

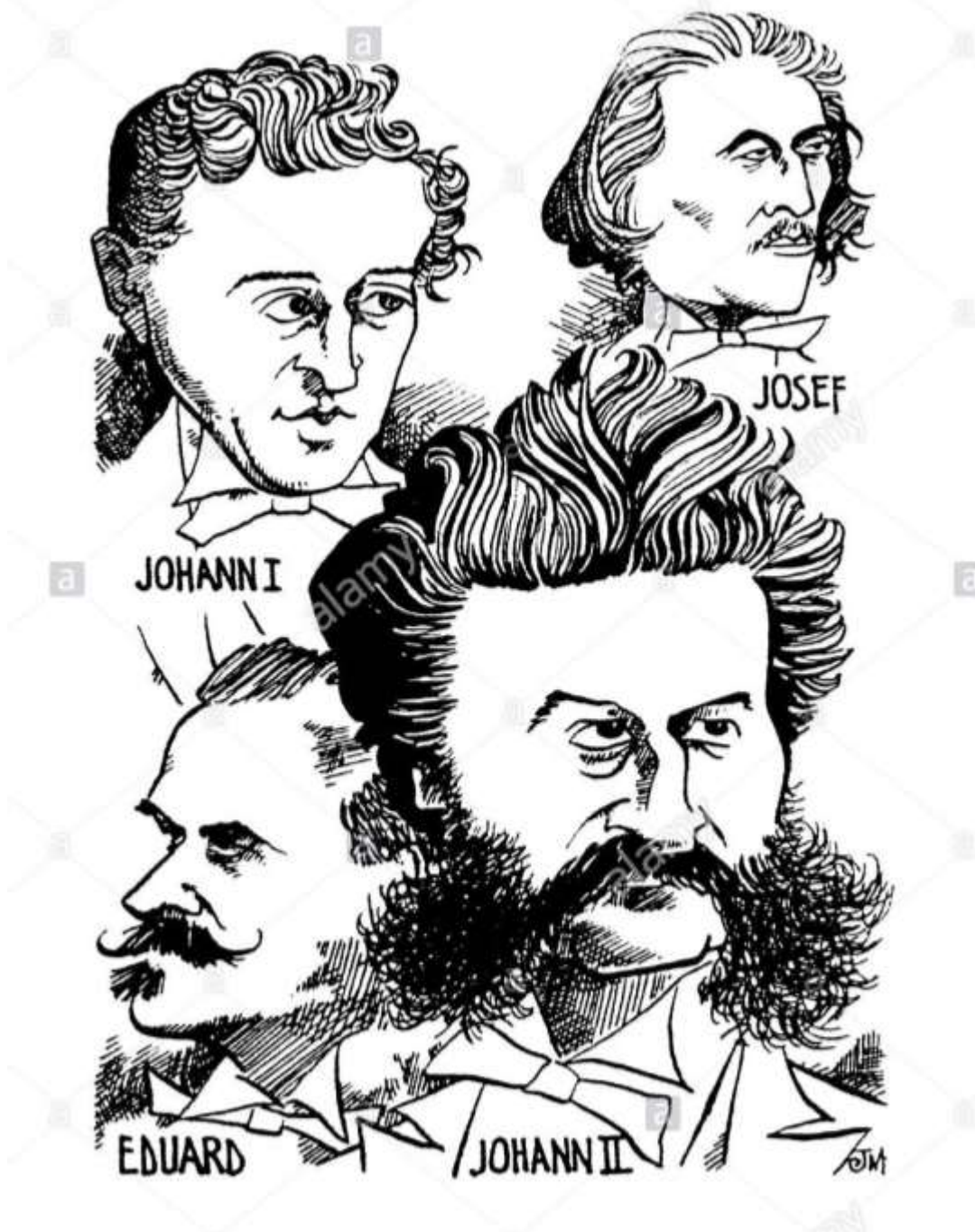


UNIVERSITY OF  
THE THIRD AGE

Benalla & District Inc.



