



**CHANDOS**  
OPERA IN  
ENGLISH

SIEGFRIED

CHAN 3045(4)

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION



AKG

Richard Wagner

## Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

### Siegfried

#### Second Day of the Festival Play *The Ring of the Nibelung*

Music drama in three acts

Poem by Richard Wagner

English translation by Andrew Porter

Siegfried .....	Alberto Remedios <i>tenor</i>
Mime .....	Gregory Dempsey <i>tenor</i>
Wanderer.....	Norman Bailey <i>bass-baritone</i>
Alberich .....	Derek Hammond-Stroud <i>baritone</i>
Fafner .....	Clifford Grant <i>bass</i>
Erda .....	Anne Collins <i>contralto</i>
Brünnhilde.....	Rita Hunter <i>soprano</i>
Voice of the Woodbird.....	Maurine London <i>soprano</i>

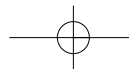
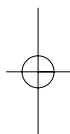
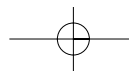
#### Sadler's Wells Opera Orchestra

Barry Tuckwell solo horn

Reginald Goodall

COMPACT DISC ONE

	Time	Page
<b>Act I</b>		
[1] Prelude	5:28	[p. 118]
<b>Scene 1</b>		
[2] 'Wearisome labour!' <i>Mime</i>	4:05	[p. 118]
[3] 'Hoiho! Hoiho!' <i>Siegfried, Mime</i>	2:08	[p. 119]
[4] 'Well, there are the pieces' <i>Siegfried, Mime</i>	2:42	[p. 120]
[5] 'A whimpering babe' <i>Mime</i>	1:35	[p. 121]
[6] 'Much you've taught to me, Mime' <i>Siegfried, Mime</i>	9:54	[p. 121]
[7] 'I found once in the wood' <i>Mime, Siegfried</i>	5:58	[p. 124]
[8] 'And now these fragments' <i>Siegfried, Mime</i>	2:00	[p. 126]
[9] 'He storms away!' <i>Mime</i>	1:53	[p. 126]
<b>Scene 2</b>		
[10] 'Hail there, worthy smith!' <i>Wanderer, Mime</i>	4:04	[p. 127]
[11] 'I sit by your hearth' <i>Wanderer, Mime</i>	12:07	[p. 128]

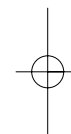


[12] 'What you needed to know' <i>Wanderer, Mime</i>	8:32	[p. 130]
[13] 'The fragments! The sword!' <i>Mime, Wanderer</i>	3:11	[p. 131]

**TT 63:40**

COMPACT DISC TWO

<b>Scene 3</b>		
[1] 'Accursed light!' <i>Mime</i>	1:15	[p. 132]
[2] 'Hey there! You idler!' <i>Siegfried, Mime</i>	4:14	[p. 133]
[3] 'Have you not felt within the woods' <i>Mime, Siegfried</i>	5:46	[p. 134]
[4] 'Give me these pieces' <i>Siegfried, Mime</i>	4:04	[p. 135]
[5] 'Notung! Notung! Sword of my need!' <i>Siegfried, Mime</i>	9:29	[p. 137]
[6] 'Hoho! Hoho! Hoho!' (Forging Song) <i>Siegfried, Mime</i>	7:05	[p. 139]
<b>Act II</b>		
[7] Prelude	6:07	[p. 141]
<b>Scene 1</b>		
[8] 'In gloomy night by Fafner's cave I wait' <i>Alberich</i>	2:46	[p. 141]



	Time	Page
9 'To Neidhöhl by night I have come' <i>Wanderer, Alberich</i>	7:21	[p. 142]
10 'Not my plan!' <i>Wanderer, Alberich</i>	3:00	[p. 143]
11 'Fafner! Fafner! You dragon, wake!' <i>Wanderer, Alberich, Fafner</i>	3:05	[p. 144]
12 'Now, Alberich! That plan failed!' <i>Wanderer, Alberich</i>	4:38	[p. 145]

**Scene 2**

13 'We go no further!' <i>Mime, Siegfried</i>	6:32	[p. 145]
14 'So he's no father of mine' <i>Siegfried</i>	1:55	[p. 148]

**TT 67:34**

COMPACT DISC THREE

1 'Could I but know' <i>Siegfried</i>	} (Forest Murmurs)	2:45	[p. 148]
2 'See my mother –' <i>Siegfried</i>		10:05	[p. 148]
3 'Ha ha! At last with my call' <i>Siegfried, Fafner</i>		3:33	[p. 150]
4 'Who are you, youthful hero' <i>Fafner, Siegfried</i>		4:52	[p. 151]
5 'The dead can tell no tidings' <i>Siegfried, Woodbird</i>		2:30	[p. 152]

**Scene 3**

	Time	Page
6 'Hehe! Sly and slippery knave' <i>Alberich, Mime</i>	3:12	[p. 152]
7 'Tarnhelm and ring, here they are' <i>Siegfried, Woodbird, Mime</i>	3:13	[p. 155]
8 'Be welcome, Siegfried!' <i>Mime, Siegfried, Alberich</i>	10:11	[p. 155]
9 'You lie there too, mighty dragon' <i>Siegfried, Woodbird</i>	10:43	[p. 158]

**Act III**

10 Prelude	3:00	[p. 160]
------------	------	----------

**Scene 1**

11 'Waken, Wala! Wala! Awake!' <i>Wanderer</i>	2:20	[p. 160]
12 'Strong is your call' <i>Erda, Wanderer</i>	12:16	[p. 161]
13 'You unwise one, learn what I will' <i>Wanderer</i>	4:31	[p. 163]

**Scene 2**

14 'I see that Siegfried's near' <i>Wanderer</i>	1:08	[p. 163]
---	------	----------

**TT 74:33**

COMPACT DISC FOUR

	Time	Page
1 'My woodbird fluttered away' <i>Siegfried</i>	0:35	[p. 164]
2 'Young man, hear me' <i>Wanderer, Siegfried</i>	6:18	[p. 164]
3 'Child, if you knew who I am' <i>Wanderer, Siegfried</i>	5:44	[p. 166]
4 'With his spear in splinters' <i>Siegfried</i>	7:19	[p. 167]
<b>Scene 3</b>		
5 'Here in the sunlight' <i>Siegfried</i>	4:00	[p. 168]
6 'Come, my sword!' <i>Siegfried</i>	11:49	[p. 169]
7 'Hail, bright sunlight!' <i>Brünnhilde, Siegfried</i>	4:30	[p. 170]
8 'Siegfried! Siegfried! Glorious hero!' <i>Brünnhilde, Siegfried</i>	8:30	[p. 170]
9 'And there is Grane, my sacred horse' <i>Brünnhilde, Siegfried</i>	9:11	[p. 172]
10 'Oh! I cared always' <i>Brünnhilde, Siegfried</i>	15:01	[p. 173]

TT 73:01



Anthony Crickmay/Theatre Museum, V & A

Siegfried, Act I, Scene 1

## Richard Wagner: Siegfried

### 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 its composition 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.

© 2000 Richard Lawrence

### Siegfried

Anyone who has read that *Siegfried* is the scherzo of the *Ring*, with all that this implies of lightness and wit, will be puzzled by the Prelude to Act I. When we first see Mime he is hammering away at a sword that he is trying to make for Siegfried. But before the curtain rises the orchestra depicts his innermost thoughts in great detail. Over a soft drumroll two bassoons whisper the merest outline of the

leitmotif associated with the ring. Fafner, who murdered his brother Fasolt to get sole ownership of the Rhinegold, has turned himself into a dragon to protect the hoard from theft – stupidly keeping his money under the mattress, as you might say, instead of investing it in equities or gilts.

Mime is plotting to regain the ring, the most important part of the treasure. Before our eyes, or rather ears, pass the gold, the Nibelungs, the baleful power of the ring (a distorted version of the ‘Rhinegold’ motif), and the ring itself. The mood is dark and mysterious, the aural picture created by low woodwind, brass and strings. The motif of the sword, which rang out so nobly in the preceding operas, is heard, *pianissimo*, on the bass trumpet. Even the violins, whose entry is delayed until just before Mime starts hammering, are instructed to play with mutes which, as with those of the lower strings, are not removed until the entrance of Siegfried and the bear.

The Prelude to Act II is equally sombre. Alberich, Mime’s brother, is in the depths of the forest, waiting outside Fafner’s cave. Timpani, double-basses and contrabass tuba represent the dragon. Woodwind and horns announce that Alberich, as ever, is brooding

on the ring, while the motif of the curse is heard, unmistakably, on the trombones, exactly as on its first orchestral appearance after the death of Fasolt in *The Rhinegold*. The Prelude builds up swiftly to a *fortissimo* climax before just as suddenly deflating to recall the sinister atmosphere of the beginning. It is a masterpiece, even more evocative of the horrors of a gloomy forest than the Wolf’s Glen scene in Weber’s *Der Freischütz* on which it is modelled.

All is not dull and drear, however. After sunrise come the Forest Murmurs, where Siegfried, musing on his unknown parents, gradually notices the singing of the birds above him – and of one, the Woodbird, in particular. This wonderful piece of scene-painting starts with a speeded-up version of the undulating figure on the cellos heard shortly before when Siegfried finds himself alone at last. Wagner then uses divided strings to convey the shimmering languor of the dappled forest, while the oboe, flute and clarinet chirp away. It is a perfect example of the delight in Nature so characteristic of the Romantic movement in Germany.

If the scherzo element is missing from these orchestral set-pieces, it is certainly to be found elsewhere. In Act I only an air of jocularity

about the Wanderer’s exchanges with Mime would seem to qualify, but instances abound in Act II. Mime’s wish for Fafner and Siegfried to kill each other usually raises a laugh; then, after the Forest Murmurs, a lighter mood prevails when Siegfried attempts to imitate the Woodbird’s song on a pipe hastily improvised from a nearby reed. The quarrel between Alberich and Mime while Siegfried is searching for the Rhinegold in Fafner’s cave provides a moment of high comedy, the chattering woodwind depicting Mime’s hysterical fury. Then there is the irony of the music’s conveying Mime’s unctuous insincerity while Siegfried, thanks to the magical properties of the dragon’s blood, is made aware of the dwarf’s murderous intentions. The act ends with the Woodbird teasing Siegfried by flying hither and thither before fixing its sights on Brünnhilde’s rock and leading the way.

This lightness of touch is distinctly missing from Act III, though Siegfried’s cry of alarm as he removes the armour from the sleeping Brünnhilde, ‘It’s not a man!’, is always a tricky moment for the singer. It was with this act that Wagner returned to the *Ring* after a twelve-year gap, and the development of his style is immediately evident from the way in which he deploys no less than nine motifs in

an introduction that rivals the Prelude to Act I of *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg* for contrapuntal ingenuity. The skill with which he superimposes the stately chords of the Wanderer on the rest of the material is simply breathtaking.

This magnificent Prelude introduces the great scene with Erda who, like Alberich, Mime and Fafner, last appeared in *The Rhinegold*. In his guise of Wanderer, Wotan has been roaming the world in search of wisdom. Now at last he has come to seek help from the all-knowing earth mother. But Wotan is forced to recognise that Erda is all-knowing no longer. He tells her that he welcomes the destruction of the gods, and bequeaths his realm to Siegfried, the free agent who knows nothing of fear. This is marked by a new melody of great breadth and nobility. In its almost Italianate lyricism it is very different from the fragmentary motifs conceived in the period before the twelve-year interruption.

After his crucial confrontation with the Wanderer, Siegfried dashes into the flames. If the beginning of Act II reminds us of *Der Freischütz*, here the analogy is surely with Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Siegfried’s horn standing in for Orpheus’ lyre. And just as Orpheus emerges wonderingly into the Elysian

fields, so Siegfried can only look round in astonishment at the peaceful scene that greets him on Brünnhilde's rock. In a supremely daring stroke Wagner thins out the orchestral texture until only the violins are left, climbing to the top of their range and then descending. The purity of the air is palpable.

The final duet for Siegfried and Brünnhilde may be considered by some to be a disappointment after the splendours of the earlier part of the act. But Wagner skilfully expresses Brünnhilde's dismay at the loss of her divine status followed by joyful acceptance of the human love that she had only witnessed, not experienced, in *The Valkyrie*. We in the audience can choose whether to relish the irony of the situation or to suspend our disbelief until the doom-laden chords, an echo of Brünnhilde's awakening, that open *Twilight of the Gods*.

*Siegfried* was first performed in August 1876, as part of the first *Ring* cycle at the Bayreuth Festival.

© 2001 Richard Lawrence

**The Birth of the Sadler's Wells Opera 'Ring'**  
– A personal memoir by Edmund Tracey  
The English *Ring*: how did it come into being? By hard work, by fighting, by the blessing of time (it is a very long work); by a

simultaneous abundance of the right talent in the right place and, as usually happens with great enterprises, by guess and by God. As the first complete cycle is an occasion for rejoicing, I choose not to recall the fighting, some of it nasty; and all artists take hard work for granted; but I would like to write a little about the people who contributed their talent, because it is they, after all, who turned the idea into reality, giving it flesh, sinew, colour and movement.

We took our first significant step in 1967 when we decided to do a new production of *The Mastersingers*, partly because 1968 was the centenary of its first performance and partly because we wanted, around the Christmas/New Year period, to utilise all the available forces of the two companies that Sadler's Wells then comprised. We started by asking Glen Byam Shaw and John Blatchley to collaborate on the production, and we invited Reginald Goodall to prepare the musical performance.

