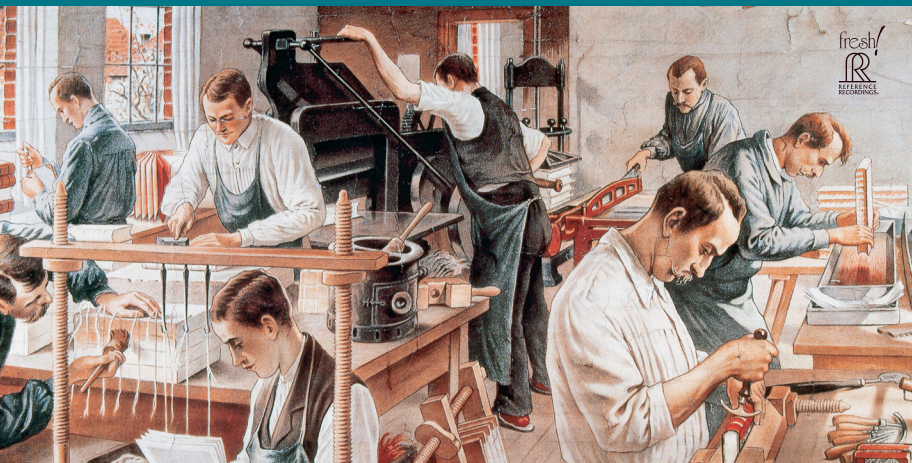


Richard Strauss

The Happy Workshop—1945

Serenade Op. 7–1881

CARNEGIE MELLON WIND ENSEMBLE GEORGE VOSBURGH, CONDUCTOR



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FOREWORD

This album consists of two works that I have studied and lived with for many years, and it is my pleasure to present them here in cooperation with Reference Recordings. The wind ensemble repertoire has always been very special to me. As a student at the Eastman School of Music, I played in the Eastman Wind Ensemble. During my time in the ensemble, we made several recordings and toured the Far East for the first time, under the direction of Donald Hunsberger. Thanks in part to Hunsberger's tutelage, I developed a deep and personal relationship with many staples of the wind ensemble repertoire.

When I was first invited to direct the Carnegie Mellon Wind Ensemble in 1996 as a guest conductor, I enjoyed the opportunity to introduce college students to works that have been so meaningful to me in this genre.

Since 2012, I've been privileged to continue exploring this repertoire as Director of the ensemble.

"Happy Workshop" has always been one of my favorites, not only of the wind ensemble repertoire, but of Strauss's extraordinary and varied body of works. I've always felt that it is underplayed and therefore underappreciated. It possesses all the hallmarks of Strauss's finest works—a unique spirit and character, brilliant orchestration, and wholly original timbres.

The pairing of "Happy Workshop" with the *Serenade* is a natural one: two works that refer to earlier musical traditions, one from late in the composer's life and one very early. It has been a pleasure to explore these two works in a recording setting, and to guide this group of talented young musicians in the learning process of performance.

—George Vosburgh



Richard Strauss was born in Munich in 1864. Music filled his childhood: his father, Franz Strauss, was principal horn at the Bavarian Court Opera, where he worked closely with Richard Wagner. Franz's musical tastes skewed conservative, and he had a famously turbulent relationship with Wagner, whose music he denounced openly despite playing the premieres of four major operas.

Richard later wrote of his father, "His musical trinity was Mozart (above all), Haydn, and Beethoven. To these were added Schubert, as song-writer, Weber, and, at some distance, Mendelssohn and Spohr. To him Beethoven's later works, from the *finale* of the Seventh Symphony onward, were no longer 'pure' music (one could begin to scent in them that Mephistophelian figure Richard Wagner)." The conservatism of young Strauss's musical education was further compounded by the influence of his teacher, Friedrich Wilhelm Meyer, who introduced

the budding composer to the principles of harmonic and formal theory, counterpoint, and instrumentation.

The *Serenade* Op. 7, which Strauss dedicated to Meyer, pays homage to the influence of the classical composers while foreshadowing the distinctive flavor of the composer's mature works. The *Serenade* consists of a single movement in sonata form, a nod to classical tradition. The composer's choice of instrumentation, a small ensemble of 13 winds, mimics Mozart's great *Serenade* K. 361, "Gran Partita." The Strauss *Serenade* opens with a simple, sweet melody in the oboe, supported by the bassoons and clarinets.

