

Hearing Wagner in *Till Eulenspiegel*: Strauss's Merry Pranks Reconsidered

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Few would argue the influence Richard Wagner has exerted upon the history of Western art music. Among those who succeeded Wagner, this influence is perhaps most obvious in the works of Richard Strauss, the man Hans von Bülow and Alexander Ritter proclaimed Wagner's heir.¹ While Strauss's serious operas and tone poems clearly derive from Wagner's compositional idiom, the lighter works enjoy a similar inheritance; Strauss's comic touch—in pieces from *Till Eulenspiegel* to *Capriccio*—adds an insouciant frivolity to a Wagnerian legacy often characterized as deeply emotional, ponderous, and even bombastic. Light-hearted musics, however, are no less prone to posing interpretive dilemmas than are their serious counterparts. *Till*, for one, has remained notoriously problematic since its premiere. In addition to the perplexing *Rondeauform* marking on its title page, *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* also remains enigmatic for historical and programmatic reasons.² In addressing these problems, some scholars maintain that Strauss identified himself with his musical protagonist, thumbing his nose, as it were, at the musical philistines of the late romantic era.³ But the possibility that *Till* may bear an

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¹Hans von Bülow needs no introduction to readers of this journal, though Alexander Ritter may be less familiar. Ritter was a German violinist, conductor, and Wagnerian protégé. It was Ritter, in part, who convinced Strauss to abandon his early, conservative style in favor of dramatic music—Ritter's poem *Tod und Verklärung* appears as part of the published score of Strauss's work by the same name.

²Among them is Strauss's deeply personal attachment to the work. See Krause 1995, 132, in which Strauss identifies himself with Till. Strauss's association with his protagonist was due, in part, to the immediate and lasting success of *Till* as well as Strauss's personal reaction to his critics—a theme that returns in later works such as *Ein Heldenleben* and *Feuersnot*.

³As Kurt Wilhelm points out, the composer's "primary concern...is obviously to represent the struggle that the exceptional person (Till) wages against the

intimate connection to the greatest musical influence upon Strauss-as-composer—namely, Wagner—has not been fully explored.

There are many pieces of historical evidence that point to this influence, not the least of which is Strauss's thorough knowledge of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and *Tristan und Isolde*.⁴ Although the young Strauss, no doubt influenced by his father, was initially critical of Wagner, he nevertheless undertook a serious study of the score of *Tristan* and later of *The Ring*. Strauss wrote of "being in rapture" while listening to *Die Walküre* and even adopted musical and dramatic elements of this work in his first opera, *Guntram*.⁵ In fact, Wagner's music may have already exerted an influence on the earlier tone poems.⁶ Under Bülow's tutelage, Strauss's views

philistines, and the contempt that he feels for them." Strauss returned to this same theme later in *Feuersnot*, appropriately set in Munich, where much of his criticism originated. See the slightly abridged translation in Wilhelm 1982, 503–08. The composer actually admitted this agenda in his old age. See Strauss 1953, 149. While the passage cited refers to *Feuersnot*, one can easily extend the inference to *Till*. Finally, see Specht 1921, 218–20 for an analysis of humor in *Till* relying on an understanding of Till-as-Strauss. Such a reading of *Till* (and other more explicit "autobiographical" references in later works like *Ein Heldenleben* and the *Symphonia domestica*) may trace its roots back to Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in which Walther's struggle against the tradition-bound guild singers as personified by Beckmesser was a none-too-subtle reflection of Wagner's own struggles with Eduard Hanslick.

⁴Strauss knew *The Ring* and *Tristan* well by the time he composed *Till*. See Gilliam 1999, 16, 23, and 50. See also the appearance of *Tristan* and *Die Walküre* on Strauss's "short list" of the most moving works of music (in Strauss 1953, 85–86).

⁵Six months after his condemnation of *Siegfried*, Strauss wrote to Ludwig Thuille that he had become a Wagnerian due to his rapture at hearing *Die Walküre*. See Ott 1969, 165–67 and 174–75. Note, too, that *Guntram* was hardly the last of Strauss's operatic works to rely heavily on Wagner. *Feuersnot*, for instance, contains copious allusions to both *The Ring* and *Tristan*. Two recent dissertations read both *Feuersnot* and Strauss's earlier *Guntram* as a rejection of Wagnerian metaphysics and of Wagner-as-musical-establishment while citing many moments of Wagnerian musical influence in these works. See Youmans 1996 and Kristiansen 2000.

⁶The scholars who have posited a connection between Wagner's music and Strauss's tone poems are legion. Suffice it to say that this observation has been made almost continuously from the late nineteenth century to the present. Both early figures (such as Gustav Brecher, Arthur Hahn, Wilhelm Klatte, Hans Merian, Otto Nodnagel, Friedrich Rösch, Arthur Seidl, and Erich Urban), and more recent writers tend to make generic comments, rather than providing detailed analyses of elements like: Strauss's use of *Leitmotiv*, Strauss's symphonic and dramatic formal

became more sympathetic as he assumed additional conducting responsibilities.⁷ Eventually, in a letter to his father dated October 14, 1885, Strauss spoke of his “first triumph” in conducting the overture to *der fliegende Holländer*. He eventually set his heart on directing *Tristan* in its entirety, a task that, despite an intervening illness, came to fruition with the performance at Weimar on January 17, 1892. Strauss subsequently described the occasion to Wagner’s widow as the “most wonderful day of my life.”⁸ There seems to be little doubt that he held *Tristan* up as the benchmark for subsequent Romantic opera, a fact reinforced by his constant allusions to the work.⁹

Wagnerian references in *Till Eulenspiegel*, however, have gone largely unnoticed, which is not surprising given that commentary on Strauss’s early tone poems has tended to focus on their programmatic aspects rather than on their compositional details. In *Till*, for instance, much has been made of the correlation between Strauss’s vivid musical portrayals and the programmatic details he provided in his “blow-by-blow” account of the legendary mischief-maker’s activities (see Figure 1).¹⁰ Yet we must remember that both

conception derived from both Wagner and Liszt, and Strauss’s Wagnerian orchestration, harmony, and musical/dramatic allusion. See, for instance, Nodnagel 1902; the essays in Walden n.d.; Harrison 1993, 48; and Wajamen 2003, 16–24.

⁷Strauss first heard *Siegfried* in 1878 at the Court Theater while he was attending the Ludwigs-Gymnasium. See Ashley 1999, 27. Soon thereafter he met Karl Klindworth, a Liszt student who prepared the first vocal score of *The Ring*. Op. cit., 29.

⁸Krause 1995, 95.

⁹See mm. 34–35 of the last movement of the Op. 18 Violin Sonata, a passing allusion to the opening of the *Tristan* Prelude, and his allusion to *Tristan* in the cadenza of the 1886 *Burleske*. Also, note Hofmannsthal’s conscious parody of a portion of text from *Tristan* in Scene 1 of *Rosenkavalier* and Strauss’s appropriate musical setting. For these and other examples, see Schuh 1981, 63–82. Moreover, Victor Reinshagen reminisced that during Strauss’s old-age exile in Switzerland, the composer continually carried a score of *Tristan* with him as a kind of “talisman.” See Marek 1967, 95.