It was this last decision that was vital to the whole project. I had heard Goodall conduct *The Mastersingers* and *The Valkyrie* at the Royal Opera House, and I had for many years admired what I knew of his way of working, but it was a way of working that could only be

accommodated with difficulty into the workings of a hard-pressed repertory house. Goodall works best in what one might call festival conditions, and he is not prepared to compromise his high ideals: he demands long, detailed preparation, individual coaching of all the singers and all the instrumental groups, an enormous number of ensemble and orchestral rehearsals and a patient putting together of the whole elaborate mosaic over a period of many months. When I first proposed his name I met with some opposition, but Stephen Arlen, then Managing Director of the company, and a man of vision as well as an immensely adroit administrator, backed me, and Goodall was engaged. In point of fact the sort of preparation that *The Mastersingers*, and subsequently *The Ring*, entailed was essential because neither our singers nor our orchestra were used to the idiom of the music and, like athletes, they needed a long period of training to acquire the sheer physical stamina that performances required.

It is a matter of history that the first performances, given at the Sadler's Wells Theatre in 1968, took London by storm; even more so when the production was revived a few months later at the Coliseum, to which the company had moved in the summer of

1968. By that time Stephen Arlen had seen that the next step must be *The Ring* – and of course in English. In those days there were still people who laughed at the idea of *The Ring* in English: intoxicated with the music and having only a very imperfect acquaintance with German, they had never understood the full fascination of the drama, and that it was as important for the words to be true and intelligible as for the music to be idiomatically sung and played. I therefore commissioned a new translation from Andrew Porter who had already done an excellent version of *Rigoletto* for the company and was particularly eager to take on *The Ring*.

It was obvious that Reginald Goodall/Glen Byam Shaw/John Blatchley should continue to work together, and we were already beginning to form the team of Wagner singers that we have gradually built up over the years: Alberto Remedios, Norman Bailey and Margaret Curphey, all of whom had scored such a success in *The Mastersingers*, were in the first performance of *The Valkyrie*, our first stage of *The Ring*; and it was in this opera that Rita Hunter made such a striking impression as Brünnhilde, Ava June as Sieglinde, Ann Howard as Fricka and Clifford Grant as Hunding. These, together with Derek

Hammond-Stroud and Gregory Dempsey (for whom, however, there were no roles in *The Valkyrie*), were the founder-members of a closely-knit group of artists, most of them resident, who gradually learned to develop a coherent and flexible house-style: singing in English to an English-speaking audience and thus giving Wagner, the dramatist, equal due with Wagner, the composer.

When Glen Byam Shaw and John Blatchley first talked to me about the stage designs, we all realised that the time had come to make a new statement about *The Ring* different from the one that Wieland Wagner had made at Bayreuth twenty years before, and which had completely dominated European Wagner design ever since. What emerged was an element of naturalism, in that almost everything that Wagner specified in the libretto appears on the stage, but transmuted through Ralph Koltai's highly individual imagination. Just as Wieland Wagner created his abstract *Ring* in a post-war Germany, denuded of imperial glory and with all its romantic splendours shattered, Koltai's designs have suggested to many people an affinity with the Space Age on whose verge we live. What I personally always found so satisfying is that within these remarkable designs a production

of deep humanity has been placed, never quirkish or inventive for the sake of invention, but true, vivid and faithful to the composer's demands.

The four parts of our *Ring* have been built over a period of four years, with each existing part revived to accompany the first presentation of the next part. Inevitably we have made changes and had second tries. Koltai's first shot at the Rhine in *Twilight of the Gods* was unsatisfactory, but he got it right the following year in *The Rhinegold*. The first solution to Brünnhilde's mountain-top was not quite right in *The Valkyrie*, but we improved it when we came to *Siegfried*. Again, many elements of the translation were refined and perfected only after rehearsal with Goodall and the chief coaches and detailed discussion with the co-producers and the singers. The whole democratic approach to the work has informed every aspect of its preparation and, to my mind, is one of the reasons why it has been so triumphantly successful. It is an achievement of which we are unashamedly proud. One of the commentators once called it '*The Ring* for our time', and that is how I like to think it will be remembered.

© 1973 Edmund Tracey

### Events preceding 'Siegfried'

For the construction of a secure fortress-home for the gods, Valhalla (German, 'Walhall'), Wotan has contracted with the giants Fasolt and Fafner, the payment agreed upon being Freia, goddess of Youth and Beauty. Wotan has concluded this bargain, despite the strong disapproval of his wife Fricka, goddess of Marriage (and Freia's sister), at the suggestion of Loge, god of Fire (and deceit), relying on his assurance that when the time for payment comes it will be easy to cheat the giants of their due.

But in the event Loge seems unable to help. He has journeyed the world to find some way out of Wotan's predicament; and has to admit that nowhere can he find any prize more highly valued by men than the love and beauty of women – save in one case only: and he recounts the events already witnessed in the opening scene of the opera (*The Rhinegold*): the theft of their golden treasure from the Rhinemaidens by Alberich the Nibelung (one of a race of dwarfs who live in the depths of the earth), after they have let slip the information that he who fashions a ring from it has in his power to become master of the world. There is one condition: only he who will forswear love can forge such a ring – and Alberich has already made the necessary renunciation.

The Rhinemaidens have implored him, Loge goes on, to appeal to Wotan for help in restoring their gold to them. This, however, Wotan has no intention of doing. He has immediately seen the danger to the gods caused by Alberich's, or anyone else's, possession of the ring, and determines to secure it for himself. When the giants arrive to demand their fee and express willingness to accept the gold in lieu of Freia, whom they hold hostage, he bluntly rejects the Rhinemaidens' plea, but when the giants have left again, taking Freia with them, old age begins to fall on the gods, and he has second thoughts.

First, however, the gold has to be obtained, and Loge is ready with advice: since it was won by theft, so the easiest way of possessing it is to steal it again. Together he and Wotan descend into Nibelheim, succeed in overpowering Alberich by trickery, and force him to deliver up the treasure, including the Tarnhelm (a magic cap with the power of rendering the wearer invisible or allowing him to change his shape at will) and the ring. But in parting with the ring Alberich lays upon it a terrible curse: it shall bring death to all who wear it, its owners shall live in care pursued by the envy of others, knowing no peace or joy, until it is restored to the hand that made it. And later on (after Erda,

primeval goddess of all the world's wisdom, has intervened to convince Wotan of the danger to the gods inherent in their possession of the ring and has finally overcome his reluctance to part with it), even as ring and treasure are handed over to the giants and Freia is set at liberty, the curse begins to work. Quarrelling over the division of their spoils, Fafner clubs his brother Fasolt to death.

Payment effected, the gods are now free to enter their new abode, but as they cross the rainbow bridge thrown across the valley to it by Donner, the Storm-God, the voices of the Rhinemaidens lamenting their loss rise up from far below.

If we are to appreciate the conflicting motives that lie behind Wotan's actions in *The Valkyrie*, we must clearly understand the dilemma in which he is placed. His power (symbolised by his spear) is based upon the principles of law, justice and fair dealing. But now he has fallen from grace: he has stolen the ring from Alberich, and instead of returning it to the Rhinemaidens has used it to pay his debt to the giants Fafner and Fasolt. This breach undermines the very foundations of his supremacy, which is also threatened from without by the hostile power of the ring (now held by Fafner). What is he to do?

Since we last saw him in *The Rhinegold* he has not been idle. For one thing he has paid a long visit to Erda and she, besides giving him much wise advice, has born him nine daughters, the Valkyries. These wild warrior-maidens he now employs in gathering the souls of heroes slain in battle and bringing them to Valhalla. Thus he is marshalling an army, strengthening himself for the inevitable clash with the dark forces of the ring.

But until he has undone the wrong he has wrought, and restored the Rhinegold to its natural owners, the Rhinemaidens, he can never feel secure. The ring now belongs to Fafner, who has hidden it in a cave and, transformed into a dragon by the magic of the Tarnhelm, keeps ceaseless watch beside it. There are two reasons that prevent Wotan from attempting to wrest it from him by force. In the first place it was paid to Fafner as his fee for building Valhalla, and for the god to take it back now would be a violation of the law of fair dealing. Secondly, there is the curse laid on the ring by Alberich. As we have seen, Wotan has had some experience of the efficacy of this and, having parted with the talisman immediately and so, he hopes, escaped the consequences of ownership, he is quite determined that it will never come into his hands again.

But if someone else were to capture the ring and return it to the Rhine? That thought is the basis of his plan. Such a one must receive no aid from him, for his hands are tied by his bond with Fafner. But if a free agent were to do the work, taking his chance with the curse, then Wotan would be rid of all his troubles. With this idea in mind he has taken a mortal wife, and begotten two children, Siegmund and Sieglinde. (He himself is known as Wälse, the children as Wälsungs.)

We meet the two children in the first scene of *The Valkyrie* when Siegmund, exhausted and disarmed after a tribal fight, seeks shelter from a storm in the forest dwelling of Sieglinde's husband Hunding. As she tends his wounds he tells her his story and they feel instinctively drawn to each other, though as yet neither realises that they are long-separated brother and sister. When Hunding comes home he quickly recognises in Siegmund an enemy: hospitality is his for the night, but on the morrow he must be prepared to do battle with him.

Later that night Sieglinde returns from her bedchamber to Siegmund, resting before the dying fire in the main hall. She tells him that Hunding is lying in a drugged sleep, and goes on to recount her tale of a loveless marriage and

to draw his attention to a sword (Notung) buried up to its hilt in the tree-trunk that forms the main support of the building. It was placed there by Wälse (Wotan, as we know) for a hero to withdraw: many men have tried but all have failed. Recognising in it the weapon his father had once promised him in the hour of his need, with a mighty effort Siegmund wrests it triumphantly from its hiding-place. Now passionately in love, brother and sister flee together into the spring night.

In Act II Hunding overtakes the fugitives on a mountain pass and his combat with Siegmund is imminent. Wotan has commanded his favourite Valkyrie daughter Brünnhilde to aid Siegmund in the fight, but an agonising change of decision is forced upon him by Fricka who, as guardian of wedlock, is deeply affronted by the incestuous union of the two Wälsungs, and he countermands his order. Siegmund must die.

In the event, moved by the evident devotion of the pair and knowing that Sieglinde carries within her Siegmund's unborn child, Brünnhilde defies her father by attempting to shield the Wälsung in the moment of battle. But Wotan interposes his spear, Siegmund's sword shatters on it, and Hunding strikes his defenceless adversary dead. Appalled at the

sight, Brünnhilde gathers up the pieces of the broken sword and hastens away with the fainting Sieglinde across her horse. Wotan, vowing vengeance on his daughter for her disobedience, starts in pursuit.

In Act III, after Brünnhilde has assisted Sieglinde in escaping with the sword fragments to the deep forestlands to the east – where Wotan seldom ventures, for there Fafner guards the ill-omened ring – she is called to account by her father. Angrily he chides her for her disobedience and ordains her punishment: no longer shall she be Wishmaiden and Valkyrie to him; he casts her off. With her godhead lost, she is banished for ever from his sight and condemned to lie helpless on the rock, bound fast in fetters of sleep, a prey to the first human to find her.

Her appeals for mercy – by disobeying him had she not been fulfilling his true will? – leave him adamant. Then, pleads Brünnhilde, if he will not recall his decree, let him at least encircle the mountain with a girdle of flame such that only the boldest of mortals dare face it. This final plea Wotan is unable to resist, and calling upon Loge to surround the mountain peak with a wall of fire, he sadly takes his leave of his beloved daughter.

## Synopsis

### Compact Disc One

[1] The Prelude to *Siegfried* tells us that we are in the great forest where Fafner's cave lies. Here Mime found Sieglinde about to give birth to Siegfried. She died as the boy was born, and the Nibelung has brought up Siegfried to believe he has no other parents. Mime schemes to gain the ring and its power for himself, and hopes that Siegfried will slay the dragon Fafner, with the sword Notung.

### Act I

#### A Forest

[2] A cave equipped as a smithy. As the curtain rises Mime is discovered at his anvil: so far, all his efforts to reforge the fragments of Notung have failed, and Siegfried has smashed every sword made for him, so Mime's chances appear slight and his despair is quite evident.

[3] Siegfried comes in leading a bear which he sets upon Mime, for whom he has nothing but hatred and contempt: having enjoyed his discomfiture and turned the beast loose into the forest again, he demands his sword and, wrenching Mime's latest efforts from his hand, [4] once more smashes it over the anvil

before breaking out into a torrent of reproaches. [5] Mime whines at his ingratitude: all he gets for having been 'father and mother' to Siegfried is abuse and hatred. [6] But the youth has seen his own reflection in the stream and knows that this misshapen creature can be no father of his. Curious to know about his real parents, [7] he eventually forces the story out of Mime who, as proof of its truth, fetches out the pieces of Siegmund's sword – the only reward, he says, for all his trouble. [8] Siegfried is greatly excited. With this, his own rightful sword, refashioned he can go out into the world and leave Mime for ever. And shouting at him to hurry with the task, [9] he rushes off into the forest, where at least he can find among the beasts the congenial companionship he longs for.

