



CHANDOS

OPERA IN
ENGLISH

THE VALKYRIE

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

CHAN 3038(4)



Richard Wagner

Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

The Valkyrie

First Day of the Festival Play *The Ring of the Nibelung*

Music drama in three acts

Poem by Richard Wagner

English translation by Andrew Porter

Siegmond	Alberto Remedios <i>tenor</i>
Hunding	Clifford Grant <i>bass</i>
Wotan	Norman Bailey <i>bass-baritone</i>
Sieglinde.....	Margaret Curphey <i>soprano</i>
Brünnhilde.....	Rita Hunter <i>soprano</i>
Fricka	Ann Howard <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Valkyries:	
Gerhilde	Katie Clarke <i>soprano</i>
Ortlinde	Anne Conoley <i>soprano</i>
Waltraute	Elizabeth Connell <i>soprano</i>
Schwertleite	Helen Attfield <i>soprano</i>
Helmwige.....	Anne Evans <i>soprano</i>
Siegrune.....	Sarah Walker <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Grimgerde	Shelagh Squires <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Rossweiße	Anne Collins <i>contralto</i>

English National Opera Orchestra
Reginald Goodall

COMPACT DISC ONE

	Time	Page
Act I		
[1] Prelude	4:20	[p. 110]
Scene 1		
[2] 'The storm drove me here' <i>Sigmund, Sieglinde</i>	5:36	[p. 110]
[3] 'This house and this wife' <i>Sieglinde, Sigmund</i>	4:11	[p. 111]
[4] 'Evil fortune's never far from me' <i>Sigmund, Sieglinde</i>	4:17	[p. 112]
Scene 2		
[5] 'There he lay, feeble and faint' <i>Sieglinde, Hunding, Sigmund</i>	3:03	[p. 112]
[6] 'Through field and forest' <i>Sigmund, Hunding, Sieglinde</i>	2:02	[p. 113]
[7] 'Friedmund no one could call me' <i>Sigmund, Hunding, Sieglinde</i>	3:35	[p. 113]
[8] 'The Neidings raided again' <i>Sigmund</i>	3:01	[p. 114]
[9] 'So the Norn who dealt you this fate' <i>Hunding, Sieglinde, Sigmund</i>	4:50	[p. 115]
[10] 'I know a troublesome race' <i>Hunding</i>	6:13	[p. 116]

Scene 3

	Time	Page
[11] 'A sword was pledged by my father' <i>Sigmund</i>	6:41	[p. 117]
[12] 'Are you awake?' <i>Sieglinde, Sigmund</i>	1:12	[p. 118]
[13] 'My husband's kinsmen' <i>Sieglinde</i>	4:48	[p. 118]
[14] 'Yes, loveliest bride' <i>Sigmund, Sieglinde</i>	1:37	[p. 119]
[15] 'Winter storms have vanished' (Sigmund's Spring Song) <i>Sigmund</i>	3:41	[p. 119]
[16] 'You are the Spring' <i>Sieglinde</i>	2:19	[p. 120]
[17] 'Oh sweetest enchantment' <i>Sigmund, Sieglinde</i>	3:21	[p. 121]
[18] 'The stream has shown my reflected face' <i>Sieglinde, Sigmund</i>	4:05	[p. 121]
[19] 'Sigmund call me, and Sigmund am I!' <i>Sigmund</i>	1:33	[p. 122]
[20] 'Sigmund, the Walsung, here you see!' <i>Sigmund, Sieglinde</i>	2:36	[p. 123]

TT 73:06

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act II

Scene 1

	Time	Page
[1] 'Go bridle your horse, warrior maid!' <i>Wotan</i>	2:58	[p. 123]
[2] 'Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!' (Brünnhilde's Battle Cry) <i>Brünnhilde</i>	2:33	[p. 123]
[3] 'The usual storm, the usual strife!' <i>Wotan, Fricka</i>	2:02	[p. 124]
[4] 'Pretend that you don't understand!' <i>Fricka, Wotan</i>	1:37	[p. 124]
[5] 'Now it's come to pass!' <i>Wotan</i>	1:00	[p. 125]
[6] 'So this is the end of the gods and their glory' <i>Fricka</i>	3:36	[p. 125]
[7] 'You never learn what I would teach you' <i>Wotan, Fricka</i>	6:00	[p. 126]
[8] 'What must I do?' <i>Wotan, Fricka</i>	2:21	[p. 128]
[9] 'Hiaha! Hiaha! Hoyotoho!' <i>Brünnhilde, Fricka, Wotan</i>	3:45	[p. 128]

Scene 2

[10] 'Fricka has won the fight' <i>Brünnhilde, Wotan</i>	5:27	[p. 129]
[11] 'When youth's delightful pleasures had waned' <i>Wotan</i>	2:33	[p. 130]
[12] 'She refused to reveal more about it' <i>Wotan, Brünnhilde</i>	2:45	[p. 130]
[13] 'There's more to tell' <i>Wotan</i>	2:25	[p. 131]
[14] 'Yet one can accomplish what I may not' <i>Wotan</i>	2:30	[p. 132]
[15] 'But the Walsung, Siegmund' <i>Brünnhilde, Wotan</i>	1:18	[p. 132]
[16] 'Then Siegmund must fall in his fight?' <i>Brünnhilde, Wotan</i>	3:56	[p. 133]
[17] 'I give you my blessing, Nibelung son!' <i>Wotan, Brünnhilde</i>	1:38	[p. 133]
[18] 'No, have mercy' <i>Brünnhilde, Wotan</i>	3:43	[p. 134]

TT 52:09

	Time	Page
COMPACT DISC THREE		
1	4:24	[p. 135]
		<i>Brünnhilde</i>
Scene 3		
2	3:05	[p. 135]
		<i>Siegmond, Sieglinde</i>
3	4:46	[p. 135]
		<i>Sieglinde, Siegmund</i>
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		<i>Sieglinde, Siegmund</i>
Scene 4		
5	3:19	[p. 137]
		<i>Brünnhilde, Siegmund</i>
6	4:34	[p. 138]
		<i>Siegmond, Brünnhilde</i>

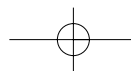
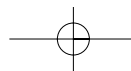
	Time	Page
7	3:51	[p. 138]
		<i>Siegmond, Brünnhilde</i>
8	4:42	[p. 139]
		<i>Siegmond, Brünnhilde</i>
9	2:37	[p. 140]
		<i>Siegmond, Brünnhilde</i>
Scene 5		
10	3:12	[p. 141]
		<i>Siegmond</i>
11	2:09	[p. 141]
		<i>Siegmond, Sieglinde</i>
12	5:55	[p. 142]
		<i>Hunding, Siegmund, Sieglinde, Brünnhilde, Wotan</i>
	TT 47:57	

COMPACT DISC FOUR

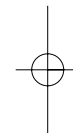
Act III

Scene 1

	Time	Page
[1] 'Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!' (Ride of the Valkyries) <i>Gerhilde, Helmwig, Waltraute, Schwerleite, Ortlinde Siegfrune, Grimgerde, Rossweisse</i>	9:00	[p. 143]
[2] 'Shield me and help' <i>Brünnhilde, The Eight Valkyries</i>	1:25	[p. 147]
[3] 'Hear while I tell you' <i>Brünnhilde, The Eight Valkyries</i>	2:38	[p. 148]
[4] 'Pray suffer no sorrow for me' <i>Sieglinde, Brünnhilde, The Eight Valkyries</i>	3:59	[p. 149]
[5] 'Fly him swiftly, away to the east!' <i>Brünnhilde</i>	1:24	[p. 150]
[6] 'O radiant wonder!' (Parting Salute) <i>Sieglinde</i>	0:49	[p. 151]
[7] 'Stay, Brünnhild!' <i>Wotan, The Eight Valkyries, Brünnhilde</i>	1:07	[p. 151]
Scene 2		
[8] 'Where is Brünnhild?' <i>Wotan, The Eight Valkyries</i>	1:39	[p. 152]
[9] 'Weak-spirited, womanish brood!' <i>Wotan</i>	2:59	[p. 152]
[10] 'Here am I, father' <i>Brünnhilde, Wotan</i>	2:47	[p. 153]
[11] 'No more will you ride from Walhall' <i>Wotan, The Eight Valkyries, Brünnhilde</i>	3:05	[p. 153]



[12] 'Did you not hear what I decreed?' <i>Wotan, The Eight Valkyries</i>	4:56	[p. 154]
Scene 3		
[13] 'Was it so shameful' <i>Brünnhilde, Wotan</i>	3:51	[p. 155]
[14] 'I know so little' <i>Brünnhilde, Wotan</i>	4:00	[p. 156]
[15] 'You, who this love into my heart revealed' <i>Brünnhilde, Wotan</i>	4:06	[p. 157]
[16] 'You indulged your love' <i>Wotan</i>	0:54	[p. 157]
[17] 'Unworthy of you this foolish maid' <i>Brünnhilde, Wotan</i>	3:14	[p. 157]
[18] 'You fathered a glorious race' <i>Brünnhilde, Wotan</i>	2:50	[p. 158]
[19] 'In long, deep sleep' <i>Wotan, Brünnhilde,</i>	3:05	[p. 159]
[20] 'Farewell, my valiant, glorious child!' (Wotan's Farewell) <i>Wotan</i>	5:00	[p. 159]
[21] 'These eyes so warm and so bright' <i>Wotan</i>	7:48	[p. 160]
[22] 'Loge, hear! Come at my call!' <i>Wotan</i>	1:26	[p. 160]
[23] Magic Fire Music <i>Wotan</i>	3:57	[p. 161]



Richard Wagner: The Valkyrie

An Introduction to 'The Ring of the Nibelung'

Wagner conceived the idea of a musical drama on the subject of the Nibelung myth in 1848, at around the time he completed the last of his traditional operas, *Lohengrin*. *The Ring of the Nibelung* can be enjoyed on many levels: as a fairy story, political allegory or philosophical tract, for instance. In essence it deals with the timeless struggle between good and evil and the contrast between the love of power and the power of love. Wotan, chief of the gods, wants power for ultimately benign purposes; Alberich, chief of the Nibelungs, dwarfs who live underground, wants it for his own evil ends. From Monteverdi's *Orfeo* to Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, from Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie* to Weber's *Der Freischütz*, the juxtaposition of light and darkness has fascinated composers of opera. Wagner recognised that all is not black and white but very largely shades of grey. Thus, Wotan resorts to subterfuge and theft and describes himself as the dwarf's alter ego, 'Light-Alberich' while Alberich, who after all acquires the Rhinegold by complying with the

condition that he renounce love, is invested with dignity as well as malignity.

Wagner worked on the words and music for several years, starting with a résumé of the story in prose before embarking on the text of what he called *The Death of Siegfried* ('Siegfrieds Tod'). By December 1856, however, he informed a friend that 'the Nibelungs are beginning to bore me'; indeed he abandoned the *Ring* the following summer and did not resume composition of it until 1869, by which time he had written *Tristan and Isolde* and *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*. From conception to completion the gigantic project took him twenty-six years: years of turmoil both in his personal life and on the political stage of Europe.

It was not just boredom that led him, as he put it, to leave his young Siegfried under the linden tree, where he 'bade him farewell with heartfelt tears'. Having fled Dresden to avoid being arrested for his involvement in the revolution of 1848, he was living as an exile in Zürich with scant prospect of ever seeing the *Ring* staged; and his compositional style was changing so radically that he needed to work it

through, so to speak, with *Tristan*. That he should go on to complete the *Ring* and, through his own efforts, have it performed in a purpose-built theatre is nothing short of a miracle.

His sources included five epics, in Icelandic, Middle High German and Old Norse, all dating from the thirteenth century. As with all his operas, before and after the *Ring*, Wagner wrote his own words. But, to the alarm of his friends, starting with *The Death of Siegfried* he revived an old poetic device called 'Stabreim' that made use of explosive alliteration rather than scansion and rhyme. This was of a piece with his theories, expounded in essays written from his exile in Zürich, which were concerned among other things with the interdependence of verbal and musical sounds and the need for sung words to be audible; from which it followed that ensembles and choruses would no longer be appropriate.

As it turned out, Wagner did not always follow his own precepts: there is a full-blown quintet, as well as choruses galore, in *The Mastersingers*, and a chorus and a trio in the second act of *Twilight of the Gods*. The opera that begins the *Ring* cycle, *The Rhinegold*, provides a good example of Wagnerian theory in practice, but much work lay ahead before

Wagner could start on the music. At first he was planning just one opera, which would end on a note of optimism with the moral and physical superiority of the gods firmly established. The comment by one of his friends that the story required an unrealistic amount of background knowledge on the part of the audience caused him first to expand *The Death of Siegfried* and then to add what we would now call a 'prequel', *Young Siegfried* ('Der junge Siegfried'). Seeing the need for still further expansion backwards, he wrote the texts of *The Valkyrie* and *The Rhinegold*. *Young Siegfried* was eventually renamed *Siegfried* and *The Death of Siegfried* became *Twilight of the Gods*, with significant omissions and changes, one of the latter being to the ending where the gods now perished in the flames of their castle, Valhalla. Acknowledging the influence of the *Oresteia* and the *Prometheus* plays of Aeschylus, Wagner described the *Ring* as a trilogy (*The Rhinegold* being by way of an *hors-d'œuvre*).

In 1854 Wagner was introduced to the writings of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer – 'a grouch of the most pronounced description', as P.G. Wodehouse's Bertie Wooster puts it. The revised ending to the story of the *Ring* had been written before then; but Wagner wrote several different

endings thereafter, while engaged in the compositional stage of the cycle, including one reflecting Schopenhauer's pessimistic view that life was merely the negation of death. Here, Brünnhilde achieves a state of Buddhist enlightenment by arriving at 'the blessed end of everything eternal'. This was not the version he finally set to music, but it is an indication of his state of mind at the time he was composing the end of *The Valkyrie* and the beginning of *Siegfried*.

Having written the texts in the reverse order, Wagner proceeded to compose the music from the beginning: thus he began *The Rhinegold* in 1853, a year after finishing the words, whereas in the case of *Twilight of the Gods*, which he began in 1869, he was setting words that he had written (albeit with later revisions) twenty years earlier. Of course his musical style developed over that period, and the score of the latter opera is considerably more subtle and complex than that of the former. Yet the four operas, disparate as they are, hang together on account of the connecting device known as the leitmotif (from the German *Leitmotiv*, leading motif).

There was nothing new about musical reminiscence in opera. A familiar example is the little phrase on the oboe that tells us, in

Act II of Beethoven's *Fidelio*, that the sleeping Florestan is now dreaming of the wife about whom he has just been singing. Wagner's achievement was to create a network of leitmotifs: short, pregnant phrases associated with individuals, objects, feelings and many other things, that recur in the vocal line and, particularly, in the orchestra. They are much more than the 'visiting cards' derided by Debussy (who was not above using the device himself in *Pelléas et Mélisande*): plain repetition, melodic or harmonic modification, and combination – especially towards the end of the cycle – with other motifs, all serve to create a tightly woven tapestry.

Books have been written that assign names to the various motifs, but the more precise the attempted definition of any of the more abstract ones, the more elusive it can turn out to be. None of this need trouble the first-time listener, who will come to recognise the themes after a few hearings. Not all the connections are obvious, however: it is worth pointing out, to take but one example, the similar contours of the 'Valhalla' and the 'Ring' motifs – noble and sinister, respectively – which confirm, or rather anticipate our impression that Wotan and Alberich are two sides of the same coin.

Of the many delights of the *Ring*, not the least is the orchestration. Wagner employs enormous forces, but time and again it is a single woodwind instrument – oboe, say, or bass clarinet – that will express a situation or give point to a vocal phrase. One of the *Ring*'s most characteristic tone colours is provided by the so-called Wagner tubas (played by members of the eight-strong horn section), which indeed intone the 'Valhalla' motif in the second scene of *The Rhinegold*.

By 1862 Wagner was no longer banned from the German states. In the following year he published an edition of the text of the *Ring* with a foreword in which he expressed the hope that a German prince would provide the money to enable the cycle – still incomplete – to be mounted in a specially built theatre. His prayer was soon answered. The eighteen-year-old crown prince of Bavaria succeeded to the throne as King Ludwig II in 1864. He helped Wagner to pay off his debts, installed him in a house in Munich, provided him with gifts of cash and an annual salary, and encouraged him to proceed with his great work.

Their relationship had its ups and downs, to put it mildly; but it was thanks to Ludwig that *Tristan* and *The Mastersingers* had their premieres at the court theatre, which also saw

revivals of Wagner's earlier operas. Productions of *The Rhinegold* and *The Valkyrie* were given too, much against the composer's will. Wagner was still determined that the complete *Ring* should be performed in its own theatre, under festival conditions. In 1871 he settled on the provincial town of Bayreuth. The building of the new theatre was financed by public subscription, Ludwig stepping in with help at a critical moment. Wagner completed *Twilight of the Gods* in 1874 and *The Ring of the Nibelung* was given its first complete performance in August 1876. By 1889 productions had been seen all over the operatic world; they are still the yardstick by which any opera house aspiring to greatness has to be judged.

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The Valkyrie

Wagner composed the music of *The Valkyrie* between November 1854 and March 1856. If it is the most popular of the *Ring* operas and the one most likely to be performed in isolation, it is not hard to see why. It marks the first appearance in the story of human beings, in contrast to the Rhinemaidens, Nibelungs, giants and gods of *The Rhinegold*.

An impassioned performance of the love duet in Act I can stir the members of an audience deeply and long enough for them to forget the uncomfortable fact that Siegmund and Sieglinde are brother and sister who are about to commit incest as the curtain falls.

The end of the opera, too, as Wotan takes a long leave of his favourite daughter (Brünnhilde, the Valkyrie of the title), is an emotional situation with which everyone can identify: the audience is moved by the feelings of the father even more than by the predicament of the god. After all the sound and fury of the 'Ride of the Valkyries', Sieglinde's ecstatic outpourings and Wotan's rage, the quiet near-immobility of the last scene provides a deeply satisfying close.

Act I begins with a storm, through which Siegmund is running away from his enemies. He runs away at the end of the act, too; and if this, combined with his self-pity, makes him at first seem one of the *Ring's* less attractive characters, Wagner forces us to sympathise with him by providing him with music of both tenderness and power. Sieglinde, it has been said, is the only truly sympathetic person in the *Ring* (perhaps the lovelorn giant Fasolt comes close): her music is all tenderness, from the moment she fetches the wounded

Siegmund a drink of water. Her growing excitement as she tells the story of the old man who embedded a sword in the tree, with the 'Valhalla' and the 'Sword' motifs surging away in the orchestra, is one of the supreme moments in the opera.

In Act III Sieglinde, on learning that she is to give birth to Siegfried, 'the noblest hero of all', expresses her joy in the motif generally called 'Redemption', which does not recur until the very end of *Twilight of the Gods*. She stumbles off, never to be seen again (we learn of her fate in *Siegfried*). Once the assembled Valkyries have fled in terror of their father's wrath, the scene belongs to Wotan and Brünnhilde. Their dialectical exchange recalls the argument between Wotan and Fricka in Act II, with the difference that there Wotan is worn down by Fricka's remorseless logic, whereas here there is a rapprochement of sorts.

Glorious though the outer acts are, it is perhaps Act II that shows Wagner at his greatest. The five scenes encompass Wotan's all-too-brief joy when he orders Brünnhilde to protect Siegmund in the battle with Hunding, and his utter despair at having to acknowledge instead the incontrovertible necessity of the death of Siegmund and therefore the end of his plans to restore the gold to the

Rhinemaids by means of a free agent. In between comes the scene with Fricka, followed by the monologue, much of it in recitative, where in talking to Brünnhilde he is really communing with himself. (In this recording you can almost feel the audience hanging on every word of Norman Bailey's gripping narration.) Wotan welcomes the end of his power and tells how Alberich is working to bring this about by seducing a woman for gold in order to father an ally (thus implying that Siegfried and Alberich's son Hagen, who meet in *Twilight of the Gods*, are almost exact contemporaries).

After a scene for the fleeing lovers, Brünnhilde makes her solemn appearance before Siegmund as the messenger of death. He asks her six questions, to each of which she replies. For Siegmund's own response, refusing to follow her to Valhalla without Sieglinde, Wagner emphasises the point by raising the pitch of each phrase in a kind of ratchet effect. Siegmund's steadfastness leads ultimately to Brünnhilde's acquiring an understanding of human love, with momentous consequences. Finally there is Siegmund's tenderness over the sleeping Sieglinde, her brief nightmare and the fatal fight. Within the span of just a few seconds Wotan and the orchestra express

contempt for Hunding, sorrow at Siegmund's death and rage at Brünnhilde's disobedience: a concise and powerful end to a faultlessly paced act.

The Valkyrie was first performed in Munich in June 1870. Its first performance as part of the complete *Ring* cycle was at the Bayreuth Festival in August 1876.

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Reginald Goodall – a personal appraisal by Brian Ward

Occasionally one arrives for a concert or an opera in a state of mind which makes it virtually impossible to enjoy the performance and there is no doubt that the evening of 5 March 1954 looked like being one of those occasions.

Everything had gone wrong: I had driven down to Croydon particularly to hear *Die Walküre* with Ludwig Hofmann, a famous pre-war German high bass, in the role of Wotan, but having been late leaving the office I had then had a tyre blow-out in the middle of the rush hour traffic and had eventually arrived to find that Mr Hofmann was not appearing. Five hours later I left the Davis Theatre in such a state of high excitement that I would

have happily walked home having heard a performance such as I had only imagined possible under the direction of Knappertsbusch or Furtwängler. The conductor that night was Reginald Goodall.

Of course I had heard, and admired, a great deal of Mr Goodall's work at Covent Garden in the immediate postwar years when he had regularly conducted what seem now to be such unlikely works as *Carmen*, *Manon*, *La traviata*, *Aida* and *Il trovatore* but nothing had prepared me for a Wagnerian interpretation of such deep understanding and nobility as that which I heard that evening.

From that moment on I thought much of the possibility of a *Ring* under Mr Goodall's guidance but as time went on it became quite apparent that this was not to be. There were revivals, under his direction, of *Gloriana* and *Boris Godunov*, of *Fidelio* and *Turandot*, of *Peter Grimes*, *Wozzeck* and *Troilus and Cressida* but nothing prepared from scratch by Mr Goodall. It was not until seven years later that I heard another Wagner performance which made me realise, once again, just what a great Wagner conductor we had and just how much he was neglected.

This occasion, in October 1960, was a *Tannhäuser* revival at Sadler's Wells to which I

had gone with a certain amount of trepidation feeling that the small Sadler's Wells Orchestra and the somewhat dry acoustic of the Theatre were unlikely to suit a work of this nature. In the event I was confounded and heard a performance which, despite some vocal deficiencies, was, in its way, as thrilling as that marvellous Croydon *Walküre* some years previously.

Up to this time Mr Goodall's Wagner had not aroused much interest amongst the music critics, but of *Tannhäuser* Peter Heyworth wrote in *Opera*:

Mr Goodall has a splendid sense of the music's breadth and grandeur, yet there is no inertia or lack of liveliness in his tempi and rhythms. The spaciousness he gives the score enables every detail to emerge with unflustered ease, yet his reading never lacks dramatic excitement, and his timing of climaxes is unerring. Above all he has a remarkable ability to reveal one of Wagner's immense acts as a single unfolding entity – and that is no mean achievement in a work in as many ways as immature as *Tannhäuser*. His climaxes indeed achieve such extraordinary power in relation to the slim resources at his command because they arise out of the music's organic development.

Mr Goodall is an authoritative interpreter of

Wagner. It is profoundly to be hoped that his reappearance at Sadler's Wells represents an appreciation of his rare talents more acute than that shown by Covent Garden on whose staff he is.

Like Mr Heyworth I, too, hoped for more of Mr Goodall but not a bit of it: the following season at Covent Garden he conducted nothing at all. Whilst in the 1962/63 season there was just one *The Golden Cockerel*, after that there were no more performances for the next five years. It was not until the beginning of 1968 that we had the opportunity of hearing this extraordinary man again. This time, however, it was in a series of performances that shook the opera-going public, and the critics, to the core. It had been announced that as the two Sadler's Wells Companies were in London simultaneously there would be a new production of *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg* utilising the resources of the combined Companies, and on 31 January 1968 the first of a great series of Wagner performances took place. At last we had a production which had been prepared and not simply revived, and at last we could see just what Mr Goodall could do in the way of forming a house style with the collaboration of dedicated artists such as Norman Bailey,

Alberto Remedios, Gregory Dempsey, Derek Hammond Stroud and, subsequently, Clifford Grant.

I was lucky enough to see several *Mastersingers* at Sadler's Wells and the Coliseum and, although I had seen a number of performances under Rankl, Krauss and Beecham and had heard many broadcasts from Bayreuth, to me they were a revelation; to the critics, too, for they at once started writing of Mr Goodall as being 'the greatest Wagner conductor alive today'; a fact of which some of us had been aware for fifteen years. Subsequent events are, of course, well known: the rumours of a *Ring* cycle, the new production at the Coliseum of *The Valkyrie* and the gradual build-up over the years of a complete cycle which was first heard in August 1973 with the house six times oversubscribed!

Many of the original singers who appeared in the 1968 *Mastersingers* also appeared in the *Ring* operas but Mr Goodall had enlisted the aid of several newcomers (newcomers to major Wagner roles, that is): in addition to splendid contributions by the above mentioned in the roles of Wotan/Wanderer, Siegmund/Siegfried, Mime, Alberich and Hagen/Hunding we had the magnificent Brünnhilde of Rita Hunter and quite extraordinarily convincing

impersonations by such stalwarts as Emile Belcourt, Ann Howard and Katherine Pring to name but a few of the many who made these performances so memorable.

Nevertheless, although he would be the first to deny it, it is Reginald Goodall who is the real hero, whose genius was the driving force behind the Sadler's Wells *Ring* and to whom all true Wagner lovers should be eternally grateful.

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Events preceding 'The Valkyrie'

In *The Rhinegold* Alberich, the Nibelung dwarf, has stolen the gold that was guarded by the Rhinemaidens and, by renouncing love, has been able to fashion a ring giving him mastery of the world. With this he descended to Nibelheim and enslaved the Nibelungs, forcing them to mine more gold for him.

The giants Fasolt and Fafner, having constructed Valhalla (German, 'Walhall') for Wotan, demanded as payment Freia, the goddess of Youth and Beauty, but Wotan, prompted by the fire-spirit Loge, offered them the Nibelung gold instead. This they accepted. Wotan and Loge descended to Nibelheim and tricked Alberich out of his treasure: the magical Tarnhelm whose wearer may change

shape at will, and the ring, which Wotan intended to keep for himself. The giants, however, were only content after everything had been relinquished, including the ring. At first Wotan refused to part with the ring, but heeding the earth-spirit Erda, who warned him of the curse Alberich has laid on it, he eventually surrendered it.

Immediately, the curse took effect for Fafner killed Fasolt and took all the treasure. Uneasy at the outcome of these events, Wotan and the gods nonetheless entered Valhalla in triumph, accompanied by the lament of the Rhinemaidens for their lost gold.

Synopsis

Compact Disc One

Act I

Inside a dwelling

[1] A storm is heard to be raging before the rise of the curtain. When it subsides a man hurries in, clearly the exhausted victim of a hunt. [2] He collapses on the rug before the fire, exclaiming his need of rest no matter whose house it be. A woman comes from inside, disturbed by the noise, astonished to see a stranger, but relieved to find him alive

though unconscious. The man calls for a drink, and she fetches water in a drinking-horn to revive him. [3] He learns that she and the hut belong to her husband Hunding. She brings him a drink of mead from the larder, and the music tells us that they have fallen in love. [4] But the man attempts to hurry away, to avert ill-luck from his hostess – she answers that ill-luck is already at home here. He tells her that his name is Wehwalt (Woeful countenance).

Hunding, heralded by a menacing call on the Bayreuth tubas, returns home. [5] The woman explains that she has succoured a fugitive. [6] Hunding proclaims the sanctity of his hearth, remarks on the likeness of the two and asks the guest's history. [7] – [8] Wehwalt explains that his mother was killed by bandits and his twin sister abducted when he was a boy; his father, nicknamed Wolfe, had brought him up, then disappeared. He himself was shunned by all men. [9] He had reached Hunding's hut after a fight in which he went to aid a girl who was being forced into a loveless marriage. She and all her folk were killed; only Wehwalt escaped.

[10] Hunding rises in wrath; this was the enemy against whom his kinsmen had called him, now found sheltering in his own home.

Hospitality binds them for the night, but on the morrow they must fight to the death. He dispatches his wife to make his night's drink – she goes unwillingly, with many significant glances at the tree-trunk round which the hut is built. Hunding, with a final warning, follows her.

[11] The light has faded. Wehwalt is alone, unarmed; he can only remember that Wolfe had promised him a sword when he should need one. 'Wälse! Wälse!' he calls on his father, 'Where is the sword?' And the fire's last embers shed a light on the tree in which a sword is embedded – from the orchestra a trumpet calls the theme of the magic sword.

[12] In the darkness Hunding's wife returns; she has given her husband a heavy sleeping draught, and now begs the stranger to win the sword. [13] At her wedding a grey-clad stranger had entered and plunged this sword in the tree. The orchestra tells us that he was Wotan. None of the guests could withdraw it; she knew then that it was put there for her saviour – would he might be Wehwalt! [14] They fall into each other's arms, and are suddenly illuminated by bright moonlight that seems to be bestowing nature's benison on their love. [15] Spring and its sister Love, says Wehwalt, are united in wedlock. [16] – [17] The woman hails

Wehwalt as her Spring, and as their loving exchanges proceed ^[18] it dawns upon her that he is closer to her than anything save her own reflection, the echo of her own voice. When he mentions that his father was not Wolfe but Wälse and he a Wälsung, she is overcome with joy. She knows that he is her brother, and she gives him his original, rightful name Siegmund (Victor). ^[19] – ^[20] He jumps up, leaps to the tree, pulls out the sword and, calling out its name, Notung (Needful), offers it as his bridal gift. The woman reveals that she is his sister Sieglinde. ‘The blood of these Wälsungs is blessed!’ he cries, embracing her as the curtain falls.

Compact Disc Two

Act II

A wild, craggy summit

^[1] Their escape is portrayed in the orchestral prelude to the second act, a wild and passionate symphonic treatment of themes associated with Notung, flight, and the love of Siegmund and Sieglinde for each other. Gradually the music becomes more thunderous and grandiose to prepare for the immortals among whom the action now passes. From the rocky height Wotan is

surveying the scene with his favourite daughter, the Valkyrie maiden Brünnhilde. He orders her, as the instrument of his own will, to protect Siegmund in the approaching affray with Hunding. ^[2] Joyously Brünnhilde calls her war-cry of ‘Hojotoho!’ She warns Wotan to prepare himself too; his wife Fricka, guardian of domesticity, is coming this way in her ramchariot.

^[3] Fricka has come to insist on the triumph of matrimonial decency and the punishment of the incestuous lovers. ^[4] – ^[5] If she were to bless the love of Siegmund and Sieglinde, as Wotan wishes, the moral superiority of the gods would be at an end. She taxes him with all his past infidelities and, ^[7] when he explains the need of a free agent, counters that his chosen agent Siegmund is not free at all but has been guided all along by Wotan. He cannot therefore perform his task. ^[8] Miserably Wotan concedes, point by dreadful point, all that she demands: Siegmund must be slain by Hunding; neither Wotan nor Brünnhilde shall protect him; the sword shall lose its magic power. ^[9] Triumphant Fricka commands Brünnhilde, on her return, to receive Wotan’s new orders. ^[10] Wotan pours out his indignation and misery to her. ^[11] – ^[13] He retraces to her, as if to himself, the sources of

this crucial conflict, recalling the events of *The Rhinegold* – a recapitulation structurally necessary to Wagner’s symphonic plan, not simply a method of bringing audiences up to date. ^[14] – ^[15] The narration confirms Wotan’s belief that the outcome must be the end of everything, unless a hero of his own free will intervenes and prevents this, the end for which ^[16] Alberich the Nibelung is striving, and for which he has by bribery begotten a son, Hagen. ^[17] – ^[18] Wotan gives Brünnhilde her orders: fight for Fricka and put aside Wotan’s own will.

Compact Disc Three

^[1] Wotan storms away; Brünnhilde leaves the scene more slowly, in deep dejection. ^[2] The flight music is heard again as Siegmund and Sieglinde hasten to the spot. ^[3] – ^[4] Sieglinde is unwilling to rest even for a moment – already she imagines the sounds of Hunding in pursuit. But fatigue is stronger than fear and she falls senseless in Siegmund’s arms. ^[5] – ^[6] As he supports her thus, sitting upon a rock, Brünnhilde like a figure in a dream appears before him, warning him of his approaching death and journey with her to the hall of heroes in Valhalla. ^[7] – ^[8] Siegmund

refuses, however, to be parted from Sieglinde and threatens to slay her and her unborn child. ^[9] Brünnhilde decides to save them both and defy Wotan (though of course she is only preparing to do what Wotan really desires). She hurries away.

^[10] Siegmund gently lays the sleeping Sieglinde on the ground and prepares for the fight as Hunding’s horn-call is heard. ^[11] Sieglinde awakes from a nightmare to find herself alone, just as ^[12] Siegmund is confronted at the mountain-pass by Hunding. Brünnhilde hovers above, protecting Siegmund, but suddenly Wotan appears. Siegmund’s sword breaks on Wotan’s spear leaving Hunding free to strike his opponent dead. Brünnhilde quickly turns and carries away Sieglinde who has fainted. Wotan stands over Hunding and with a wave of the hand dispatches his spirit to Fricka as messenger of her victory. But he promises a dreadful punishment for Brünnhilde’s disobedience.

Compact Disc Four

Act III

On the summit of a rocky mountain

^[1] The orchestral prelude describes the journey through the air of the Valkyries

(Wotan's warrior-daughters mothered by the earth-goddess Erda) as they ride to their meeting place on a mountain-top. At curtain rise they are seen assembling here, one by one, before riding together to Valhalla with the bodies of heroes slain in battle. [2] Last of all comes Brünnhilde, carrying on her saddle not the dead Siegmund but the living Sieglinde. [3] Brünnhilde entreats her Valkyrie sisters to help her hide Sieglinde; Wotan is riding in pursuit and will soon deal out vengeance to them both. No other Valkyrie dares brave Wotan's anger, and [4] Sieglinde herself longs only for death, until Brünnhilde tells her of the Wälzung hero who is growing to life in her womb: Sieglinde's only safety is in flight alone to a deep forest guarded by Fafner the dragon; [5] there she must bear her child in hiding, give him the fragments of his father's sword, and call him Siegfried. [6] Sieglinde pours out her gratitude and joy in a glorious outburst of lyricism before hurrying away. [7] Brünnhilde hides among her Valkyrie sisters as Wotan storms to the mountain-top, calling angrily for her. [8] – [9] Scornful of the Valkyries' pleas for mercy he orders her to show herself. [10] She has created her own punishment, for she is part of him; he passes sentence; she is no longer a Valkyrie, [11] no longer an inhabitant

of Valhalla, she may see Wotan no more; here on this rock she shall sleep defenceless for the first passer-by to take for himself and make his domestic chattel. [12] Wotan sends the protesting Valkyries on their way.

[13] – [14] Brünnhilde lies prostrate. After a long pause she begins to defend herself; she has only done what was Wotan's true will. [15] – [17] She sheltered Siegmund because she loved him. Wotan created that love, and with it the will to disobey Fricka. She has fulfilled, not betrayed, her duty. Wotan is moved but not deflected. [18] She reminds him of the Wälzung, his own children, and seeks to turn him by revealing that she has saved Sieglinde with her unborn child, and the sword that Wotan made; Wotan reminds her that it was he who shattered it. Brünnhilde's fate cannot be changed; [19] she must be exposed in magic sleep. [20] – [21] One thing he concedes; she shall be ringed with magic fire that will at least repel cowards. Wotan raises her from the ground and begins to bid her farewell.

With a kiss on the eyes he removes her godhead from her and plunges her in sleep, then lays her down on the mountain with her helmet and spear. [22] Solemnly he points his spear at a rock and calls up Loge, spirit of fire, to ring the peak with flame. [23] Wotan casts a

spell on the mountain: no-one who fears his spearpoint shall pass through the magic fire. Slowly the god departs. His power is finished. The destiny of the world rests with his unborn hero-grandson Siegfried, and with the demi-goddess now reduced to mere womanhood and lying alone upon this mountain.

William Mann, 1976

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Alberto Remedios, among the leading British heroic tenors of his generation, studied in Liverpool with Edwin Francis and at the Royal College of Music and made his debut with Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera) as Tinca in *Il tabarro*. His numerous roles with that company include Don Ottavio, Tamino, Max (*Der Freischütz*), Alfredo, Faust (in both Gounod's opera and *The Damnation of Faust* by Berlioz), Des Grieux (*Manon*), Samson (*Samson and Delilah*), Lenski, Erik (*The Flying Dutchman*), Lohengrin, Walther (*The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*), Tristan, Siegmund, Siegfried and Bacchus (*Ariadne on Naxos*). He made his debut at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden as Dimitri (*Boris*

Godunov) and returned to sing Florestan, Aeneas (*Les Troyens*), Max, Erik, Siegfried, Bacchus and Mark (Sir Michael Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*). He has also performed with Welsh National Opera and Scottish Opera and spent two years with Frankfurt City Opera. He made his debut at The Metropolitan Opera, New York as Bacchus and has also appeared in San Francisco (as Dimitri and Don Carlos), in Los Angeles, San Diego and Seattle (as Siegfried), in Boston (as Gounod's Faust) and at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires (as Peter Grimes). With Dame Joan Sutherland he toured Australia singing Edgar (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Alfredo, Lenski and Faust, and a close association with that country has involved performances as Florestan, Siegmund, Radames and Otello with Opera Australia as well as appearances in Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane. Alberto Remedios received a CBE in the 1981 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

The Australian bass **Clifford Grant** trained in Sydney, Melbourne and London, and made his operatic debut with the New South Wales Opera Company as Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He joined Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera), where he has

appeared as Seneca (*The Coronation of Poppea*), the Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*), Sarastro (*The Magic Flute*), Silva (*Ermani*), Padre Guardiano (*The Force of Destiny*), Philip II (*Don Carlos*), King Henry (*Lohengrin*), Pogner (*The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*), Fafner, Hunding and Hagen (*The Ring of the Nibelung*) and in leading roles in *The Barber of Seville*, *Rigoletto*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Manon*, *Oedipus Rex* and *Peter Grimes*. Other engagements have included Doctor Bartolo (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden; roles in *Nabucco* and *Die Zauberflöte* at Welsh National Opera; Nettuno (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) at Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Hunding at L'Opéra de Marseille; Alidoro (*La Cenerentola*), Oroveso (*Norma*), Matteo (Auber's *Fra Diavolo*), Sparafucile (*Rigoletto*), the King (*Aida*), Lodovico (*Otello*), and Hagen, as well as roles in *I puritani*, *Il trovatore* and *Tannhäuser* at San Francisco Opera; and Nilakantha (Delibes's *Lakmé*) and Pimen (*Boris Godunov*) in Sydney. After appearing in Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* with Opera Australia in 1990 he retired from opera but returned to the stage in 1993 to sing Alvisé Badoero in *La Gioconda* with Opera North. He has collaborated with such distinguished artists as Dame Joan

Sutherland, Otto Klemperer, Sir Adrian Boult and Sir Colin Davis.