¹⁰This remark refers to the brief annotations Strauss made in the score he sent to Wilhelm Mauke, who had requested additional information from the composer for his guide to the work. Transcriptions of these annotations may be found in a number of sources including Schuh 1982, 398. Of course, other sources also

the light-hearted nature of the work—a characteristic that stands in bold relief to his other tone poems of that period—and the specificity of its program stem from its original conception: Till and his exploits in the town of Schilda first appeared in Strauss's incomplete text draft of an opera entitled *Till Eulenspiegel bei den Schildbürgern*. Although he eventually abandoned the project in favor of using this material in a symphonic poem, *Till's* operatic origins suggest a connection to the Wagnerian *Musikdrama* tradition.

Figure 1. Overview of *Till Eulenspiegel* with Strauss's programmatic notes.

Measure	Caption	Music
1	Once upon a time there was a knavish fool...	Introduction
7	...named Till Eulenspiegel.	
46	He was a wicked goblin...	"Till" chord
75	...up to new tricks.	F Major tonic cadence
103	Just wait you faint hearts!	
135	Hop! on horseback through the market women.	
151	He runs away in seven-league boots.	
155	Hidden in a mouse's hole.	Harmonic "Till" half-steps
179	Disguised as a parson, he oozes unction and morality	B♭ new theme
191	but the knave peeps out at his big toe.	
196	But, because of his mockery of religion, he feels a sudden horror of his end.	"Fate" theme in g minor
209	Till as gallant, exchanging dainty courtesies with pretty girls.	Rising by thirds, D♯...
222	He woos them.	...E...
245	However fine, a basket still signifies refusal.	...G
263	Vows revenge on the whole human race.	
293	Philistines' motive	a minor
314	After imposing a few whopping theses on the Philistines, he abandons them, baffled, to their fate.	stretto entrances
344	Grimace from a distance.	
374	Till's street diaty.	A♭ new theme
577	The trial.	f minor
582	He whistles nonchalantly.	"Till" chord
615	Up the ladder! There he swings, the air is squeezed out of him, a last jerk. Till's mortal part has come to an end.	

provide clues to Strauss's conception of *Till's* programme. A summary appears in Werbeck 1996,125–32. See also op. cit., 540–41.

The central aim of this study is to identify the many allusions Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel* makes to Wagner's music and to suggest a rationale for these allusions. While much recent work on Strauss profitably examines both the published and unpublished primary source material, the aim of this study is different. References and citations are included in the following material to bolster the central claims of the argument, but these claims are primarily analytical in nature. That is, an examination of evidence from the scores to *Till Eulenspiegel* and to Wagner's music dramas comprises the focus of this study.

The personality of the mischievous protagonist, Till, informs much of the expressive tone of *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*, and Till's character is most succinctly depicted by the rising half-step from an accented, raised second scale degree resolving to the major-mode mediant (or, $\sharp 2-3$). The motive has a sassy, mocking character that is evident in both the opening horn solo and the so-called Till chord (the horn solo is presented in Example 5 and the Till chord in Example 6). Its sound is featured so prominently throughout *Till Eulenspiegel* that it assumes an iconic role as *the* Till half-step. As such, it appears in numerous contexts throughout the work. Frequent $\sharp 2-3$ melodic gestures occur both in the home key of F major and in other keys, saturating the surface of the music with accented, rising half-step gestures.¹¹ Many of these are harmonized with idiosyncratic progressions. The melodic half-step G \sharp -A ($\sharp 2-3$ in the tonic key of F Major), or its enharmonic respelling as A \flat -A grant a voice-leading consistency to the disparate progressions illustrated in Example 1a.¹² The half-step also appears harmonically as a mocking gesture when Till hides from his

¹¹While semitonal voice leading was common in central European music of the late 19th century, the accented rising half-step gesture $\sharp 2-3$ is unique among Strauss's tone poems in its pervasiveness. $\sharp 2-3$ is a motive shared by many themes in *Zarathustra*, but unlike in *Till*, it is most often $\sharp 3$, rather than $\sharp 2$ that is accented. Also in contradistinction to *Till*, it is the gesture's shift from major or minor triadic third that is of primary importance in this work's dramatic and musical structure. See Youmans 1998, especially 122–24 and Examples 1 and 2.

¹²This rising half-step is shown in the top voice in this example for convenience. In the score, this is not always the case, though the voice leading remains audible regardless.

pursuers in a mouse hole (mm. 157–58).¹³ In addition, the Till half-step unites the entirety of the Trial scene in which a number of chords are linked by the common tone $\sharp 2 = \flat 3$ (see Example 1b).¹⁴ Melodic $\sharp 4 - \flat 5$ gestures—a kind of secondary Till half-step—also appear frequently. While the character of both the $\sharp 2 - \flat 3$ and $\sharp 4 - \flat 5$ motion is appropriately matched to *Till's* program, the gestures themselves might call to mind an earlier work—the Prelude to Act I of *Tristan*.¹⁵ There, of course, the accented rising half-step not only contributes to the harmonic ambiguity of the opening sonority, but later appears as a sort of “retardation motive,” stated alone in mm. 14–15 and constituting the melodic line in the many upward-resolving accented dissonances that so define the sound-world of that opera (see Example 2). That Wagner’s rising half-steps are so expressive of repressed longing only makes their tongue-in-cheek recasting in *Till* all the more delicious.

¹³Similar uses of “mocking” half-steps can be found in earlier music. See, for instance, the accompaniment to Mozart’s Horn Concerto Rondos (e.g., mm. 73–89 of K. 417, III), accompanying the “all-in-good-fun” insults he wrote to the hornist, Leutgeb, on the score. The distorted presentation of the *idée fixe* in the Witches’ Sabbath from Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique* (“Songe d’une Nuit du Sabbat,” mm. 21–28, and 40–62) also features a similar gesture.

¹⁴Such a $G\sharp/A\flat$ pitch-class is possible, of course, in equal-tempered pitch space though, in a functionally tonal context, this blending of implied harmonic and melodic functions is highly irregular. Nevertheless, earlier scholarship has suggested this possibility in 19th-century music. See Proctor 1978, 140–42 who proposes this tonally ambiguous juxtaposed pitch-class as part of his theory of chromatic tonality. Moreover, hearing the continuity of this $G\sharp/A\flat$, which implies that *f* minor’s pervasive nature in *Till*’s trial section ultimately depends upon resolution to *F* major, might be considered a simplistic example of “linking analysis” as presented by Harrison 1994, 134–53.

¹⁵Wagner’s may not have been the only influence on Strauss’s use of $\sharp 2 - \flat 3$ in *Till*. The tone poem, *Penthesilea* (1888–89), by Felix Draeseke, a contemporary of Strauss’s, features a melodic gesture that is surprisingly similar to *Till*’s horn call, especially the version presented by the melody instruments in mm. 245–252 of Strauss’s score (cf. mm. 99ff of *Penthesilea*). Strauss himself almost assuredly knew this work, since he was familiar with Draeseke and conducted some of his compositions from time-to-time.

