

J. STRAUSS JR.

Famous Waltzes, Polkas, Marches and Overtures

Beliebte Walzer, Polkas, Märsche und Ouvertüren

Valses, Marches, Polkas et Ouvertures Célèbres

Volume 1



Johann Strauss II (1825 - 1899)

To many the Strauss family has been seen as the epitome of the golden age of Vienna, the city that set Europe dancing, with its waltzes and polkas. As the capital of an Empire that embraced the most musical parts of Europe, Bohemia, Slovakia and Hungary, as well as a good part of Northern Italy and the German-speaking peoples closer to hand, Vienna proved the most fertile ground for music that the world has ever known. One reason for this may lie in the inevitable cross-fertilisation of races and cultures, of which the Strauss family provides an example.

The first recorded member of the family was Johann Michael Strauss, a native of the Hungarian town of Ofen, who moved to Vienna in the service of Count Franz von Roggendorff in 1750. Jewish in origin, Johann Michael became a Christian and settled in the city as an upholsterer. His second child, Franz Strauss, married the daughter of a coachman and worked as a waiter before taking the tenancy of a small drinking-house, Zum heiligen Florian, in the Leopoldstadt district of the city. It was here, on 14th March, 1804, that Johann Strauss the elder, founder of the Strauss musical dynasty, was born.

On the death of his father in 1816, Johann Strauss was apprenticed by his guardian to a book-binder. Even at this period he earned a living for himself playing the viola in a band run by the somewhat disreputable violinist Michael Pamer. In 1819 he joined a rival band started by the Pamer violinist Josef Lanner: in 1824 he became second conductor under Lanner, and the following year established his own orchestra. He married on 11th July, 1825: on 25th October his first son was born and named after his father.

The younger Johann Strauss, even more prolific and successful than his father, studied music at first by stealth, until his father abandoned the family in favour of his mistress in 1842. Two years later he launched his own dance orchestra and went on to unparalleled success, in which he compelled his younger brothers to share, although all three of them had been originally

destined for other professions. In 1863 Johann Strauss was appointed Imperial Music Director for the balls held at court, a position he relinquished in 1871, when he was succeeded by his youngest brother, Eduard. His career took him abroad, to London, Paris, Budapest and regularly to the Russian Vauxhall at Pavlovsk. For the theatre he wrote a series of operettas, from *Indigo and the Forty Thieves* in 1871 and *Die Fledermaus* three years later to the final *Goddess of Reason* in 1897. By the time of his death in 1899 Strauss had written some 500 pieces of music, waltzes, polkas, quadrilles and stage works, evidence of prolific talent and an enormous capacity for work.

The sparkling operetta *Die Fledermaus* (*The Bat*), based on the French vaudeville *Le Réveillon*, derived in its turn from a German play by Roderich Benedix, *Das Gefängnis* (*The Prison*), was first staged at the Vienna Theater an der Wien in 1874. The *Bat* of the title is Eisenstein, about to be imprisoned for tax misdemeanours, but instead attending a masked ball at the house of Prince Orlofsky, wearing the disguise of a bat. At the ball he will encounter his wife, disguised as a Hungarian countess and his wife's maid Adèle, all attending the ball without the knowledge of the others. The complications of the evening are successfully resolved the morning after, when there is a general reconciliation, and a hymn of praise to King Champagne.

Lagunen-Walzer (*The Lagoon Waltz*) is taken from *A Night in Venice*, an operetta first staged in Berlin in 1883 for the opening of the Friedrich-Wilhelm Städtisches Theater. Strauss had decided to deny Vienna the first performance after the elopement of his second wife, Angelika "Lili" Dittrich, with the manager of the Theater an der Wien, Franz Steiner. Strauss was granted a civil divorce in 1882, but before he could marry his new companion, Adele Strauss, he was obliged to become a Protestant citizen of Coburg, since re-marriage in Catholic Vienna was out of the question. Adele was with him in Berlin, when the new operetta met a mixed reception. The subsequent performance in Vienna, with revisions of the libretto and new words for the *Lagoon Waltz*, was received with enthusiasm.

The so-called Tik-Tak Polka is taken from *Die Fledermaus*. At Prince Orlofsky's ball Eisenstein flirts with the Hungarian countess, his wife in disguise, timing her heart-beats with his watch, of which she gains possession. The watch can later be used as evidence of his infidelity. The Polka contains references to other themes from the second and third acts of the operetta. *Wine, Woman and Song* takes its German title from the popular saying:

Wer nicht liebt Wein, Weib und Gesang
Der bleibt ein Narr sein Leben lang.

(He who loves not wine, woman and song
Stays a fool his whole life long.)

The work was originally a choral waltz, written for the Vienna Männergesangverein in 1869. The *Annen-Polka* dates from 1852, the year in which Strauss first appeared as conductor at the court balls in Vienna. It was to prove the most popular of all his dances during his visit to London in 1867.

Rosen aus dem Süden (*Roses from the South*) is taken from the operetta *Das Spitzentuch der Königin* (*The Queen's Handkerchief*), based on Cervantes, and Franz Steiner's opening production, after the death of his father, at the Theater an der Wien in 1880. The aria given to Cervantes, *Wo die wilde Rose erblüht* (*Where the wild rose blooms*) forms the basis of *Roses from the South*, with the King's so-called *Trüffel-Couplet*. The polka *Auf der Jagd* (*At the Hunt*) is taken from the earlier operetta *Cagliostro in Wien* (*Cagliostro in Vienna*), based on the life of the fraudulent 18th century alchemist Count Cagliostro, and first staged in Vienna in 1875, to the delight of Brahms, a great admirer of Strauss's achievement.

The *Künstlerleben* Waltz (*Artist's Life*) was written in 1867 for the ball of the Artists' Association and the *Unter Donner und Blitz* Polka (*Thunder and Lightning Polka*) in the following year for the summer season, during which the famous *Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald* (*Tales from the Vienna Woods*) was first heard.

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 Playing
 Time:
 51'42"

J. STRAUSS JR.

Famous Waltzes, Polkas, Marches and Overtures Volume 1

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| 1 | Die Fledermaus (Overture) | (8:27) |
| 2 | Lagunen-Walzer, Op. 411 | (6:53) |
| 3 | Tick-Tack-Polka, Op. 365 | (2:46) |
| 4 | Wein, Weib und Gesang (Walzer), Op. 333 | (6:00) |
| 5 | Annen-Polka, Op. 117 | (4:27) |
| 6 | Rosen aus dem Süden (Walzer), Op. 388 | (8:23) |
| 7 | Auf der Jagd (Polka), Op. 373 | (2:22) |
| 8 | Künstlerleben, Walzer, Op. 316 | (8:35) |
| 9 | Unter Donner und Blitz, Polka, Op. 324 | (3:20) |

CSR Symphony Orchestra (Nos. 1, 4, 6-9), Polish State Philharmonic Orchestra (Nos. 2 & 5) & CSR State Philharmonic Orchestra (No. 3) conducted by Martin Sieghart (No. 1), Oliver Dohnányi (No. 2), Alfred Walter (No. 3), Ondrej Lenard (Nos. 4, 6-9) & Johannes Wildner (No. 5).

Music Notes: Keith Anderson (English),
Ulrich Spratte (German)

Cover: An Evening with J. Strauss (1894)
(Painting by Marquis Franz V. Bayros)



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