[10] Wotan (in his guise as the Wanderer, a broad-brimmed hat pulled over one eye and carrying a spear as a staff) breaks in upon Mime's despair, entering through the back of the cave. He comes to offer wisdom in exchange for hospitality, he says, but Mime, deeply suspicious, only wants to be rid of his unrecognised visitor. Wotan, all friendliness, suggests that he may be able to tell him something to his advantage and [11] proposes a riddling game, wagering his head that he can

answer any three questions Mime chooses to put to him. Summarising the events of *The Ring* to this point, the Wanderer answers the dwarf's questions, saying that he knows of the Nibelungs who forged the mighty ring and lost it, of the giant Fafner who now holds it, and of the gods in Valhalla who still rule over the others. [12] Questioned in his turn, Mime now shows that he has heard of the Wälsungs, Siegmund and Sieglinde, the parents of Siegfried, and that the sword Notung is destined to slay the dragon and regain the ring. [13] But as to who shall forge the sword, Mime is at a loss: the one useful question he should himself have asked, comments the Wanderer, and informs him that only he who does not know fear can shape Notung. As to Mime's head, he goes on, smilingly, he will not claim it, but leaves it in forfeit to this fearless hero.

### Compact Disc Two

[1] He disappears just as [2] Siegfried returns to find the dwarf in a state of terrified collapse beneath the anvil.

He is exasperated to find the sword not ready; but, as Mime explains, only he who does not know fear can reshape it. [3] Does Siegfried have any idea of the fear to be

experienced before the great dragon Fafner, for instance? – And he launches out upon a vivid description of the symptoms. Siegfried does not, but longs to experience that feeling and, exasperated by Mime's incompetence, [4]–[5] sets to work welding the sword himself. Seeing him at work, Mime is convinced that despite his unorthodox methods he will succeed and, while Siegfried hammers away, conceives the idea of a drugged potion to offer him as a refreshment after the forthcoming fight so that he may kill him with his own weapon and thereby obtain the ring and treasure. [6] Finishing his work, Siegfried triumphantly splits the anvil in two with his new sword.

## Act II

### *In the depths of the forest*

[7]–[8] Alberich is keeping jealous watch outside Fafner's cave. [9]–[10] Wotan comes to him to tell him that a hero is being brought there by Mime, who will attempt to take the treasure. [11] The Wanderer and Alberich wake the dragon, offering to defend him in exchange for the ring, but Fafner refuses. [12] Wotan laughs and rides away. As Alberich hides, [13] the sun rises and Mime enters with Siegfried. Warnings of the dragon's fearsome powers do not teach Siegfried fear, and Mime

withdraws into the forest as [14] the youth stretches out to wait for the monster.

## Compact Disc Three

[1] Gradually, Siegfried becomes aware of the murmurings of the forest and, in particular, [2] the song of a Woodbird in the branches over his head. It seems to be trying to tell him something. He attempts to converse with the bird by cutting a reed-pipe, but its sounds are coarse and unconvincing. Instead, he makes the music he knows, by blowing on his horn, and [3]–[4] this brings the dragon from his hiding place. Siegfried challenges him and, after a brief combat, manages to strike him to the heart with Notung. [5] Withdrawing the sword, Siegfried is burned by a spurt of the creature's blood and involuntarily puts his hand to his mouth. Now, suddenly, he understands the voices of nature. The bird tells him to enter the cave and take only the magic Tarnhelm and ring.

[6] While he is inside, Alberich and Mime quarrel over their expected spoils, [7] slipping away as Siegfried reappears. The Woodbird now tells Siegfried that he will understand Mime's words, not as the deceitful flattery that he intends, but in their true meaning (and this

is how we, too, hear them). Mime returns and [8] asks Siegfried whether he has learned fear: he has not. Mime appears to say plainly that he is going to give Siegfried a drugged drink, slay him and take the ring for himself. Overcome by contemptuous rage, Siegfried strikes him dead and leaves his body in the cave, [9] moving the dragon's corpse across its mouth to seal it for ever. Pausing once more to rest, he resumes his conversation with the Woodbird, telling of his loneliness. Might the bird know of a mate for him such as the other animals have? It tells him that there is such a one, Brünnhilde, who lies surrounded by fire on a mountain top, and rises into the air to show him the way. Siegfried eagerly follows the bird as it leads him on.

## Act III

### *A wild place at the foot of a rocky mountain*

[10] This opens at the wild, rocky foot of a mountain. [11]–[14] Wotan, in his guise as the Wanderer, has come to consult Erda for one last time. He is oppressed by knowledge that the twilight of the gods is at hand, but obeys Erda's advice to give over his power freely to the hero who is his heir: Siegfried shall awaken Brünnhilde, and redeem the world. Erda sinks into the earth.

## Compact Disc Four

[1] Siegfried enters, still following the Woodbird. [2] Unaware that he faces Wotan, Siegfried reveals that he has reforged the powerful sword Notung, slain the dragon and won the ring (of whose value he is completely ignorant), and that now he is going to find Brünnhilde as his bride. [3] Stung by the youth's bold, defiant attitude, Wotan bars the way with his spear. Siegfried shatters it. [4] Now his fiery path to the mountain top is clear, and Siegfried hastens on his way, joyfully sounding his horn-call.

Fire covers the scene, giving way to dark clouds which disperse in elemental light to reveal the mountain top where Brünnhilde was laid to sleep at the end of *The Valkyrie*.

[5]–[6] Siegfried approaches, hesitantly removes her armour, and draws back in fear (at last) before this form, unlike any he has seen before. She does not respond to his call, so he bends to kiss her lips and wake her. [7] Opening her eyes, she hails him as the morning sun, and each exults in the other's beauty. [8] And now ensues no ordinary 'love duet' but, as William Mann has put it, a veritable 'duet of courtship, characterised with wonderfully sensitive humanity'. [9] As their

ardour increases, Brünnhilde grieves for a moment the loss of her maidenhood, that she is no longer the proud warrior-maid of Valhalla; she is ashamed to face the light of day. ☐ Yet she is reassured by his purity and submits to him in the fulfilment of their love. As the curtain falls they pledge to each other their love's eternal bond.

© EMI Records Ltd  
Reprinted courtesy of EMI Classics

**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 tenor **Gregory Dempsey**, born in Melbourne, made his debut as Don Ottavio for the Melbourne National Opera Company before joining The Elizabethan Trust Opera Company. His appearance as Jenik in *The Bartered Bride* with Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera) led to his becoming resident tenor with the company. His many

roles have included Florestan, Max, Erik (*The Flying Dutchman*), David (*The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*), Mime, Don José, Canio, Gregor (*The Makropulos Affair*), Skuratov (*The House of the Dead*), Tom Rakewell and Essex (*Gloriana*). He has also been a frequent guest with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Welsh National Opera and Scottish Opera (Aeneas in *The Trojans*), and has sung at the Edinburgh Festival (the world premiere of Thea Musgrave's *Mary, Queen of Scots*) and Aldeburgh Festival (*The Prodigal Son*). Abroad he has appeared with San Francisco Opera (Gregor) as well as in Brussels (the title role in *Peter Grimes*), Stuttgart and other European cities. Now residing in Australia, he has performed frequently with The Australian Opera (later Opera Australia) in roles including Herman (*The Queen of Spades*), Boris (*Kat'a Kabanová*), Dimitri (*Boris Godunov*), Jim (*Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*), Valzacchi (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Trim (*La fanciulla del West*) and with Victoria State Opera (in the title role in *The Return of Ulysses*, as Nero in *The Coronation of Poppea* and as Monostatos). He has also appeared at the Adelaide Festival (the title role in *The Excursions of Mr Brouček* and Mark in Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*).

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*.

The English baritone **Derek Hammond-Stroud** studied with Elena Gerhardt and Gerhard Hüsch in Munich and London, and his career has embraced both the recital platform and the operatic stage. He has sung with all the major British opera companies while his engagements in Europe have included the Bavarian State Opera, the Theater an der Wien, the Theater am Gärtnerplatz and three seasons with The Netherlands Opera. In South and North America he has sung at the Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires and with The Metropolitan Opera, New York and San Diego Opera among many others. Major roles have included Dr Bartolo, Rigoletto, Fra Melitone

(*La forza del destino*), Sharpless, Tonio (*Pagliacci*), Papageno, Alberich, Beckmesser, Faninal (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Krušina (*The Bartered Bride*) and Sir Robert Cecil (*Gloriana*) besides numerous roles in works by Gilbert and Sullivan and by Offenbach. He has taken part in several first British stage productions, including Haydn's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (as Creonte), Rossini's *La pietra del paragone* (as Pacuvio), *War and Peace* (as Napoleon, with English National Opera) and Gottfried von Einem's *Der Besuch der alten Dame* (as the Schoolmaster, at Glyndebourne). He created the role of the Old Fisherman in the world premiere of Malcolm Williamson's *The Violins of Saint-Jacques* at Sadler's Wells. He has received many honours including, in 1987, the OBE.

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 (*Ernani*), 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 Alvis 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.

The contralto **Anne Collins** joined 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.

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.

The career of the Australian soprano **Maurine London** encompassed opera, operetta and musical comedy. The recipient of a Melba trophy, she sang such roles as Violetta and Zerbinetta with the Australian Opera Company (later Opera Australia), along with both Valenciennes and Hanna Glawari in an Australian Sadler's Wells production of *The Merry Widow*. With the New Zealand Opera Company she sang in *Rigoletto* before joining Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera) in England. There her roles included Euridice (*Orpheus in the Underworld*), Aennchen (*Der Freischütz*), Musetta, Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Countess Adèle (*The Count Ory*) and Hanna Glawari. She was a guest with Frankfurt Opera in Ireland and sang the role of Elizabeth Barrett on a regional tour of Ron Grainer's musical *Robert and Elizabeth*.

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.



Mime and Siegfried, Act I, Scene 1

Anthony Crickmay/Theatre Museum, V & A



Mime and the Wanderer, Act I, Scene 2

## Richard Wagner: Siegfried

### 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 sechszwanzig Jahre: Jahre des Aufbruchs sowohl in seinem Privatleben als auch auf der politischen Bühne Europas.

Es war nicht nur Langeweile, die Wagner bewegte, 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* gewissermaßen durcharbeiten 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 angefangen 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 diente).

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 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 *Rings* ist die Orchestrierung nicht die geringste. Wagner setzt umfangreiche Kräfte ein, doch immer wieder ist es ein einzelnes Holzblasinstrument – sagen wir eine Oboe oder Bassklarinetten –, das eine Situation umreißt oder eine Gesangsphrase auf den Punkt bringt. Eine der typischsten Klangfarben des *Rings* 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.

© 2000 Richard Lawrence

Übersetzung: Anne Steeb/Bernd Müller

### Siegfried

Wer einmal gelesen hat, dass *Siegfried* das Scherzo des *Ring*-Zyklus sei, samt allem, was man damit verbindet an Leichtigkeit und Witz, wird vom Vorspiel zum ersten Akt erstaunt sein. Wenn wir Mime zum ersten Mal sehen, hämmert er auf ein Schwert ein, das er für Siegfried zu schmieden versucht. Aber noch bevor der Vorhang aufgeht, schildert das Orchester ausführlich seine innersten

Gedanken. Über einem leisen Trommelwirbel umreißen zwei Fagotte flüsternd das zum Ring gehörige Leitmotiv. Fafner, der seinen Bruder Fasolt erschlagen hat, um alleiniger Besitzer des Rheingolds zu werden, hat sich in einen Drachen verwandelt, um den Hort vor Dieben zu schützen – wie dumm von ihm, könnte man sagen, dass er sein Geld unter der Matratze aufbewahrt, statt es in Aktien und mündelsicheren Wertpapieren anzulegen.

Mime sinnt darauf, den Ring wiederzuerlangen, den wichtigsten Teil des Horts. Vor unseren Augen oder vielmehr Ohren passieren das Gold, die Nibelungen, die unheilvolle Macht des Rings (eine verzerrte Version des Rheingold-Motivs) und der Ring selbst Revue. Die Stimmung ist finster und geheimnisvoll, das Klangbild wird von tiefen Holzbläsern, Blechbläsern und Streichern bestimmt. Das Schwert-Motiv, das in den vorangegangenen Opern so hehr geklungen hat, ist *pianissimo* auf der Basstrompete zu hören. Selbst die Geigen, deren Einsatz bis kurz vor dem Punkt verzögert wird, an dem Mime zu hämmern anfängt, sind angewiesen, mit Dämpfen zu spielen, die wie jene der tiefen Streicher nicht vor dem Auftritt von Siegfried und dem Bären entfernt werden.

Das Vorspiel zum zweiten Akt ist ebenso

düster. Alberich, Mimes Bruder, harrt in der Tiefe des Waldes vor Fafners Höhle aus. Pauken, Kontrabässe und Kontrabasstuba verkörpern den Drachen. Holzbläser und Hörner verkünden, dass Alberich wie immer nur an den Ring denkt, während die Posaunen unverkennbar das Fluch-Motiv anstimmen, genau wie bei seinem ersten Auftreten im Orchester nach dem Tode Fasolts im *Rheingold*. Das Vorspiel baut rasch zu einem *fortissimo* dargebotenen Höhepunkt auf, ehe ihm ebenso rasch die Luft ausgeht und es an die düstere Atmosphäre des Anfangs erinnert. Es ist ein Meisterwerk und beschwört noch klarer die Schrecken eines finsternen Waldes als die Wolfsschluchtszene in Webers *Freischütz*, nach deren Vorbild es gestaltet ist.