Example 1. Harmonizations of the $\sharp 2/b 3-3$ gesture in Till Eulenspiegel.

(a) Harmonic progressions.

mm. 47—49 69-73 291-93
649-52 104-05 591-93 581-82

F: Till I⁶ bIII V⁷ I bvi I Till iii i I

(b) The trial scene.

mm. 557 582 583 584 585 589 590 591 593 594 600 602 604 605

Example 2. Accented rising half-steps in Tristan.

(a) *Tristan, m. 15, retardation motive.*



(b) *Tristan, mm. 24–28, half-step upward-resolving melodic dissonances circled.*

The rising half-step and concomitant Wagnerian allusions work their way into the opening of *Till Eulenspiegel* in numerous guises. For instance, the first four notes of Strauss's introductory "Once upon a time" theme immediately call to mind the opening melodic gesture of the *Geborgenheit in Liebe* motive from the Act II Love Duet of *Tristan* (see Example 3).¹⁶ Note the characteristic leap down to $\sharp 4$ rising by half-step to $\sharp 5$ in both.¹⁷ The frequent truncation of this figure to just the first three notes later in Strauss's score had also been anticipated by Wagner.¹⁸

A second Wagnerian connection can be heard in the cadenza-like horn solo presented in Example 4a. This celebrated tune finds its diatonic basis in the older hand-horn technique of the instrument. In fact, the pitches comprise the total span of open tones from the second to the thirteenth harmonic, omitting the flatted seventh (see Example 4b). While the theme's later continuation suggests a relation to Siegfried's familiar call (Example 4c), which shares the same key and meter, the opening of the *Till* horn solo is closer in structure to the Alpine-horn tune played by the shepherd upon sighting Isolde's ship in scene 2 of *Tristan Act III*; Example 4d depicts this theme, which also features a rising $\sharp 3$ - $\hat{1}$ - $\hat{2}$ - $\hat{3}$ structure.¹⁹

¹⁶In Strauss's sketches for the work, this setting originally appeared in the epilogue (mm. 623ff).

The designation of "associative" themes is tricky enough in *The Ring*, where they are often reinforced by dramatic events on stage. The more "internal" psychological nature of *Tristan* renders this task almost impossible. The titles cited here are fairly standard, largely derived from Windsperger, n.d.

¹⁷The fifth note of Strauss's tune ($\sharp 2$ in $B\flat$ Major) is harmonized by an augmented dominant seventh ($F-A-C\sharp-E\flat$), a sonority only one half-step removed from a $B\flat$ Major *Till* chord ($E\flat-G\flat-A-C\sharp$).

¹⁸Cf. *Tristan und Isolde* 173/2/5-4/4 and *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* mm. 223-24.

¹⁹This C Major section in *Tristan* may be viewed as a dominant prolongation of the preceding f min. in Scene 1. Interestingly, the *original* version of this melody eventually found its home in the closing duet of *Siegfried* (333/4/1-4), appropriately scored for solo horn and sharing the same key. Note that many

Example 3. Till Eulenspiegel's opening violin melody and the "Geborgenheit in Liebe" motive from Tristan.

(a) Till, opening.

(b) Tristan, 172/2/4-6*.

Gb:

* Measure numbers in this format refer to the page number/system/measure number in the Schirmer piano/vocal score.

The manner in which Strauss transforms Wagner's mundane diatonic prototype into the Puckish portrayal of Till is nothing short of miraculous. It is accomplished through the insertions of a *single* chromatic note (written as $\sharp 2$),²⁰ whose dynamic/agogic emphasis and successive repetition is masterfully varied by irregular

references to Wagner's scores in this paper are made in the following format: page number/system/measure(s), in the Schirmer piano-vocal score.

²⁰If this note were performed on a natural hand-horn, the difference in timbre would further highlight the striking character of the G \sharp .

and shifting metric groupings: 7/8 – 7/8 – 3/4 – 6/8 (assuming the first three eighth-notes act as an upbeat).²¹ The ♯2–3̣ semitone is then chromatically extended to a minor third (G♯–A, G♯–A, G♯–A–B♭–B♭)—a third that bears an inescapable similarity to the opening of the *Tristan* Prelude with respect to both pitch and register (see Example 5a.) This similarity continues in the subsequent *Fortspinnung* of the theme, retaining the same pitch, register, and segmental partitioning of *Tristan*'s opening. In *Till* the woodwinds continue to lengthen the initial chromatic segment: the oboes playing G♯–A–B♭–B♭–C–C♯–D–(E♭) and the clarinets, D⁵–D♯–E–F♯–F♯–G–G♯–A–(B♭) just as in *Tristan* (see Examples 5b and 5c.) Discounting the concluding E♭ and B♭, which derive from Strauss's underlying harmonic progression, a gradual unfolding of semitones proceeds upward from G♯ to A⁵.²²

Perhaps the most convincing Wagnerian connection follows the decisive dominant fermata in measure 45. Here, a mocking diminution of the original “Geborgenheit” motive is followed by the ♯2–3̣ from the horn tune, both supported by the enigmatic Till chord and its subsequent resolution to I⁶ in F Major.²³ Although the Till chord may be considered a half-diminished sonority with a predominant function,²⁴ the chordal seventh is notated as G♯, suggesting an augmented-sixth (B♭–G♯) that expands to the octave thirds of the tonic triad (see Example 6a).²⁵ This harmony begs a

²¹Till is *already* up to “no good” rhythmically, a point noted in Mauke n.d., 95. One might note the irony of this moment as well, in which the horn, *contra* Wagner, plays the role of the anti-hero—an irony enriched by knowledge of the antagonistic relationship that Strauss's horn-playing father, Franz, shared with Wagner.

²²The *harmonic* support of the passage above, however, bears no relation to the underlying sequential progressions of the Prelude's initial measures. Strauss may have intentionally separated the melodic and chordal elements of this chromatically segmented octave in *Tristan* and provided each with its own individual presentation.

²³With respect to this chord, Wilhelm Mauke (with Strauss's blessing) remarks “Man beachte den schmerzlichen Accord unter gis, das Tragische in diesem zerrissenen Charakter!” See Mauke n.d., 95.

²⁴For greater detail on the functional and voice-leading variety of half-diminished chords see Bass 2001, especially 42–44.

²⁵A similar augmented-sixth function exists in the basic Blues progression F⁷ to C, with the enharmonic F–D♯ resolving to the E's of tonic. Invoking a concept from

direct comparison to the initial Tristan chord of Wagner's Prelude, shown in Example 6b.²⁶ Not only does it share in common the same melodic notes (G \sharp -A) and enigmatic half-diminished seventh sonority, but both chords are scored exclusively for double reeds.

Example 4. Till Eulenspiegel's opening horn call.

(a) Till, mm. 6–12.