Born in South Africa, the bass-baritone **Norman Bailey** studied in Vienna and spent his early career singing in Austria and Germany. He then returned to the United Kingdom where he has sung with all the major opera companies. As one of the leading Wagner singers of his generation he is associated particularly with the title role in *Der fliegende Holländer* and Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. He has also sung the Landgraf in *Tannhäuser* with Opera North and Wotan/the Wanderer and Gunther with English National Opera, where as company member he also sang Pizarro (Beethoven's *Leonore*), Count di Luna (*Il trovatore*), Alfio (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Scarpia (*Tosca*), the Father (*Hansel and Gretel*), Prince Gremin (*Eugene Onegin*), Kutuzov (Prokofiev's *War and Peace*) and the Forester (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) among other roles. With The Royal Opera, Covent Garden he has appeared as Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*), also on tour to Palermo) and as Germont (*La traviata*), Ford (*Falstaff*), Wolfram (*Tannhäuser*), Kurwenal (*Tristan und Isolde*), Donner (*Das Rheingold*), Wotan (*Die*

Walküre), Klingsor and Amfortas (*Parsifal*), Jochanaan (*Salome*) and the Music Master (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). Recent roles have included Oroveso (*Norma*), Banquo (*Macbeth*), the King (*Aida*), the Doctor (*Wozzeck*) and Schigolch (*Lulu*). His international career has taken him to major opera stages and festivals throughout Europe and the United States, including several seasons at Bayreuth, and to collaborations with conductors such as Sir Colin Davis, Sir Georg Solti, James Levine, Carlo Maria Giulini, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Claudio Abbado and Daniel Barenboim. For Chandos he has recorded the title role in Sir Michael Tippett's *King Priam*.

Born in Douglas on the Isle of Man and trained at the Birmingham School of Music, the lyric soprano **Margaret Curphey** toured with Opera for All and spent two years in the chorus of the Glyndebourne Festival before joining Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera), where she debuted as Micaela (*Carmen*) and went on to sing La Musica (Monteverdi's *Orfeo*), the Countess (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Pamina, Ninetta (*The Thieving Magpie*), Mary Stuart (Donizetti's opera of that name), Violetta,

Elisabeth de Valois (*Don Carlos*), Santuzza (*Cavalleria rusticana*), both Mimì and Musetta (*La bohème*), Marguerita (Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust*) and Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*) among many other roles. Her renowned Wagnerian performances with the company have included Elsa (*Lohengrin*), Eva (*The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*), Sieglinde, Brünnhilde and Gutrune. She participated in the British premiere of Mozart's *Lucio Silla* at the Camden Theatre, has made guest appearances on several opera stages on the European continent, won a medal at the International Competition in Sofia, Bulgaria, and also enjoyed an active career as a concert singer.

Having trained in Liverpool with Edwin Francis and later with Dame Eva Turner among others, the dramatic soprano **Rita Hunter** toured with the Carl Rosa Opera Company before becoming a principal at Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera), where she sang Marcellina, Donna Anna, Odabella (*Attila*), Leonora (*Il trovatore*), Amelia (*A Masked Ball*), Elisabeth de Valois (*Don Carlos*), Santuzza, Musetta (*La bohème*), Senta and Fata Morgana (Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges*) among other roles. She

attracted worldwide attention in the early 1970s for her performances as Brünnhilde, a role she has since performed all over the world, and soon made her debut in Berlin, at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, The Metropolitan Opera, New York (returning for several consecutive seasons), in Munich, San Francisco, New Orleans and Australia, a country to which she developed specially close ties, settling there permanently in 1985. She has also performed with Welsh National Opera, at the Pacific Northwest Festival in Seattle (as Brünnhilde in the complete *Ring* cycle) and at major festivals at home and abroad. She has achieved great success in the Italian repertoire of Norma, Abigaille (*Nabucco*), Lady Macbeth, Leonora and Aida, but has also performed leading roles in *Idomeneo*, *Turandot*, *Lohengrin*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Elektra*. She has performed with such distinguished artists as Birgit Nilsson (Sieglinde to her own Brünnhilde at The Metropolitan Opera), Carlo Maria Giulini, Lorin Maazel, Sir Yehudi Menuhin, Sir Simon Rattle and Richard Hickox. Rita Hunter has received many honours including, in 1980, a CBE.

Having won a Royal Opera Scholarship, the London-born mezzo-soprano **Ann Howard**

studied in Paris and upon her return from France joined Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera) where her roles have included Azucena, Princess Eboli, Musetta (*La bohème*), Carmen, Delilah, Conception (*L'Heure espagnole*), Ortrud (*Lohengrin*), Brangäne, Fricka, the Witch (*Hansel and Gretel*), the Composer (*Ariadne on Naxos*), Baba the Turk (*The Rake's Progress*), Katisha (*The Mikado*), the Fairy Queen (*Iolanthe*) and Auntie (*Peter Grimes*). She has also appeared with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden (Amneris), Welsh National Opera (the Duchess in *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* and in Sir Peter Maxwell Davies's *The Doctor of Myddfai*), Scottish Opera (Brangäne, Fricka, Cassandra in *Les Troyens* and the Old Lady in Bernstein's *Candide*) and Opera North (the Hostess in *Boris Godunov*). Dividing her international career between the European continent and North and South America she has made operatic appearances throughout France, at the Bavarian State Opera, Vienna State Opera, Teatro San Carlo in Naples, in Genoa and Lisbon, and in Edmonton, Montreal, Los Angeles, New York (both The Metropolitan Opera and New York City Opera), Washington D.C., Baltimore, New Orleans, Santa Fe, Mexico and Santiago.

Elizabeth Connell has established her reputation in the dramatic soprano repertoire, particularly the operas of Beethoven, Wagner and Strauss. Following her debut at the Wexford Opera Festival she performed in Prokofiev's *War and Peace* at the opening of the Sydney Opera House and has maintained a close relationship with Opera Australia. Her international career has taken her to opera houses and festivals throughout Europe and North America in a repertoire that includes *Idomeneo*, *Norma*, *Nabucco*, *Attila*, *Macbeth*, *Don Carlos*, *Fidelio*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, *Elektra* (the title role), *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Jenůfa* (Kostelnicka) and *Peter Grimes*. Conductors with whom she has collaborated include Claudio Abbado, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Carlo Maria Giulini, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir Edward Downes, Sir Colin Davis, Mark Elder, Lorin Maazel, James Levine and Seiji Osawa.

The international career of the soprano **Anne Evans** has taken her to major operatic stages throughout Europe and in North and South America in a repertoire that centres particularly on German opera, from Beethoven (*Leonore* in *Fidelio*) to Strauss (the

Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Ariadne*), with specially notable successes in the Wagnerian roles of Brünnhilde, Isolde and Sieglinde. She appeared at the Bayreuth Festival under Daniel Barenboim from 1989 to 1992 and has participated at the Ravello and Edinburgh Festivals as well as the BBC Promenade Concerts (on the 'Last Night of the Proms'). In Great Britain she has sung with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera and Scottish Opera and performed in concert and recital at the Royal Festival Hall, Royal Albert Hall (under Bernard Haitink) and the Wigmore Hall.

The mezzo-soprano **Sarah Walker** has enjoyed an outstanding career as a singer in recital and opera and has appeared at festivals, concert halls and opera houses throughout Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand with many of the world's most distinguished conductors, singers and accompanists. Her operatic repertoire ranges from Claudio Monteverdi (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* and *L'incoronazione di Poppea*) and Francesco Cavalli (*La Calisto*) to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies (*Taverner*) and Aulis Sallinen (*The King Goes Forth to France*). She is closely associated

with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden and has also performed frequently with English National Opera. Her numerous recordings reflect the vast range of her repertoire and include, on Chandos, music by Manuel de Falla (*Love the Magician*) and Mozart (Requiem) as well as *Julius Caesar* and *Faust*, both in association with the Peter Moores Foundation. Sarah Walker received a CBE in the 1991 Queen's Birthday Honours List.

The contralto **Anne Collins** joined the Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera), where her repertoire included *The Coronation of Poppea*, *Count Ory*, *A Masked Ball*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Arabella* and several roles, including most famously Erda, in Wagner's *Ring* cycle. She has sung frequently with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Welsh National Opera, Opera North and Scottish Opera, and has appeared at the Glyndebourne, Aldeburgh, Wexford and Camden Festivals and at the BBC Promenade Concerts. She has performed in concert, at festivals and with opera companies throughout Europe, including the opera houses of Lyon, Strasbourg, Geneva and Hamburg, the Paris Opéra and Châtelet théâtre musical, the Théâtre royal de la Monnaie in Brussels and the Teatro alla Scala

in Milan. American appearances have included The Metropolitan Opera in New York. She has made many recordings, among them, for Chandos, the *Grammy*-award-winning *Peter Grimes* under Richard Hickox.

Critically and publicly acclaimed, the **English National Opera Orchestra** Leader Barry Griffiths, has in recent years received several prestigious awards, including the *Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award* and an *Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera*. The Orchestra is at the heart of the Company's artistic life and as well as opera performances in the London Coliseum has been seen on the concert platform. In addition many of the players participate in the work of the Baylis Programme of the Company's education and outreach department and with the English National Opera Studio in the development of new operas, in particular Mark-Anthony Turnage's *The Silver Tassie* which had its world premiere in February 2000. The Orchestra appears in many recordings, including Verdi's *Otello* under Mark Elder, which is soon to appear on Chandos under the sponsorship of the Peter Moores Foundation. Other recordings for Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation are *Mary*

Stuart, *Julius Caesar*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Rigoletto* (Jonathan Miller's production), *La traviata* and *Werther*.

The English conductor **Reginald Goodall** was born in 1901 and studied conducting under Malcolm Sargent and Constant Lambert at the Royal College of Music. From 1929 to 1936 he was organist and choirmaster at St Alban the Martyr, Holborn, where he conducted the first British performances of choral works by Bruckner, Stravinsky and Szymanowski, as well as early works by Britten. During the late 1930s he worked as assistant to Albert Coates and Malcolm Sargent among others. At the beginning of the Second World War he became conductor of the Bournemouth-based Wessex Philharmonic Orchestra.

In June 1945, as a member of Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera), he conducted the first performance of *Peter Grimes* at the newly reopened Sadler's Wells Theatre. In the following year he shared with Ernest Ansermet the first performances of

Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* during the Glyndebourne Festival's first postwar season. Shortly afterwards he joined the music staff at Covent Garden, where for the next twenty-five years he conducted a repertoire ranging from *Il trovatore* to *Troilus and Cressida*.

Only rarely was he given the chance to conduct operas by the composer he most admired, Richard Wagner. This omission was rectified in 1968, not by The Royal Opera but by Sadler's Wells, which invited him to conduct a new production of *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*. So remarkable was its success that he returned to the company to conduct its now legendary complete production of *The Ring of the Nibelung*, built up between 1970 and 1973 and the first to be given in English for some years. He went on to conduct *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* for The Royal Opera, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Walküre* for Welsh National Opera and *Tristan and Parsifal* at English National Opera. He received a CBE in 1975 and was knighted in 1985. Reginald Goodall died in 1990 at the age of eighty-eight.

PETER MOORES, CBE, DL

Peter Moores was born in Lancashire, the son of Sir John Moores, founder of the giant Littlewoods mail order, chain store and football pools group. He was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, where he read modern languages – he was already fluent in German and Italian. It was opera, however, which was his great love. He had worked at Glyndebourne Festival Opera before going up to university, and after Oxford he became a production student at the Vienna State Opera, combining this with a three-year course at the Vienna Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

By the end of his third year at the Academy Moores had produced the Vienna premiere of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, had worked as Assistant Producer at the San Carlo Opera House, Naples, the Geneva Festival and Rome Opera, and seemed set for a successful operatic career. At this point he received a letter from his father asking him to come home as he was needed in the firm. Family loyalty being paramount, he returned to Liverpool.

From 1981 to 1983 he was a Governor of the BBC, and a Trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1978 until 1985; from 1988 to 1992 he was a director of Scottish Opera. He received the Gold Medal of the Italian Republic in 1974, an Honorary MA from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1975, and was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Northern College of Music in 1985. In May 1992 he became Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire, and in the New Year's Honours List for 1991, he was made a CBE for his charitable services to the Arts.

Whilst still in his early twenties, Peter Moores had started



Christina Buron/PMF

Peter Moores, CBE, DL

giving financial support to various young artists, several of whom – Joan Sutherland, Colin Davis and the late Geraint Evans amongst them – were to become world-famous. In 1964 he set aside a substantial part of his inheritance to establish the Peter Moores Foundation, a charity designed to support those causes dear to his heart: to make music and the arts more accessible to more people; to give encouragement to the young and to improve race relations.

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

In the field of music, the main areas supported by the Peter Moores Foundation are:

- the recording of operas from the core repertoire sung in English translation; the recording or staging of rare Italian opera from the *bel canto* era of the early nineteenth century (repertoire which would otherwise only be accessible to scholars); the nurturing of promising young opera singers; new operatic work.

The Foundation awards scholarships annually to students and post-graduates for furthering their vocal studies at the Royal Northern College of Music. In addition, project awards may be given to facilitate language tuition in the appropriate country, attendance at masterclasses or summer courses, specialised repertoire study with an acknowledged expert in the field, or post-graduate performance training.

The Foundation encourages new operatic work by contributing to recordings, the publication of scores and stage productions.

Since 1964 the Foundation has supported the recording of more than forty operas, many of these sung in English, in translation. It has always been Peter Moores's belief that to enjoy opera to the full, there must be no language barrier, particularly for newcomers and particularly in the popular repertoire – hence the *Opera in English* series launched with Chandos in 1995. This includes many of the English language recordings funded by the Foundation in the 1970s and 1980s and is now the largest recorded collection of operas sung in English.



Siegmund and Sieglinde, Act I, Scene 1



Siegmund and Sieglinde, Act I, Scene 1

Richard Wagner: Die Walküre

Eine Einführung in den “Ring des Nibelungen”

Wagner entwickelte die Idee eines Musikdramas zum Thema der Nibelungensage 1848, etwa um die Zeit, als er *Lohengrin* fertig stellte, die letzte seiner traditionellen Opern. *Der Ring des Nibelungen* ist auf zahlreichen Ebenen zu genießen: beispielsweise als Märchen, politische Allegorie oder philosophisches Traktat. Im Grunde behandelt er den zeitlosen Widerstreit von gut und böse, den Gegensatz zwischen der Liebe zur Macht und der Macht der Liebe. Wotan, der oberste der Götter, strebt mit letztendlich guten Absichten nach der Macht; Alberich, das Oberhaupt der Nibelungen (unterirdisch lebender Zwerge) erstrebt sie für seine eigenen bösen Zwecke. Von Monteverdis *Orfeo* bis zu Mozarts *Zauberflöte*, von Rameaus *Hippolyte et Aricie* bis zu Webers *Freischütz* hat die Gegenüberstellung von Licht und Schatten stets die Openkomponisten fasziniert. Wagner erkannte, dass nicht alles Schwarz und Weiß ist, sondern dass Grauschattierungen vorherrschen. So nimmt Wotan Zuflucht zu Täuschungsmanövern und Diebstahl und bezeichnet sich selbst als Alberichs Alter Ego (“Licht-Alberich”),

während Alberich, der das Rheingold erwirbt, indem er die Bedingung erfüllt, aller Liebe zu entsagen, nicht nur als boshaft, sondern auch als würdevoll dargestellt wird.

Wagner arbeitete mehrere Jahre lang an Text und Musik, angefangen mit einer Zusammenfassung der Fabel in Prosa, ehe er den Text des Werks zu erstellen begann, das er *Siegfrieds Tod* nannte. Im Dezember 1856 teilte er jedoch einem Freund mit, dass ihn die Nibelungen allmählich langweilten; tatsächlich legte er den *Ring* im folgenden Sommer beiseite und nahm die Arbeit daran erst wieder 1869 auf – bis dahin hatte er *Tristan und Isolde* sowie *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* komponiert. Vom ersten Entwurf bis zur Fertigstellung brauchte er für das gigantische Projekt sechsundzwanzig Jahre: Jahre des Aufruhrs sowohl in seinem Privatleben als auch auf der politischen Bühne Europas.

Es war nicht nur Langeweile, die Wagner bewog, den jungen Siegfried unter der Linde zurückzulassen, wo er sich nach eigenem Bekunden mit aufrichtigen Tränen von ihm verabschiedete. Nachdem er aus Dresden

geflohen war, um der Verhaftung wegen seiner Beteiligung an der Revolution von 1848 zu entgehen, lebte Wagner im Züricher Exil und sah kaum eine Chance, den *Ring* jemals aufgeführt zu sehen; außerdem war sein Kompositionsstil einem derart raschen Wandel unterworfen, dass er ihn mit *Tristan* unterwerfen musste. Dass er den *Ring* doch noch vollenden und aus eigener Kraft dafür sorgen sollte, dass er in einem eigens erbauten Theater aufgeführt wurde, grenzt an ein Wunder.

Zu seinen Quellen gehörten fünf Epen, alle aus dem dreizehnten Jahrhundert, auf Isländisch, Mittelhochdeutsch und Altnordisch. Wie bei allen seinen Opern vor und nach dem *Ring* verfasste Wagner seine Texte selbst. Allerdings ließ er zum Entsetzen seiner Freunde anfangen mit *Siegfrieds Tod* den altherwürdigen dichterischen Kunstgriff des Stabreims wieder aufleben, der statt auf einem Versmaß mit Endreim auf der Alliteration von Explosivlauten beruht. Dies entsprach den Theorien, die er in Essays aus dem Züricher Exil dargelegt hatte und die sich unter anderem mit der Interdependenz von gesprochenen und musikalischen Klängen sowie mit der Notwendigkeit befassten, Gesangstexte verständlich zu halten, weshalb

ihm Ensemblenummern und Chöre nicht mehr angemessen erschienen.

Wie es sich herausstellte, gehorchte Wagner nicht immer seinen eigenen Regeln: In den *Meistersingern* kommen ein ausgewachsenes Quintett und zahllose Chöre vor, im zweiten Akt der *Götterdämmerung* ein Chor und ein Trio. Die Oper, mit der der *Ring*-Zyklus beginnt, *Das Rheingold*, liefert ein gutes Beispiel für die praktische Umsetzung Wagnerscher Theorien, aber ehe Wagner sich mit der Musik befassen konnte, war noch viel zu tun. Zunächst plante er nur eine einzige Oper, die optimistisch enden sollte, mit einer entschiedenen Bestätigung der moralischen und physischen Überlegenheit der Götter. Die Bemerkung eines Freundes, dass die Fabel vom Publikum ein unrealistisches Maß an Vorkenntnissen verlange, veranlasste ihn, erst *Siegfrieds Tod* zu erweitern und dann mit *Der junge Siegfried* eine Art Vorgeschichte hinzuzufügen. Als er die Notwendigkeit erkannte, noch weiter in die Vergangenheit zurückzugehen, schrieb er die Libretti zur *Walküre* und zum *Rheingold*. *Der junge Siegfried* wurde in *Siegfried* umbenannt, aus *Siegfrieds Tod* wurde mit erheblichen Streichungen und Änderungen die *Götterdämmerung*; geändert wurde unter

anderem der Schluss, der nun die Götter in den Flammen ihrer Feste Walhall umkommen sah. In Anerkennung des Einflusses der *Oresteia* und der *Prometheus*-Dramen des Aischylos beschrieb Wagner den *Ring* als Trilogie (wobei das *Rheingold* gewissermaßen als Vorspeise diene).

Im Jahre 1854 wurde Wagner mit den Schriften von Arthur Schopenhauer bekannt gemacht – “ein Griesgram der allerschlimmsten Sorte”, wie P. G. Wodehouses Bertie Wooster es ausdrückt. Der Schluss der *Ring*-Fabel war schon zuvor revidiert worden; aber danach, während er mit der Komposition des Zyklus beschäftigt war, verfasste Wagner mehrere verschiedene Schlüsse, darunter einen, der Schopenhauers pessimistische Sicht vom Leben als bloßer Negation des Todes widerspiegelte. Darin erlangt Brünnhilde einen Zustand buddhistischer Erleuchtung, indem sie das gesegnete Ende alles Ewigen erreicht. Dies ist nicht die Fassung, die Wagner schließlich vertont hat, doch sie gibt einen Einblick in seine Geistesverfassung um die Zeit, als er den Schluss der *Walküre* und den Anfang von *Siegfried* komponierte.

Nachdem er die Texte in umgekehrter Reihenfolge geschrieben hatte, machte Wagner sich daran, die Musik vom Beginn an zu

schreiben: So nahm er das *Das Rheingold* 1853 in Angriff, ein Jahr nach Fertigstellung des Librettos, wohingegen er bei der *Götterdämmerung*, die er 1869 begann, einen Text vertonte, den er (wenn auch mit späteren Überarbeitungen) zwanzig Jahre zuvor geschrieben hatte. Natürlich entwickelte sich sein Musikstil über diesen Zeitraum, und die Partitur der letztgenannten Oper ist erheblich subtiler und komplexer als die der Ersten. Dennoch werden die vier Opern, so unterschiedlich sie auch sind, durch das Bindemittel zusammengehalten, das als Leitmotiv bekannt ist.

Musikalische Reminiszenzen waren in der Oper nichts Neues. Ein bekanntes Beispiel ist die kurze Phrase der Oboe, die uns im zweiten Akt von Beethovens *Fidelio* klar macht, dass der schlafende Florestan nun von seiner Frau träumt, von der er soeben noch gesungen hat. Wagners Leistung war es, ein Geflecht von Leitmotiven zu schaffen: kurze, bedeutungsschwere Phrasen, die mit bestimmten Personen, Objekten, Gefühlen und vielem anderem in Verbindung stehen und in der Gesangslinie, vorwiegend jedoch im Orchester wiederkehren. Sie sind viel mehr als die “Visitenkarten”, über die Debussy spottete (der selbst keineswegs darüber

erhaben war, in *Pelléas et Mélisande* davon Gebrauch zu machen): Schlichte Wiederholung, melodische oder harmonische Abwandlung und die Kombination mit anderen Motiven – speziell gegen Ende des Zyklus – lassen allesamt ein eng verflochtenes Gewirk entstehen.

Ganze Bücher sind geschrieben worden, die den verschiedenen Motiven Namen zuordnen, aber je genauer die versuchte Definition der abstrakteren dieser Motive ausfällt, desto schwerer können sie zu fassen sein. Das muss den neuen Hörer nicht kümmern, der die Themen nach mehrmaligem Anhören wieder erkennen lernt. Allerdings sind nicht alle Zusammenhänge offensichtlich: Es lohnt sich zum Beispiel, auf die ähnlichen Konturen des Walhall- und des Ring-Motivs hinzuweisen – das eine edel, das andere finster –, die unseren Eindruck bestätigen oder vielmehr vorwegnehmen, dass Wotan und Alberich zwei Seiten ein und derselben Münze darstellen.

Von den vielen Freuden des *Ring* ist die Orchestrierung nicht die geringste. Wagner setzt umfangreiche Kräfte ein, doch immer wieder ist es ein einzelnes Holzblasinstrument – sagen wir eine Oboe oder Bassklarinette –, das eine Situation umreißt oder eine Gesprächsphrase auf den Punkt bringt. Eine der

typischsten Klangfarben des *Ring* liefern die so genannten Wagner-Tuben (gespielt von Mitgliedern der mit acht Musikern besetzten Hörner), die auch tatsächlich in der zweiten Szene des *Rheingold* das Walhall-Motiv intonieren.

Um 1862 war Wagner nicht mehr aus den deutschen Staaten verbannt. Im folgenden Jahr veröffentlichte er eine Ausgabe des *Ring*-Textes mit einem Vorwort, in dem er der Hoffnung Ausdruck gibt, ein deutscher Fürst werde die Mittel aufbringen, um den – noch immer unvollständigen – Zyklus in einem eigens errichteten Theater aufzuführen. Seine Bitte wurde bald erhört. Der achtzehnjährige bayerische Kronprinz bestieg 1864 als Ludwig II. den Thron. Er half Wagner, seine Schulden abzubezahlen, quartierte ihn in einem Haus in München ein, ließ ihm Geldgeschenke und ein Jahresgehalt zukommen und ermunterte ihn, mit seinem großen Werk fortzufahren.

Die Beziehung zwischen den beiden hatte ihre gute und schlechten Zeiten, um es höflich auszudrücken; aber es ist Ludwig zu verdanken, dass *Tristan* und *Die Meistersinger* am Hoftheater uraufgeführt wurden, das auch Wiederaufnahmen der früheren Opern Wagners erlebte. Auch das *Rheingold* und die *Walküre*

gelangten gegen den Willen des Komponisten zur Aufführung. Wagner war immer noch fest entschlossen, den gesamten *Ring* in einem eigenen Theater unter Festspielbedingungen aufgeführt zu sehen. 1871 legte er sich auf die Provinzstadt Bayreuth fest. Der Bau des neuen Theaters wurde durch öffentliche Subskription finanziert, wobei Ludwig in einem kritischen Moment zu Hilfe kam. Wagner vollendete die *Götterdämmerung* 1874, und im August 1876 wurde *Der Ring des Nibelungen* erstmals vollständig aufgeführt. Bis 1889 hatte es überall in der Welt der Oper weitere Inszenierungen gegeben; sie sind nach wie vor der Maßstab, an dem sich jedes nach wahrer Größe trachtende Opernhaus messen lassen muss.

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Übersetzung: Anne Steeb/Bernd Müller

Die Walküre

Wagner komponierte die Musik zur *Walküre* zwischen November 1854 und März 1856. Es ist nicht schwer zu erkennen, warum sie die populärste der *Ring*-Opern ist und am ehesten von allen für sich allein aufgeführt wird. Es treten darin zum ersten Mal sterbliche Menschen auf, im Gegensatz zu den Rheintöchtern, Nibelungen, Riesen und

Göttern des *Rheingold*. Eine leidenschaftliche Darbietung des Liebesduetts im ersten Akt kann das Publikum aufs äußerste und lange genug in Wallung bringen, um die beunruhigende Tatsache zu vergessen, daß Siegmund und Sieglinde als Geschwister drauf und dran sind, Inzest zu begehen, wenn der Vorhang fällt.

Auch das Ende der Oper, wenn Wotan sich ausführlich von seiner Lieblingstochter Brünnhilde (der Walküre des Titels) verabschiedet, bietet eine emotionale Situation, mit der sich jeder identifizieren kann: Das Publikum bewegen die Vatergefühle noch mehr als das Dilemma des Gottes. Nach dem dröhnenden Schall des Walkürenritts, den ekstatischen Ausbrüchen Sieglindes und der Wut Wotans sorgt die fast unbewegte Stille der letzten Szene für einen höchst befriedigenden Schluß.

Der erste Akt beginnt mit einem Sturm, durch den Siegmund vor seinen Feinden flieht. Und auch am Ende des Akts ist er auf der Flucht; in Verbindung mit seinem Selbstmitleid läßt ihn das anfangs als eine der weniger liebenswerten Figuren des *Rings* erscheinen, doch Wagner zwingt uns, Sympathie für ihn zu empfinden, indem er ihm Musik zuordnet, die zugleich zärtlich und

kraftvoll ist. Es ist behauptet worden, Sieglinde sei die einzig wirklich sympathische Gestalt im *Ring* (auch wenn der liebeskranke Riese Fasolt ihr nahekommt): Ihre Musik ist von dem Augenblick an von Zärtlichkeit durchdrungen, da sie dem verwundeten Siegmund einen Trunk Wasser reicht. Ihre wachsende Erregung, als sie die Geschichte von dem Mann erzählt, der das Schwert in den Baumstamm gestoßen hat, während im Orchester die Walhall- und Schwert-Motive wogen, ist einer der überwältigendsten Momente der Oper.

Im dritten Akt gibt Sieglinde auf die Nachricht hin, daß sie Siegfried gebären soll, "den hehrsten Helden der Welt", ihrer Freude mit dem meist so genannten "Erlösungsmotiv" Ausdruck, das erst ganz am Ende der *Götterdämmerung* wiederkehrt. Sie geht taumelnd ab und tritt nie wieder auf (in *Siegfried* wird uns ihr Schicksal berichtet). Nachdem die versammelten Walküren aus Furcht vor dem Zorn ihres Vaters entflohen sind, gehört die Szene allein Wotan und Brünnhilde. Ihr dialektischer Austausch erinnert an die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Wotan und Fricka im zweiten Akt, mit dem Unterschied, daß Wotan dort von Frickas erbarmungsloser Logik bezwungen wird,

während hier eine gewisse Annäherung stattfindet.

So großartig die Eckakte auch sind, ist es doch wohl der zweite Akt, der Wagner von seiner begnadetsten Seite zeigt. Die fünf Szenen umfassen Wotans allzu kurze Freude, als er Brünnhilde befiehlt, Siegmund im Kampf mit Hunding zu beschützen, und seine absolute Verzweiflung, stattdessen die unwiderlegbare Notwendigkeit von Siegmunds Tod einsehen zu müssen und damit das Scheitern seines Vorhabens, den Rheintöchtern ihr Gold mit Hilfe eines frei Handelnden zurückzuerstatten. Dazwischen kommt die Szene mit Fricka, gefolgt von dem weitgehend als Rezitativ dargebotenen Monolog, bei dem er nur scheinbar zu Brünnhilde, in Wahrheit jedoch mit sich selbst spricht. (In der vorliegenden Aufnahme kann man fast spüren, wie das Publikum an jedem Wort von Norman Baileys ergreifender Schilderung hängt.) Wotan heißt das Ende seiner Macht willkommen und berichtet, wie Alberich darauf hinarbeitet, indem er eine Frau gegen Gold verführt, um einen Verbündeten zu zeugen (er läßt damit anklingen, daß Siegfried und Alberichs Sohn Hagen, die in der *Götterdämmerung* aufeinandertreffen, fast genau gleich alt sind).

Im Anschluß an eine Szene für die Liebenden auf der Flucht hat Brünnhilde ihren feierlichen Auftritt als Todesbotin vor Siegmund. Er stellt ihr sechs Fragen, die sie jeweils beantwortet. Bei Siegmunds Erwiderung, seiner Weigerung, ihr ohne Sieglinde nach Walhall zu folgen, betont Wagner die Aussage, indem er in einer Art mechanischer Steigerung Phrase um Phrase jeweils die Tonlage erhöht. Siegmunds Standhaftigkeit führt im Endeffekt dazu, daß Brünnhilde menschliche Liebe verstehen lernt, was bedeutsame Folgen zeitigt. Hinzu kommen Siegmunds Zärtlichkeit angesichts der schlafenden Sieglinde, ihr kurzer Albtraum und der tödliche Kampf. Innerhalb weniger Sekunden äußern Wotan und das Orchester ihre Verachtung für Hunding, Trauer um Siegmunds Tod und Zorn über Brünnhildes Ungehorsam: das prägnante und eindrucksvolle Ende eines makellos geführten Akts.

Die *Walküre* wurde 1870 in München uraufgeführt. Die erste Darbietung im Rahmen des vollständigen *Ring*-Zyklus fand im August 1876 bei den Festspielen von Bayreuth statt.

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Übersetzung: Anne Steeb/Bernd Müller

**Reginald Goodall –
eine persönliche Bewertung von Brian Ward**
Gelegentlich trifft man zu einem Konzert oder einer Opernaufführung in einer Geistesverfassung ein, die es so gut wie unmöglich macht, die Darbietung zu genießen, und es besteht kein Zweifel, dass der Abend des 5. März 1954 ein solcher Anlass zu werden versprach.

Alles war schief gelaufen: Ich war eigens mit dem Auto nach Croydon im Süden Londons gefahren, um *Die Walküre* mit Ludwig Hofmann (dem aus der Vorkriegszeit berühmten deutschen hohen Bass) in der Rolle des Wotan zu hören. Doch ich war verspätet aus dem Büro weggekommen, nur um mitten im Berufsverkehr eine Reifenpanne zu erleiden, und als ich schließlich ankam, stellte sich heraus, das Herr Hofmann nicht auftreten würde. Fünf Stunden später verließ ich das Davis Theatre in einem solchen Zustand höchster Erregung, dass ich mit Freuden zu Fuß nach Hause gewandert wäre – ich hatte eine Aufführung gehört, wie ich sie nur unter der Leitung von Knappertsbusch oder Furtwängler für möglich gehalten hätte. Der Dirigent an jenem Abend war Reginald Goodall.

Natürlich hatte ich unmittelbar nach dem

Krieg in Covent Garden eine Menge von Mr. Goodalls Darbietungen gehört und bewundert, als er regelmäßig aus heutiger Sicht für ihn ungewohnte Werke wie *Carmen*, *Manon*, *La traviata*, *Aida* und *Il trovatore* dirigierte, aber keine hatte mich veranlasst, auf eine Wagner-Interpretation gefasst zu sein, die von so tiefem Verständnis und solcher Erhabenheit geprägt war wie jene, die ich an diesem Abend hörte.

Von dem Augenblick an dachte ich oft an die Möglichkeit eines *Ring*-Zyklus unter der Stabführung von Mr. Goodall, aber es wurde im Lauf der Zeit immer deutlicher, dass damit nicht zu rechnen war. Unter seiner Leitung wurden *Gloriana* und *Boris Godunow*, *Fidelio* und *Turandot*, *Peter Grimes*, *Wozzeck* und *Troilus and Cressida* wieder aufgenommen, aber nichts, was von Grund auf von Mr. Goodall erarbeitet worden wäre. Erst sieben Jahre später hörte ich eine weitere Wagner-Aufführung, die mich erneut erkennen ließ, was für einen bedeutenden Wagner-Dirigenten wir an ihm hatten und wie sehr er vernachlässigt wurde.

Der Anlass war eine Wiederaufnahme des *Tannhäuser* am Sadler's Wells Theatre im Oktober 1960, zu deren Besuch ich mich mit einer gewissen Beklommenheit durchgerungen

hatte, da ich meinte, dass das kleine Sadler's-Wells-Orchester und die eher trockene Akustik des Theatersaals einem Werk dieser Art abträglich wären. Wie es sich ergab, war ich im Unrecht, denn ich hörte eine Aufführung, die trotz einiger gesanglicher Unzulänglichkeiten auf ihre Weise so aufregend war wie die großartige *Walküre* in Croydon einige Jahre zuvor.

Bis dahin hatten Goodalls Wagner-Interpretationen unter den Musikkritikern keine besondere Aufmerksamkeit erregt, doch vom *Tannhäuser* schrieb Peter Heyworth in der Zeitschrift *Opera*:

Mr. Goodall hat ein herrliches Gespür für die Breite und Erhabenheit der Musik, doch ist seinen Tempi und Rhythmen keinerlei Trägheit oder Mangel an Lebendigkeit nachzusagen. Die Weiträumigkeit, die er der Partitur vermittelt, lässt jedes Detail mit gefasster Leichtigkeit hervortreten, ohne dass es seiner Interpretation an dramatischer Spannung fehlte, und er setzt seine Höhepunkte mit untrüglicher Präzision. Vor allem besitzt er die bemerkenswerte Fähigkeit, einen von Wagners enormen Akten als sich entfaltende Einheit zu offenbaren – und das ist bei einem in vielerlei Hinsicht so unreifen Werk wie *Tannhäuser* keine geringe Leistung. In der Tat wirken seine Höhepunkte im Verhältnis

zu den geringen Kräften, die ihm zur Verfügung stehen, deshalb so machtvoll, weil sie aus der organischen Entwicklung der Musik erstehen.

Mr. Goodall ist ein Respekt einflößender Wagner-Interpret. Es ist zutiefst zu hoffen, dass sein erneutes Auftreten am Sadler's Wells Theatre eine scharfsichtigere Würdigung seines seltenen Talents darstellt, als es die Covent Garden Opera bewiesen hat, zu deren Stab er gehört.

Wie Mr. Heyworth erhoffte auch ich mir mehr von Mr. Goodall, aber vergebens: In der folgenden Spielzeit in Covent Garden dirigierte er gar nichts. In der Saison 1962/63 gab es nur eine einzige Produktion, *Der goldene Hahn*, und danach fünf Jahre lang keine einzige mehr. Erst Anfang 1968 hatten wir wieder Gelegenheit, diesem außerordentlichen Mann zu lauschen. Diesmal jedoch kam es zu einer Reihe von Aufführungen, die das Opernpublikum (und die Kritiker) bis ins Mark erschütterten. Mit der Begründung, dass beide Sadler's-Wells-Truppen gerade gleichzeitig in London weilten, wurde eine Neuinszenierung der *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* angekündigt, die die Ressourcen des vereinigten Ensembles nutzen sollte, und am 31. Januar 1968 fand die erste einer großartigen Serie von Wagner-Darbietungen statt. Endlich hatten wir es mit

einer Produktion zu tun, die gründlich vorbereitet statt bloß wieder aufgenommen war, und endlich konnten wir feststellen, inwieweit Mr. Goodall in Zusammenarbeit mit engagierten Künstlern wie Norman Bailey, Alberto Remedios, Gregory Dempsey, Derek Hammond Stroud und später auch Clifford Grant einen Hausstil zu prägen verstand.

Ich hatte das Glück, mehrere *Meistersinger* am Sadler's Wells Theatre und im London Coliseum zu erleben, und obwohl ich eine Anzahl von Aufführungen unter Rankl, Krauss und Beecham gesehen und zahlreiche Rundfunkübertragungen aus Bayreuth gehört hatte, waren sie für mich eine Offenbarung; desgleichen für die Kritiker, die Mr. Goodall sogleich als "größten lebenden Wagner-Dirigenten" zu bezeichnen begannen – eine Tatsache, die einigen von uns seit fünfzehn Jahren bekannt war. Wie es weiterging, ist natürlich wohl bekannt: die Gerüchte von einem *Ring*-Zyklus, die Neuinszenierung der *Walküre* am Coliseum und im Lauf der Jahre der allmähliche Aufbau eines vollständigen Zyklus, der im August 1973 erstmals zu hören war und für den sechsmal so viele Karten bestellt wurden, wie zur Verfügung standen!