Dabei ist jedoch keineswegs alles dumpf und trostlos. Nach Sonnenaufgang setzt das Waldweben ein, in dessen Verlauf Siegfried, der über seine unbekannteten Eltern nachsinnt, allmählich auf den Gesang der Vögel über ihm aufmerksam wird – speziell den des Waldvogels. Dieses wunderbare Stück szenischer Klangmalerei beginnt mit einer beschleunigten Fassung der wogenden Cellofigur, die zu hören war, kurz bevor sich Siegfried endlich allein glaubt. Danach benutzt Wagner unterteilte Streicher, um das

Spiel von Licht und Schatten, die schimmernde Mattigkeit des Waldes darzustellen, während Oboe, Flöte und Klarinette vor sich hin zwitschern. Es ist dies ein perfektes Beispiel für die Freude an der Natur, die für die deutsche Romantik so typisch war.

Der Scherzocharakter mag zwar in diesen Orchesterversatzstücken fehlen, doch ist er anderswo mit Sicherheit zu finden. Im ersten Akt bietet sich dafür nur ein Hauch von Belustigung im Dialog des Wanderers mit Mime an, aber im zweiten Akt kommt er verstärkt zum Vorschein. Mimes Wunsch, dass Fafner und Siegfried sich gegenseitig umbringen mögen, löst gewöhnlich einen Lacher aus. Im Anschluss an das Waldweben ist die Stimmung eher aufgelockert, wenn Siegfried versucht, den Gesang des Waldvogels auf einer Flöte nachzuahmen, die er provisorisch aus einem Stück Schilfrohr angefertigt hat. Der Streit zwischen Alberich und Mime, während Siegfried in Fafners Höhle nach dem Rheingold sucht, sorgt für einen Moment hoher Komik, in dem schnatternde Holzbläser Mimes hysterische Wut verkörpern. Ironisch wirkt, dass die Musik Mimes salbungsvolle Unehrllichkeit darstellt, während Siegfried dank der

Zauberkräfte des Drachenbluts die mörderischen Absichten des Zwergs erkennt. Der Akt endet damit, dass der Waldvogel Siegfried neckt, indem er zunächst ziellos hin und her flattert, ehe er sich auf Brünnhildes Felsen konzentriert und ihn dorthin führt.

An solcher Leichtigkeit fehlt es im dritten Akt, aber Siegfrieds besorgter Aufschrei: "Das ist kein Mann!", als er der schlafenden Brünnhilde den Harnisch abnimmt, ist für den Sänger immer ein heikler Moment. Es war dieser Akt, mit dem Wagner sich nach zwölfjähriger Pause erneut dem *Ring* zuwandte, und die Weiterentwicklung seines Stils ist sogleich daran erkennbar, dass er in einer Einleitung, die es an kontrapunktischer Genialität mit dem Vorspiel zum ersten Akt der *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* aufnehmen kann, nicht weniger als neun Motive zu Gehör bringt. Das Geschick, mit dem er die getragenen Akkorde des Wanderers auf das übrige Material überträgt, ist schlicht atemberaubend.

Dieses herrliche Vorspiel leitet die großartige Szene mit Erda ein, die wie Alberich, Mime und Fafner zuletzt im *Rheingold* aufgetreten war. In der Gestalt des Wanderers hat Wotan auf der Suche nach Weisheit die Welt durchschritten. Nun endlich ist er gekommen, um die allwissende Erdmutter um Hilfe zu ersuchen.

Aber Wotan ist gezwungen, zu erkennen, dass Erda nicht länger allwissend ist. Er teilt ihr mit, dass er den Niedergang der Götter begrüßt, und erklärt Siegfried, der sein eigener Herr ist und keine Furcht kennt, zu seinem Nachfolger. Seine Bekanntmachung ist durch eine neue Melodie von epischer Breite und hoher Gesinnung gekennzeichnet. Sie unterscheidet sich in ihrem beinahe italienisch anmutenden Lyrismus deutlich von den vor der zwölfjährigen Unterbrechung ersonnenen fragmentarischen Motiven.

Nach seiner entscheidenden Konfrontation mit dem Wanderer stürzt sich Siegfried in die Flammen. Während uns der Anfang des zweiten Aktes an den *Freischütz* erinnert, ist hier die Analogie gewiss Glucks *Orfeo ed Euridice*, und Siegfrieds Horn entspricht Orpheus' Leier. Und genau wie Orpheus verwundert die elysischen Gefilde betritt, kann auch Siegfried nur staunend auf die friedliche Szene blicken, die sich ihm auf Brünnhildes Felsen bietet. Wagner dünnt hier überaus kühn das Orchestergefüge aus, bis nur noch die Geigen übrig sind: Sie steigen bis an die Spitze ihres Tonumfangs und anschließend wieder herab. Die Reinheit der Luft ist deutlich spürbar.

Das Schlussduett für Siegfried und Brünnhilde wird nach den Herrlichkeiten im

ersten Teil des Aktes möglicherweise von einigen als Enttäuschung empfunden. Aber Wagner bringt geschickt Brünnhildes Bestürzung über den Verlust ihrer Göttlichkeit zum Ausdruck, gefolgt von freudiger Annahme der menschlichen Liebe, die sie in der *Walküre* nur mit angesehen, nicht jedoch selbst erlebt hatte. Wir im Publikum können uns aussuchen, ob wir die Ironie der Lage genießen oder uns wohl wollend unkritisch auf diesen Schluss einlassen wollen, bis (als Echo von Brünnhildes Erwachen) die unheilvollen Akkorde erklingen, welche die *Götterdämmerung* einleiten.

*Siegfried* wurde im August 1876 als Teil des ersten *Ring*-Zyklus bei den Festspielen in Bayreuth uraufgeführt.

© 2001 Richard Lawrence  
Übersetzung: Anne Steeb / Bernd Müller

#### Die Geburt des "Ring" an der Sadler's Wells Opera – Eine persönliche Erinnerung von Edmund Tracey

Der englische *Ring*: Wie wurde er ins Leben gerufen? Mit harter Arbeit, mit Streit, mit dem Segen der Zeit (er ist ein ausgesprochen langes Werk); damit, dass viele verschiedene Talente der richtigen Art gleichzeitig am richtigen Ort

versammelt waren, und wie gewöhnlich bei großen Vorhaben mit Glück und Gottes Beistand. Da dieser erste vollständige Zyklus ein Anlass zur Freude ist, will ich auf den Streit, der in manchen Fällen sehr unangenehm war, gar nicht erst eingehen; auch dass harte Arbeit eine Notwendigkeit ist, nehmen alle Künstler als gegeben hin; worüber ich hingegen gern schreiben möchte, sind die Menschen, die dafür ihr Talent zur Verfügung gestellt haben, denn schließlich sind sie es, die die Idee verwirklicht haben, indem sie ihr Fleisch und Kraft, Farbe und Bewegung gegeben haben.

Den ersten wesentlichen Schritt haben wir 1967 mit der Entscheidung getan, eine Neuproduktion der *Meistersinger* auf die Bühne zu bringen, da 1968 seit der Uraufführung der *Meistersinger* hundert Jahre vergangen waren und da wir um Weihnachten und Neujahr alle verfügbaren Kräfte der beiden Truppen nutzen wollten, aus denen sich Sadler's Wells damals zusammensetzte. Wir fingen damit an, dass wir Glen Byam Shaw und John Blatchley baten, gemeinsam an der Inszenierung zu arbeiten, und wir betrauten Reginald Goodall mit der musikalischen Vorbereitung der Aufführungen.

Es war die letztgenannte Entscheidung, die für das ganze Projekt von entscheidender

Bedeutung war. Ich hatte Goodall als Dirigent der *Meistersinger* und der *Walküre* am Royal Opera House erlebt und bewunderte seit Jahren, was ich über seine Arbeitsmethode wusste. Es war eine Arbeitsmethode, für die im Betrieb eines unter ständigem Druck stehenden Repertoiretheaters eigentlich kein Platz ist. Goodall arbeitet am besten unter so genannten Festivalbedingungen, und er ist nicht bereit, von seinen hoch gesteckten Idealen abzuweichen: Er verlangt eine lange, detaillierte Vorbereitung, individuelles Einstudieren für sämtliche Sänger und Instrumentalgruppen, eine ungeheure Zahl von Ensemble- und Orchesterproben und geduldiges Zusammenfügen des ganzen kunstvollen Mosaiks über viele Monate hin. Als ich zum ersten Mal seinen Namen in die Debatte warf, begegnete ich einigem Widerstand, aber Stephen Arlen, der damalige Verwaltungsdirektor der Truppe, ein Mann mit Weitblick und ein ungeheuer kluger Administrator, unterstützte mich, und Goodall wurde engagiert. Unter den gegebenen Umständen war die Art der Vorbereitung, der *Die Meistersinger* und danach *Der Ring* bedurfte, unverzichtbar, da weder unsere Sänger noch unser Orchester das besondere Idiom dieser Musik gewohnt waren und wie

Sportler eine lange Trainingsperiode brauchten, um die schiere physische Ausdauer zu erwerben, die für die Aufführungen nötig war.

Es ist inzwischen Geschichte, dass die ersten Aufführungen der *Meistersinger* 1968 am Sadler's Wells Theatre London im Sturm erobert haben, und als die Produktion wenige Monate später am Coliseum wieder aufgenommen wurde, in das die Truppe im Sommer 1968 umgezogen war, war ihr Erfolg noch größer. Damals hatte Stephen Arlen bereits erkannt, dass der nächste Schritt *Der Ring* sein musste – und zwar in englischer Sprache. Zu jener Zeit gab es immer noch Leute, die sich über die Idee eines englischen *Rings* lustig machten: Berauscht von der Musik und des Deutschen größtenteils nicht mächtig hatten sie nie recht verstanden, was an dem Drama so faszinierend war und dass ein dem Original getreuer und verständlicher Text ebenso viel bedeutete wie das idiomatisch richtige Singen und Spielen der Musik. Aus eben diesem Grund habe ich Andrew Porter beauftragt, eine Neuübersetzung vorzunehmen; er hatte für die Truppe bereits eine ausgezeichnete *Rigoletto*-Fassung geschaffen und war besonders davon angetan, sich an den *Ring* zu wagen.

Es war keine Frage, dass Reginald Goodall, Glen Byam Shaw und John Blatchley ihre Zusammenarbeit fortsetzen sollten; außerdem hatten wir bereits angefangen, ein Team aus Wagner-Sängern zusammenzustellen, das wir mit den Jahren allmählich ausgebaut haben: Alberto Remedios, Norman Bailey und Margaret Curphey, die alle mit großem Erfolg an den *Meistersingern* mitgewirkt hatten, nahmen auch an der ersten Aufführung von der *Walküre* teil, dem ersten Stadium unseres *Rings*; und es war diese Oper, in der Rita Hunter als Brünnhilde einen ebenso bleibenden Eindruck hinterließ wie Ava June als Sieglinde, Ann Howard als Fricka und Clifford Grant als Hunding. Sie waren zusammen mit Derek Hammond-Stroud und Gregory Dempsey (für die es in der *Walküre* leider keine Rollen gab) die Gründungsmitglieder einer eng verbundenen Gruppe mehrheitlich fest engagierter Künstler, die allmählich einen kohärenten und flexiblen Hausstil zu entwickeln lernten: Sie sangen auf Englisch für ein englischsprachiges Publikum und wurden damit dem Dramatiker Wagner ebenso gerecht wie dem Komponisten.

Als Glen Byam Shaw und John Blatchley zum ersten Mal mit mir über das Bühnenbild

sprachen, ging uns allen auf, dass der Zeitpunkt gekommen war, eine neue Aussage über den *Ring* zu machen, anders als jene, die Wieland Wagner zwanzig Jahre zuvor in Bayreuth gemacht hatte und die seither vollkommen das europäische Wagner-Design beherrscht hatte. Was dabei herauskam, hatte insofern naturalistische Anklänge, als nahezu alles, was Wagner im Libretto angegeben hat, auf der Bühne zu sehen ist, jedoch gewandelt durch Ralph Koltais höchst individuelle Phantasie. So wie Wieland Wagner im Nachkriegsdeutschland einen abstrakten *Ring* schuf, der seiner imperialen Prachtentfaltung beraubt und allen romantischen Glanzes entledigt war, glaubten viele in Koltais Entwürfen eine Affinität zum Zeitalter der Weltraumfahrt zu entdecken, an dessen Schwelle wir heute leben. Was ich persönlich immer als befriedigend empfunden habe, ist der Umstand, dass in diesen bemerkenswerten Bühnenbildern eine von tiefer Humanität geprägte Produktion angesiedelt wurde, die niemals schrullig oder originell um der Originalität willen ist, sondern wahrhaftig, lebendig und den Anforderungen des Komponisten gerecht.

