

The Cambridge Companion to

RICHARD  
STRAUSS

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EDITED BY  
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For my parents

## Contents

*List of illustrations* [page ix]  
*List of music examples* [x]  
*List of tables* [xii]  
*Notes on contributors* [xiii]  
*Preface and acknowledgments* [xvii]  
*Chronology of Strauss's life and career* [xxi]  
*List of abbreviations* [xxvii]

### Part I • Background [1]

- 1 The musical world of Strauss's youth  
*James Deaville* [3]
- 2 Strauss's compositional process  
*Walter Werbeck* [22]
- 3 Maturity and indecision in the early works  
*Wayne Heisler, Jr.* [42]

### Part II • Works [57]

- 4 The first cycle of tone poems  
*David Larkin* [59]
- 5 The second cycle of tone poems  
*James Hepokoski* [78]
- 6 Strauss's road to operatic success: *Guntram*,  
*Feuersnot*, and *Salome*  
*Morten Kristiansen* [105]
- 7 The Strauss–Hofmannsthal operas  
*Bryan Gilliam* [119]
- 8 Opera after Hofmannsthal  
*Philip Graydon* [136]
- 9 "Actually, I like my songs best": Strauss's lieder  
*Susan Youens* [151]
- 10 Last works  
*Jürgen May* [178]

### Part III • Perspectives [193]

- 11 Strauss's place in the twentieth century  
*Alex Ross* [195]

- 12 Musical quotations and allusions in the works of Richard Strauss  
*Günter Brosche* [213]
- 13 Strauss in the Third Reich  
*Michael Walter* [226]
- 14 Strauss and the business of music  
*Scott Warfield* [242]
- 15 Kapellmeister Strauss  
*Raymond Holden* [257]
- 16 Strauss and the sexual body: the erotics of humor,  
philosophy, and ego-assertion  
*Bryan Gilliam* [269]
- 17 Strauss and the nature of music  
*Charles Youmans* [280]

*Notes* [294]

*Select bibliography* [326]

*Index* [332]

## Illustrations

- 2.1 Sketchbook 2, pp. 71–3: *Also sprach Zarathustra*, sketches for “Von den Hinterweltlern.” [page 29]
- 2.2 Sketchbook 3, p. 17: *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, continuity draft of opening. [33]
- 2.3 Sketchbook 3, p. 31: *Also sprach Zarathustra*, partcell of opening orchestration. [38]

## 5 The second cycle of tone poems

JAMES HEPOKOSKI

Things suddenly deprived of their supposed meaning, of the place assigned to them in the so-called order of things ... make us laugh. In origin, laughter is thus of the devil's domain. It has something malicious about it (things suddenly turning out different from what they pretended to be), but to some extent also a beneficent relief (things are less weighty than they appeared to be, letting us live more freely, no longer oppressing us with their austere seriousness).<sup>1</sup>

For those connoisseurs in the mid and late 1890s who were tracking the latest developments of musical "progress" (*Fortschritt*) in Austro-Germanic art music, there was no doubt. The most innovative orchestral works of the decade were the tone poems of the young modernist, Richard Strauss. Debated everywhere in these circles were the four stunners that comprise his second cycle of tone poems, each of which outflanked its predecessor in extremity and provocation: *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* (1894–5), *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1896), *Don Quixote* (1897), and *Ein Heldenleben* (1897–8). (A later work, *Symphonia domestica* [1902–3], not considered in this essay, may be regarded as an extension to this cycle, as might *Eine Alpensinfonie* [1915], for which Strauss jotted down a few sketches as early as 1899, considerably before taking up the work in earnest over a decade later.) For listeners today, becoming acquainted with their narrative programs along with a basic history of their composition is a simple task. Such background information is well known and widely available. The more pressing issue is to orient ourselves to the larger artistic purposes that motivated these works in the first place.

While these compositions persist in the repertory as spectacularized historical landmarks, one cannot reduce them only to their initial shock-value or still-ringing sonic thrills. They are also multifaceted in their implications, approachable from several different angles. On the one hand, as pro-institutional works they were intended to attract notice within an elite symphonic tradition. On the other hand, as splashy manifestos they also struck a pose of overturning that tradition's sober pieties through iconoclastic *lèse-majesté*, raffish parody, and, at times, nose-thumbing ridicule. They both sustained and undermined the institution. In this respect they were resounding emblems of the high-strung *Nervenkunst* that was sweeping a new-generational wave of modernism through all of the European arts. From another perspective the second-cycle works could be grasped autobiographically: Strauss as impish Till, as world-smashing Zarathustra,

as mad and illusion-ridden Quixote, as himself qua composer. Or one could assess them careeristically: the entrepreneurial Strauss manufacturing sensational artistic merchandise towards the goal of unabashed self-promotion. Or technically: Strauss as avant-garde wizard of huge-ensemble orchestration and polyphony; as brilliant pastiche-coordinator of multiple compositional styles in the service of wide-ranging, ad hoc representations; as masterly conjurer of precise images and narratives; as harmonic and textural alchemist whose effects range from the calm or lush to the unbridled and chaotic; as composer-craftsman with an unparalleled sense of emancipation from the constraints of Classical symphonic form.

### The conversion to Nietzscheanism

At the bottom of it lay Strauss's collapse of faith in the metaphysical view of music, with which he had probably never been entirely comfortable.<sup>2</sup> Strauss's "full-blown personal crisis"<sup>3</sup> emerged two or three years after the completion of the first cycle of tone poems and came to a head during the period that saw the completion and premiere of the opera *Guntram* (1892–3). By this time he had acquired a distaste for any naïve claim that music was a sacramental conveyor of altruistic, spiritual truths. This was the Schopenhauerian/Wagnerian view promoted not only at Bayreuth but also by his once-persuasive former mentor Alexander Ritter. Instead, breaking with Bayreuth's Cosima Wagner in an anti-Schopenhauerian letter from March 1, 1893, he began to embrace the antimetaphysical, anti-Christian, and self-affirming iconoclasm of Nietzsche and distance himself from the doctrine of *Willensverneinung*, the ascetic, self-renouncing denial of the Will so prized by Ritter.

With his reading of *Human, All Too Human, Beyond Good and Evil*, and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, a philosophical line was crossed.<sup>4</sup> Strauss was on his way to constructing a new musical aesthetic, capable, he thought, of reinvigorating German composition. The second tone-poem cycle provided a series of endorsements of a Nietzsche-fueled conception of music. "Gott ist tot," Nietzsche had written in 1882 and 1883.<sup>5</sup> In these tone poems from the later 1890s the god that Strauss declared dead was the overinflated musical *doxa* of the age, the bowed-head faith in music as a bearer of a mystical, redemptive content. Those metaphysical beliefs – phantoms, self-deceptions – were now to be sloughed off, laughed away, replaced with an embrace of the joyous physicality of the earth and the creative assertion of the unbound self. Music was still important as a human statement, a grand personal and cultural achievement, but it was no longer to be believed in as a bearer of world-transcendence.

To those musical idealists who grasped what the composer was doing, this was nothing short of apostasy. While in Strauss's hands the grand pillars of the Austro-Germanic symphonic temple remained standing, that temple was now desacralized, no longer the home of a god.<sup>6</sup> Strauss's reorientation projected a novel, often misunderstood style of modernism into art music. It participated in what Max Weber would later call the "disenchantment of the world" (*Entzauberung der Welt*), the falling-away of faith-based illusions. In the face of this matter-of-fact demythologizing, other modernist styles less eager to dispense with a hyper-elevated conception of music – even when more obviously dissonant – can seem outdated, clinging to an unsustainable aesthetics of self-absorption and inwardness, propped up with heavy-handed moral assessments. In that celebratory release from the encumbrances of austere seriousness lay the heart of the Strauss-tone-poem controversies that would dominate not only the 1890s but most of the next century as well.<sup>7</sup>

The dismayed Ritter saw all this coming in January, 1893, almost two years before the composer started to work on *Till*, writing in a concerned letter to Strauss: "What alone of Wagner has survived in you? The mechanics of his art. But to use this art for the glorification of a worldview that directly contradicts the Wagnerian is not to *build upon* Wagner's achievement, but: *to undermine it*."<sup>8</sup> The original listeners of Strauss's second cycle were presented with a sense of disorienting incongruity. Abundantly present were the splendor, orchestral power, and technical alliance with "musical progress" that they had associated with the redemptive claims of Schopenhauerian and Wagnerian metaphysics. And yet those associations were rendered inaccessible with these desacralized musical programs and displays, so eager to slap the face of that tradition.

It was not only a matter of flamboyant exhibits of pictorialism nor of the adoption of more detailed musical narratives, now outlined for audiences in instructive program notes by Strauss-authorized commentators (Wilhelm Mauke, Arthur Hahn, Wilhelm Klatt, Friedrich Rösch).<sup>9</sup> The composer had also chosen the programs as anti-idealistic affronts. They could hardly have been more deflationary in implication. While the instantly popular *Till Eulenspiegel* could be viewed by the naïve as a harmlessly *völkisch*, *gemütlich* tale, its deeper, "esoteric" program, noted in 1896 by its pro-Nietzsche dedicatee (and friend of Strauss), Arthur Seidl, was anti-institutional, a mocking rebellion against established rigidities. Here in *Till* we should recognize that "a superior spirit interacts with the external world ... 'Épater le bourgeois!' War against all apostles of moderation, against the old guild of the merely virtuous and comfortable, against all good middle-class folk and secure 'schools of abstinence.'"<sup>10</sup> Celebrating gleeful destruction for its own sake and culminating in *Till's* seizure, trial,

and (unsuccessful) execution by scandalized social authorities, these anarchic romps were veiled metaphors for the new, antimetaphysical music that Strauss was inaugurating.

