

A Strauss Celebration

Johann Strauss Orchestra
Jack Rothstein

collect

A Strauss Celebration

COMPACT DISC ONE

Johann Strauss II

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 1 | Tritsch-Tratsch-Polka, Op. 214
(Chit-Chat-Polka) | 2:40 |
| 2 | Kaiser Franz Josef Marsch, Op. 67
(Emperor Franz Josef March) | 2:55 |
| 3 | Wiener Bonbons Walzer, Op. 307
(Vienna Bon-bons Waltz) | 6:05 |
| 4 | Fata Morgana Polka Mazur, Op. 330
(Fata Morgana Polka Mazurka) | 3:43 |
| 5 | Morgenblätter Walzer, Op. 279
(Morning Papers Waltz) | 8:09 |
| 6 | Auf der Jagd Schnell-Polka, Op. 373
(At the Hunt Quick Polka) | 2:23 |
| 7 | Rosen aus dem Süden Walzer, Op. 388
(Roses from the South Waltz) | 8:30 |
| 8 | Annen-Polka, Op. 117
(Anna-Polka) | 3:51 |
| 9 | An der schönen, blauen Donau Walzer, Op. 314
(By the Beautiful, Blue Danube Waltz) | 8:10 |

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|----|---|------|
| 10 | Eljen a Magyar Schnell-Polka, Op. 332
(Long live the Magyar Quick Polka) | 2:28 |
| 11 | Tausend und eine Nacht Walzer, Op. 346
(Thousand and One Nights Waltz) | 6:07 |
| 12 | Furioso-Polka quasi Galopp, Op. 260
(Furious-Polka, quasi Galop) | 2:01 |
| 13 | Egyptischer Marsch, Op. 335
(Egyptian March) | 4:12 |
| 14 | Unter Donner und Blitz Schnell-Polka, Op. 324
(Thunder and Lightning Quick Polka) | 3:13 |

TT 65:03

COMPACT DISC TWO

Johann Strauss II

- | | | |
|------------------|--|------|
| 1 | Banditen-Galopp, Op. 378
(Bandits' Galop) | 2:23 |
| 2 | Wiener Blut, Op. 354
(Vienna Blood) | 8:34 |
| 3 | Quadrille nach Motiven der Operette
Der lustige Krieg, Op. 402
(Quadrille on themes from the operetta <i>The Merry War</i>) | 5:01 |
| Johann Strauss I | | |
| 4 | Cachucha-Galopp, Op. 97 | 2:17 |

Josef Strauss		
5	Ohne Sorgen Schnell-Polka, Op. 271 (Without a Care Quick Polka)	1:50
6	Aquarellen Walzer, Op. 258 (Water Colours Waltz)	6:08
7	Moulinet Polka, Op. 57 (Little Mill Polka)	3:24
8	Perlen der Liebe Concert-Walzer, Op. 39 (Pearls of Love Concert Waltz)	7:18
9	Die Libelle Polka Mazur, Op. 204 (The Dragonfly Polka Mazurka)	4:01
10	Farewell! Schnell-Polka, Op. 211	1:42
Eduard Strauss		
11	Leuchtkäferln Walzer, Op. 161 (Glow-worms Waltz)	9:46
12	Weyprecht-Payer-Marsch, Op. 120	2:51
13	Schleier und Krone Walzer, Op. 200 (Veil and Crown Waltz)	8:12
14	Saat und Ernte Schnell-Polka, Op. 159 (Sow and Reap Quick Polka)	2:21
		TT 66:28
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The British concert-going public, largely fed on a diet of familiar Viennese Strauss family music, responded with enthusiasm to the opportunity of hearing some of their lesser-known, though no less delightful, dances and marches when the impresario Raymond Gubbay included a number of them in the first of his Johann Strauss Gala programmes in 1975, marking the 150th anniversary of the birth of Johann Strauss II. Today, such concert tours continue to charm audiences around the country, offering a blend of the familiar and the unfamiliar. This present recording follows the same pattern; an amalgamation of two previous Chandos releases (*A Strauss Gala* and *Beautiful Blue Danube*), together with selected tracks from three other Chandos issues (*Vienna Premiere*, Volumes 1, 2 and 3), it affords listeners a chance to hear, alongside the 'evergreens', some of the now rarely-played pieces which proved so popular during the last century.

The Strauss family's musical legacy of some 1500 orchestral pieces, as well as seventeen completed stage works, resulted from the tireless industry of its five composers: Johann I (1804–1849), his three sons Johann II (1825–1899), Josef (1827–1870) and

Eduard (1835–1916), and his grandson Johann III (1866–1939). The collection presented here concentrates largely on music by two of these masters, the 'Waltz King', Johann Strauss II and his highly gifted brother Josef.

