Strauss - Also Sprach Zarathustra; Don Juan; Four Last Songs etc. (Karajan) [2003]

CD I: Also sprach Zarathustra; Don Juan; Four Last Songs Also sprach Zarathustra, Op.30 *1 Prelude (Sonnenaufgang) [1:50] 2 Von den Hinterweltlern [3:29] 3 Von der großen Sehnsucht [2:07] 4 Von den Freuden und Leidenschaften [1:59] 5 Das Grablied [2:49] 6 Von der Wissenschaft [4:32] 7 Der Genesende [5:15] 8 Das Tanzlied - Das Nachtlied [8:00]*
Michel Schwalbé – violin Berliner Philharmoniker Herbert von Karajan – conductor
9 Das Nachtwandlerlied [5:05] 10 Don Juan, Op.20 [18:03]
Berliner Philharmoniker, Herbert von Karajan Vier letzte Lieder
11- 1. Frühling [3:16] 12- 2. September [3:56] 13- 3. Beim Schlafengehen [5:24] 14- 4. Im Abendrot [7:05]
Anna Tomowa-Sintow - soprano Berliner Philharmoniker, Herbert von Karajan CD II: Alpensinfonie; Till Eulenspiegel; Dance of the Seven Veils Alpensymphonie, Op.64
1 Nacht [3:05] 2 Sonnenaufgang [1:29] 3 Der Anstieg [2:18] 4 Eintritt in den Wald [2:57] 5 Wanderung neben dem Bache [2:39] 6 Am Wasserfall [0:17] 7 Erscheinung [0:51] 8 Auf blumige Wiesen [0:56] 9 Auf der Alm [2:06] 10 Durch Dickicht und Gestrüpp auf Irrwegen [1:34] 11 Auf dem Gletscher [1:17] 12 Gefahrvolle Augenblicke [1:28] 13 Auf dem Gipfel [4:31] 14 Vision [3:40] 15 Nebel steigen auf [0:18] 16 Die Sonne verdüstert sich allmählich [0:49] 17 Elegie [2:18] 18 Stille vor dem Sturm [3:02] 19 Gewitter und Sturm, Abstieg [3:58] 20 Sonnenuntergang [2:57] 21 Ausklang [6:02] 22 Nacht [2:45]
Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche), Op. 28
23 Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks ([15:30]
Salome, Op.54, Scene 4
24 Salome's Dance of the Seven Veils [10:09]
Berliner Philharmoniker, Herbert von Karajan

This recoupling of Strauss masterpieces is probaby Herbert von Karajan's greatest existing CD set of Richard Strauss, for whose music he was an unquestioned master. This set is headlined by Karjan's remarkable 1974 performance of "Also Sprach Zarathustra" and his top of the line digital recording of "Eine Alpensinfonie" from 1981. It includes a number of popular Strauss tone poems and Karajan's elegant collaboration with Anna Tomowa-Sintow of the Four Last Songs.

The remastering on this set is somewhat uneven. "Also Sprach Zarathustra" sounds about the same here as it did on the DG Strauss Panorama two-CD set where it last appeared. The Alpine Symphony is the 21-track version from the Karajan Gold CD and is a major improvement over the earlier single track and 11 track versions DG distributed. The performance in this set sounded wonderful on my home stereo.

I paid an Amazon.com vendor about $9 for this set new, making it an outstanding bargain box of most of Karajan's best Strauss recordings. His EMI "Ein Heldenleben" is not included, of course. Still, this set is a major improvement of the DG Strauss Panorama that included Karajan's 1959 recording of "Ein Heldenleben".

With the addition of Karajan's recordings of "Don Juan", "Til Eulenspiegel" and Salome's "Dance of the Seven Veils", this now becomes the preferred collection of Strauss orchestral music by this conductor. --- Larry VanDeSande, amazon.com

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