Also sprach *Zarathustra*, the hypertrophic companion-piece to *Till*, was more explicit. Here Strauss turned the tables on the prevailing conviction that both absolute and program music could harbor deep philosophical truths: if the musical public wished to believe in musical philosophizing, why, then, he would give it to them. In this act of purposefully hyperbolic overreaching, he wrote immensely conceived music "freely after Nietzsche" (*frei nach Nietzsche*), loosely conjuring up selected ideas from a literal book of philosophy, or at least from a literal philosopher, since one issue has always been the degree to which the tone poem adheres to the narrative specifics of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*.<sup>11</sup> From certain perspectives this was a *reductio ad absurdum* flung back at the tradition's face. Doubling the outrage, it was an atheistic philosophy that sought to ridicule and annihilate earlier, sentimentalized pieties – above all, Christianity and its morality of body-denying self-sacrifice. In its place was an *Übermensch* titanism repeatedly ushered in by a recurring disgust (*Ekel*) with the past coupled with a hearty, profane laughter that flooded away that past's burdensome illusions. "I should believe only in a God who understood how to dance," wrote Nietzsche in *Zarathustra*. "My devil ... was the Spirit of Gravity – through him all things are ruined. One does not kill by anger but by laughter. Come, let us kill the Spirit of Gravity."<sup>12</sup>

If *Till* and *Zarathustra* could be construed "esoterically" as complementary works, opposite faces of the same coin – comic and serious, anti-hero and hero – so too could the next pair, *Don Quixote* and *Heldenleben*. In 1898 Strauss claimed to have conceived them as "direct pendants" to one another, with *Heldenleben* providing the context for an interpretation of *Quixote*.<sup>13</sup> However we interpret this remark, it is clear that selecting Cervantes's character as a topic served as another parody of an entrenched tradition within program music. Representative masculine heroes – strivers, achievers – were common fare in symphonic poems and other illustrative music. *Quixote* alluded to and deflated this tradition. This hero was no Prometheus, no Tasso, Dante, Hamlet, or Faust – not even a Macbeth or a Don Juan. Rather, he was a deluded dreamer drawn off the track of sanity by too much reading of chivalric novels, foolishly believing in the pursuit of imagined ideals, and Strauss illustrated him to appear as preposterous as possible. Youmans has elaborated the suggestion that the implied "knight" (*Ritter*) in this set of variations for cello and orchestra on a theme "of knightly character" (*ritterlichen Characters*) was none other than Alexander Ritter, the young Strauss's pious mentor, alluded to here as a stand-in for all believers in the metaphysics of music, the position of which

Strauss had once, in vain, tried to convince himself.<sup>14</sup> And yet for all of the musical hijinks and sensational mockery, the musical caricature is streaked with a wistful, "if only" flavor, as if Strauss were bidding a tender farewell to a once grand idea that never was and never could be true. As has been observed, such sentiments may be found more than once in the second-cycle works, at times surfacing as an aching nostalgia for the simplicity of the old illusions and their comforts. Even as he adopted Nietzscheanism as the leading edge of his tone-poem manifestos, it was neither absolute nor uncompromising. Mists of old-world sentiment continued to linger, and from time to time he appears to have questioned the thoroughness of his recent conversion and, disillusioned, to have wished only for withdrawal and peace.<sup>15</sup>

Raising the deflationary stakes to their utmost, Strauss now, in *Ein Heldenleben*, parodied another cherished aspect of the romantic-hero stereotype: not the elevated literary topic this time, as in *Quixote*, but rather the image of the masculine artist-creator. Here the broad target was the conception of the composer as a Promethean figure: the *Eroica*-propelled, Beethoven-through-Wagner legacy. In a calculated act of staged egoism Strauss now lionized himself as the tone poem's subject. He thus isolated a linchpin doctrine of the tradition and pushed it across any normative line of self-restraint. More to the point, he situated himself not in any idealized metaphysical empyrean but in the flat, everyday world that fluctuated between the careerist production of musical goods within the strife-torn marketplace of carping critics and the bourgeois concerns and erotic pursuits of personal-domestic life. Such a maneuver challenged at its core an aesthetic culture that, at least since Schiller, had insisted upon the purified separateness of art from the affairs of this world – the aesthetic sphere conceived as an emancipatory realm of freedom. *Symphonia domestica*, composed about five years later, would be an even more outrageous successor to the *Heldenleben* assault, depicting the ordinary concerns of a typical day in the Strauss household.

Like the other second-cycle tone poems, *Ein Heldenleben* offers multiple, sometimes contradictory implications co-existing in tension. Its aim was not entirely destructive. On the contrary, in this self-aggrandizing display one may perceive a performative act of personal affirmation, a quasi-Nietzschean heroic deed promulgated under the aegis of a new aesthetic regime. This is obvious in its demonstration of an undeniably formidable musical accomplishment, a sonic presence meant to astonish at every turn. At the same time this is tongue-in-cheek music writ large. Its very orchestral grandiosity plays into this contradiction. The more ostentatious the musical apparatus, the more disproportionate is the gap between the physical splendor of sound and the banal everydayness of what is claimed to

be represented. It is not merely the piece's concept that launches a siege on cherished aesthetic convictions; it is also its performative enactment on the concert stage, the resonant physicality of its acoustic effect on audiences.

### Music and historical progress

Particularly in its original 1890s context, the music conjured up in these second-cycle tone poems was astounding. Immense, hyper-rich worlds of sound were made to appear and disappear with a frictionless ease and magic that took one's breath away. Driven by audacity and nerves, the sheer exhibitionism of it all was an essential part of its claim to represent the *ne plus ultra* of modern practice. Central to the enterprise was a continual display of a technological complexity that overrode past limits of taste and technique. Moreover, the coolness and calculating mastery of the hand that set all this into motion gave the impression that the works were being produced as if to show objectively (or, as some came to suspect, cynically)<sup>16</sup> what could now be done with modern textural, harmonic, and orchestral resources. The result was analogous to a public demonstration of the latest wonders of newly manufactured industrial equipment capable of serving modern needs more productively.

The progress claimed by the supporters of such music was sometimes recast as a simple fact of reality, a correlate of the age's technological advances. Writing in 1896, Arthur Seidl asserted that *Eulenspiegel* had displayed an "empirical progress in the analysis of the life of the soul, from the differentiation of the feelings to the laying-bare of the nerves."<sup>17</sup> For Hans Merian (in a trenchant commentary on *Zarathustra* from 1899) the essence of Strauss's modernism lay in his unswerving embrace of program music and overt pictorial effects.<sup>18</sup> The mere conveying of abstract feelings in music, so characteristic of early decades in the century, had now been overtaken by representations of clear images. Prior "architectonic fetters" and traditional compositional "rules" had yielded to the modern world of coloristic pictorialism. "These days," insisted Merian, "program music is a fact." As a result, "modern composers can express more complicated ideas than could the older masters." This new music was "poetry" [*Dichtung*] "in a higher sense ... [and yet] it still remained, in all cases, music above all."<sup>19</sup>

"Music above all." Such remarks remind us that for all of the programmatic and philosophical interests driving these tone poems, Strauss was also pursuing musical issues of thematic construction, harmony, texture, orchestration, and form. This point plunges us into discipline-specific matters of craft that are difficult if not impossible to simplify. Not only did these works have to be composed, measure-by-measure, but each measure, each

phrase, each larger section was also to respond to the musical urgencies and debates of the day. Here we confront these works' specifically musical qualities, professionally wrought and situated at every moment within an ongoing symphonic tradition. Technical concerns of expertise and originality are features that no commentator should downplay. Strauss invited his keenest listeners to savor musical details at their most specialized, set forth at the far end of over a century-and-a-half of theoretical and formal development.

Other composers noticed these things at once. Strauss's local and long-range effects served as a sourcebook for contemporary and later composers to imitate and extend: daring compositional ideas, innovative instrumental effects, swashbuckling melodic arcs, sudden chromatic slippages and tonal jolts, exploratory or shocking dissonances, overt depictions of eroticism, nervously busy and stratified polyphony, radical and sophisticated structural deformations. One cannot overstate this point. It is the larger part of the Strauss legacy, a musical counterpart to the aesthetic revolution that he was introducing into the turgid institution of art music. This is one reason why thumbnail descriptions of these pieces fall so short of conveying the plenitude and complexity that burst forth from virtually every page. No brief essay – and certainly not this one – can do justice to the countless details of musical and historical significance here. At best one might provide a sampler of a few musical features to serve as a spur to a more adequate examination of this music.

### Aspects of musical style

Strauss's arsenal of hypermodern techniques ranged freely in the second cycle, stirring up controversy in their wake. Foreshadowing many of the practical concerns of film-music composers of the subsequent century, his style is best characterized as a mixture of different historical styles. To be sure, all of these works are shot through with unmistakable Strauss signatures: incandescent, prolonged dominant-seventh chords, ♯ arrival-chord epiphanies, orchestrationally resonant chord-spacing, and so on. But what was most new to the later 1890s was his willingness to dip his musical brush into any number of stylistic paint-pots to produce ("objectively") the image-impression or mood-effect for which each moment called. In Strauss one encounters a manipulation of different styles evoked from a cool distance, summoned up as if in quotation marks, apart from an aesthetic commitment to any of them. This was a departure from the historical metanarrative of internal consistency and organic development still being pursued as a virtually moral imperative by other composers of the

time. Coupled with the decentering of the authority of any single aesthetic narrative, this abundance of concurrently-available style options resonated with the ever-emerging marketplace modernity of the age.

Morten Kristiansen has characterized Strauss's embrace of pluralism as an example of the era's interest in *Stilkunst* (an art of styles): the adoption of a stylistic volatility that alluded, as needed, to differing, connotatively marked historical identifiers. This *Stilkunst* embraced the "juxtaposing [of] contrasting styles inside of works," a purposely adopted "aesthetic of constant change" fully consistent, Kristiansen argues, with the "contemporary zeitgeist," a tightly coiled "culture of nerves" (*Nervenkultur*), and an obsession with rapidly shifting psychological states that several literary, artistic, and musical critics saw arising at the turn of the century.<sup>20</sup> Leon Botstein, similarly, has noted Strauss's detached "fragmentation," his "stylistic extraction and appropriation" of past practices, and his "disregard for consistency" as central features of the composer's style, one that might even be interpreted as a prefiguration of late-twentieth-century postmodernism.<sup>21</sup>

The quintessential Strauss might be recognized in any number of characteristic procedures and sounds: the composer returned to the same set of personalized topoi in each work, probably seeking in each case to surpass his earlier examples of them. The most obvious of these is the production of a self-enclosed scene of ironized wit, linked with an amusing narrative incident indicated in the program, that sometimes precipitates a sudden disorder or climactic calamity at its end. Often riddled with sonic gimmicks and historical style-allusions, such scenes seek to demonstrate how precise the pictorial capabilities of "progressive" music could be. *Till* is a succession of such tableaux. Much of its counterpart, *Don Quixote*, followed suit as an over-the-top pictorial extravaganza – windmill, sheep, penitents, coarse peasant girl, imagined ride through the air, the boat that capsizes. While somewhat more abstract in illustration, often depicting general conditions rather than narratives, many sections of *Zarathustra* and *Heldenleben* are underpinned by similarly illustrative aims. In the former, for instance, we encounter the hymn-singing of the soon-superseded *Hinterweltler* and, later, the probing scientists fuggally examining a single three-note object from all angles, systematically turning it over and over in learned, academic fashion. In the latter we have the finger-pointing disapprovals of sniping critics, the hero's patiently repeated amorous advances (tried in various keys) to a skittish *des Helden Gefährtin* (solo violin) before she yields, and the immediately succeeding central battle with his ideological foes.

Another Straussian earmark is the ultra-lush love scene, a creamily scored sound-sheet of erotic bliss. Here the most direct model was the



oboe-led, G major ("third mistress") episode from his own *Don Juan* (mm. 232–309). While *Till* and *Zarathustra*, occupied with other matters, do not feature extended passages along these lines, *Quixote* and *Heldenleben* do, replete with soaring melodies and provocative contrapuntal interiors. *Quixote*'s F# major Dulcinea-Idyll (mm. 332–c. 371, beginning six bars before rehearsal no. 36) and the Hero's prolonged Gb major, *mässig langsam* – marking the conquest of the *Gefährtin*, and beginning with one of Strauss's most luxuriantly surging  $\frac{4}{5}$ s of arrival and the broadly spanned *Thema der Siegesgewissheit* ("Certainty-of-conquest theme," mm. 288–369) – provide touchstone illustrations. (Another, even more extravagant, occupies the vast center of *Symphonia domestica*: the potent erotics of creativity, the onset of *Schaffen und Schauen* – Adagio, m. 600 [rehearsal no. 55] – eventually proceeding into more graphically construed sexual activity.) Related to this sonorously gratifying topos is a mood of affectionate gentleness, especially in introductions and valedictory epilogues for his ironized heroes, notably *Till*, *Quixote*, and himself: winsome framings of their personalities and lovable quirks. Or his penchant for mock-pastoral episodes replete with ovine or *ranz-des-vaches* double-reed circularities: with chipper alertness in *Zarathustra* (mm. 435ff., rehearsal no. 26, shortly after the onset of the C major *Tanzlied*); with high parody in the sheep scene of *Quixote* (Variation II); and attaining a much-desired, personal island of rest near the end of *Heldenleben* (m. 828 [rehearsal no. 99]), soon tipping into the hero's concluding *Vollendung*, or withdrawal from the world.