*Programme Notes - 9th November, 2018*



*The Strauss Family*

## In the beginning.....



Statue of Joseph Lanner and Johann Strauss I in Vienna

### Johann Strauss 1 and Joseph Lanner

Vienna! The city of the schnitzel, the pastry, and the coffee house. The city of Freud, Klimt, and Wittgenstein. The city where elaborate palaces rub shoulders with cosy Biedermeier architecture and Adolf Loos' "house without eyebrows". The city of Mozart and Beethoven - Hummel too. And, above all, the city of the Waltz.

The Viennese waltz had no mother, but it did have two fathers -- Johann Strauss I and his one-time boss, Joseph Lanner. It was Lanner who launched the waltz craze, taking the first steps as a teenager. Largely self-taught as a violinist and composer, he'd joined

a dance orchestra when he

was 12, and formed his own trio in 1816 to play light music in the taverns

in and around Vienna. Sometimes this group expanded to a sextet or more,

and within a few years Johann Strauss I signed on as a violist. Lanner met with such success that in 1825 he split his group into two small orchestras, placing Strauss in charge of the second. Strauss went his own way two years later, developing a rivalry with his former employer-partner.

## The Strauss Family

### Johann Strauss I (the Elder, Snr, the Father) (1804-1849)



Founder of the Strauss Musical Dynasty who came to be known as 'The Father of the Waltz'.

Self-taught violinist, played in a dance orchestra.

In 1824 he formed his own orchestra. He composed waltzes, polkas and other dances for it and published over 250 works. He also composed marches for the local regiment, including the *Radetzky March*, his best known piece.

The Strauss Orchestra played in Viennese taverns, restaurants and society events and as its reputation grew it toured all over Europe. He died of scarlet fever aged only 45.

### Johann Strauss II (the Younger, Jr, the Son) 1825 - 1899 "The Waltz King".



The most important member of the Strauss dynasty, he composed over 500 Waltzes, polkas, quadrilles, marches, mazurkas, 18 Operettas, and 1 Ballet (Cinderella).

Although he composed his first waltz at 6 years of age, his father wanted him to be a banker and aggressively discouraged him from a career in music. His mother secretly managed to get him music lessons.

At age 19 he formed his own small orchestra, in competition to his father, and played in restaurants.

At age 24 his father died so he merged the two orchestras. At age 28 he suffered a nervous breakdown due to overwork and stress but continued after a couple of months rest.

He continued composing dances and operettas well into old age and died in Vienna of pleural pneumonia at the age of 73.

**Josef Strauss (1827 - 1870)     The second born son of Johann I.**



Studied mechanical engineering and started a career as an architectural draughtsman.

In 1853 following his brother Johann's nervous breakdown he stepped in to keep the orchestra going. On Johann's return he was persuaded to give up his day job and to join the family business.

He was also a talented and prolific composer of over 300 dances and marches. Additionally he made over 500 arrangements of other composers' works.

His brother Johann said: "Pepi (Josef) is the more gifted of us two; I am merely the more popular..."

He died aged 53 after falling off a conductor's podium.

**Eduard Strauss I (1835 - 1916)**



Youngest son of Johann I, brother of Johann II and Josef. Started work in the diplomatic service.

Joined the orchestra as a harpist then worked together with his brothers as a conductor.

When Josef died he took over the management of the orchestra until he disbanded it in 1901.

He also was a prolific composer and wrote over 320 dances and marches.

He married and had two sons, one of which - Johann Strauss III - followed the family business. The other son, Josef, went into the motor trade instead, but his third child Eduard did become a talented conductor.

**Johann Strauss III (1866-1939)     Son of Eduard Strauss**



He also was a conductor and composer, but not as prolific or successful as his relatives. Better remembered as a conductor, he was unofficially entrusted with the task of upholding his family's tradition after the dissolution of the Strauss Orchestra by his father in 1901. His talents were not fully realised during his lifetime as musical tastes were changing with more popular composers such as Franz Lehár and Oscar Straus (no relation) dominating the Viennese musical scene with their operettas. Principally, he was the first conductor in the Strauss family to actively conduct works to be recorded by prominent recording companies. He conducted the Strauss orchestra in the first recordings of his family's works. He died in Berlin aged 81.