A second theme, introduced by a call-and-response between the horns and upper winds, is more spirited, moving forward and showcasing the richness of the 13-voice texture. Gradually, the texture builds to greater intensity. Turbulent transitional music leads to a climax which quickly relaxes into the recapitulation of the first theme, this time rendered as a glowing chorale in the horns.

Later in life, Strauss reflected critically on the *Serenade*. Its instrumentation, he claimed, was flawed—"double woodwinds are impossible against four horns." The work as a whole he described as "nothing more than

the respectable work of a music student." Yet, it offers a glimpse into the rich texture and pellucid wind writing that would characterize the composer's mature works. It similarly illuminates an affection and admiration for the classical composers, Mozart in particular, that would follow Strauss throughout his compositional career, reappearing openly at the end of his life with the *Symphony for Winds*, "Happy Workshop."



If the *Serenade* is a genuine expression of the innocence and inexperience of youth, the "Happy Workshop" is a reach to recapture the same, complicated by the circumstances that preceded its writing. In 1933, Strauss had assumed the role of president of Hitler's *Reichsmusikkammer*. His attitude toward the Nazi party and its ideology was unsteady: in some letters and writings, he praised Hitler and openly used anti-Jewish slurs; in other instances, he staunchly defended his Jewish colleagues and family members and attacked party officials.

By 1935, his relationship with the Nazi Party had soured, and he was dismissed from his position. He fended off attacks from Party allies, who claimed that he was

uncommitted to the regime, and from Jewish and émigré collaborators in the musical world, who denounced his role in the Party. Musically, he suffered criticisms that his style was retardataire, no longer relevant in a century dominated by the sharp, angular modernism of composers like Schoenberg and Stravinsky.

In 1943, as he recovered from a bout of influenza, Strauss wrote his first work for winds in nearly sixty years. The Sonatina No. 1, subtitled “From an Invalid’s Workshop,” shares the classical influence of the *Serenade* Op. 7, but the writing was now longer and more fully developed, filled with turbulent chromaticism and fragmentary melodies, interspersed with blossoming moments of beauty and calm.

A few months after Strauss completed the Sonatina No. 1, bombing by Allied Forces reduced the Munich Court Theater to rubble, triggering an existential despair for the aging composer. In a letter to his friend and biographer Willi Schuh, Strauss wrote, “The destruction of the Munich Court Theater, the holy site of the first *Tristan* and *Meistersinger* performances, where I heard *Freischütz* for the first time 73 years ago, where my good father sat in the orchestra for 49 years at the first horn

desk...is the greatest catastrophe of my life, for which there is no consolation and at my age no hope.”

The displacement and destruction of the war spurred a creative outpouring for the composer. In 1945, with an Allied victory in Europe on the horizon, he completed *Metamorphosen*, a transcendent work for 23 solo strings memorializing the destruction of the war. Six days after its completion, he wrote in a diary, “The most terrible period of human history is at an end, the twelve year reign of bestiality, ignorance and anti-culture under the greatest criminals, during which Germany’s 2,000 years of cultural evolution met its doom.”

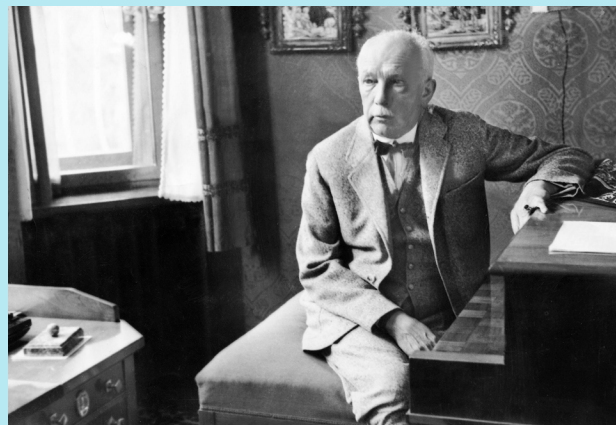
The late works of Strauss are shimmering and incandescent, a refutation of criticism that condemned his style to the past; the writer Alex Ross describes these late works as “so potent as to render the idea of relevance irrelevant.”