Strauss's harmonic language is riddled with cavalier shifts of tonal implication – casual chromatic twists – within melodic contexts that might otherwise have led us to expect a more straightforward diatonicism. The insouciance of his short-range glides from one tonal world to another can give the impression of an arbitrary sense of local key, a weakened tonal force capable of being slid from anywhere to anywhere else with the wave of a compositional wand. The opening seventeen bars of *Don Quixote*, three successive D major images of the knight, provide a much-noted illustration (Example 5.1). Considered seriatim, the three melodic modules give us the succession: largely normative, odder, oddest. Measures 1–4 (the hero's "knightly character," Arthur Hahn tells us)<sup>22</sup> are diatonic, leading a sprightly initial impulse into an expanded cadential progression (featuring a savory, sustained I $\frac{5}{2}$  in m. 3), concluding with a straightforward D major perfect authentic cadence at m. 4 (I:perfect authentic cadence [PAC]). The example's second module, mm. 5–12 ("the principal duty of the knight, to honor and protect his lady"), is more extravagant. Built on an exaggerated, *grazioso* bowing and swooping, it is a parody of a parallel period. Here the sentential antecedent swerves outlandishly (m. 7) to an imperfect

Example 5.1 *Don Quixote*, mm. 1–17

authentic cadence a diminished fifth away, on Ab (♭V:imperfect authentic cadence [IAC]!, m. 8), while the consequent reverses the tritonal deviation as though nothing unusual had happened, returning to the tonic D to conclude with a I:PAC in m. 12. (As Youmans remarks, such a D–Ab–D tonal course "lets us know [at once] that the protagonist is at the very least a strange bird.")<sup>23</sup> Even more eccentric is the codetta punctuation-tag in mm. 13–17 ("the dream-prone man, to whom even the simple appears as

something dreadfully complex”), whose effect, however, seems like the solemn equivalent of “This I vow,” or perhaps a self-crossing before one rises at the end of a prayer. (Strauss will later use this heartfelt module to furnish a lovingly valedictory end to the tone poem.) Here the chromatic chords slip liquidly from a “*Tristan*” half-diminished seventh (m. 13) through a succession of “forbidden-parallel” major–minor sevenths, heedless of normative voice-leading, in which a single “V7” sonority (sometimes with augmented-sixth implications) is moved up and down by half-steps (with a melodically contoured upper voice) before settling on a deliciously gratifying I:PAC at m. 16.

Those of Strauss’s critics who were accusing the composer of going too far sometimes pointed to his cacophonous dissonances. In turn, Strauss went out of his way to guarantee that each work would have its own “outrageous” moments, as if goading his opponents into denouncing the scandal. While these passages were invariably produced for pictorial purposes (moments of extremity or uproarious chaos), they became important forerunners of the twentieth-century emancipation of the dissonance. In 1896 Seidl noted that the multiple *fortissimo* soundings of the *Halt!* dissonances in the midst of the fever-delirium of *Tod und Verklärung* (trombones, tuba, and timpani, mm. 270–1, 278–9, 282–3, 287–8) had shocked some and been denounced as an “empty boxing of the ears” (*eitel Ohrgeschinder*).<sup>24</sup> Successors in the second cycle were forthcoming. Till’s upsetting of the marketwives provides an obvious example (mm. 133ff.), as does the madly climactic illustration of his chase and capture by the authorities (mm. 500–73). In *Zarathustra* we have the celebrated bichordal fade-out conclusion, juxtaposing C (or perhaps an incomplete French sixth built above C) and B major – alluding to earlier C–B juxtapositions within the work and provoking an endless string of commentaries and explanations. *Quixote* is riddled with splashy dissonance-upsets, as the unhinged knight charges and routs one thing after another. Moreover, the work’s introduction (*Quixote*’s descent into delusion) drives to a climactic *telos* of bichordal madness, tritone-based dissociations representing a fractured consciousness (Example 5.2). Following *Quixote*’s imagined transformation into a D minor knight-of-steel-resolve (trumpets and trombones; mm. 109–12, a determined, taut-muscle variant of the head-motive from m. 1), Strauss hurls the harmony, triple-*fortissimo*, first into a B<sup>b</sup>7 sounded against an incomplete E<sup>7</sup>, mm. 112–16 (with inner “resolutions” to what amounts to an extended stack of thirds, or an E<sup>b</sup>9 chord, mm. 113, 115), then into a repetitively jammed, incomplete A<sup>7</sup> (V<sup>7</sup> of the ensuing D minor) against E<sup>b</sup>7, mm. 117–20. In *Heldenleben* there is the central battle-scene (*Des Helden Walstatt*, beginning with off-stage, call-to-arms fanfares at m. 369 [rehearsal no. 42]), that occupies most of the developmental space,

Example 5.2 *Don Quixote*, mm. 109–22

unleashing a manic tableau goaded onwards by the militaristic prodding of snare drum and percussion (m. 434).

Apart from such Straussian fingerprints, the tone poems (especially the post-*Till* ones) are marked by a self-promoting grandiosity in orchestral size, length, and sonic splendor. In *Zarathustra*, *Quixote*, and *Heldenleben* Strauss pursued a sonorous and structural massiveness exceeding prior limitations. Within individual tableaux this often claimed by sheer fiat a liberated monumentality uncontainable by mere convention – a declaration that the “new man” celebrated by Nietzsche has been forcefully emancipated beyond the norms.

The famous, C major opening of *Zarathustra* – a blazing illuminated initial too well known to need citing here – provides an illustration in terms

of absolute *Klang* (sonority). One likely candidate for its immediate model would be the closing three or four bars of Liszt's *Les Préludes*: a similar, C major fanfare-paroxysm of orchestral sound. But what Liszt had placed at the end as the ecstatic, cadential *telos* of a heroic life, Strauss situated at the beginning, with an immensely augmented orchestra (including contra-bassoon and low-rumbling organ) and a much-expanded time-span. It is as if Liszt's programmatic hopes (old romantic illusions) were only starting-points for the new antimetaphysical philosophy. From another perspective in its acoustic references to an emerging overtone-series from raw sound, Strauss's opening recalled the *creatio ex nihilo* openings of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and Wagner's *Das Rheingold* – there, in both cases, an initial creative stirring; here, an ego-centered conquering of sonic territory. The underlying conception remained: starting from natural overtones, the acoustic emergence of sound, then of music. In *Zarathustra* Strauss recast the idea as a three-gesture event. Over a deep, resonant C pedal fundamental, one first hears two flaring sonic-convulsions: the major-to-minor one, an initiating surge not yet capable of sustaining its overtone-frame, is at once strengthened into a more stable minor-to-major complement. Each is responded to by elemental triplet-pounding in the timpani. These raw-acoustic phenomena are followed by the great moment of continuation: the thrilling leap into “music” with the subdominant chord, m. 15. This is a musical shock beyond mere acoustics, proceeding harmonically into the sonically unprecedented *Klang*-cadence at m. 19. Considered as a whole – in formal terms – this famous opening is shaped as a colossal sentence: two briefer, complementary gestures (*aa'*, mm. 5–8, 9–12), the sentence's presentation modules; followed by a more expansive continuation (*b*, mm. 13–21).<sup>25</sup> At the same time, the opening measures are packed with a complex of programmatic references. In 1896 Arthur Hahn identified the opening  $\hat{1}$ – $\hat{5}$ – $\hat{8}$  in the unison trumpets as an elemental *Natur-Thema* (a world as yet without humans) as well as “something mysterious, unfathomable, a great, unsolved riddle,” while in 1899 Hans Merian agreed, referring to its “elemental Being” also as the “World-Riddle ... Nature the Sphinx that gazes upon us with empty, starless eyes.” This “Nature theme” or “world-riddle,” however, comes to us from a Nietzschean world.<sup>26</sup> It is not too extravagant to propose that the three rising notes, here and especially later in the tone poem, may also be underlaid with *Gott ist tot*, the proclamation of a godless, purely physical nature eventually to be embraced as such by the liberated superman.

Or consider the opening statement of *Ein Heldenleben* (Example 5.3), the initial presentation of *Der Held* (“the hero”), not surprisingly in Beethoven's *Eroica* key of E $\flat$  major. (The intended connection between the two works is obvious enough.) Once again, in terms of thematic

Example 5.3 *Ein Heldenleben*, mm. 1–19

Lebhaft bewegt.

format this is a large-scale sentence (*aa'b*, mm. 1–2, 3–4, 5–17) – or, more accurately, a sentence-chain, in which each successive continuation (*b*) is itself shaped as a sentence, beginning with another *aa'*-type presentational unit.<sup>27</sup> (Strauss often favored the thematic shapes of sentences and sentence-chains in these works.) Typical also is the enormously wide range and registral disposition of the melody, leaping over and through multiple octaves with unconfined heroic strides and sharp-angled, whiplash twists, commanding broad expanses of musical space. Nor is the hero to be contained by the diatonic traditions of any single tonality. While the statement begins and ends in E $\flat$ , the theme momentarily breaks free of these shackles with the accented, quasi-whole-tone descent at m. 7;<sup>28</sup> returns to E $\flat$  by mm.

8–10; stretches upward, sequentially, to a hyperintense E major sonority (E♭ “arbitrarily” pulled up a half-step); then returns to a cadential  $\frac{6}{4}$  in E♭ at m. 13 to pursue a florid and decisive cadence in that key. The ever-moralistic Adorno cited the seemingly “wrong notes” F and C in the melody at the end of m. 3 as an illustration of what he regarded as Strauss’s careless composition, marked by an “imprecision of details.” The perceived problem was that those two pitches do not belong within the implied E♭ chord. “Their effect is to obscure: they are designed to blur the pedantry of the surrounding chords: in the *élan* of the theme, the individual notes become irrelevant as opposed to the irresistible whole.” As Adorno assessed it, like so many other effects in Strauss, they seemed to produce only irresponsible “jet flame” effects over banal and commonplace chords.<sup>29</sup> To be sure, such free melodic dissonances are characteristic of Strauss as modernist. But there is no reason to suppose that they were casually written. Not only do the non-chordal tones reinforce the image of the hero’s irrepressible character, but this fleeting deviation away from normative pitches is also soon succeeded, as part of an intensifying pattern, by the two more telling escapes from E♭ diatonism mentioned above.

