

## Richard Strauss: Ein Heldenleben - Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme (Rattle) [2005]

Written by bluesever

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01. 'Ein Heldenleben', Op. 40 - I. Der Held / The Hero [0:04:15.74] 02. II. Des Helden Widersacher / The Hero's Adversaries [0:03:18.63] 03. III. Des Helden Gefährtin / The Hero's Companion [0:14:00.68] 04. IV. Des Helden Walstatt / The Hero's Battlefield [0:07:21.00] 05. V. Des Helden Friedenswerke / The Hero's Works of Peace [0:06:21.63] 06. VI. Des Helden Weltflucht und Vollendung / The Hero's Retirement from the World and the Fulfilment of his Life [0:12:15.71] 07. 'Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme', Op. 60 - 1. Ouverture zum ersten Aufzug / Overture to Act I [0:04:03.69] 08. 2. Menuett [0:01:34.25] 09. 3. Der Fechtmeister / The Fencing Master [0:01:50.65] 10. 4. Auftritt und Tanz der Schneider / Entrée and Dance of the Tailors [0:04:53.44] 11. 5. Das Menuett des Lully / Lully's Minuet [0:02:13.48] 12. 6. Courante [0:02:18.32] 13. 7. Auftritt der Cleonte / Entrée of Cleonte (after Lully) [0:03:55.44] 14. 8. Vorspiel zum zweiten Aufzug / Intermezzo : Prelude to Act II [0:03:26.71] 15. 9. Das Diner / The Dinner [0:10:05.72] Berliner Philharmoniker Simon Rattle – conductor

The really surprising thing about Simon Rattle's 2005 recording of Richard Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben* with the Berlin Philharmonic is how much it resembles Herbert von Karajan's 1959 recording of the same work with the same orchestra. Not that Rattle's *Heldenleben* is actually in the same league as Karajan's in terms of orchestral execution -- the scrappy string playing and sloppy ensemble that mar Rattle's Berlin Philharmonic would never have been tolerated in Karajan's Berlin Philharmonic -- but Rattle's interpretation resembles Karajan's in terms of its single-minded concentration on its own gorgeous image. Because for all that Rattle's Berlin Philharmonic cannot match Karajan's in discipline, Rattle is nevertheless as fascinated by the sheer opulence of the world's most polished orchestra as Karajan had been. Time and again throughout the work, Rattle like Karajan before him pauses to admire the glorious noise his orchestra can make -- at the peak of the imperious fanfares at the peak of the opening portrait of the hero, for example, or at the rapturous arabesques at the climax of the scene with the hero's companion -- but nowhere more so than at the closing pages of the finale section that seem to go on and on forever. While egotism was apparently a big part of Strauss' personality, one wonders if he would have found Rattle's and Karajan's narcissistic approach to his work to his liking. Better by far is the filler, Rattle and the Berlin's delightful performance of Strauss' charmingly ironic *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. With a nod and a wink, Rattle and the Berlin turn

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in a stylishly insouciant and brightly witty interpretation that ideally captures Strauss' fin de siècle drolleries. EMI's sound is loud enough, but seems at the same time oddly distant. ---  
James Leonard, Rovi

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