Viele Sänger der Originalbesetzung der *Meistersinger* von 1968 traten im *Ring* auf,

aber Mr. Goodall hatte sich auch der Dienste zahlreicher Neulinge (zumindest in großen Wagner-Rollen) versichert: Zusätzlich zu großartigen Beiträgen der oben Genannten in den Rollen Wotan/Wanderer, Siegmund/Siegfried, Mime, Alberich und Hagen/Hunding hatten wir die herrliche Brünnhilde von Rita Hunter und außerordentlich überzeugende Darstellungen von Könnern wie Emile Belcourt, Ann Howard und Katherine Pring, um nur einige der vielen zu nennen, die diese Aufführungen so unvergesslich machten.

Auch wenn er der Erste wäre, dies abzustreiten, ist Reginald Goodall der eigentliche Held, dessen Genie die treibende Kraft hinter dem Sadler's-Wells-*Ring* war und dem alle Wagner-Liebhaber ewig dankbar sein sollten.

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Übersetzung: Anne Steeb/Bernd Müller, 2000

Die Vorgeschichte der "Walküre"

Im *Rheingold* hat der Zwerg Alberich, der Nibelung, das Gold gestohlen, das von den Rheintöchtern bewacht wurde, und indem er der Liebe entsagt hat, ist es ihm gelungen, einen Ring zu schmieden, der ihm die

Weltherrschaft verleiht. Damit ist er nach Nibelheim hinabgestiegen und hat die Nibelungen versklavt, die er nun zwingt, weiteres Gold für ihn zu schürfen.

Die Riesen Fasolt und Fafner haben, nachdem sie Walhall für Wotan erbaut haben, Freia zum Lohn gefordert, die Göttin der ewigen Jugend, doch auf den Rat des Feuergotts Loge hat Wotan ihnen stattdessen das Nibelungengold geboten. Sie haben das Angebot angenommen. Wotan und Loge sind nach Nibelheim hinabgestiegen und haben Alberich durch eine List um seinen Hort gebracht: Sie haben ihm den zauberkräftigen Tarnhelm geraubt, dessen Träger sich auf Wunsch verwandeln kann, sowie den Ring, den Wotan selbst behalten wollte. Die Riesen waren jedoch erst zufrieden, als ihnen alles ausgehändigt war, auch der Ring. Wotan, der sich zunächst nicht von dem Ring trennen wollte, hat auf die Weltmutter Erda und ihre Warnung vor dem Fluch gehört, mit dem Alberich den Ring belegt hat, und ihn schließlich herausgerückt.

Der Fluch hat sofort seine Wirkung getan, denn Fafner hat Fasolt getötet und den ganzen Hort an sich genommen. Obwohl sie über den Ausgang der Ereignisse besorgt waren, sind die Götter im Triumph in Walhall eingezogen,

begleitet vom Klagen der Rheintöchter über den Verlust ihres Goldes.

Inhaltsangabe

CD 1

Erster Akt

In einer Hütte

[1] Ehe der Vorhang aufgeht, hört man einen Sturm wüten. Als er abflaut, eilt ein Mann herein, eindeutig zu erkennen als das erschöpfte Opfer einer Verfolgungsjagd.

[2] Er sinkt auf der Decke vor dem Herdfeuer zusammen und erklärt vernehmlich sein Bedürfnis zu rasten, ganz gleich, in wessen Heimstatt. Auf den Lärm hin tritt eine Frau aus dem Innern der Hütte; sie ist verblüfft, einen Fremden anzutreffen, doch erleichtert, ihn lebendig, wenn auch bewusstlos vorzufinden. Der Mann bittet um einen Trank, und sie holt ihm Wasser in einem Trinkhorn, um ihn zu erfrischen. [3] Er erfährt, dass sie und die Hütte ihrem Gatten Hunding gehören. Sie kredenzt ihm Met aus der Speisekammer, und die Musik teilt uns mit, dass die beiden in Liebe zueinander entbrannt sind. [4] Doch der Mann will enteilen, um Unheil von seiner Gastgeberin

abzuwenden – sie antwortet, dass Unheil bereits unter diesem Dache wohne. Er sagt zu ihr, sein Name sei Wehwalt.

Hunding kehrt heim, angekündigt durch einen bedrohlichen Ruf der Wagner-Tuben.

[5] Die Frau erklärt, sie habe einem Flüchtling Unterschlupf geboten. [6] Hunding verkündet die Unverletzlichkeit des Gastrechts, bemerkt die Ähnlichkeit der beiden und verlangt die Lebensgeschichte des Gastes zu hören.

[7] – [8] Wehwalt erklärt, seine Mutter sei von Räubern erschlagen, seine Zwillingschwester entführt worden, als er noch ein Knabe war; sein Vater, genannt Wolfe, habe ihn herangezogen, sei aber dann verschwunden. Er selbst werde von allen Menschen gemieden. [9] Er habe Hundings Hütte nach einem Kampf erreicht, bei dem er einem Mädchen zu Hilfe gekommen sei, das zu einer Ehe ohne Liebe gezwungen werden sollte. Sie und ihre ganze Sippe seien getötet worden; nur er, Wehwalt, sei entkommen.

[10] Hunding fährt wütend auf; dies ist der Feind, gegen den seine Sippschaft ihn zu den Waffen gerufen hat und der nun Schutz in seiner Hütte sucht. Das Gastrecht bindet sie für die Nacht, doch am Morgen müssen sie auf den Tod fechten. Er schickt sein Weib, den Nachtrunk zu holen – sie geht nur

widerwillig, mit vielen bedeutungsvollen Blicken auf den Baumstamm, um den die Hütte gebaut ist. Mit einer letzten Warnung folgt ihr Hunding.

[11] Es wird Nacht. Wehwalt ist allein und unbewaffnet; er kann sich nur entsinnen, dass Wolfe ihm im Augenblick der Not ein Schwert verheißsen hat. Er ruft seinen Vater (“Wälse! Wälse!”) und verlangt nach der Waffe. Die letzte Glut des Herdfeuers wirft ein Licht auf den Baum, in dem ein Schwert haftet – aus dem Orchester lässt eine Trompete das Leitmotiv des Zauberschwerts erklingen.

[12] Im Schutz der Dunkelheit kehrt Hundings Weib zurück; sie hat ihrem Gatten einen betäubenden Schlaftrunk verabreicht und fleht nun den Fremden an, das Schwert zu erringen. [13] Bei ihrer Hochzeit war ein grau gekleideter Fremder hinzugetreten und hatte die Klinge in den Baumstamm gestoßen. Das Orchester teilt uns mit, dass es sich um Wotan gehandelt hat. Keinem der Gäste gelang es, das Schwert herauszuziehen, da wusste sie, dass es dort ihres Retters harrt – möge es doch Wehwalt sein! [14] Sie fallen sich in die Arme und werden plötzlich von hellem Mondlicht bestrahlt, das ihrer Liebe den Segen der Natur zu verleihen scheint. [15] Der Lenz und dessen Schwester, die Liebe, sagt

Wehwalt, seien im Ehebund vereint.

[16] – [17] Die Frau preist Wehwalt als ihren Lenz, und während sie zärtliche Worte wechseln [18], geht ihr auf, dass ihr nur ihr eigenes Spiegelbild, das Echo ihrer eigenen Stimme näher ist als er. Als er erwähnt, dass sein Vater nicht Wolfe, sondern Wälse gewesen und er selbst ein Wälung sei, ist sie von Freude überwältigt. Sie weiß, er ist ihr Bruder, und sie verleiht ihm seinen rechtmäßigen Namen Siegmund. [19] – [20] Er springt auf, tritt an den Baum, zieht das Schwert heraus, nennt es bei seinem Namen Nothung und bietet es als Brautgabe dar. Die Frau offenbart, dass sie seine Schwester Sieglinde ist. “So blühe denn, Wälungenblut!” ruft er und schließt sie in die Arme, als der Vorhang fällt.

CD 2

Zweiter Akt

Ein wildes Felsengebirge

[1] Die Flucht des Paares wird im Orchestervorspiel zum zweiten Akt dargestellt, einer wilden und leidenschaftlichen sinfonischen Umsetzung der Themen, die mit Nothung, der Flucht und der Liebe zwischen Siegmund und Sieglinde in Verbindung stehen. Allmählich wird die Musik donnernder

und grandioser, um uns auf die Unsterblichen vorzubereiten, in deren Reich die Handlung nun übergeht. Vom Felsengipfel herab beobachtet Wotan die Szene mit seiner Lieblingstochter, der Walküre Brünnhilde. Er befiehlt ihr, als Werkzeug seines Willens Siegmund im bevorstehenden Kampf mit Hunding zu beschützen. ^[2] Freudig läßt Brünnhilde ihren Schlachtruf erklingen: "Hojotoho!" Sie ermahnt Wotan, auch sich selbst zu wappnen; sein Weib Fricka, die Hüterin der Häuslichkeit, naht in ihrem Streitwagen.

^[3] Fricka ist gekommen, um auf dem Sieg ehelicher Moral und der Bestrafung des blutschänderischen Liebespaars zu bestehen. ^[4] – ^[6] Hätte sie die Liebe zwischen Siegmund und Sieglinde gesegnet, wie es Wotan wünscht, wäre es mit der moralischen Überlegenheit der Götter vorbei gewesen. Sie hält ihm alle vergangenen Seitensprünge vor, und als er ihr erklärt ^[7], dass er eines frei Handelnden bedürfe, entgegnet sie, der von ihm erkorene Siegmund sei keineswegs frei, sondern stets von Wotan gelenkt worden. Er könne darum seine Aufgabe nicht erfüllen. ^[8] Niedergeschlagen gesteht ihr Wotan Punkt um Punkt all ihre Forderungen zu: Siegmund muss von Hunding erschlagen werden; weder

Wotan noch Brünnhilde sollen ihn beschützen; das Schwert soll seine Zauberkraft verlieren. ^[9] Triumphierend befiehlt Fricka der heimkehrenden Brünnhilde, Wotans neue Anweisungen entgegenzunehmen. ^[10] Seiner Lieblingstochter klagt Wotan sein Leid und seine Entrüstung. ^[11] – ^[13] Er verfolgt ihr gegenüber, wie zu sich selbst, den entscheidenden Konflikt zu seinem Ursprung zurück und erinnert an die Ereignisse im *Rheingold* – eine Rekapitulation, die für Wagners sinfonischen Gesamtplan notwendig und nicht nur eine Möglichkeit ist, das Publikum auf dem Laufenden zu halten. ^[14] – ^[15] Die Erzählung bestärkt Wotan in seinem Glauben, dass das Ende aller Dinge bevorsteht, wenn nicht ein Held aus freien Stücken eingreift und es verhindert; das Ende aber erstrebt Alberich der Nibelung ^[16], der mit diesem Ziel vor Augen mittels Bestechung einen Sohn namens Hagen gezeugt hat. ^[17] – ^[18] Wotan erteilt Brünnhilde ihren Auftrag: seinen Willen zu missachten und für Fricka zu fechten.

CD 3

^[1] Wotan stürmt davon; Brünnhilde verlässt die Szene langsamer, zutiefst betrübt.

^[2] Erneut erklingt die Fluchtmusik, als Siegmund und Sieglinde herbei eilen.

^[3] – ^[4] Sieglinde will keinen Augenblick innehalten – sie meint bereits Hunding zu vernehmen, der die Verfolgung aufgenommen hat. Doch Ermattung siegt über die Angst, und sie sinkt bewusstlos in Siegmunds Arme. ^[5] – ^[6] Während er sie auf einem Fels sitzend umschlungen hält, erscheint Brünnhilde wie eine Traumgestalt und klärt ihn über das Herannahen des Todes und seinen Einzug in Walhall an ihrer Seite auf. ^[7] – ^[8] Doch Siegmund will sich nicht von Sieglinde trennen; er droht, sie und ihr ungeborenes Kind zu töten. ^[9] Brünnhilde beschließt, sich Wotan zu widersetzen und beide zu retten (obwohl sie natürlich nur zu tun anhebt, was Wotan wirklich wünscht). Sie eilt davon.

^[10] Siegmund legt die schlafende Sieglinde sanft zu Boden und bereitet sich auf den Kampf vor, als auch schon Hundings Hornsignal zu hören ist. ^[11] Sieglinde erwacht aus einem Albtraum und stellt fest, dass sie allein ist, gerade als ^[12] Hunding auf der Passhöhe Siegmund entgegentritt. Brünnhilde schwebt über ihnen und schützt Siegmund, als plötzlich Wotan erscheint. Siegmunds Schwert zerbricht an Wotans Speer, sodaß Hunding freie Bahn hat, seinen Gegner

niederzustrecken. Rasch wendet sich Brünnhilde und trägt die ohnmächtige Sieglinde davon. Wotan steht über Hunding und schickt seinen Geist mit einem verächtlichen Winken als Bote ihres Siegs zu Fricka. Brünnhilde dagegen verheißt er furchtbare Strafe für ihren Ungehorsam.

CD 4

Dritter Akt

Auf dem Gipfel eines Felsengebirges

^[1] Das Orchestervorspiel beschreibt den Ritt der Walküren (der kriegerischen Töchter Wotans von der Weltmutter Erda) durch die Lüfte zu ihrer Versammlungsstätte auf einem Berggipfel. Als der Vorhang aufgeht, sieht man sie nacheinander zusammenkommen, ehe sie mit den in der Schlacht gefallenen Helden gemeinsam gen Walhall reiten. ^[2] Zuletzt erscheint Brünnhilde, die statt des toten Siegmund die lebende Sieglinde bei sich im Sattel hat. ^[3] Brünnhilde beschwört ihre Walküreschwester, ihr behilflich zu sein, Sieglinde zu verbergen; Wotan sei hinter ihnen her und werde sie bald beide seine Rache spüren lassen. Keine andere Walküre wagt es, Wotans Zorn zu trotzen, und ^[4] Sieglinde selbst ersehnt nur den Tod, bis Brünnhilde sie

von dem Wälsungenhelden unterrichtet, der in ihrem Schoß heranwächst: Sieglinde könne sich nur in Sicherheit bringen, indem sie allein in den tiefen Wald fliehe, den der Drache Fafner bewacht; ^[5] dort müsse sie ihr Kind im Verborgenen gebären, ihm die Stücke vom zerborstenen Schwert seines Vaters überreichen und ihm den Namen Siegfried geben. ^[6] Sieglinde macht in einem wunderbaren lyrischen Erguss ihrer Dankbarkeit und Freude Luft, ehe sie davoneilt. ^[7] Brünnhilde verbirgt sich zwischen ihren Walkürenschwestern, als Wotan auf den Gipfel stürmt und wütend nach ihr ruft. ^[8] – ^[9] Verachtungsvoll tut er das Flehen der Walküren um Milde ab und befiehlt ihr, sich zu stellen. ^[10] Sie habe, sagt er, ihre eigene Strafe geschaffen, denn sie sei ein Teil von ihm. Er verkündet sein Urteil: Sie soll nicht mehr Walküre sein, ^[11] nicht mehr in Walhall weilen und Wotan nie wieder sehen. Hier auf dem Felsen soll sie wehrlos schlummern, bis sie dem ersten vorbeikommenden Mann anheim fällt, der sie in Besitz nimmt und zur häuslichen Habe macht. ^[12] Wotan verschleucht die aufbegehrenden Walküren. ^[13] – ^[14] Brünnhilde liegt dahingestreckt. Nach langer Pause beginnt sie sich zu verteidigen; sie habe nur Wotans wahren

Willen vollstreckt. ^[15] – ^[17] Sie habe Siegmund behütet, weil sie ihn liebe. Wotan habe diese Liebe geschaffen und mit ihr den Willen, Fricka den Gehorsam zu verweigern. Sie habe ihre Pflicht nicht verraten, sondern erfüllt. Wotan ist tief bewegt, lässt sich aber nicht erweichen. ^[18] Sie gemahnt ihn an die Wälsungen, seine eigenen Kinder, und versucht ihn umzustimmen, indem sie ihm verrät, dass sie Sieglinde samt ihrem ungeborenen Kind und das von Wotan geschmiedete Schwert gerettet hat; Wotan erinnert sie, dass er es war, der das Schwert zertrümmert hat. Brünnhildes Schicksal sei nicht abzuwenden; ^[19] sie müsse in Zauberschlaf verfallen. ^[20] – ^[21] Nur eines gesteht er ihr zu: Sie wird von einer Waberlohe umgeben sein, die wenigstens die Feiglinge abhält. Wotan hebt sie vom Boden auf und beginnt Abschied von ihr zu nehmen.

Mit einem Kuss auf die Augen entzieht er ihr das Göttertum und versetzt sie in Schlaf; dann bettet er sie mit Helm und Speer auf den Berg. ^[22] Feierlich zeigt er mit seinem Speer auf einen Felsen und ruft den Feuergott Loge herbei, der den Gipfel mit einem Feuerring umgeben soll. ^[23] Wotan belegt den Berg mit einem Zauberbann: Niemand, der seine Speerspitze fürchtet, soll das magische Feuer

durchschreiten können. Langsam entfernt sich der Gott. Seine Macht ist am Ende. Das Schicksal der Welt ruht bei seinem Enkel, dem Helden Siegfried, und der zum bloßen Weib gewordenen Halbgöttin, die allein auf dem Felsengipfel ruht.

William Mann, 1976

Übersetzung: Anne Steeb/Bernd Müller, 2000

Alberto Remedios, der zu den führenden britischen Heldenentworfener seiner Generation zählt, studierte in Liverpool bei Edwin Francis sowie am Royal College of Music und gab sein Debüt an der Sadler's Wells Opera (der späteren English National Opera) als Tinca in *Il tabarro*. Zu seinen zahlreichen Rollen mit dem Ensemble zählen Don Ottavio, Tamino, Max (*Der Freischütz*), Alfredo, Faust (sowohl in Gounods gleichnamiger Oper als auch in *La Damnation de Faust* von Berlioz), Des Grieux (*Manon*), Samson (*Samson et Dalila*), Lenski, Erik (*Der fliegende Holländer*), Lohengrin, Walther von Stolzing (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Tristan, Siegmund, Siegfried und Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). An der Royal Opera Covent Garden debütierte er als Dimitri (*Boris Godunow*) und kehrte dorthin zurück, um Florestan, Aeneas

(*Les Troyens*), Max, Erik, Siegfried, Bacchus und Mark (in Sir Michael Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*) zu singen. Er ist auch an der Welsh National Opera sowie der Scottish Opera aufgetreten und war zwei Jahre an den Städtischen Bühnen Frankfurt am Main engagiert. Sein Debüt an der Metropolitan Opera New York gab er als Bacchus, und außerdem ist er in San Francisco (als Dimitri und Don Carlos), Los Angeles, San Diego und Seattle (als Siegfried), in Boston (als Gounods Faust) und am Teatro colón in Buenos Aires (als Peter Grimes) aufgetreten. Mit Dame Joan Sutherland war er in Australien als Edgar (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Alfredo, Lenski und Faust auf Tournee, und seine engen Beziehungen zu dem Land hatten Aufführungen mit Opera Australia als Florestan, Siegmund, Radames und Otello zur Folge, daneben Auftritte in Melbourne, Adelaide und Brisbane. Königin Elisabeth II. hat Alberto Remedios 1981 den Orden eines Commander of the Order of the British Empire verliehen.

Der australische Bass **Clifford Grant** absolvierte seine Ausbildung in Sydney, Melbourne und London; er gab sein Operndebüt mit der New South Wales Opera

Company als Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Danach ging er an die Sadler's Wells Opera (die spätere English National Opera), wo er als Seneca (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), der Komtur (*Don Giovanni*), Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*), Silva (*Ernani*), Pater Guardiano (*La forza del destino*), Philipp II. (*Don Carlos*), Heinrich der Vogler (*Lohengrin*), Pogner (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Fafner, Hundung und Hagen (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) sowie in tragenden Rollen in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Manon*, *Oedipus Rex* und *Peter Grimes* auftrat. Seine sonstigen Engagements umfassten die Partie des Doktor Bartolo (*Le nozze di Figaro*) an der Royal Opera Covent Garden, Auftritte in *Nabucco* und der *Zauberflöte* an der Welsh National Opera, Nettuno (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) an der Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Hundung an der Opéra de Marseille, Alidoro (*La Cenerentola*), Oroveso (*Norma*), Matteo (Aubers *Fra Diavolo*), Sparafucile (*Rigoletto*), den König (*Aida*), Lodovico (*Otello*) und Hagen sowie Rollen in *I puritani*, *Il trovatore* und *Tannhäuser* an der San Francisco Opera, außerdem Nilakantha (in Delibes' *Lakmé*) und Pimen (*Boris Godunow*) in Sydney. Nachdem er 1990 an der Opera Australia in Meyerbeers

Les Huguenots aufgetreten war, verabschiedete er sich von der Oper, kehrte jedoch 1993 auf die Bühne zurück, um an der Opera North Alvisé Badoero in *La Gioconda* zu singen. Er hat mit namhaften Künstlern wie Dame Joan Sutherland, Otto Klemperer, Sir Adrian Boult und Sir Colin Davis zusammengearbeitet.

Der in Südafrika geborene Bassbariton **Norman Bailey** studierte in Wien und verbrachte die Anfangsjahre seiner Laufbahn in Österreich und Deutschland. Dann ging er nach Großbritannien, wo er an allen bedeutenden Opernhäusern gesungen hat. Als einer der führenden Wagner-Sänger seiner Generation ist er besonders in der Titelrolle des *Fliegenden Holländer* und als Hans Sachs in den *Meistersingern von Nürnberg* bekannt geworden. Außerdem hat er den Landgrafen im *Tannhäuser* an der Opera North und Wotan/Wanderer sowie Gunther an der English National Opera gesungen; als Mitglied dieses Ensembles gab er unter anderem auch Don Pizarro (Beethovens *Leonore*), den Grafen von Luna (*Il trovatore*), Alfio (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Scarpia (*Tosca*), den Vater (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Fürst Gremin (*Eugen Onegin*), Kutusow (Prokofjews *Krieg und Frieden*) und den Förster (*Das schlaue Fuchslein*). An der

Royal Opera Covent Garden ist er als Balstrode (in *Peter Grimes*, auch auf Tournee in Palermo), Germont (*La traviata*), Ford (*Falstaff*), Wolfram (*Tannhäuser*), Kurwenal (*Tristan und Isolde*), Donner (*Das Rheingold*), Wotan (*Die Walküre*), Klingsor und Amfortas (*Parsifal*), Jochanaan (*Salome*) und der Musiklehrer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) aufgetreten. Zu seinen jüngsten Rollen gehören Oroveso (*Norma*), Banquo (*Macbeth*), der König (*Aida*), der Doktor (*Wozzeck*) und Schigolch (*Lulu*). Seine internationale Karriere hat ihn an bedeutende Opernbühnen und Festivals in ganz Europa und den USA geführt; so war er mehrere Spielzeiten in Bayreuth beschäftigt und hat mit Dirigenten wie Sir Colin Davis, Sir Georg Solti, James Levine, Carlo Maria Giulini, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Claudio Abbado und Daniel Barenboim zusammengearbeitet. Für Chandos hat er die Titelrolle von Sir Michael Tippetts *King Priam* aufgenommen.

Margaret Curphey, in Douglas auf der Isle of Man geboren und an der Birmingham School of Music ausgebildet, ist als lyrischer Sopran mit Opera for All auf Tournee gegangen und hat zwei Jahre dem Chor des Glyndebourne Festival angehört, ehe sie der Sadler's Wells Opera (der späteren English National Opera)

beitrat. Dort debütierte sie als Micaela (*Carmen*) und sang dann neben vielen anderen Partien La Musica (Monteverdis *Orfeo*), die Gräfin (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Pamina, Ninetta (*La gazza ladra*), Maria Stuarda (in Donizettis gleichnamiger Oper), Violetta, Elisabeth de Valois (*Don Carlos*), Santuzza (*Cavalleria rusticana*), sowohl Mimi als auch Musetta (*La bohème*), Marguerite (*La Damnation de Faust*) und Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*). Zu ihren viel beachteten Wagner-Darbietungen mit dem Ensemble gehörten Elsa (*Lohengrin*), Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Sieglinde, Brünnhilde und Gutrune. Sie war an der britischen Erstaufführung von Mozarts *Lucio Silla* am Camden Theatre beteiligt, hat an mehreren Opernbühnen Kontinentaleuropas gastiert und beim Internationalen Wettbewerb in Sofia einen Preis gewonnen; außerdem war sie als Konzertsängerin viel beschäftigt.

Im Anschluß an ihre Gesangsausbildung in Liverpool bei Edwin Francis und später unter anderem bei Dame Eva Turner ging **Rita Hunter** als dramatischer Sopran mit der Carl Rosa Opera Company auf Tournee, ehe sie als Solistin an die Sadler's Wells Opera (die spätere English National Opera) engagiert wurde. Dort sang sie unter anderem

Marcellina, Donna Anna, Odabella (*Attila*), Leonora (*Il trovatore*), Amelia (*Un ballo in maschera*), Elisabeth de Valois (*Don Carlos*), Santuzza, Musetta (*La bohème*), Senta und Fata Morgana (in Prokofjews *Die Liebe zu den drei Orangen*). Anfang der 1970er-Jahre erregte sie weltweite Aufmerksamkeit mit ihrer Interpretation der Brünnhilde; diese Rolle hat sie seither in aller Welt dargeboten, und bald darauf gab sie ihre Debüts in Berlin, an der Royal Opera Covent Garden in London, an der New Yorker Metropolitan Opera (wohin sie mehrere Spielzeiten hintereinander zurückkehrte), in München, San Francisco, New Orleans sowie in Australien, einem Land, mit dem sie besonders enge Beziehungen knüpfte und wo sie sich 1985 auf Dauer niederließ. Darüber hinaus ist sie an der Welsh National Opera, beim Pacific Northwest Festival in Seattle (als Brünnhilde im kompletten *Ring*-Zyklus) und bei bedeutenden Festspielen in und außerhalb ihrer Heimat aufgetreten. Besonderen Erfolg hatte sie im italienischen Repertoire als Norma, Abigaille (*Nabucco*), Lady Macbeth, Leonora und Aida, war aber auch in tragenden Rollen in *Idomeneo*, *Turandot*, *Lohengrin*, *Tristan und Isolde* sowie *Elektra* zu sehen. Sie hat mit namhaften Künstlern wie Birgit Nilsson (als

Brünnhilde gegenüber deren Sieglinde an der Metropolitan Opera), Carlo Maria Giulini, Lorin Maazel, Sir Yehudi Menuhin, Sir Simon Rattle und Richard Hickox zusammengearbeit. Neben vielen anderen Ehrungen wurde Rita Hunter 1980 der Orden CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) verliehen.

Nachdem sie ein Stipendium der Royal Opera gewonnen hatte, ging die in London geborene Mezzosopranistin **Ann Howard** zum Studium nach Paris und trat nach ihrer Rückkehr aus Frankreich der Sadler's Wells Opera (der späteren English National Opera) bei. Zu ihren dortigen Rollen gehörten Azucena, Prinzessin Eboli, Musetta (*La bohème*), Carmen, Dalila, Concepción (*L'Heure espagnole*), Ortrud (*Lohengrin*), Brangäne, Fricka, die Hexe (*Hänsel und Gretel*), der Komponist (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Baba the Turk (*The Rake's Progress*), Katisha (*The Mikado*), die Feenkönigin (Gilbert und Sullivan *Iolanthe*) und Auntie (*Peter Grimes*). Sie ist auch an der Royal Opera Covent Garden (als Amneris), der Welsh National Opera (als Herzogin in *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* und in Sir Peter Maxwell Davies' *The Doctor of Myddfai*), der Scottish Opera (als Brangäne, Fricka, Cassandra in *Les Troyens* und die alte

Dame in Bernsteins *Candide*) sowie an der Opera North (als Schankwirtin in *Boris Godunow*) aufgetreten. Sie hat ihre internationale Karriere auf Kontinentaleuropa und Nord- und Südamerika verteilt: In Opernrollen war sie einerseits in ganz Frankreich, an der Bayerischen Staatsoper, der Wiener Staatsoper, am Teatro San Carlo in Neapel, in Genua und Lissabon zu sehen, andererseits in Edmonton, Montreal, Los Angeles, New York (an der Metropolitan Opera ebenso wie an der New York City Opera), Washington D.C., Baltimore, Santa Fe, Mexico City und Santiago.

Elizabeth Connell hat sich mit Partien im dramatischen Sopranrepertoire einen Namen gemacht, insbesondere in den Opern von Beethoven, Wagner und Strauss. Nach ihrem Debüt beim Wexford Opera Festival trat sie bei der Eröffnung des Sydney Opera House in Prokofjews *Krieg und Frieden* auf und hat ihre engen Verbindungen zur Opera Australia aufrechterhalten. Ihre internationale Karriere führte sie an Opernhäuser und zu Festivals in ganz Europa und Nordamerika, mit einem Repertoire, das *Idomeneo*, *Norma*, *Nabucco*, *Attila*, *Macbeth*, *Don Carlos*, *Fidelio*, den *Fliegenden Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*,

Tristan und Isolde, den *Ring des Nibelungen*, die Titelrolle in *Elektra* sowie *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Jenůfa* (Kostelnicka Buryovká) und *Peter Grimes* umfasst. Zu den Dirigenten, mit denen sie gearbeitet hat, gehören Claudio Abbado, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Carlo Maria Giulini, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir Edward Downes, Sir Colin Davis, Mark Elder, Lorin Maazel, James Levine und Seiji Osawa.

Die internationale Karriere der Sopranistin **Anne Evans** hat sie an bedeutende Opernbühnen in Europa, Nord- und Südamerika geführt, mit einem Repertoire, das sich besonders auf die deutsche Oper konzentriert, von Beethoven (Leonore in *Fidelio*) bis Strauss (die Marschallin im *Rosenkavalier* und Ariadne); besondere Erfolge verzeichnete sie in den Wagner-Rollen Brünnhilde, Isolde und Sieglinde. Bei den Festspielen von Bayreuth ist sie von 1989 bis 1992 unter der Leitung von Daniel Barenboim aufgetreten und hat an den Festivals von Ravello und Edinburgh sowie am Abschlussabend der BBC Promenade Concerts in London teilgenommen. In Großbritannien hat sie an der Royal Opera Covent Garden, der English National Opera, der Welsh

National Opera und Scottish Opera gesungen und war in Londoner Konzerten und Recitals in der Royal Festival Hall, der Royal Albert Hall (unter Bernard Haitink) und der Wigmore Hall zu hören.

Die Mezzosopranistin **Sarah Walker** kann auf eine herausragende Karriere als Recital- und Opernsängerin verweisen und ist bei Festivals, in Konzertsälen und an Opernhäusern in ganz Europa, Nordamerika, Australien und Neuseeland mit vielen der namhaftesten Dirigenten, Sängern und Begleitpianisten der Welt aufgetreten. Ihr Opernrepertoire reicht von Claudio Monteverdi (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* und *L'incoronazione di Poppea*) und Francesco Cavalli (*La Calisto*) bis zu Sir Peter Maxwell Davies (*Taverner*) und Aulis Sallinen (*The King Goes Forth to France*). Sie pflegt enge Kontakte zur Royal Opera Covent Garden und ist auch vielfach an der English National Opera aufgetreten. Ihre zahlreichen Aufnahmen auf Tonträger spiegeln die große Bandbreite ihres Repertoires wider; dazu zählen bei Chandos Musik von Manuel de Falla (*El amor brujo*) und Mozart (das Requiem) sowie *Giulio Cesare* und *Faust*, beide in Zusammenarbeit mit der Peter Moores Foundation eingespielt. Von Königin Elisabeth

II. wurde Sarah Walker 1991 mit dem Orden CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) ausgezeichnet.

Die Altistin **Anne Collins** trat der Sadler's Wells Opera (der späteren English National Opera) bei, und ihr dortiges Repertoire umfasste *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Le Comte Ory*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Arabella* sowie mehrere Rollen in Wagners *Ring*-Zyklus, wovon ihre Erda besondere Aufmerksamkeit erregte. Sie hat häufig an der Royal Opera Covent Garden, der Welsh National Opera, Opera North und Scottish Opera sowie bei den Festivals von Glyndebourne, Aldeburgh, Wexford und Camden ebenso wie bei den BBC Promenade Concerts gesungen. Sie ist in Konzerten, bei Festspielen und als Gast von Operntruppen in ganz Europa aufgetreten, zum Beispiel an den Opernhäusern von Lyon, Straßburg, Genf und Hamburg, in Paris an der Opéra und am Châtelet théâtre musical, am Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brüssel und am Mailänder Teatro alla Scala. In Amerika war sie an der Metropolitan Opera in New York zu hören. Sie hat zahlreiche Aufnahmen auf Tonträger vorgenommen, darunter für Chandos die mit einem *Grammy*-Preis ausgezeichnete

Einspielung von *Peter Grimes* unter Richard Hickox.

Das von der Kritik ebenso wie vom Publikum gefeierte **Orchester der English National Opera** unter Konzertmeister Barry Griffiths hat in den letzten Jahren mehrere angesehene Preise gewonnen, beispielsweise den Musikpreis der *Royal Philharmonic Society* und einen *Olivier Award* für herausragende Leistungen im Bereich der Oper. Das Orchester ist von zentraler Bedeutung für das künstlerische Leben der Truppe und war nicht nur bei Opernvorstellungen im Londoner Coliseum, sondern auch auf dem Konzertpodium zu sehen. Zusätzlich sind viele der Musiker am Baylis-Programm der für Schul- und Gemeindearbeit zuständigen Abteilung des Orchesters beteiligt und arbeiten mit dem English National Opera Studio an der Entwicklung neuer Opern, speziell an Mark-Anthony Turnages *The Silver Tassie*, das im Februar 2000 uraufgeführt wurde. Das Orchester hat an vielen Einspielungen mitgewirkt, zum Beispiel an diesen von Verdis *Otello* unter Mark Elder die demnächst bei Chandos herauskommen wird. Dies geschieht unter der Schirmherrschaft der Peter Moores Foundation. Andere Aufnahmen

des Orchesters für Chandos und die Peter Moores Foundation sind *Maria Stuarda*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto* (in der Inszenierung von Jonathan Miller), *La traviata* und *Werther*.

Der englische Dirigent **Reginald Goodall** wurde 1901 geboren und studierte Orchesterleitung am Royal College of Music unter Malcolm Sargent und Constant Lambert. Von 1929 bis 1936 war er Organist und Chorleiter der Kirche St. Alban the Martyr im Londoner Stadtteil Holborn, wo er die britische Erstaufführung von Chorwerken von Bruckner, Strawinski und Szymanowski sowie frühe Werke von Britten besorgte. Gegen Ende der 1930er-Jahre war er unter anderem als Assistent von Albert Coates und Malcolm Sargent tätig. Zu Beginn des Zweiten Weltkriegs wurde er Dirigent des im südenglischen Bournemouth ansässigen Wessex Philharmonic Orchestra.

Im Juni 1945 dirigierte er als Mitglied der Sadler's Wells Opera (der späteren English National Opera) die Uraufführung von *Peter Grimes* im neu eröffneten Sadler's Wells Theatre. Im Jahr darauf wechselte er sich in der ersten Nachkriegszeit des Glyndebourne Festival bei den ersten

Aufführungen von Brittens *The Rape of Lucretia* als Dirigent mit Ernest Ansermet ab. Kurz darauf trat er dem musikalischen Stab der Royal Opera Covent Garden bei, wo er über die folgenden fünfundzwanzig Jahre hin ein Repertoire dirigierte, das von *Il trovatore* bis *Troilus and Cressida* reichte.

Nur selten erhielt er Gelegenheit, Opern seines Lieblingskomponisten Richard Wagner zu leiten. Diese Unterlassungssünde wurde 1968 wettgemacht, und zwar nicht von der Royal Opera, sondern von Sadler's Wells, wohin er eingeladen wurde, eine Neuinszenierung der *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* zu dirigieren. Der Erfolg war so

durchschlagend, dass er an das Haus zurückkehrte, um seine heute legendäre vollständige Produktion vom *Ring des Nibelungen* zu erarbeiten, die zwischen 1970 und 1973 Gestalt annahm und seinerzeit die erste seit vielen Jahren war, die auf Englisch gesungen wurde. Später leitete er *Das Rheingold* und *Die Walküre* an der Royal Opera, *Tristan und Isolde* und *Die Walküre* an der Welsh National Opera sowie *Tristan und Parsifal* an der English National Opera. 1975 wurde er mit dem Orden CBE ausgezeichnet und 1985 zum Ritter geschlagen. Reginald Goodall verstarb 1990 im Alter von achtundachtzig Jahren.



Siegmond, Hunding and Sieglinde, Act I, Scene 2



Siegmund and Sieglinde, Act I, Scene 3



Fricka and Wotan,
Act II, Scene 1

Richard Wagner: Die Walküre

Une introduction à “Der Ring des Nibelungen”

Wagner conçut l'idée d'un drame musical s'inspirant de l'histoire du mythe des Nibelungen en 1848, à peu près à l'époque où il achevait le dernier de ses opéras traditionnels, *Lohengrin*. Il est possible d'apprécier *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (L'Anneau du Nibelung) à plusieurs niveaux: comme un conte de fées, une allégorie politique ou un tract philosophique, par exemple. En son essence, il traite du combat éternel entre le bien et le mal, et du contraste qui existe entre l'amour du pouvoir et le pouvoir de l'amour. Wotan, le chef des dieux, veut un pouvoir dont les fins sont bénignes; Alberich, le chef des Nibelungen, gnomes qui vivent sous la terre, le veut pour servir ses propres fins maléfiques. De l'*Orfeo* de Monteverdi à *Die Zauberflöte* de Mozart, d'*Hippolyte et Aricie* de Rameau au *Freischütz* de Weber, la superposition entre la lumière et les ténèbres a été un sujet de fascination pour les compositeurs d'opéras. Wagner reconnut que tout n'est pas noir et blanc, mais très largement teinté d'ombres de gris. Ainsi,

Wotan a recours à la ruse et au vol, et se décrit lui-même comme l'alter ego du gnome, “Lumière-Alberich”, tandis qu'Alberich, qui après tout obtient l'or du Rhin en se pliant à la condition de renoncer à l'amour, est investi aussi bien par la dignité que par la malfaisance.

Wagner travailla pendant plusieurs années aux paroles et à la musique, commençant par un résumé en prose de l'histoire avant de se lancer dans le texte de ce qu'il appela *Siegfrieds Tod* (La Mort de Siegfried). Cependant, il déclara à un ami en décembre 1856 que “les Nibelungen commencent à m'ennuyer”; en effet, il abandonna le *Ring* l'été suivant, et ne revint à la composition de celui-ci qu'en 1869, époque à laquelle il avait composé *Tristan und Isolde* et *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Les Maîtres chanteurs de Nuremberg). Depuis sa conception jusqu'à son achèvement, ce projet gigantesque lui demanda vingt-six ans: années de trouble dans sa vie privée ainsi que sur la scène politique de l'Europe.