Die vier Teile unseres *Rings* wurden im Laufe von vier Jahren so aufgebaut, dass jeder

existierende Teil wiederaufgenommen wurde, um die Erstaufführung des nächsten Teils zu begleiten. Zwangsläufig haben wir Änderungen vorgenommen und es uns in einigen Fällen anders überlegt. Koltais erste Umsetzung des Rheins in *Götterdämmerung* war unbefriedigend, aber im nächsten Jahr im *Rheingold* hat er ihn richtig hingekriegt. Auch die erste Lösung für Brünnhildes Berggipfel in der *Walküre* war nicht ganz gelungen, doch auch sie wurde verbessert, als wir *Siegfried* herausbrachten. Außerdem wurden viele Elemente der Übersetzung erst nach den Proben mit Goodall und den leitenden Korrepetitoren und nach eingehender Diskussion mit dem künstlerischen Stab und den Sängern verfeinert und perfektioniert. Dieses demokratische Herangehen an das Werk hat jeden Aspekt seiner Vorbereitung beeinflusst und ist meines Erachtens einer der Gründe, warum es so ungeheuer erfolgreich war. Es ist eine Leistung, über die wir unverhohlen stolz sind. Einer der Kommentatoren hat es einst „den *Ring* unserer Zeit“ genannt, und so, glaube und hoffe ich, wird man sich an ihn erinnern.

© 1973 Edmund Tracey  
Übersetzung: Anne Steeb/Bernd Müller, 2001

#### Die Vorgeschichte zu “Siegfried”

Zum Bau von Walhall, einer sicheren Feste und Heimstatt für die Götter, hat sich Wotan mit den Riesen Fasolt und Fafner zusammengetan und ihnen als Entgelt Freia versprochen, die Göttin der Jugend und Schönheit. Wotan hat sich trotz der heftigen Missbilligung seiner Gemahlin Fricka, der Göttin der Ehe (und Freias Schwester), auf den Tauschhandel eingelassen; er hat dem Rat von Loge, dem Gott des Feuers (und des Betrugs), und dessen Versicherung vertraut, es werde ein Leichtes sein, die Riesen um den ihnen zustehenden Lohn zu bringen, wenn die Zeit der Bezahlung gekommen sei.

Doch als es so weit ist, erweist sich Loge als unfähig, ihm behilflich zu sein. Er ist um die ganze Welt gereist, um einen Ausweg aus Wotans Zwangslage zu finden, und muss gestehen, dass er nirgendwo einen Preis finden konnte, den Männer höher schätzen als die Liebe und Schönheit der Frauen – außer in einem einzigen Fall. Er schildert die Ereignisse, die bereits im Vorspiel des Zyklus (*Das Rheingold*) zu sehen waren: den Raub des Goldschatzes der Rheintöchter durch Alberich, den Nibelung (Angehöriger einer Zwergenrasse, die in den Tiefen der Erde hausen); sie haben sich die Kunde entlocken

lassen, dass derjenige, der aus dem Gold einen Ring schmiedet, die Macht hat, die Welt zu beherrschen. Doch unter einer Bedingung: Nur wer der Liebe entsagt, kann einen solchen Ring schmieden – und Alberich hat den nötigen Verzicht bereits geleistet.

Die Rheintöchter, fährt Loge fort, hätten ihn angefleht, Wotan um Hilfe bei der Wiederbeschaffung ihres Goldes gebeten. Das jedoch hat Wotan nicht vor. Er hat sogleich die Gefahr erkannt, die den Göttern drohen würde, falls Alberich oder ein anderer den Ring besäße. Er beschließt, ihn selbst an sich zu bringen. Als die Riesen erscheinen, ihren Lohn einzufordern, und anstelle von Freia, die sie als Pfand festhalten, das Gold zu nehmen bereit sind, weist er das Flehen der Rheintöchter entschieden zurück, doch als die Riesen wieder fort sind und Freia mitgenommen haben, beginnen die Götter zu altern, und Wotan besinnt sich eines besseren.

Zunächst jedoch muss er sich das Gold aneignen, und Loge steht ihm mit gutem Rat zur Seite: Da es durch Diebstahl erworben sei, könne man seiner am leichtesten habhaft werden, indem man es ein zweites Mal stiehlt. Gemeinsam steigen er und Wotan nach Nibelheim hinab, überrumpeln Alberich mit einer List und zwingen ihn zur Übergabe des

Schatzes samt dem Tarnhelm (einer Zauberkappe mit der Macht, den Träger unsichtbar zu machen oder nach Belieben die Gestalt zu wechseln) und dem Ring. Als er den Ring übergibt, belegt Alberich ihn mit einem entsetzlichen Fluch: Er soll allen, die ihn tragen, den Tod bringen, und seine Besitzer sollen in Sorge leben, verfolgt vom Neid der anderen, ohne Frieden oder Freude zu kennen, bis er der Hand zurückerstattet wird, die ihn geschaffen hat. Später (nachdem sich Erda, die urzeitliche Göttin aller Weisheit der Welt, eingemischt hat, um Wotan von der Gefahr zu überzeugen, in der die Götter schweben, solange sie den Ring besitzen, und Wotan endlich seinen Widerwillen besiegt hat, sich von ihm zu trennen) beginnt der Fluch zu wirken, noch während der Ring und der Schatz an die Riesen weitergegeben und Freia freigelassen wird. Im Streit um die Aufteilung ihrer Beute erschlägt Fafner seinen Bruder Fasolt.

Nachdem die Bezahlung ausgeführt ist, steht es den Göttern frei, ihre neue Heimstatt zu beziehen, doch als sie die Regenbogenbrücke überqueren, die Donner, der Sturmgott, über das Tal geworfen hat, steigen die Stimmen der Rheintöchter, die ihren Verlust beklagen, aus der Tiefe zu ihnen auf.

Um die widersprüchlichen Motive zu begreifen, die hinter Wotans Handeln in der *Walküre* stehen, müssen wir uns über das Dilemma Klarheit verschaffen, dem er ausgesetzt ist. Seine Macht (symbolisiert durch seinen Speer) beruht auf den Prinzipien Gesetz, Recht und Anstand. Nun jedoch ist er vom rechten Weg abgekommen: Er hat Alberich den Ring geraubt und statt ihn den Rheintöchtern zurückzuerstatten, hat er ihn dazu benutzt, seine Schuld bei den Riesen Fafner und Fasolt zu begleichen. Dieser Verstoß erschüttert die Grundfesten seiner Herrschaft, die außerdem von außen durch die feindliche Macht des (nun im Besitz von Fafner befindlichen) Rings bedroht wird. Was soll er tun?

Seit wir ihn zum letzten Mal im *Rheingold* gesehen haben, war er nicht müßig. Zum einen hat er Erda einen langen Besuch abgestattet, und sie hat ihm nicht nur viele gute Ratschläge erteilt, sondern ihm auch neun Töchter geboren, die Walküren. Diese wilden kriegerischen Maiden stellt er nun dazu ab, die Seelen im Kampf gefallener Helden zu sammeln und nach Walhall zu bringen. Auf diese Weise stellt er ein Heer auf und rüstet sich für den unvermeidbaren Zusammenstoß mit den finsternen Mächten des Rings.

Bis er jedoch das begangene Unrecht wieder gutgemacht und das Rheingold seinen rechtmäßigen Eigentümerinnen, den Rheintöchtern, zurückerstattet hat, kann er sich nicht sicher fühlen. Der Ring befindet sich im Besitz von Fafner, der ihn in einer Höhle versteckt hat und, durch den Zauber des Tarnhelms in einen Drachen verwandelt, unermüdlich dabei Wache hält. Es gibt zwei Gründe, die Wotan davon abhalten, ihm den Ring mit Gewalt zu entreißen. Erstens wurde er Fafner als Entgelt für den Bau von Walhall überlassen, und wenn der Gott ihn nun zurücknähme, wäre das ein Verstoß gegen das Gesetz des Anstands. Zweitens scheut er den Fluch, mit dem Alberich den Ring belegt hat. Wie wir gesehen haben, hat Wotan einige Erfahrungen mit der Wirksamkeit dieses Fluchs, und obwohl er, wie er hofft, durch die sofortige Weitergabe des Kleinods den Konsequenzen seines Besitzes entgangen ist, denkt er nicht daran, noch einmal Hand an ihn zu legen.

Wenn jedoch ein anderer den Ring erbeuten und ihn dem Rhein überantworten würde? Dieser Gedanke ist die Grundlage seines Plans. Der Betreffende darf keine Hilfe von ihm erhalten, denn ihm sind durch seine Abmachung mit Fafner die Hände gebunden. Wenn jedoch jemand am Werk wäre, der sein

eigener Herr ist, und das mit dem Ring verbundene Risiko auf sich nehmen würde, wäre Wotan auf einen Schlag seine Sorgen los. Mit diesem Hintergedanken hat er eine Sterbliche zur Gemahlin genommen und zwei Kinder gezeugt, Siegmund und Sieglinde. (Er selbst ist unter dem Namen Wälse aufgetreten, und seine Kinder sind als die Wälungen bekannt.)

Wir begegnen den beiden Kindern in der ersten Szene der *Walküre*, als Siegmund, erschöpft und entwaffnet nach der Austragung einer Stammesfehde, mitten im Wald in der Behausung von Sieglindes Ehemann Hunding vor einem Gewitter Schutz sucht. Während sie sich um seine Verletzungen kümmert, erzählt er ihr seine Geschichte, und die zwei fühlen sich instinktiv zueinander hingezogen. Bislang ist keinem von beiden klar, dass sie Bruder und Schwester sind, die vor langer Zeit getrennt wurden. Als Hunding heimkehrt, erkennt er in Siegmund rasch einen Widersacher: Seine Gastfreundschaft gilt für die Nacht, doch am Morgen muss er bereit sein, gegen ihn anzutreten.

Später in der Nacht verlässt Sieglinde ihr Schlafgemach und begibt sich zu Siegmund, der vor dem ersterbenden Feuer im Hauptsaal ruht. Hunding liege im Betäubungsschlaf, sagt

sie zu ihm; sie beginnt, ihre Geschichte von einer Ehe ohne Liebe zu erzählen, und macht ihn auf ein Schwert (Notung) aufmerksam, das bis zum Heft in dem Baumstamm vergraben ist, der als die Hauptstütze des Hauses dient. Es wurde von Wälse (Wotan, wie wir wissen) dort für einen Helden hinterlassen, der es herausziehen soll: Viele Männer haben es versucht, doch alle haben versagt. Siegmund, der in dem Schwert die Waffe erkennt, die sein Vater ihm einst in der Stunde seiner Not versprochen hatte, zieht das Schwert unter gewaltiger Anstrengung triumphierend aus der Versenkung. Bruder und Schwester, die sich leidenschaftlich ineinander verliebt haben, entfliehen gemeinsam in die Frühlingsnacht.

Im zweiten Akt überholt Hunding die Liebenden an einem Gebirgspass, und seine Auseinandersetzung mit Siegmund steht unmittelbar bevor. Wotan hat seine Lieblingstochter, die Walküre Brünnhilde, damit betraut, Siegmund im Kampf beizustehen, doch Fricka, die als Wächterin des ehelichen Bundes über die Inzestbeziehung der beiden Wälungen zutiefst entrüstet ist, hat ihn zur Rücknahme seiner Entscheidung genötigt. Er widerruft seinen Befehl. Siegmund muss sterben.

Bewegt von der deutlich sichtbaren Zuneigung des Paares und in dem Wissen, dass Sieglinde Siegmunds ungeborenes Kind in sich trägt, lehnt sich Brünnhilde gegen ihren Vater auf, indem sie versucht, den Walsung im Kampf zu beschirmen. Doch Wotan wirft seinen Speer dazwischen, Siegmunds Schwert zerbricht daran und Hunding metzelt seinen schutzlosen Gegner nieder. Entsetzt über den Anblick sammelt Brünnhilde die Bruchstücke des Schwerts auf und eilt mit der ohnmächtig hinsinkenden Sieglinde, die sie vor sich aufs Pferd gelegt hat, von dannen. Wotan schwört, sich an seiner Tochter für ihren Ungehorsam zu rächen, und nimmt die Verfolgung auf.

Im dritten Akt hat Brünnhilde Sieglinde geholfen, mit den Fragmenten des Schwerts in die tiefen Wälder des Ostens zu entkommen – wo sich Wotan selten hinwagt, da dort Fafner den fluchbeladenen Ring bewacht –, und wird nun von ihrem Vater zur Verantwortung gezogen. Erzürnt tadelt er sie wegen ihres Ungehorsams und legt ihre Strafe fest: Sie soll nicht länger sein Wunschkind und Walküre sein; er verstößt sie. Nachdem er ihr die Göttlichkeit genommen hat, weist er sie für immer aus seinen Augen und verurteilt sie, hilflos auf einem Felsen zu

liegen, in den Banden des Schlafs gefangen, als Beute des ersten Sterblichen, der sie findet.

Ihre Bitten um Gnade – hat sie nicht, indem sie ihm nicht gehorcht hat, seinen wahren Willen erfüllt? – lassen ihn unbeirrt. Wenn er seine Entscheidung schon nicht rückgängig machen wolle, fleht Brünnhilde, dann solle er wenigstens den Felsen mit einem Flammengürtel umgeben, so dass nur der kühnste Sterbliche es wagt, ihn zu ersteigen. Dieser letzten Bitte kann Wotan nicht widerstehen. Er fordert Loge auf, den Felsen mit einer Feuerwand zu umgeben und verabschiedet sich traurig von seiner geliebten Tochter.

### Inhaltsangabe

#### CD 1

[1] Das Vorspiel zu *Siegfried* erzählt uns, dass wir uns in dem großen Wald befinden, in dem Fafners Höhle liegt. Hier hat Mime Sieglinde gefunden, als sie kurz davor stand, Siegfried zu gebären. Sie ist bei der Geburt des Jungen gestorben, und der Nibelung hat Siegfried in dem Glauben gelassen, er habe keine anderen Eltern. Mime ist darauf aus, den Ring und

seine Macht für sich zu beanspruchen, und hofft, dass Siegfried mit dem Schwert Notung den Drachen Fafner erschlagen wird.