### Illustrative program and musical form

Essential to the production of programmatic musical scenes is an assumed generic contract between composer and listener whereby musical ideas are agreed to be mappable onto aspects of specific characters or situations: let motives A, B, and C represent narrative-images X, Y, and Z. Without an initial agreement to accept this principle of musical metaphor, the tone-poem premise collapses. To suggest that it might be appropriate to listen to these works as absolute music or that they are adequately comprehensible in terms of pure music alone is to blind oneself to the historically controversial and witty aesthetic game that the tone poems are playing. Once the central musical signifiers for each work are grasped, it becomes a simple matter to follow their recurrences and transformative adventures. Hence the importance of the initially published, authorized guidebooks from the 1890s, which not only provided listeners with the broad outlines of the intended narratives (while still leaving much to the imagination) but also decoded the various motives. Still, the official explanations are only starting-points for more advanced inquiries. Are they truly reliable or only safe public statements? Do the explanations themselves need to be decoded? What might they have suppressed, ignored, glossed over, or sanitized? What are their larger “esoteric” implications? While composing the works did Strauss have these (or other) labels in mind?<sup>30</sup>

From the perspective of the signifying motives, one aspect of the musical form may be construed as purely narrative: tracing the linear adventures of a single masculine identity (or, in *Zarathustra*, an inexorable ruling idea) marked by a cluster of recognizable attributes and put through a paratactic series of different environments or adventures. Under these lights the poetic form of the story, with its own climaxes and denouements, may be taken to be a sufficient guarantor of linear graspability apart from any allusion to more traditional formal prototypes. This may be the way that most of Strauss’s non-professional listeners have heard these pieces – as musically narrated, engaging tales. At the heart of this lies the familiar technique of thematic transformation: mood- and situation-reshapings of easily recognized pitch- and contour-shapes. While this (Berlioz-, Liszt-, and Wagner-influenced) technique is so obvious that it requires no extended commentary here, it is nonetheless central to our experience of these works: how many ways can Strauss refashion individual ideas?

Example 5.4 shows five instances (of many) from *Till Eulenspiegel*. The opening four bars of prologue (5.4a), Mauke tells us, sought to depict the onset of the telling of a narrative, *Es war einmal ein Schalksnarr* (“Once upon a time there was a knavish fool”).<sup>31</sup> Recast into 6/8 meter and accelerated in tempo, the same initial pitches soon become one of Till’s central identifiers, the *arger* “Kobold” (“wicked ‘goblin’”) motive (5.4b), the *lustig* sign of the irrepressibly teasing prankster.<sup>32</sup> The onset of the marketwives incident begins with a new transformation of the idea, m. 113, led off with carefully tentative, *piano* mutterings in the bass (5.4c), as if Till were tiptoeing unobserved into a social scene that he will soon disrupt (*Wartet auf, ihr Duckmeister!* [“Just wait, you fainthearts!”]). Examples 5.4d and 5.4e are taken from the “Pastor” scene, Till disguised as a sober minister entering with a dignified (Brahmsian) hymn (m. 179). In 5.4d (mm. 187–9) we are informed that we are to recognize Till by this mischievous bass-line figure, representing his “big toe” sticking out from under his robe, while in the immediately following 5.4e we are apparently to sense Till’s high-pitched, smug complacency (m. 195, solo violin) just before he begins to shiver with fears about his own mocking of religion (mm. 196–201). Similar examples could be multiplied throughout not only *Till* but also all of the other tone poems. (As suggested in Examples 5.1 and 5.2 above, the transformations of the opening bar of *Don Quixote* – the primary image of the knight – are also noteworthy.)

The task of uncovering the musical principles that govern the large-scale architecture of each of these compositions is more difficult. As is also common in Strauss’s earlier tone poems, each of the four works furnishes us with a narrative succession of individualized, contrasting tableaux, well stocked with reappearing, reshaped motives. To what degree are the

Example 5.4a-e *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, opening idea and transformations

consecutive musical scenes, grouped together, dialogically relatable to any of the traditional *Formenlehre* patterns as handed down to the late nineteenth century? In no case does the paratactic succession outline a familiar pattern in familiar ways.

When the tableaux-contrasts include matters of tempo and character, as they customarily do, it is inviting to try to grasp the entire complex as alluding to the traditional four-movement plan: opening movement, slow movement, scherzo, and finale. As Steven Vande Moortele has recently noted, this much-noted "integration of elements of multi-movement patterns into single-movement designs was a constant concern of many composers of the nineteenth century." Citing familiar examples ranging from Beethoven and Schubert through Liszt, Strauss (*Don Juan*, *Heldenleben*, and *Domestica*), Schoenberg, and others, Vande Moortele redubbed this format "two-dimensional sonata form": the combination of sections of a sonata cycle and movements of a sonata form at the same hierarchical

level in a single-movement composition ... the projection of a sonata form onto an entire through-composed sonata cycle."<sup>33</sup> Dahlhaus had termed this a "multimovement form within a single movement"; for William S. Newman the structure had been a "double-function sonata."<sup>34</sup> Some caveats are pertinent: the concept of a rapid scherzo is to be understood freely; and "movements" need not coincide with the standard zones of a sonata, though the "finale" impression sometimes begins with the onset of a recapitulatory space. The multimovement aspect of the two-dimensional idea is significant and introduces its own set of interrelated issues. Analysts, for example, have had differing views on its applicability and clarity of demarcation in each piece. Nevertheless, the concept is elementary, and that feature will not be pursued here.

More problematic is the other side of the double-function issue: the potential dialogical relationship of each tone poem's entire tableau-sequence, programmatically inflected, to any of the institutionally sanctioned musical formats, even as they had been modified by the end of the century. To what extent might we justifiably perceive implied allusions, however transient or free, to the procedures of once-normative sonata form, sonata-rondo form, theme and variations, and so on? The challenge is to perceive the formal clues that Strauss gives us along the way and then flexibly to imagine how and for which purposes he might have wished us to regard the ongoing succession as potentially in dialogue (or not) with any of a number of these conventional structural formats. Now marketing himself as a brash modernist and Nietzschean "free spirit," Strauss's characteristic approach was to provide gestures towards one or more of these formats (thereby claiming himself as a participant within an honored tradition on whose accrued cultural distinction he was capitalizing) but simultaneously to stage such reassurances as generationally out of date through a transgressive emancipation from their normative constraints. What one encounters is an audacity of conception that explodes definitional aspects of the forms from within. The first two of the tone poems are perhaps the most formally innovative, and it is with these two that we shall spend the most time.

The title-page of *Till Eulenspiegel* famously declares that the work is disposed in *Rondeauform* (though *nach alter Schelmenweise*, "in the old roguish manner"). Heightened by the antique spelling of "rondo" (an insider's wink of the eye), the reference to an institutionally orthodox form declares an intention to conform to formal behavior that the work delights in shattering. This is no ordinary rondo within which predictable recurrences of a generally stable refrain-theme are separated by contrasting episodes. Instead, once past the brief, initial introduction of Till, the remainder of the piece unspools a paratactic string of adventure-episodes,

within which the “rondo” elements, the Till-identifiers, are constantly present and threaded throughout. Thus the “rondo” themes and the episodes are simultaneously present: a strikingly modernist idea, appropriate for Strauss’s narrative predilections. From this perspective one can also read the successive episodes as differing adventure-cycles of the same rondo-ideas. This circular or helical aspect – one rotation of the generative ideas cycling into the next – can be regarded as an instance of what I have elsewhere called *rotational form*: successive presentations of similarly ordered, often-transforming material, including the possibility of free variants, expansions, and modular omissions.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, one can perceive droll gestures towards the “good behavior” of a *sonata*-rondo in the large-scale arrangement. Not long after the episode in which Till mocks the academic philistines, we re-encounter the familiar solo-horn motive (m. 429, twelve measures after rehearsal no. 28), an obvious reprise of the opening (m. 6) and a telling signal that invites us to understand the moment as the launch of a potentially well-mannered recapitulation. Not surprisingly, what follows is the most disruptive, unleashed music in the work, a “recapitulation” torn to shreds at every stage, even while several of the motives from earlier in the piece do manage to resurface, albeit transformed, in the expected order. In sum (and engaging with Strauss’s “rondeau” paratext), the work’s tableau-succession may also be grasped as an extreme sonata-rondo deformation. It maintains a transgressive dialogue with the norms of a sonata-rondo, whose typical, “textbook” procedures and options are to be kept in mind as a benchmark by the listener, even as the piece regularly and brazenly violates those norms – mocks them – as a manifesto of modernist liberation.<sup>36</sup>

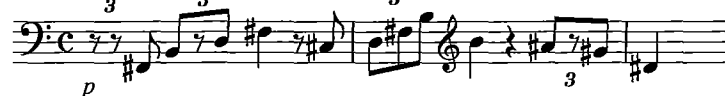
This liberation is more aggressively proclaimed in *Also sprach Zarathustra*, whose large-scale organization and programmatic implications are more puzzling than those of the other three works. The structure of *Zarathustra* superimposes a number of principles. One of them, the tonal conflict between the tonalities of C and B, suggesting the irreconcilability of nature and humankind, has been so frequently discussed that it need not be rehearsed again here. Instead, we can focus on another important structural procedure: that of the staging of a process of persistent overcoming, whereby each major section (or section-pair) begins forthrightly but is allowed to flourish only so far before encountering a field of dissolution or an outright rejection. The resulting disintegration leads to another rebirth-cycle of similar materials on a higher level of human emancipation from superstition and naïveté. Each cycle (or cycle-pair) presents reconceived transformations of the germinal motives of the piece. From this perspective the form is freely rotational, with each rotation-tableau replacing its predecessor and aspiring to a higher philosophical status. In addition, the

Example 5.5a *Also sprach Zarathustra*, “Nature”Example 5.5b *Also sprach Zarathustra*, “Reverent shudder”

23

Example 5.5c *Also sprach Zarathustra*, “Longing”

30

Example 5.5d *Also sprach Zarathustra*, “Of the afterworldsmen”Example 5.5e *Also sprach Zarathustra*, “Of joys and passions”

115

Example 5.5f *Also sprach Zarathustra*, “Disgust”

150



successive cycles are connected in such a manner as to suggest here and there a tangential, free dialogue with aspects of sonata form, while never concretizing its realization of that traditional format.

The famous introduction, Rotation 1, lays out some of the most fundamental motives of the piece (Example 5.5a–c) and is the referential,

Example 5.5g Also sprach Zarathustra, "Ideal" theme



Example 5.5h Also sprach Zarathustra, "Dance" theme



generative source for many of the variants and expansions found in the later rotations: the colossal material being of Nature, the C major  $\hat{1}-\hat{5}-\hat{8}$ , also posing a world-riddle to be faced by humanity (5.5a); the cowering human response in the muted low strings, a "reverent shudder" (*ein andachtsvoller Schauer*; 5.5b); and the embryo of humankind's B minor "Longing theme" (*Sehnsuchts-Thema*), the urge to inquire and understand (5.5c). A fearful and primitive response in the muted horns, representing blind religious faith (Strauss underlaid it with the words *Credo in unum deum*), leads to the first of four successive rotation-pairs (double rotations, or eight rotations in all). These may be designated as Rotations 2a-b, 3a-b, 4a-b, and 5a-b. In each pair the first half (a), the positive tableau, presents a temporary solution to the world-riddle, superseding prior stages but decaying or proving insufficient at its end. In the second half (b), the negative tableau, we find a distorted commentary on the wreckage or destruction of the insufficient solution proposed in the first, along with a reorientation and preparation for the next stage to come. The initial pair, Rotations 2a and b, is concerned with religious faith and its loss: *Von der Hinterweltlern* ("Of the afterworldsmen"), whose theme, Example 5.5d, smooths out the shudder of Example 5.5b; and *Von der großen Sehnsucht* ("Of the great longing"), expanding on the "Longing" motive, Example 5.5c, then proceeding to a sharp Nature critique (*Gott ist tot!*,  $\hat{1}-\hat{5}-\hat{8}$ ) of any attempt to continue the religious life.