(b) Overtone series.

jazz theory, one could posit an enharmonic spelling of the Till chord here (B \flat -D \flat -F \flat -A \flat) as a tritone substitution of a vii $^{\circ 7}$ in F (E-G-B \flat -D). Both chords have a dominant function due to the shared B \flat -E (F \flat) tritone. Incidentally, the connection between Till and jazz is also suggested by the opening of Thelonius Monk's "Straight No Chaser." Not only does the opening melodic gesture evoke the sounds of Till's horn call (complete with accented $\sharp 2$ resolving up to $\sharp 3$) but the first vertical sonority contains both $\sharp 2/\flat 3$ and $\sharp 3$.

²⁶The Tristan chord has also been considered as a modification of vii $^{\circ 7}$: E-G \sharp (\flat)-B \flat -D \flat . For a thorough analytic treatment of *Tristan* based on the diminished seventh sonority, see Boretz 1972. For a discussion of the Till and Tristan chords as augmented-sixth sonorities, see Harrison 1995, 183–85. Their similarity is also pointed out by Babbitt 1987, 149 and by Austin 1966, 140. Incidentally, the Till chord is "anticipated" in *Parsifal* in the *same* key, when Kundry tells him of his mother (see 181/4/1-2). And, similar sonorities also occur earlier in Strauss's *oeuvre*. See, for instance, the fugue subject from the final movement of the Op. 4 Suite for winds, which features a leap down to an accented $\sharp 2$ resolving up to $\sharp 3$.

(c) *Götterdämmerung*, mm. 39/1/1–1/2, Siegfried's horn call.



(d) *Tristan*, 265/4/4ff, Shepherd's alpine horn call.



Example 5. Melodic similarities between opening of Till Eulenspiegel and opening of the Tristan Prelude.

(a) *Till*, mm. 6–12.



Example 5 cont.

(b) Till, 22–24.

Tristan, *mm.* 2–7.

c) Till, 26–29.

Tristan, *mm.* 10–17.

Moreover, the continual retention of the pitch-class content of the Tristan and Till chords (disregarding enharmonic notation) results in an invariant sonority that recurs throughout their respective works.²⁷ In fact, the Till chord in Strauss's score *never* occurs at a

²⁷Aside from the obvious quotation of the Prelude's opening, important recurrences of the Tristan chord appear at 4/6/2–5/1/1, 5/6/4–6, 161/5/3,

transposed level.²⁸ It does, however, feature a variety of resolutions,²⁹ another characteristic it shares with Wagner's Tristan chord.³⁰ Finally, both the Till and Tristan chords work their way into the closing moments of their respective works. Incidentally, in *Till's* final moments, Till's accented $\sharp 2-3$ half-step and underlying harmony form an allusion to another of Wagner's iconic sonorities: the augmented triad in the World Treasure theme from *Siegfried* (see Example 7).³¹

Thus far, the $\sharp 2-3$ gesture has informed our surface-level analysis. We will return to examine its effects on deeper level structures when we consider the problem of formal design in *Till*. There remain, however, some other striking parallels to consider between the opening of Strauss's tone poem and the Prelude to *Tristan*. The passage that immediately follows the Till chord is characterized by two cadential gestures in A and C \sharp , which forms part of an overall tertian chain from tonic to dominant in measures 49–63: I(F)–III \sharp (A)– \downarrow VI (enharmonic: C \sharp =D \flat)–V \sharp (see Examples 8a and 8c).³² Their analogous parallels may be found in m. 24 and mm. 43–44 of the *Tristan* Prelude (see Examples 8b and 8d). In the latter, Wagner substitutes a deceptive motion to a VI chord (or, A Major) in order to retain his previous voice leading into the

163/1/1–4, 223/3/2–3, and 256/2/3, among others. The two succeeding half-diminished chords of the initial section of the Prelude (A \flat –D–F \sharp –B and C–F–G \sharp –D) likewise recur to a lesser degree; see 161/5/1–4, 256/4/44, and 257/3/1. Derrick Puffett has commented at length on Strauss's tendency to restate associative themes at their original pitch (-class) levels. See Puffett 1992.

²⁸See mm. 47, 104, 107, 286, 291, 345, 349, 369ff, 583, 591, 611ff, and 653.

²⁹The Till chord resolves to d minor in mm. 286–87, and to a minor in mm. 291–93. This latter move is reminiscent of Wagner's treatment of the third-related Tarnhelm motive in *Götterdämmerung* (see 122/3/7–4/4).

³⁰In addition to the opening resolution to E \sharp , refer also to its resolutions to a B \flat ⁹ (m. 81) and an implied G \sharp (mm. 107–10) in the Prelude, all of which strongly suggest a dominant function. The implied tonic keys of a min., \flat min., and c min. play a significant role in the tonal scheme of Act I that follows.

³¹The texture and thematic repetition here are perhaps more evocative of Wagner's reworking of this theme in the *Siegfried Idyll*. Though this quotation is mentioned only in passing in this study (and comprises more music than just the measures cited above), it should be noted that Hepokoski 2004 makes this connection central to his study of *Till Eulenspiegel* as an icon of cultural modernism.

³²Note that both cadences feature an accented rising half-step in the melodic line.

succeeding $d\sharp^7$ (cf. mm. 24–25 and 44–45). Nevertheless, the tonal implication at this point is clearly $c\sharp$ minor. These two moments are presented within their local tonal contexts in Example 8c and 8d.³³ The cadential gesture to A is marked “A” on both, and the gesture to $c\sharp$, “B.” Despite the differences in tonic between the two excerpts, note the similarities in voice leading: in both, the cadential gestures “A” and “B” feature $C\sharp^5$ in the upper voice after a marked drop in register from an earlier A^5 .

Example 6. The Till and Tristan chord as augmented sixth sonorities.

(a) Till, mm. 47–49.

F: +6 I 6

G# A

Bb A

³³The interested reader may wish to compare these sketches with those in Mitchell 1967.

Example 6 cont.

(b) Tristan, mm. 2–3.

a: +6

V⁷

(E) - D

(E)

Example 7. Till, #2–3, and Wagner's Siegfried.

(a) Till, mm. 637–38.

#2 — 3

5

8

Till

Example 7 cont.

(b) Siegfried 319/3/1.

12 — 3 5 8

(*flüchtig-lebhaft sein*)
(with fire, but tenderly)

O Sieg - fried, Herr - li - cher! Hort der Welt!
O Sieg - fried, glo - rious wealth of the world!

poco f *p* *sf*

Augmented Triad

Example 8. Third chains in Till and the Tristan Prelude.

(a) Till, mm. 53–54.

(A: #2 - 3)

A: V I

Example 8 cont.

Till, *mm.* 57–58.

Cl: V I

(b) *Tristan*, *m.* 24.

A: V I

Tristan, *mm.* 43–44.

cl: V VI

Example 8 cont.

(c) Tonal context of tertian chains, *Tristan Prelude*, mm. 1–44.

Measure numbers: 13, 30, 49, 54, 58, 63, 75.

Chord labels: I, III, V₄, V₇, VI.

(d) Tonal context of tertian chains, *Till*, mm. 13–75.

Measure numbers: 3, 17, 21, 24, 32, 36, 44.

Chord labels: VI, VII, IV, V.

