

= Johann Strauss II =

Johann Strauss II (October 25 , 1825 ? June 3 , 1899) , also known as Johann Strauss Jr . , the Younger , the Son (German : Sohn) , Johann Baptist Strauss , was an Austrian composer of light music , particularly dance music and operettas . He composed over 500 waltzes , polkas , quadrilles , and other types of dance music , as well as several operettas and a ballet . In his lifetime , he was known as " The Waltz King " , and was largely then responsible for the popularity of the waltz in Vienna during the 19th century .

Strauss had two younger brothers , Josef and Eduard Strauss , who became composers of light music as well , although they were never as well known as their elder brother . Some of Johann Strauss ' most famous works include " The Blue Danube " , " Kaiser @-@ Walzer " , " Tales from the Vienna Woods " , and the " Tritsch @-@ Tratsch @-@ Polka " . Among his operettas , Die Fledermaus and Der Zigeunerbaron are the best known .

= = Early life = =

Strauss was born in St Ulrich near Vienna (now a part of Neubau) , Austria , on October 25 , 1825 , to the composer Johann Strauss I. His paternal great @-@ grandfather was a Hungarian Jew ? a fact which the Nazis , who lionised Strauss 's music as " so German " , later tried to conceal . His father did not want him to become a musician but rather a banker . Nevertheless , Strauss Junior studied the violin secretly as a child with the first violinist of his father 's orchestra , Franz Amon . When his father discovered his son secretly practising on a violin one day , he gave him a severe whipping , saying that he was going to beat the music out of the boy . It seems that rather than trying to avoid a Strauss rivalry , the elder Strauss only wanted his son to escape the rigours of a musician 's life . It was only when the father abandoned his family for a mistress , Emilie Trampusch , that the son was able to concentrate fully on a career as a composer with the support of his mother .

Strauss studied counterpoint and harmony with theorist Professor Joachim Hoffmann , who owned a private music school . His talents were also recognized by composer Joseph Drechsler , who taught him exercises in harmony . It was during that time that he composed his only sacred work , the graduale Tu qui regis totum orbem (1844) . His other violin teacher , Anton Kollmann , who was the ballet répétiteur of the Vienna Court Opera , also wrote excellent testimonials for him . Armed with these , he approached the Viennese authorities to apply for a license to perform . He initially formed his small orchestra where he recruited his members at the Zur Stadt Belgrad tavern , where musicians seeking work could be hired easily .

= = Debut as a composer = =

Johann Strauss I 's influence over the local entertainment establishments meant that many of them were wary of offering the younger Strauss a contract for fear of angering the father . Strauss Jr. was able to persuade the Dommayer 's Casino in Hietzing , a suburb of Vienna , to allow him to perform . The elder Strauss , in anger at his son 's disobedience , and at that of the proprietor , refused to ever play at the Dommayer 's Casino again , which had been the site of many of his earlier triumphs .

Strauss made his debut at Dommayer 's in October 1844 , where he performed some of his first works , such as the waltzes " Sinngedichte " , Op. 1 and " Gunstwerber " , Op. 4 and the polka " Herzenslust " , Op. 3 . Critics and the press were unanimous in their praise for Strauss 's music . A critic for Der Wanderer commented that " Strauss 's name will be worthily continued in his son ; children and children 's children can look forward to the future , and three @-@ quarter time will find a strong footing in him . "

Despite the initial fanfare , Strauss found his early years as a composer difficult , but he soon won over audiences after accepting commissions to perform away from home . The first major appointment for the young composer was his award of the honorary position of " Kapellmeister of

the 2nd Vienna Citizen 's Regiment " , which had been left vacant following Joseph Lanner 's death two years before .

Vienna was wracked by the revolutions of 1848 in the Austrian Empire and the intense rivalry between father and son became much more apparent . Johann Jr. decided to side with the revolutionaries . It was a decision that was professionally disadvantageous , as the Austrian royalty twice denied him the much coveted ' KK Hofballmusikdirektor ' position , which was first designated especially for Johann I in recognition of his musical contributions . Further , the younger Strauss was also arrested by the Viennese authorities for publicly playing " La Marseillaise " , but was later acquitted . The elder Strauss remained loyal to the monarchy , and composed his " Radetzky March " , Op. 228 (dedicated to the Habsburg field marshal Joseph Radetzky von Radetz) , which would become one of his best @-@ known compositions .