We are soon thrown into Rotations 3a and b, *Von der Freuden- und Leidenschaften* ("Of joys and passions") and *Das Grablied* ("Song of the grave"). Of these, the stormy and feral "joys and passions," locking onto an earnest C minor (Example 5.5e) and representing a stirring youthfulness, religion-free embrace of the "stream of life," is eventually blocked from further progress by the first statement of the important motive of "Disgust" (*Ekel*) sounded *fortissimo* in the trombones (Example 5.5f). The ensuing *Grablied*, a zone of stark dissolution (with some recurrences of

the Nature motive) surveys the damage in spectral and mysterious, proto-expressionistic textures.

Rotations 4a and b comprise *Von der Wissenschaft* ("Of science") and *Der Genesende* ("The convalescent"), which itself subdivides into two parts separated by the emphatic, full-force return of the Nature motive on C (recalling the opening of the work) and a hyperdramatic grand pause. *Von der Wissenschaft* presents us with the slow Science fugue – an image of dry rationality, the academic scrutiny of the Nature motive – soon spinning into a more animated recurrence of B minor longing that immediately sprouts a new, clearly aspirational continuation, the B major "Ideal theme" (*Weise des Ideals*), as Hans Merian dubbed it in 1899 (Example 5.5g).<sup>37</sup> In turn this triggers a first, anticipatory glimpse of the new man-to-come, Zarathustra, in the dotted-rhythm "Dance theme" (*Thema des Tanzes*; Example 5.5h), and this unexpected vision provokes dizzying recurrences of the Disgust motive. The vehement first part of "The convalescent" depicts the violent unspooling of belief in scientific rationality – the fugue – in the face of Being and Nature itself. It builds to a blindingly climactic, open-fifth return, on C, of the  $\hat{1}-\hat{5}-\hat{8}$  Nature motive, the persistently unsolved riddle, triple-*fortissimo*, in the full orchestra.<sup>38</sup> And then ... an astonishing silence. (This long pause responds to a parallel moment of physical collapse in Nietzsche's own *Der Genesende* section, from Part 3 of the book, in which Zarathustra, overwhelmed by an epiphany of the abyss of material Being, "fell down like a dead man and remained like a dead man for a long time," only to be granted, upon reawakening, the hidden secret of eternal recurrence: "Everything goes, everything returns; the wheel of existence rolls forever.")<sup>39</sup> "The convalescent" restarts on a low-register, leaden B minor triad and is soon extracted from this pitch-black lethargy (stirred by the contrary urges of Longing and Disgust) to enter unexpectedly into a new lightness of being marked by Nietzschean laughter. This is the throwing-off of weights, the dismissal of the Spirit of Gravity. Even the Disgust motive is now lightened into humor. Urged onward by forward-pointing citations of the Longing and Dance themes, the music enters an exalted and prolonged corridor leading into what is to be celebrated in the next rotation-pair: the new, antimetaphysical human being.

Rotations 5a and b, "The dance song" (*Das Tanzlied*) and "The night-wanderer's song" (*Das Nachtwandlerlied*), draw together and recast in radical transformations the principal motives of the piece (those from Example 5.5). Promised as a final revelation, the exaggeratedly trivial, popular-style opening of the "The dance song" – Strauss's riskiest wager in the piece – comes as a shock. What may strike some as an anticlimactic purveying of C major cabaret-*Kitsch* must have been intended instead to convey the audacity of the new lightness, along with a mock-pastoral sense

of peace and expansiveness released through the shrugging off of tradition. This new aura of liberation is confirmed several minutes later by an affirmationally exuberant re-sounding and peroration of the Dance theme. The remainder of the "Dance song" moves through further stages of thematic transformation that eventually coalesce around colossal intensifications of the Longing motive, driven through various tonal areas (often lurched onto as violent tonal shocks), seeking but never cadentially attaining its resolution into C major. This inability to close cadentially, an ecstatically immense "almost," is central to the tone poem's philosophical agenda of non-closure in a new world shorn of faith and definitive answers. It pushes the music into a vertiginous zone of mounting decay. At the moment of its *Götterdämmerung*-like collapse, a convulsive triple-*fortissimo* marked also with the first of the "midnight" bell-strokes, we merge into Rotation 5b. "The night-wanderer's song" concludes the work in two phases: a prolonged *diminuendo* from this negative crest; and a slow, B major fade-out epilogue grounded in a return of the Ideal theme, suggesting humanity's persistent dream of proceeding further, into an uncharted future. At the end it dissolves away with the famous C-B ambiguity.<sup>40</sup>

How are these rotations related, if at all, to any notion of sonata form? The sonata idea persists as a much-weakened shaping principle that is alluded to at various referential stations of the work but is never carried out in any easily explained way.<sup>41</sup> Rotations 1 and 2a-b can be initially construed as an extended, multisectional introduction, particularly since Rotation 3a, "Of joys and passions," sounds much like the onset of a sonata exposition. On the other hand, central material is also set forth in Rotations 1 and 2a-b, which are in some important senses expository as well, and if Rotation 3a is to be construed as the primary-theme marker of a just-launched exposition, that exposition is soon aborted (with the arrival of the Disgust motive and entry into the *Grablied*), failing to produce a secondary theme proper. Rotation 4a-b, "Science" and "Convalescent," may be interpreted as occupying an episodic developmental space – a procedure familiar from Strauss's earlier tone poems. "The dance song," Rotation 5a, suggests the onset of a freely transformed recapitulation (though it is at first based on materials from Rotations 1 and 2a-b), while Rotation 5b, "The night-wanderer's song," devolves into an epilogue-coda. Complicating the whole matter, though, are not only important tonal factors but also the seeming lack of a properly situated secondary theme. In the "recapitulatory" Rotation 5a, the Longing theme, associated earlier in the work with B minor, seeks a sonata-like apotheosis-transformation into C major (which it does not fully attain). This can suggest that at least here that theme is taking on aspects of one type of late-nineteenth-century secondary-theme behavior. It may be that

Strauss invites us to imagine that the Longing theme, in its disparate and scattered placements earlier in the work, has been aspiring to become a secondary theme within a sonata form. (The Ideal theme, similarly, may be one of its most transformed mutations.) In *Zarathustra* the sonata idea, only dimly discernible at best, functions largely as a remembered vessel, an antique container demonstrated via occasional allusions as inadequate to hold these massive new contents.

The "fantastic variations on a theme" of *Don Quixote* present us with conflicting impressions. On the one hand, aspects of its paratactic structure are obviously similar to those of *Till* and *Zarathustra*: what we find is the familiar Straussian string of leitmotivically interrelated, illustrative tableaux through which the protagonist is made to advance. In this case, as with *Till*, the whole is framed by an extended introduction (Quixote falling into madness and deciding to set out on his quests) and an epilogue-*"finale"* (the knight's death) that recycles, as a concluding valediction, a portion of the music of the introduction. On the other hand, it is difficult not to conclude that the ordering of these tableaux is freer, more arbitrary, than those of its predecessors: could not some of the interior adventures be reordered without significant effect on the whole? More to the point, unequivocal allusions to the normative indicators of sonata form are now absent. Strauss was now asking his audiences to conceptualize the episodic whole under the looser category of theme and variations.<sup>42</sup> Most significantly, there is no *rappel à l'ordre* provided by any sense of recapitulation-onset – a crucial moment of strong articulation in the preceding two tone poems and in those of the first tone-poem cycle. This purposeful lack makes any retrospective identification of a deformational exposition impossible. Or nearly so. The structural problem is that even while the successive-chapter architecture of the whole seems to preclude the relevance of the sonata concept, Strauss did stock the work with some characteristic thematic types that in a more logically ordered world might have been used for sonata or sonata-deformational purposes. Thus the Quixote theme (especially in the solo cello as it restarts the theme after the introduction, four measures before rehearsal no. 13, m. 122) – or, if one prefers, the Quixote/Sancho complex – strikes one as a potential "masculine-protagonist" primary theme, just as the ideal "Lady" or "Dulcinea" theme (for example, at rehearsal no. 17, m. 170) sounds as though it could have been deployed as a generically standard "feminine-redemptrix" secondary theme. But it may be the point that in this crazed Quixote-world recognizably sonata-like themes are discursively scrambled in ways that cannot be assimilated into cogent sonata-logic. The sonata-form background-concept is present only in its absence or unattainability. To the extent that one might wish to entertain this idea, we may conclude – once again – that even the arbitrary thematic



organization and sectional design in *Quixote* contribute via negation and disorientation to the larger programmatic idea governing the whole.<sup>43</sup>

While *Till*, *Zarathustra*, and *Quixote* show us a Strauss moving ever further away from allusive references to a historically enervated sonata concept, *Ein Heldenleben* surprises by turning once again, more explicitly, to that format. But this is no mere retrenchment. On the contrary, the return to a more clearly sonata-deformational practice can seem transgressive in a larger sense, as if it had been deployed to demonstrate the new-world hero's right to reconceive a venerable tradition as audaciously as possible. Invading and conquering the old "Classical" lands on modern terms: this seizure of old ground, replete with pitched battles for control against persistent militias of resistance, motivates the architectural design of *Heldenleben*. The familiar sonata stations are there not as passive nods to tradition but rather as highlighted signposts that mark off, zone-by-zone, which conventional features of the form are being conceptually overpowered at any given moment as one self-enclosed tableau is succeeded by another.

This is not to say that all of the sonata aspects of this hypertrophic work are self-evident. The twenty-minute exposition, for instance (mm. 1–368), comprises four contrasting tableaux: the entry of the masculine hero (E♭, mm. 1–117);<sup>44</sup> the hero's initial struggles with his opponents (*Des Helden Widersacher*; mm. 118–c. 191); the wooing of "The hero's feminine companion" (*Des Helden Gefährtin*; m. 192, three measures after rehearsal no. 22); and a subsequent love scene marked by the wide-spanning "Certainty-of-conquest theme" (*Thema der Siegesgewißheit*; m. 288 [rehearsal no. 32]–368, now settling into and concluding in a sustained G♯ major). That we are to regard the *Gefährtin* and *Siegesgewißheit* music as occupying a "feminine" secondary-theme space seems likely,<sup>45</sup> but what about the preceding *Widersacher* tableau? Is that the first part of a double secondary theme of differing contrasts, as some have suggested?<sup>46</sup> Or is it a tableau standing in for a more traditional transition away from the primary theme? Or might it be better regarded, as I prefer to think, as an interruption in the sonata form – a distractive parenthesis-episode that the heroic composer is obliged to bear and confront: the petty objections of nitpicking critics? The developmental space (m. 369, rehearsal no. 42; *Des Helden Walstatt*) is given over to distant calls to battle followed by the unrestrained furor of combat. While there can be no doubt that the recapitulatory space proper is launched only with the enormous structural downbeat and *fortissimo* reprise of the opening music at m. 631 (rehearsal no. 77), its tonic E♭ had been set in place several bars earlier (m. 616), as a non-normative tonic preparation (proclaiming an ecstatic victory) for the recapitulatory re-entry of the all-vanquishing hero. And the recapitulatory space from

this point onwards is totally reconceived as a celebration of achievement, marred only by recurring, interruptive spats with the not-yet-pacified remnants of old-guard criticism and moving inexorably towards the eroticized pastoral-vision of a satisfied (but surely temporary) withdrawal from the struggle.