#### Erster Akt

##### Wald

[2] Eine Höhle, die als Schmiede eingerichtet ist. Als der Vorhang aufgeht, sieht man Mime an seinem Amboss: Bisher sind alle seine Bemühungen fehlgeschlagen, die Bruchstücke von Notung neu zusammenzuschmieden. Siegfried hat jedes andere Schwert zerbrochen, das für ihn hergestellt wurde, darum stehen die Aussichten für Mime offensichtlich schlecht, und seine Verzweiflung macht sich deutlich bemerkbar. [3] Siegfried treibt einen Bären herein und hetzt ihn auf Mime, für den er nichts als Hass und Verachtung empfindet: Nachdem er dessen Verunsicherung genossen und das Untier zurück in den Wald gescheucht hat, verlangt er nach seinem Schwert. Er entreißt Mime das letzte Ergebnis seiner Anstrengungen und [4] zerbricht auch dieses Schwert mit einem Schlag auf den Amboss. Dann bricht er in wilde Verwünschungen aus. [5] Mime beklagt seine Undankbarkeit: Alles, was er davon habe, Siegfried "Vater und Mutter" gewesen zu sein, seien

Beschimpfungen und Hass. [6] Doch der Junge hat sein Spiegelbild im Bach gesehen und weiß, dass diese ungeschlachte Gestalt nicht sein Vater sein kann. Begierig, etwas über seine wahren Eltern zu erfahren, [7] ringt er Mime schließlich die Geschichte ab. Dieser holt zum Beweis, dass er die Wahrheit sagt, die Bruchstücke von Siegmunds Schwert hervor – den einzigen Lohn, behauptet er, den er für seine Plackerei erhalten habe. [8] Siegfried gerät in höchste Erregung. Wenn dieses Schwert, das von Rechts wegen ihm gehört, wieder heil würde, könnte er in die Welt hinausziehen und Mime für immer verlassen. Er schreit ihn an, sich gefälligst zu sputen, und [9] eilt in den Wald hinaus, wo er bei den wilden Tieren wenigstens die angenehme Gesellschaft finden kann, nach der er sich sehnt.

[10] Wotan (in der Gestalt des Wanderers, die breite Krempe eines Huts über ein Auge herabgezogen und mit einem Speer als Wanderstab) unterbricht Mimes verzweifelte Klage, als er von hinten die Höhle betritt. Er sei gekommen, sagt er, im Austausch gegen Mimes Gastfreundschaft Weisheit zu bieten. Doch der zutiefst misstrauische Mime will den unerkannten Besucher nur möglichst rasch wieder loswerden. Wotan meint ausnehmend

freundlich, er könne ihm etwas zu seinem Vorteil mitteilen, und [11] schlägt ein Rätselspiel vor. Er setzt seinen Kopf darauf, dass er drei Fragen beantworten könne, die Mime ihm stellt. Indem er die Vorgeschichte des *Rings* bis zu diesem Punkt zusammenfasst, beantwortet der Wanderer die Fragen des Zwergs. Er sagt, er wisse von den Nibelungen, die den mächtigen Ring geschmiedet und verloren hätten, von dem Riesen Fafner, der ihn derzeit in seinem Besitz habe, und von den Göttern in Walhall, die immer noch über die anderen herrschen. [12] Als Mime an der Reihe ist, Fragen zu beantworten, verrät er, dass er von den Wälsungen Siegmund und Sieglinde gehört hat, den Eltern von Siegfried, und dass das Schwert Notung dazu bestimmt ist, den Drachen zu erschlagen und den Ring zurückzuerobern. [13] Wer jedoch das Schwert schmieden soll, weiß Mime nicht – die eine sinnvolle Frage, die er hätte stellen müssen, meint der Wanderer. Er teilt Mime mit, dass nur derjenige, der keine Furcht kennt, Notung schmieden könne. Was Mimes Kopf angehe, fährt er lächelnd fort, so werde er ihn nicht beanspruchen, sondern ihn als Unterpfand für den besagten furchtlosen Helden zurücklassen.

## CD 2

[1] Wotan verschwindet im selben Augenblick, als [2] Siegfried zurückkehrt und den Zwerg unterm Amboss vorfindet, wohin er sich angstvoll verkrochen hat.

Er ist verärgert, dass das Schwert immer noch nicht fertig ist, aber Mime erklärt ihm, dass nur einer, der keine Furcht kenne, es wieder zusammensetzen könne. [3] Ob Siegfried beispielsweise eine Ahnung von der Angst habe, die man angesichts des großen Drachen Fafner empfinde? Mime beginnt mit einer anschaulichen Beschreibung der Symptome. Siegfried kann die Angst nicht nachvollziehen, sehnt sich jedoch nach der beschriebenen Empfindung. Erbost über Mimes Unvermögen [4]–[5] macht er sich selbst an die Arbeit, das Schwert zu schmieden. Mime, der ihm dabei zusieht, ist überzeugt, dass er trotz seiner ungewöhnlichen Methode Erfolg haben wird, und kommt, während Siegfried drauflos hämmert, auf die Idee, ihm nach dem bevorstehenden Kampf einen betäubenden Trank als Erfrischung zu reichen, damit er ihn mit seiner eigenen Waffe umbringen und den Ring und den Schatz an sich bringen kann. [6] Nachdem er seine Arbeit beendet hat, spaltet Siegfried mit

seinem neuen Schwert den Amboss triumphierend in zwei Hälften.

## Zweiter Akt

*Tiefer Wald*

[7]–[8] Alberich hält eifersüchtig Wache vor Fafners Höhle. [9]–[10] Wotan erscheint, um ihm mitzuteilen, dass Mime einen Helden herführen werde, der versuchen werde, den Schatz zu rauben. [11] Der Wanderer und Alberich wecken den Drachen und bieten ihm an, ihn im Austausch gegen den Ring zu verteidigen, doch Fafner lehnt ab. [12] Wotan lacht und reitet davon. Während Alberich sich versteckt, [13] geht die Sonne auf und Mime erscheint mit Siegfried. Seine Warnungen vor der furchtbaren Macht des Drachen bringen Siegfried nicht das Fürchten bei, und Mime zieht sich in den Wald zurück, während [14] der junge Mann es sich bequem macht, um auf das Ungeheuer zu warten.

## CD 3

[1] Allmählich wird Siegfried auf das Raunen im Walde aufmerksam, insbesondere [2] auf den Gesang eines Waldvogels im Geäst über seinem Kopf. Er scheint ihm etwas mitteilen zu wollen. Siegfried versucht, sich mit dem

Vogel zu verständigen, indem er eine Rohrpfife schnitzt, aber deren Klang ist rau und unbestimmt. Da macht Siegfried schon lieber die Musik, die er kennt. Er bläst in sein Horn, und [3]–[4] das lockt den Drachen aus seinem Bau. Siegfried fordert ihn heraus und schafft es nach kurzem Kampf, ihm mit Notung das Herz zu durchbohren. [5] Als er das Schwert herauszieht, wird Siegfried von einem Spritzer vom Blut des Ungeheuers verbrannt und fährt sich unwillkürlich mit der Hand an den Mund. Daraufhin versteht er plötzlich die Stimmen der Natur. Der Vogel rät ihm, die Höhle zu betreten und nur den Tarnhelm und den Ring zu entnehmen.

[6] Während er drinnen ist, streiten sich Alberich und Mime über die zu erwartende Beute und [7] schleichen davon, als Siegfried zurückkehrt. Nun sagt der Waldvogel zu Siegfried, dass er Mimes Worte verstehen werde, und zwar nicht die hinterlistige Schmeichelei, die er vorschleibt, sondern deren wahre Bedeutung (und so hören auch wir sie). Mime erscheint und [8] fragt Siegfried, ob er das Fürchten gelernt habe. Er hat es nicht gelernt. Mime spricht weiter, und wir hören ihn sagen, dass er Siegfried einen Schlaftrunk verabreichen, ihn umbringen und den Ring an

sich nehmen will. Von Wut und Verachtung überwältigt tötet ihn Siegfried und lässt seinen Leichnam in der Höhle zurück; [9] den Kadaver des Drachen zerrt er vor den Eingang, um sie für immer zu verschließen. Er hält noch einmal inne, um sich zu erholen, und nimmt das Gespräch mit dem Waldvogel damit wieder auf, dass er ihm von seiner Einsamkeit erzählt. Ob der Vogel ihm von einer Gefährtin zu berichten wisse, wie sie die anderen Tiere haben? – Der Vogel antwortet, dass es so eine gebe, Brünnhilde genannt, die in einem Feuerkreis auf einem Berggipfel liege. Der Vogel erhebt sich in die Lüfte, um ihm den Weg zu weisen. Siegfried folgt eifrig dem Vogel, der ihn von dannen führt.

### Dritter Akt

#### *Wilde Gegend am Fuße eines Felsenberges*

[10] Der Akt beginnt am öden, felsigen Hang eines Berges. [11]–[14] Wotan ist in Gestalt des Wanderers gekommen, um sich ein letztes Mal mit Erda zu beraten. Ihn bedrückt der Gedanke, dass die Götterdämmerung naht, doch er befolgt Erdas Ratschlag, seine Macht freiwillig dem Helden zu überlassen, der sein Erbe ist: Siegfried soll Brünnhilde wecken und die Welt retten. Erda versinkt im Erdboden.

### CD 4

[1] Siegfried erscheint, immer noch im Gefolge des Waldvogels. [2] Ohne zu wissen, mit wem er es zu tun hat, vertraut Siegfried Wotan an, dass er das mächtige Schwert Notung neu geschmiedet, den Drachen erschlagen und den Ring erobert hat (über dessen Wert er sich nicht im klaren ist). Nun werde er Brünnhilde finden und sie zu seiner Braut machen.

[3] Aufgebracht über die tollkühne, trotzig Art des jungen Mannes versperrt Wotan ihm mit seinem Speer den Weg. Siegfried zerschmettert ihn. [4] Nun ist der feurige Weg zum Berggipfel frei, und Siegfried macht sich frohgemut in sein Horn blasend eilig an den Aufstieg.

Das Feuer, das die Szene verhüllt, macht dunklen Wolken Platz, die sich in urwüchsiges Licht verwandeln und den Blick auf den Berggipfel freigeben, wo Brünnhilde am Ende der *Walküre* in Schlaf versunken ist.

[5]–[6] Siegfried nähert sich, nimmt ihr zögernd den Harnisch ab und weicht, endlich von Angst erfüllt, vor ihrer Gestalt zurück: So etwas hat er noch nie gesehen. Brünnhilde reagiert nicht auf seinen Ruf, darum beugt er sich über sie, um sie auf die Lippen zu küssen und damit zu wecken.

[7] Sie schlägt die Augen auf und grüßt ihn als

die Morgensonne; dann weiden sie sich gegenseitig an ihrer Schönheit. [8] Was folgt, ist kein gewöhnliches “Liebesduett”, sondern – wie William Mann es formuliert hat – ein wahres “Duett des Liebeswerbens, gekennzeichnet durch wunderbar empfindsame Humanität”.

[9] Während ihre Leidenschaft immer weiter zunimmt, betrauert Brünnhilde einen Augenblick lang den Verlust ihrer Jungfräulichkeit und dass sie nicht länger die stolze kriegerische Maid Wälhalls ist; sie schämt sich, das Licht des Tages zu erblicken. [10] Doch Siegfrieds Reinheit beschwichtigt sie, und sie gibt sich ihm in Erfüllung ihrer Liebe hin. Während der Vorhang fällt, besiegeln sie den ewigen Bund ihrer Liebe.

© EMI Records Ltd

Übersetzung: Anne Steeb/Bernd Müller, 2001

**Alberto Remedios**, der zu den führenden britischen Heldenentören 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 Tippetts *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 in Melbourne geborene australische Tenor **Gregory Dempsey** gab sein Debüt als Don Ottavio an der Melbourne National Oper Company, ehe er ins Ensemble der Elizabethan Trust Opera Company aufgenommen wurde. Sein Auftritt als Jenik in Smetanas *Die verkaufte Braut* an der Sadler's Wells Opera (der späteren English National Opera) führte zu einem festen Engagement als Tenorsolist der Truppe. Er hat zahlreiche Partien gesungen, darunter Florestan, Max, Erik (*Der fliegende Holländer*), David (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Mime, Don José, Canio, Gregor (*Die Affäre Makropulos*), Skuratov (*Aus einem Totenhaus*), Tom Rakewell und Essex (*Gloriana*). Außerdem hat er häufig an der Royal Opera Covent Garden gastiert, an der Welsh National Opera und an der Scottish Opera (als Aneas in *Les Troyens*) und ist sowohl beim Edinburgh Festival (anlässlich der Uraufführung von Thea Musgraves *Mary, Queen of Scots*) als auch beim Aldeburgh

Festival (*The Prodigal Son*) aufgetreten. Im Ausland hat er an der San Francisco Opera (Gregor) gesungen, in Brüssel (die Titelrolle von *Peter Grimes*), in Stuttgart und anderen europäischen Städten. Inzwischen ist er in Australien ansässig und hat dort häufig an der Australian Opera gastiert (der späteren Opera Australia), wo er unter anderem Herman (*Pique Dame*), Boris (*Kat'a Kabanová*), Dimitri (*Boris Godunow*), Jim (*Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*), Valzacchi (*Der Rosenkavalier*) und Trim (*La fanciulla del West*) gesungen hat. An der Victoria State Opera war er in der Titelrolle von *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, als Nero in *L'incoronazione di Poppea* und als Monostatos zu sehen. Außerdem ist er beim Adelaide Festival aufgetreten (in der Titelrolle von *Die Ausflüge des Herrn Brouček* und als Mark in Tippetts *The Midsummer Marriage*).

