

Strauss's *Don Juan* and *Ein Heldenleben* take us on an epic ride from tragic longing to triumphant self-celebration, showcasing his orchestral genius.



Cat.no. 8.226934 · UPC: 636943693421

The “Tondichtung”, or tone poem, was a popular European genre from the mid-19th to early 20th century. German composer Richard Strauss excelled in this form, producing ten works. A tone poem is a single-movement orchestral piece meant to evoke moods, stories, or scenes without following a strict narrative.

Strauss's *Don Juan*, Op. 20 (1888), was inspired by Nikolaus Lenau's poetic take on the Don Juan legend, portraying him as a man seeking the perfect woman and ultimately succumbing to despair. Strauss's orchestral work mirrors this, opening with energetic themes of Don Juan's adventures, featuring lyrical passages for his loves, and concluding with dark chords symbolizing his demise.

In 1898, Strauss composed *Ein Heldenleben* (A Hero's Life), a six-section tone poem inspired by Beethoven's *Eroica*, reflecting his own life and career. Themes depict the hero, his adversaries, companion, battles, peace, and eventual retirement. Critics debated Strauss's self-portrait as arrogant or humorous, but the work remains a testament to artistic struggle and triumph.

Austrian conductor Hans Graf, Chief Conductor and Quantedge Music Director of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra (SSO) since 2020, is known for his curiosity, creative programming, and commanding presence. An acclaimed guest conductor worldwide, he has won multiple awards including the Österreichischer Musiktheaterpreis and recorded works by Mozart, Stravinsky, and Berg.

Founded in 1979, the SSO is Singapore's flagship orchestra, performing year-round and achieving global recognition, including rankings by Gramophone and BBC Music Magazine. Under Graf, the orchestra has released over 50 recordings and revived rare works by composers like Kozłowski, Klenau and Ogerman. The SSO forms part of the Singapore Symphony Group, which also encompasses choruses, youth orchestras, and major music festivals.

Link to the album:

<https://www.ourrecordings.com/albums/a-hero's-life>

Link to direct streaming:

<https://www.ourrecordings.com/stream-music>

Link to live concerts:

<https://youtu.be/XAIBT53mc7c> (R. STRAUSS *Don Juan*, Op. 20)

<https://youtu.be/wSAYNdEjjHs> (STRAUSS *A Hero's Life* (Ein Heldenleben))

OUR Recordings
www.ourrecordings.com

WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION: www.naxos.com