The founder of the Strauss musical dynasty, Johann I, best remembered for his ubiquitous *Radetzky-Marsch* (Op. 228), is here represented by the little-heard *Cachucha-Galopp*. With a keen sense for the commercial, the Strausses were swift to latch onto the latest crazes, and this galop by the elder Strauss recalls the Spanish dance, the Cachucha, which was made famous by the dancer Fanny Elssler and which caused such wild excitement in Vienna in 1837.

Had Johann II written nothing else but the waltz *An der schönen, blauen Donau* (By the Beautiful, Blue Danube), his lasting fame would still have been assured. Composed originally as a choral waltz for the Vienna Men's Choral Association in 1867, the piece found immediate favour and has come to be regarded as Austria's second National Anthem. (The version recorded here presents the work in its purely orchestral form, and with a slightly truncated coda section.) Like a great

number of the Strauss family's compositions, the sprightly **Tritsch-Tratsch-Polka** chronicles contemporary life, and takes its name from a Viennese satirical weekly publication of 1858. Such was the polka's success that before long the celebrated Viennese folk singer Johann Moser added words and thereby further spread its popularity.

Quite apart from the incessant demand of the Viennese public for new dance tunes, the Strausses provided original compositions to commemorate special events and important personages, for the imposing balls of the nobility, university faculties and various professional and industrial associations and, in the case of Johann II and Eduard, as a means of improving their personal standing with those of rank. An example is the swaggering **Kaiser Franz Josef Marsch**, dating from 1849, when Johann was still attempting to secure the favour of the young Austrian Emperor, Franz Josef I, after Strauss's pro-revolutionary stance in 1848 had made him *persona non grata* in the eyes of the Court. Not, in fact, until 1863 was the coveted honorary title of 'k.k. Hofball-Musikdirektor' (Director of Music for the Imperial-Royal Court Balls), created especially for his father in 1846, eventually conferred upon him. The **Kaiser Franz Josef Marsch** is rarely performed nowadays, whereas Johann's graceful **Annen-Polka** will surely be familiar to almost all

listeners. The composer wrote this piece for the Roman Catholic Name-Day celebrations of the Saint Anna, taking place in the Vienna Prater in July 1852. Ironically, Johann gave the first performance of this dainty polka at an establishment called 'The Wild Man'. The master-waltzes **Morgenblätter** (1864) and **Wiener Bonbons** (1866) were written for the balls of the Vienna Writers' and Journalists' Association and the Industrialists' Association respectively, whilst Johann's haunting **Fata Morgana**, like Josef's **Aquarellen** waltz, was written for the Vienna Artists' Association, 'Hesperus', in 1869. The title of this polka mazurka refers to the curious shimmering mirage sometimes observed over the Straits of Messina, and indeed there is something of a 'shimmering' quality about the music itself. Johann's sinuous **Egyptischer Marsch** also dates from 1869, and celebrates the formal opening of the Suez Canal. In Vienna, this 'characteristic piece' was first heard as a processional march for Egyptian warriors in a topical burlesque.

With a few exceptions, most notably *Die Fledermaus* (The Bat, 1874) and *Der Zigeunerbaron* (The Gypsy Baron, 1885), the majority of Johann Strauss's sixteen stage works have disappeared from theatre repertoire. Yet it is a measure of the composer's genius for melody that much of his music continues to find a ready audience

through the individual orchestral dances and marches which Johann arranged from the scores of his operettas. The lovely waltz, **Tausend und eine Nacht**, is based on themes from Strauss's first operetta, *Indigo und die vierzig Räuber* (Indigo and the Forty Thieves) of 1871, whilst the lively **Banditen-Galopp** owes its origins to material in the composer's fifth operetta, *Prinz Methusalem* (1877), and **Auf der Jagd** uses themes from Johann's fourth operetta, *Cagliostro in Wien* (1875). Similarly, the waltz **Rosen aus dem Süden**, much later to gain wide recognition as the signature tune of BBC Radio's *Grand Hotel*, comprises melodies from *Das Spitzentuch der Königin* (The Queen's Lace Handkerchief), first seen in 1880. Perhaps the most tuneful of all Johann Strauss's operettas, *Der lustige Krieg* (The Merry War, 1881), enabled its composer to arrange no less than ten separate numbers for the ballroom and concert hall, including the superb **Lustige Krieg-Quadrille**. The graceful waltz, **Wiener Blut** was written in 1873 as an independent dance piece celebrating the marriage of Emperor Franz Josef's eldest daughter, Gisela, and Prince Leopold of Bavaria. Only later did the work give its name, and some of its melodies, to the posthumous Strauss operetta-pastiche, *Wiener Blut* (1899).

The quick polka **Eljen a Magyar** reveals how adept Johann II was at imbuing his

compositions with the musical 'flavour' of other nations when occasion demanded. Written for a concert visit to Pest in March 1869, the polka was dedicated 'to the Hungarian Nation', and features a fleeting quotation from the patriotic Rákóczi song which Berlioz had earlier utilised in his *Rákóczi March*. While the elder Johann Strauss wrote a *Furioso-Galopp*, Op. 114 (1839), based on the music of Liszt, the younger Johann's thrilling and aptly named **Furioso-Polka quasi Galopp** (1861), with its rapid alternations between major and minor keys, is an entirely original composition which deserves wider public appreciation. It is interesting to reflect that the evergreen quick polka, **Unter Donner und Blitz**, first performed under that name in March 1868 at a 'carnival revue' in Vienna, actually received its premiere the previous month under a different title: 'Sternschnuppe' (Shooting Star).