Ce n'est pas seulement l'ennui qui le poussa, comme il le raconta, à abandonner son jeune Siegfried sous le tilleul, où il “lui fit des adieux

avec des larmes sincères”. Ayant fui Dresde pour échapper à l'arrestation en raison de sa participation à la Révolution de 1848, il vivait en exil à Zürich avec peu d'espoir de jamais voir le *Ring* représenté sur scène; et son style était en train de changer de manière si radicale qu'il lui fallait le faire passer, c'est le cas de le dire, par *Tristan*. Le fait que Wagner ait persévéré jusqu'à terminer le *Ring* puis, grâce à ses propres efforts, à le faire représenter dans un théâtre spécialement construit à cet effet, tient véritablement du miracle.

Ses sources incluent cinq poèmes épiques, en islandais, en allemand moyen et en vieux norrois, qui datent tous du treizième siècle. Comme pour tous ses opéras, avant et après le *Ring*, Wagner écrivit lui-même ses livrets. Mais, à l'inquiétude de ses amis, commençant par *Siegfrieds Tod*, il reprit une ancienne technique poétique appelée “Stabreim” qui fait appel à des alitérations explosives plutôt qu'à la scansion et aux rimes. Ceci s'accordait avec ses théories, exposées dans les essais qu'il écrivit en exil à Zürich, et qui traitaient entre autres de l'interdépendance entre les sons verbaux et musicaux, et de la nécessité pour les paroles chantées d'être audibles; d'où il s'ensuivit que les ensembles et les chœurs n'avaient plus leur place.

Cependant, Wagner ne suivit pas toujours à la lettre ses propres préceptes: en effet, on peut trouver un quintette et de nombreux chœurs dans *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, ainsi qu'un chœur et un trio au deuxième acte de *Götterdämmerung* (Le Crépuscule des dieux). L'opéra qui ouvre le cycle du *Ring*, *Das Rheingold* (L'Or du Rhin), offre un bon exemple de la mise en pratique des théories wagnériennes, mais il restait beaucoup de travail avant que Wagner puisse commencer à composer la musique. Au départ, il prévoyait de n'écrire qu'un seul opéra, qui pourrait s'achever sur une note d'optimisme avec la supériorité morale et physique des dieux solidement établie. La remarque de l'un de ses amis selon laquelle l'histoire exigerait du public une quantité irréaliste de connaissances touchant le contexte l'incita d'abord à développer *Siegfrieds Tod*, puis à ajouter ce que l'on pourrait qualifier de “prologue”, *Der junge Siegfried* (Le Jeune Siegfried). Voyant la nécessité d'un plus grand retour en arrière, Wagner écrivit les textes de *Die Walküre* (La Walkyrie) et de *Das Rheingold*. *Der junge Siegfried* fut rebaptisé *Siegfried*, tandis que *Siegfrieds Tod* devint *Götterdämmerung*, avec des omissions et des changements significatifs, notamment la fin où maintenant les dieux

périssent dans l'incendie de leur palais, le Walhalla. Reconnaisant l'influence de l'*Orestie* et du *Prométhée* d'Eschyle, Wagner décrit le *Ring* comme étant une trilogie (*Das Rheingold* servant de hors-d'œuvre).

En 1854, Wagner prit connaissance des écrits du philosophe Arthur Schopenhauer – “un râleur d'un genre des plus prononcés” selon l'expression de Bertie Wooster, un personnage de l'écrivain humoriste anglais P. G. Wodehouse. La version révisée de la fin de l'histoire du *Ring* avait été écrite auparavant; mais Wagner rédigea par la suite plusieurs fins différentes au cours de la composition du cycle, notamment une qui reflète la vue pessimiste de Schopenhauer selon laquelle la vie n'est que la négation de la mort. Ici, Brünnhilde parvient à un état d'illumination bouddhiste en arrivant à la “fin bénie de toute chose éternelle”. Ce n'est pas la version que Wagner utilisa finalement, mais c'est une indication de son état d'esprit au moment où il composait la fin de *Die Walküre* et le début de *Siegfried*.

Ayant écrit le texte en ordre inverse, Wagner composa la musique à partir du début: ainsi, il commença *Das Rheingold* en 1853, un an après la rédaction du livret, alors que dans le cas de *Götterdämmerung*, commencé en 1869,

il mit en musique le texte qu'il avait écrit (quoique avec des révisions) vingt ans plus tôt. Bien entendu, son style musical se développa pendant cette période, et la partition de *Götterdämmerung* est beaucoup plus subtile et complexe que celle de *Das Rheingold*. Pourtant, aussi disparates qu'ils soient, les quatre opéras se tiennent ensemble grâce à l'outil de liaison connu sous le nom de leitmotiv (de l'allemand *Leitmotiv*, motif conducteur).

Les réminiscences musicales dans l'opéra n'avaient rien de nouveau. Un exemple bien connu est celui de la petite phrase de hautbois qui nous dit, à l'Acte II de *Fidelio* de Beethoven, que Florestan endormi est maintenant en train de rêver à l'épouse à propos de laquelle il vient juste de chanter. La réussite de Wagner fut de créer un réseau de leitmotive: phrases brèves et éloquentes associées à des individus, des objets, des sentiments et bien d'autres choses encore, qui réapparaissent dans la ligne vocale, et en particulier dans l'orchestre. Ils sont bien plus que les “cartes de visite” ridiculisées par Debussy (qui pourtant ne dédaigna pas d'utiliser ce moyen dans *Pelléas et Mélisande*): simple répétition, modification mélodique ou harmonique, et combinaison – en particulier

vers la fin du cycle – avec d'autres motifs, tous concourent à créer une tapisserie solidement tissée.

Des livres ont assigné des noms aux divers leitmotive, mais au fur et à mesure que la définition des plus abstraits se veut plus précise, ceux-ci peuvent se révéler encore plus insaisissables. Rien de tout cela ne doit troubler l'auditeur qui prend connaissance du *Ring* pour la première fois, car il parviendra à reconnaître les leitmotive après quelques auditions. Toutefois, les correspondances ne sont pas toutes évidentes: il est utile de souligner, pour ne prendre qu'un exemple, la similarité des contours des leitmotive du “Walhalla” et de “Anneau” – respectivement noble et sinistre – qui confirme, ou plutôt anticipe notre impression que Wotan et Alberich représentent les deux faces d'une même pièce.

L'un des nombreux plaisirs du *Ring*, et non des moindres, est son orchestration. Si Wagner a recours à des ensembles gigantesques, très souvent c'est un seul instrument à vent – un hautbois ou une clarinette basse par exemple – qui exprime une situation ou répond à une phrase vocale. L'une des couleurs les plus caractéristiques du *Ring* est créée par ce que l'on a appelé les “tubas Wagner” (joués par des

membres de la puissante section des huit cors), qui entonnent le leitmotiv du “Walhalla” à la scène deux de *Das Rheingold*.

En 1862, Wagner n'était plus banni des états allemands. Il publia l'année suivante une édition du texte du *Ring* avec une préface dans laquelle il exprimait l'espoir qu'un prince allemand fournirait l'argent nécessaire permettant au cycle – pas encore achevé – d'être représenté dans un théâtre spécialement construit. Sa prière fut rapidement entendue. Le prince héritier de Bavière âgé de dix-huit ans monta sur le trône en 1864 et devint le roi Louis II. Il aida Wagner à rembourser ses dettes, l'installa dans une maison à Munich, lui offrit des cadeaux en numéraires et un salaire annuel, et l'encouragea à poursuivre son grand œuvre.

Leurs relations eurent des hauts et des bas, pour dire les choses avec modération, mais c'est grâce à Louis II de Bavière que *Tristan und Isolde* et *Das Meistersinger von Nürnberg* furent créés au théâtre de la cour, qui vit également les reprises d'opéras plus anciens de Wagner. Des productions de *Das Rheingold* et de *Die Walküre* furent également données au grand dam du compositeur. En effet, Wagner était encore déterminé à ce que le cycle complet du *Ring* soit représenté dans son

propre théâtre et dans le cadre d'un festival. En 1871, il se décida pour la ville provinciale de Bayreuth. La construction du nouveau théâtre fut financée par une souscription publique, Louis II apportant son renfort à un moment critique. Wagner acheva *Götterdämmerung* en 1874 et *Der Ring des Nibelungen* reçut sa première représentation intégrale en août 1876. Parvenu en 1889, des productions avaient été données dans les opéras du monde entier; aujourd'hui encore, le *Ring* demeure l'ouvrage de référence par lequel est jugé tout théâtre aspirant à la grandeur.

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Traduction: Francis Marchal

Die Walküre

Wagner composa la musique de *Die Walküre* entre novembre 1854 et mars 1856. Si c'est l'opéra le plus populaire du *Ring* et le plus susceptible d'être représenté indépendamment, il n'est pas difficile de comprendre pourquoi. Il marque la première apparition d'êtres humains dans l'histoire, faisant contraste aux Filles du Rhin, aux Nibelungen, aux géants et aux dieux de *Das Rheingold*. Une interprétation exaltée du duo d'amour de l'Acte I peut émouvoir profondément un auditoire et suffisamment

longtemps pour lui faire oublier le malaise créé par le fait que Siegmund et Sieglinde sont frère et sœur, et qu'ils se préparent à commettre un inceste au moment où le rideau tombe.

La scène où Wotan fait de longs adieux à sa fille préférée (Brünnhilde, la Walkyrie du titre) à la fin de l'opéra est également une situation lourde d'émotion à laquelle chacun peut s'identifier: le public est ému par les sentiments du père encore davantage que par la position difficile du dieu. Après tout le bruit et la fureur de la "Chevauchée des Walkyries", les débordements extatiques de Sieglinde et la rage de Wotan, le calme presque immobile de la dernière scène offre une conclusion profondément satisfaisante.

L'Acte I débute par une tempête à travers laquelle Siegmund fuit ses ennemis. Il se sauve également à la fin de l'acte; et si cela, combiné à son apitoiement sur lui-même, le fait d'abord percevoir comme l'un des personnages les moins séduisants du *Ring*, Wagner nous force à le prendre en sympathie en lui donnant une musique à la fois tendre et puissante. Il a été dit que Sieglinde est la seule personne vraiment sympathique du *Ring* (peut-être le géant Fasolt en peine d'amour la suit de près): sa musique est toute tendresse, depuis le moment où elle va chercher de l'eau à boire

pour Siegmund qui est blessé. Son exaltation croissante pendant le récit qu'elle fait du vieil homme qui a planté une épée dans l'arbre, avec les leitmotifs du "Walhalla" et de "l'Épée" déferlant dans l'orchestre, est l'un des moments suprêmes de l'opéra.

Quand Sieglinde apprend à l'Acte III qu'elle va donner naissance à Siegfried, "le plus noble héros du monde", elle exprime sa joie par le leitmotiv généralement surnommé "Rédemption", et qui ne réapparaîtra plus avant la toute fin de *Götterdämmerung*. Elle disparaît, et on ne la revoit plus jamais (son destin nous est raconté dans *Siegfried*). Une fois que les Walkyries assemblées se sont enfuies terrifiées par la colère de leur père, la scène appartient à Wotan et Brünnhilde. Leur échange dialectique rappelle la querelle entre Wotan et Fricka à l'Acte II, avec cette différence que Wotan est abattu par la logique impitoyable de Fricka, tandis qu'ici il existe un certain rapprochement.

Aussi glorieux que soient les Actes I et III, c'est peut-être l'Acte II qui nous révèle Wagner au plus haut de son génie. Les cinq scènes contiennent la joie trop brève de Wotan quant il ordonne à Brünnhilde de protéger Siegmund dans le combat qui l'oppose à Hunding, puis son désespoir total de devoir admettre la

nécessité inéluctable de la mort de Siegmund, qui a pour conséquence de mettre un terme à son projet de rendre l'or aux Filles du Rhin par le truchement d'un être libre. Dans l'intervalle se situe la scène avec Fricka, suivie par le monologue, en grande partie récitatif, où en parlant à Brünnhilde il s'entretient vraiment avec lui-même. (Dans le présent enregistrement, il est presque possible de sentir le public accroché à chaque mot du récit captivant de Norman Bailey.) Wotan accueille la fin de son pouvoir et raconte comment Alberich est en train d'y travailler en séduisant une femme avec de l'or afin d'engendrer un allié (impliquant de cette manière que Siegfried et Hagen, le fils d'Alberich, qui se rencontrent au cours de *Götterdämmerung*, sont presque exactement contemporains).

Après une scène pour les amants en fuite, Brünnhilde fait son apparition solennelle devant Siegmund comme messagère de la mort. Il lui pose six questions, et elle répond à chacune d'entre elles. Pour la réponse de Siegmund qui refuse de la suivre au Walhalla sans Sieglinde, Wagner souligne le propos en élevant la hauteur de chaque phrase en un effet de roue à rochet. La ténacité de Siegmund conduit finalement Brünnhilde à acquiescer une compréhension de l'amour

humain, dont les conséquences seront capitales. Enfin, il y a la tendresse de Siegmund au-dessus du sommeil de Sieglinde, le bref cauchemard de celle-ci, et le combat fatal. En l'espace de quelques secondes seulement, Wotan et l'orchestre expriment le mépris pour Hunding, le chagrin causé par la mort de Siegmund et la colère provoquée par la désobéissance de Brünnhilde: une fin concise et puissante pour un acte au déroulement infaillible.

Die Walküre fut représenté pour la première fois à Munich en juin 1870. Sa première représentation dans le cadre du cycle complet du *Ring* eut lieu au Festival de Bayreuth au mois d'août 1876.

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Traduction: Francis Marchal

Reginald Goodall – une évaluation personnelle de Brian Ward

Il se trouve parfois que l'on arrive à un concert ou à l'opéra dans un état d'esprit qui rende presque impossible d'apprécier l'exécution, et il ne fait aucun doute que le soir du 5 mars 1954 paraissait être l'une de ces occasions.

Tout alla de travers de jour-là: je m'étais rendu en voiture à Croydon tout spécialement

pour entendre *Die Walküre* avec Ludwig Hofmann, un célèbre basse-baryton allemand d'avant-guerre, dans le rôle de Wotan, mais ayant quitté tard le bureau j'eus ensuite une crevasion en plein milieu de l'heure de pointe, et arrivant enfin, je découvris que Ludwig Hofmann ne chanterait pas. Cinq heures plus tard, je quittai le Davis Theatre dans un tel état d'exaltation que je serais volontiers rentré chez moi à pieds ayant entendu une interprétation que je n'aurais imaginé possible que sous la direction de Knappertsbusch ou Furtwängler. Le chef d'orchestre ce soir-là était Reginald Goodall.

Bien sûr j'avais déjà entendu, et admiré, une grande partie du travail de Reginald Goodall à Covent Garden au cours des années qui suivirent immédiatement la guerre, période pendant laquelle il dirigea régulièrement ce qui semble maintenant des œuvres aussi improbables que *Carmen*, *Manon*, *La traviata*, *Aida* et *Il trovatore*, mais rien ne m'avait préparé à une interprétation wagnérienne d'une compréhension et d'une noblesse aussi profondes que celle que j'entendis ce soir-là.

A partir de ce moment, je réfléchis beaucoup à la possibilité d'un *Ring* sous la direction de Reginald Goodall, mais au fur et à mesure que le temps passa, il devint clair que

cela ne se produirait pas. Il y eu des reprises, sous sa direction, de *Gloriana* et *Boris Godounov*, de *Fidelio* et *Turandot*, de *Peter Grimes*, *Wozzeck* et *Troilus and Cressida*, mais rien qui ne fût conçu dès le départ par Reginald Goodall. Ce n'est que sept ans plus tard qu'il me fut donné d'entendre une autre interprétation d'un opéra de Wagner qui me fit comprendre, une fois de plus, quel grand chef wagnérien il était, et combien il était négligé.

Cette occasion, en octobre 1960, fut une reprise de *Tannhäuser* au Sadler's Wells Theatre à laquelle je m'étais rendu avec une certaine nervosité, pensant que le petit orchestre du Sadler's Wells ainsi que l'acoustique plutôt sèche du théâtre avaient peu de chance de convenir à une œuvre de cette nature. En l'occurrence, je fus confondu et j'entendis une interprétation qui, malgré quelques lacunes vocales, était, à sa manière, aussi passionnante que la merveilleuse *Walküre* quelques années plus tôt.

Jusqu'à cette époque, le Wagner de Reginald Goodall n'avait soulevé que peu d'intérêt parmi les critiques musicaux, mais Peter Heyworth écrivit à propos de *Tannhäuser* dans la revue *Opera*:

Mr Goodall possède un merveilleux sens de la

respiration et de la grandeur de la musique, et pourtant il n'y a aucune inertie ni aucun manque de vie dans ses tempos et ses rythmes. L'ampleur qu'il donne à la partition permet à chaque détail de se révéler avec une aisance posée, et cependant sa lecture ne manque jamais d'animation dramatique, tandis que sa manière de préparer les points culminants est infaillible. Par-dessus tout, il possède la remarquable capacité de révéler l'un des immenses actes de Wagner comme une entité unique se déployant d'un seul tenant – et cela n'est pas une mince réussite dans une œuvre telle que *Tannhäuser* qui est immature à bien des égards. Ses points culminants parviennent à une puissance aussi extraordinaire par rapport aux maigres ressources dont il dispose parce qu'ils naissent du développement organique de la musique.

Mr Goodall est un interprète de Wagner qui fait autorité. On ne peut qu'espérer vivement que sa réapparition au Sadler's Wells représente une appréciation de ses rares talents plus perspicace que celle montrée par Covent Garden dont il est l'un des membres.

Tout comme Peter Heyworth, j'espérais, moi aussi, entendre davantage Reginald Goodall, mais rien du tout: il ne dirigea absolument rien pendant la saison suivante à Covent Garden. Au cours de la saison

1962/1963, il y eut seulement un *Coq d'or*, et après cela il n'y eut plus aucune représentation pendant cinq ans. Ce n'est pas avant 1968 que l'on put entendre à nouveau cet homme extraordinaire. Cette fois-ci, cependant, ce fut dans une série de représentations qui bouleversèrent profondément le public d'opéra et les critiques. On avait annoncé que puisque les deux compagnies du Sadler's Wells se trouvaient simultanément à Londres, il y aurait une nouvelle production de *Der Meistersinger von Nürnberg* utilisant les ressources des deux compagnies, et le 31 janvier 1968 fut donnée la première d'une grande série d'interprétations wagnériennes. Enfin, nous avions une production qui avait été préparée et pas seulement reprise, et enfin nous pouvions voir exactement ce que Reginald Goodall pouvait faire dans la manière de former le style d'une compagnie avec la collaboration d'artistes dévoués tels que Norman Bailey, Alberto Remedios, Gregory Dempsey, Derek Hammond Stroud, et par la suite Clifford Grant.

J'eus la chance d'assister à plusieurs *Meistersinger* au Sadler's Wells et au Coliseum, et bien que j'eusse entendu un certain nombre de représentations sous la direction de Rankl, Krauss et Beecham, ainsi que de nombreuses

retransmissions radiophoniques de Bayreuth, pour moi, ce fut une révélation; et aussi pour les critiques, car ils se mirent aussitôt à écrire que Reginald Goodall était "le plus grand chef wagnérien vivant aujourd'hui"; un fait que quelques-uns d'entre-nous avaient été conscients depuis quinze ans. Les événements qui suivirent sont, évidemment, bien connus: les rumeurs d'un cycle du *Ring*, la nouvelle production au Coliseum de *Die Walküre*, et la conception progressive pendant plusieurs années d'un cycle complet qui fut entendu pour la première fois en août 1973 dans une salle six fois à guichés fermés!

Beaucoup des chanteurs de la production de 1968 des *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* se produisirent également dans les opéras du *Ring*, mais Reginald Goodall avait engagé plusieurs nouveaux venus (c'est-à-dire nouveaux venus dans des grands rôles wagnériens): outre les superbes contributions des artistes mentionnés plus haut dans les rôles de Wotan/Wanderer, Siegmund/Siegfried, Mime, Alberich et Hagen/Hunding, nous eûmes la magnifique Brünnhilde de Rita Hunter, et les interprétations tout à fait convaincantes de fidèles tels que Emile Belcourt, Ann Howard et Katherine Pring pour ne citer que quelques noms parmi tous

ceux qui rendirent ces représentations si mémorables.

Cependant, et bien qu'il serait le premier à le nier, c'est Reginald Goodall qui est le véritable héros, lui dont le génie fut la force motrice derrière le *Ring* du Sadler's Wells, et à qui tous les véritables amateurs de Wagner devraient être éternellement reconnaissants.

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Traduction: Francis Marchal, 2000

Événements précédant "Die Walküre"

Dans *Das Rheingold*, Alberich, le gnome du Nibelung, a volé l'or qui était gardé par les Filles du Rhin, et en renonçant à l'amour, il est parvenu à forger un anneau le rendant maître de l'univers. Muni de l'anneau, il est descendu dans le Nibelheim et a réduit les Nibelung à l'esclavage, les forçant à extraire davantage d'or pour lui.

Après avoir construit le Walhalla pour Wotan, les géants Fasolt et Fafner lui ont demandé pour salaire Freia, la déesse de la Jeunesse et de la Beauté, mais Wotan, poussé par Loge, le dieu du Feu, leur a offert à la place l'or du Nibelung. Ils l'ont accepté. Wotan et Loge sont descendus dans le Nibelheim et ont dépouillé Alberich de son

trésor: le heaume magique (le Tarnhelm) qui peut changer à volonté la forme de celui qui le porte, et l'anneau, que Wotan avait l'intention de garder pour lui. Les géants ne furent cependant satisfaits qu'après avoir obtenu tout le trésor, y compris l'anneau. Wotan avait d'abord refusé de se séparer de l'anneau, mais tenant compte de l'avertissement d'Erda, un esprit de la terre, qui lui révéla la malédiction lancé par Alberich, il finit par le céder.

L'effet de la malédiction fut immédiat: Fafner a tué Fasolt et s'est emparé de tout le trésor. Troublés par la tournure des événements, Wotan et les dieux sont cependant entrés en triomphe au Walhalla, accompagnés par les Filles du Rhin se lamentant sur la perte de leur or.

Argument

Disque Compact Un

Acte I

Dans une cabane

☐ Une tempête fait rage avant que le rideau ne se lève. Quand elle s'apaise, un homme entre précipitamment sur scène, visiblement la victime épuisée d'une chasse. ☐ Il s'écroule sur le tapis devant le feu et déclare qu'il lui

faut se reposer, peu importe la maison où il se trouve. Dérangée par le bruit, une femme entre de la pièce voisine; elle est surprise de voir un étranger, mais est soulagée de constater qu'il est vivant et seulement inconscient. L'homme réclame à boire, et elle va chercher de l'eau dans une corne à boire pour le ranimer. ^[3] Il apprend que la femme et la cabane appartiennent à son époux Hunding. Elle va vers le garde-manger et en rapporte une corne d'hydromel qu'elle lui donne à boire, tandis que la musique nous dit qu'ils sont tombés amoureux. ^[4] Mais l'homme tente de se sauver afin d'éviter le malheur que pourrait lui apporter son hôtesse – elle lui répond que le malheur est déjà dans cette maison. Il lui dit que son nom est Wehwalt (Visage affligé).

Hunding, annoncé par un appel menaçant des tubas de Bayreuth, est de retour à la maison. ^[5] La femme lui explique qu'elle a secouru un fugitif. ^[6] Hunding proclame la sainteté de sa terre, remarque la ressemblance entre sa femme et l'étranger, et lui demande de lui raconter son histoire. ^[7] – ^[8] Wehwalt explique que sa mère a été tuée par des brigands et que sa sœur jumelle a été enlevée alors qu'il était encore enfant; son père, surnommé Wolfe, l'a élevé, puis a disparu. Lui-même a été rejeté par les hommes. ^[9] Il

est arrivé à la cabane de Hunding après un combat au cours duquel il est venu en aide à une jeune femme qui était contrainte à se marier contre son gré. Elle et tous ses gens ont été tués; seul Wehwalt s'en est réchappé.

^[10] Hunding se lève en colère; cet homme est l'ennemi contre lequel ses parents l'avaient appelé à l'aide, et qui a maintenant trouvé refuge dans sa propre demeure. Les lois de l'hospitalité les lient pour la nuit, mais au matin, ils devront se battre à mort. Il envoie sa femme préparer sa boisson du soir – elle s'éloigne à contre-cœur, et lance des regards significatifs vers le tronc de l'arbre autour duquel la cabane est construite. Après un final avertissement, Hunding la suit.

^[11] La lumière a décliné. Wehwalt est seul, sans arme; il se souvient seulement que Wolfe lui a promis une épée quand il en aurait besoin. "Wälse! Wälse!" s'exclame-t-il à son père, "Où est ton épée?" Et les dernières lueurs des braises projettent une lumière sur l'arbre dans lequel est enfoncé une épée – dans l'orchestre, une trompette joue le motif de l'épée magique.

^[12] La femme de Hunding revient dans l'obscurité; elle a donné à son mari un breuvage dans lequel elle a versé un puissant narcotique, et supplie maintenant l'étranger de

gagner l'épée. ^[13] Lors de son mariage, un étranger vêtu de gris est entré et a enfoncé son épée dans l'arbre. L'orchestre nous informe qu'il s'agissait de Wotan. Aucun des invités ne parvint à l'arracher; elle comprit alors qu'elle avait été mise là pour celui qui serait son sauveur – si ce pouvait être Wehwalt! ^[14] Ils tombent dans les bras l'un de l'autre, et sont soudain illuminés par un brillant clair de lune qui semble être comme la bénédiction de leur amour par la nature. ^[15] Le Printemps et sa sœur l'Amour, dit Wehwalt, sont unis par les liens du mariage. ^[16] – ^[17] La femme salue Wehwalt comme étant son Printemps, et tandis qu'ils continuent leurs échanges amoureux, ^[18] elle se rend compte qu'il est plus proche d'elle qu'aucune autre chose, hormis son propre reflet, l'écho de sa propre voix. Quand il lui dit que son père n'était pas Wolfe mais Wälse, et qu'il est lui-même un Wälsung, elle est submergée par la joie. Elle sait qu'il est son frère, et lui donne son véritable nom, Siegmund (Victorieux). ^[19] – ^[20] Il se lève d'un bon, grimpe à l'arbre, arrache l'épée du tronc, et proclamant son nom, Nothung (Nécessaire), il la lui offre comme cadeau de noces. La femme révèle qu'elle est sa sœur Sieglinde. "Le sang de ces Wälsung est béni!" s'écrie-t-il, et il l'embrasse tandis que le rideau tombe.

Disque Compact Deux

Acte II

Un sommet sauvage et rocheux

^[1] Le prélude orchestral du deuxième acte dépeint leur fuite en un traitement symphonique sauvage et passionné des motifs associés avec Nothung, la fuite, et l'amour que Siegmund et Sieglinde se portent l'un à l'autre. La musique devient de plus en plus tempétueuse et grandiose pour préparer le glissement de l'action qui se déroule maintenant parmi les immortels. Du haut du sommet rocheux, Wotan surveille la scène avec sa fille préférée, la vierge Walkyrie Brünnhilde. Il lui ordonne, comme instrument de sa propre volonté, de protéger Siegmund dans le combat imminent avec Hunding. ^[2] Brünnhilde profère joyeusement son cri de guerre "Hoïotoho!" Elle avertit Wotan de se préparer aussi; sa femme Fricka, gardienne des lois familiales, approche sur son char tiré par des béliers.

^[3] Fricka est venu pour demander que triomphent des lois sacrées du mariage et que les amants incestueux soient punis. ^[4] – ^[5] Si elle bénissait l'amour de Siegmund et de Sieglinde, comme le souhaite Wotan, la supériorité morale des dieux irait à sa perte.

Elle lui reproche ses infidélités passées, et [7] quand il lui explique la nécessité d'un être libre, elle lui réplique que l'être libre qu'il a choisi, Siegmund, n'est pas du tout libre, mais qu'il a été guidé depuis le début par Wotan. Il ne peut en conséquence accomplir sa mission. [8] Misérablement, Wotan cède point par point à ses terribles exigences: Siegmund doit être tué par Hunding; ni Wotan ni Brünnhilde ne doivent lui venir en aide; l'épée doit perdre son pouvoir magique. [9] Triomphante, Fricka commande à Brünnhilde, qui est revenue, de recevoir les nouveaux ordres de Wotan. [10] Wotan déverse son indignation et son désespoir devant Brünnhilde. [11] – [12] Il lui retrace, comme si c'était pour lui-même, les origines de ce conflit crucial, rappelant les événements de *Der Rheingold* – un rappel nécessaire sur le plan structurel pour le plan symphonique de Wagner, et non pas simplement un moyen de mettre le public au courant de la situation. [14] – [15] La narration confirme la croyance de Wotan dans le fait que l'issue doit être la fin du monde, à moins qu'un héros n'intervienne de sa propre volonté libre et ne l'empêche, cette fin [16] qu'Alberich le Nibelung recherche, et pour laquelle il a engendré par des moyens corrompus un fils, Hagen. [17] – [18] Wotan donne ses ordres à

Brünnhilde: elle doit se battre pour Fricka et laisser de côté la volonté de Wotan.

Disque Compact Trois

[1] Wotan s'éloigne précipitamment; profondément attristée, Brünnhilde quitte la scène plus lentement. [2] On entend de nouveau la musique de la fuite alors que s'approchent rapidement Siegmund et Sieglinde. [3] – [4] Sieglinde refuse de se reposer ne serait-ce qu'un instant – elle imagine déjà le bruit de Hunding à leur poursuite. Mais la fatigue est plus forte que la peur, et elle s'effondre inconsciente dans les bras de Siegmund. [5] – [6] Assis sur un rocher et la tenant ainsi dans ses bras, Brünnhilde apparaît devant lui comme un visage dans un rêve: elle l'avertit de sa mort imminente et du voyage qu'il va faire avec elle vers la demeure des héros dans le Walhalla. [7] – [8] Mais Siegmund refuse de se séparer de Sieglinde, et menace de la tuer ainsi que l'enfant qu'elle porte en son sein. [9] Brünnhilde décide alors de les sauver tous les deux, et défie Wotan (bien entendu, elle se prépare à exécuter la volonté véritable de Wotan). Elle se sauve.

[10] Siegmund allonge doucement sur le sol Sieglinde qui est toujours endormie, et se

prépare au combat tandis que l'on entend les appels de cor de Hunding. [11] Sieglinde se réveille d'un cauchemard, et se découvre seule, au moment même [12] où Siegmund se retrouve face à face avec Hunding au col de la montagne. Brünnhilde voletige au-dessus d'eux, et protège Siegmund, mais soudain Wotan apparaît. L'épée de Siegmund se brise contre la lance de Wotan, laissant libre Hunding de tuer son adversaire. Brünnhilde s'éloigne rapidement et emporte Sieglinde qui s'est évanouie. Wotan se tient au-dessus de Hunding, et d'un geste de la main le foudroie et expédie son esprit à Fricka comme messenger de sa victoire. Mais il promet un châtement terrible pour la désobéissance de Brünnhilde.

Disque Compact Quatre

Acte III

Au sommet d'une montagne rocheuse

[1] Le prélude orchestral dépeint la chevauchée dans les airs des Walkyries (les filles guerrières de Wotan engendrées par la déesse de la terre Erda) tandis qu'elles se dirigent vers leur lieu de réunion sur le sommet d'une montagne. Quand le rideau se lève, on les voit en train de s'assembler une à une avant de partir toutes ensemble à cheval vers le Walhalla, emportant

avec elles les corps des héros morts au combat. [2] Brünnhilde est la dernière à arriver; elle porte sur sa selle non pas le cadavre de Siegmund, mais Sieglinde qui est en vie.

[3] Brünnhilde supplie ses sœurs Walkyries de l'aider à cacher Sieglinde; Wotan est à leur poursuite et va bientôt les frapper toutes les deux de sa vengeance. Aucune des autres Walkyries n'ose braver la colère de Wotan, et [4] Sieglinde n'aspire elle-même qu'à la mort jusqu'au moment où Brünnhilde lui parle du héros Walsung qu'elle porte dans son sein: la seule manière pour Sieglinde d'être en sécurité est de fuir seule dans une forêt profonde gardée par le dragon Fafner; [5] là, elle mettra au monde son enfant en cachette, lui donnera les morceaux de l'épée de son père, et l'appellera du nom de Siegfried. [6] Sieglinde exprime sa gratitude et sa joie en un glorieux élan plein de lyrisme avant de s'enfuir.

[7] Brünnhilde se cache parmi ses sœurs Walkyries alors que Wotan arrive précipitamment au sommet de la montagne, l'appelant d'une voix chargée de colère. [8] – [9] Méprisant les Walkyries qui implorent sa pitié, il ordonne à Brünnhilde de se montrer. [10] Elle a créé son propre châtement, car elle est une part de lui-même; il lui dit sa sentence: elle n'est plus une Walkyrie, [11] elle

n'est plus une habitante du Walhalla, elle ne pourra plus voir Wotan; ici, sur ce rocher, elle va devoir dormir sans défense, livrée au premier passant qui la prendra et en fera sa femme. [12] Wotan renvoie les Walkyries qui protestent.

[13] – [14] Brünnhilde demeure allongée et prostrée. Après un long silence, elle commence sa défense; elle a seulement agi selon la volonté véritable de Wotan. [15] – [17] Elle a protégé Siegmund parce qu'elle l'aimait. Wotan a provoqué cet amour, et avec lui la volonté de désobéir à Fricka. Elle a rempli son devoir, elle ne l'a pas trahi. Bien qu'ému, Wotan demeure inflexible. [18] Elle lui rappelle les Wälsungen, ses propres enfants, et tente de le convaincre en lui révélant qu'elle a sauvé Sieglinde et l'enfant qu'elle porte, ainsi que l'épée que forgea Wotan; Wotan lui rappelle que c'est lui qui l'a brisée. Le destin de Brünnhilde ne peut donc être modifié; [19] elle va devoir dormir d'un sommeil magique. [20] – [21] Il consent cependant à une chose: elle sera entourée d'un feu magique qui tiendra au moins à l'écart les poltrons. Wotan la relève du sol, et commence à lui faire ses adieux.

Par un baiser sur les yeux, il la dépouille de sa divinité et la plonge dans le sommeil, puis la dépose sur la montagne à côté de son

heaume et de sa lance. [22] Il tourne solennellement la pointe de sa propre lance vers un rocher, et invoque Loge, le dieu du Feu, pour qu'il entoure de flammes la lance. [23] Wotan jette un sort à la montagne: nul ne pourra passer au travers du feu magique s'il redoute la pointe de sa lance. Lentement le dieu s'en va. Son pouvoir est aboli. Le destin du monde repose sur son petit-fils, le héros Siegfried qui n'est pas encore né, et sur la demi-déesse maintenant réduite à la simple condition de femme, et qui gît seule sur cette montagne.

William Mann, 1976

Traduction: Francis Marchal, 2000

L'un des plus grands ténors héroïques britanniques de sa génération, **Alberto Remedios** a fait ses études musicales à Liverpool avec Edwin Francis, et au Royal College of Music de Londres. Il a fait ses débuts au Sadler's Wells Opera (plus tard rebaptisé English National Opera) dans le rôle de Tinca (*Il tabarro*). Parmi les nombreux rôles qu'il a chantés avec cette compagnie, on citera Don Ottavio, Tamino, Max (*Der Freischütz*), Alfredo, Faust (dans *Faust* de Gounod et dans *La Damnation de Faust* de Berlioz), Des

Griex (*Manon*), Samson (*Samson et Dalila*), Lenski, Erik (*Der fliegende Holländer*), Lohengrin, Walther (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Tristan, Siegmund, Siegfried et Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). Il a fait ses débuts au Royal Opera de Covent Garden dans le rôle de Dimitri (*Boris Godounov*), et a chanté par la suite Florestan, Enée (*Les Troyens*), Max, Erik, Siegfried, Bacchus et Mark (*The Midsummer Marriage* de Sir Michael Tippett). Il s'est également produit au Welsh National Opera et au Scottish Opera, et a passé deux ans à l'Opéra de Francfort. Il a fait ses débuts au Metropolitan Opera de New York dans le rôle de Bacchus, et a également chanté à San Francisco (dans les rôles de Dimitri et de Don Carlos), à Los Angeles, San Diego et Seattle (le rôle de Siegfried), à Boston (le rôle de Faust de Gounod) et au Teatro colón de Buenos Aires (le rôle de Peter Grimes). Avec Joan Sutherland, Alberto Remedios a effectué des tournées en Australie interprétant les rôles d'Edgar (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Alfredo, Lenski et Faust; il est souvent revenu dans ce pays, chantant les rôles de Florestan, Siegmund, Radames et Otello avec l'Opera Australia, et se produisant également à Melbourne, Adelaïde et Brisbane. Alberto

Remedios a été fait commandeur de l'ordre de l'empire britannique (CBE) en 1981.

Après avoir fait ses études musicales à Sydney, Melbourne et Londres, la basse australienne **Clifford Grant** a fait ses débuts avec la New South Wales Opera Company dans le rôle de Raimondo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*). Il est ensuite entré au Sadler's Wells Opera (plus tard rebaptisé English National Opera) où il a chanté Seneca (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), le Commandeur (*Don Giovanni*), Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*), Silva (*Ernani*), Padre Guardiano (*La forza del destino*), Philippe II d'Espagne (*Don Carlos*), le Roi Henri (*Lohengrin*), Pogner (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Fafner, Hunding et Hagen (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*), ainsi que dans des rôles importants dans *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Manon*, *Oedipus Rex* et *Peter Grimes*. Il s'est également produit au Royal Opera de Covent Garden dans le rôle du Docteur Bartolo (*Le nozze di Figaro*); au Welsh National Opera dans *Nabucco* et *Die Zauberflöte*; au Glyndebourne Festival Opera dans le rôle de Nettuno (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), et à l'Opéra de Marseille dans celui d'Hunding. Il a chanté Alidoro (*La Cenerentola*), Oroveso (*Norma*), Matteo (dans *Fra Diavolo* d'Auber), Sparafucile

(*Rigoletto*), le Roi (*Aida*), Lodovico (*Otello*), Hagen, ainsi que des rôles dans *I puritani*, *Il trovatore* et *Tannhäuser* à l'Opéra de San Francisco, Nilakantha (dans *Lakmé* de Delibes) et Pimen (*Boris Godounov*) à Sydney. Après s'être produit dans *Les Huguenots* de Meyerbeer avec l'Opera Australia en 1990, Clifford Grant se retira de l'opéra mais revint sur scène en 1993 pour chanter Alvisé Badoero dans *La Gioconda* à l'Opera North. Il a collaboré avec des artistes aussi éminents que Dame Joan Sutherland, Otto Klemperer, Sir Adrian Boult et Sir Colin Davis.