**Eduard Strauss II (1910 - 1969)**

Grandson of Eduard Strauss, nephew of Johann Strauss III. An eminent conductor who of course was an expert on the works

of the Strauss family. He travelled all over the world including 6 major tours with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra.

He was the first conductor of the Vienna Johannes Strauss Orchestra which he took on a tour of the USA in 1966.

As far as is known he did not compose anything. His son (also Eduard, born 1955, was Patron of the Strauss Society of Great Britain until 2014, and grandson Thomas, born 1990, is the current Patron of the Society.

## Did You Know.....



### .....The Story Behind The Blue Danube?

If you feel sorry for shop assistants forced from November onwards to listen to Christmas music, spare a thought for the citizens of Vienna. All year round, in restaurants, shops, and hotels, there is no escaping The Blue Danube waltz.

It is the most famous waltz ever written – actually not one waltz but a chain of five interlinked waltz themes. It is Austria’s second national anthem. It is the inescapable conclusion to each New Year’s Day concert in Vienna. But how many of us have ever heard Strauss’s original version?

In 1865, Johann Herbeck, choirmaster of the Vienna Men’s Choral Society, commissioned Strauss to write a choral work. Due to the composer’s other commitments the piece wasn’t even started. The following year, Austria was defeated by Prussia in the Seven Weeks’ War. Aggravated by post-war economic depression, Viennese morale was at a low and so Strauss was encouraged to revisit his commission and write a joyful waltz song to lift the country’s spirit.

Strauss recalled a poem by Karl Isidor Beck (1817-79). Each stanza ends with the line: ‘By the Danube, beautiful blue Danube’. It gave him the inspiration and the title for his new work – although the Danube could never be described as blue and, at the time the waltz was written, it did not flow through Vienna. To the waltz, the choral society’s “poet” Josef Weyl added humorous lyrics ridiculing the lost war, the bankrupt city and its politicians: “Wiener seid’s froh! Oho! Wieso?” (“Viennese be happy! Oho! But why?”).

The premiere of the Waltz For Choir at Vienna’s Dianabadsaal (Diana Bath Hall) took place on February 15, 1867. Considering its subsequent popularity, its reception was somewhat muted (apparently it received only one encore, which in Strauss’s terms equalled a flop). This may have been due to the fact that both the choir and the audience hated the words. But when, later that year, Strauss introduced the waltz in its orchestral garb to Paris at the World Exhibition, it created a sensation.

It’s said that Strauss’s publisher received so many orders for the piano score that he had to make 100 new copper plates so that he could print over a million copies. Twenty-three years later, Franz von Gernerth, a member of the Austrian Supreme Court, composed a more



dignified text for the melodies of the waltz: “Donau, so blau, so blau” (“Danube, so blue, so blue”).

Johann Strauss II made his American debut in Boston on June 17, 1872, conducting *The Blue Danube* for the World Peace Jubilee. For the occasion, Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore, an Irish bandmaster, assembled an orchestra of 2000 and a choir of 20,000.

*Acknowledgement: Classic FM*



### **Johann Strauss II    Operetta: Die Fledermaus**

*First performance: April 5, 1874, Theater an der Wien, Vienna.*

*Johann Strauss, Jr., conductor.*

Although the form may have initially gained popularity in 1850s Paris, operetta soon filled the seats of theatres throughout Europe. Austrian audiences were particularly enamoured with these quick-paced theatrical works by composers such as Offenbach and Suppé. The comic plots and infectious melodies of the genre were a natural fit for Johann Strauss, Jr., whose polkas and waltzes had been delighting Viennese audiences for years.

Strauss' most popular stagework, *Die Fledermaus (The Bat)*, is best characterized as a romp—a husband sentenced to prison stops by a party on his way to jail, finds his wife in the company of an overly-attentive companion, and wackiness ensues. The catchy, tuneful music mirrors the quick-paced action onstage, and it is paired with remarkably skilful orchestration (Brahms, on hearing the show for the first time, is said to have remarked, “*Now there is a master of the orchestra!*”). It is no coincidence that *Die Fledermaus* is the single most oft-performed operetta in the repertoire.

