

# Waltzing into Summer

Johann Strauss, Jr. / October 25, 1825 – June 03, 1899

## KAISER-WALZER (ARR. CARLO MARTELLI)

The Waltz originated in the Alpine region of Austria and slowly seeped into the suburbs of Vienna. Although it seems today like an innocent dance form, the Waltz was met in some circles as obscene, a threat to contemporary morals. It shocked polite society, the older generation, and religious leaders who called it “vulgar and sinful”. When it migrated to England, the Press welcomed it in July of 1816 with unbridled hostility. After the Waltz was featured in a ball sponsored by the future King George IV, an editorial in the Times of London read, “We remarked with pain that the indecent foreign dance called the Waltz was introduced (we believe for the first time) at the English court on Friday last ... it is quite sufficient to cast one’s eyes on the voluptuous intertwining of the limbs and close compressure on the bodies in their dance, to see that it is indeed far removed from the modest reserve which has hitherto been considered distinctive of English females. So long as this obscene display was confined to prostitutes and adulteresses, we did not think it deserving of notice; but now that it is attempted to be forced on the respectable classes of society by the civil examples of their superiors, we feel it a duty to warn every parent against exposing his daughter to so fatal a contagion.” (Does this sound like the 50s condemnation of rock and roll?)

In any event, the waltz caught fire, and one of the first to take advantage of the energy was Johann Strauss I, who quickly became the first “Waltz King”. Strauss lived the dissolute life about which his critics fretted. He ditched his wife and family to move in with his mistress, squandered his vast income, and abandoned his son after telling him he had no talent and should become a banker. Instead, Junior started his own orchestra, soon eclipsing his father’s fame. Junior’s *Blue Danube* remains the most popular waltz of all time. Richard Wagner called Johann Strauss II “the most musical man in Europe.” Brahms was an admirer.

Strauss II, now known as the rightful “Waltz King”, composed the *Kaiser Waltz* to celebrate the visit of the Austria Emperor Franz Josef to the German Kaiser Wilhelm II. It begins fittingly not with a Waltz, but with a march-like stately processional. A cello solo interrupts the parade, and the dance begins.

Carlo Martelli is a Brit born in 1935 who in the 1960s turned to make a living from orchestral compositions to film music. He also had a special talent for arranging large-scale pieces for string quartet. His pitch on the *Kaiser Waltz* is perfect. Dance away!

---

Richard Strauss / June 11, 1864 – September 08, 1949

## TILL EULENSPIEGEL, EINMAL ANDERS! (ARR. FRANZ HASENÖHRL)

In the middle of the 19th century, Franz Liszt invented the “symphonic poem”, a one-movement composition illustrating the content of a literary work, a painting, a landscape, or another non-musical source. At the end of the century, Richard Strauss brought the form to its zenith with “tone poems” *Don Juan*, *Death and Transfiguration*, *Don Quixote*, and *Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks*. Till Eulenspiegel? In German folklore, Till was a legendary rogue-prankster, an insubordinate youngster known for poking fun at the high and mighty. Some might call him a budding gangster who delighted in exposing hypocrisy and folly. Strauss set the legend to music for a late-Romantic supersized orchestra, and it became very popular. In 1954, the Austrian Franz Hasenöhr (whose last name means “little rabbit ears”) reduced Strauss’s 17 minute 80 instrument lush behemoth to what Hasenöhr calls an eight minute “frolic” for five instruments: violin, clarinet, bassoon, double bass, with the horn delivering Till’s theme at the outset and

# Waltzing into Summer

---

the violin playing the part of the trickster. Near the end, the long arm of the law catches up with Till, and the bass vigorously sounds his demise. But do not despair, Till rises again to live (maybe only as a legend) another day. This piece is a blast. Hats off to Little Rabbit Ears! Whoops. Almost forgot “Einmal Anders” means “this time a bit differently”.

WRITTEN BY THE HONORABLE STEPHEN S. TROTT