzogen, 1900). In 1905 Strauss shocked the musical public with *Salome*, based on Oscar Wilde's play, and repeated the process in 1909 with *Elektra*, which

took H. von Hofmannsthal's tragedy as libretto. From this time until the death of Hofmannsthal in 1928 the two collaborated regularly and produced five more operas, which bore witness to their profound devotion to an ideal conception of opera. They are *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911), *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912), *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1919), *Die ägyptische Helena* (1928), and *Arabella* (1933). Strauss wrote other vocal music, including motets, *Enoch Arden* after Tennyson (1899), and songs. Among the poets he set are O. J. Bierbaum, G. A. Bürger, R. Dehmel, H. von Gilm, Heine, and Weinheber. His *Vier letzte Lieder*, written between 1946 and 1948, consist of three songs to poems by H. Hesse ('Frühling', 'September', and 'Beim Schlafengehen') followed by 'Im Abendrot' by Eichendorff. In these, as in a number of other songs, he used orchestral accompaniment in preference to the piano. His writings appeared as *Betrachtungen und Erinnerungen*, ed. W. Schuh, 1949 (reissued 1957), and editions of correspondence include that with H. von Hofmannsthal (1926, revised 1964), and with S. Zweig (1957). During his lifetime Strauss was considered the greatest composer of the first half of the 20th century, and his music had a profound influence on the development of 20th-century music. There were few 20th-century composers who compared with Strauss in terms of orchestral imagination, and no composer since Wagner made a more significant contribution to the history of opera. Strauss's late works, modeled on "the divine Mozart at the end of a life full of thankfulness," are perhaps the most remarkable works by any octogenarian composer. The Canadian pianist Glenn Gould described Strauss in 1962 as "the greatest musical figure who has lived in this century."

The *Suite in Bb for thirteen instruments*, Op. 4 (1884) was commissioned by Hans von Bülow and was premiered in Munich on November 18, 1884 with Strauss conducting the Meiningen Orchestra. Hans von Bülow had met the young composer in the winter of 1883-84 and subsequently conducted Strauss's *Serenade in Eb for thirteen instruments*, Op. 7 (1881) with the Meiningen Orchestra in Berlin. The success of this work led von Bülow to commission Strauss for a work for the same set of instruments. The premiere performance, conducted by the composer without a rehearsal with the orchestra, was the first major performance in which Strauss conducted and effectively "jump started" his musical career. *Praeludium* is based upon the triplet rhythm first heard in the opening measure. In contrast is an oboe solo in measure 46 which contains an ascending minor second that later on in the movement acts as a motif. *Romanze* begins with a clarinet cadenza-like passage followed by a plaintive melody. Contrasted with this are heroic solos in the horn and bassoon. *Gavotte* is loosely based on the dance originating from Bretagne of the same name. *Introduction und Fuge* begins with the plaintive melody from the second movement. The fugue is in ABA form with the main theme starting in the first horn.