#### **Overture:**

The show's overture is in the grand tradition established by Rossini and other composers of light opera. Little attempt is made to fit the piece into any classical form; rather, the overture gives us a preview of the tunes that will be heard in the course of the operatta.

The overture starts with a three-note motif, heard in the Act III trio of Rosalinde, Eisenstein (her husband), and Alfred (her lover, who, mistaken for Eisenstein, has been put in jail). The motif is used throughout the overture, insistently telling the audience “Yes, it's me!” as Eisenstein and the others, near the end of the operetta, try to figure out what has happened. Following the overture's opening section, there is an Allegretto, the accompaniment of the Act III trio con moto. It's a light, questioning tune in simple meter, which is answered when the overture next moves into the accompaniment to the theme from the Act III finale, where all is explained. A bridge sounded by horns and flutes leads into rushing violins and the sweeping waltz that is the finale of Act II. The party guests dance to the melody that is equal to Strauss' Blue Danube. This is abruptly followed by the announcement of the next section, a flowing, minor tune that exaggerates Rosalinde's disappointment in Act I at not being able to attend the ball. What follows is the bouncy polka that represents the excitement that Adele's (Rosalinde's maid) and Eisenstein's invitations to the ball bring to them. Brief reprises of the themes from

the finales of Acts III and II are heard just before the overture makes its way, with another reference to the polka, to its grand and exciting end.



### Voices of Spring

Strauss dedicated the work to the pianist and composer Alfred Grünfeld. He originally entrusted the melody of his *Frühlingsstimmen* (Voices of Spring) waltz, Op. 410, not to the violin but to the voice, specifically that of **Bianca Bianchi**, a coloratura soprano. Bianca Bianchi was then a famous member of the Vienna Court Opera Theatre and Strauss was sufficiently inspired to compose a new work, a waltz for solo voice, for the acclaimed singer. Richard Genée (1823-1895), librettist of *Die Fledermaus*, provided the text and the piece was composed during work on *Eine Nacht in Venedig*. The waltz was not a great success at its premiere, but was more successful when performed on Strauss' tour of Russia in 1886. A piano arrangement by the composer contributed much to its success beyond Vienna.

The result was his world-renowned “*Frühlingsstimmen*” waltz which celebrated spring and remained one of the classical repertoire's most famous waltzes. The piece is sometimes used as an insertion aria in the act 2 ball scene of Strauss' operetta *Die Fledermaus*.

The waltz makes a grand entry in the key of B-flat major with loud chords preceded with the waltz's three beats to the bar ushering the first waltz's gentle and swirling melody. The second waltz section, in E-flat major invokes the joys of spring with the flute imitating birdsong and a pastoral scene. The plaintive and dramatic third section in A-flat major and later in C minor probably suggests spring showers whereas the fourth section that follows breaks out from the pensive mood with another cheerful melody in A-flat major. Without a coda, the familiar first waltz melody makes a grand entrance before its breathless finish, strong chords and the usual timpani drumroll and warm brass flourish.



Frederick Ashton created a ballet piece set to the *Frühlingsstimmen* waltz for The Royal Opera's 1977 production of Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*, where it replaced one of the score's original numbers in the second-act ball scene. The piece was renamed *Voices of Spring* and given its first performance independent from the operetta in a gala in Los Angeles the

following year.

A vocal version was performed also by “The Three Stooges” in their 1945 film “*Micro-phonies*” .