A few years later, Strauss completed the Sonatina No. 2, whose title was modified at publication to Symphony for Winds, this time bearing the moniker “Happy Workshop.” The work’s dedication reveals its inspiration: “to the spirit of the divine Mozart at the end of a grateful life.”

Like the *Serenade*, “Happy Workshop” relies on classical conventions. The first movement showcases the composer’s sweeping dramatic range, with a bundle of swirling melodies and motivic figures wrapped up in sonata form. The Andantino and Minuet offer graceful Mozartean melodies, elegantly presented by various pairs and trios of voices. The last movement begins darkly, before giving way to an energized sixteenth-note theme, which refers conspicuously to the final movement of Mozart’s “Gran Partita.”

A letter from Strauss to the conductor Klemens Krauss reveals Strauss’s attitude toward these two late works for winds. “It would greatly offend the Spirit of Music History,” he wrote, “to regard them as anything more than senile toys for my posthumous estate!” Yet, these two works are too substantial to write off as what Strauss dismissively termed “wrist exercises.”

Strauss was not religious; he did not believe in God, and he rejected the Wagnerian belief in the redemptive power of music. Yet, it is difficult not to imagine a spiritual dimension to his reverence for Mozart, as the dedication of the “Happy Workshop” implies. Coupled with the affectionate, youthful energy of the work, it



suggests a redemptive quality to the “Happy Workshop”—a reach into the past, into the pre-war, pre-modernist world for something purer.

Taken together, the *Serenade* Op. 7 and the “Happy Workshop” form the bookends to a long and diverse body of work, marked by innovative chromaticism and complexity, but tethered at either end to the classical tradition.

—Amanda Vosburgh

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS





Conductor George Vosburgh has enjoyed a long and multi-faceted international career as a soloist, orchestral musician, teacher, and conductor. He holds a Grammy for his 1985 Reference Recording of *L'Histoire du Soldat* with Chicago Pro Musica, and is a laureate of the ARD Music Competition in Munich. From 1992–2017, he held the Martha Brooks Robinson Principal Trumpet Chair in the Pittsburgh Symphony. He has taught at Carnegie Mellon University since 1992 and has been Director of the Carnegie Mellon Wind Ensemble since 2011.

Vosburgh began his orchestral career at age nineteen as third trumpet and assistant principal of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of David Zinman. In 1979, he joined the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Sir Georg Solti as the youngest member of the orchestra's celebrated brass section. He was named Principal Trumpet of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra by Lorin Maazel in 1992. In 2003, he was invited to become



Principal Trumpet of the World Orchestra for Peace under the direction of Valery Gergiev. Vosburgh has appeared as soloist with orchestras including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the Seattle Symphony, the Bavarian Radio Symphony, the Calgary Philharmonic, the Ravinia Festival Orchestra, and the Eastman Wind Ensemble. He has premiered works by André Previn, Rodion Shchedrin, Ralph Shapey, and Shulamit Ran. In solo and chamber music settings he has collaborated with such artists as Pinchas Zukerman, Yefim Bronfman, and Chen Reiss.

An experienced and committed educator, Vosburgh has given masterclasses at universities and conservatories across Europe, Asia, and the United States. Recent masterclass appearances include the Yale School of Music, Northwestern University, the University of Michigan, U.C.L.A., and the Tanglewood Festival. He teaches private lessons, classes on repertoire and pedagogy, and is Director of Wind Ensemble Studies at Carnegie Mellon University. Recent work with the Carnegie Mellon Wind Ensemble includes recordings of works by Mozart as well as a CD of works by Leonardo Balada for the Naxos label.

As a conductor, Vosburgh has appeared with the American Conservatory of Music Orchestra, the Duquesne University Orchestra, the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony, the Rolandsek Festival Chamber Orchestra, and the Gran Canaria Philharmonic.

CARNEGIE MELLON WIND ENSEMBLE



The Carnegie Mellon Wind Ensemble traces its roots to the Carnegie Tech Kiltie Band, founded in 1908. Over the years, the Kiltie Band grew and enjoyed a long and distinguished history as a concert band. For decades, it was the preeminent performing ensemble at the University, appearing regularly in concert at Carnegie Hall in New York City. Among the band's distinguished directors were William Schaeffer, Richard Strange, and Philip Catelinet.