Josef Strauss, Johann's younger brother, entered the family music business very much against his will. When a severe mental and physical collapse temporarily removed the 'Waltz King' from public life in 1853, Josef selflessly deputised for his brother, initially on an interim basis, although eventually relinquishing a brilliant career as an engineer for a life in music. Johann's own assessment, 'Pepi [Josef] is the more gifted of us two, I am merely the more popular', has found increasing

support amongst present-day Strauss devotees and scholars. Whilst melancholic and introspective by nature, as illustrated in his glorious waltz *Aquarellen*, the lighter side of Josef's character is heard to good account in the contrasting polkas *Moulinet* (1858), *Farewell!* (1866) and *Ohne Sorgen* (1869). His polka mazurka, *Die Libelle* (1866), surely one of the most perfect works in the entire Strauss family repertoire, is a miniature sound-sketch in which Josef conjures up memories of drowsy summer days beside a shaded water's edge, interrupted only by a dragonfly as it flits across the surface. Like his elder brother, Josef was greatly influenced by the music of his contemporaries, and their orchestral styles found expression in several of his own compositions. Of special importance was Richard Wagner (1813–83) whose work the Strausses championed in Vienna, and whose influence can be heard to remarkable effect in the (here slightly truncated) introduction to the magnificent concert waltz, *Perlen der Liebe* (1857), which was Josef's wedding gift to his beloved Caroline.

The compositions of the youngest Strauss brother, Eduard, were from the outset unfairly compared with those by Johann II and Josef, and by the time his compositional talents had fully matured his music was often overlooked because of the wealth of masterpieces by his older brothers. In truth, much of Eduard's

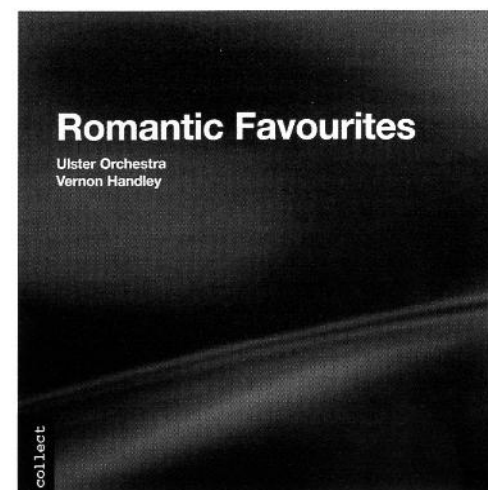
output – particularly that dating from the 1870s and 1880s – stands very favourable comparison with that written by his two famous brothers. This present collection includes two of Eduard's finest creations in three-quarter-time, the waltzes *Leuchtkäferln* (1877), in whose delicately glimmering introduction the composer portrays the glow-worms of the title, and the sublime *Schleier und Krone* (1881), dedicated to Crown Prince Rudolph (1858–1889) and first performed at the Hofburg Palace in Vienna on the eve of his marriage to Princess Stephanie of Belgium (1864–1945). A change of tempo heralds the *Weyprecht-Payer-Marsch* (1874), recalling the discovery of Franz-Josef-Land (today, Zemlya Frantsa Iosifa) east of Spitzbergen by the Austrian explorers Karl Weyprecht and Julius Payer, whilst Eduard's particular penchant for the quick polka is ably demonstrated by his contribution to the 1877 International Grain and Seed Market Assembly in Vienna, the *Saat und Ernte* quick polka.

The compositions on this recording serve as ample demonstration of the Strausses' mastery of their art: through them, Viennese dance music attained its consummate form. Equally at home on the dance floor as in the concert hall, it remains unsurpassed and unsurpassable.

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The Johann Strauss Society of Great Britain

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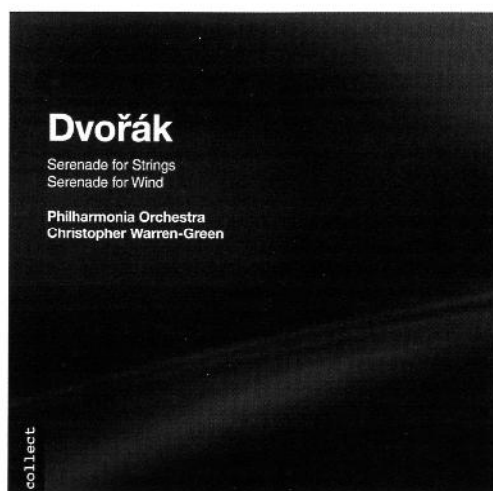
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