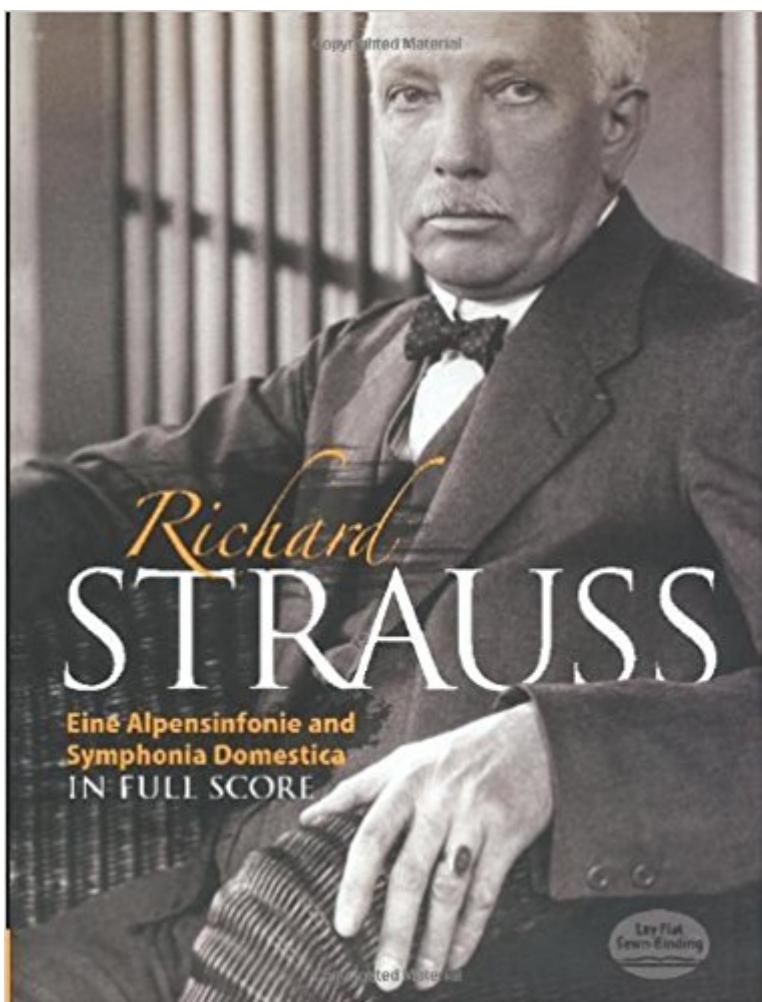


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Eine Alpensinfonie And Symphonia Domestica In Full Score (Dover Music Scores)



Synopsis

Two symphonic masterworks employing vast orchestras, one powerfully portraying a day in the mountains, the other Strauss's day-to-day life at home with his wife, Pauline. Eine Alpensinfonie (1911-15) is nature painting on a grand scale, a magnificent showcase for Strauss's gifts for sumptuous orchestration. The Symphonia Domestica (1902-3), despite its broad instrumentation, has more of the intimate feel of a chamber work. The full orchestral scores of both are reprinted here in one inexpensive volume from authoritative German editions.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A leading composer of the late Romantic and early modern eras, Richard Strauss (1864-1949) is known for his operas (Der Rosenkavalier and Salome), Lieder, tone poems, and orchestral works.

If the score is of similar material to previous Dover publications, unfortunately the seam becomes brittle within a few years and the pages scatter. The printing is very clear, even with everything Strauss could include in the instrumentation, except the kitchen sink.

This reproduction of the original Handpartitur edition is relatively nice. The spacing is very close sometimes, but that is due mainly to the rich, full orchestration. It is well-engraved, however, and I look forward to my first full listen-through with the full score.

Dover scores another fantastic bargain with this coupling of two of Richard Strauss's orchestral works, *Eine Alpensinfonie* and *Symphonia Domestica*. Why these works are paired is a mystery--*Symphonia Domestica*'s natural companion piece is *Ein Heldenleben*, but Dover already published that with *Till Eulenspiegels Lustige Streiche* and *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. The draw for this collection, though, is surely the Alpine Symphony, and that anything else at all is included is a pure bonus. Another bonus for the language-challenged among us is the English translations for the titles of sections and the musical terms. Dover's implementation of these translations is somewhat awkward, though, as the section titles are listed at the beginning of each piece, but the musical terms are all bunched together at the end of the volume, forcing you to flip repeatedly through it at least once. These two works date from a time and place now past when a respected composer could literally write for any orchestral forces he desired. *Eine Alpensinfonie* is scored for a huge orchestra (150 instruments, by one count--although not 150 different instrumental parts) and includes hecklephone, windmachine, thundermachine, tenor tubas, and 20(!) French horns--12 are offstage and play only in 21 measures of the piece, for less than one minute. *Symphonia Domestica* is not quite as gargantuan (as the name indicates) but is still scored for a quite large ensemble, with oboe d'amore and 4 saxophones--soprano, alto, baritone, and the very rare bass saxophone added to the large wind section. These scores are bibles of orchestration--Strauss is a master of handling huge forces, surpassed only by Gustav Mahler, and that arguably. Students of orchestration can learn much about writing for large, professional orchestras from careful study of these pieces; but they are also full of important details that will be helpful for those using smaller ensembles. Beyond the orchestration, however, lies deep and powerful music. Strauss has been criticized for being overly programmatic and literal, writing trivial music and being derivative of Richard Wagner and Gustav Mahler. But whatever truth these criticisms hold, the fact remains that Wagner, Mahler and Strauss revolutionized music. Aside from their already well-known harmonic innovations and orchestral mastery, they freed melody from its primarily vocal conception, which had limited it from its origin. Where most composers before them would follow a large leap with motion in the opposite direction, thereby restricting the melodic line in musical space, these three composed great soaring lines in which a large leap might well be followed by another leap or stepwise motion in the same direction. The resulting themes often surpass the range of a single instrument; a given melody might, for example, begin in the tuba doubled with bassoon, celli and contrabasses, move to French horns and finally end in the upper registers of flutes, oboes, and violins. Orchestration becomes not simply an assigning of instruments to particular lines, but an inseparable part of the composition of a piece.

Whatever flaws Strauss's music might have (and I have to admit that the Storm Scene in the Alpine Symphony, with its wind and thunder machines and the portrayal of raindrops in the pizzicato strings is too cliched for my taste), its glories far surpass them. Reading the score can also help determine which recording of a work is particularly good. Strauss's layers of counterpoint and his textural conceptions can suffer at the hands of an overenthusiastic brass section (this is the man who said, "Never look encouragingly at the trombones.") or an insufficiently aware conductor. To supplement this score, I enthusiastically recommend Andre Previn's rendition of Eine Alpensinfonie with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, released on Telarc and also available here at .com.

This is an excellent resource but is out of print perhaps because of new copyright laws. I bought mine on Ebay (in new condition) recently for slightly more than it's original price of \$14.95. Hopefully we will see a new printing in the future. Some oddities of this edition is that Dover decided to put Eine Alpensinfonie first though it was composed years after the Symphonia Domestica and the opus numbers bare this out. This printing should also have been subtitled "Strauss Tone Poems Volume III" in continuation of the previous 2 Dover Tone Poem releases of Strauss.

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