Following the retirement of Catelinet in 1976, Leonard Geissel was hired as director and reorganized the concert band into the Carnegie Mellon Wind Ensemble, positioning it as a major ensemble for the School of Music's woodwind, brass, and percussion students.

After Geissel's departure from CMU in the late 1980s, the ensemble had a series of directors, including Eduardo Alonso Crespo, Keith Lockhart (now Music Director of the Boston Pops) and Jon Mitchell. Denis Colwell, former

music director of the River City Brass Band, directed the ensemble from 1993 to 2011. Under Colwell's direction the ensemble recorded works by Nancy Galbraith, Leonardo Balada and Efrain Amaya, as well as various pieces for SmartMusic education software. The ensemble also frequently collaborated with the Carnegie Mellon Concert Choirs and the Bach Choir of Pittsburgh.

Upon Colwell's promotion to Head of the School of Music in 2011, George Vosburgh and Thomas Thompson became co-Music Directors, along with Associate Director Stephen Story. Accomplishments of these directors included various recording projects, the establishment of an annual concerto competition, and an ongoing collaboration with the Carnegie Mellon School of Design for concert posters and programs. In 2019, George Vosburgh was named Music Director and Director of Wind Ensemble Studies.

In the Carnegie Mellon Wind Ensemble, single players perform each instrumental part, emulating an orchestral wind section. This style of playing in a large ensemble allows for the tonal colors found in a symphony orchestra, as well as the opportunity for clear and focused intonation not always found in the

concert band. The Carnegie Mellon Wind Ensemble utilizes flexible instrumentation, allowing it to perform a large variety of repertoire. Over the years, the ensemble has played the original wind works of Beethoven, Berlioz, Wagner, Richard Strauss, Stravinsky, and countless contemporary composers.

Unusual and underperformed repertoire has been a hallmark of the ensemble's programming, and recent concerts have included off-stage music from Verdi operas in conjunction with the CMU Opera Workshop, as well as original music from various film scores which used exclusively winds, brass, and percussion. Members of the CMU faculty regularly appear as soloists with the ensemble.

CARNEGIE MELLON WIND ENSEMBLE

George Vosburgh, Conductor

RICHARD STRAUSS

Symphony for Winds in E-flat Major, Op. Posthumous,
“Fröhliche Werkstatt” (“Happy Workshop”)

FLUTE

Edna Jeon
Jillian Coscio

BASSOON

Grace Houde
Casey Ferguson

OBOE

Natalie Beckenbaugh
Evan Tegley

CONTRABASSOON

Elizabeth Devonshire

CLARINET

Tony Mai – C Clarinet
Ricky Smith – B flat Clarinet
Joseph Mansfield – B flat Clarinet
Jiayin Xie – Bass Horn
Andrew Muller – Bass Clarinet

HORN

Brent Patteson
Austin Sposato
Frank Carrubba
Cooper Johnson
Samantha Slockbower

RICHARD STRAUSS

Serenade for Winds in E-flat Major, Op. 7

FLUTE

Jillian Coscio
Edna Jeon

BASSOON

Casey Ferguson
Grace Houde

OBOE

Evan Tegley
Natalie Beckenbaugh

CONTRABASSOON

Elizabeth Devonshire

CLARINET

Joseph Mansfield
Zackary Neville

HORN

Frank Carrubba
Samantha Slockbower
Austin Sposato
Cooper Johnson

MUSIC PRODUCER

George Vosburgh

ASSOCIATE MUSIC PRODUCER

Stephen Story

MASTERING ENGINEERS

Sean Royce Martin
Keith O. Johnson

RECORDING ENGINEER

Riccardo Schulz

ASSISTANT ENGINEER

Andrew Dewey

EDITING AND MIXING

Riccardo Schulz

PHOTOGRAPHY

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GRAPHIC DESIGN

Kate Apostolou

PROGRAM NOTES

Amanda Vosburgh

RECORDING LOCATION

Kresge Theatre,
Carnegie Mellon University,
Pittsburgh, PA

MIXING AND EDITING

Vlahakis Recording Studio,
Carnegie Mellon University,
Pittsburgh, PA