

**RICHARD STRAUSS LEADS  
CHICAGO ORCHESTRA CONCERT.**

That master musician of modern music, that wonderful combination of poet, painter, and composer, the man to whom pictures are audible and tones visible—Richard Strauss—appeared at the Auditorium yesterday afternoon, and for over two hours some 3,700 persons sat beneath the spell his great gifts weave and listened to the tonal tales they enable him to tell.

It may be that some who heard did not understand, and that many who listened did not fully comprehend. For fully to grasp all that this maker of musical pictures presents to us would mean that to us, too, the tones of an orchestra were but so many pigments, and that the color and forms drawn in them upon the canvas of the vibrant air were as clear, as distinct, and as definite to our aural vision as they are to his.

To most of us such hearing is denied—our ears are still too blind to be able to see all the dream pictures Richard Strauss' magical power would have us see through them. But while we may be thus blind, and while some of us in that blindness may even question the possibility of such tonal pictures existing—may, in short, doubt the possibility of music performing all the tasks he would have it perform—it was not difficult, while sitting yesterday afternoon in the presence of this mighty weaver of musical mysteries, to catch glimpses of the brilliantly colored pictures he was painting with tones, and to credit the possibility of music doing all he would have it do.

The question of "program" music probably will be ever discussed. So long as men hear tones instead of seeing them, music's defenders will deny the capability of their goddess to do all that painting can do. And so long as some men find in tone a certain visible and chromatic quality, just so long will these admirers of the descriptive in art maintain that an orchestral picture is just as clear, just as well defined as is one limned on canvas with material colors.

Of these latter doubly gifted, doubly sensed natures is Richard Strauss, and being so qualified he can but see the natural and rational in all he does. To many of us his processes seem strange, but of his sincerity and his full convictioned earnestness no one who was present at the Auditorium yesterday and who listened with spirit, unbiased by prejudice, could doubt.

The Auditorium was filled to the last available seat in the body of the great house. Several of the boxes were vacant, but the music lovers to whom the concerts are a pleasure rather than a "function" left no place vacant in their part of the auditorium. At 2:15 Mr. Thomas entered, and a welcome even more cordial than usual was accorded him. He led his "boys" through the intricacies of the Prelude to "Die Meistersinger," and they as well as their hearers being keyed up to festival pitch gave a performance of the splendid number such as has rarely been heard from them, and their record is a brilliant one. A double recall for Mr. Thomas, and then after a pause came Dr. Strauss, escorted by Mr. Thomas. A rousing fanfare from the whole orchestra and applause loud and long continued expressed to the celebrated conductor-composer Chicago's cordial welcome. He bowed repeatedly, and then raised his baton for the first measures of "Thus Spake Zarathustra."

Of Dr. Strauss' appearance and manner of conducting it is unnecessary to write. THE TRIBUNE readers were told something of these after the rehearsal on Wednesday. It may be mentioned, however, that in public Dr. Strauss is more quiet in manner than he was at rehearsal.

The orchestra was on its mettle, and a more superb technical presentment of the intensely difficult scores than it gave could not be desired. Every wish of the conductor was instantly responded to, and Dr. Strauss' pleasure in the work done by the men was unmistakable.

Interpretatively, the treatment of the works was not widely different from that to which we are accustomed when they are given under Mr. Thomas' baton. There was a deepening of color here and there, the raising into prominence of certain details of the score, and a giving of all with an exaltation and enthusiasm that made the performances inspiring and uplifting. Certain portions of the works which heretofore have been unclear in meaning took on clarity and beauty, but this may have been due not only to the remarkably finished and brilliant performance but also to the fact that the works were heard again—for each rehearing of a Strauss composition brings increase of understanding and fuller appreciation of its beauties.

After the "Zarathustra" Mme. Strauss appeared, escorted by both Mr. Thomas and Dr. Strauss. Mme. Strauss is one of the leaders of the dress reform movement in Germany, and her gown yesterday was in this style, an elaborate creation of creamy lace and silk, which was distinctly becoming to her. Her singing proved interesting and satisfactory from an interpretative viewpoint. The voice has lost its richness in the upper middle register and in the high tones, but it is of no inconsiderable beauty in the lower half, and it is used throughout with so much of discretion and understanding that it seems adequate for all that is undertaken. The seven songs heard yesterday were beautifully interpreted, and the exquisite accompaniments, played, as they were, in finest style by the orchestra, made the performance of them in high measure gratifying.

Tonight the same program will be repeated.

W. L. HUBBARD.