

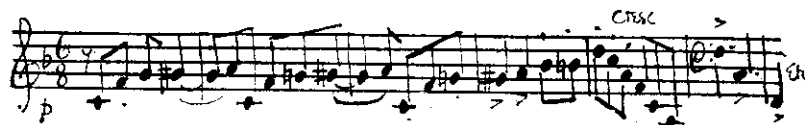
KNOW YOUR CLASSICS

THIS series of articles, written for "The Listener" by BESSIE POLLARD, is designed to help the student and the interested listener towards a more complete appreciation of good music. Each article deals in outline with one accepted masterpiece and illustrates its main themes.

(6) Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks, Op. 28 (Richard Strauss)

RICHARD STRAUSS'S tone-poem *Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*, first performed in 1895, is based on a famous folk tale about a merry rogue who went through life whistling casually as he executed one practical joke after another. Although Strauss makes him ultimately die at the gallows, actually the real Till is said to have died of the Black Death at Lubeck in 1350.

Strauss adopts the Rondo form for his tone-poem, and he employs a large orchestra, with a particularly full wood-wind section. The work begins with a prologue in subdued colouring, suggesting the "once upon a time" atmosphere of a fairy tale, then the horn announces the first theme of the main subject—



Following a climax succeeded by a pause we hear Till's motif (clarinet), then Till jumps on his horse and gallops off through a crowd of market women, upsetting their wares in all directions. Next he dons "seven-league boots" (trombone) and is away, searching for new adventures—



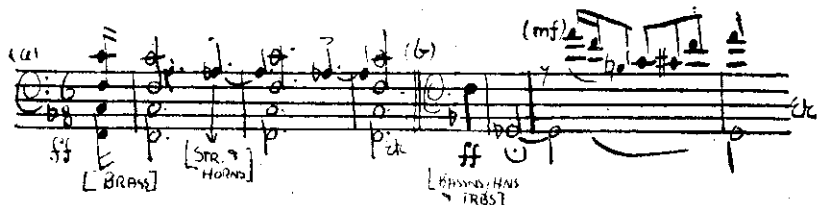
Till now disguises himself as a priest, and preaches to the faithful—



Next we find him playing cavalier to the girls, who rebuff him, and he makes off, vowing revenge. The next episode brings him into contact with some learned professors (lower wood-winds) and Till mocks them with a vulgar little street song (violin and clarinet)—



A formidable side-drum roll, and Till is brought before the judge (brass), followed by strings and horns), who condemns him to hang for his misdeeds; he whistles and jokes defiantly as he ascends the ladder and he is hanged (bassoons, horns, and trombones)—



The music of the short epilogue is retrospective and plaintive, based upon Till's theme with all the mischief taken out of it, remembering him with tenderness; it rounds out the tale by reminding the listener that "once upon a time, there was a rogue named Till."

Richard Strauss's tone-poem "*Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*" will be heard from Station 1YX at 9.36 p.m. on Saturday, August 21.



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