But withdrawal is hardly the lasting impression provided by these four aggressive tone poems considered as a group. All four were locked in joyous battles with the symphonic traditions and expectations of the 1890s, particularly as institutionalized in the agendas of Austro-Germanic conservatories and universities, along with those of the partisan press. To remind ourselves of those contextual battles is the first step in reawakening the often-disturbing implications harbored in this music. Naïvely to enjoy these works is profoundly to misconstrue them. Far better to grasp how riddled they are with provocation and challenge: in Strauss's renunciation of the ideology of absolute music (orthodox "musical logic") in favor of a modernist embrace of an intensely detailed program music ("poetic logic"); in his irreverent deflations of the elevated topics that had nourished art music's metaphysical fantasies for decades; in his attraction to the atheistic, "free-spirit" laughter of Nietzscheanism; in his disquieting intermixture of symphonic high purpose and boisterous sonic sprees; in his easy acceptance of the concept of symphonic music both as an esteemed craft that sustained his conception of high culture and as a frankly commodified product to be introduced into the urban-modern marketplace of art. Most unsettling of all, perhaps, is the impression of total control and *Übermensch*-ease with which young Strauss, striding into the arena as pure ego, had set this scandalous gigantism into motion.

Strauss's tone poems were the most significant and influential orchestral works of their decade. The controversies that they aroused continued to unfold throughout most of the twentieth century, even as the art-music project was falling into a decline in social relevance, challenged by more commercially viable musical sectors in rapidly changing times. Throughout it all these pieces remained formidable staples of the concert and recorded repertory. Not only were they championed as personal vehicles by influential star conductors, but they also served as exhibition-pieces for virtuoso orchestras competing with each other in increasingly meticulous, razor-sharp performances. Their continued attraction among the broad musical public surely had little to do with any prolonged reflection on the quasi-nihilism that they had once been advancing; nor with any adequate grasp of the complexities of their musical contents. They appealed, more superficially, as repertory objects offering a seductive immediacy of rich instrumentation along with massively grand, climactic deliveries. Here one could experience orchestral glamour. And orchestral glamour sold

tickets. By the second half of the century this led seamlessly into the “living stereo” market (discs of the tone poems as demonstrations of proudly owned, high-tech woofers and tweeters), followed not long after by such appropriations as the popular-culture ubiquity of that Kubrickian extract. In not a few scholarly quarters the tone poems were regarded as unsuitable material for serious treatment and research. It has only been in the past two decades that these tone poems – the first and second cycles along with *Symphonia domestica* and *Eine Alpensinfonie* – have been reopened for significant discussion and a much-needed rethinking. One senses that new debates about them have just begun.

## 6 Strauss’s road to operatic success: *Guntram*, *Feuersnot*, and *Salome*

MORTEN KRISTIANSEN

The years from the completion of his first opera *Guntram* in 1893 to that of *Salome* in 1905 were pivotal to the career and aesthetic development of Richard Strauss: his operatic fortunes changed from failure to success, his creative focus from tone poem to opera, his philosophical allegiance from Schopenhauer to Nietzsche, and his aesthetic orientation from relative epigonism to assertive independence. The thread that connects these three dissimilar works is their implicit or explicit critique of Wagner. During the final decades of the nineteenth century Wagner’s musical style and dramatic themes became the baseline against which all new works were measured, and critics typically referred to Wagner’s successors as “epigones” because of their uninspired imitation of the older master.<sup>1</sup> The idealistic, quasi-Schopenhauerian themes of Wagner’s works – especially redemption through love, Christian compassion, renunciation, and physical versus ideal love – appeared with limited variations and in diluted or superficial form in the serious operas of Strauss’s most prominent colleagues, such as Wilhelm Kienzl (1857–1941), Felix Weingartner (1863–1942), Eugen d’Albert (1864–1932), Max von Schillings (1868–1933), and Hans Pfitzner (1869–1949). In this feebly obedient context Strauss’s early operas stand out as radical documents. Although Strauss identified himself as a Wagnerian, this adherence became limited to musical style and principles: a huge, colorful, polyphonic, and dominant orchestra; an intricate web of leitmotifs; chromaticism; and placing drama above purely musical concerns. Aesthetically, however, Strauss progressed from pseudo-Wagnerian to anti-Wagnerian during the 1890s, and achieving independence of Bayreuth helped him become the only German opera composer of his time to emerge successfully from Wagner’s shadow.

### *Guntram* (1893)

Given his awe of Wagner’s music dramas, Strauss had no desire to enter into competition with them, but Alexander Ritter (1833–96), his mentor from the mid 1880s until 1893, who had brought him into the fold of the programmatic composers and introduced him to the writings of Schopenhauer

61 The official poem has been rather neglected in discussions of the work. It is symptomatic that in the Eulenberg edition it has been replaced by an abbreviated version of Del Mar's commentary. Various writers (including Mathias Hansen, *Richard Strauss: Die Sinfonischen Dichtungen* [Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2003], p. 81) have erroneously maintained that Strauss did not take the poem seriously, whereas in fact Strauss told his publisher that Ritter's poem was an excellent guide to *Tod und Verklärung* ("Bitte ich dich, dich an Ritter zu wenden, von dem das Gedicht ist, ich weiß nichts besseres dafür!"). Strauss to Eugen Spitzweg, December 23, 1890, D-Mmb: Sammelstück, 48.

62 Werbeck, *Tondichtungen*, p. 124. In addition to those concepts listed above, Werbeck states that the retrospective look at childhood and the emergence of the ideals theme were probably also formative elements. Other ideas to emerge early on were the reminiscences of infancy, boyhood, and youthful ardour. However, he demonstrates that the ordering and content of events did not remain unchanged from the beginning.

63 An expanded discussion of temporality in this work is found in Daniel G. Harrison, "Imagining *Tod und Verklärung*," *Richard-Strauss-Blätter* (new series) 29 (June, 1993): 22–52.

64 Gustav Brecher, *Richard Strauss: Eine monographische Skizze* (Leipzig: Hermann Seemann Nachfolger, n.d. [1900]), p. 23.

65 For more on the concept of transfiguration, see Camilla Bork, "Tod und Verklärung: Isoldes Liebestod als Modell künstlerischer Schlußgestaltung," in Hermann Danuser and Herfried Münkler, eds., *Zukunftsbilder: Richard Wagners Revolution und ihre Folgen in Kunst und Politik* (Schliengen: Argus, 2002), pp. 161–78, esp. p. 163.

66 German original published in the score of *Tod und Verklärung* (London: Eulenberg, 1961).

67 Brecher, *Richard Strauss*, p. 22, trans. Schmid, "The Tone Poems of Richard Strauss," p. 198 (wrongly attributed to Romain Rolland in the text at this point).

68 Admittedly, *Tod und Verklärung* is in the minor mode, which of its nature tends to involve a greater incidence of chromaticism than does the major. Furthermore, *Don Juan* is hardly devoid of chromaticism (see mm. 1ff., 28ff., 38ff., 148ff., 482ff., and esp. 505ff.).

69 Roland Tenschert, *Straussiana aus vier Jahrzehnten*, ed. Jürgen Scharwächter (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1994), p. 34 relates the trajectory of *Tod und Verklärung* to

Beethoven's Fifth and Ninth Symphonies and Brahms's Symphony No. 1, and acknowledges that it can be seen as a "companion piece" [*Pendant*] to Liszt's *Les Préludes*.

70 Letter from Strauss to Wilhelm Bopp, February 9, 1931, quoted in *Chronicle*, p. 181 (translation modified).

71 Strauss noted that "*Tod und Verklärung* bringt das Hauptthema erst als Culminationspunkt in der Mitte." "Tagebuch" Blau V, RSA, 8. See also Franz Grasberger and Franz Hadamowsky, eds., *Richard Strauss-Ausstellung zum 100. Geburtstag* (Vienna: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 1964), p. 127.

72 Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, p. 363.

### 5 The second cycle of tone poems

1 Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, trans. Aaron Asher (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), p. 86.

2 Much of the following discussion is based on material chronicled in Charles Youmans, *Richard Strauss's Orchestral Music and the German Intellectual Tradition: The Philosophical Roots of Musical Modernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005). Cf. also Charles Youmans, "The Private Intellectual Context of Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*," *19th-Century Music* 22/2 (1998): 101–26; and "The Role of Nietzsche in Richard Strauss's Artistic Development," *Journal of Musicology* 21 (2004): 309–42.

3 Youmans, *Strauss's Orchestral Music*, p. 92.

4 His reading of Nietzsche, it seems, was preceded by an interest c. 1892 in the writings of Max Stirner, "anarchic individualist" and promoter of the "explicitly antimetaphysical view of sexual love" – such works as *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (*The Ego and His Own*). See *ibid.*, pp. 86, 91.

5 Nietzsche's first proclamations appeared in *The Gay Science*, Section 108 ("New Struggles"), Book 3: "God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. – And we – we still have to vanquish his shadow, too." More famously, the line is shouted out in the famous parable of the madman crying out the death of God in the marketplace (Section 125): "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him." Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), pp. 167, 181. Kaufmann also provided (p. 167 n. 1) several references to the "God is dead" line in *Zarathustra*.

6 The temple/god image is adapted and recrafted from a well-known passage in Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1935–6, 1950), in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: HarperCollins, 2001), pp. 40–9. The passage dwells on art, being, and truth from a very different perspective.

7 An extreme but telling variant of this conservative, old-world charge may be found in the ever-indignant Adorno's diatribes against Strauss for morally defiling the truth-content features of music (as posited a priori by the Frankfurt School writers) in favor of commercial success and bourgeois compromise. Among the reiterative *jaccuse-indictments* hurled by Adorno (and cf. n. 6 above, the Heideggerian image of the abandoned temple): "His work has the atmosphere of the Grand Hotel of childhood, a palace accessible only to money, yet not really a palace any more." Or: "[Strauss's music] thumbs its nose at inwardness ... [abandons itself to] unmitigated exteriority." Theodor W. Adorno, "Richard Strauss: Born June 11, 1864," trans. Samuel and Shiery Weber, *Perspectives of New Music* 3 (1964), 25–26, 16–17. Cf. n. 16 below.

8 Alexander Ritter to Strauss, January 17, 1893, in Youmans, *Strauss's Orchestral Music*, p. 68.

9 Walter Werbeck, *Die Tondichtungen von Richard Strauss* (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1996), pp. 248–9, 255–9, 260, 262, 264. Several of these were collected and republished in Herwarth Walden, ed., *Richard Strauss: Symphonien und Tondichtungen* (Berlin: Schlesinger, n.d. [c. 1908]).