At the climactic point of the Prelude (mm. 81–83), an enharmonic version of the Tristan chord is given a fifth-related resolution as a diatonic $\text{ii}^{\#7}$ to V^9 in the implied center of \flat min. (see Example 9a).³⁴ Strauss takes an identical tack in measures 369–75 of his tone poem, extending the Till chord (as did Wagner) before respelling it as $\text{ii}^{\#7}$ of $\text{A}\flat$ in measure 373 (see Example 9b). While Wagner withholds the intended resolution to $\text{E}\flat$ by reverting back to the original augmented sixth function in A at the apex of the Prelude, Strauss allows his V^7 to proceed on to an $\text{A}\flat$ tonic. The impish little polka tune that follows, portraying Till's disappearance down the alley, provides a delightfully satirical comment on Wagner's enharmonic depiction of hope and despair.³⁵

*Example 9. Enharmonic respelling and resolution of the
Till and Tristan chords.*

(a) Tristan, mm. 81–83.

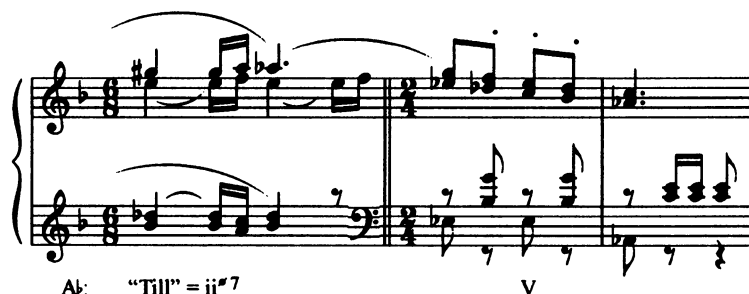
The musical notation shows a piano accompaniment in 6/8 time. The right hand (treble clef) has a melodic line with a slur over four notes: \flat B, \flat A, \flat G, and \flat F. The left hand (bass clef) has a harmonic line with a slur over two chords: \flat B \flat and \flat F. The chords are labeled below the staff as \flat : "Tristan" = $\text{ii}^{\#7}$ and V^9 .

³⁴This resolution of the Tristan chord, which recurs in Act III when Kurvenal is relieved to discover that Tristan is still alive (259/5/1–260/3/2), may be associated with the element of hope.

³⁵In the autograph score the composer prepared for his grandchildren in 1940, he added some ornamental "curlicues" to this clarinet theme.

Example 9 cont.

(b) Till, mm. 373–75.



Even *Till Eulenspiegel's* tonic key seems to imply a Wagnerian connection. As a possible rationale for the F Major tonic of the tone poem, we might consider the two title characters of the works Strauss alludes to in *Till*—Siegfried and Tristan. Not unlike Till, Siegfried is a puerile youth, gallivanting about the countryside following youthful flights of fancy; the case can be made for an association between the key of F major and Siegfried's adventures.³⁶ Siegfried's Horn Call is in F and, after slaying Fafner, Siegfried appropriates the giants' associative f minor—the modal shift to F Major reflecting Siegfried's callow optimism.

But what of Tristan? Raymond Knapp observes that within the prevailing chain of minor thirds in Act I of the opera (A–C–E \flat), each entry of Tristan signals an abrupt shift in the music to F (Schirmer score 19/3/1 in F Major, and 67/1/1 in f minor).³⁷

³⁶From *Siegfried* Act II onward, the key of F major, so often associated with the horn call, is continually linked to the hero's adventures. For examples, see the breaching of the fire surrounding Brünnhilde's rock in *Siegfried* Act III and *Götterdämmerung* Act I, the opening of the Rhine journey, Siegfried's approach to the hall of the Gibichungs, and the encounter with the Rhinedaughters in the initial scene of Act III.

³⁷Knapp 1984, 19.

Tristan's long-awaited arrival in the next act is associated with the dominant (F⁷!) prolongation of B \flat (191/2/1ff). The great majority of the opening scene of Act III is focused around the f minor of the sick knight, including the "Heimat" section in the parallel major (222/3/1ff) and the expected chord at Isolde's arrival (276/1/3–4, where a diminished-seventh is substituted instead). Even the deceptive F goal of the opening portion of the Act I Prelude is marvelously prolonged at Tristan's death (277/3/2–4/1).³⁸

Despite the profound differences in character between Siegfried and Tristan, both share the same fate: each expires at the end of his tale, epitomizing the role of the tragic hero. Till likewise dies, but his is not a heroic passing—it is rather a public pillory and execution. His tale, extant since the 16th century, conveniently befits a satire of Wagner's overblown Teutonic tradition in which the departed hero is gloriously apostrophized by the soprano who is about to join him in spiritual union. While Till's ignominious fate is nothing like Siegfried's or Tristan's, during the section of the tone poem that depicts Till's trial, verdict, and death by hanging, the music reverts for the first time to f minor.³⁹ Could this parallel mode constitute a possible allusion to the same key of Tristan's despair and illness that opens and pervades much of the initial scene in Act III of *Tristan*? Even the G \flat of Strauss's descending major-seventh "Der Tod" motive (Example 10a) may derive from the insistence on this Neapolitan during the extended English horn solo of the shepherd that begins Tristan's third act⁴⁰ (see Example 10b).

³⁸At 29/2/2–4, the F Major (!) anticipation of Isolde's Transfiguration music now initiates a chromatic succession of its opening theme before eventually finding the home-key of the A \flat Major Love Duet in Act II: G \flat = 292/1/2–4, G = 292/3/1–3, and finally A \flat = 293/4/4–5.

³⁹It is hard not to hear a similarity between this music and the execution scene at the conclusion of the "Marche au Supplice" movement of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. Though Berlioz's chord is a G Major (rather than an f minor) triad, the drum roll, repeated chords, and proximity to a high clarinet sonority is shared by both passages.

⁴⁰See Del Mar 1962, 125.

Example 10. F minor, G [flat], Till, and Tristan.

(a) Till, mm. 613–14, “Der Tod.”



(b) Tristan 217/2/3 – 3/2, “Die alte Weise.”



