Richard Strauss - Oboe Concerto in D major (Heinz Holliger) [1970]

1. Allegro moderato 2. Andante 3. Vivace. Allegro Heinz Holliger – oboe New Philharmoniker Orchestra Edo de Waart – conductor

Oboe Concerto, in full Concerto in D Major for Oboe and Small Orchestra, three-movement concerto for oboe and small orchestra, one of the last works written by German composer Richard Strauss. It was completed in 1945, and Strauss revised the ending in 1948; most musicians prefer the earlier ending. The piece was inspired by John de Lancie, an American serviceman who in civilian life was a professional oboist.

After World War II the American army moved into the Bavarian resort town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen. There de Lancie, who was affiliated with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and was a longtime admirer of Strauss's works, met with the composer and asked him, de Lancie later recalled, "if, in view of the numerous beautiful lyric solos for oboe in almost all of his works, he had ever considered writing a concerto for oboe." Strauss had not, but he apparently took the question as a challenge, for he soon was at work on just such a piece.

The Oboe Concerto premiered in Zürich on February 26, 1946. Strauss expressed the wish that its American premiere be given by de Lancie, then an assistant principal oboist (second chair) with the Philadelphia Orchestra. The principal oboist, noted French-born performer Marcel Tabuteau, refused to grant the honour of a premiere to a lower-ranked musician, regardless of de Lancie's role in the work's creation. Instead, de Lancie granted the honour to an oboist friend with the CBS Symphony Orchestra: Mitch Miller, who later hosted the TV program Sing Along with Mitch (1961–66).

Strauss's Oboe Concerto is notoriously difficult for the soloist. The ability to practice circular breathing (simultaneous inhalation and exhalation) is a requirement if the piece is to be played as the composer wrote it, as the phrases are often rather prolonged. The movements of the piece are seamless. The first movement, “"Allegro moderato,"” is written in sonata-allegro form with contrasting melodies that are developed and varied mid-movement. The second movement, “"Andante,"” is in classic ternary (ABA) form, and the third movement, “"Vivace-allegro,"” is a hybrid of sonata and rondo. --- britannica.com

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