10 Arthur Seidl, "Richard Strauß: Eine Charakterskizze" [1896], in Seidl, *Straußiana: Aufsätze zur Richard Strauß-Frage aus drei Jahrzehnten* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1913), pp. 11–66 (p. 58; my translation). See also the more extended discussion of the *Till* program and its "esoteric" metaphor in James Hepokoski, "Framing Till Eulenspiegel," *19th-Century Music* 30/1 (2006): 4–43; reprinted in Hepokoski, *Music, Structure, Thought: Selected Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 273–312.

11 Arthur Seidl remarked in 1896 ("Richard Strauß," p. 62) that although Strauss's forthcoming tone poem would bear the title *Also sprach Zarathustra*, its actual subject (*Gegenstand*) would be *Human, All Too Human* (Youmans, *Strauss's Orchestral Music*, p. 90). The larger point is that Strauss was informed more broadly by the emancipatory spirit of Nietzsche in general. Even as key images from Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* (1883–5) recur

prominently in the tone poem, the point-of-view and flavor of the earlier *Menschliches, allzumenschliches: Ein Buch für freie Geister* (1878) are also congruent with that of Strauss's composition. The musician reprocessed what he needed from the philosopher to serve his own ends.

12 Friedrich Nietzsche, "Of Reading and Writing," in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1961), p. 68.

13 Strauss to Gustav Kogel, quoted, for example, in Werbeck, *Tondichtungen*, p. 262 n. 684.

14 Youmans, *Strauss's Orchestral Music*, p. 204, where Ritter is described as a proponent of "unhappy [and 'outmoded'] idealism" who "lived in semiretirement, buried in his books."

15 In *Strauss's Orchestral Music*, p. 181, Youmans provides an overview of these "interior" doubts, of Strauss's "professional insecurity, reflecting persistent questions about the validity of his antimetaphysical views and the advisability of destroying a musical aesthetic so widely held by his peers" – a "multileveled insecurity" that was turning him into a "misanthrope."

16 The charges of cynicism would be leveled most vituperatively in Adorno's 1964 essay, "Richard Strauss": "noncommittal *peinture* [that] denounces ... all absorption as boredom" (p. 22); "a bourgeois coolness, a lack of participation on the part of the aesthetic subject" (p. 31). See also n. 7 above. Adorno's observations about Strauss and his style are by no means incorrect, nor can they be shrugged off by any current commentator on the composer. On the contrary, Adorno repeatedly put his finger on the most telling points of the style and its implications, often in unforgettable phrases that invite quotation and reflection. It is only that the moralistic Adorno, upholding his own variant of a by-then-eclipsed view of one's absolute duty to the revelatory truth-bearing value of music (in this era, posited as resistance to capitalism and the desires of "the bourgeois subject," non-accommodation with the culture industry, and so forth), had a visceral aversion to what he found in Strauss, and cast his observations in the form of repeated denunciations that current readers are likely to find exaggerated and self-indicting. Adorno's remarks are brilliant, to be sure, but they are also strident and open to historicizing and deconstruction.

17 Seidl, "Richard Strauß," p. 61.

18 Hans Merian, *Richard Strauß' Tondichtung Also sprach Zarathustra: Eine Studie über die moderne Programmsymphonie* (Leipzig: Carl Meyer, 1899). Merian's reading of *Zarathustra*

is more persuasive, more detailed, than the authorized (and somewhat cautious) version by Arthur Hahn.

19 *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 9–11. In the Foreword, Merian noted that the two central questions still being debated among critics were “will and can program music express specific thoughts? and in what ways can this happen?” (p. 4). He devoted his monograph to laying out the case for the presence of philosophical, Nietzschean thought – “specific ideas” – in *Zarathustra*.

20 Morten Kristiansen, “Richard Strauss, *Die Moderne*, and the Concept of *Stilkunst*,” *The Musical Quarterly* 86/4 (Winter, 2002): 689–749 (“juxtaposing,” p. 702; “aesthetic,” p. 700; “contemporary zeitgeist,” p. 702; “culture of nerves,” p. 693). A central model for this detached, objective aesthetic of styles, remarked Strauss in a 1909 letter to Paul Bekker, was Mozart, “the incarnation of the pure artist, in comparison with the artists who also want to be confessors and starry-eyed idealists in their art” (*ibid.*, pp. 700–1). Kristiansen noted that he adopted the term *Stilkunst* from the literary history by Richard Hamann and Jost Hermand, *Deutsche Kunst und Kultur von der Gründerzeit bis zum Expressionismus*, 5 vols., Vol. IV: *Stilkunst um 1900* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1967).

21 Leon Botstein, “The Enigmas of Richard Strauss: A Revisionist View,” in *Strauss and His World*, pp. 3–32 (“fragmentation in the use of the past and . . . irony,” p. 18; “stylistic extraction,” p. 18; “disregard for consistency,” p. 19; “prefigured the aesthetics of postmodernism,” p. 17). “In the tone poems he perfected a language of musical illustration that played with the illusion of realism” (p. 24).

22 Herwarth Walden (based on Arthur Hahn), “Don Quixote,” in Walden, *Richard Strauss: Symphonien und Tondichtungen*, p. 130.

23 Youmans, *Strauss's Orchestral Music*, p. 205. The D–A–D swerve was noted and analyzed in Graham Phipps, “The Logic of Tonality in Strauss's *Don Quixote*: A Schoenbergian Evaluation,” *19th-Century Music* 9 (1986): 189–205 (pp. 192–4). As Phipps observed (p. 190), the initial slippage from D to A in the antecedent had been attacked by Heinrich Schenker in his *Harmonielehre* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1906), pp. 299–300 as “unnatural and therefore inadmissible . . . [a] digression . . . not artistically composed, but, on the contrary, with disregard for nature . . . placed without proper linear working-out [*unmotiviert*] purely at the whim of a man who does not know what he wants, what is appropriate.”

24 Seidl, “Richard Strauss,” pp. 28–9.

25 On the format of a sentence, see n. 27 below.

26 Arthur Hahn, “Also sprach Zarathustra,” reprinted in Walden, *Richard Strauss: Symphonien und Tondichtungen*, pp. 113; Merian, *Richard Strauss' Tondichtung Also sprach Zarathustra*, p. 17.

27 A sentence is a forward-driving melodic shape based on the vectored principle of short–short→long (*aa'b*) in which the two short impulses may be perceived as either identical or closely related as variants. (How far-ranging the *a'*-variant can be and still be considered *a'* is a matter of individual judgment.)

The two *a*'s are called the presentation (or presentation modules); *b* is the continuation. The continuation is often (but not always) based on material from the presentation, and it typically drives towards an eventual cadence. When the continuation begins with its own complementary presentation modules, as here at the opening of *Ein Heldenleben*, that continuation is itself sentential (a “sentential continuation”), beginning another *aa'b* pattern. In turn its succeeding *b* can once again be initiated sententially, and so on. The result is a sentence-chain (*Satzkette*). Its effect is to produce a succession of presentational modules, paired short impulses, until a cadence is finally driven towards and attained. In *Heldenleben*, then, m. 5, nominally a continuation, begins with complementary *aa'*-style modules: mm. 5–6, 7–8; m. 9, nominally a new continuation, again begins presentationally with new complementary modules: mm. 9–10, 11–12.

A non-sentential continuation (with its characteristic fragmentation and compression) and drive to cadence is reached only at m. 13. An introduction to Classical sentence-formats is provided in William E. Caplin, *Classical Form: A Theory of Formal Functions for the Instrumental Music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 35–48. For a more flexible discussion extending further into the nineteenth century and including a consideration of *Satzketten*, see Matthew Bailey Shea, “The Wagnerian Satz: The Rhetoric of the Sentence in Wagner's Post-*Lohengrin* Operas” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2003).

28 A delicious detail: at the beginning of the recapitulation (m. 631, rehearsal no. 77), the moment celebrating triumph over adversaries, the chromatic deformation from m. 7 is now straightened out into a confident diatonicism (m. 637).

29 Adorno, “Richard Strauss,” pp. 19, 30–1.

30 The most thorough guide through the evidence bearing on these programmatic questions in all of Strauss's tone poems remains Werbeck, *Tondichtungen*, pp. 103–300.

31 Wilhelm Mauke, “Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche,” reprinted in Walden, *Richard Strauss: Symphonien und Tondichtungen*, pp. 92–108. English equivalents are adapted from *Chronicle*, p. 397. For a complete list of the Mauke labels see also Hepokoski, “Framing Till Eulenspiegel,” p. 13.

32 As is well known, the initial pitch-contour of all versions shown in Example 5.4 may allude to a familiar motive (tranquility or repose) from the love duet of *Tristan und Isolde*, Act II, while the jeering, tongue-protruding “Till chord,” *sforzando* at m. 47, is the “Tristan chord” differently spelled and resolved. See also the discussion of these and related matters in Matthew Bribitzer-Stull and Robert Gauldin, “Hearing Wagner in *Till Eulenspiegel*: Strauss's Merry Pranks Reconsidered,” *Intégral* 21 (2007): 1–39.

33 Steven Vande Moortele, “Beyond Sonata Deformation: Liszt's Symphonic Poem *Tasso* and the Concept of Two-Dimensional Sonata Form,” *Current Musicology* 86 (2008): 49. A more extensive treatment, including studies of *Don Juan* and *Ein Heldenleben*, may be found in Vande Moortele, *Two-Dimensional Sonata Form: Form and Cycle in Single-Movement Instrumental Works by Liszt, Strauss, Schoenberg, and Zemlinsky* (Leuven: University of Leuven Press, 2009).

34 Cf. Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 236–44, 360–8; and William S. Newman, *The Sonata since Beethoven* (New York: Norton, 1969), pp. 134–5, 373–7. The issue of potential multimovement-cycle implications (*Mehrsätzigkeit*) in the second cycle (particularly in *Zarathustra* and *Heldenleben*) has also been treated by David Larkin, “Reshaping the Liszt–Wagner Legacy: Intertextual Dynamics in Strauss's Tone Poems” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2006), pp. 289–90, 296–9. More generally, the dual-function possibility has long been a commonplace within the analysis of several nineteenth-century (and later) symphonic forms. See also, for example, Werbeck, *Tondichtungen*, pp. 257, 304–6, 444–5; James Hepokoski, review of Werbeck, *Tondichtungen*, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51 (1998): 603–25 (p. 613); and James Hepokoski, “Beethoven Reception: The Symphonic Tradition,” in Jim Samson, ed., *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 453–4. The likely eighteenth-century origins of the format are suggested in James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy,

*Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 220–1.

35 On rotations as a general concept, see James Hepokoski, “Structure, Implication, and the End of *Suor Angelica*,” *Studi pucciniani* 3 (2004): 241–64, which contains (p. 242) a list of complementary articles on the topic; reprinted in Hepokoski, *Music, Structure, Thought*, pp. 143–66. Cf. Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory*, e.g. pp. 611–14.

36 For a more detailed study of the structure of this work, including the role and implications of its introduction (mm. 1–5) and epilogue (mm. 632–57), see Hepokoski, “Framing Till Eulenspiegel.”