When the elder Strauss died from scarlet fever in Vienna in 1849 , the younger Strauss merged both their orchestras and engaged in further tours . Later , he also composed a number of patriotic marches dedicated to the Habsburg Emperor Franz Josef I , such as the " Kaiser Franz @-@ Josef Marsch " Op. 67 and the " Kaiser Franz Josef Rettungs Jubel @-@ Marsch " Op. 126 , probably to ingratiate himself in the eyes of the new monarch , who ascended to the Austrian throne after the 1848 revolution .

= = Career advancements = =

Strauss Jr. eventually surpassed his father 's fame , and became one of the most popular waltz composers of the era , extensively touring Austria @-@ Hungary , Poland , and Germany with his orchestra . He applied for the KK Hofballmusikdirektor Music Director of the Royal Court Balls position , which he eventually attained in 1863 , after being denied several times before for his frequent brushes with the local authorities .

In 1853 , due to constant mental and physical demands , Strauss suffered a nervous breakdown . He took a seven @-@ week vacation in the countryside in the summer of that year , on the advice of doctors . Johann 's younger brother Josef was persuaded by his family to abandon his career as an engineer and take command of Johann 's orchestra in the interim .

In 1855 , Strauss accepted commissions from the management of the Tsarskoye @-@ Selo Railway Company of Saint Petersburg to play in Russia for the Vauxhall Pavilion at Pavlovsk in 1856 . He would return to perform in Russia every year until 1865 .

Later , in the 1870s , Strauss and his orchestra toured the United States , where he took part in the Boston Festival at the invitation of bandmaster Patrick Gilmore and was the lead conductor in a " Monster Concert " of over 1000 performers (see World 's Peace Jubilee and International Musical Festival) , performing his " Blue Danube " waltz , amongst other pieces , to great acclaim .

= = Marriages = =

Strauss married the singer Henrietta Treffz in 1862 , and they remained together until her death in 1878 . Six weeks after her death , Strauss married the actress Angelika Dittrich . Dittrich was not a fervent supporter of his music , and their differences in status and opinion , and especially her indiscretion , led him to seek a divorce .

Strauss was not granted a divorce by the Roman Catholic Church , and therefore changed religion and nationality , and became a citizen of Saxe @-@ Coburg @-@ Gotha in January 1887 . Strauss sought solace in his third wife Adele Deutsch , whom he married in August 1887 . She encouraged his creative talent to flow once more in his later years , resulting in many famous compositions , such as the operettas Der Zigeunerbaron and Waldmeister , and the waltzes " Kaiser @-@ Walzer " Op. 437 , " Kaiser Jubiläum " Op. 434 , and " Klug Gretelein " Op. 462 .

= = Musical rivals and admirers = =

Although Strauss was the most sought @-@ after composer of dance music in the latter half of the

19th century , stiff competition was present in the form of Karl Michael Ziehrer and Émile Waldteufel ; the latter held a commanding position in Paris . Phillip Fahrbach also denied the younger Strauss the commanding position of the KK Hofballmusikdirektor when the latter first applied for the post . The German operetta composer Jacques Offenbach , who made his name in Paris , also posed a challenge to Strauss in the operetta field .

Strauss was admired by other prominent composers : Richard Wagner once admitted that he liked the waltz " Wein , Weib und Gesang " Op. 333 . Richard Strauss (unrelated to the Strauss family) , when writing his Rosenkavalier waltzes , said in reference to Johann Strauss , " How could I forget the laughing genius of Vienna ? "

Johannes Brahms was a personal friend of Strauss ; the latter dedicated his waltz " Seid umschlungen , Millionen ! " (" Be Embraced , You Millions ! ") , Op. 443 , to him . A story is told in biographies of both men that Strauss 's wife Adele approached Brahms with a customary request that he autograph her fan . It was usual for the composer to inscribe a few measures of his best @-@ known music , and then sign his name . Brahms , however , inscribed a few measures from the " Blue Danube " , and then wrote beneath it : " Unfortunately , NOT by Johannes Brahms . "