Né en Afrique du Sud, la basse-baryton **Norman Bailey** a fait ses études à Vienne, puis a passé les premières années de sa carrière à chanter en Autriche et en Allemagne. Il est ensuite revenu au Royaume-Uni où il s'est produit avec toutes les grandes compagnies d'opéra. Salué comme l'un des plus remarquables chanteurs wagnériens de sa génération, son nom est particulièrement associé au rôle titre de *Der fliegende Holländer* et à celui de Hans Sachs dans *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Il a également chanté le Landgrave (*Tannhäuser*) à l'Opera North, Wotan/le Voyageur et Gunther à l'English National Opera, où en sa qualité de membre

de la compagnie il a par ailleurs incarné les rôles de Pizzaro (*Leonore* de Beethoven), le Comte de Luna (*Il trovatore*), Alfio (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Scarpia (*Tosca*), le Père (*Hänsel und Gretel*), le Prince Greminé (*Eugène Onéguine*), Kutuzov (*Guerre et Paix* de Prokofiev), et le Forestier (*Le Petit Renard rusé*). Au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, Norman Bailey s'est produit dans *Balstrode* (*Peter Grimes*, également en tournée à Palerme), Germont (*La traviata*), Ford (*Falstaff*), Wolfram (*Tannhäuser*), Kurwenal (*Tristan und Isolde*), Donner (*Das Rheingold*), Wotan (*Die Walküre*), Klingsor et Amfortas (*Parsifal*), Jochanaan (*Salome*), et le Maître de musique (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). Récemment, il a également chanté Oroveso (*Norma*), Banquo (*Macbeth*), le Roi (*Aida*), le Docteur (*Wozzeck*) et Schigolch (*Lulu*). Sa carrière internationale l'a conduit à se produire sur les grandes scènes lyriques et dans les festivals de toute l'Europe et des Etats-Unis, incluant plusieurs saisons à Bayreuth. Il a collaboré avec des chefs aussi importants que Sir Colin Davis, Sir Georg Solti, James Levine, Carlo Maria Giulini, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Claudio Abbado et Daniel Barenboim. Pour Chandos, Norman Bailey a enregistré le rôle titre dans *King Priam* de Sir Michael Tippett.

Née à Douglas sur l'île de Man, la soprano lyrique **Margaret Curphey** a fait ses études musicales à la Birmingham School of Music. Elle a ensuite effectué des tournées avec "Opera for All" et a passé deux ans dans le chœur du Glyndebourne Festival avant de devenir membre du Sadler's Wells Opera (plus tard rebaptisé English National Opera), où elle a fait ses débuts dans le rôle de Micaela (*Carmen*), puis a continué avec La Musica (*Orfeo* de Monteverdi), la Comtesse (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Pamina, Ninetta (*La gazza ladra*), Mary Stuart (*Maria Stuarda* de Donizetti), Violetta, Elisabeth de Valois (*Don Carlos*), Santuzza (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Mimì et Musetta dans *La bohème*, Marguerite (*La Damnation de Faust* de Berlioz), Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*), ainsi que de nombreux autres rôles. Ses célèbres interprétations wagnériennes avec cette compagnie incluent Elsa (*Lohengrin*), Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Sieglinde, Brünnhilde et Gutrune. Margaret Curphey a pris part à la création anglaise de *Lucio Silla* de Mozart au Camden Theatre, et s'est produite dans plusieurs salles lyriques d'Europe. Elle a remporté une médaille au concours international de Sofia en Bulgarie, et a mené une importante carrière de concertiste.

Après avoir étudié à Liverpool avec Edwin Francis et plus tard avec Dame Eva Turner, la soprano dramatique **Rita Hunter** a effectué des tournées avec la Carl Rosa Opera Company. Elle est ensuite devenue soprano principale au Sadler's Wells Opera (plus tard rebaptisé English National Opera) où elle a chanté les rôles de Marcellina, Donna Anna, Odabella (*Attila*), Leonora (*Il trovatore*), Amelia (*Un ballo in maschera*), Elisabeth de Valois (*Don Carlos*), Santuzza, Musetta (*La bohème*), Senta et Fata Morgana (*L'Amour des trois oranges* de Prokofiev). Elle a attiré l'attention internationale au début des années 1970 avec ses interprétations de Brünnhilde, un rôle qu'elle a depuis chanté dans le monde entier. Elle fit rapidement ses débuts à Berlin, au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, au Metropolitan Opera de New York (où elle revint pendant plusieurs saisons consécutives), à Munich, San Francisco, New Orleans et en Australie, un pays avec lequel elle a établi des liens privilégiés, et où elle s'est installée en 1985. Rita Hunter a également chanté au Welsh National Opera, au Pacific Northwest Festival de Seattle (Brünnhilde dans le cycle complet du *Ring*), et dans le cadre de grands festivals en Grande-Bretagne et à l'étranger. Elle a également remporté de nombreux succès

dans le répertoire italien avec Norma, Abigaille (*Nabucco*), Lady Macbeth, Leonora et Aida. Elle a également interprété des rôles importants dans *Idomeneo*, *Turandot*, *Lohengrin*, *Tristan und Isolde* et *Elektra*. Elle s'est produite avec des artistes aussi éminents que Birgit Nilsson (qui incarna Sieglinde face à sa Brünnhilde au Metropolitan Opera de New York), Carlo Maria Giulini, Lorin Maazel, Sir Yehudi Menuhin, Sir Simon Rattle et Richard Hickox. Rita Hunter a reçu de nombreuses distinctions, notamment le titre de commandeur de l'ordre de l'empire britannique (CBE) en 1980.

Née à Londres, la mezzo-soprano **Ann Howard** remporta une bourse d'études (Royal Opera Scholarship) qui lui permit de venir étudier à Paris. A son retour de France, elle est entrée au Sadler's Wells Opera (plus tard rebaptisé English National Opera) où elle a chanté Azucena, la Princesse Eboli, Musetta (*La bohème*), Carmen, Dalila, Conception (*L'Heure espagnole*), Ortrud (*Lohengrin*), Brangäne, Fricka, la Sorcière (*Hänsel und Gretel*), le Compositeur (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Baba la Turque (*The Rake's Progress*), Katisha (*The Mikado*), la Reine des fées (*Iolanthe*) et Auntie (*Peter Grimes*). Elle s'est également

produite au Royal Opera de Covent Garden dans le rôle d'Amneris, au Welsh National Opera dans celui de la Duchesse (*La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*) et dans *The Doctor of Myddfai* de Sir Peter Maxwell Davies; au Scottish Opera elle a interprété Brangäne, Fricka, Cassandre (*Les Troyens*) et la Vieille Dame (*Candide* de Bernstein), et à l'Opera North dans l'Hotesse de l'auberge (*Boris Godounov*). Partageant sa carrière internationale entre l'Europe, l'Amérique du Nord et l'Amérique du Sud, Ann Howard a chanté sur les scènes lyriques à travers la France, à l'Opéra d'Etat de Bavière, à l'Opéra d'Etat de Vienne, au Teatro San Carlo de Naples, à Gênes, Lisbonne, Edmonton, Montréal, Los Angeles, New York (au Metropolitan Opera et au New York City Opera), Washington D.C., Baltimore, New Orleans, Santa Fe, Mexico et Santiago.

Elizabeth Connell a imposé sa réputation dans le répertoire de soprano dramatique, en particulier avec les opéras de Beethoven, Wagner et Strauss. Après ses débuts au Wexford Opera Festival, elle s'est produite dans *Guerre et Paix* de Prokofiev donné lors de l'ouverture de l'Opéra de Sydney, et a poursuivi une collaboration étroite avec

l'Opera Australia. Sa carrière internationale l'a conduite à se produire sur les scènes lyriques et dans les festivals d'Europe et d'Amérique du Nord, dans un répertoire qui compte *Idomeneo*, *Norma*, *Nabucco*, *Attila*, *Macbeth*, *Don Carlos*, *Fidelio*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, *Elektra* (dans le rôle titre), *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Jenůfa* (Kostelnicka) et *Peter Grimes*. Elizabeth Connell a chanté sous la direction de chefs tels que Claudio Abbado, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Carlo Maria Giulini, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir Edward Downes, Sir Colin Davis, Mark Elder, Lorin Maazel, James Levine et Seiji Osawa.

La carrière internationale de la soprano **Anne Evans** l'a conduite à se produire sur les grandes scènes lyriques d'Europe, d'Amérique du Nord et du Sud, dans un répertoire essentiellement allemand, depuis Beethoven (Leonore dans *Fidelio*) jusqu'à Strauss (la Maréchale dans *Der Rosenkavalier* et Ariadne), avec des succès particulièrement notables dans les rôles wagnériens de Brünnhilde, Isolde et Sieglinde. Elle a chanté au Festival de Bayreuth sous la direction de Daniel Barenboim de 1989 à 1992, et s'est produite dans les festivals de

Ravello, Edimbourg, et les BBC Promenade Concerts (soirée de clôture). En Grande-Bretagne, Anne Evans a chanté au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, à l'English National Opera, au Welsh National Opera et au Scottish Opera. Elle s'est également produite en concert à Londres au Royal Festival Hall et au Royal Albert Hall (sous la direction de Bernard Haitink), ainsi qu'au Wigmore Hall.

La mezzo-soprano **Sarah Walker** mène une carrière exceptionnelle à l'opéra et en récital, se produisant dans les festivals, les salles de concert et sur les scènes lyriques de toute l'Europe, l'Amérique du Nord, l'Australie et la Nouvelle-Zélande, avec la plupart des plus grands chefs d'orchestre, chanteurs et accompagnateurs. A l'opéra, son répertoire va de Claudio Monteverdi (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* et *L'incoronazione di Poppea*) et Francesco Cavalli (*La Calisto*) jusqu'à Sir Peter Maxwell Davies (*Taverner*) et Aulis Sallinen (*The King Goes Forth to France*). Elle entretient des liens étroits avec le Royal Opera de Covent Garden et a souvent chanté à l'English National Opera. Ses nombreux disques reflètent son vaste répertoire, et pour Chandos, elle a notamment enregistré des œuvres de Manuel de Falla (*El amor brujo*) et de Mozart

(Requiem), ainsi que *Giulio Cesare* et *Faust*, ces deux opéras en association avec la Peter Moores Foundation. Sarah Walker a reçu le titre de commandeur de l'ordre de l'empire britannique (CBE) en 1991.

La contralto **Anne Collins** entra au Sadler's Wells Opera (plus tard rebaptisé English National Opera) où elle chanta un répertoire comprenant *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Le Comte Ory*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Arabella* et plusieurs autres rôles, notamment sa célèbre interprétation d'Erda dans le cycle du *Ring* de Wagner. Elle s'est souvent produite au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, au Welsh National Opera, à l'Opera North et au Scottish Opera, et a chanté dans le cadre des festivals de Glyndebourne, Aldeburgh, Wexford, Camden et des BBC Promenade Concerts de Londres. Elle s'est produite en concert, dans les festivals et sur les scènes lyriques dans toute l'Europe, notamment aux opéras de Lyon, Strasbourg, Genève, Hambourg, à l'Opéra de Paris et au Châtelet théâtre musical, au Théâtre royal de la Monnaie de Bruxelles et au Teatro alla Scala de Milan. Aux Etats-Unis, elle s'est produite au Metropolitan Opera de New York. Elle a réalisé de nombreux enregistrements,

notamment *Peter Grimes* pour Chandos sous la direction de Richard Hickox, qui a reçu un *Grammy Award*.

Salué autant par la critique que par le public, L'**Orchestre de l'English National Opera**, avec Barry Griffiths comme premier violon, s'est vu décerner ces dernières années plusieurs prix prestigieux comme le Prix de la *Royal Philharmonic Society* et un *Olivier Award* pour sa contribution exceptionnelle au monde lyrique. L'Orchestre est au cœur de la vie artistique de la Compagnie et outre les représentations lyriques au Coliseum à Londres, il se produit également en concert. De plus, de nombreux membres de l'Orchestre participent au Projet Baylis mis sur pied par la branche de la Compagnie chargée de l'éducation ainsi qu'au développement de nouveaux opéra avec l'English National Opera Studio, comme *The Silver Tassie* de Mark-Anthony Turnage dont la création mondiale eut lieu en février 2000. L'Orchestre a participé à de nombreux enregistrements, comme son enregistrement d'*Otello* de Verdi sous la baguette de Mark Elder qui doit prochainement paraître chez Chandos grâce au financement de la Peter Moores Foundation. Parmi ses autres enregistrements pour Chandos, en

collaboration avec la Peter Moores Foundation, notons *Maria Stuarda*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto* (dans la mise en scène de Jonathan Miller), *La traviata* et *Werther*.

Le chef d'orchestre anglais **Reginald Goodall** naquit en 1901 et étudia la direction d'orchestre avec Malcolm Sargent et Constant Lambert au Royal College of Music de Londres. De 1929 à 1936, il fut organiste et chef de chœur à St Alban the Martyr, Holborn (Londres), où il dirigea les premières anglaises d'œuvres chorales de Bruckner, Stravinski et Szymanowski, ainsi que des œuvres de jeunesse de Britten. Pendant la fin des années trente, il fut l'assistant d'Albert Coates et de Malcolm Sargent. Au début de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, il devint le chef du Wessex Philharmonic Orchestra basé à Bournemouth.

En sa qualité de membre du Sadler's Wells Opera (plus tard rebaptisé English National Opera) Reginald Goodall dirigea en juin 1945 la première représentation de *Peter Grimes* au Sadler's Wells Theatre récemment réouvert. L'année suivante, il partagea avec Ernest Ansermet les premières représentations de *The Rape of Lucretia* de Britten pendant la

première saison d'après-guerre du Festival de Glyndebourne. Peu après, il devint membre du Royal Opera de Covent Garden où pendant vingt-cinq ans il allait diriger un répertoire allant de Verdi (*Il trovatore*) à Walton (*Troilus and Cressida*).

Reginald Goodall n'eut que rarement la possibilité de diriger les opéras du compositeur qu'il admirait le plus, Richard Wagner. Cette omission fut rectifiée en 1968, non pas par le Royal Opera de Covent Garden mais par le Sadler's Wells Opera qui l'invita à diriger une nouvelle production de *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Ce fut un tel succès qu'il fut réinvité à diriger une production maintenant légendaire du cycle complet de *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, montée entre 1970 et 1973, et la première à être donnée en langue anglaise depuis plusieurs années. Il dirigea par la suite *Das Rheingold* et *Die Walküre* au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, *Tristan und Isolde* et *Die Walküre* au Welsh National Opera, *Tristan und Isolde* et *Parsifal* à l'English National Opera. Reginald Goodall devint commandeur de l'ordre de l'empire britannique (CBE) en 1975, et fut anobli en 1985. Il mourut en 1990 à l'âge de quatre-vingt-huit ans.



Brünnhilde and Wotan (Raimund Herincx), Act II, Scene 2



Brünnhilde, Act II, Scene 2

Richard Wagner: Die Walküre

Un'introduzione a "Der Ring des Nibelungen"

Wagner concepì l'idea di un dramma musicale sul soggetto del mito del Nibelungo nel 1848, all'incirca all'epoca in cui aveva completato l'ultima delle sue opere tradizionali, *Lohengrin*. Si può essere interessati a *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (L'anello del Nibelungo) a diversi livelli: ad esempio come un racconto di fate, come un'allegoria politica o come un libretto filosofico. In sostanza tratta con l'eterna battaglia tra il bene e il male ed il contrasto tra l'amore del potere ed il potere dell'amore. Wotan, il capo degli dei, desidera il potere per scopi che infine sono ben intenzionati; Alberico, il capo dei Nibelunghi, nani che vivono sotto terra, lo desidera per i suoi fini malvagi. Dall'*Orfeo* di Monteverdi a *Die Zauberflöte* di Mozart, dall'*Hippolyte et Aricie* di Rameau al *Der Freischütz* di Weber, la giustapposizione di luce e d'ombra ha sempre affascinato i compositori di opere. Wagner riconobbe che ogni situazione non è mai definita nettamente in bianco e nero, ma ha per lo più tonalità grigie. Pertanto Wotan ricorre ad un sotterfugio ed al furto e si

descrive come un amico inseparabile del nano, "Luce-Alberico" mentre Alberico, il quale dopo tutto acquista l'oro del Reno osservando la condizione di rinunciare all'amore, assume un'aria di dignità insieme a quella di malvagità.

Wagner lavorò sulle parole e sulla musica per parecchi anni, cominciando con un abbozzo in prosa della storia prima di iniziare il testo di quello che chiamò *Siegfrieds Tod* (La morte di Sigfrido). Durante il dicembre 1856, tuttavia, fece sapere ad un amico che "i Nibelunghi cominciano ad annoiarmi"; ed in realtà l'estate successiva abbandonò il *Ring* e ricominciò a comporre soltanto nel 1869, dopo aver scritto *Tristan und Isolde* e *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (I maestri cantori di Norimberga). Dal momento della concezione al completamento questo progetto gigantesco lo occupò per ventisei anni, che furono anni di scompiglio sia nella sua vita personale che sulla scena politica europea.

Non era stata solo la noia, come disse, che lo aveva indotto ad abbandonare il giovane Sigfrido sotto il tiglio, dove "gli aveva fatto gli addii con lacrime sincere". Dopo aver

abbandonato Dresda per evitare l'arresto per la sua complicità nella rivoluzione del 1848, viveva in esilio a Zurigo con scarse prospettive di poter vedere il suo *Ring* rappresentato; ed il suo stile di composizione stava cambiando in modo così radicale che si può dire gli fu necessario affinarlo lavorando su *Tristan*. Si può dire che fu quasi miracoloso il fatto che continuò poi con il completamento del *Ring*, fino alla sua rappresentazione, grazie ai suoi sforzi, in un teatro costruito unicamente a tale scopo.

Le sue sorgenti inclusero cinque epopee, in islandese, in tedesco medio alto e norvegese antico, che risalgono tutte al tredicesimo secolo. Analogamente a tutte le sue opere, prima e dopo il *Ring*, Wagner scrisse il proprio libretto. Ma allarmando i suoi amici, a cominciare con *Siegfrieds Tod* riportò in vita un vecchio espediente poetico chiamato "Stabreim" che utilizzava allitterazioni esplosive invece di scansione e rima. Questo faceva parte delle sue teorie, esposte in saggi scritti durante il suo esilio a Zurigo, che si occupavano tra l'altro della connessione reciproca tra suoni verbali e musicali e la necessità di poter udire parole cantate, la cui conseguenza logica era che complessi e cori non erano più adatti.

Negli sviluppi successivi, Wagner non si attenne sempre alle proprie regole: in *Die Meistersinger* si trova un quintetto completo, insieme a cori a profusione, ed un coro ed un trio nel secondo atto della *Götterdämmerung* (Crepuscolo degli dei). L'opera che dà inizio al ciclo del *Ring*, *Das Rheingold* (L'oro del Reno), presenta un buon esempio delle teorie di Wagner messe in pratica, ma fu necessario successivamente tanto lavoro prima che Wagner potesse cominciare con la musica. Da principio egli aveva in preparazione una sola opera, che sarebbe terminata con una nota di ottimismo e la superiorità morale e fisica degli dei ben stabilita. L'osservazione da parte di uno dei suoi amici che la storia richiedeva una conoscenza inusitata degli antefatti da parte degli spettatori lo convinse per prima cosa ad ampliare *Siegfrieds Tod* e poi ad aggiungere quello che oggi possiamo chiamare un "antefatto", *Der junge Siegfried* (Il giovane Sigfrido). Riconoscendo la necessità di ampliare più indietro nel tempo, scrisse i testi della *Walküre* (La Valchiria) e *Das Rheingold*. *Der junge Siegfried* fu infine intitolato *Siegfried* e *Siegfrieds Tod* diventò *Götterdämmerung*, dopo aver apportato notevoli tagli e modifiche, tra queste ultime alla fine quando gli dei periscono nel loro castello, il Valhalla.

Dando atto all'influenza delle tragedie di *Oresteia* e di *Prometeo* di Eschilo, Wagner descrisse il *Ring* come una trilogia (considerando *Das Rheingold* come un preambolo).

Nel 1854 Wagner venne a conoscenza degli scritti del filosofo Arturo Schopenhauer – “un brontolone della massima misura”, come l'aveva descritto Bertie Wooster di P. G. Wodehouse. Il finale riveduto della storia del *Ring* era già stato scritto, ma Wagner continuò a scrivere successivamente parecchi finali diversi, mentre era allo stesso tempo occupato nella composizione del ciclo, incluso uno che rispecchiava la visione pessimistica di Schopenhauer che la vita rappresenta semplicemente la negazione della morte. Qui, Brunilde raggiunge uno stato di illuminazione buddista riuscendo ad arrivare alla “fine benedetta di ogni cosa eterna”. Questa non fu la versione che Wagner traspose in musica, ma rimane indicativa del suo stato d'animo al momento in cui stava componendo la fine della *Walküre* e l'inizio di *Siegfrid*.

Dopo aver scritto i testi in ordine inverso, Wagner iniziò a comporre la musica dal principio: cominciò pertanto *Das Rheingold* nel 1853, un anno dopo aver completato il libretto, mentre nel caso della

Götterdämmerung, cominciato nel 1869, stava adattando parole scritte (anche se corrette successivamente) venti anni prima. Naturalmente il suo stile musicale si stava sviluppando durante tale periodo, e la partitura dell'ultima opera è assai più ingegnosa e complessa di quella che la precede. Eppure le quattro opere, nonostante la loro diversità, rappresentano un tutto coerente a motivo di un espediente di connessione che passa sotto il nome di leitmotiv (dal tedesco *Leitmotiv*, tema melodico ricorrente).

Reminiscenze musicali in opere non rappresentavano certo una novità. Un esempio ben noto è costituito dalla piccola frase sull'oboe che ci dice, nel secondo atto del *Fidelio* di Beethoven, che Florestano addormentato sta sognando di sua moglie della quale stava poco prima cantando. Wagner riuscì a creare una rete di leitmotiv, rappresentati da frasi brevi e ricche di significato, associate a persone, oggetti, sentimenti e tanto altro, che ricorrono nella musica vocale e specialmente nell'orchestra. Essi sono assai più che i semplici “biglietti da visita” derisi da Debussy (il quale peraltro non era alieno ad impiegare tale espediente lui stesso in *Pelléas et Mélisande*). Sono rappresentate da ripetizioni pure e semplici, da

modifiche melodiche o armoniche, e da combinazioni con altri motivi particolarmente verso la fine del ciclo, le quali tutte servono a creare un arazzo strettamente intessuto.

Sono stati scritti volumi interi per dare un nome ai vari motivi, ma più si cerca di definire in modo preciso quelli più astratti, più difficile da afferrare si rende una definizione. Chi ascolta per la prima volta non se ne deve preoccupare, in quanto comincerà a riconoscere i vari motivi tematici dopo alcuni ascolti. Non tutte le connessioni sono tuttavia ovvie: vale la pena notare, solo per dare un esempio, i profili simili dei motivi del “Valhalla” e dell’“Anello” (rispettivamente nobili e funesti), che confermano o, meglio ancora, anticipano la nostra impressione che Wotan ed Alberico rappresentano il dritto e il rovescio della stessa medaglia.

L'orchestrazione è una delle delizie di particolare rilievo del *Ring*. Wagner impiega forze enormi, ma assai di frequente un solo strumento a fiato di legno (un oboe, per esempio, o un clarinetto in fa) è quello che esprime una situazione o dà punto ad una frase vocale. Una delle tonalità più caratteristiche del *Ring* è offerta da quelle che sono chiamate le tube di Wagner (suonate da membri della sezione composta da otto corni)

che intonano davvero il motivo del “Valhalla” nella seconda scena di *Das Rheingold*.

A partire dal 1862 Wagner non era più al bando dagli stati tedeschi. Durante l'anno seguente pubblicò un'edizione del testo del *Ring* con una prefazione in cui espresse la speranza che un principe tedesco fosse disposto a procurare il denaro necessario per rappresentare il ciclo (tuttora incompleto) in un teatro costruito appositamente. La sua richiesta ricevette presto una risposta favorevole. Il diciottenne principe ereditario della Baviera ereditò il trono nel 1864 diventando Re Ludwig II. Egli aiutò Wagner a ripagare i propri debiti, lo sistemò in una casa a Monaco di Baviera, gli diede denaro in contanti ed uno stipendio annuale, e lo incoraggiò a continuare con il suo grande lavoro.

A dir poco, i loro rapporti passarono tra alti e bassi, ma fu grazie a Ludwig che *Tristan* e *Die Meistersinger* ebbero le loro prime rappresentazioni al teatro di corte, dove furono anche riesumate opere precedenti di Wagner. Furono anche messe in scena produzioni di *Das Rheingold* e della *Walküre*, malgrado la resistenza del compositore. Wagner era tuttora deciso all'esecuzione del *Ring* al completo nel proprio teatro, in condizioni di festival. Nel

1871 scelse la cittadina provinciale di Bayreuth. La costruzione del nuovo teatro fu finanziata mediante una sottoscrizione pubblica, con un intervento da parte di Ludwig ad un momento critico. Wagner completò *Götterdämmerung* nel 1874 e *Der Ring des Nibelungen* fu rappresentato per la prima volta nella sua interezza nell'agosto 1876. Entro il 1889 erano state rappresentate produzioni in tutto il mondo operistico; esse rappresentano tuttora il modello a cui si riferiscono tutti i teatri dell'opera che aspirano all'eccellenza.

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Die Walküre

Wagner compose la musica della *Walküre* tra il novembre del 1854 ed il marzo del 1856. Non è difficile comprendere il motivo per cui questa sia l'opera più famosa del *Ring* e sia anche quella che, con maggiore probabilità, viene eseguita in isolamento. Segna la prima apparizione nella storia degli esseri umani, in contrapposizione alle Vergini del Reno, ai Nibelunghi, ai giganti e agli dei di *Das Rheingold*. L'esecuzione appassionata del duetto d'amore dell'Atto I riesce ad

appassionare il pubblico talmente a lungo e con una tale profondità da fargli dimenticare la scomoda realtà, e cioè che Siegmund e Sieglinde sono fratello e sorella e commetteranno un incesto appena il sipario sarà calato.

Anche la conclusione dell'opera, che vede Wotan (Odino) allontanarsi per un lungo periodo dalla sorella preferita (Brünnhilde [Brunilde], la Valchiria del titolo), rappresenta una situazione emotiva in cui chiunque può identificarsi: il pubblico si commuove, dinanzi ai sentimenti del padre, più di quanto non lo sia per i comandamenti divini. Dopo tutta la furia della "Cavalcata delle Valchirie", le effusioni di estasi di Sieglinde e la rabbia di Wotan, la quasi immobilità tranquilla della scena finale fa da sfondo ad una conclusione appagante.

L'Atto I ha inizio con una tempesta, nella quale Siegmund fugge dai suoi nemici. Egli fugge anche alla fine dell'atto; e se questo elemento, combinato alla sua autocommiserazione, lo fa apparire all'inizio come uno dei personaggi meno affascinanti del *Ring*, Wagner ci spinge a mostrare solidarietà nei suoi confronti, accompagnandolo con una musica che esprime tenerezza e forza al tempo stesso. Si dice che Sieglinde sia l'unico

personaggio veramente solidale all'interno del *Ring* (forse le si avvicina il gigante Fasolt che si strugge d'amore): la sua è una musica che vuole denotare tenerezza assoluta, dal momento in cui porta dell'acqua al ferito Siegmund. La sua crescente eccitazione, mentre racconta dell'uomo anziano che conficca una spada nell'albero, con i motivi "Valhalla" e "Spada" che si levano dall'orchestra, è uno dei momenti supremi dell'opera.

Nell'Atto III Sieglinde, venendo a sapere che darà alla luce Siegfried (Sigfrido), "l'eroe più nobile del mondo", esprime la propria gioia nel tema dominante definito generalmente 'Redenzione', che non ricorre fino alla fine della *Götterdämmerung*. Barcolla e cade per non riapparire mai più (il suo destino viene reso noto in *Siegfried*). Dopo che le Valchirie si sono riunite e sono fuggite temendo la collera del padre, la scena appartiene a Wotan e Brünnhilde. I loro scambi dialettici ricordano la discussione tra Wotan e Fricka nell'Atto II, con l'unica differenza che in quel caso Wotan è logorato dalla logica senza pietà di Fricka, mentre qui vi è un riavvicinamento delle sorti.

Per quanto siano gloriosi gli altri atti, è forse l'Atto II che fa trasparire il meglio di Wagner.

Le cinque scene descrivono la gioia troppo fugace di Wotan mentre ordina a Brünnhilde di proteggere Siegmund nella battaglia con Hunding, e la sua profonda disperazione nel dover invece prendere atto dell'incontestabile necessità della morte di Siegmund e quindi della fine del suo piano per restituire l'oro alle Vergini del Reno tramite un agente libero. Nel frattempo si inserisce la scena di Fricka, seguita dal monologo, in gran parte recitato, dove, mentre parla a Brünnhilde, egli sta in realtà comunicando con se stesso. (In questa parte sembra quasi di sentire il pubblico aggrapparsi ad ogni parola dell'avvincente narrazione di Norman Bailey.) Wotan accetta la fine del proprio potere e racconta di come Alberich (Alberico) si stia impegnando per causare questa situazione seducendo una donna per oro al fine di procurarsi un alleato (insinuando quindi che Siegfried e il figlio di Alberich Hagen, che si incontrano nella *Götterdämmerung*, sono quasi perfetti coetanei).

Dopo una scena dedicata agli amanti in fuga, Brünnhilde fa la sua solenne apparizione dinanzi a Siegmund come messaggera di morte. Egli le pone sei domande, e lei risponde ad ognuna di esse. Per enfatizzare la risposta di Siegmund, che si rifiuta di seguirla nel Valhalla senza Sieglinde, Wagner aumenta

la tonalità di ogni frase, ottenendo una sorta di effetto irreversibile. La risolutezza di Siegmund porterà alla fine all'acquisizione, da parte di Brünnhilde, della consapevolezza di cosa sia l'amore umano, con conseguenze memorabili. Per finire vi è la tenerezza di Siegmund nei confronti di Sieglinde addormentata, il suo breve incubo e la battaglia fatale. Nell'arco di pochi secondi, Wotan e l'orchestra esprimono disprezzo per Hunding, dolore per la morte di Siegmund e rabbia per la disobbedienza di Brünnhilde: la fine potente e concisa di un atto impeccabilmente ritmato.

Die Walküre fu eseguita per la prima volta a Monaco nel giugno 1870. La sua prima rappresentazione come parte del ciclo completo del *Ring* ebbe luogo in occasione del Festival di Bayreuth nell'agosto del 1876.

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Traduzione: ASA Products

Reginald Goodall – una recensione di Brian Ward

Capita a volte di dover assistere ad un concerto o ad un'opera in una tale situazione mentale che, di fatto, ci impedisce di apprezzarne appieno l'interpretazione: posso affermare con certezza che la sera del 5 marzo

1954 rientrava a tutti gli effetti in questo genere di situazioni.

Non c'era nulla che fosse andato per il verso giusto: mi ero recato in macchina a Croydon al solo scopo di assistere a *Die Walküre* Ludwig Hofmann, un famoso basso tedesco del periodo prebellico, nel ruolo di Wotan, ma ero uscito tardi dall'ufficio, avevo poi forato proprio nel bel mezzo del traffico dell'ora di punta per poi scoprire alla fine che Hofmann non sarebbe apparso sulla scena. Cinque ore dopo sarei uscito dal Davis Theatre in un tale stato di eccitazione da poter tranquillamente andarmene a casa a piedi: avevo infatti assistito ad un'esecuzione che non avrei mai ritenuto possibile, se non diretta da Knappertsbusch o Furtwängler. Quella sera il direttore fu Reginald Goodall.

Avevo naturalmente sentito ed ammirato diversi lavori di Goodall al Covent Garden negli anni del primo dopoguerra, quando aveva diretto con una certa regolarità opere che sembrano oggi estremamente inverosimili, titoli quali *Carmen*, *Manon*, *La traviata*, *Aida* e *Il trovatore*, ma nulla mi aveva preparato ad un'interpretazione wagneriana contraddistinta da tale profondità e nobiltà come quella di cui sarei stato testimone quella sera.

Da allora avevo pensato spesso alla possibilità di un *Ring* diretto da Goodall, ma con il passare del tempo questa probabilità diveniva sempre più remota. Egli diresse le rivisitazioni di *Gloriana* e *Boris Godunov*, di *Fidelio* e *Turandot*, di *Peter Grimes*, *Wozzeck* e *Troilus and Cressida*; ma nulla che Goodall avesse realizzato si suo pugno. Sarebbero dovuti passare altri sette anni prima che mi rendessi conto, ancora una volta, in occasione di una rappresentazione wagneriana, della grandezza di questo direttore wagneriano, e di quanto egli fosse stato dimenticato.

Questa volta, nell'ottobre del 1960, si trattava di una rivisitazione del *Tannhäuser* al Sadler's Wells, alla quale avevo assistito con una certa trepidazione, dovuta alla consapevolezza che la piccola orchestra del Sadler's Wells e l'acustica alquanto asciutta del teatro non erano esattamente ciò che meglio si addiceva ad una rappresentazione di questo genere. Quella sera rimasi sconcertato udendo un'esecuzione che, nonostante alcune carenze a livello vocale, fu, a suo modo, emozionante, proprio come lo era stata, alcuni anni prima, quella meravigliosa *Walküre* di Croydon.

Fino ad allora il Wagner di Goodall non aveva risvegliato un particolare interesse da parte della critica musicale, ma ecco quello che

Peter Heyworth scrisse di *Tannhäuser* su Opera:

Goodall ha uno splendido senso del respiro e della grandezza della musica, non vi è tuttavia alcuna passività o assenza di vivacità nei suoi tempi e ritmi. La partitura acquista grazie a lui una tale ampiezza da consentire ad ogni singolo dettaglio di emergere con estrema facilità, senza trascurare tuttavia l'aspetto drammatico dell'eccitazione, con un'infallibile sincronizzazione dei momenti culminanti. Ma la sua maggiore abilità consiste nel rivelare uno degli immensi atti di Wagner come un'entità singola che si schiude, un'impresa decisamente non da poco, se si considerano i molteplici elementi che denotano l'immaturità di un lavoro quale il *Tannhäuser*. I suoi momenti culminanti acquistano un tale e straordinario potere, se correlati alle scarse risorse di cui egli dispone, proprio perchè derivano dall'evoluzione organica della musica.

Goodall è un autorevole interprete wagneriano. Vogliamo sperare profondamente che la sua ricomparsa al Sadler's Wells sia il segno dell'apprezzamento del suo raro talento, un apprezzamento più vasto di quello mostrato dal Covent Garden, di cui egli fa parte.

Anch'io, come Heyworth, avevo voluto sperare in qualcosa di più da parte di Goodall ma nulla: al Covent Garden nella stagione

successiva non vi fu alcuna rappresentazione diretta da lui, e nella stagione 1962/63 vi fu solo un'unica esecuzione de *Il gallo d'oro*, dopodichè non vi fu più nulla per altri cinque anni. Avremmo dovuto attendere fino all'inizio del 1968 per poter ascoltare nuovamente quest'uomo straordinario. Questa volta, comunque, in un ciclo di rappresentazioni che avrebbero scosso profondamente il pubblico dell'opera e la critica. Poichè le due compagnie del Sadler's Wells si sarebbero esibite a Londra contemporaneamente, era stato dichiarato che vi sarebbe stata una nuova produzione dei *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* che avrebbe utilizzato le risorse combinate delle compagnie, ed il 31 gennaio 1968 ebbe luogo la prima di una grande serie di rappresentazioni wagneriane. Finalmente potevamo assistere ad una produzione che era stata realizzata, e non solo ripresa, e finalmente potevamo vedere quello che Goodall avrebbe fatto per creare uno stile teatrale, con la collaborazione di artisti devoti come Norman Bailey, Alberto Remedios, Gregory Dempsey, Derek Hammond Stroud e, di conseguenza, Clifford Grant.

La fortuna mi ha consentito di assistere a diverse rappresentazioni dei *Meistersinger* al Sadler's Wells e al Coliseum e, sebbene fossi stato testimone di una serie di spettacoli diretti

da Rankl, Krauss e Beecham e avessi anche seguito molte opere trasmesse da Bayreuth, esse mi apparvero come una vera e propria rivelazione; e lo furono anche per la critica, visto che iniziò immediatamente a scrivere di Goodall definendolo il 'più grande direttore wagneriano vivente'; una realtà di cui alcuni di noi erano stati consapevoli per quindici anni. La successione degli eventi è da allora ben nota: le voci riguardo a un ciclo del *Ring*, la nuova produzione della *Walküre* al Coliseum e il graduale allestimento negli anni di un ciclo completo che avremmo ascoltato per la prima volta nell'agosto del 1973 con il teatro tutto esaurito per ben sei volte!

Molti dei cantanti apparsi originariamente sulla scena dei *Meistersinger* nel 1968 presero parte anche alle opere del *Ring*, anche se Goodall aveva previsto la partecipazione di diversi novizi (novizi per i ruoli wagneriani principali, s'intende): oltre agli eccezionali contributi degli artisti summenzionati, nei ruoli di Wotan/Wanderer, Siegmund/Siegfried, Mime, Alberich e Hagen/Hunding, vi fu la magnifica Brünnhilde di Rita Hunter e le interpretazioni incredibilmente convincenti delle coraggiose Emile Belcourt, Ann Howard e Katherine Pring, senza dimenticare comunque tutti coloro che hanno contribuito

a rendere queste rappresentazioni così indimenticabili.

E tuttavia, anche se egli non lo ammetterebbe mai, per nessuna ragione, il vero eroe è lui, Reginald Goodall, con un genio che si è rivelato l'anima del *Ring* al Sadler's Wells, e a cui tutti i fedeli ammiratori di Wagner dovrebbero esprimere la loro eterna gratitudine.

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Antefatti della "Walküre"

In *Das Rheingold* Alberico, il nano nibelungo, ruba l'oro delle Vergini del Reno e crea un anello che gli dona il dominio universale, dovendo però rinunciare all'amore. Scende a Nibelheim e riduce in schiavitù i nibelunghi grazie ai poteri dell'anello, costringendoli a estrarre oro nelle miniere per suo conto.