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 nach 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.

Der englische Bariton **Derek Hammond-Stroud** hat bei Elena Gerhardt und Gerhard Hüsch in München und London studiert, und seine Karriere erstreckt sich ebenso auf das Konzertpodium wie auf die Opernbühne. Er ist mit allen bedeutenden britischen Operntruppen aufgetreten und war auf dem europäischen Kontinent unter anderem an der Bayerischen Staatsoper, am Theater an der Wien, am Theater am Gärtnerplatz und drei Spielzeiten lang an der Niederlande Opera engagiert. In Süd- und Nordamerika hat er am Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, an der New Yorker Metropolitan Opera, an der San Diego Opera und an vielen anderen Bühnen gesungen. Zu seinen bedeutenden Partien zählen Dr. Bartolo, Rigoletto, Fra Melitone (*La forza del destino*), Sharpless, Tonio (*Pagliacci*), Papageno, Alberich, Beckmesser, Faninal (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Krušina (*Die verkaufte Braut*) und Sir Robert Cecil (*Gloriana*); daneben hat er zahlreiche Rollen in

Werken von Gilbert und Sullivan und solchen von Offenbach gespielt. Er war an mehreren britischen Erstaufführungen beteiligt, beispielsweise an Haydns *Orfeo ed Euridice* (als Creonte), Rossinis *La pietra del paragone* (als Pacuvio), Prokofjews *Krieg und Frieden* (als Napoleon, an der English National Opera) und Gottfried von Einems *Der Besuch der alten Dame* (als der Lehrer, in Glyndebourne). Er hat anlässlich der Uraufführung von Malcolm Williamsons *The Violins of Saint-Jacques* am Sadler's Wells Theatre die Rolle des alten Fischers kreiert. Es wurden ihm viele Auszeichnungen zuerkannt, zum Beispiel 1987 der Orden Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE).

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, Hunding 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, Hunding 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 Alvise 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.

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.

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 zusammengearbeitet. Neben vielen anderen Ehrungen wurde Rita Hunter 1980 den Orden CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) verliehen.

Die Karriere der australischen Sopranistin **Maurine London** umfaßte Oper, Operette und das musikalische Lustspiel. Die mit einer Melba Trophy ausgezeichnete Sängerin hat Rollen wie Violetta und Zerbinetta an der Australian Opera Company (der späteren Opera Australia) und in einer australischen Sadler's-Wells-Produktion der *Lustigen Witwe* sowohl Valencienne als auch Hanna Glawari gespielt. An der New Zealand Opera Company hat sie in *Rigoletto* mitgewirkt, ehe sie in England ins Ensemble der Sadler's Wells

Opera (später: English National Opera) eintrat. Dort zählten zu ihren Partien unter anderem Euridice (*Orphée aux enfers*), Ännchen (*Der Freischütz*), Musetta, Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), Gräfin Adèle (*Le Comte Ory*) und Hanna Glawari. Sie hat mit der Frankfurter Oper in Irland gastiert und auf landesweiten Tournee Elizabeth Barrett in Ron Grainers Musical *Robert and Elizabeth* gesungen.

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 Britten's *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.



Reg Wilson

Siegfried, Act I, Scene 3

Anthony Crickmay/Theatre Museum, V & A



Alberich and the Wanderer, Act II, Scene 1

## Richard Wagner: Siegfried

### 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 leitmotiv: 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 leitmotiv, 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 leitmotiv 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 leitmotiv 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 *Die 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.

© 2000 Richard Lawrence

Traduction: Francis Marchal

### Siegfried

Quiconque a lu que *Siegfried* est le scherzo du *Ring*, avec tout ce que cela implique de légèreté et d'humour, sera perplexe devant le Prélude de l'Acte I. Quand nous voyons Mime pour la première fois, il est en train d'essayer de forger une épée pour Siegfried. Mais avant que le rideau ne se lève, l'orchestre dépeint en grands détails ses pensées les plus intimes. Au-dessus d'un sourd roulement de timbales, deux bassons chuchotent les simples contours du leitmotiv associé avec l'anneau. Fafner, qui a

tué son frère Fasolt pour garder seul l'or du Rhin, s'est transformé en dragon pour protéger le trésor des voleurs – gardant stupidement son argent sous son matelas, pourrait-on dire, au lieu de l'investir dans des actions ou des bons d'Etats.

Mime complotte de reconquérir l'anneau, qui est la part la plus importante du trésor. Devant nos yeux, ou plutôt nos oreilles, défilent l'or, les Nibelungen, la puissance maléfique de l'anneau (une version déformée du leitmotiv de l'or du Rhin), et l'anneau lui-même. L'atmosphère est sombre et mystérieuse, l'effet sonore étant créé par les bois graves, les cuivres et les cordes. Le leitmotiv de l'épée, qui sonnait de manière si noble dans les opéras précédents, est ici entendu *pianissimo* à la trompette basse. Même les violons, dont l'entrée est retardée jusqu'à l'instant précédant celui où Mime commence à forger, doivent jouer avec leurs sourdines qui, comme pour les cordes graves, ne seront pas enlevées avant l'entrée de Siegfried et de l'ours.

Le Prélude de l'Acte II est également sombre. Alberich, le frère de Mime, se trouve dans les profondeurs de la forêt, attendant devant l'entrée de la caverne de Fafner. Timbales, contrebasses et tuba contrebasse

représentent le dragon. Les bois et les cors annoncent qu'Alberich, comme toujours, rumine des idées à propos de l'anneau, tandis que le leitmotiv de la malédiction est entendu, de manière distincte, aux trombones, exactement comme lors de sa première apparition orchestrale après la mort de Fasolt dans *Das Rheingold*. Le Prélude parvient rapidement à un point culminant *fortissimo* juste avant de retomber subitement pour rappeler l'atmosphère sinistre du début. C'est un chef-d'œuvre, encore plus évocateur de l'horreur d'une forêt sinistre que la scène des Gorges du Loup du *Freischütz* de Weber dont il s'inspire directement.

Cependant, tout n'est pas gris et sinistre. Après le lever du soleil viennent les Murmures de la forêt, où Siegfried, songeant à ses parents inconnus, prend peu à peu conscience du chant des oiseaux au-dessus de lui – et de l'un d'eux, l'Oiseau de la forêt, en particulier. Cette merveilleuse pièce descriptive commence par une version accélérée de la figure ondulante des violoncelles entendue peu avant que Siegfried se trouve enfin seul. Wagner divise alors les parties des cordes pour dépeindre la langueur chatoyante de la forêt tachetée, tandis que le hautbois, la flûte et la clarinette gazouillent. C'est un exemple parfait de la

délectation de la Nature si caractéristique du romantisme allemand.

Si l'élément scherzo est absent de ces pages orchestrales élaborées, on le trouve assurément ailleurs. A l'Acte I, seul un air de jovialité dans les échanges entre le Wanderer et Mime pourrait s'en approcher, mais à l'Acte II les exemples abondent. Le souhait de Mime que Fafner et Siegfried s'entretient produit généralement des rires; après les Murmures de la forêt, une humeur plus légère règne quand Siegfried tente d'imiter le chant de l'Oiseau de la forêt sur un pipeau improvisé à la hâte avec un morceau de roseau. La querelle qui éclate entre Alberich et Mime pendant que Siegfried cherche l'or du Rhin dans la caverne de Fafner offre un moment de haute comédie, le bavardage des bois dépeignant la fureur hystérique de Mime. Suit l'ironie de la musique qui exprime l'hypocrisie onctueuse de Mime, tandis que Siegfried, grâce aux propriétés magiques du sang du dragon, devient conscient des intentions meurtrières du gnome. L'acte s'achève avec l'Oiseau de la forêt taquinant Siegfried en volant de ci, de là, avant de fixer son regard vers le rocher de Brünnhilde et lui indiquer le chemin.

Cette légèreté de touche est clairement absente dans l'Acte III, quoique le cri d'alarme

de Siegfried au moment où il retire l'armure de Brünnhilde endormie, "Ce n'est pas un homme!", est toujours un moment délicat pour le chanteur. C'est avec cet acte que Wagner revint au *Ring* après un intervalle de douze ans, et l'évolution de son style est immédiatement évidente par la manière dont il déploie neuf leitmotifs dans une introduction qui rivalise en invention contrapuntique avec le Prélude de l'Acte I de *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. L'habileté avec laquelle il superpose les accords imposants du Wanderer au reste du matériau est tout simplement stupéfiante.

Ce magnifique Prélude introduit la grande scène avec Erda qui, comme Alberich, Mime et Fafner, est apparue la dernière fois dans *Das Rheingold*. Sous son déguisement de Wanderer, Wotan a parcouru le monde à la recherche de la sagesse. Maintenant enfin, il vient chercher l'aide de la mère de la terre qui connaît toute chose. Mais Wotan est contraint de reconnaître qu'Erda a perdu son omniscience. Il lui dit qu'il accueille favorablement la destruction des dieux, et qu'il lègue son royaume à Siegfried, l'agent libre qui ignore la peur. Ceci est marqué par une nouvelle mélodie ample et d'une grande noblesse. Avec son lyrisme presque italien, elle

est très différente des motifs fragmentaires conçus pendant la période précédant l'interruption de douze ans.

Après sa confrontation décisive avec le Wanderer, Siegfried se précipite dans les flammes. Si le début de l'Acte II fait songer au *Freischütz*, ici l'analogie est sûrement avec *l'Orfeo ed Euridice* de Gluck, le cor de Siegfried étant l'équivalent de la lyre d'Orphée. Et tout comme Orphée entre émerveillé dans les Champs Élysées, de même Siegfried ne peut regarder autour de lui qu'avec étonnement la scène paisible qui l'accueille sur le rocher de Brünnhilde. En un geste d'une hardiesse suprême, Wagner réduit la texture de l'orchestre pour ne garder que les seuls violons, qui montent jusqu'à l'aigu de leur tessiture puis redescendent. On peut palper la pureté de l'air.

Le duo final entre Siegfried et Brünnhilde peut apparaître décevant à certains comparé aux splendeurs de la première partie de l'acte. Mais Wagner exprime avec adresse la consternation de Brünnhilde devant la perte de son statut divin, puis l'acceptation joyeuse de l'amour humain qu'elle a seulement vu, mais non éprouvé, dans *Die Walküre*. Nous autres auditeurs, nous pouvons choisir soit de savourer l'ironie de la situation, soit de

suspendre notre incrédulité jusqu'aux accords sombres, un écho du réveil de Brünnhilde, qui ouvrent *Götterdämmerung*.

*Siegfried* fut représenté pour la première fois en août 1876, dans le cadre du premier cycle du *Ring* au Festival de Bayreuth.

© 2001 Richard Lawrence

Traduction: Francis Marchal

#### La Naissance du "Ring" du Sadler's Wells Opera – Un souvenir personnel d'Edmund Tracey

Le *Ring* anglais: comment est-il né? Par le travail acharné, par la lutte, par la grâce du temps (c'est une œuvre très longue); par une abondance simultanée de talents adéquats se trouvant au bon endroit, et comme il arrive généralement dans les grandes entreprises, Dieu seul sait comment. Puisque le premier cycle complet est une occasion de se réjouir, je ne choisirai pas de rappeler les luttes, qui parfois furent des plus âpres; et tous les artistes considérant le travail acharné comme allant de soi; mais je voudrais écrire quelques mots à propos des gens qui ont apporté leur talent, parce que ce sont eux, après tout, qui ont fait de cette idée une réalité, lui donnant corps, nerfs, couleur et mouvement.

Nous fîmes notre premier pas décisif en 1967 quand nous décidâmes de monter une nouvelle production de *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, en partie parce que 1968 était le centenaire de la création de l'œuvre, mais aussi parce que nous voulions, pour la période de Noël et du Nouvel an, utiliser tous les membres disponibles des deux compagnies qui constituaient alors le Sadler's Wells. Nous commençâmes par demander à Glen Byam Shaw et à John Blatchley de collaborer à la production, et nous invitâmes Reginald Goodall à préparer la partie musicale.

Cette dernière décision ce révéla vitale pour le projet tout entier. J'avais entendu Goodall diriger *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* et *Die Walküre* au Royal Opera House de Covent Garden, et j'admirais depuis de nombreuses années ce que je savais de sa manière de travailler, mais c'était une méthode de travail qui ne pouvait s'accorder qu'avec difficulté à la pression imposée par une maison possédant un vaste répertoire. Goodall donne le meilleur de lui-même dans ce que l'on pourrait appeler des conditions de festival, et il refuse de faire des compromis avec ses très hauts idéaux: il exige une préparation longue et détaillée, un travail individuel avec tous les chanteurs et tous les groupes instrumentaux, un très grand nombre

de répétitions d'ensembles et d'orchestre, et une patiente réunion de tous les éléments de cette mosaïque élaborée pendant une période de plusieurs mois. Quand j'ai proposé son nom pour la première fois, j'ai rencontré une certaine opposition, mais Stephen Arlen, alors directeur général de la compagnie, un homme visionnaire doublé d'un administrateur extrêmement habile, m'apporta son soutien, et Goodall fut engagé. En fait, le genre de préparation qu'impliquait *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, et plus tard *Der Ring*, était essentiel car ni nos chanteurs ni notre orchestre n'étaient habitués au langage de cette musique et, tout comme des athlètes, ils avaient besoin d'une longue période d'entraînement pour acquérir la résistance physique que les représentations nécessitaient.