= = Stage works = =

The most famous of Strauss ' operettas are Die Fledermaus , Eine Nacht in Venedig , and Der Zigeunerbaron . There are many dance pieces drawn from themes of his operettas , such as " Cagliostro @-@ Walzer " Op. 370 (from Cagliostro in Wien) , " O Schöner Mai " Walzer Op. 375 (from Prinz Methusalem) , " Rosen aus dem Süden " Walzer Op. 388 (from Das Spitzentuch der Königin) , and " Kuss @-@ Walzer " op . 400 (from Der lustige Krieg) , that have survived obscurity and become well @-@ known . Strauss also wrote an opera , Ritter Pázmán , and was in the middle of composing a ballet , Aschenbrödel , when he died in 1899 .

= = Death and legacy = =

Strauss was diagnosed with Pleura @-@ pneumonia , and on June 3 , 1899 he died in Vienna , at the age of 73 . He was buried in the Zentralfriedhof . At the time of his death , he was still composing his ballet Aschenbrödel .

As a result of the efforts by Clemens Krauss who performed a special all @-@ Strauss programme in 1929 with the Vienna Philharmonic , Strauss 's music is now regularly performed at the annual Vienna New Year 's Concert . Distinguished Strauss interpreters include Willi Boskovsky , who carried on the Vorgeiger tradition of conducting with violin in hand , as was the Strauss family custom , as well as Herbert von Karajan , Carlos Kleiber , Lorin Maazel , Zubin Mehta and Riccardo Muti . In addition , the Wiener Johann Strauss Orchester , which was formed in 1966 , pays tribute to the touring orchestras which once made the Strauss family so famous . In 1987 Dutch violinist and conductor André Rieu also created a Johann Strauss Orchestra .

Most of the Strauss works that are performed today may once have existed in a slightly different form , as Eduard Strauss destroyed much of the original Strauss orchestral archives in a furnace factory in Vienna 's Mariahilf district in 1907 . Eduard , then the only surviving brother of the three , took this drastic precaution after agreeing to a pact between himself and brother Josef that whoever outlived the other was to destroy their works . The measure was intended to prevent the Strauss family 's works from being claimed by another composer . This may also have been fueled by Strauss 's rivalry with another of Vienna 's popular waltz and march composers , Karl Michael Ziehrer .

Two museums in Vienna are dedicated to Johann Strauss II . His residence in the Praterstrasse where he lived in the 1860s is now part of the Vienna Museum . The Strauss Museum is about the whole family with a focus on Johann Strauss II .

= = Portrayals in the media = =

The lives of the Strauss dynasty members and their world @-@ renowned craft of composing Viennese waltzes are also briefly documented in several television adaptations , such as The Strauss Family (1972) , The Strauss Dynasty (1991) and Strauss , the King of 3 / 4 Time (1995) . Many other films used his works and melodies , and several films have been based upon the life of the musician , the most famous of which is called The Great Waltz (1938) , redone in 1972 .

Alfred Hitchcock made a low @-@ budget biographical film of Strauss in 1933 called Waltzes from Vienna . After a trip to Vienna , Walt Disney was inspired to create four feature films . One of those was The Waltz King , a loosely adapted biopic of Johann Strauss , which aired as part of the Wonderful World of Disney in the U.S. in 1963 . In Mikhail Bulgakov 's 1940 (published 1967) novel , The Master and Margarita , Johann Strauss conducts the orchestra during Satan 's Great Ball at the invitation of Behemoth .

A Corny Concerto (1943) , a Warner Bros cartoon , directed by Bob Clampett with animation by Robert McKimson , features music that was composed by Johann Strauss , and is a parody of Walt Disney 's 1940 Fantasia . The cartoon is narrated by Elmer Fudd , parodying Deems Taylor 's appearance in Fantasia .

The 1950 animated short entitled " Tom and Jerry in the Hollywood Bowl " from the series " Tom and Jerry " makes use of Johann Strauss II 's Overture of Die Fledermaus .

Another 1953 animated short " Johann Mouse " from the series Tom and Jerry features a mouse mesmerised by the playing of several Strauss waltzes by Johann Strauss himself , and later , by Tom .

The 1968 film 2001 : A Space Odyssey features " The Blue Danube " .

= = Works = =