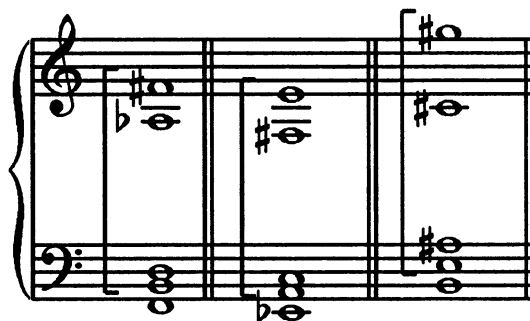
Several other passages could conceivably relate to Wagner's oeuvre, but they are probably more coincidental in nature, indicating Strauss's thorough immersion in the Wagnerian idiom.⁴¹ One is the use of a half-diminished seventh chord over a bass pedal, a frequent sound in both *Götterdämmerung* and *Tristan* (see Example 11). Another is the similarity of mm. 293–99 to Mime's "Starling Song" from *Siegfried*. The use of the low register, bassoons and bass clarinet sonorities; the feeling of triple subdivision; the use of $\flat 2$ in the minor mode; and a descending stepwise line all evoke Mime's sonic character. That this music occurs during the "false teachers" section of *Till's* program seems appropriate, given Mime's relationship to his ward, Siegfried. Another potential

⁴¹In comparison to *Tristan*, for instance: 1. the F Major arpeggiation in the clarinets (mm. 4–5)=the dyadic ascent of the violins in 216/3/7–10; 2. the chromatic segment of the horn solo followed by its appoggiatura-like resolution to C⁵ (G[♯]–A–B \flat –B \sharp –D–C) in mm. 9–10 = the similar melodic profile in 1/3/2–3 of the deceptive cadence in the Prelude, as well as other similar cadential gestures in the opera (for instance, see the climax of the Transfiguration); 3. the diminished-seventh leap of C⁶–D[♯] in mm. 49–50 = the intimated *Tod* motive in the bass of 1/5/4–5 of the Prelude; and 4. the (D) D \sharp –E–G–F \sharp followed by F \sharp –E–D \sharp (1) in mm. 300–303 = the *Tod* motive in Act I (B \sharp ³–C–F \sharp –D); see 16/2/4–5.

Wagner reference is the series of rising minor thirds B \flat –D \flat –E–G from the False Sermon through Till's wooing scene. It is hard not to be reminded of the "Song of Death" rising minor thirds from Act II, scene III of *Tristan* (see Example 12).⁴² Unlike Tristan, however, Till finds that his love is not reciprocated and, in another bow to Wagner, he briefly channels Alberich as he vows vengeance on the human race.⁴³

Example 11. Half-diminished seventh chords over a bass pedal.

Till, mm. 171 *Gd.*, 84/1/1 *Tristan*, 241/2/2



⁴²Rising minor thirds also structure the remainder of the opera from the A \flat Major to B Major of the love duet, to the d minor confrontation with Melot and King Mark, to the f minor of Tristan's delirium, through A \flat again to the concluding B Major of Isolde's Transfiguration.

⁴³Just before this, the opening of Till's horn call is presented in inversion (*cellibassi*, mm. 253–54), perhaps suggesting the protagonist's disappointment.

counterpoint—a favorite device of Wagner's (see Examples 14a and B).⁴⁵ Similar passages may be observed throughout Strauss's score, evoking analogous moments in Wagner, as in the simultaneous statement of the three primary themes of the *Tristan* Prelude that immediately precede its climax (see Example 14c).

Despite the assortment of potential surface references to *Tristan* we have uncovered, the larger formal issues of *Till* remain to be addressed. Strauss sub-titled his tone poem "After the old Roguish Style—in Rondeau [sic]-form."⁴⁶ Muschler has pointed out the composer's specific designation of "Rondeau" rather than the usual German "Rondoform."⁴⁷ While the former is often diagrammed as ABACADA(E), the latter falls into a more typical ABACA(BA) design.⁴⁸ Subsequent scholars have been hard pressed

⁴⁵Until he wrote *Die Meistersinger*, Wagner was not a great contrapuntalist. Early attempts (like the combination of the "Dutchman" and "Sea Storm" themes in *Holländer* (Hd/35/4/1)) are often heterophonic presentations of structurally related themes. In *Till* the superimposition of themes is reminiscent of Wagner in that the "counterpoint" is based more on a layering of thematic ideas than it is on sound contrapuntal precepts of consonance and dissonance.

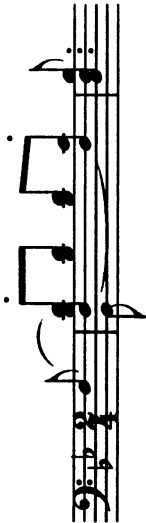
⁴⁶Strauss's marking "*Rondeauform*" on the title page of *Till* is by no means clear in a musical sense. Some English commentaries conjectured that the original title read "Radau" (meaning "racket," as in *radau machen* or "make a racket"), reasoning that the publisher mistook the composer's poor handwriting for "Rondeau." A letter from Strauss himself eventually dispelled this theory, clarifying that "Rondeau" was what he intended for the title page. See W. McNaught 1937. Strauss himself described *Till* as "an expansion of rondo form through poetic content." See Gilliam 1999, 63.

⁴⁷Muschler 1925, 315. In Mozart's time, of course, both spellings were used almost interchangeably. By Strauss's time, "rondo" had become the preferred spelling, as it is today in both German and English. At least one early commentator normalized Strauss's *Rondeauform* to *Rondoform* in the title to his analysis of the work. See Mauke n.d., 92.

⁴⁸For further discussions of *Till*'s form see Lorenz 1925; McNaught 1937; Murphy 1983, 227–29; Gilliam 1997, 349; Werbeck 2003, 123–26; Werbeck 1996, 405–12; Hepokoski 1998, 621–22; and Gilliam 1999, 63. Werbeck's discussion is the most thorough. In it, he summarizes the view of earlier authors who propounded rondo, sonata, scherzo, and four-movement-symphony-in-one forms for *Till*. Werbeck goes on to problematize these essentially 19th-century views of form in terms of both the ritornello-like recurrence of the two main *Till* themes and the work's tonal structure. Ultimately he reads *Till* as a scherzo in spirit (Strauss's *Rondeauform* marking mocks society's formal paradigms in a manner analogous to

Example 13. Themes from Till and the opening of Tristan.

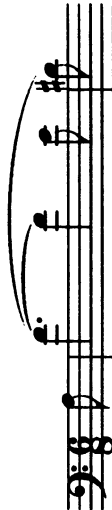
(a) Till, mm. 178–80.



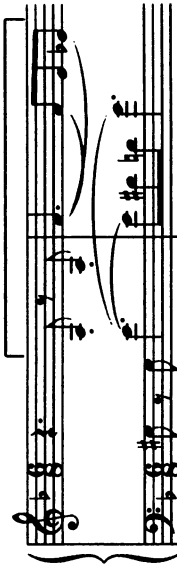
(b) Till, mm. 295–97.



Tristan, mm. 1–2.



(c) Till, mm. 324–25.



*Example 14. Superimposition of themes in Till and Tristan.**(a) Till, mm. 187–90.*

Rising Line from Horn Theme

"Once upon a time"

Detailed description: This musical score is for measures 187-90 of the piece 'Till'. It is written for piano in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score consists of two staves. The upper staff features a melodic line with a bracket above it labeled 'Rising Line from Horn Theme'. The lower staff features a bass line with a bracket below it labeled '"Once upon a time"'. The two themes are superimposed, with the 'Rising Line' often playing over the 'Once upon a time' line.

(b) Till, mm. 339–42.

Rising Line from Horn Theme

Philistines

Detailed description: This musical score is for measures 339-42 of the piece 'Till'. It is written for piano in 3/8 time with a key signature of two flats. The score consists of two staves. The upper staff features a melodic line with a bracket above it labeled 'Rising Line from Horn Theme'. The lower staff features a bass line with a bracket below it labeled 'Philistines'. The two themes are superimposed, with the 'Rising Line' often playing over the 'Philistines' line.