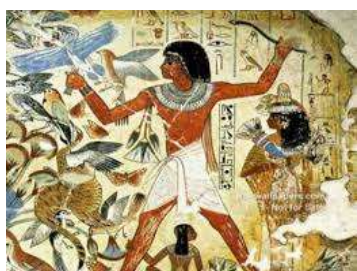


### Freikugel Polka



The title literally translates into “Free Shooters”, however Strauss preferred to call it “*Magic Bullets*” Polka. He certainly demonstrated a sense of humour in his music, particularly with the sonic mischief in works like the *Explosions-Polka* (1847), which contains several fireworks-like explosions. This work, “*Free-shooting Bullets*”, also exemplifies this type of musical humour. While it refrains from the actual gunfire sonics the title promises, the piece

calls on the tympani and bass drum to punctuate the festive music here with many thunderous blows. The work is pure fun, full of tomfoolery and colour, and quite light - even for light music. “Free-shooting Bullets” opens with a tympani stroke, which serves to free the other instruments from the starting gate at quite a lively pace. The main theme is busy in its sense of playful mayhem and colourful festivity. A second subject continues the fun, prodded by driving rhythms and the same mischievous character. The middle section also maintains much the same mood, but drives on with an almost manic sense toward the end. As it moves toward its conclusion, the music maintains a manic intensity.



### **Ägyptischer Marsch, (Egyptian March) Op. 335 (RV 335)**

This wonderfully energetic piece was written in 1869 to celebrate the completion of the Suez Canal, and was premiered in a summer concert by the composer's popular travelling orchestra in Pavlovsk, Russia, outside St. Petersburg, and then the location of Tsar Paul I's country residence. It was first played in Vienna in December of that year as a processional march for Anton Bittner's burlesque entitled: “Into Egypt”.

The piece opens quietly with low drums and a distant wind section playing an exotic minorish “Egyptian” introductory melody, with the lower strings tripping along scale-wise in response. On a sudden fast crescendo, three heavily accented minor chords begin the melody with the full orchestra featuring the brasses. The mood is that of an aggressive military band. The next section recasts the tune in the brighter parallel major scale with one “Arabic” alteration of the melody (a flattening of the sixth step). The mood changes to that of a spirited military parade on a sunny day. A chorus is then added singing wordlessly (on “la”s) and softly in a combination of the minor and major key melodies. The aggressive first theme then repeats with lower brass runs. This is followed by the introduction as the music slowly fades away into the distance with a repeated rhythmic figure.

### **Pizzicato Polka**



Strauss composed the polka with his brother Josef in 1869 for a trip to Imperial Russia. It was published in 1870. The polka was written for string orchestra and glockenspiel. It was hugely popular, especially in Italy, where it was included on every program Strauss played there. The piece consists of four melodies and the work is arranged in ternary form (A-B-A).

As the title suggests, the entirety of the piece is scored for plucked strings, although a glockenspiel appears for the first half of the central section. Possibly because of the limited instrumentation, Strauss seems to have attempted to provide as much contrast as possible in other ways, such as the rhythm and shape of melodies.

After a brief introduction, the first eight-measure tune falls into two sections and outlines chords with alternating eighth and sixteenth note rhythms. The second melody is quite different, with its falling scales, constant eighth note pulse and occasional rests.

A literal return of the first melody rounds out the A section. The central section features the glockenspiel in the first of its two melodies, which derives its identity more from colour than from melodic shape. Broken chords played on all instruments open the contrasting tune, the

second half of which consists of descending scales. Each melody of the B section is repeated. A full return of section A and a brief coda of descending scales closes the piece.

### Operetta: **Indigo und die vierzig Räuber** (Indigo and The Forty Thieves)



Long famous as a composer of dance music, in the mid-1860s Johann Strauss II made a completely fresh start: the triumphant success of Jacques Offenbach's stage works in Vienna, economic considerations, and last but not least the expectations of the public led him to try his hand at composing operettas.

His first attempts, for example: to set to music a libretto by Josef Braun, *Die lustigen Weiber von Wien* (The Merry Wives of Vienna), were dismal failures. Strauss had never learned how to set words to music and express their contents in music.

Maximilian Steiner, the artistic director of the Theater an der Wien in Vienna, recognised Strauss's problem and put him in touch with a collaborator in the person of the experienced theatre conductor Richard Genée.

In an interview with Curt von Celau of the *Deutsche Revue* journal in 1885, Genée recalled, 'When Steiner was director I was given the task of getting Johann Strauss to compose for the stage, and used my experience of the theatre to provide help and support for him when he composed his first operettas *Indigo and Fledermaus*'.

