

Richard Strauss - Die Liebe der Danae op. 83 (de Waart) [2002]



1. Act I 2. Act II 3. Act III Peter Coleman-Wright - Jupiter Jörg Schneider - Mercurius
Gary Rideout - Pollux Anne Schwanewilms - Danaë Monique Krüs - Xanthe Michael Hendrick -
Midas Brian Galliford - König Ruud Kok - König Harry Teeuwen - König Jeroen van Glabbeek
Ingrid Kaiserfeld - Semele Claudia Patacca - Europa Anette Seiltgen - Alkmene Jolana
Fogasová - Leda Matthias Beutich Thomas Müller Martin Schubert Mirko Tuma
Concertgebouw Orchestra Edo de Waart – conductor Amsterdam 12.10.2002

Richard Strauss' three-act opera, *Die Liebe der Danae*, is written to a libretto by Josef Gregor, after an outline by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. Along with *Daphne*, *Die Aegyptische Helena*, and *Elektra*, *Die Liebe der Danae* belongs to a line of operas in which Strauss dealt with tales from classical antiquity, and especially its compelling female characters. Moving from the successful and poignant story of *Daphne*, Strauss chose to present the sensual story of Danaë, who was confined from human contact by her father, but eventually seduced by the god Zeus, who came to her in a shower of gold. In his version of the story, Hofmannsthal intended to draw parallels between the golden shower of Zeus and the golden touch of the legendary Midas.

In taking up this story, Strauss reminded the librettist Joseph Gregor that he and Hofmannsthal had in mind a German-language equivalent to Offenbach's *La belle Hélène*, called *Danaë oder die Vernunfttheirat* (*Danaë, or the Marriage of Convenience*). Gregor's conception of the plot differed, however, from Hofmannsthal's published scenario, and Strauss rejected several drafts before approving one for Gregor to complete. In working with Gregor, Strauss seemed, at best, uncomfortable, and during this time consulted the conductor Clemens Krauss about the opera. In fact, Strauss continued to solicit Krauss' opinions for almost all of his operatic projects in the coming years.

Rehearsals began for *Die Liebe der Danae* after the successful premiere of *Capriccio*, a work

Strauss had finished after he completed the score for Die Liebe der Danae. While it was planned that Die Liebe der Danae would open the Salzburg Festival in 1944, the only performance during Strauss's lifetime was an open dress rehearsal on August 16th of that year. Only in 1952 did the work receive its premiere (August 14, at Salzburg).

In style, the work recalls the score of Daphne, but it suffers somewhat in comparison, largely due to the quality of the libretto. The commingling of legends has, perhaps, more academic fascination than dramatic purpose, and the ensuing problems in dramaturgy makes it a difficult work to stage. Nevertheless, Die Liebe der Danae is performed on occasion, and it stands as a testimony to the craftsmanship of Strauss in his later years. The autumnal spirit of the final act serves as homage to Strauss's inspiration in the music of Wagner, since it recalls the character of Wotan in the Ring. At the same time, the final scene is sometimes seen as Strauss's affectionate farewell at the end of his own career. --- James Zychowicz, Rovi

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