I giganti Fasolt e Fafner hanno costruito il Valhalla per Wotan a patto di avere in cambio Freia, dea della giovinezza e della bellezza. Wotan, su consiglio dello spirito del fuoco Loge, offre invece loro l'oro dei nibelunghi. I giganti accettano. Wotan e Loge scendono a Nibelheim e con uno stratagemma tolgono ad Alberico il Tarnhelm magico, che permette a

chi lo indossa di assumere la forma che vuole, e l'anello, che Wotan vuole tenere per sé. I giganti voglio comunque tutto, anche l'anello. Inizialmente Wotan non vuole separarsi dall'anello, ma viene convinto a darlo ai giganti dalla dea della terra Erda, che lo avverte della maledizione di Alberico.

La maledizione si avvera immediatamente: Fafner uccide Fasolt e si appropria di tutto il tesoro. Scossi dall'accaduto, Wotan e gli dei entrano il Valhalla in trionfo, accompagnati dal lamento delle Vergini del Reno per il loro tesoro perduto.

Sinopsi

Primo Compact Disc

Atto I

Scena: interno d'una capanna

□ Da prima che si alzi il sipario si sente il frastuono della tempesta che infuria. La tempesta si calma: entra in scena un uomo sfinito sfuggito ai suoi inseguitori. □ L'uomo non sa chi vive nella capanna, ma crolla spossato sulla pelle di fronte al fuoco. Entra in scena dall'interno della capanna una donna richiamata dal rumore. Si allarma nel vedere l'estraneo disteso svenuto, ma tira un sospiro

di sollievo quando scopre che è ancora vivo. L'estraneo chiede da bere, la donna gli porta dell'acqua in un corno. [3] La donna gli spiega che quella è l'abitazione di Hunding, suo sposo. Gli porge quindi un corno di idromele. La musica rivela che si sono innamorati a prima vista. [4] L'uomo vuole andarsene per evitare che la disavventura che lo perseguita coinvolga anche la donna, ma lei gli risponde di avere già dimestichezza con l'infelice compagna. Lui dice di chiamarsi Wehwalt (che vuol dire: aspetto triste).

Hunding, annunciato dalle tube minacciose di Bayreuth, torna a casa. [5] La donna gli racconta quanto è successo. [6] Hunding dichiara la sua capanna sacra all'ospite; nota la somiglianza della moglie e dell'estraneo e gli chiede di raccontargli la sua storia.

[7] – [8] Wehwalt narra: sua madre venne uccisa da alcuni banditi e sua sorella gemella rapita quando era ancora piccolo; venne cresciuto dal padre, soprannominato Wolfe, finché anch'egli non scomparve. Così rimase da solo, evitato da tutti. [9] È ora giunto qui nella capanna di Hunding per sfuggire ai persecutori di una giovane donna a cui volevano imporre un matrimonio e che lui ha cercato di aiutare: lei e tutti i suoi familiari sono morti, solo Wehwalt è riuscito a salvarsi.

[10] Hunding trasalisce: lo straniero è il nemico contro il quale è stato chiamato a combattere dalla sua gente, ora ospite a casa sua. Il dovere dell'ospitalità lo protegge per la notte, ma al mattino devono duellare all'ultimo sangue. Ordina alla moglie di preparargli la bevanda per la notte, lei esegue esitante, guardando insistentemente al tronco di frassino centrale della casa. Hunding la segue dopo aver ricordato a Wehwalt che dovranno combattere il mattino seguente.

[11] Si fa notte. Wehwalt è solo e disarmato. Suo padre gli promise che avrebbe trovato una spada nel momento di suprema necessità. Invoca il padre: "Wälse! Wälse! Dov'è la tua spada?" Dal fuoco che si sta spegnendo scaturisce una vampa che punta al tronco, dove ora si vede l'elsa di una spada. Una tromba dell'orchestra esegue il tema della spada magica.

[12] La moglie di Hunding torna nella scena buia. Ha dato da bere a Hunding un forte sonnifero. Prega lo straniero di prendere la spada. [13] Il giorno del suo matrimonio, contratto senza il suo assenso, uno straniero vestito di grigio apparve e infilò la spada nel tronco. L'orchestra rivela che lo straniero era Wotan. Nessuno dei presenti riuscì a estrarla; lei sapeva che solo il suo salvatore ci sarebbe

riuscito: forse è lui, Wehwalt! [14] Si abbracciano e vengono improvvisamente illuminati dalla luna che sembra benedire il loro amore. [15] La Primavera e la sorella Amore, dice Wehwalt, sono unite in matrimonio. [16] – [17] Sieglinde dice a Wehwalt che lui è la sua Primavera. Continuano a parlare d'amore. [18] Sieglinde gli dice che lui è più vicino di qualsiasi altra cosa, a parte il suo riflesso o l'eco della sua voce. Wehwalt le rivela che il nome di suo padre non era Wolfe ma Wälse e che lui stesso è un Wälside. Lei si riempie di gioia: ora sa che lui è suo fratello e lo chiama con il suo nome proprio originale: Siegmund (Vittorio). [19] – [20] Siegmund si alza con un balzo, raggiunge il tronco ed estrae la spada chiamandola per nome, Nothung (Necessità), offrendola in dono nuziale. Sieglinde gli dice il suo nome e gli rivela che è sua sorella. Siegmund esclama: "Fiorisca il sangue dei Wälside!" e la abbraccia mentre si chiude il sipario.

Secondo Compact Disc

Atto II

Scena: sommità di una montagna rocciosa e selvaggia

[1] La fuga degli amanti viene descritta dal

preludio dell'orchestra al secondo atto: una sinfonia appassionata e sfrenata ispirata alla spada magica, alla fuga e all'amore di Siegmund e Sieglinde. Gradualmente la musica assume pomposità e impetuosità, annunciando l'entrata in scena degli immortali. Dalle cime rocciose Wotan osserva la scena con la figlia prediletta, la Valchiria Brünnhilde. Strumento del suo volere, le ordina di proteggere Siegmund durante il duello con Hunding. [2] Brünnhilde lancia gioiosamente il suo grido di battaglia: "Hojotoho!" Avvisa Wotan che sta per giungere sua moglie Fricka, protettrice del focolare domestico, nel suo carro trainato da due arieti.

[3] Fricka chiede a Wotan di proteggere il diritto nuziale di Hunding e punire gli amanti incestuosi: [4] – [6] se Wotan sancisce l'amore di Siegmund e Sieglinde, l'autorità morale degli dei ne verrebbe permanentemente sminuita. Gli rinfaccia tutte le volte che lui l'ha tradita. [7] Wotan gli spiega che Siegmund è un eroe libero e che ha un compito da assolvere: Fricka risponde che Siegmund è in realtà uno strumento di Wotan e non può quindi portare a termine il compito di cui parla. [8] Wotan è costretto a cedere a malincuore a tutte le richieste di Fricka:

Siegmund deve essere ucciso da Hunding; Wotan e Brünnhilde non dovranno proteggerlo e la spada deve perdere il potere magico. [9] Brünnhilde torna in scena e Fricka, trionfante, le comanda di ricevere i contrordini da Wotan. [10] Wotan si sfoga con Brünnhilde, confessandole il suo senso d'impotenza. [11] – [13] Riassume con lei tutti i fatti che hanno portato al conflitto attuale, raccontati in *Das Rheingold* (più che per ricordare la trama al pubblico, è una ricapitolazione necessaria al piano sinfonico di Wagner). [14] – [16] Nella narrazione Wotan rivela di essere convinto che solo l'intervento di un eroe di sua volontà possa impedire la fine del mondo [16] voluta da Alberico il nibelungo, che a tale scopo ha anche generato un figlio: Hagen. [17] – [18] Wotan ordina a Brünnhilde di eseguire il volere di Fricka e di non prestare attenzione ai suoi desideri.

Terzo Compact Disc

[1] Wotan si allontana rapidamente; Brünnhilde lascia la scena più lentamente, profondamente scoraggiata. [2] Si ode nuovamente l'aria musicale della fuga che annuncia l'ingresso in scena di Siegmund e Sieglinde. [3] – [4] Sieglinde non vuole

fermarsi neanche un momento, terrorizzata al pensiero di Hunding che li insegue. Ma la stanchezza prevale ed ella si accaccia nelle braccia di Siegmund. [5] – [6] Mentre lui la tiene in braccio seduto su una roccia, Brünnhilde gli appare come in sogno e gli predice che morirà e la seguirà nella sala del Valhalla riservata agli eroi. [7] – [8] Siegmund rifiuta di separarsi da Sieglinde e minaccia di uccidere lei e il figlio che porta in grembo. [9] Brünnhilde a questo punto decide di salvare entrambi e di sfidare il volere di Wotan (mentre in realtà sta solo eseguendo ciò che Wotan desidera realmente). Scompare improvvisamente.

[10] Siegmund poggia delicatamente sul suolo Sieglinde addormentata e si prepara al duello con Hunding annunciato dal suono del suo corno. [11] Sieglinde si risveglia da un incubo e si trova sola. Nello stesso istante [12] Siegmund e Hunding si affrontano sul passo della montagna. Brünnhilde protegge Siegmund dall'alto, ma all'improvviso appare Wotan che rompe con la sua lancia la spada di Siegmund permettendo a Hunding di colpire a morte il suo avversario. Brünnhilde raccoglie Sieglinde svenuta e la porta via. Wotan con un gesto della mano fulmina Hunding e ne spedisce lo spirito a portare a Fricka la notizia della

vittoria. Promette quindi di punire severamente Brünnhilde per la sua disobbedienza.

Quarto Compact Disc

Atto III

Scena: vetta di una montagna rocciosa

[1] Il preludio orchestrale descrive il volo delle Valchirie (le figlie guerriere di Wotan e di Erda, dea della terra) che giungono sulla vetta della montagna, loro punto d'incontro. Il sipario si alza. Le Valchirie giungono una a una con i corpi degli eroi uccisi in battaglia che porteranno insieme nel Valhalla. [2] Arriva per ultima Brünnhilde portando in sella non il corpo di Siegmund, ma Sieglinde ancora in vita. [3] Brünnhilde chiede alle sorelle Valchirie di aiutarla a nascondere Sieglinde: Wotan le sta inseguendo e si vendicherà su entrambe. Nessuna Valchiria osa sfidare l'ira di Wotan. [4] Sieglinde stessa vuole morire ma Brünnhilde le rivela che porta in grembo il futuro eroe Wälside. Per salvarsi Sieglinde deve fuggire sola e nascondersi nella foresta profonda di Fafner il drago, [5] dove darà alla luce il figlio che chiamerà Sigfrido e a cui donerà i pezzi della spada del padre. [6] Sieglinde, al colmo della commozione,

esprime la propria gratitudine e gioia prima di partire in fretta. [7] Brünnhilde si nasconde tra le sorelle Valchirie all'arrivo di Wotan che la chiama furiosamente. [8] – [9] Senza badare alle Valchirie che gli chiedono di perdonare, Wotan ordina a Brünnhilde di mostrarsi. [10] Lei stessa, la figlia a lui più vicina, è causa della sua punizione: non sarà più una Valchiria, [11] non abiterà più nel Valhalla, non potrà più vedere Wotan; rimarrà addormentata e inerme sulla roccia finché non verrà risvegliata dal primo uomo che, trovandola, la possederà e la porterà nella propria casa dove lei dovrà servirlo. [12] Wotan caccia via le Valchirie che cercano di dissuaderlo.

[13] – [14] Brünnhilde rimane prostrata. Dopo una lunga pausa si difende dicendo di aver solamente eseguito il vero volere di Wotan. [15] – [17] Lei ha difeso Siegmund perché lo amava. Wotan ha creato tale amore e con esso la volontà di disobbedire a Fricka. Lei non ha tradito, ma ha compiuto il proprio dovere. Wotan si commuove ma non cede. [18] Lei gli ricorda che i Wälsidi sono suoi figli e gli rivela che Sieglinde, da lei salvata, è gravida e ha con sé la spada di Wotan. Il padre le ricorda che è stato lui stesso ad aver spezzato la spada. Il destino di Brünnhilde è ormai deciso: [19] deve rimanere addormentata e inerme. [20] – [21] Le

concede alla fine di circondarla con un fuoco magico che terrà almeno lontani i codardi salvandole l'onore. Wotan la solleva per darle l'addio.

Baciandola sugli occhi, le toglie lo stato di divinità e l'addormenta. La distende quindi sulla montagna con elmo e lancia. ^[22] Punta solennemente la sua lancia contro un macigno e ordina a Loge, lo spirito del fuoco, di circondare la rupe con un cerchio di fiamme. ^[23] Wotan decreta che coloro che temono la sua lancia non riusciranno a passare il fuoco magico. Lentamente, se ne va. Ormai il suo potere è ridotto. Il destino del mondo dipende dall'eroe che ancora deve nascere, Sigfrido, suo nipote, e dalla semidea ora semplice mortale che dorme sola sulla rupe.

William Mann, 1976

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Alberto Remedios, tra i principali tenori eroici inglesi della sua generazione, ha studiato a Liverpool insieme a Edwin Francis ed al Royal College of Music, facendo la sua prima comparsa a teatro con la Sadler's Wells Opera (che più tardi diventò l'English National Opera) nella parte di Tinca ne *Il tabarro*. Con quella compagnia è comparso nei ruoli di Don

Ottavio, Tamino, Max (*Der Freischütz*), Alfredo, Faust (nell'opera di Gounod e nella *Damnation de Faust* di Berlioz), Des Grieux (*Manon*), Sansone (*Samson et Dalila*), Lenski, Erik (*Der fliegende Holländer*), Lohengrin, Walther (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Tristano, Siegmund, Sigfrido e Bacco (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). Ha fatto il debutto alla Royal Opera, Covent Garden nella parte di Dimitri (*Boris Godunov*) ed è ritornato nella parte di Florestano, Enea (*Les Troyens*), Max, Erik, Sigfrido, Bacco e Marco (*The Midsummer Marriage* di Sir Michael Tippett). Si è anche esibito con la Welsh National Opera e la Scottish Opera ed ha passato due anni con l'Opera di Francoforte. Ha fatto la sua prima comparsa alla Metropolitan Opera, New York nella parte di Bacco ed è anche apparso a San Francisco (nella parte di Dimitri e Don Carlos), a Los Angeles, San Diego e Seattle (come Sigfrido), a Boston (nella parte di Faust di Gounod) ed al Teatro colón a Buenos Aires (nella parte di Peter Grimes). Con Dame Joan Sutherland ha fatto una tournée in Australia nel ruolo di Edgar (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Alfredo, Lenski e Faust, e contatti stretti con quel paese gli hanno permesso di fare comparse nelle parti di Florestano, Siegmund, Radames e Otello con l'Opera Australia oltre a

spettacoli a Melbourne, Adelaide e Brisbane. In Inghilterra, Alberto Remedios ha ricevuto l'onorificenza del CBE in occasione del compleanno della Regina nel 1981.

Il cantante basso australiano **Clifford Grant** ha studiato a Sydney, Melbourne e Londra, ed ha fatto la sua prima comparsa in un'opera con la New South Wales Opera Company nel ruolo di Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. È entrato nella Sadler's Wells Opera (che più tardi diventò l'English National Opera), dove è comparso nella parte di Seneca (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), del Commendatore (*Don Giovanni*), di Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*), di Silva (*Ernani*), del Padre Guardiano (*La forza del destino*), di Filippo II (*Don Carlos*), di Re Enrico (*Lohengrin*), di Pogner (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), di Fafner, Hunding e Hagen (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) e nei ruoli principali ne *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Manon*, *Oedipus Rex* e *Peter Grimes*. È comparso anche nel ruolo del Dottor Bartolo (*Le nozze di Figaro*) alla Royal Opera, Covent Garden; con parti nel *Nabucco* e *Die Zauberflöte* alla Welsh National Opera; Nettuno (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*) alla Glyndebourne Festival Opera; Hunding

all'Opéra de Marseille; Alidoro (*La Cenerentola*), Oroveso (*Norma*), Matteo (*Fra Diavolo* di Auber), Sparafucile (*Rigoletto*), il Re (*Aida*), Lodovico (*Otello*), ed Hagen, oltre a ruoli ne *I puritani*, *Il trovatore* e *Tannhäuser* alla San Francisco Opera; e Nilakantha (*Lakmé* di Delibes) e Pimen (*Boris Godunov*) a Sydney. Dopo essere comparso ne *Les Huguenots* di Meyerbeer con l'Opera Australia nel 1990, ha lasciato l'opera, ritornando però a cantare nel 1993 come Alvisé Badoero ne *La Gioconda* con l'Opera North. Ha collaborato con artisti insigni quali Dame Joan Sutherland, Otto Klemperer, Sir Adrian Boult e Sir Colin Davis.

Nato in South Africa, il baritono basso **Norman Bailey** ha studiato a Vienna e durante la prima parte della sua carriera ha cantato in Austria e Germania. È poi ritornato nel Regno Unito dove ha cantato con tutte le compagnie d'opera più importanti. È uno dei principali cantanti di Wagner della sua generazione, collegato particolarmente con la parte del personaggio principale nel *Fliegende Holländer* e come Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Ha anche cantato come Landgraf in *Tannhäuser* con Opera North e Wotan/il giramondo e Gunther con l'English National Opera, dove come membro della compagnia

ha anche cantato nella parte di Pizarro (*Leonore* di Beethoven), Conte di Luna (*Il trovatore*), Alfio (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Scarpia (*Tosca*), il Padre (*Hänsel und Gretel*), il Principe Gremin (*Eugene Onegin*), Kutuzov (*Guerra e pace* di Prokofiev) e il Guardiaboschi (*La piccola volpe astuta*) tra gli altri ruoli. Con la Royal Opera, Covent Garden è comparso nella parte di Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*, anche in tournée a Palermo) e di Germont (*La traviata*), Ford (*Falstaff*), Wolfram (*Tannhäuser*), Kurwenal (*Tristan und Isolde*), Donner (*Das Rheingold*), Wotan (*Die Walküre*), Klingsor e Amfortas (*Parsifal*), Jochanaan (*Salome*) ed il Maestro di musica (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). Ruoli più recenti hanno incluso Oroveso (*Norma*), Banquo (*Macbeth*), il Re (*Aida*), il Dottore (*Wozzeck*) e Schigolch (*Lulu*). La sua carriera internazionale lo ha visto sui palcoscenici delle opere ed ai festival più importanti in tutta Europa e negli Stati Uniti, incluse parecchie stagioni a Bayreuth, ed a collaborare con direttori quali Sir Colin Davis, Sir Georg Solti, James Levine, Carlo Maria Giulini, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Claudio Abbado e Daniel Barenboim. Per Chandos ha registrato la parte principale in *King Priam* di Sir Michael Tippett.

Nata a Douglas nell'Isola di Man e dopo aver studiato alla School of Music di Birmingham, la soprano lirica **Margaret Curphey** ha fatto una tournée con l'Opera for All ed ha passato due anni nel coro del Festival di Glyndebourne prima di entrare nella Sadler's Wells Opera (che più tardi diventò l'English National Opera), dove ha fatto la sua prima comparsa nella parte di Micaela (*Carmen*) continuando nel ruolo di La Musica (*Orfeo* di Monteverdi), la Contessa (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Pamina, Ninetta (*La gazza ladra*), Maria Stuarda (nell'omonima opera di Donizetti), Violetta, Elisabetta de Valois (*Don Carlos*), Santuzza (*Cavalleria rusticana*), sia come Mimì che come Musetta (*La bohème*), Marguerita (*La Damnation de Faust* di Berlioz) ed Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*) oltre a molti altri ruoli. Le sue interpretazioni in opere di Wagner hanno incluso Elsa (*Lohengrin*), Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Sieglinde, Brunilde e Gutrune. Ha preso parte alla prima rappresentazione nel Regno Unito di *Lucio Silla* di Mozart al Camden Theatre, è comparsa in partecipazione straordinaria in parecchie opere in Europa, ha vinto un'onorificenza alla Gara Internazionale di Sofia in Bulgaria, e continua anche una carriera attiva come cantante in concerti.

Dopo aver studiato a Liverpool con Edwin Francis e successivamente con Dame Eva Turner ed altri, la soprano drammatica **Rita Hunter** è stata in tournée con la Carl Rosa Opera Company prima di diventare una prima attrice nella Sadler's Wells Opera (che più tardi diventò l'English National Opera), dove ha cantato nella parte di Marcellina, Donna Anna, Odabella (*Attila*), Leonora (*Il trovatore*), Amelia (*Un ballo in maschera*), Elisabeth de Valois (*Don Carlos*), Santuzza, Musetta (*La bohème*), Senta e la Fata Morgana (*L'amore delle tre melarance* di Prokofiev) oltre ad altri ruoli. Ha attratto l'attenzione del mondo musicale al principio degli anni '70 per le sue interpretazioni nella parte di Brunilde, un ruolo che ha coperto in tutto il mondo, e poco dopo esordì a Berlino, alla Royal Opera, Covent Garden, alla Metropolitan Opera, New York (per parecchie stagioni consecutive), a Monaco di Baviera, a San Francisco, New Orleans ed in Australia, paese con cui ha dei rapporti particolarmente stretti, e dove si è infine stabilita nel 1985. È anche comparsa con la Welsh National Opera, al Festival del Pacific Northwest a Seattle (come Brunilde nel ciclo completo del *Ring*) ed ai festival più importanti in tutto il mondo. Ha ottenuto un gran successo nel repertorio italiano di Norma,

Abigail (*Nabucco*), Lady Macbeth, Leonora e Aida, ma è anche comparsa in ruoli di primo piano in *Idomeneo*, *Turandot*, *Lohengrin*, *Tristan und Isolde* ed *Elektra*. Si è esibita con artisti di alto livello quali Birgit Nilsson (nella parte di Sieglinde contrapposta al suo ruolo di Brunilde alla Metropolitan Opera), Carlo Maria Giulini, Lorin Maazel, Sir Yehudi Menuhin, Sir Simon Rattle e Richard Hickox. Rita Hunter ha ricevuto numerose onorificenze oltre al CBE nel 1980.

Dopo aver vinto una borsa di studio alla Royal Opera, la mezzosoprano **Ann Howard** di Londra ha studiato a Parigi ed al suo ritorno dalla Francia è entrata nella Sadler's Wells Opera (che più tardi diventò l'English National Opera), dove le sue parti hanno incluso Azucena, la principessa Eboli, Musetta (*La bohème*), Carmen, Dalila, Conception (*L'Heure espagnole*), Ortrud (*Lohengrin*), Brangäne, Fricka, la Strega (*Hänsel und Gretel*), il Compositore (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Baba il Turco (*The Rake's Progress*), Katisha (*The Mikado*), la Regina delle fate (*Iolanthe*) e Auntie (*Peter Grimes*). È anche comparsa con la Royal Opera, Covent Garden (Amneris), la Welsh National Opera (la Duchessa ne *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* e in *The Doctor*

of *Myddfai* di Sir Peter Maxwell Davies), la Scottish Opera (Brangäne, Fricka, Cassandra in *Les Troyens* e la Vecchia in *Candide* di Bernstein) e l'Opera North (l'ospite in *Boris Godunov*). Ripartendo la sua carriera internazionale tra l'Europa e le Americhe del Nord e del Sud, è comparsa in opere in Francia, all'Opera nazionale della Baviera di Monaco, all'Opera nazionale di Vienna, al Teatro San Carlo di Napoli, a Genova ed a Lisbona, e ad Edmonton, Montreal, Los Angeles, New York (sia alla Metropolitan Opera che alla New York City Opera), a Washington D.C., Baltimore, New Orleans, Santa Fe, Messico e Santiago.

Elizabeth Connell ha stabilito la propria reputazione nel repertorio drammatico di soprano, particolarmente le opere di Beethoven, Wagner e Strauss. Dopo il suo esordio al festival di opera di Wexford è comparsa in *Guerra e pace* di Prokofiev all'inaugurazione della Sydney Opera House ed ha continuato a mantenere una collaborazione ben stretta con l'Opera Australia. La sua carriera internazionale l'ha vista in teatri dell'opera e festival in tutta Europa e nell'America del nord in un repertorio che include *Idomeneo*, *Norma*,

Nabucco, *Attila*, *Macbeth*, *Don Carlos*, *Fidelio*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, *Elektra* (nel ruolo principale), *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Jenifa* (Kostelnicka) e *Peter Grimes*. Tra i direttori d'orchestra con cui ha lavorato citiamo Claudio Abbado, Giuseppe Sinopoli, Carlo Maria Giulini, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir Edward Downes, Sir Colin Davis, Mark Elder, Lorin Maazel, James Levine e Seiji Osawa.

La carriera internazionale della soprano **Anne Evans** l'ha vista sui palcoscenici dei teatri dell'opera più importanti in tutta Europa e nelle Americhe del nord e del sud, in un repertorio rivolto particolarmente all'opera tedesca, da Beethoven (Leonora in *Fidelio*) a Strauss (la Marschallin nel *Der Rosenkavalier* e Ariadne), con successi particolarmente significativi nei ruoli wagneriani di Brunilde, Isolda e Sieglinde. È comparsa al Festival di Bayreuth sotto la direzione di Daniel Barenboim dal 1989 al 1992 ed ha preso parte ai festival di Ravello e di Edimburgo oltre che ai Promenade Concerts della BBC (per la 'Last Night of the Proms'). In Gran Bretagna è comparsa con la Royal Opera, Covent Garden, l'English National Opera, la Welsh National

Opera e la Scottish Opera e si è esibita in concerto e recital alla Royal Festival Hall, alla Royal Albert Hall (sotto la direzione di Bernard Haitink) ed alla Wigmore Hall.

La mezzosoprano **Sarah Walker** ha sviluppato una carriera eccezionale in recital ed opera, comparando in festival, sale da concerti e teatri dell'opera in tutta Europa, nell'America del nord, in Australia e Nuova Zelanda con molti dei più rinomati direttori d'orchestra, cantanti ed accompagnatori. Il suo repertorio operistico va da Claudio Monteverdi (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* e *L'incoronazione di Poppea*) e Francesco Cavalli (*La Calisto*) a Sir Peter Maxwell Davies (*Taverner*) ed Aulis Sallinen (*The King Goes Forth to France*). Ha stretti legami con la Royal Opera, Covent Garden e si è esibita anche di frequente con la English National Opera. Le sue numerose registrazioni rispecchiano l'immensa gamma del suo repertorio, includendo, su Chandos, musica di Manuel de Falla (*El amor brujo*) e Mozart (Requiem), oltre a *Giulio Cesare* e *Faust*, entrambi in associazione con la Peter Moores Foundation. In Inghilterra, Sarah Walker ha ricevuto l'onorificenza del CBE in occasione del compleanno della Regina nel 1991.

La contralto **Anne Collins** entrò nella Sadler's Wells Opera (che più tardi diventò l'English National Opera), dove il suo repertorio includeva *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Le Compteur*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Arabella* e parecchi ruoli, tra cui quello più famoso come Erda, nel ciclo del *Ring* di Wagner. Si è esibita di frequente con la Royal Opera, Covent Garden, la Welsh National Opera, l'Opera North e la Scottish Opera, ed è comparsa ai festival di Glyndebourne, Aldeburgh, Wexford e Camden ed ai Promenade Concerts della BBC. Si è esibita in concerto, a festival e con compagnie di opera in tutta Europa, includendo i teatri dell'opera di Lione, Strasburgo, Ginevra ed Amburgo, l'Opéra di Parigi ed il Châtelet théâtre musical, il Théâtre royal de la Monnaie a Bruxelles ed il Teatro alla Scala di Milano. Le esibizioni in America hanno incluso la Metropolitan Opera di New York. Ha fatto molte registrazioni, tra le quali, per Chandos, *Peter Grimes* sotto la direzione di Richard Hickox, che ha vinto un premio *Grammy*.

Acclamata dalla critica e dal pubblico, l'**Orchestra di English National Opera**, primo violino Barry Griffiths, ha ricevuto negli ultimi anni diversi premi prestigiosi, tra cui il

Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award e un *Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera*. L'Orchestra è al centro della vita artistica dell'Opera e, oltre a esibizioni liriche al Coliseum di Londra è stata anche vista sul palco in concerto. Inoltre molti dei musicisti partecipano al lavoro del Baylis Programme del dipartimento di educazione e "outreach" dell'Opera e con l'English National Opera Studio allo sviluppo di nuove opere, in particolare *The Silver Tassie* di Mark-Anthony Turnage che è stata uscita in prima mondiale nel febbraio 2000. L'Orchestra appare in numerose registrazioni, tra cui la sua registrazione dell'*Otello* di Verdi diretto da Mark Elder, che apparirà presto su Chandos con il patrocinio della Peter Moores Foundation. Altre registrazioni per Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation sono *Maria Stuarda*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto* (produzione di Jonathan Miller), *La traviata* e *Werther*.

Il direttore d'orchestra inglese **Reginald Goodall** nacque nel 1901 e studiò con Malcolm Sargent e Constant Lambert al Royal College of Music. Dal 1929 al 1936 fu organista e maestro del coro a St Alban the Martyr, Holborn, dove condusse le prime

esecuzioni in Inghilterra delle composizioni corali di Bruckner, Stravinsky e Szymanowski, oltre che le prime composizioni di Britten. Verso la fine degli anni '30 lavorò per assistere, tra gli altri, Albert Coates e Malcolm Sargent. All'inizio della seconda guerra mondiale diventò direttore della Wessex Philharmonic Orchestra con base a Bournemouth.

Durante il mese di giugno 1945, facendo parte della Sadler's Wells Opera (che più tardi diventò l'English National Opera), diresse la prima esecuzione di *Peter Grimes* al Sadler's Wells Theatre appena riaperto. L'anno seguente prese parte con Ernest Ansermet alle prime esecuzioni del *Rape of Lucretia* di Britten durante la prima stagione del dopoguerra del Glyndebourne Festival. Immediatamente dopo si associò al Covent Garden, dove per venticinque anni successivi diresse un repertorio che andava da *Il trovatore* a *Troilus and Cressida*.

Solo raramente ebbe la possibilità di dirigere opere del compositore che più ammirava, Richard Wagner. Questa lacuna fu colmata nel 1968, non dalla Royal Opera ma dalla Sadler's Wells, che lo invitò a dirigere una nuova produzione dei *Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Il suo successo fu così straordinario che ritornò alla compagnia per dirigere quella leggendaria

produzione completa del *Ring des Nibelungen*, costruita tra il 1970 ed il 1973 e la prima data in inglese per molti anni. Continuò poi a dirigere *Das Rheingold* e *Die Walküre* per la Royal Opera, *Tristan und Isolde* e *Die Walküre*

per la Welsh National Opera e *Tristan e Parsifal* alla English National Opera. Ottenne l'onorificenza del CBE nel 1975 e fu fatto cavaliere nel 1985. Reginald Goodall morì nel 1990 ad ottantotto anni.



Brünnhilde, Sieglinde and the Valkyries, Act III, Scene 1



Brünnhilde and Wotan, Act III, Scene 3

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act One

Inside a dwelling

In the middle stands a mighty ash-tree, whose prominent roots spread wide and lose themselves in the ground. The summit of the tree is cut off by a jointed roof, so pierced that the trunk and the boughs branching out on every side pass through it, through openings made exactly to fit. We assume that the top of the tree spreads out above the roof. Around the trunk of the ash, as central point, a room has been constructed. The walls are of rudely hewn wood, here and there hung with plaited and woven rugs. In the foreground, right, is a hearth, whose chimney goes up sideways to the roof; behind the hearth is an inner room, like a storeroom, reached by a few wooden steps. In front of it, half-drawn, is a plaited hanging. In the background, an entrance-door with a simple wooden latch. Left, the door to an inner chamber, similarly reached by steps. Further forward, on the same side, a table with a broad bench fastened to the wall behind it and wooden stools in front of it.

¹ *A short orchestral prelude of violent, stormy character introduces the scene. When the curtain rises, Siegmund, from without, hastily opens the main door and enters. It is towards evening; a fierce thunderstorm is just about to die down. For a moment, Siegmund keeps his hand on the latch and looks around the room; he seems to be exhausted by*

tremendous exertions; his raiment and general appearance proclaim him a fugitive. Seeing no one, he closes the door behind him, walks to the hearth, and throws himself down there, exhausted, on a bearskin rug.

Scene 1

Siegmund

² The storm drove me here;
here I must shelter.

(He sinks back and remains for a while stretched out, motionless. Sieglinde enters from the door of the inner room, thinking that her husband has returned. Her grave look changes to one of surprise when she sees a stranger on the hearth.)

Sieglinde *(still at the back)*

A stranger here?
Where has he come from?
(Quietly, she comes a few steps closer.)
Who sought this house,
and lies near the fire?

(As Siegmund does not move, she comes a little closer and looks at him.)

He's exhausted
and does not move.
Can he have fainted here,
or is he dead?

(She bends over him and listens.)
Ah no, he is breathing;
it seems that he's sleeping.

Valiant, strong is the man,
though he's weary now.

Siegmund *(suddenly raises his head)*
A drink! A drink!

Sieglinde

I'll bring some water.
(She quickly takes a drinking-horn and goes out of the house with it. Returning with it filled, she offers it to Siegmund.)

Cool your lips with this drink
that I've brought you!
Water – will you not drink?

Siegmund *(drinks and hands her back the horn. As he signals his thanks with his head, his glance fastens on her features with growing interest.)*

Cool and refreshing –
now I am well;
my curse of care
suddenly light;
my spirits revive;
my eyes enjoy
a blessed, glorious sight.
And who has brought me to life?

Sieglinde

³ This house and this wife
belong to Hunding.
He will welcome his guest:
say here till he returns.

Siegmund

Weaponless am I:
a wounded guest
cannot trouble your husband.

Sieglinde *(with anxious haste)*

Oh quickly, show me the wounds!

Siegmund *(shakes himself and sits up quickly)*

Slight are they
unworthy your care;
no bone in my body
broken at all.
Had my shield and spear been as strong,
half as strong as my body,
I would never have fled;
but they shattered my spear and shield.

And so I fled
the enemies' wrath;
a thunderstorm
broke on my head.
Yet, swifter than I was fleeing,
all my faintness has fled.
Darkness had covered my eyes –
the sunlight shines on me now.

Sieglinde *(goes to the storeroom, fills a horn with mead, and offers it to Siegmund with friendly eagerness)*

I bring you a drink
of honeyed mead;
say that you'll not refuse.

Siegmund

Will not you taste it first?

(Sieglinde sips from the horn and gives it back to him. Siegmund takes a long draught, while his gaze rests on her with growing warmth. Still gazing, he takes the horn from his lips and lets it sink slowly, while the expression on his face tells of strong emotion. He sighs deeply, and gloomily lowers his gaze to the ground. With trembling voice)

4 Evil fortune's never far from me:

may I keep it
away from you!

(He starts up to go.)

I rested sweetly;
I feel refreshed.

I must go on my way.

(He moves towards the back.)

Sieglinde *(turning round quickly)*

Who pursues you? Why must you flee?

Siegmund *(arrested by her cry; slowly and sadly)*

Ill fate pursues me,
follows my footsteps;
ill fate advances –
soon it will reach me.

This ill fate you must not share!

So I must leave your house.

(He strides swiftly to the door and lifts the latch.)

Sieglinde *(calling to him with impetuous self-forgetfulness)*

No, do not leave!

You bring no ill fate to me,
for ill fate has long been here!

Siegmund *(deeply moved, remains where he is; he gazes intently at Sieglinde, who lowers her eyes in embarrassment and sadness. A long silence. Siegmund returns into the room.)*

Wehwalt, that is my name.

Hunding – I will await him.

(He leans against the hearth; his eyes fix themselves with calm and steady sympathy on Sieglinde. Slowly, she raises her eyes again to his. They gaze into one another's eyes, during a long silence, with an expression of the deepest emotion.)

Scene 2

Suddenly Sieglinde starts, listens, and hears Hunding, who is leading his horse to the stable outside. She goes quickly to the door and opens it. Hunding, armed with shield and spear, enters, and pauses at the threshold on perceiving Siegmund. He turns to Sieglinde with a glance of stern inquiry.

Sieglinde *(in answer to Hunding's look)*

5 There he lay,
feeble and faint;
need drove him in here.

Hunding

You cared for him?

Sieglinde

I said you'd welcome him;
cared for him as guest.

Siegmund *(watching Hunding calmly and firmly)*

Rest and drink,
both she brought:

Why should you then reproach her?

Hunding

Sacred is my hearth;
sacred keep you my house.

(He hands his weapons to Sieglinde, and says to her)

Go, make ready our meal!

(Sieglinde hangs the weapons on the branches of the ash-tree, fetches food and drink from the storeroom, and prepares the table for supper. Involuntarily she turns her eyes again to Siegmund. Hunding looks keenly and with astonishment at Siegmund's features, comparing them with his wife's; aside)

How like to my wife there!

A glittering snake
seems to shine in their glances.

(He hides his surprise and turns, as if unconcerned, to Siegmund.)

You have strayed
far from your way;
you rode no horse
to reach my house.
What painful journey
brought you to me?

Siegmund

6 Through field and forest,
meadow and marsh,
driven by storm
and starkest need –

I know not the way that I took;
nor can I tell you
where I have wandered.
May I now learn that from you?

Hunding *(at the table, motioning to Siegmund to sit)*

This house is mine;
this land is mine;
Hunding is your host.
Turn to the west
when you leave my house,
and there my kin
live in rich homesteads,
where Hunding's honour is guarded.

You may honour me too:
will my guest not tell me his name?

(Siegmund, who has sat down at the table, gazes thoughtfully in front of him. Sieglinde has placed herself next to Hunding, opposite Siegmund, on whom she fastens her eyes with evident sympathy and intentness. Hunding, observing them both)

Though you fear
to trust it to me,
my wife there longs to learn it.
See, how eagerly she waits!

Sieglinde *(unembarrassed and eager)*

Guest, I would know
who you are.

Siegmund *(looks up, gazes into her eyes, and begins gravely)*

7 Friedmund no one could call me;

Frohwalt – would that I were!
 I'm Wehwalt, named for my sorrow.
 Wolfe, he was my father;
 his two children were twins –
 my unhappy sister and I.
 Both sister and mother
 were lost –
 my mother killed
 and my sister borne off –
 both gone while I was a boy.
 Valiant and strong was Wolfe;
 his foes were many and fierce.
 And hunters bold
 were the boy and his father.
 Once, weary and worn,
 we came from the chase,
 and found our home laid waste.
 A heap of ash
 was all that was left;
 a stump where once
 an oak tree had stood;
 the corpse of my mother
 lay at my feet;
 all trace of my sister
 was lost in smoke.
 This cruel blow was dealt
 by Neidings who sought revenge.
 As outlaws then
 we took to the woods;
 there I lived
 with Wolfe my father;
 in hunting I spent my youth.

Many a raid
 was made on us both,
 but we had learnt
 to defend our lives.
(turning to Hunding)
 A Wölfing tells you this tale,
 and as 'Wölfing' often I'm known.