And so on 26 May 1870 the contract was signed with the management of the Theater an der Wien. Finally, on 10 February 1871, the first performance of Strauss's first operetta, *Indigo und die vierzig Räuber*, took place. Composed with a German libretto by Maximilian Steiner the operetta is based on the tale "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" from "The Book of One Thousand and One Nights".

### Overture

Even before Strauss had conducted the overture there was resounding applause. Before then, on New Year's Day 1871, the *Fremden-Blatt* newspaper reported that Strauss had played the overture at a concert in the apartments of Archduchess Sophie and the twelve-year-old Crown Prince Rudolf had commented favourably, 'Je suis très content'.

In the concert hall the overture was first heard in the 'Promenade Concert' given by Johann's youngest brother Eduard in the Golden Hall of the Musikverein on 19 February 1871, with Eduard conducting the Strauss Orchestra.

### Kaiserwalzer - Emperor Waltz Op. 437



Composed by Johann Strauss II in 1889, the waltz was originally titled *Hand in Hand* and was intended as a toast made in August of that year by Austrian emperor Franz Joseph I on the occasion of his visit to the German Kaiser Wilhelm II where it was symbolic as a 'toast of friendship' extended by Austria to Germany.

Strauss' publisher suggested the title *Kaiser-Walzer* since the title could allude to either monarch, and thus satisfy the vanity of both rulers. The waltz was first performed in Berlin on 21

*Emperor Wilhelm II and Franz*



October 1889. The original cover of the piano edition bore the illustration of the the Austrian Imperial Crown.

In the *Kaiser-Walzer*, Strauss is thinking as much in terms of the concert hall as the dance hall. It is not possible to waltz to the music of the coda, and the arrangement and patterns of repetition of the waltzes seem to be conceived to satisfy the listener as well as the dancer.

The duple-meter introduction to the *Kaiser-Walzer* is a mood painting conveying both the light, showy atmosphere of imperial Vienna and the martial air surrounding Kaiser Franz Joseph.

A solo cello introduces the first pair of waltzes, the two of which contrast in both tempo and mood. Instead calling for a repeat of each of the two waltzes separately, Strauss directs that the entire pair be played twice. More typically, the second waltz pair features internal repeats, the second of the pair, whose melody consist of a single, repeated pitch, is again at a faster tempo than the first. A trumpet fanfare introduces Waltz No. 3 and one of Strauss's lilting, sustained melodies, while the brass appear again with an angular melody for the second part of No. 3. The fourth waltz opens with a rising, syncopated line shared between the strings and winds. The first waltz of the pair moves imperceptibly into the second and its arching string melody. Although No. 4 features internal repeats, Strauss closes the pair by returning momentarily to the rising line of the first half before moving into a modulating return to Waltz No. 1. Strauss's desire to unify the entire piece becomes evident as he next moves to not a fifth waltz but a return to the entirety of the first in the original key. A fifth waltz does follow, but only the first of the pair is new, the second is a return of the second part of Waltz No. 3. Reminiscence is the theme of the coda, which revisits the introduction as the solo cello reappears, playing the melody of the first half of Waltz No. 1 while a brief reference to the second part of the same waltz sounds in the flute.



### **Operetta: Der Zigeunerbaron (The Gypsy Baron)**

The *Gypsy Baron* (1885) is the first Viennese operetta set in Hungary. It was born out of Strauss' visits to Budapest and his acquaintanceship with German-Hungarian writers Mór Jókai and Ignaz Schnitzer.

They began working on it in late 1883. Schnitzer, with input from Jókai, developed the libretto from Jókai's novel, *Saffi*. Early in 1885, Schnitzer threatened to give the libretto to Franz von Suppé or another composer since Strauss was unusually slow in composing the music. Strauss got the message.

The operetta finally premiered on 25 October 1885, the eve of Strauss' 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. The main characters are Hungarians and Gypsies and these influences are evident in the score, which combines Hungarian Czardas, Gypsy music, and Viennese waltz.