(c) Tristan, mm. 81–82.

"Glance"

"Desire"

"Grief"

Detailed description: This musical score is for measures 81-82 of the piece 'Tristan'. It is written for piano in 3/8 time with a key signature of two flats. The score consists of two staves. The upper staff features a melodic line with a bracket above it labeled '"Glance"'. The lower staff features a bass line with a bracket below it labeled '"Grief"'. The two themes are superimposed, with the 'Glance' line often playing over the 'Grief' line. A third theme, labeled '"Desire"', is indicated by a bracket on the right side of the score, pointing to the upper staff.

to depict the piece in terms of the traditional simple alternation of refrain and episode.⁴⁹ Since Edward Murphy's survey reveals that Del Mar, Kennedy, Grout, Krause, and Green are in no particular agreement, he concludes that "Strauss is having fun with his form at the expense of the analyst. The form is actually a pseudo-rondo and is indeed merely another one of Till's tricks."⁵⁰ Although Strauss's remaking a standard formal archetype is an attractive hypothesis (as well as a convenient analytical "cop out"), it is hard to believe that he did this with music analysts in mind. Perhaps more likely is the supposition that Strauss incorporated this particular term because he intended some semblance of refrain-principle. In fact, he even cited the finale of Beethoven's Eighth as a possible "rondo-like" model. While the Beethoven movement does prominently feature periodic recurrences of the opening theme, it is actually cast in modified sonata form, with a pair of developments and recapitulations.⁵¹ Figure 2 outlines some tonal/formal parallels between Beethoven's work and Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*.

Till's world view) whose structure comprises an amalgamation of rondo, sonata, and variation techniques. Cohesion is achieved via a process of musical intensification (*Steigerung*) of thematic material until the dramatic climax. This conception of formal cohesion in *Till* stands in relief to our view of a thematic refrain principle, sketched out below.

⁴⁹One, Alfred Lorenz, proclaims that the work is cast in sonata form. His Exposition and Recapitulation commence at mm. 6ff and 428ff respectively, while the middle section, or Development, assumes the shape of a rondo (mm. 208ff). See Lorenz 1925.

⁵⁰Murphy 1983, 227–29.

⁵¹Gauldin 1978. Perhaps one of the reasons Strauss was drawn to this work is its idiosyncratic form. During the 1890s Strauss firmly believed that the future of instrumental music lay in single-movement works whose poetic idea led to the creation of their own unique form—a form that could draw upon earlier models without being bound by them. See Strauss's 1888 letter to composer Johann Leopold Bella, cited in translation in Werbeck 2003, 106.

Figure 2. Comparison of tonal areas in *Till Eulenspiegel* and the finale to *Beethoven Symphony no. 8*.

<i>Till Eulenspiegel</i> F major (tonic)	Beethoven Finale F major (tonic)
A \flat major (mm. 374-85 "surprise" modulation via enharmonic reinterpretation of the "Till" chord)	A \flat major (mm. 48-56 "surprise" modulation via deceptive cadence)
C major (mm. 409-27 as V leading back into tonic restatement of principal theme)	C major (mm. 60-85 as V leading back into restatement of principal theme)
a minor (293ff contrapuntal, developmental section)	a minor (mm. 141 contrapuntal, developmental section)
B \flat major (mm. 179-94 follows tonicizations of a and g minor (mm. 141ff and 149ff))	B \flat (mm. 273-78 follows tonicizations of a and g minor in sequence (mm. 257-59))
D major (mm. 367-72 thematic restatement over \sharp)	D major (mm. 346-50 thematic restatement over \sharp)

From a purely thematic perspective then, the model of the work presented in Example 15 would appear to vindicate Muschler's "rondeau" hypothesis. The A section in the example is characterized by the use of three recurring ideas: the introductory "Once upon a time" theme, the horn tune, and the Till chord. (Incidentally, both the horn tune and the "Once upon a time" theme were singled out by Strauss in his letter to Wüllner as the two *Ur-motives* he considered to underlie the entire work.⁵²) These ideas in turn alternate with contrasting episodes. Could this be another compositional device Strauss borrowed from Wagner? Even a cursory analysis of *Tristan* reveals that the "Rondo" principle is not foreign to the design of Wagner's music drama: music from the opening seventeen measures of the Prelude continues to reappear at the same pitch level at crucial points throughout the drama, functioning as a kind of recurring "Refrain," not unlike the opening ideas of *Till Eulenspiegel*.⁵³

⁵²Quirino Principe's attempt to relate these two themes seems tenuous. See Principe 1989, 545.

⁵³See Hepokoski 2004 whose reading of *Till* as a modified rondo differs slightly from the one presented here.

However, this partitioning does not take into account the tonal structure of the work. The sketch of the basic harmonic areas in Example 15 cuts across the "Rondeau" form divisions. The opening refrain and Market passages establish and extend the basic tonic of F Major (mm. 1–112), while the False Sermon, Philistine, and Street Ditty episodes (m. 179ff, m. 293ff, and m. 374ff respectively) outline a descending chromatic bass supporting B \flat Major, a minor, and A \flat Major (IV–iii–bIII).⁵⁴ Moreover, the intervening references to the Refrain motives forsake the original F. A cycle of fifths in the retransition redirects the tonal motion back to tonic via V/V–V–I (mm. 409–428ff) and the Death of Till retains the basic tonal center albeit in the parallel minor. Notice, however, that the melodic line of *Till's* deep middleground features half-step neighbors to $\hat{3}$ —the same melodic and harmonic motions heard so prominently on the surface as part of the Till augmented-sixth (among other places)—before resolving to $\hat{2}$ and $\hat{1}$. As we noted previously, the melodic $b\hat{3}$ to $\hat{3}$ detail is also reiterated during the "trial" music and the coda's quotation from *Siegfried*. Thus, the tonal plan, though not that of a strict "Rondeau" form, still reveals a motivic connection to the work's pervasive $\sharp\hat{2}$ – $\hat{3}$ gesture.

From the large network of references adduced to show *Till's* Wagnerian connections, various listeners may find some more compelling than others. But what do they mean? That is, why might Strauss compose a work so rich in allusion to Wagner's music dramas? One possibility is reading *Till Eulenspiegel* as a concealed musical satire.⁵⁵ As we have witnessed, many details in the score support the reading that Till's tendency to ridicule the establishment is mirrored by Strauss's recasting of material from Wagner's two defining works: *The Ring* and *Tristan*. These works were icons of the musical establishment in *fin-de-siècle* Germany,

⁵⁴Incidentally, the melodic pattern of an ascending fourth followed by falling half-steps (F–B \flat –A–A \flat) produced by these keys duplicates the opening of the Act II love duet "Song of Death" motive from *Tristan*, which is restated at the opening of Isolde's transfiguration.