Hunding

Wonderful, wild adventures
 came to our daring guest,
 Wehwalt the Wölfing!
 I think that I've heard of the pair,
 I've heard unholy stories
 spoken of Wolfe
 and Wölfing, too.

Sieglinde

But tell us more, O stranger:
 where is your father now?

Siegmund

8 The Neidings raided again,
 fell on my father and me;
 and many a hunter
 fell in the battle;
 they fled through the woods,
 chased by us both;
 like chaff we scattered the foe.
 They parted my father and me;
 in the fight I lost him.
 A long while I sought him.
 Though I found the wolfskin
 that he had worn,

him I could not find;
 my father was not there.
 Then I lost my love for the woods;
 I mingled with warriors and women.

But all in vain,
 often I tried
 to win a friend,
 to woo a maid –
 everywhere I was distrusted.
 Ill fate lay on me.
 For what I thought was right,
 others reckoned was wrong,
 and what seemed to me bad,
 others held to be good.

And so it was wherever I went,
 outlawed by all whom I met;
 striving for gladness,
 found only woe!
 And so I was Wehwalt always;
 yes, Wehwalt! – Sorrow is mine.

(He turns his eyes to Sieglinde and observes her sympathetic glance.)

Hunding

9 So the Norn who dealt you this fate,
 she felt no love for you:
 no one greets you with joy
 when you arrive as guest.

Sieglinde

Manly hearts do not fear
 a weaponless lonely man!

Tell us more, guest;
 tell of the fight
 in which you lost spear and shield.

Siegmund *(with increasing excitement)*

A child in distress
 called for my aid;
 her kinsmen wanted
 to force the maiden
 to marry a husband she feared.
 Hearing her cry,
 I came to her help.
 Her cruel kin
 met me in fight;
 they fell before my spear.
 I'd killed her fierce, cruel brothers.
 The maid threw her arms round the dead;
 her rage had turned into grief.
 With wildly streaming eyes
 she bathed the dead with her tears,
 as she mourned for the death of those
 who'd wronged her – that ill-fated bride.

Then her brothers' kinsmen
 rushed to the place;
 vowing vengeance,
 angrily fell on me,
 raging around me,
 eager to kill me.
 Meanwhile the maid
 stayed by the dead;
 my shield and spear
 sheltered her life,
 till spear and shield

were hacked from my hands.
I was weaponless, wounded;
she was killed while I watched:
I fled from the furious host;
on the bodies she lay dead.
*(turning to Sieglinde with a look filled with
sorrowful fervour)*

You asked me, now you must know
why I'm not Friedmund – but Wehwalt!

*(He stands up and walks to the hearth. Sieglinde,
pale and deeply stirred, lowers her eyes.)*

Hunding *(rises)*

¹⁰ I know a troublesome race;
they do not respect
what we revere;
they are hated by all men – and me.
I heard a summons to vengeance:
Death to the stranger
who killed our kin!
Too late came I,
but now that I'm home,
I find that stranger here;
he sought my house for his rest.
(He advances.)

My house guards you,
Wölfing, today;
for the night you are my guest.
But with trusty weapons
defend you tomorrow;
I choose the day for our fight:
as payment I will have blood.

*(With anxious gestures Sieglinde steps between the
two men. Hunding, harshly)*

Go from the room!

Linger not here!
Prepare my drink for the night,
and wait for me in there.

*(Sieglinde stands awhile undecided and thoughtful.
Then she turns slowly and with hesitating steps
towards the storeroom. There she again pauses and
remains standing, lost in thought, with her face half
turned away. With quiet resolve she opens the
cupboard, fills a drinking-horn, and shakes some
spices into it from a container. Then she turns her
eyes on Siegmund so as to meet his gaze, which he
keeps unceasingly fixed on her. She perceives that
Hunding is watching, and goes at once towards the
bedchamber. On the steps she turns once more, looks
yearningly at Siegmund, and indicates with her eyes,
persistently and with eloquent earnestness, a
particular spot in the ash tree's trunk. Hunding
starts, and drives her with a violent gesture from the
room. With a last look at Siegmund, she goes into
the bedchamber, and closes the door behind her.)*

Hunding takes down his weapons from the tree-trunk.)
With weapons man should be armed.

(to Siegmund, as he goes)

You, Wölfing, meet me tomorrow,
and then – fight with me!
Guard yourself well!

*(He goes into the chamber; the closing of the bolt is
heard from within.)*

Scene 3

*Siegmund is alone. It has become quite dark. The
room is lit only by a feeble fire on the hearth.
Siegmund sinks down on the couch near the fire
and broods silently for a while, in great agitation.*

Siegmund

¹¹ A sword was pledged by my father,
to serve me in hour of need.

I am unarmed
in my enemy's house;
as a hostage here
helpless I wait.
But fair woman,
loveliest eyes:
a new emotion
fills my heart.

This woman who holds me bound,
whose enchantment tears at my heart,
as slave she's held by a man
who mocks his weaponless foe.

Wälse! Wälse!

Where is the sword?

The shining sword
that alone can save me,

when there should break from my breast
that frenzy my heart still hides?

*(The fire collapses, and a bright glow springs up,
striking the place on the ash-trunk indicated by
Sieglinde's look, where now a sword-hilt is clearly
seen.)*

What's glinting there

to light the gloom?
On the ash-tree
there's a starry gleam.
My eyes are blinded,
dazzled with light;
lightnings flash from the tree.
How the shining gleam
inspires my heart!
Is it the glance
that shone from her eyes,
did she leave it
to linger behind,
when she went from the room?
*(From now on, the fire on the hearth gradually
sinks.)*

Shadows of darkness
clouded my eyes;
but her radiant glance
fell on me then,
warming and lighting my heart.
Glorious rays
of the golden sun,
with gladdening splendour
encircled my head,
till in the mountains it sank.
(a new faint gleam from the fire)
Yet once more, as it went,
evening radiance did shine;
and the ancient ash-tree's trunk
was lit by a golden glow;
that light is fading;
the gleam has gone;

shadows of darkness
gather around me:
deep in my breast there lingers on
that last smouldering glow.

(The fire has burnt out; complete darkness. The door at the side opens softly. Sieglinde, in a white garment, comes out and advances lightly but quickly towards the hearth.)

Sieglinde

¹² Are you awake?

Siegmund *(springing up in joyful surprise)*

Who steals this way?

Sieglinde

I do. Listen to me!
In deepest sleep is Hunding;
I gave him a drug in his drink.
Now, in the night, you are safe!

Siegmund *(interrupting her passionately)*

Safe when you are near!

Sieglinde

There's a sword for him who can win it;
and when that sword is won,
then I can call you
noblest of heroes:
the strongest alone
masters the sword.

So listen well, mark what I tell you!

¹³ My husband's kinsmen
sat in this room,

they'd come here to witness his wedding.

He married a wife
against her will;
robbers had made her their prize.

Sadly, I sat
while they were drinking;
a stranger entered the house:
an old man dressed all in grey;
his hat hung so low
that one of his eyes was hidden;
but the other's flash
filled them with terror:
none could counter
that threatening gaze.

I alone
felt in those glances
sweet, yearning regret –
sorrow and solace in one.

On me smiling,
he glared at the others;
in his hand he carried a sword;
then drove it deep
in the ash-tree's trunk;
to the hilt buried it there.
But one man alone could win it,
he who could draw it forth.

The guests were warriors;
they rose to the challenge;
but none could master the sword.

Many tried it
but all were baffled;
the strongest seized it in vain –

none could move the blade from its place.

That sword is still in the tree.
I knew then who he was,
come to greet me in my grief;

I know, too,
who alone
can draw the sword from the tree.

And oh, have I found
today that friend,
come from the distance
to end my grief?
Then all that I've suffered
in pain and distress,
yes, all that I've suffered
in sorrow and shame,
all is forgotten,
all is atoned for!
Regained all that
I'd thought I had lost;
my fondest desires
win their fulfilment,
if I have found that friend,
and hold that hero to me!

Siegmund *(embracing Sieglinde with ardour)*

¹⁴ Yes, loveliest bride,
I am that friend;
both weapon and wife I claim!
Fierce in my breast
blazes the vow
that binds me ever to you.
For all that I've sought
I see now in you;

in you, all that
I sought is found.
Though you were shamed,
though sad was my life,
though I was outlawed,
and you were disgraced,
joyful vengeance,
blessed gladness!
I laugh now
in fullest delight,
as I embrace your glory,
feel your beating heart!

(The large door flies open.)

Sieglinde *(starts in alarm, and tears herself away)*
Ah, who went? Or who has come?

(The door remains open; outside, a glorious spring night; the full moon shines in, throwing its bright light on the pair, so that suddenly they can fully and clearly see each other.)

Siegmund *(in gentle ecstasy)*

No one left –
but one has come:
see him, the Spring
smiles on our love!
(Siegmund draws Sieglinde to him on the couch with tender vehemence, so that she sits beside him. Increasing brilliance of the moonlight)

¹⁵ Winter storms have vanished
at Spring's command;
in gentle radiance

sparkles the Spring,
 on balmy breezes,
 light and lovely,
 working wonders
 on his way;
 on wood and meadow
 softly breathing;
 wide and smiling
 are his eyes.
 The songs of happy birds
 reflect his voice;
 sweet the fragrance
 of his breath;
 from his ardent blood the flowers
 are joyfully blooming;
 buds and blooms
 have sprung at his call.
 He waves his wand of magic
 over the world;
 winter and storm yield
 to his strong command:
 as soon as his words were spoken
 the doors that barred him were broken,
 for how could they keep us
 parted from him?
 To clasp his sister
 here he has flown;
 for Love called to the Spring;
 and Love was hidden
 deep in our hearts;
 but joyfully laughs to the light.
 The bride and sister

are freed by the brother;
 the barriers fall
 that held them apart;
 joyfully greeting
 as now they meet:
 united are Spring and Love!

Sieglinde
 [16] You are the Spring,
 the Spring I have yearned for
 in frost and in winter's ice.
 My heart felt the glow,
 grew warm when you came;
 when my eyes beheld you, I knew you.
 Everything used to be strange,
 friendless all that was round me;
 like far off things and unknown,
 all that ever drew near.
 But you came
 then all was clear:
 for I knew you were mine
 when I beheld you.
 What I hid in my heart,
 all I am,
 clear as the day,
 all was revealed;
 the sound of this truth
 rang in my ear,
 when in winter's frosty desert
 my eyes first beheld my friend.
*(She throws her arms around his neck, enraptured,
 and gazes closely into his face.)*

Siegmunde (*carried away*)
 [17] Oh sweetest enchantment,
 woman most blessed!

Sieglinde (*close to his eyes*)
 Oh, hold me close you,
 and clasp me to you,
 to see more clearly
 that holy light
 that shines from eyes,
 from countenance,
 and so sweetly steals to my heart.

Siegmund
 The Spring's fair moon
 shines on you here,
 crowns with glory
 your lovely hair.
 Ah, now I know
 what captured my heart;
 my glances feast in delight.

Sieglinde (*pushes the locks back from his brow, and
 gazes at him in astonishment*)
 Your noble brow
 is broad and clear;
 its delicate veins
 with my fingers I trace!
 I tremble with the rapture
 of my delight!
 A marvel stirs in my memory:
 although you came but today,
 I've seen your face before!

Siegmund
 I know your dream,
 and feel it, too:
 in ardent yearning
 you were my dream!

Sieglinde
 [18] The stream has shown
 my reflected face –
 and now I find it before me;
 in you I see it again,
 just as it shone from the stream!

Siegmund
 You are the dream
 that I felt in my heart.

Sieglinde (*quickly turning her eyes away from him*)
 Be still! Again
 that voice is sounding,
 the voice which I heard
 once as a child –
 But no! I know when I heard it:
(excitedly)
 when through the woods I called,
 and echo's voice in reply.

Siegmund
 Oh loveliest music,
 voice that enchants me!

Sieglinde (*again gazing into his eyes*)
 And your gleaming eyes,
 I've seen it before:
 the stranger in grey

gazed on me thus
 when he came to console my grief.
 By his glance
 his child knew him well –
 I knew by what name I should call him!
(She pauses a moment and then continues softly.)
 Wehwalt, is that what you're called?

Sigmund

No more that name,
 now you are mine:
 my sorrow has turned to rapture!

Sieglinde

And Friedmund was no name
 for a sufferer.

Sigmund

Name me yourself;
 by what name can you love me?
 My name, I'll take it from you!

Sieglinde

You told me that Wolf was your father.

Sigmund

A Wolf when he hunted foxes!
 But when his eye
 shone on me proudly,
 as your eye shines on me now,
 why then – Wälse his name.

Sieglinde *(beside herself)*

Was Wälse your father,
 and are you a Wälzung?
 Then it is yours,

that sword in the tree!
 So now let me name you
 as I have loved you:
 Sigmund –
 that is your name!

Sigmund *(leaps up, hurries to the trunk, and grasps the sword hilt)*

¹⁹ Sigmund call me,
 and Sigmund am I!
 The proof is the sword,
 my hand soon shall hold it!
 Promised by Wälse
 in hour of need,
 now it is found;
 I grasp it now!
 Yearning desire
 in longing and need,
 yearning desire
 in longing and need,
 burning bright in my breast,
 drives to deeds and death.

Notung! Notung!
 so name I the sword!
 Notung! Notung!
 Broad, shining steel.
 Show me your sharpness,
 glorious blade!

Come forth from the scabbard to me!
(With a powerful effort, Sigmund draws the sword from the tree, and shows it to the astonished and enraptured Sieglinde.)

²⁰ Sigmund, the Wälzung,
 here you see!
 As bride-gift
 he brings you this sword;
 and claims with it
 his loveliest bride;
 and from this house
 he leads her away.
 Far from here,
 follow me now,
 onward to the laughing
 land of bright Spring.
 Your guard is Notung, the sword,
 should Sigmund die, conquered by love!

(He has embraced her, to draw her away with him.)

Sieglinde *(in highest excitement tears herself away, and stands before him)*

Is this Sigmund,
 standing before me?
 Sieglinde am I;
 I longed for you.
 Your own dear sister
 and bride you have won with the sword!

Sigmund

Bride and sister
 be to your brother;
 the blood of these Wälzungen is blessed!

(He draws her to him with passionate fervour; with a cry, she falls on his breast. The curtain falls quickly.)

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act II

A wild, craggy summit

In the background, a gorge slopes up from below to a high ridge of rocks, from which the ground again sinks to the front.

Scene 1

Wotan, armed for battle, carrying his spear; before him Brünnhilde, as a Valkyrie, likewise fully armed

Wotan

¹ Go bridle your horse,
 warrior maid!
 Seize your shield;
 battle is near.

Brünnhilde's off to the fight,
 the Wälzung is victor today!

Hunding falls to him;
 leave him to lie;
 for Walhall he is not fit.
 Now hasten away,
 ride to the field!

Brünnhilde *(shouting as she leaps from rock to rock up to the heights on the right)*

² Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!
 Hiaha! Hiaha!
 Hoyotoho! Hiaha!

(On a high peak she stops, looks into the gorge at the back, and calls back to Wotan.)

I warn you, father,
look to yourself;
brave the storm
blowing your way.
Fricka's coming – your wife;
she's drawn along by two of her rams.

Hi! How she swings
her glittering whip!
The wretched beasts
are sweating with fear;
wheels rattle and rumble,
whirl her on to the fray.

A woman's battle
is not to my taste,
rather the clangour
of martial arms.
Take care that you weather the storm;
I'm happy to leave it to you!
Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!
Hiaha! Hiaha!
Hiahaha!

*(Brünnhilde disappears behind the mountain
height at the side. Fricka, in a chariot drawn by
two rams, comes up from the gorge to the top of the
rocky ridge, where she stops suddenly and alights.
She strides impetuously towards Wotan in the
foreground.)*

Wotan *(seeing Fricka approaching; aside)*

³ The usual storm,
the usual strife!
But here I must be steadfast!

Fricka *(as she approaches, moderates her pace and
places herself with dignity before Wotan)*
In the mountains where you hide,
to shun the sight of your wife,
here I have
found you at last,
to claim the help that you owe me.

Wotan

Let Fricka's troubles
freely be told.

Fricka

I have heard Hunding cry:
revenge the wrong they have done!
As wedlock's guardian
I answered him.
I swore
I would punish the deed
this pair dared to commit,
who wronged a husband and me.

Wotan

But what evil
have they done?
The Spring enticed them to love.
The power of love
overcame them both;
and who can resist that power?

Fricka

⁴ Pretend that you don't understand!
And yet you know all too well
that I have come

to avenge marriage vows,
the holy vows they have broken!

Wotan

Unholy
call I the vows
that bind unloving hearts;
and do you
expect me to act,
to exert my power
where yours is helpless?
For where bold spirits are moving,
I stir them ever to strife.

Fricka

If you encourage
adulterous love,
then proudly go further
and praise as holy
the incest there has been,
the love of a pair of twins!
My senses are shocked,
my mind is amazed –
bridal embrace
of sister and brother!
When came it to pass
that brother and sister were lovers?

Wotan

⁵ Now it's come to pass!
And learn from this
that a thing may happen
although it's not happened before.
They love one another,

as you must know;
so hear my words of advice:
since Fricka is famed
for her blessing on lovers,
bestow on them your blessing,
on Siegmund's and Sieglinde's love!

Fricka *(breaking out in deep indignation)*

⁶ So this is the end
of the gods and their glory,
now you have fathered
Wölfling the Wälsung?
I speak frankly;
am I not right?
The race of the gods
by you is forgotten!
You cast aside
what you once held in honour;
you break every bond
that you tied to unite us;
loosen, laughing,
your hold on heaven:
that the lustful lovers may flourish,
this sinful incestuous pair,
who were born as the fruit of your shame!
Oh, why mourn
over virtue and vows,
when they first were broken by you!
Your faithful wife
you've always betrayed;
down in the caverns,
high on the mountains,
your glance searched

and lusted for love,
where your roving fancy might lead you.
Your scorn has broken my heart.

Sad in my spirit,
I had to see you
leading to battle
those barbarous maidens
your lawless love
had brought into being;
but you still respected your wife,
for the Valkyrie brood,
and Brünnhild herself
whom you love so well –
they were bound in obedience to me.

But now a new name
has taken your fancy,
and ‘Wälse’ prowls
like a wolf through the woodland;
now you have stooped
to the depth of dishonour,
a mortal woman
has borne you her children:
now to whelps of a she-wolf
you would abandon your wife!

Go on with your work!
Fill now my cup!
You betrayed me; let me be trampled!

Wotan (*quietly*)

7 You never learn
what I would teach you,
to try to conceive a deed
before that deed comes to pass.

Your concern
is for things that have been;
but what is still to come –
to that turn all my thoughts.
Hear this one thing!
We need a man
who lives without our protection,
who is free from the rule of the gods.

He alone
can accomplish the deed,
which, although it will save us,
the gods are forbidden to do.

Fricka

With crafty reasoning
you would deceive me.
What marvel can be worked
by these mortals?
What is this deed which gods cannot do?
And who gives the mortals their power?

Wotan

Do you rate their own
achievement so low?

Fricka

Who breathed the soul into men?
Who kindled the light in their eyes?
When you are near,
then they are strong;
when you inspire them,
then they can strive.
You fill them with daring,
then sing their praises to me.

With new deceits
you were taught to trick me;
with new excuses
you would escape me;
but for this Wälzung
you plead all in vain:
in him I find only you;
what he does, you do through him.

Wotan (*with emotion*)

In wildest sorrow
he grew by himself;
and I gave him no help.

Fricka

Then do not help him now!
Take back the sword
you’ve placed in his hand.

Wotan

The sword?

Fricka

Yes, the sword,
the magical,
glittering sword,
that the god has given his son!

Wotan (*violently*)

Siegmund has won it himself
(*with a suppressed shudder*)
in his need.

(*From this point, Wotan’s whole demeanour expresses
an ever-increasing uneasy, profound dejection.*)

Fricka (*continuing eagerly*)

You sent him the need,
as you sent him the sword.
Can you deceive me,
when day and night
I have watched every step?
For him you prepared
that sword in the tree,
and you promised him
it would be found.
Can you deny it,
that your hand alone
has led him where it was hid?

(*Wotan makes a wrathful gesture. Fricka becomes
ever more confident, as she sees the impression she
has made on Wotan.*)

The gods do not battle
with bondsmen;
rebellious slaves must be punished.

As an equal
I argue with you;
but Siegmund must fall to me as slave.

(*Wotan makes another vehement gesture, and then
is overcome by the sense of his powerlessness.*)

For soul and body,
he is your servant,
and now must I
be subjected to him?
Am I his slave,
to smile when he scorns me?
Despised by the world,
and mocked by the free?

And can my husband allow me,
his goddess, to suffer this shame?

Wotan (*gloomy*)

8 What must I do?

Fricka

Abandon the Walsung!

Wotan (*with muffled voice*)

He goes his own way.

Fricka

And you'll give him no help
when he's called to defend his life?

Wotan

I'll give him no help.

Fricka

Do not deceive me;
look in my eyes;
the Valkyrie leaves him to die!

Wotan

The Valkyrie is free to choose.

Fricka

Not so; your commandment
is all she obeys:
command her that Siegmund dies!

Wotan (*breaking out after a violent inner struggle*)

I cannot destroy him;
he found my sword!

Fricka

Destroy all its magic,
command it to break!
Siegmund falls in the fight!

Brünnhilde (*still invisible, calling from the heights*)

9 Hiaha! Hiaha! Hoyotoho!

Fricka

And here is your valiant maid,
joyfully coming this way.

Brünnhilde

Hiaha! Hiaha!
Hiohotoyo! Hotoyoha!

Wotan (*dejected, to himself*)

To fight now for Siegmund she rides.

(Brünnhilde appears, with her horse, on the rocky path to the right. On seeing Fricka, she breaks off suddenly and, during the following, she slowly, silently leads her horse down the mountain path, and then stables it in a cave.)

Fricka

And her shield today
must shelter the honour
of your immortal wife!
For men in their scorn
would laugh at our might,
jeer at the glorious gods,
if today your warlike daughter
should not revenge
all the wrongs of your wife!

The Walsung dies for my honour!
Will Wotan now give me his oath?

Wotan (*throwing himself on to a rocky seat in terrible dejection and inner anger*)

Take my oath!

(Fricka strides towards the back: there she meets Brünnhilde and stops for a moment before her.)

Fricka (*to Brünnhilde*)

Wotan is waiting there:
let him instruct you
how the lot must be cast.

(She mounts her chariot and drives quickly away.)

Scene 2

Brünnhilde advances with astonished and anxious mien to Wotan, who, leaning back on the rocky seat, his head propped on his hand, is sunk in gloomy brooding.

Brünnhilde

10 Fricka
has won the fight;
since she smiles at the outcome.
Father, what news
have you to tell me?
Why this sadness and sorrow?

Wotan (*drops his arm helplessly and lets his head sink on his breast*)

I forged the fetters;
now I'm bound.
I, least free of all living!

Brünnhilde

What troubles you so;
what new grief is this?

Wotan (*whose expression and gestures grow in intensity from this point, until they culminate in a fearful outburst*)

Oh infinite shame!
Oh shameful distress!
Gods' despair!
Gods' despair!
Endless remorse!
Grief evermore!

The saddest of beings is Wotan!

Brünnhilde (*terrified, throws shield, spear and helmet from her and sinks at Wotan's feet in anxious solicitude*)

Father! Father!
Tell me, what is it?
For your daughter is filled with dismay!

Oh, trust in me!
You know I'm true!
See, Brünnhilde begs you.

(She lays her head and hands with loving concern on his knees and lap.)

Wotan (*looks long in her eyes; then he strokes her hair with involuntary tenderness. As if coming to himself out of deep brooding, he begins softly*)

If I should tell you,
might I not lose
the controlling power of my will?

Brünnhilde (*answers him equally softly*)

To Wotan's will you're speaking;
you can say what you will;
what am I,
if not your will alone?

Wotan (*very softly*)

These thoughts that I never have uttered,
though I may think them,
still they're not spoken.
I think aloud, then,
speaking to you.

(in a still more muted, fearful voice, while he gazes steadily into Brünnhilde's eyes)

[11] When youth's delightful
pleasures had waned,
I longed in my heart for power;
and driven
by impetuous desires,
I won myself the world;
yet all unwitting,
I acted wrongly;
trusted in treaties
where evil lay,
craftily counselled by Loge,
who lured me on – then left.
Yet the longing
for love would not leave me;
in my power I felt its enchantment.
That child of night,
the cringing Nibelung,
Alberich, broke from his bonds;
by cursing at love

he was able to gain
the Rhinemaid's glistening gold,
and with that gold, all his power.

The ring that he made,
I cunningly stole it;
but to the Rhine
it was not returned.
I used the gold
to pay for Walhall,
the hall the giants had built me,
the hall where I rule all the world.

For one who knows
all things that were,
Erda, the wisest,
holiest Wala,
warned me away from the ring,
told of eternal disaster.

[12] She refused to reveal
more about it,
in silence she sank from my sight.
Then I lost all my joy in life;
my only desire was to learn.
So I made my way
down into the depths;
by love's enchantment
I conquered the Wala,
humbled her silent pride,
till she told me all she knew.
Wisdom I won from her words;
the Wala demanded a pledge;
the wise Erda conceived
a daughter – Brünnhilde, you.

With eight sisters
you were brought up
and you, Valkyrie,
might avert
the doom that the Wala
had made me fear –
the shameful defeat of immortals.

Our foes would find us
ready for fight;
you would assemble my army:
the men whom we bound
by our laws in bondage,
the mortals, whom we
had curbed in their pride,
whom by treacherous treaties,
shameful agreements,
we'd bound in obedience
blindly to serve us;
and yours was the task
to stir them to battle,
and arouse brave men
to ruthless war,
till valiant hordes of heroes
had gathered in Walhall's hall!

Brünnhilde

And that hall is guarded securely:
many a hero I brought.
So why are you troubled,
if we never failed?

Wotan

[13] There's more to tell;

mark what I say;
hear what the Wala foretold!
For Alberich's host
threatens our downfall;
an envious rage
burns in the Niblung.
Yet I have no fear
of his dusky battalions,
while my heroes keep me secure.
But if once the ring
returns to the Niblung,
he conquers Walhall for ever;
he who cursed all true love,
he alone
by his cursing
has won the power
to bring eternal
shame on the gods;
my heroes' hearts
he'd win for himself;
he'd make my army
bend to his will,
and with that force
give battle to me.
So I pondered a way
to keep the ring from the Niblung.
The giant Fafner,
one of the pair
for whose work I paid
the fatal gold –
Fafner broods on the gold
he murdered his brother to gain.

From him must the ring be taken,
that ring he's won as his wages.

But the bond that I made
forbids me to harm him;
if I should try
my power would fail.
These are the fetters
which have bound me;
since by my treaties I rule,
by those treaties I am enslaved.

- [14] Yet one can accomplish
what I may not: –
a man, a hero
I've never shielded,
whom I've not prompted,
foe to the gods,
free of soul,
fearless and bold,
who acts alone,
by his own design –
that man can do
what the gods must shun;
though never urged by me,
he can achieve my desire!
One at war with all gods,
he can save us!
This friendliest foe,
oh, how can I find?
Oh, where is this free one,
whom I've not shielded,
who in brave defiance
is dearest to me?

How can I create one,
who, not through me,
but by himself
can achieve my will?
Oh godly distress!
Sorrowful shame!
With loathing
I can find but myself
in all my hand has created!
This free one whom I have longed for,
this free one can never be found;
for I have no power to make him;
vassals are all I create.

Brünnhilde

- [15] But the Wälsung, Siegmund,
is he not free?

Wotan

Wild and free
was our life together;
he learned to hate the gods,
I urged his heart to rebel.
Now when the gods would kill him,
all that he has is a sword;
(emphatic and bitter)
and yet that sword
was given by a god.
How could I hope
to win by deception?
The lie was revealed
when Fricka arrived:
I stood ashamed;

I had no reply!
So to her I had to surrender.

Brünnhilde

- [16] Then Siegmund must fall in his fight?

Wotan

I laid hands on Alberich's ring,
grasped in greed at the gold.
The curse which I fled
has fastened on me.
Though I love him, I must forsake him;
murder the son I love so;
basely betray him,
when he trusts!
*(Wotan's demeanour changes from the
expression of the most terrible suffering to that
of despair.)*
Fade from my sight,
honour and fame,
glorious godhead's
glittering shame!
And fall in ruins,
all I have raised!
I leave all my work;
but one thing I desire:
that ending,
the ending!
(He pauses in thought.)
And to that ending
works Alberich!
Now I grasp
all the secret sense

that filled the words of the Wala:
'When the fearful foe of love
gains in hatred a son,
the gods may know
their doom is near.'
From Nibelheim
the tidings have come
that the dwarf has forced a woman;
his gold bought her embrace;
and she will bear
Alberich's son;
the seed of spite
stirs in her womb;
this wonder befell
the loveless Niblung;
while I, who loved so truly,
my free son I never could win.
(rising up in bitter wrath)
[17] I give you my blessing,
Nibelung son!
Let all that irks me
be yours to inherit;
in Walhall's glorious halls
achieve your unhallowed desires!

Brünnhilde *(alarmed)*

Oh speak, father,
and tell me my task.

Wotan *(bitterly)*

Fight boldly for Fricka,
guardian of wedlock's vow!
(drily)

The choice she made,
that choice must be mine:
my own desires are but useless.
Since my free son I cannot fashion,
be Fricka's champion,
fight for her slave!

Brünnhilde

¹⁸ No, have mercy,
take back your word!
You love Siegmund;
let your love
command me: fight for the Walsung!

Wotan

You must conquer Siegmund,
and Hunding must win in the fight!
Guard yourself well,
be stern and strong;
bring all your boldness
and force to the fight:
a strong sword
has Siegmund;
he'll not easily yield!

Brünnhilde

Him you have always
taught me to love;
for his noble courage
and valour you love him;
now you ask me to kill him,
then I shall refuse!

Wotan

Rebellious child!
Do as I say!
What are you but the obedient,
blind slave of my will?
When I told my sorrows,
sank I so low,
that I'm scorned, defied
by the child whom I raised?
Daughter, know you my wrath?
Your soul would be killed
if you confronted
that fierce, furious rage!
Within my bosom
anger is hid,
that could lay to waste
all of a world –
that world I once used to love:
woe to him whom it strikes!
He would pay for his pride!
I warn you, then,
rouse not my wrath!
But swiftly do my command.
Siegmund's fated!
That is the Valkyrie's work!

*(He storms away, and quickly disappears among the
crags to the left.)*

COMPACT DISC THREE

Brünnhilde (*stands for a long time, shocked and
stunned*)

¹ So I obey his command;
such rage I've never seen before.
*(She stoops down sadly, and takes up her weapons,
with which she arms herself again.)*
Shield, spear
seem to weigh me down!
In a joyful fight
I found they were light!
This hateful task
fills my heart with fear.
(She gazes thoughtfully before her, and sighs.)
Woe, my Walsung!
In deepest sorrow
this true one must falsely betray you!

(She turns slowly towards the back.)

Scene 3

*Arrived at the rocky pass, Brünnhilde, looking into
the gorge, perceives Siegmund and Sieglinde; she
watches their approach for a moment and then goes
into the cave to her horse, disappearing from the
audience. Siegmund and Sieglinde appear on the
pass. Sieglinde comes hastily forwards; Siegmund
tries to restrain her.*

Siegmund

² Rest for a while;
stay by my side!

Sieglinde

Further! Further!

Siegmund (*embraces her with gentle force*)

No further now!
(He clasps her firmly to him.)
Oh trust me, Sieglinde mine!
In bliss I embraced you,
then you escaped;
with frenzied haste
fled from my arms,
so fast I could scarce pursue;
through wood and field,
over rock and stone,
speechless, silent,
flying ahead,
I called you all in vain!
Now you must rest:
speak but a word,
ending this silent dread!
See, your brother
shelters his bride:
Siegmund guards you from harm!

*(Without her noticing, he has drawn her to the
rock seat.)*
Sieglinde (*gazes with growing rapture into
Siegmund's eyes, then throws her arms passionately
round his neck and so remains. Then she starts up
in sudden terror.*)
³ Away! Away!
Fly from the cursed one!
Unholy

this form that you clasp;
 disgraced, dishonoured,
 dead is my heart.
 Cast me from you,
 fling me aside!
 Let winds waft her away,
 who, graceless, was held in your arms!
 When in your loving embrace,
 when blissful delight I found,
 you gave me all of your heart,
 and all my love was awaked.

In that holy enchantment,
 sweetest rapture,
 when all my soul
 and senses were won,
 loathing and horror
 for shameful dishonour
 struck with dismay
 this traitorous woman,

who once belonged to a man
 and loveless lay in his arms!

Fly from the cursed one,
 far let her flee!
 Dishonoured am I,
 bereft of grace:
 the purest hero
 I must abandon,
 for how can this guilty wife
 dare to love him.

Shame I'd bring to my brother,
 shame to him I have loved!

Sigmund

But this shame you have felt,
 this shame shall be paid by blood!

So flee you no further;
 Hunding shall find us;
 here I shall defeat him:
 with Notung
 I shall pierce his heart;
 vengeance then you will have won!

Sieglinde (*starts up and listens*)

Hark! The horn call!
 Do you not hear?
 All around,
 cries of revenge,
 from wood and dale,
 ring in my ears.
 Hunding has wakened
 from heavy sleep!
 Hunters, I hear them;
 all have assembled:
 hard on the trail,
 dogs are howling;
 they lead the avengers;
 they will kill us for breaking a vow!
 (*As if mad, she stares before her.*)

[4] Where are you, Sigmund?
 Are you still here?
 bravest of lovers,
 loving brother!
 With your glorious eyes

for the last time behold me:
 do not refuse
 one accursed woman's kiss!
 (*She throws herself sobbing on his breast, then starts
 up again in terror.*)

Hear! Again!
 That is Hunding's horn!
 And the huntsmen
 come to take your life;
 no sword helps you
 against the hounds;
 let it go, Sigmund!
 Sigmund, where are you?
 Ah there! I see you now!
 Fearful the sight!
 Dogs have fastened
 their teeth in your flesh;
 they take no heed
 of your noble glance;
 all around you leaping
 to tear at your throat –
 you fall –
 in splinters the shining sword!
 The ash is down –
 that tree destroyed!
 Brother! My brother!
 Sigmund – ha! –

(*She sinks senseless into Sigmund's arms.*)

Sigmund
 Sister! Beloved!

(*He listens to her breathing and makes sure that
 she is still alive. He lets her slide downwards so
 that, as he himself sinks into a sitting posture, her
 head rests on his lap. In this position they both
 remain until the end of the following scene. A long
 silence, during which Siegmund bends over
 Sieglinde with tender care, and presses a long kiss
 on her brow.*)

Scene 4

*Brünnhilde, leading her horse by the bridle, comes
 out of the cave and advances slowly and solemnly
 forwards. She pauses and observes Sigmund from a
 distance. She again slowly advances. She stops,
 somewhat nearer. She carries her shield and spear
 in one hand, resting the other on her horse's neck,
 and thus she gravely regards Sigmund.*

Brünnhilde

[5] Sigmund!
 Look at me!
 I come
 to call you hence.

Sigmund (*raises his eyes to her*)

Who are you, say,
 who so stern and beautiful appear?

Brünnhilde

Those doomed to death
 alone can see me;
 who meets my gaze

must turn from the light of life.
I appear in the fight
to death-doomed heroes:
those whom I choose
have no choice but to die!

Sigmund (*looks long, firmly, and searchingly into her eyes, then bows his head in thought, and at length turns resolutely to her again*)

6 And if I come,
tell me, where will you lead me?

Brünnhilde

To Wotan
who's marked you for his.
He commands:
to Walhall come with me.

Sigmund

To Walhall's hall?
Does Wotan rule there alone?

Brünnhilde

The fallen heroes
dwell there, too;
they'll welcome you
and greet you to their hall.

Sigmund

And shall I find there
Wälse, my noble father?

Brünnhilde

Your father waits there
to greet his son!

Sigmund

Are there in Walhall,
women as well?

Brünnhilde

Fair maidens
wait on you there.
Wotan's daughter,
she will bring you the cup!

Sigmund

Fair goddess
with awe I salute you
as Wotan's child;
but one thing tell me, immortal!

This brother is blessed
by a bride and sister;
embraces Sigmund
Sieglind as well?

Brünnhilde

Here on earth
you have to leave her:
Sieglinde sees
Sigmund no more.

Sigmund (*bends softly over Sieglinde, kisses her gently on the brow, and again turns calmly to Brünnhilde*)

7 Then greet for me Walhall,
greet for me Wotan,
greet for me Wälse
and all the heroes;
greet all those fair
and lovely maidens.
To Walhall I will not go!

Brünnhilde

You've gazed on the Valkyrie's
searing glance,
and now you have no choice.

Sigmund

Where Sieglinde lives
in joy or pain:
there must Sigmund live with her:
I've gazed on your glance;
I do not fear you:
you cannot force me to go!

Brünnhilde

I cannot force,
not while you live;
but death can force you to go!
I come to tell you
death is near.

Sigmund

And who is the man
who'll take my life?

Brünnhilde

Hunding kills you today.

Sigmund

Do you think I'm threatened
by Hunding's anger?
If you lurk here,
lusting for blood,
choose that man as your prey:
I know he will fall in the fight!

Brünnhilde (*shaking her head*)

You, Wälsung,
hear what I say:
you have been marked for death.

Sigmund

I have a sword!
My father's sword
will serve me well:
I defy your threats with the sword!

Brünnhilde (*with solemn emphasis*)

Gift of the god
who's ordered your death;
and he takes his spell from the sword!

Sigmund (*vehemently*)

Still! You'll waken
my sister from sleep!
(*He bends tenderly, in an outburst of grief, over Sieglinde.*)

8 Woe! Woe!
Sister and bride,
you saddest of all trusting women!
Though the world rises
against you in arms,
yet I, whom alone you can trust,
yet I, who have brought you this shame,
am not allowed
to shield you from danger,
I'm told I must fall in the fight!
Then shame on him
who bestowed the sword,
the sword that will bring my shame!

Yet though I die here,
I'll not go to Walhall:
hell may hold me instead!

(He bends low over Sieglinde.)

Brünnhilde *(shocked)*

So you would sacrifice
joy everlasting?

(slowly and hesitatingly)

Is she all
in the world to you
that maid who lies there
limp and afraid in your arms?
You'd leave Walhall for her?

Sigmund *(looking up at her bitterly)*

So young and fair
you seem to my eyes;
but how cold and hard
I know in my heart!
You came to mock me;
now leave me alone,
you cruel, unfearing maid!
But if it delights you
to see my woe,
you're free to feed on my pain;
may my grief gladden
your envious heart;
but of Walhall's loveless pleasure
you need tell me no more!