The story concerns Sandor Barinkay who, returning from Austria to his birth land of Hungary, finds his father's castle in ruins and the rest of the estate being used by gypsies and a pig-farmer. The gypsies proclaim him a baron. Saffi, daughter of the gypsy Czipra, helps Barinkay find treasure in the castle. Saffi is then revealed to be a princess; Barinkay, despite his new-found wealth and nobility, declines to marry her. He joins the Hungarian army, goes to war, later returning to marry Saffi.

### **Entrance March**

Act 3 takes place after the war. The victorious Hungarian troops are given an heroic welcome as they enter Vienna to Strauss' spirited and rhythmic entrance march: "Hurrah, we have taken

part in the battle in a distant land”. In the stage production the work is a choral piece, but such is its popularity that it is found in the repertoire of many bands and orchestras as a stand-alone work in march time.

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## Edward Strauss



### Doctrinen. Walzer (Doctrines. Waltz) Op.79

The 1872 Lawyers’ Ball was held in the halls of the Musikverein on 22 January. Organised to raise funds for the benevolent society of the students of law at Vienna University, it succeeded in making a substantial profit and the event lived up to its reputation as one of the most elegant ‘elite balls’ in the Austrian capital. Of the programme of music itself, the *Fremden-Blatt* observed: ‘Lively dancing took place to the sounds of the orchestra led by Eduard Strauss in person, and a waltz dedicated to the ball festivity by this Kapellmeister, *Doctrinen*, was very enthusiastically received and had to be repeated several times.’

*Doctrinen* is one of Eduard’s most important works, first performed less than a month before he succeeded his brother Johann to the prestigious title of Director of Music for the Imperial-Royal Court Balls. Notably, the composer’s grandson, Eduard Strauss II (1910–1969), recorded this waltz with the Polish Radio Orchestra in 1967.

### La Belle Helene – Quadrille Op.14



*Quadrille.*

A reliable barometer of a stage work’s success in the 19th century was the arrangement of its most popular melodies as a quadrille for dancing. *La Belle Hélène* (The Beautiful Helen) was a triumph for Jacques Offenbach to match that of *Orphée aux enfers* (Orpheus in the Underworld) in 1858. To be recognised in this fashion by the Strauss dynasty was high accolade indeed, and in this case it was the youngest member of the family, Eduard Strauss, who paid tribute to their Parisian competitor with his *Helenen*

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## Johann Strauss III

Eduard's eldest son, **Johann Strauss III**, became the last of the Strauss dynasty (dying in 1939) - not that you ever hear his music all that often. By all accounts, the lad got off to a disastrous start with one of his pieces going down so badly with the public that he was told by critics to use a pseudonym so as not to tarnish the family name. (Ouch!) Trying out his *Unter den Linden Walzer*, Op.30 and *Kronungs-Walzer*, Op.40 ('Coronation Waltz'), written for the coronation of England’s Edward VII, shows that he got over this crisis and went on to be a highly competent Strauss - if not a great Strauss.

### Krönungs-Walzer (Coronation Waltz) Op. 40



Johann Strauss III, made his first visit to Britain in 1902 when, together with his orchestra of around thirty-five players, he was engaged to play in London at festivities celebrating the coronation of King Edward VII, planned for 26<sup>th</sup> June.

Johann had brought with him a splendid coronation gift, a waltz dedicated to the King and Queen Alexandra, appropriately entitled *Krönungs-Walzer* (Coronation Waltz), which he

played for the first time on 21<sup>st</sup> June at a matinee concert at London's Empire Theatre. In the event, the King's illness postponed the coronation, and Strauss' previously scheduled commitments elsewhere made him unavailable for the reappointed Coronation Day, 9<sup>th</sup> August 1902. In 1903 Edward VII appointed Strauss to the Royal Victorian Order in recognition of his services to music.

### Under the Linden Tree Op. 30



Johann III, wrote to a friend on 23 March 1900: "Now I intend to write a waltz for Berlin and call it 'Unter den Linden', since curiously enough this title has not yet been used". Johann undertook a five-month tour of Germany and Holland in 1900, making his debut in Berlin on 26 May. It seems to have been at his "waltz" evening at the Neues Königliches Operntheater (Kroll's) on 2 June that he and his Viennese Orchestra gave the premiere of this waltz, extolling the beauty of Berlin's tree-lined main avenue. Viennese audiences first heard the work, with its haunting 4th waltz section, at Strauss's Grand Concert in the "Goldenes Kreuz" Hotel on 11 November 1900.

