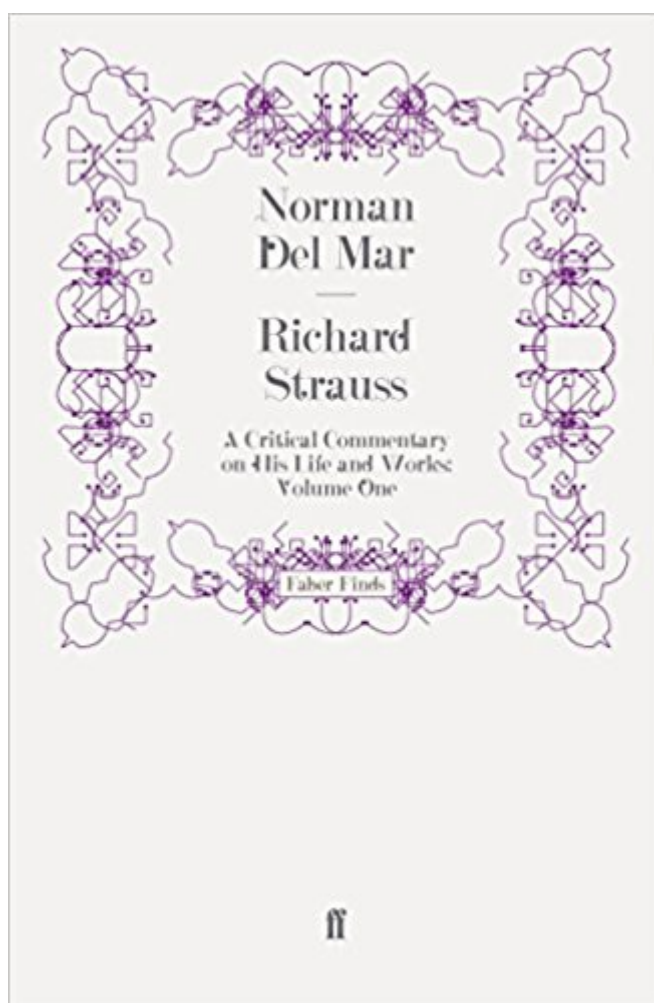


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Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary On His Life And Works (Volume I)



Synopsis

Norman Del Mar (1919-1994) was universally recognised as a leading authority on the music of Richard Strauss, and his masterly three-volume study of his life and works remains a classic. Volume I deals with the years from the composer's birth (1864) to *Der Rosenkavalier* (1912), discussing the early orchestral and chamber music, the tone poems and the operas *Guntram*, *Feuersnot*, *Salome* and *Elektra*. 'Deploying a well-nigh encyclopaedic knowledge, Mr Del Mar acquits himself brilliantly of his task of disentangling and reassembling the numerous strands that make up the backcloth of poetry and philosophy which Strauss, while not always understanding every intricacy, yet needed as a constant reference map for his composing. The three volumes of this magnificent book should be studied by all lovers of the late-romantic music, amateurs and professionals alike...a monumental achievement.' *Times Literary Supplement* 'A brilliant and copiously analytical study ... a constant fascination.' *Guardian*

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Customer Reviews

Norman Del Mar (1919-1994) was a distinguished British conductor, musicologist and biographer. He was recognised as a leading authority on Richard Strauss, and his major three-volume work on his life and music remains a classic. He is also remembered for his recordings of British music, in particular Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Delius and Britten.

For anyone wishing to gain access to the composer and his works, Norman Del Mar's three volume

biography of Richard Strauss, originally written in the 1960's, is the best introduction and indispensable otherwise. Over the course of some 1,500 pages, Del Mar discusses all of Strauss' works, including all of his songs, with objective, concrete appraisals, complete with numerous musical examples, as well as running narratives of his life (and the plots and working up of all of the operas and ballets). It's the kind of survey with which the novice to Strauss, armed with some recordings, can follow along easily. Del Mar began the work in the early '60's at a time when Strauss was still well known only by a half dozen works, and against a prejudice that Strauss' creativity had ended at about the time the First World War began, only to re-emerge in muted form after the end of the Second World War. He also had to contend with the vitriol left over from the Nazi period, since Strauss remained in Germany, and thus it was customary (see George Marek's hatchet job) to associate Strauss with the Nazis (even though his daughter in law and several of his collaborators were Jewish.) As a result Del Mar sets his sights low, simply to point out the skill and talent ever-present in Strauss' work, and balances his admiration with criticisms which are invariably funny and affectionate. As a result we have a balanced survey of RS' life and works that is still the best, now 50 years later. (More recent biographers are strong also, but much briefer, and much more ecstatic in their appreciation of Strauss, sometimes over the top.) Strongly recommended to anyone interested in the musical compositions of Richard Strauss.

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