

Sunrise

The composer's orchestration of *Sunrise* begins with a sustained low C on the double basses, contrabassoon and organ. The point of using this tone was to put the double basses on the lowest possible tone in their range in order to give the work real gravitas. As though the organ wasn't enough!

The familiar brass fanfare follows and introduces the "dawn" motif of the larger work that contains *Sunrise*. This motif permeates the structure of the entire work and makes prominent use of three tones in intervals of a fifth and octave: C-G-C. (Note: *Sunrise* has been transposed to fit better on traditional instruments. On the lead sheet these tones are D – A - D).

This simple motif is often called the Nature-motif. The motif is a part of the first five notes of the natural overtone series: octave, octave, fifth, octave, and a major third. Much of the power of the piece comes from the immediate use of the minor third. This short fanfare is notable for its simplicity, power and memorable quality. How could anyone forget this music after seeing the movie 2001?

Sunrise is the short, introductory fanfare of Richard Strauss' Op. 30, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. The work is a tone poem composed in 1896 and inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical work of the same name. Strauss conducted first performance of the work in Frankfurt, Germany. A typical performance of Op. 30 lasts about half an hour.

Richard Georg Strauss (1864 – 1949) was a German composer and widely regarded as an important transitional figure from the music of the late Romantic period to jarring, alienated music of the early 20th century. He fits somewhere between Wagner and Stravinsky. Strauss came to fame first as a conductor and later as an effective composer of operas and tone poems.

Strauss' relationship with the NAZIs is an enduring controversy. Soon after taking power the Nazis, actually Joseph Goebbels, appointed Strauss to be president of the State Music Bureau. In this position, Strauss composed the music for the 1936 Olympics. And yet in 1938 just before the start of WWII Strauss debuted a one-act opera titled *Friedenstag*. The work was homage to peace and a hardily-veiled attack on Nazism. Production ended with the outbreak of war in 1939.

Some of Strauss's operas have become part of the standard operatic repertoire:

Der Rosenkavalier

Elektra

Salome