pos are quite fast, even in the most honeyed sections, but the conductor's perfect organization prevails. Preceding this Don is of a piece; Krauss melts—not smears—one segment into another. He is at the same time both the least sentimental and least bombastic of interpreters. The Vienna Philharmonic responds to his direction with a sturdy delicacy, producing a sound as unlike that of other orchestras as Krauss is unlike other conductors in his approach to the music. This twelve-year-old recording is still acceptable, although the volume level is rather low.

Galliera’s treatment is perhaps the most exquisitely suave and sensuous the Don has ever received, a quality heightened by the ineffable cushion of tone produced by the Philharmonia. Although his rather fast interpretation may not suit all tastes, I find that it wears remarkably well. The recording, mono and stereo, is rich and sharply defined.

Karaan gives us a more sumptuous Don than Krauss. In certain respects this is an interpretation as sophisticated as Galliera’s, but less romantic. Tempo contrasts are, as in the Krauss, moderate. There isn’t a trace of fuss and bother here. Karaan attacks the music with keen forward motion, avoiding neither excitement nor brilliance on route. London’s engineering is dazzling, with the stereo version being but slightly superior to the monophonic edition.

—Vienna Philharmonic, Krauss, cond. (with Till Eulenspiegel). Richmond B 19043, LP.
—Philharmonia Orchestra, Galliera, cond. Angel 35784, LP; S 35784, SD.
—Vienna Philharmonic, Karajan, cond. London CM 9278, LP; CS 6209, SD.
—Vienna Philharmonic, Furtwängler, cond. (with Till Eulenspiegel). Electrola E 90093, LP.
—New York Philharmonic, Walter, cond. (Tod und Verklärung). Columbia ML 3338, LP.
—Philharmonia Orchestra, Steinberg, cond. (with Rosenkavalier Suite). Capitol P 8423, LP; SP 8423, SD.
—Minneapolis Symphony, Dorati, cond. (with Tod und Verklärung). Mercury MG 50202, LP; SP 90202, SD.
—Stadium Symphony of New York, Stokowski, cond. (with Till Eulenspiegel and Salomé Tanz). Everett LPBR 6023, LP; SDBR 3023, SD.
—Cleveland Orchestra, Szell, cond. (with Tod und Verklärung and Till Eulenspiegel). Epic LC 3439, LP; BC 1011, SD.
—Chicago Symphony, Reiner, cond. RCA Victor LM 2463, LP; LSC 2463, SD.

Tod und Verklärung, Op. 24 (1889)

Strauss’s third symphonic poem, Death and Transfiguration, was the delight of late-nineteenth-century audiences, surpassing even Don Juan in frequency of presentation. Audiences were supplied with an accompanying text (written by Alexander Ritter after Strauss had completed his score) describing the final agonies of an old man, lying on a (figurative) bed of nails constructed by the heartless craftsmen of this purblind world. He relives his past, part of it happy; then commences his losing battle with a hulky Angel of Death. Release—i.e., “transfiguration”—is his final reward. Tovey, in a classic Understatement, tells us that the intentions of music and poem are “sublime.”

Strauss may well have thought that Ritter’s programmatic poem was taking his title just a bit too far; but he did concede that somewhat what the poem had inspired him to write the music. At any rate, D & T has managed to hold a place in the modern repertory in spite of the passé literary window-dressing.

Poor performances of D & T are hardly any more common than with Don Juan. The work is set out in simpler fashion than its illustrious predecessor; and beside its successful rival Eulenspiegel, seems virtually archaic in the degree of restraint Strauss has placed on his passion for polyphony. It might be interesting for listeners to compare this work to Liszt’s Tasso, which it clearly imitates.

Each of the available recordings presents a straightforward exposition of the music. Differences in tempo are slight, although there is some diversity in the various conductors’ methods of contrasting sections connotating “mood,” conflict, and transfiguration. I can find no fault with versions by such experienced and perceptive Straussians as Karajan, Reiner, Artur Rodzinski, Szell, Toscanini, and Walter. All are appropriately moody, dramatic, and romantic. A choice must therefore be made on the basis of extramusical considerations, as reproduction and coupling. I have chosen the Rodzinski for my own collection. To my mind it represents an ideal confluence of solid performance, fine sonics, and offbeat coupling.

—Phiharmonia Orchestra, Rodzinski, cond. (with Dance Suite After Couperin and Salomés Tanz). Capitol G 7147, LP; SG 7147, SD.
—NBC Symphony, Toscanini, cond. (with Till Eulenspiegel). RCA Victor LM 1891, LP.
—New York Philharmonic, Walter, cond. (with Don Juan). Columbia ML 5338, LP.

—Vienna Philharmonic, Karajan, cond. (with Till Eulenspiegel and Salomés Tanz). London CM 9280, LP; CS 6211, SD.
—Vienna Philharmonic, Reiner, cond. (with Till Eulenspiegel). RCA Victor LM 2077, LP; LSC 2077, SD.
—Cleveland Orchestra, Szell, cond. (with Don Juan and Till Eulenspiegel). Epic LC 3439, LP; BC 1011, SD.

Till Eulenspiegel, Op. 28 (1895)

The problems inherent in the nature of program music clearly present themselves when we attempt to discuss Till, the only Strauss symphonic poem to have retained a popularity comparable to that of Don Juan. No detailed summary of extramusical images accompanies the work, but the title does conjure up a familiar figure. Given the complete title, Till Eulenspiegel lustige Streichele ("merry pranks"), our imagination is given free rein to construct the precise nature of these pranks. The information given by us the composer is restricted to identifying the two motives associated with Till himself. To choose one "best" from among so many recorded versions of a work which (like Don Juan and, to a lesser extent, Death and Transfiguration) poses the problems of a pranks to an experienced conductor at the head of a good orchestra is a virtually hopeless task. Reiner, Karajan, Krauss, Toscanini, and Furtwängler are the conductors who have probably given the greatest attention to this work, and all are able to project it with a maximum blending of discipline and humor. Each prefers sanity and charm to the kind of frenzied and figurativeness masking as ebullience and clarity to be found in the Leinsdorf and Dorati recordings. The conductors grouped together above go along with Strauss in his affection for the central character; the other gentlemen imply, to my mind, censure.

Krauss is as persuasive here as in Don Juan, bringing us the ultimate in clarity, warmth, and humor. His Till is a charmingly ubiquitous rascal, making his effects with a foot hot rather than a conflagration. Krauss’s companions in the aforementioned group pursue succulent, dramatic portrayal; but each manages to keep sight of the whimsical nature of the piece. I have disclosed a prejudice for the Krauss here, although I would not disavow the prospective purchaser from considering the several other excellent choices. A two-Till collection—Krauss or another of the fine monos, plus Reiner or Karajan in stereo Continued on page 115