

## The Strauss Family and the Technical World

By Wilhelm Sinkovicz

Is the world divided in two sections, one for the realists, the other one for the Fine Arts? Sometimes we get the impression that people, who are working within the scientific world have nothing in common with those worldly innocent poets, painters and composers.

A concert with music of the famous Viennese Strauss-family proves that there can be a strong link even between music and techniques. Both well known Strauss-brothers, Johann and Joseph, began their career not as musicians, but as students at the Viennese "Polytechnicum", the institute of technology.

Of course Johann Strauss II had to change immediately: His father Johann I was the unrivalled king of Austrian dance music in these days. And his son was designated to follow in his footsteps.

Soon the family realised that it could be possible to extend the family's activities to the size of an effective business concentration. But to this end all male members of the Strauss-clan had to pull together.

Though Joseph Strauß wanted to be an architect or an engineer, he soon had to participate in the family's composing-circus. His journeyman-work was named "The First and the Last", a perfectly shaped series of waltzes. The title suggested wishful thinking: Joseph Strauß soon was indelible part of the Viennese "Waltz-Dynastie".

As it happened, Joseph studied counterpoint and musical theory with a namesake of the famous photogrammetrist: Franz Dolleschal.

But both, Johann and Joseph Strauss, never forgot their interest in the engineering progress. At least the titles of some of the waltzes and polkas give evidence of this lifelong inclination. They devoted compositions to new inventions and things of technical advantages: "Telephone-Polka", "Motor-Polka" or "The Electromagnet". Sometimes in such music you feel the engine working, beating and punching. During the 20th century many composers wrote such sounding devotions to technical machines, Arthur Honegger even set the noise of an express train ("Pacific 231") into music!

In our program we hear one of the most charming devotions to techniques and engineering, the so called "musical joke", "*Perpetuum mobile*" sound-symbol for the old dream of an endlessly working machine.

Start of the program is the operetta-overture "*Cagliostro in Wien*", music to the memory of a famous 18th-century-wizard. Johannes Brahms who admired Johann Strauss was extremely fond of this work and wrote about the overture: "This man is a master-musician. He never goes out of ideas. This is the difference between him and us."

The "*Anna Polka*", a charming piece, full of coquettish melodic sighs, is the best example for the slower, so called "french" version of the Polka.

The "*Pizzicato Polka*" is a work of Johann and Joseph Strauss. The music is played by string orchestra without bowing, as if the violins were plucking instruments. The best change for the musicians to demonstrate their ability of playing sensitively "pianissimo".

"*Chit Chat*" is the most popular example for the quicker "Schnell-Polka", a sound-picture of chatting women. A delicious example for irony in music.

Two of the famous Viennese waltzes form the natural centre of our concert: "*Vienna Blood*" was one of the favorite Strauss-waltzes even during the composer's lifetime. Immediately after Johann Strauss' death the melodies of this work were among others arranged to the new operetta which took the name of the well known waltz. Though it is not an original Strauss-composition, it became part of the repertory of all German theatres.

"*On the beautiful blue Danube*", last but not least, is today handled like a kind of Austrian national anthem. Especially since it forms the finale of every New Year's Concert, which is transmitted by TV from the Golden Hall of the Musikverein every year.

Like in this concert, there must be played one or two racing encores: In our case the smart Military March from the operetta "*The Gipsy Baron*" and the Polka "*At the Hunt*", with which we come back to our starting point: The melodies of this piece Johann Strauss took over from the operetta "*Cagliostro in Wien*".





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K. Kraus  
Congress Director, ISPRS

*This picture shows the design of the certificates awarded to the prize winners on the occasion of this ISPRS Congress. It shows the frame as used on the certificate conferring the Honorary Membership of the Austrian Society of Photogrammetry to Professor Eduard Doležal, the founder of ISPRS, in 1927. The portrait added in the centre dates from 1932 and has been found in the archives of the Federal Office of Metrology and Surveying, Surveying Division, Vienna.*