Many of the original trees have been cut down for various reasons - for example, a tunnel to serve the S-Bahn and for firewood used in the last years of World War II. The trees that exist today were replanted in the 1950s.



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### Josef Strauss      Feuerfest - Polka Française (Fireproof! French polka), Op. 269

**Strauss** appended the words "Polka française" to the title of this work, though one will not necessarily hear anything particularly French in this music. This work, though, is light throughout and makes little attempt to achieve expressive depth. It features a joyous, bouncy theme and belled sonorities that combine to produce one of this composer's most buoyant, festive works. Lasting around three minutes, this piece begins in a playful, almost gentle manner, but swells to larger proportions as the bells punctuate strong beats and Strauss' deft scoring dresses the music in colourful instrumentation.

Those bell strokes often hit with a measure of wit, as the composer occasionally has them strike a delightfully sour note. The last statement of the main theme is rollicking but outdone by the closing strokes on the bells and roaring gong. While this piece discloses no great subtleties, it will certainly offer strong appeal to those with an interest in light classical music.



*Feuerfest* was first played at a company party of Viennese entrepreneur Franz Wertheim on 13 March 1869, in the garden rooms of the Gartenbaugesellschaft on the Ringstrasse, which at the time was under construction. The entire staff of the company had gathered to celebrate the completion of the twenty-thousandth iron safe, a leading product which was sold throughout the Danube monarchy and was also highly prized abroad.

The advertisement underscored the most important benefit of the

Wertheim

safes: they were fireproof.

ly Wertheim

Reports on the celebration in the garden rooms mentioned with approval that the occasion was handled "most democratically". Directors and workers were said to have equal rights and the

elegant finery of the ladies of the aristocracy who were present was appreciated as much as the simple clothes of the clerks. “And when it came to dancing, all were equal.”

Josef Strauss, who was responsible for the concert and dance music at the Wertheim celebration on 13 March 1869, brought, as a dedication, a character-piece in the rhythm of a French polka that was enthusiastically received at the original performance. In this still-popular and often-performed work, the forge hammers of a by-gone era can still be heard in our day. The title of the dedication was obvious; it echoed the advertising slogan of the company: *Feuerfest!*

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## Johann Strauss 1



### **Eisenbahn Lust Walzer (Railway Joy Waltzes)**

Today’s commuters might find it hard to credit, but in the 19th century, composers were so inspired by trains, they wrote music in homage to the new mode of transport. While Johann Strauss I was excited for the faster travel times between concerts that trains could

provide, the public was not yet in love.

On November 13, 1837, the Kaiser-Ferdinands-Nordbahn was the first continental steam railway to begin trial operations on the route from Vienna to Deutsch-Wagram. Timetable traffic came just two months later. But big events are known to cast their shadows. Already on July 18, 1836, Johann Strauss (senior) had organized a summer festival in the “Zur goldenen Pear” restaurant in the then suburb of Vienna, Landstraße, under the title “Bunte aus der Zeit” (“Colourful from the Time”), during which he launched his railroad pleasure waltzes. In the introduction and coda of the work, occasionally also in the five waltzes, he had musically realized his idea of the driving noise of the new means of transport. For the occasion, the stage designer of the Leopoldstädter Theater, Michael Mayr, had made a decoration more than thirty meters wide for the festival, on which the vision of a railway journey was depicted. The new waltz collection was presented as a midnight interlude and was so well received that it had to be repeated four times.



**Radetzky March**, Op. 228, is a march dedicated to Field Marshal Joseph Radetzky von Radetz. First performed on 31 August 1848 in Vienna, it soon became quite popular among regimented marching soldiers. It has been remarked that its tone is more celebratory than martial; Strauss was commissioned to write the piece to commemorate Radetzky's victory at

*Field Marshal Radetzky, about 1850*