⁵⁵Many studies exist on the related topics of allusion, borrowing, and resemblance. For example, see Hull 1989, 6–7 and 29–40, who treats this topic with respect to Brahms and provides a serviceable overview of the literature on allusion.

part of a Wagnerian legacy so overblown that it practically begged to be satirized.⁵⁶

Examples abound in which composers have good-naturedly parodied either stylistic practices from certain historical periods or even particular revered pieces. These include Berlioz's mimicry of "fugue d'école" in his Amen on the death of a rat (in the *Damnation of Faust*), Saint-Saëns's references to Offenbach and Berlioz in *The Carnival of the Animals*, and the recasting of the opening measures of *Tristan* as a maudlin popular song in "Golliwog's Cakewalk," to name but a few. The intended references in these citations are made fairly obvious lest the listener miss the point. The possibility of *concealed* satire, however, is quite another question, since it involves a kind of private joke probably known only to the composer or a few select acquaintances. Without supporting external evidence, concealed satire can only be hypothesized through purely *internal* analysis and conjecture. Nevertheless, such speculative investigations can uncover significant musicological insights; while not satirical in nature, the relation between music and architecture in Dufay's *Nuper rosarum flores* and the discovery of Alban Berg's secret mistress were deduced from data based on purely musical considerations.⁵⁷

In the case of *Till*, the composer's history proves suggestive. Strauss's musical personality lent itself to parody and Wagner was a favorite subject: On at least one occasion he improvised a waltz parody on Isolde's Transfiguration,⁵⁸ his *Variationen über 'Das Dirndl is harb auf mi'*, a string trio composed in March 1882 as a sort of

⁵⁶The French wasted no time in doing so; see Faure's salon piece, "Souvenirs de Bayreuth (Fantaisie en forme de la quadrille sur les thèmes, favoris de l'Anneau du Nibelung de Richard Wagner)" and Debussy's "Golliwog's Cakewalk." Modern-day parodies continue, from Anna Russell's famed one-woman *Ring of the Nibelungs* to the Looney Tunes production, "What's Opera Doc?" to a tradition closer to home: In the courtyard of the Steingraebe & Söhne piano factory in Bayreuth each summer, performances of Wagner spoofs like "Parzifal und Lohengruen" and "Parzifal frei nach Wolfram von Eschenbach und Richard Wagner" feature situations in which characters from disparate Wagner operas meet one another on-stage.

⁵⁷See Warren 1973, Wright 1994, and Perle 1995. The musical clues to the "secret program" of the latter were corroborated by markings in Berg's manuscript score.

⁵⁸See Steinitzer 1911, 13.

"inside" joke for family and friends, includes quotes from *The Ring*,⁵⁹ and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* makes use of a humorous quotation of Wagner's Rhine music. Then, of course, there is *Till*. In this case, no external documentation convincingly supports the conscious use of satire on Strauss's part. Yet, while the composer originally preferred to withhold specific programmatic notes on the piece, the sketches indicate that he already had certain tragic-comical connotations in mind.⁶⁰ Although Strauss never publicly admitted any satirical intentions, he justified his initial reluctance to supply an extended program for the piece in his brief letter to Franz Wüllner, adding that "For once, let us leave folk to crack for themselves the nuts that scallywag is handing them."⁶¹ He concluded with "...let the jolly Cologners guess what kind of musical hoax a scallywag [perhaps Strauss himself?] has played on them."

If Strauss did indeed intend a conscious parody of Wagner in *Till*, at this point in his career he would *not* have considered it as a criticism of his predecessor, whose work Strauss held in highest esteem, and whose style he emulated despite his eventual disenfranchisement with the Bayreuth establishment and ultimate

⁵⁹See Kennedy 1999, 19. Since this piece was written before Strauss's "Wagner conversion" it was likely written to please his father. Strauss also parodied Wagnerian *Stabreim* in writing to Ludwig Thuille. See, for instance, Ott 1969, 174.

⁶⁰He did allude to the Finale of Beethoven's Eighth Symphony (also in F Major) as a possible musical model, mentioning its rondo-like form and the interjection of a "tragicomical d minor [sic] episode." See Schuh 1982, 401. The composer's reference to the "d minor episode" is puzzling. This key does appear momentarily in measures 282–93 of the Beethoven, though the "tragic-comical" characteristics are not readily apparent. While one might point to m. 263ff in *Till*, when the prankster vows revenge on the entire human race, the connections are tenuous at best; nor does the discussion of the Finale by Arnold Schering, who perpetuated Bülow's programmatic approach to analysis, shed any light on the subject, despite its numerous examples; see Schering 1955. If, however, Strauss intended D Major (!), then measures 567–73 of the tone poem do closely resemble measures 346–49 of the Beethoven movement; both feature fortissimo thematic statements suspended over a $\frac{1}{2}$ pedal. Another reference to this key occurs in *Till* at measures 435–40.

⁶¹This was written at Wüllner's request for a performance of the work in Cologne on November 5, 1895. The distinction Strauss made between his public and private relationships to his works is well known. See Youmans 1998 for a detailed treatment of this phenomenon with regards to another tone poem.

rejection of Wagnerian metaphysics. That is, *Till* represents a good-natured act of “poking fun” at a revered tradition—an act that is completely in keeping with the character of Till Eulenspiegel himself. Strauss’s rationale for keeping his satire concealed, then, is obvious: while he wore the crown as “Richard III” he could hardly denigrate the tradition upon which his success rested. But this would not prevent him from *privately* remaking Wagner in a comic light.⁶²

Whether the network of references cited in this paper merely constitutes a random collection of remarkable coincidences or, in fact, demonstrates a conscious correlation on Strauss’s part between the music of *Till Eulenspiegel* and the music of Wagner may never be proven conclusively.⁶³ The evidence, however, suggests that a reading of *Till* as concealed musical satire should be, at the least, counted among the viable approaches to this enigmatic work. In either case, Strauss—as Till—will continue perpetuating his joke. It’s hard not to imagine the composer having the last laugh while listening to the “whopping theses” presented here. No doubt, were he alive today, Strauss would celebrate the continued success of *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche*.

⁶²It lies outside the scope of this article to speculate whether Strauss’s recasting of Wagner was intended “just for fun” or whether it contained a deeper Bloomsian anxiety of influence. The application of Harold Bloom’s “anxiety of influence” to the idea of musical influence is most famously explored throughout Straus 1990 (see especially 12–20). The analyses in this article suggest that study of *Till*-as-a-reaction-to-Wagner might pay substantial dividends to the scholar of literary theory willing to invest in such a project.

⁶³Hull 1989, 62–91 provides six criteria for judging the strength of a proposed allusion. These same criteria could be used to evaluate the arguments presented above. They are: 1) Exactitude (The reader will have to judge for him or herself how well this was demonstrated above); 2) Singularity (While chromatic voice leading was “in the air” in *fin-de-siècle* Germany at the time, the use of pervasive accented rising half-steps in Strauss’s tone poems is limited to *Till*); 3) Multiplicity (This study has attempted to provide many examples); 4) Historical Plausibility (undeniable in this case); 5) Prominence and Integrity (The examples cited above were important gestures, themes, and moments in all pieces involved); and 6) Function (Strauss’s parodistic purpose was to remake the music of his predecessor while mocking the musical philistinism of his critics).

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