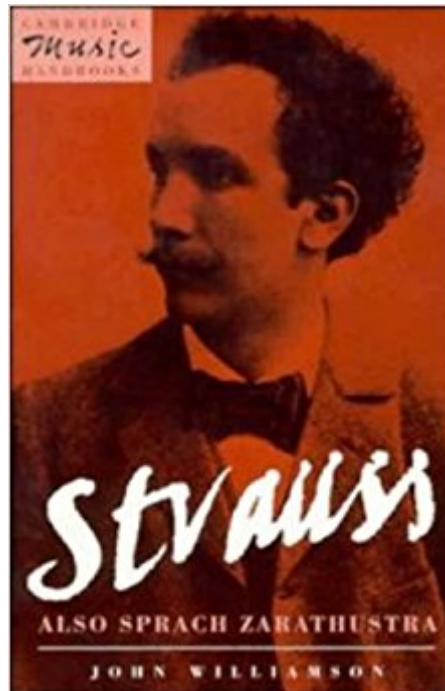




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# Strauss: Also Sprach Zarathustra (Cambridge Music Handbooks)



## Synopsis

Richard Strauss's tone poem *Also sprach Zarathustra* is one of his most controversial works, but it is also one of the staples of the virtuoso orchestra. Its greatest popularity has been achieved in recent years with its association with Kubrick's film *2001--A Space Odyssey*. This guide examines the intellectual background of the work and considers the ways in which it has been received by composers and writers. It also discusses the musical background of Liszt and Wagner which gave rise to the genre "tone poem," and provides an analysis of several aspects of Strauss's musical language.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Although one of Richard Strauss's most controversial works, the tone poem is also a staple of the virtuoso orchestra. This guide examines the work's intellectual background and considers the ways in which it has been received by such composers as Romain Rolland and Bartok.

John Williamson is Reader in Music at the University of Liverpool. He is author of *The Music of Hans Pfitzner* (1992) and the Cambridge Music Handbook *Strauss: Also sprach Zarathustra* (1993).  
--This text refers to the Printed Access Code edition.

I was looking for a book that took one of the tone poems by Strauss and gave a good musical

analysis with historical background. I am a trained amateur musician and I have read several biographies on Strauss, so I thought reading this book would be no problem. Boy, was I wrong. The book feels like a PhD thesis and is quite difficult to read. (I'm not sure if it is a thesis or not.) Actually, it feels more like a parody of a PhD thesis. 90 percent of the book seems completely irrelevant to understanding the piece. The author spends a lot of time on 19th century discussions of program music vs. pure music, and a lot of time on how the music relates to the Nietzsche's work. At times I was totally lost in the abstruse philosophical discussions. There is no comprehensive explanation of how the piece is put together, but rather many separate discussions of different parts of the piece. There are many references to bar numbers, so unless you have the score in front of you, these are useless. There is also some of musical analysis, but with relatively few musical illustrations, most of this is just not understandable. The only good thing about this book is that (including footnotes at the end of the book and the index) it's only 126 pages.

All the volumes in this Cambridge series serve the professional musician, music writer, or serious student of the art. Readers are frequently expected to have the score of the piece nearby in order to get the most out of the books. Each volume provides a comprehensive guide to the origin and publication history of the title work, differing versions and editions, formal structure, and performance history. The scholarship in this series is consistently high. Citations and bibliographic references are plentiful. If you are preparing a performance of one of the growing body of works Cambridge has included in this series, you will definitely want to pick up the guide as part of your study.

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