Brünnhilde

I see the distress
and grief in your heart,
I feel all your suffering,
share in your pain!
Sigmund, I'll care for your wife;
I'll shield her safely from harm.

Sigmund

So long as she lives
I'll allow no other to touch her:
if I have to die,
I will kill her first while she sleeps

Brünnhilde *(with increasing emotion)*

Walsung! Madman!
Hear my advice!
I'll care for your wife;
I will shield her safely;
a son shall be born from your love.

Sigmund *(drawing his sword)*

This sword
which a traitor bestowed on the true;
this sword
that fails me when faced with a fight:
if it should fail on my foe,
I'll use it instead on my friend!
(He aims the sword at Sieglinde.)

⁹ Two lives
now lie in your power;
take them, Notung,
glittering steel!
Two with a single stroke!

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Brünnhilde *(in a passionate outburst of sympathy)*

Oh stay, Walsung!
Hear what I say!
Sieglinde lives then –
and Sigmund lives by her side!
The choice is mine;
and fate is altered;
you, Sigmund,
take my blessing, and win!
(Horn-calls resound in the far distance.)
Hear the call!
Prepare for your fight!
Trust in the sword
and strike at his heart.

Your sword shall be true,
and the Valkyrie true as well!
Farewell, Sigmund,
hero I love!

I will meet you there in the battle!

(She rushes away, and disappears with her horse into a ravine on the right. Sigmund looks after her with joy and exultation. The stage has gradually darkened; heavy stormclouds sink down in the background, gradually veiling the cliffs, ravine and rocky pass completely from view.)

Scene 5

Sigmund *(bending over Sieglinde, listening to her breathing)*

¹⁰ Charms of sleep
are sent to still

my sister's grief and pain.
Did the Valkyrie cast this spell
and lull my beloved to sleep,
so that no sound of our fight
should frighten this suffering maid?

Lifeless seems she,
though still alive;
her sorrow is eased;
she smiles in her sleep.
So peacefully sleep
till the fight is fought;
then wake when I have won!

(He lays her gently on the rocky seat and kisses her forehead in farewell. He hears Hunding's horn-call, and starts up resolutely.)

¹¹ I hear your call;
hear and depart;
all you deserve
comes to you.

Notung pays all my debt!

(He draws his sword, hastens to the background and, on reaching the pass, disappears in the dark stormcloud, from which a flash of lightning immediately breaks.)

Sieglinde *(begins to move restlessly in her dreams)*

Why doesn't father return?
With the boy he's still in the woods.
Mother! Mother!
I feel afraid;
they seem unfriendly –
who are the strangers?

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Smokey darkness –
smouldering fires –
now they are flaring,
flaming around –
they burn the house –
Oh help me, brother!
Siegmund! Siegmund!
(She leaps up. Violent thunder and lightning)
Siegmund! Ah!

(She stares about her in terror; nearly the whole stage is covered with black thunderclouds, the lightning and thunder continue. Hunding's horn-call sounds near.)

Hunding's Voice *(in the background, from the pass)*

¹² Wehwal! Wehwal!
Stand there and fight,
else with my hounds will I hunt you.

Siegmund's Voice *(from farther off in the ravine)*

Then show yourself;
I've come in search of you!
Stand and let me face you!

Sieglinde *(listening in fearful agitation)*

Hunding! Siegmund!
Could I but see them!

Hunding

Come here, you treacherous lover!
Fricka claims you as prize.

Siegmund *(now likewise from the pass)*

Do you think that I'm weaponless,
boasting fool?
Don't call on Fricka,
but fight your own fight;
no help from Fricka today!
For see, in your house
I drew from the tree
the strongest, sharpest of swords,
and its sharpness strikes at your life!

(A flash of lightning illumines the pass for a moment, and Hunding and Siegmund are seen fighting there.)

Sieglinde *(with her utmost force)*

Stop the fight, you madmen!
Murder me first!

(She rushes towards the pass, but suddenly, from above the combatants, on the right, a flash breaks forth so vividly that she staggers aside as if blinded. In the blaze of light Brünnhilde appears, hovering over Siegmund and protecting him with her shield.)

Brünnhilde

Strike him, Siegmund!
Trust in the sword!

(Just as Siegmund aims a deadly blow at Hunding, a glowing red light breaks from the left through the cloud, in which Wotan appears, standing over Hunding, holding his spear diagonally out at Siegmund.)

Wotan

Away from the spear!
I shatter the sword!

(Brünnhilde, with her spear, recoils in terror before Wotan. Siegmund's sword shatters on the outstretched spear. Hunding plunges his spear into the unarmed man's breast. Siegmund falls dead to the ground: Sieglinde, who has heard his death-sigh, falls with a cry, as if lifeless, to the ground. As Siegmund falls, the glowing lights on either side disappear at once; a cloud of thick darkness rolls forward; in it, Brünnhilde is indistinctly seen, as she turns in haste to Sieglinde.)

Brünnhilde

To horse! Come, let me save you!

(She lifts Sieglinde quickly on to her horse, which is standing near the side gorge, and immediately disappears with her. At this moment the clouds part in the middle, so that Hunding, who had just drawn his spear from the fallen Siegmund's breast, is clearly seen. Wotan, surrounded by clouds, stands on a rock behind him, leaning on his spear and gazing sorrowfully at Siegmund's corpse.)

Wotan *(to Hunding)*

Go hence, slave!
Kneel before Fricka:
tell her that Wotan's spear
avenged the shame she felt.
Go! Go!

(At the contemptuous wave of his hand, Hunding falls dead to the ground. Wotan, suddenly breaking out in terrible rage)

But Brünnhilde!
Where is the guilty one?
Fearful is the fate
I'll pronounce
when she is caught in her flight!

(He disappears in thunder and lightning. The curtain falls rapidly.)

COMPACT DISC FOUR

Act III

On the summit of a rocky mountain

On the right, a pinewood bounds the stage. On the left, the entrance to a cave which looks like a natural room; above it, the rock rises to its highest point. At the back the view is entirely open; rocks of various heights border a precipice, which, it is to be assumed, falls steeply to the background. Occasional cloudbanks fly past the mountain peak, as if driven by storm. Gerhilde, Ortlinde, Waltraute and Schwertleite have assembled on the peak, by and above the cave: they are in full armour.

Scene 1

Gerhilde *(on the highest point, calling towards the background, where a thick cloud is passing)*

¹ Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!
Hiaha! Hiaha!

Helmwige! Here!
Come here with your horse!

Helmwige's Voice (*in the background*)
Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!
Hiaha!

(A flash of lightning breaks through the cloud; in its light, a Valkyrie on horseback becomes visible; on her saddle hangs a slain warrior. The apparition comes closer, moving from left to right past the rocky ridge.)

Gerhilde, Waltraute, Schwertleite (*calling to the newcomer*)
Hiaha! Hiaha!

(The cloud with the apparition has disappeared to the right, behind the wood.)

Ortlinde (*calling into the wood*)
Now fasten your chestnut
next to my grey;
she will be glad
to graze by your stallion.

Waltraute (*calling into the wood*)
Who hangs from your saddle?

Helmwige (*coming from the wood*)
Sintolt the Hegeling!

Swertleite
Far from the grey
then fasten your stallion;

Ortlinde's mare
carries Wittig the Irming!

Gerhilde (*has come down lower*)
Implacable foes
were Sintolt and Wittig!

Ortlinde (*leaps up*)
Hiaha! Your stallion
is biting my mare!

(She runs into the wood; Gerhilde, Helmwige and Schwertleite break into laughter.)

Gerhilde
The warriors' war
has spread to the horses!

Helmwige (*calling back into the wood*)
Quiet, Bruno!
Battle is over.

Waltraute (*on the highest point, where she has taken over from Gerhilde as watcher, calls to the right side of the background*)
Hoioho! Hoioho!
Siegrune, here!
What kept you so long?

(She listens to the right.)

Siegrune's Voice (*from the right side of the background*)
Work to do!
Have the others arrived?

Swertleite and Waltraute (*calling to the right of the background*)
Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!
Hiaha!

Gerhilde
Hiaha!

(Their gestures, as well as a bright glow behind the wood, show that Siegrune has just arrived there. From the distance below, two voices are heard at once.)

Grimgerde and Rossweisse (*left, in the background*)
Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!
Hiaha!

Waltraute
Grimgerde and Rossweisse!

Gerhilde
They're riding abreast.

(In a cloudbank lit by lightning, moving past from the left, Grimgerde and Rossweisse appear, similarly on horseback, each with a dead warrior on her saddle. Helmwige, Ortlinde and Siegrune come from the wood and greet the newcomers from the rocky ridge.)

Helmwige, Ortlinde and Siegrune
We greet the travellers!
Rossweiss and Grimgerde!

Rossweisse and Grimgerde's Voices
Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!
Hiaha!

(The apparition disappears behind the wood.)

The Other Six Valkyries
Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!
Hiaha! Hiaha!

Gerhilde (*calling into the wood*)
Now tether your horses
to graze and rest!

Ortlinde (*also calling into the wood*)
See that the mares are
far from the stallions,
until our heroes'
hate has been calmed!

(The Valkyries laugh.)

Helmwige (*while the others laugh*)
My horse has paid
for the heroes' anger!

(renewed laughter)

Rossweisse and Grimgerde (*coming from the wood*)
Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!

The Other Six Valkyries
Be welcome! Be welcome!

Swertleite
Did you hunt as a pair?

Grimgerde

We left separately,
and met on our way.

Rossweiße

If we are all assembled,
then wait no longer:
to Walhall hurry away;
Wotan's expecting us there.

Helmwige

Eight now are we:
one is to come.

Gerhilde

It's that swarthy Walsung
keeping our Brünnhild.

Waltraute

Then we must wait
until she is here:
Brünnhild is father's
favourite child,
and if we leave her behind...

Siegrune (*watching from the look-out point*)

Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!
She's here! She's here!
In furious haste
see Brünnhilde rides.

The Eight Valkyries (*all hasten to the look-out*)

Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!
Brünnhilde! Hi!

(*They watch with growing astonishment.*)

Waltraute

To the pinewood
she is driving her horse.

Grimgerde

And proud Grane
is panting hard!

Rossweiße

She's forced him to fly
faster than ever!

Ortlinde

Who's that on her saddle?

Helmwige

That is no man!

Siegrune

It's a girl, surely.

Gerhilde

And where was she found?

Schwertleite

She gives no greeting
to her sisters!

Waltraute (*calling down*)

Hiaha! Brünnhilde!
Answer our call!

Ortlinde

Help our sister
to leave the saddle!

Helmwige, Gerhilde, Siegrune and Rossweiße

Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!

**Ortlinde, Waltraute, Grimgerde and
Schwertleite**

Hiaha!

(*Gerhilde and Schwertleite run into the wood.
Siegrune and Rossweiße follow them.*)

Waltraute (*looking into the wood*)

And powerful Grane
has fallen!

Grimgerde

While our sister lifts
the maid to the ground!

**Ortlinde, Waltraute, Grimgerde and
Schwertleite**

Sister, sister!
What have you done?

(*All the Valkyries return to the stage; with them
comes Brünnhilde, supporting and leading
Sieglinde.*)

Brünnhilde (*breathless*)

² Shield me and help
in highest need!

The Eight Valkyries

From where have you come
in furious haste?
You ride like one who is pursued!

Brünnhilde

I flee for the first time;
I am pursued;
Wotan is hunting me!

The Eight Valkyries (*violently alarmed*)

What are you saying?
Speak to us! What?
Is Wotan hunting you?
Why do you flee?

Brünnhilde (*turns anxiously to look around, and
then turns back*)

O sisters, run
to the mountain summit!
Look to the northward,
if Wotan is near!

(*Ortlinde and Waltraute run to the rocky peak to
keep a look-out.*)

Quick! What can you see?

Ortlinde

A thunderstorm
nears from northward.

Waltraute

Threatening clouds
mass themselves there!

The Other Six Valkyries

Wotan is riding
his sacred horse!

Brünnhilde

The wild pursuer
who hunts me in wrath,
he comes, he comes from northward.
Save me, sisters!
Rescue this maid!

Six Valkyries (*all but Ortlinde and Waltraute*)

But who is this woman?

Brünnhilde

³ Hear while I tell you.
Sieglinde is she,
Sigmund's sister and bride,
one of the Wälsungs whom
Wotan swears to destroy.
Her brother's death
was Brünnhilde's task,
so Wotan decreed.
But Sigmund found my help
in his fight;
Wotan in wrath
then shattered the sword with his spear:
Sigmund fell,
but I fled
here with the wife,
and to save her
brought her to you.
Will you help us both,
and save us from the storm that is near?

Six Valkyries (*not Ortlinde and Waltraute*)

What madness moved you
to do this deed?

Sister! Brünnhilde! Sister!
Woe! O rebellious
Brünnhilde,
how could you break his command!

Waltraute (*on the look-out*)

Dark those stormclouds
that fly from the north.

Ortlinde (*also on the look-out*)

Wotan steers
his horse through the storm.

Rossweisse, Grimgerde and Schwertleite

Wild neighs
I hear from his horse –

Helmwige, Gerhilde and Siegrune

– snorts and flies on its way!

Brünnhilde

Woe to this woman
when Wotan arrives;
for she is a Wälsung,
doomed to destruction!
So lend me the fastest
horse that you have,
to save the maid from his wrath!

Siegrune

So you would make us
share in your crime?

Brünnhilde

Rossweisse, sister,
let me have your stallion!

Rossweisse

From father, my horse
refuses to fly.

Brünnhilde

Helmwige, hear me!

Helmwige

I hear only Wotan.

Brünnhilde

Grimgerde! Gerhilde!
Grant me your horse!
Schwertleite! Siegrune!
See my dismay!
Oh, now be true,
as I was to you:
rescue this sorrowing maid!

Sieglinde (*who has been gazing gloomily and coldly ahead, gives a start and makes a gesture of rejection as Brünnhilde impulsively embraces her, as if to protect her*)

⁴ Pray suffer no sorrow for me;
all I long for is death!
O warrior maid,
who asked you to save me?
I might have died
in the field with him;
for perhaps the weapon

that dealt his death,
that killed my Sigmund,
had killed me, too.
Far from Sigmund,
Sigmund, from you!
Now only my death
can unite us!
So I shall curse
this care that has saved me
unless you quickly do as I ask you:
strike with your sword in my heart!

Brünnhilde

Live still, O maid;
know that love commands you!
Rescue the son
who will grow from your love:
a Wälsung lives in your womb!

Sieglinde (*starts in fear at first; then her face lights up with sublime joy*)

Rescue me, brave one!
Rescue my child!
Save me, you maidens,
and shelter my son!

(*An ever-darkening tempest rises in the background; the thunder draws closer.*)

Waltraute (*on the look-out*)

The storm's drawing near!

Ortlinde (*on the look-out*)

Fly if you fear it!

The Other Six Valkyries

Off with the woman!
 Danger is near!
 The Valkyries dare not
 give her their aid.

Sieglinde (*on her knees to Brünnhilde*)

Rescue me, maid!
 Rescue a mother!

Brünnhilde (*raises Sieglinde with sudden resolution*)

Then fly from him swiftly,
 and fly by yourself!
 I will stay for the storm;
 I will brave Wotan's anger;
 and I'll draw on myself
 his revenge,
 so that you can escape from his rage.

Sieglinde

Ah, where can I escape him?

Brünnhilde

Which of you, sisters,
 journeyed to eastward?

Siegrune

A gloomy forest
 lies to the east,
 where the Nibelung hoard
 was brought by Fafner, the giant.

Schwertleite

There he remains,
 changed to a dragon,
 and in a cave
 he broods over Alberich's ring.

Grimgerde

It is not the place
 for a helpless maid.

Brünnhilde

And yet, from Wotan's wrath,
 there, I know, she'd be safe:
 for father fears it;
 he never goes near.

Waltraute (*on the look-out*)

Angry Wotan
 rides to the rock!

Six Valkyries

Brünnhilde, hear
 his approach in the storm!

Brünnhilde (*showing Sieglinde the direction*)

5 Fly him swiftly,
 away to the east!
 Bold in defiance,
 endure every ill,
 hunger and thirst,
 thorns and the stones;
 laugh at the pain
 and grief that will come!
 But one thing know,
 and guard it ever:

the noblest hero of all,
 he shall be born,
 O maid, from your womb!

(*She draws the pieces of Siegmund's sword from beneath her breastplate and gives them to Sieglinde.*)

For him you must guard
 these broken pieces
 of the sword his father
 let fall when it failed him;
 for he shall forge
 the sword once more.

His name, now learn it from me:
 Siegfried – victorious and free!

Sieglinde (*deeply stirred*)

6 O radiant wonder!
 Glorious maid!
 Your words have brought me
 comfort and calm!
 This son of Siegmund,
 Oh! We shall save him:
 may my son return
 to thank you himself!
 Fare you well!

Be blessed by Sieglinde's woe!

(*She hastens away in the right foreground. Black thunderclouds surround the height; a fearful storm breaks out at the back, with a fiery glare growing brighter on the right.*)

Wotan's Voice

7 Stay, Brünnhild!

(*Brünnhilde, after watching Sieglinde's departure for a while, turns to the background, looks into the pinewood, and then comes forward again in fear.*)

Ortlinde and Waltraute (*descending from the look-out*)

They've reached the mountain,
 horse and rider!

All Eight Valkyries

Woe, Brünnhild!
 Vengeance is here!

Brünnhilde

O sisters, help!
 I feel afraid!
 His rage will crush me
 unless you shield me from harm.

The Eight Valkyries (*retreat in fear up the rocky height, drawing Brünnhilde with them*)

Come here, you lost one!
 Keep out of sight!
 Hide among us here;
 be still when he calls!

(*They hide Brünnhilde in their midst and look anxiously at the pinewood, now lit by a brilliant fiery glow, while the background has become quite dark.*)

Woe!
 Wotan swings himself
 to the ground!
 Here he comes
 in furious haste!

Scene 2

Wotan comes from the pinewood in a towering rage and strides to the group of Valkyries on the height, looking around for Brünnhilde.

Wotan

- 8 Where is Brünnhild?
Where is the guilty one?
What, are you daring
to hide her from me?

The Eight Valkyries

Fearful your cry of anger!
Oh father, pity your daughters;
have we awakened
your terrible rage?

Wotan

Ha, so you mock me?
Insolent daughters!
I know Brünnhilde
there in your midst.
Leave her alone,
for she is an outcast,
and all her virtue
cast away!

Rossweiße

She came here to escape you.

The Eight Valkyries

And she asked us for our help!
In fear and anguish
fled from your rage.

For our trembling sister
now we implore:
let the angry storm now be calm.
Father, have mercy on her,
calm your dreadful rage!

Wotan

- 9 Weak-spirited,
womanish brood!
Such whining ways
you learnt not from me!
I tempered your frames
to fight in the field,
made you hard-hearted
and stern and strong:
must I hear you all whine and wail
when I punish a treacherous crime?
I'll tell you, whimperers,
what she has done,
this shameless sister
who has prompted your tears:
Brünnhilde alone
knew all my innermost secrets;
Brünnhilde alone
saw to the depths of my spirit!
Through her
all my desires took shape in the field:
yet she has broken
the bond of our love,
and, faithless,
she has defied my desire;
my sacred command
openly scorned;

against me she lifted the spear
that by Wotan's will she bore!

Hear me, Brünnhilde!
You whom I fashioned,
you who owe
all that you are,
name, even life, to me!

Say, do you hear me accuse you
and hide yourself, you coward,
to try to escape your doom?

Brünnhilde (steps out from the crowd of Valkyries and advances with humble yet resolute steps down the rock, close to Wotan)

- 10 Here am I, father;
now tell me my sentence!

Wotan

I sentence you not:
you have brought your doom on yourself.
My will alone
awoke you to life,
and against that will you have worked.
By my commandment
alone could you act,
and against me you have commanded.
Brünnhild
knew my wish,
and against that wish she rebelled.
Brünnhild
bore my shield,
and against me my shield was borne.

Brünnhilde
could choose my fate,
and she chose that fate was against me.
Once I said to her:
rouse my men,
and she roused a hero against me.
Though once you were
all that I made you,
what you become
you choose for yourself!
No more child of my will;
Valkyrie are you no longer;
henceforth remain
what you chose to be!

Brünnhilde (violently terrified)

So you cast me off?
Is that what you mean?

Wotan

- 11 No more will you ride from Walhall:
no more shall you choose
warriors who fall;
nor bring me those warriors
to guard my hall;
and in Walhall, when we are feasting,
no more shall you fill
my drink-horn for me;
no more may I kiss
the mouth of my child;
the host of the gods
no more shall know you;

cast for ever
 from the clan of the gods.
 You broke the bond of our love,
 and from my sight, henceforth, Brünnhild is
 [banned!

The Eight Valkyries (*in consternation leave their former position, coming somewhat lower down the rock*)

Horror! Woe!
 Sister, Oh sister!

Brünnhilde

Can you deprive me
 of all you gave?

Wotan

He who comes robs you of all!
 For here on the peak,
 here you must lie;
 defenceless in sleep,
 here you will stay;
 and you'll belong to the man
 who first finds you and wakes you from rest.

The Eight Valkyries (*descend completely from the rocky height, in great consternation, and in anxious groups surround Brünnhilde, who lies half-kneeling before Wotan*)

Ah no, father!
 Recall the curse!
 Shall our sister bend
 to the will of a man?

Endless disgrace!
 Stern-hearted God!
 Ah, spare her,
 spare her the shame!
 For our sister's shame on us then would fall!

Wotan

¹² Did you not hear
 what I decreed?
 That from your band
 your treacherous sister is banished?
 No more shall she ride
 through the clouds with her sisters to battle;
 the flower of the beauty
 will fade and die;
 a husband will gain
 all her womanly grace;
 that masterly husband
 will make her obey;
 she'll sit and spin by the fire,
 and the world will deride her fate!
(Brünnhilde sinks with a cry to the ground; the Valkyries, in great agitation, shrink in horror from her side.)

Are you afraid?
 Then flee from the lost one!
 Leave her alone,
 and never return!
 If one of you
 comes here to console here,
 if she should try
 to defy my command,

that rash one shares in her fate:
 so now from this peak be gone!
 Off with you now!
 Do not go near her!
 Ride away from the mountain,
 or the same fate shall be yours!

The Eight Valkyries

Woe! Woe!

(They separate with loud cries of distress and fly in haste into the wood. Black clouds gather on the cliffs; a wild tumult is heard in the wood. A vivid flash of lightning breaks through the clouds; in it are seen the Valkyries, close-grouped, their bridles hanging loose, riding wildly away. The storm soon subsides; the thunderclouds gradually disperse. During the following scene, in increasingly calm weather, twilight falls, and finally night.)

Scene 3

Wotan and Brünnhilde, who still lies at his feet, are left alone. A long solemn silence: their positions remain unchanged.

Brünnhilde (*begins slowly to raise her head a little; beginning timidly and becoming more confident*)

¹³ Was it so shameful,
 what I have done,
 that you must punish my deed with endless shame?
 Was it disgraceful,
 what I have done;

do I deserve to be plunged in disgrace?
 Was my dishonour
 boundless and base,
 for that offence must my honour be lost?
(She raises herself gradually to a kneeling position.)
 Oh speak, father!
 Look in my eyes:
 silence your scorn,
 soften your wrath,
 explain to me
 all the grievous guilt
 that compels you, cruel and harsh,
 to abandon your true, loving child.

Wotan (*in unchanged attitude, gravely and gloomily*)

Ask what you did;
 your deed will tell you your guilt!

Brünnhilde

By your command
 only I fought.

Wotan

Did I command you
 to fight for the Wälzung?

Brünnhilde

That was your command,
 as master of fate.

Wotan

But that command
 you knew I later recalled!

Brünnhilde

When Fricka had made you
change your decision;
and when her words conquered your will,
you were false to yourself.

Wotan (*softly and bitterly*)

Yet you understood me fully;
I warned of my rage if you failed;
but no, you thought:
Wotan is weak!
If I had not reason to punish
you'd be unworthy of my rage.

Brünnhilde

¹⁴ I know so little,
but one thing I did know,
that the Walsung you loved.
I saw all your torment,
as you tried
to force yourself to forget this.
The other thing
was all you could see,
and the sight of that
tortured your heart:
that Siegmund could not be shielded.

Wotan

You knew it was so,
and yet you went to his help?

Brünnhilde (*beginning softly*)

Yes, because my eyes
saw but one thing alone,

one all-conquering fact
which you could not face;
you turned your back in your sorrow!

I who guard your back
when you fight in the field,
I saw that one thing
which you did not:
Siegmund I beheld.

Told him
you'd marked him for death;
I looked in his eyes then,
heard his reply;
and I shared that hero's
grief and distress,
hearing the call
of his brave lamentation –
love's holy yearning,
hopeless despair –
proud in defiance,
dauntless in grief!
In my ears it rang;
my eyes were dazzled;
my mind was troubled;
a new emotion stole through my heart.

Shy, astonished,
I stood ashamed.
How could I help him,
how could I save him?
Victory or death,
with Siegmund I'd share it!
One thought possessed me,
and I had no choice!

¹⁵ You, who this love
into my heart revealed,
when you inspired
the Walsung with your will,
you were not betrayed –
though I broke your command.

Wotan

So you would achieve
what I longed so dearly to do,
but which cruel fate
forbade me to achieve?
So you thought
that your love for me captured so lightly,
while burning woe
broke my heart in two,
and terrible grief
awoke my rage;
when, to save creation,
the springs of love
in my tortured heart I'd imprisoned?
Then, burning with anger,
I turned on myself,
from an anguished weakness
rising in frenzy,
yearning and raging,
I was inspired
and driven to fearful resolve:
in the wreck of my ruined world
my unending sorrow I'd bury:
while you lay lapped
in blissful delights,
filled with emotion's

rapturous joy;
you laughed, while drinking
the draught of love,
and I tasted the gall,
drained bitter sorrow and grief!

¹⁶ You indulged your love;
now let it lead you:
from me you have turned away.
So I must shun you;
no more may I share
with you my secret counsels;
henceforth our paths
are parted forever:
for, while life shall endure,
I, the god, shall no more behold you.

Brünnhilde

¹⁷ Unworthy of you
this foolish maid,
who, stunned by your counsel,
misunderstood,
when that one command
overruled all the rest:
to love him whom you had loved.
If I must lose you,
and you must leave me,
if we sever
the bonds that we tied,
then half your being
you have abandoned,
which once belonged to you only.
O god, forget not that!

That other self
 you must not dishonour;
 if you disgrace her,
 it falls on you:
 your fame then would be darkened,
 if I were scorned and despised!

Wotan

You chose in rapture
 the path of love:
 follow love's path,
 and obey your lord!

Brünnhilde

If I must go from Walhall,
 and play no more part in your actions,
 and take as my master
 some man to obey:
 be sure no coward
 makes me his prize;
 but see some hero
 wins me as bride!

Wotan

From Wotan you turned away;
 your conqueror he cannot choose.

Brünnhilde (*softly and confidently*)

¹⁸ You fathered a glorious race;
 that race cannot bring forth a coward:
 a hero will come, I know it;
 be born of Wälsung blood.

Wotan

Name not the Wälsungs to me!

You turned against me;
 I turned from them,
 and then it kills all the race.

Brünnhilde

She who'll turn from you
 rescues the race.
 Sieglinde bears
 the holiest fruit;
 in pain and grief
 such as no woman suffered,
 she will give birth
 to a Wälsung child.

Wotan

I'll offer no help –
 either to her
 or to any Wälsung child.

Brünnhilde

She still has the sword
 that you gave to Siegmund.

Wotan (*vehemently*)

And which I later broke again!

Seek not, O maid,
 to change my decision;
 await now your fate,
 as it must fall:

I cannot choose it for you!

But now I must go,
 far from this place;
 too long now I have delayed.

For as you turned from me,
 I turn from you;
 I cannot even
 ask what you wish:
 your sentence now
 I must see fulfilled.

Brünnhilde

What have you decreed
 that I must suffer?

Wotan

¹⁹ In long, deep sleep
 you shall be bound:
 the man who wakes you again,
 that man shall make you his wife!

Brünnhilde (*falls on her knees*)

If fetters of sleep
 come to bind me,
 and I must fall
 to the man who finds me,
 then one thing more you must grant me;
 in deepest anguish I pray!
 Oh, shelter my slumbers,
 protect me with terrors,
 let only one
 who is fearless and free,
 none but a hero
 find me here!

Wotan

Too much you are asking,
 too great a grace!

Brünnhilde (*embracing his knees*)

This one thing more
 you must grant me!
 Oh, kill me at once
 as I clasp your hand;
 destroy your dear one,
 condemn her to die,
 let her breast receive
 one blow from your spear;
 but ah! Cast not this shame,
 this cruel disgrace on her!
 (*with mild inspiration*)
 At your command
 a flame can be kindled
 a fiery guardian,
 girding the rock,
 to lick with its tongues,
 to tear with its teeth
 the craven who rashly ventures,
 who dares to approach near the rock!

Wotan (*overcome and deeply moved, turns eagerly towards Brünnhilde, raises her from her knees and gazes with emotion into her eyes*)

²⁰ Farewell, my valiant,
 glorious child!
 You were the holiest pride of my heart!
 Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!
 (*very passionately*)

Though I must leave you,
 and may no longer
 embrace you in greeting;

though you may no more
ride beside me,
nor bear my mead in Walhall;
though I abandon you
whom I love so,
the laughing delight of my eye:
a bridal fire
shall blaze to protect you,
as never has burned for a bride.
Threatening flames
shall flare from the rock;
the craven will fear it,
cringe from its fury;
the weak will flee
from Brünnhilde's rock!

For one alone wins you as bride,
one freer than I, the god!
*(Brünnhilde, moved and exalted, sinks on Wotan's
breast: he holds her in a long embrace. She throws
her head back again and, still embracing Wotan,
gazes with solemn rapture into his eyes.)*

²¹ These eyes so warm and so bright,
which, smiling, often I kissed,
when courage
I acclaimed with kisses,
while childish prattle
in heroes' praise
was heard to pour from your lips:
yes, these gleaming, radiant eyes,
which shone so bright in the storm,
while hopeless yearning
consumed my spirit,

and worldly pleasures
were all I longed for,
when fear fastened upon me –
their glorious fire
gladdens me now,
as I take this loving,
last farewell!
On somebody mortal
one day they'll shine:
but I, hapless immortal,
I must lose them for ever.
(He clasps her head in his hands.)

And sadly
the god must depart;
one kiss takes your godhead away!
*(He presses a long kiss on her eyes. She sinks back
with closed eyes, unconscious, in his arms. He gently
supports her to a low mossy bank, which is
overshadowed by a wide-branching fir-tree, and
lays her upon it. He looks upon her and closes her
helmet; his eye then rests on the form of the sleeper,
which he completely covers with the great steel
shield of the Valkyrie. He turns slowly away, then
turns round again with a sorrowful look. Then he
strides with solemn decision to the middle of the
stage, and directs the point of his spear towards a
massive rock.)*

²² Loge, hear!
Come at my call!
As when first you were found,
a fiery glow,
as when then you escaped me,

a wandering flicker;
once you were bound:
be so again!

Arise! Come, wavering Loge;
surround the rock, ring it with flame!
*(During the following he strikes the rock three times
with his spear.)*

Loge! Loge! Appear!
²³ *(A flash of flame leaps from the rock, and
gradually increases to an ever-brightening fiery
glow. Flickering flames break out. Bright, shooting
flames surround Wotan. With his spear, he directs*

*the sea of fire to encircle the rocks; it presently
spreads toward the background, where it encloses
the mountain in flames.)*

Only the man
who braves my spear-point
can pass through this sea of flame!

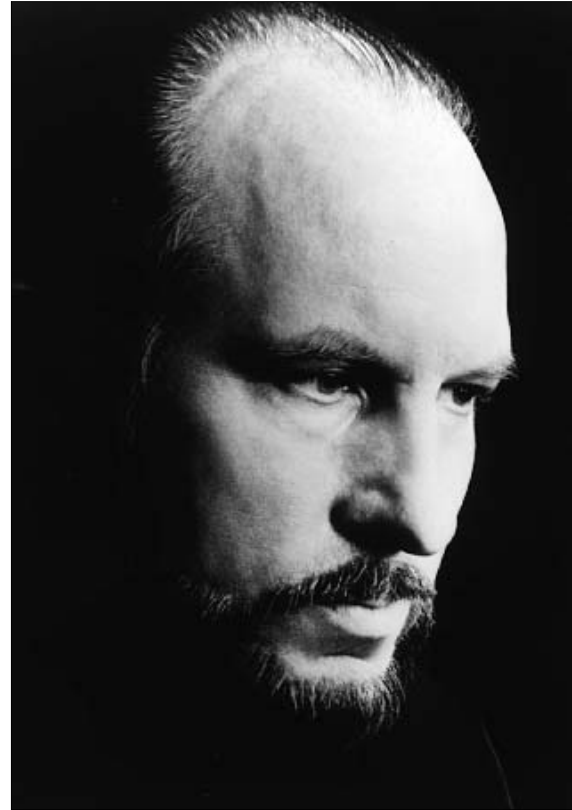
*(He stretches out the spear as if casting a spell.
Then he gazes sorrowfully back at Brünnhilde,
turns slowly to depart, and looks back once more
before he disappears through the fire. The curtain
falls.)*

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Alberto Remedios

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Norman Bailey

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Margaret Curphey

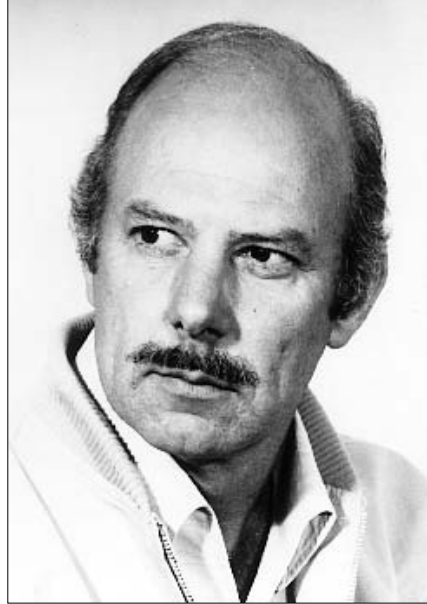


Rita Hunter

Zoe Dominic



Ann Howard



Clifford Grant

Nicky Johnston



Elizabeth Connell



Anne Evans

Christian Seiner



Sarah Walker



Anne Collins

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3000(2)



CHAN 3008(2)

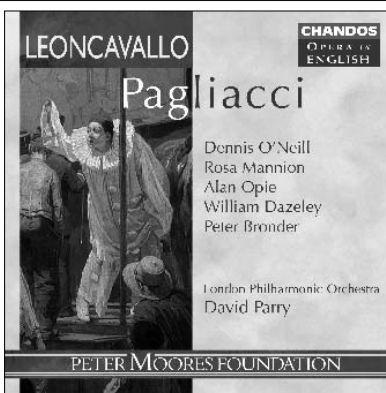


CHAN 3014(3)

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3004



CHAN 3003



CHAN 3029

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3017(2)

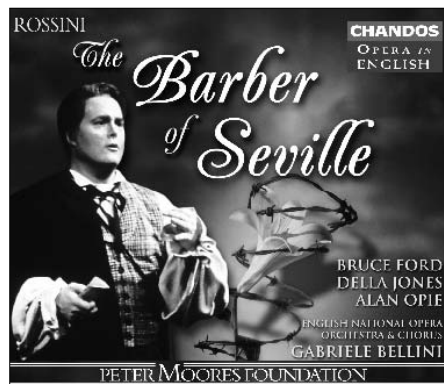


CHAN 3019(3)



CHAN 3023(2)

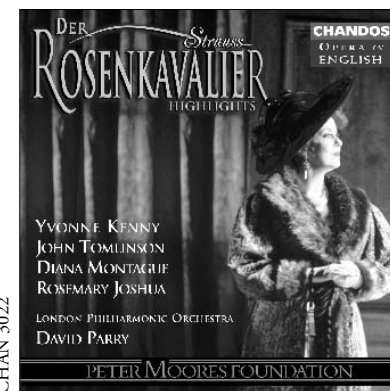
Opera in English on Chandos



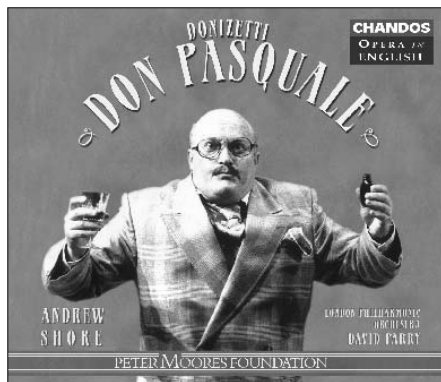
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CHAN 3007



CHAN 3022



CHAN 3011 (2)



CHAN 3027 (2)

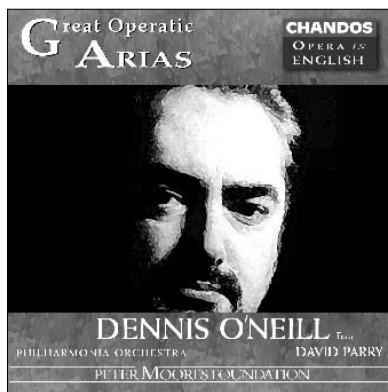


CHAN 3006

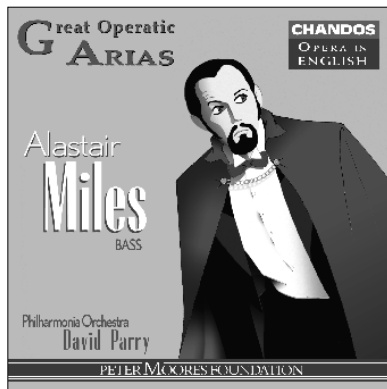
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Recording producer John Mordler

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Sieglinde	Margaret Curphey <i>soprano</i>
Brünnhilde	Rita Hunter <i>soprano</i>
Fricka	Ann Howard <i>mezzo-soprano</i>

Valkyries:

Gerhilde	Katie Clarke <i>soprano</i>
Ortlinde	Anne Conoley <i>soprano</i>
Waltraute	Elizabeth Connell <i>soprano</i>
Schwertleite	Helen Attfield <i>soprano</i>
Helmwige	Anne Evans <i>soprano</i>
Siegfrune	Sarah Walker <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Grimgerde	Shelagh Squires <i>mezzo-soprano</i>
Rosswisse	Anne Collins <i>contralto</i>

COMPACT DISC ONE
TT 73:06

COMPACT DISC TWO
TT 52:09

COMPACT DISC THREE
TT 47:57

COMPACT DISC FOUR
TT 76:02

(ADD)

English National Opera Orchestra
REGINALD GOODALL

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