37 Merian, *Richard Strauss' Tondichtung Also sprach Zarathustra*, p. 39: “We could designate this melody as the *Weise des Ideals*. It is played in B major, the key of the achieved ideal. All dark and heavy instruments [now] lie silent.” In the Strauss-authorized commentary of Arthur Hahn, this B major theme suggested “an overflowing, anticipatory sense of the feeling of happiness[–to-come], with liberation from all doubts and spiritual needs. In its passionate flight the soul ascends higher and higher.” See Walden, *Richard Strauss: Symphonien und Tondichtungen*, p. 119.

38 Cf. the famous moment at the onset of the recapitulation of the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, m. 301.

39 See, for example, Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 233–4. Following remarks originally stated in the authorized guide by Arthur Hahn as well as evidence from Strauss's own marked copies of Nietzsche, Charles Youmans (*Strauss's Orchestral Music*, pp. 93, 101–8, 194–5) has discussed the significance of this important moment to Strauss himself and has also explicated its implicit intertextual link to Faust's staggering confrontation with the Earth Spirit.

40 Having begun in an unambiguous C major (Nature), the piece's final section is grounded in B major (humanity, the spirit of question and questioning). The key of B remains unreconciled to C. The “C” implication at the end involves an upper-neighbor, incomplete French-sixth chord with C in the bass (eight bars from the end), resolving back to B major. As the music evaporates, one is left only with the residue (“C”) of the upper-neighbor, surely not to be heard at the end as a convincing tonic.

41 I borrow the concept of referential sonata stations – touched upon as location-markers or “orientation-points” but then

abandoned – from Werbeck, *Tondichtungen*, e.g. pp. 427, 447, 476.

42 The relevance of the sonata-form concept to the *Quixote* variations has been a matter of dispute. Arguments on behalf of three embedded sonata structures traversing the whole of *Don Quixote* have been made by Phipps, "The Logic of Tonality," pp. 189–205, esp. pp. 203–5. My own view is that these sonata interpretations are unconvincing. This is also the conclusion of Werbeck, *Tondichtungen*, pp. 383, 457. Similarly, Youmans, *Strauss's Orchestral Music*, p. 203, considers *Quixote* to be the composition in which "Strauss for the first time completely abandoned this dialogue [with sonata-form conceptions]." On the other hand, Larkin, "Reshaping the Liszt–Wagner Legacy," pp. 239–45, considers Phipps to have "established" the sonata-form basis of the introduction (with two secondary keys in the "exposition," F# minor and F major) but proceeds to offer an alternative, single-sonata (deformation) proposal for the whole, in which mm. 1–160 (through the "Tema") constitute the exposition, Variations 1–10 form a huge and sprawling "set of variations (taking the place of the Development)," and the finale is a reversed recapitulation. Notwithstanding Larkin's caveats, I find this interpretation, too, to be strained.

43 This conclusion is both similar to and different from that of Larkin, "Reshaping the Liszt–Wagner Legacy." Larkin does propose a sonata-framing of the interior variations (see the note directly above), but after noting the difficulties with this assertion remarks (p. 242): "My alternative reading might be best described as an imaginative reconstruction of an imaginary entity, the sonata structure which 'would' have existed but for Quixote's madness."

44 Werbeck (*Tondichtungen*, p. 448) and others have argued that the entire primary thematic zone (P, mm. 1–117) itself constitutes a miniature sonata form: (small-scale) P, m. 1; secondary theme (S), m. 21; development, m. 45; reversed recapitulation starting with S in the tonic, m. 84 (86), and P following, m. 94. From the sonata point of view, it might be preferable to begin the small-scale recapitulatory space with P starting on B $\flat$ :f at m. 76 (rehearsal no. 9), with P at m. 94 as coda (perhaps dissolving into a transition). A stronger reading would construe mm. 1–117 as rotationally based and perhaps only secondarily in dialogue with the sonata concept: Rotation 1, mm. 1–16; expanded Rotation 2, mm. 17–45; Rotation 3, mm. 45 (rehearsal no. 5)–75; Rotation 4, mm. 76 (rehearsal no. 9)–94; Rotation 5, mm. 94–117.

45 My own view is that the secondary theme proper does not begin until m. 205, six measures after rehearsal no. 23, with the onset of the Wooing motive in the bass instruments.

46 See the brief accounts, for example, in Werbeck, *Tondichtungen*, pp. 446–7; and Larkin, "Reshaping the Liszt–Wagner Legacy," p. 292.

6 Strauss's road to operatic success: *Guntram*, *Feuersnot*, and *Salome*

1 For an overview of the post-Wagnerian libretto see Morten Kristiansen, "Richard Strauss's *Feuersnot* in Its Aesthetic and Cultural Context: A Modernist Critique of Musical Idealism" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2000), pp. 95–172.

2 Strauss later noted that he would never have written an opera had it not been for Ritter's encouragement; see Richard Strauss, "Reminiscences of the First Performance of My Operas," in *Recollections*, pp. 146–67 (p. 146). For a detailed discussion of Strauss's relationship to Ritter see Charles Youmans, *Richard Strauss's Orchestral Music and the German Intellectual Tradition: The Philosophical Roots of Musical Modernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), pp. 35–48.

3 Willi Schuh documented the genesis of *Guntram* in *Chronicle*, pp. 269–97.

4 For an exhaustive discussion of Wagner's presence in *Guntram*, see Charles Youmans, "Richard Strauss's *Guntram* and the Dismantling of Wagnerian Musical Metaphysics" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1996), pp. 242–342. For the Tristan remark, see Oskar Merz's review of November 18, 1895 in Franzpeter Messmer, ed., *Kritiken zu den Uraufführungen der Bühnenwerke von Richard Strauss*, (Pfaenhofen: W. Ludwig, 1989), p. 15.

5 Anonymous review in the *Neue Musik-Zeitung* 15 (1894): 142; cited in Youmans, *Strauss's Orchestral Music*, p. 38.

6 Ernest Newman, "Richard Strauss and the Music of the Future," *Musical Studies* (London and New York: John Lane, 1905): 249–304 (p. 254).

7 For detailed discussions of the music of each of Strauss's operas see Normal Del Mar, *Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works*, 3 vols. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986).

8 A short extract from Ritter's letter of January 17, 1893 along with Strauss's responses appears in *Chronicle*, pp. 282–6; the entire letter is reproduced in Youmans, "Richard Strauss's *Guntram*," pp. 383–97. It also appears (untranslated) in Charles Youmans, ed., "Ten Letters from Alexander Ritter to Richard

Strauss, 1887–1894," *Richard Strauss-Blätter* 35 (June, 1996): 10–16.

9 Max Stirner (1806–56) advocated egoism and anarchy in *The Ego and His Own* (1845), which Strauss had read.

10 See Youmans, *Strauss's Orchestral Music*, pp. 59–99, for a thorough discussion of Strauss's interest in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and their relevance to *Guntram*.

11 Roy Pascal, *From Naturalism to Expressionism: German Literature and Society 1880–1918* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 58.

12 Eugen Schmitz, *Richard Strauss als Musikdramatiker* (Munich: Dr. Henrich Löwe, 1907), p. 24.

13 Richard Strauss, "Recollections of My Youth and Years of Apprenticeship," in *Recollections*, pp. 134–45 (p. 140).

14 See Strauss's letter to Cosima Wagner of April 10, 1893 in Franz Trenner, ed., *Cosima Wagner, Richard Strauss: Ein Briefwechsel*, ed. with the assistance of Gabriele Strauss (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1978), p. 155.

15 *Chronicle*, pp. 312–13.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 297.

17 Richard Strauss, "Betrachtungen zu Joseph Gregors 'Weltgeschichte des Theaters,'" in Strauss, *Betrachtungen und Erinnerungen*, 2nd edn., ed. Willi Schuh (Zurich: Atlantis, 1957), pp. 173–81 (p. 179). (The essay does not appear in *Recollections*.)

18 See Gustav Mahler to Richard Strauss, March 24, 1894, in Herta Blaukopf, ed., *Gustav Mahler–Richard Strauss: Correspondence 1888–1911*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 32.

19 For a more detailed discussion of *Feuersnot* see Morten Kristiansen, "Richard Strauss before *Salome*: The Early Operas and Unfinished Stage Works," in Mark-Daniel Schmid, ed., *The Richard Strauss Companion* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), pp. 245–73.

20 Romain Rolland noted in his diary on March 1, 1900 that Strauss felt tragedy to have been exhausted by Wagner and was looking for comedy, even buffoonery; see Rollo Myers, ed., *Richard Strauss and Romain Rolland: Correspondence* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1968), p. 125.

21 See Strauss, "Betrachtungen zu Joseph Gregors 'Weltgeschichte des Theaters,'" pp. 179–80; letter of November 17, 1901 in Gabriella Hanke Knaus, ed., *Richard Strauss, Ernst von Schuch: Ein Briefwechsel* (Berlin: Henschel, 1999), p. 47; and letter of October 30, 1901 in Trenner, *Cosima Wagner, Richard Strauss*, p. 243.

22 For a full profile of Wolzogen see Morten Kristiansen, "Strauss's First Librettist: Ernst von Wolzogen beyond *Überbrett!*," *Richard Strauss-Blätter* (new series) 59 (June, 2008): 75–116.

23 For reviews of the premiere see Messmer, *Kritiken zu den Uraufführungen*, pp. 20–9.

24 Even when Strauss clearly intends parody, such as the *Mittsommernacht* love duet between Kunrad and Diemut for which he directs the performers to sing "with exaggerated pathos throughout," the music itself does not signal parody (and in this case performers usually ignore Strauss's directions).

25 See Ernst Otto Nodnagel, *Jenseits von Wagner und Liszt* (Königsberg: Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1902), pp. 126, 186; and Wilhelm Raupp, *Max von Schillings: Der Kampf eines deutschen Künstlers* (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1935), pp. 78–9.

26 Schmitz, *Richard Strauss als Musikdramatiker*, pp. 35–7, 56.

27 See Morten Kristiansen, "Richard Strauss, *Die Moderne*, and the Concept of *Stilkunst*," *The Musical Quarterly* 86/4 (Winter, 2002): 689–749.

28 Leon Botstein, "The Enigmas of Richard Strauss: A Revisionist View," in Bryan Gilliam, ed., *Richard Strauss and His World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 3–32 (p. 6).

29 Letter of January 14, 1907, in Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters*, 3rd edn., ed. Donald Mitchell, trans. Basil Creighton (London: John Murray, 1973), p. 284.

30 Oscar Bie, *Die moderne Musik und Richard Strauss* (Berlin: Bard, Marquardt and Co., 1906), p. 66.

31 Oscar Wilde, Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891); and "The Soul of Man under Socialism" (1891), in Wilde, *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, ed. J. B. Foreman (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1966), pp. 17, 1091, 1093.

32 For details on Strauss's cuts and alterations see Roland Tenschert, "Strauss as Librettist," in Derrick Puffett, ed., *Richard Strauss: Salome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 36–50. This volume is a fine introduction to the background, analysis, and reception of the opera. Although it has often been claimed that Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1902) and Strauss's *Salome* were the first to set a play directly, Russian composers Dargomizhsky and Mussorgsky had done this decades earlier in *The Stone Guest* (1872) and the original version of *Boris Godunov* (1869), respectively. Heinrich Zöllner's direct settings of Goethe's *Faust* (1887) and Gerhart