C'est un fait historique que les premières représentations, données au Sadler's Wells Theatre de Londres en 1968, remportèrent un succès foudroyant; celui-ci fut encore plus immense quand la production fut reprise quelques mois plus tard au Coliseum, où la compagnie s'était installée pendant l'été 1968. A cette époque, Stephen Arlen avait vu que l'étape suivante devait être *Der Ring* – et bien entendu en anglais. Il y avait, alors, encore des gens que l'idée d'un *Ring* chanté en anglais

faisait rire: grisés par la musique et ne possédant qu'une connaissance très imparfaite de l'allemand, ils n'avaient jamais compris la fascination du drame dans son entier, ni compris qu'il était d'une importance égale que les mots soient vrais et intelligibles et que la musique soit chantée et jouée de manière idiomatique. Aussi, ai-je commandé une nouvelle traduction à Andrew Porter qui avait déjà réalisé une excellente version de *Rigoletto* pour la compagnie, et qui était particulièrement désireux de travailler au *Ring*.

Il était évident que Reginald Goodall, Glen Byam Shaw et John Blatchley devaient continuer à travailler ensemble. Nous avions déjà commencé à former l'équipe de chanteurs wagnériens que nous avons peu à peu constituée au fil des ans: Alberto Remedios, Norman Bailey et Margaret Curphey. Ils avaient tous remporté un immense succès dans *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, et prirent part à la première représentation de *Die Walküre*, notre première étape du *Ring*; et c'est dans cet opéra que Rita Hunter fit une impression si saisissante dans le rôle de Brünnhilde, Ava June dans celui de Sieglinde, Ann Howard dans celui de Fricka et Clifford Grant dans celui de Hunding. Avec Derek Hammond-Stroud et Gregory Dempsey (pour lesquels il

n'y eut cependant pas de rôles dans *Die Walküre*), ils furent les membres-fondateurs d'un groupe d'artistes étroitement unis, la plupart d'entre eux appartenant à la compagnie, qui progressivement apprirent à développer un style maison cohérent et flexible: chanter en anglais devant un public anglais, et donner ainsi la part égale à Wagner le dramaturge et à Wagner le compositeur.

Quand Glen Byam Shaw et John Blatchley me parlèrent des décors pour la première fois, nous réalisâmes que le temps était venu de donner une nouvelle interprétation du *Ring*, différente de celle que Wieland Wagner avait formulée à Bayreuth vingt ans plus tôt, et qui avait complètement dominé les productions wagnériennes européennes. Le résultat fut un certain naturalisme, en ce sens que presque tout ce que Wagner spécifie dans le livret apparaît sur scène, mais transformé par l'imagination très personnelle de Ralph Koltai. Tout comme Wieland Wagner créa un *Ring* abstrait dans l'Allemagne de l'après guerre, dépouillé de la gloire impériale et de toutes ses séductions romantiques, les décors de Koltai ont suggéré à un grand nombre de gens un rapport avec l'Age de l'espace à l'aube duquel nous nous trouvons. Ce que personnellement j'ai toujours trouvé si satisfaisant, c'est qu'au

milieu de ces décors remarquables a pris corps une production d'une profonde humanité, jamais étrange ou vainement inventive, mais vraie, vivante et fidèle aux exigences du compositeur.

Les quatre parties de notre *Ring* ont été élaborées sur une période de quatre ans, avec la reprise de chaque partie existante pour accompagner la première représentation de la partie suivante. Inévitablement, nous avons apporté des modifications et fait de nouveaux essais. La première vision du Rhin de Koltai dans *Götterdämmerung* n'était pas satisfaisante, mais il trouva la bonne, l'année suivante, dans *Das Rheingold*. La première solution pour le sommet montagneux de Brünnhilde n'était pas entièrement parfaite dans *Die Walküre*, mais elle fut améliorée dans *Siegfried*. De même, de nombreux aspects de la traduction furent peaufinés et mis au point seulement après les répétitions avec Goodall et les répétiteurs principaux, et des discussions détaillées avec les co-producteurs et les chanteurs. L'approche démocratique du travail a guidé chacun des aspects de sa préparation et, à mon avis, c'est l'une des raisons de son succès triomphal. C'est une réussite dont nous sommes ouvertement fiers. L'un des commentateurs a qualifié la production de "*Ring* pour notre

temps”, et c’est ainsi que j’aime à penser qu’on s’en souviendra.

© 1973 Edmund Tracey  
Traduction: Francis Marchal, 2001

### Événements précédant “Siegfried”

Wotan a engagé les géants Fasolt et Fafner pour la construction d’une forteresse-résidence sûre pour les dieux, le Walhalla (en allemand, “Walhall”), et leur a accordé en paiement Freia, la déesse de la Jeunesse et de la Beauté. Wotan a conclu ce marché, malgré la forte désapprobation de sa femme Fricka, la déesse du Mariage (et la sœur de Freia), sur le conseil de Loge, le dieu du Feu (et du mensonge), comptant sur sa certitude que, quand le temps sera venu d’effectuer le paiement, il sera facile de dépouiller les géants de leur dû.

Mais en l’occurrence, Loge semble incapable d’apporter son aide. Il a parcouru le monde à la recherche d’une solution à la situation difficile de Wotan; mais il doit admettre qu’il n’a pu trouver nulle part un prix d’une plus grande valeur aux yeux des hommes que celui de l’amour et de la beauté des femmes – à l’exception d’un seul cas. Et il raconte les événements déjà vus dans la scène d’ouverture de l’opéra (*Das Rheingold*): le vol de l’or des

Filles du Rhin par Alberich le Nibelung (qui appartient à une race de gnomes vivant dans les profondeurs de la terre), après qu’elles ont laissé échapper l’information selon laquelle celui qui fera un anneau de cet or en tirera le pouvoir de maîtriser l’univers. Il y a toutefois une condition: seul celui qui renoncera à l’amour pourra forger un tel anneau – renoncement nécessaire qu’Alberich a déjà accepté de remplir.

Les Filles du Rhin l’ont imploré, continue Loge, de demander à Wotan de les aider à reconquérir leur or. Cependant, Wotan n’en a nullement l’intention. Il a immédiatement perçu le danger que représente pour les dieux la possession de l’anneau par Alberich ou par qui que ce soit, et il est déterminé à se l’approprier. Quand les géants arrivent pour demander leur paiement et manifestent leur bonne volonté d’accepter l’or au lieu de Freia qu’ils retiennent en otage, il rejette froidement l’appel des Filles du Rhin, mais quand les géants repartent, emmenant Freia avec eux, la vieillesse commence à s’abattre sur les dieux, et il change d’avis.

Toutefois, il faut d’abord obtenir l’or, et Loge est prêt à donner des conseils: puisqu’il a été acquis par le vol, le moyen le plus facile de le posséder est donc de le voler à nouveau.

Loge et Wotan descendent ensemble dans le Nibelheim, parviennent par la ruse à dominer Alberich, et le forcent à leur remettre le trésor, incluant le Tarnhelm (heaume magique qui a le pouvoir de rendre invisible celui qui le porte ou lui permet de changer de forme à volonté) et l’anneau. Mais en abandonnant l’anneau, Alberich lance sur lui une terrible malédiction: il apportera la mort à quiconque le portera; poursuivi par l’envie des autres, celui-ci vivra dans l’inquiétude, ne connaissant ni paix ni joie, jusqu’à ce que l’anneau soit rendu à son créateur. Plus tard (après qu’Erda, la déesse primitive de toute la sagesse du monde, est intervenue pour convaincre Wotan du danger que représente pour les dieux la possession de l’anneau, et a finalement triomphé de sa réticence à s’en défaire), bien que l’anneau et le trésor aient été remis aux géants et que Freia ait retrouvé sa liberté, la malédiction commence à faire son effet. Se querellant sur le partage de leur butin, Fafner frappe à mort son frère Fasolt.

Le paiement effectué, les dieux sont maintenant libre d’entrer dans leur nouvelle demeure, mais tandis qu’ils traversent l’arc-en-ciel déployé au-dessus de la vallée par Donner, le dieu de la Tempête, les voix des Filles du Rhin en train de se lamenter de leur perte s’élèvent des profondeurs.

Si nous voulons saisir les motifs conflictuels qui se trouvent à la base des actes de Wotan dans *Die Walküre*, nous devons comprendre clairement le dilemme dans lequel il se trouve. Sa puissance (symbolisée par sa lance) repose sur les principes de la loi, de la justice et de l’honnêteté. Mais maintenant, il est tombé en disgrâce: il a volé l’anneau d’Alberich, et au lieu de le rendre aux Filles du Rhin, il l’a utilisé pour payer sa dette envers les géants Fafner et Fasolt. Cette infraction sape les fondations mêmes de sa suprématie qui est également menacée de l’extérieur par le pouvoir hostile de l’anneau (maintenant possédé par Fafner). Que va-t-il faire?

Depuis que nous l’avons vu la dernière fois dans *Das Rheingold*, il n’est pas resté sans rien faire. Il a passé un long séjour chez Erda qui, outre les nombreux conseils plein de sagesse qu’elle lui a prodigués, lui a donné neuf filles, les Walkyries. Il emploie maintenant ces sauvages vierges-guerrières pour rassembler les âmes des héros morts au combat et les conduire au Walhalla. Ainsi, il se trouve à la tête d’une armée, augmentant ses forces pour le conflit inéluctable avec la sombre puissance de l’anneau.

Mais jusqu’à ce qu’il répare le mal qu’il a fait, et rende l’or du Rhin à ses propriétaires

naturelles, les Filles du Rhin, il ne pourra jamais se sentir en sécurité. L'anneau appartient désormais à Fafner qui se cache dans une caverne et, transformé en dragon grâce au pouvoir magique du Tarnhelm, monte constamment la garde à proximité. Deux raisons empêchent Wotan de le lui arracher par la force. En premier lieu, il a été donné à Fafner comme paiement pour la construction du Walhalla et, si un dieu le reprenait maintenant, ce serait une violation des lois de l'honnêteté. En second lieu, il y a la malédiction lancée sur l'anneau par Alberich. Comme nous l'avons vu, Wotan possède une certaine expérience de son efficacité, et bien qu'en s'étant immédiatement débarrassé du talisman il espère avoir échappé aux conséquences attachées à sa possession, il est cependant absolument déterminé à ce que celui-ci ne lui retombe jamais plus dans les mains.

Mais que se passerait-il si quelqu'un d'autre venait à s'approprier l'anneau et le rendait au Rhin? Cette idée est la base de son plan. Un tel individu ne peut recevoir aucune aide de sa part, car il a les mains liées par son obligation envers Fafner. Mais, si un agent libre pouvait s'acquitter de cette tâche, prenant ses risques avec la malédiction, alors Wotan se trouverait

libéré de tous ses ennuis. Avec cette idée en tête, il a pris une femme mortelle avec laquelle il a engendré deux enfants, Siegmund et Sieglinde. (Lui-même est connu comme étant Wälse, et les enfants comme Walsungen).

Nous les rencontrons tous les deux enfants dans la première scène de *Die Walküre* quand Siegmund, épuisé et désarmé après un combat tribal, cherche un refuge à la tempête dans la demeure forestière de Hunding, le mari de Sieglinde. Pendant qu'elle soigne ses blessures, il lui raconte son histoire, et ils ressentent une attraction mutuelle instinctive, quoiqu'aucun d'eux ne réalise qu'ils sont frère et sœur séparés depuis longtemps. Quand Hunding revient chez lui, il reconnaît rapidement en Siegmund un ennemi: il lui offre l'hospitalité pour la nuit, mais au matin il devra être prêt à se battre avec lui.

Plus tard pendant cette nuit, Sieglinde sort de sa chambre et vient voir Siegmund qui se repose devant le feu mourant dans la pièce principale. Hunding dort sous l'effet d'un narcotique, lui dit-elle, et elle continue par le récit de son mariage sans amour. Elle attire l'attention de Siegmund vers une épée (Notung) plantée jusqu'à la garde dans le tronc de l'arbre qui constitue le support principal de la maison. Elle a été placée là par Wälse

(Wotan, comme nous savons) pour qu'un héros l'en retire: de nombreux hommes ont essayé, mais tous ont échoué. Reconnaisant en elle l'arme que son père lui promit autrefois quand viendrait son heure, Siegmund, en un effort colossal, l'arrache triomphalement de sa cachette. Maintenant passionnément amoureux, frère et sœur s'enfuient dans la nuit printanière.

A l'Acte II, Hunding rattrape les fugitifs au col d'une montagne, et son combat avec Siegmund est imminent. Wotan a donné l'ordre à Brünnhilde, sa fille Walkyrie préférée, de venir en aide à Siegmund dans le combat, mais il est contraint par Fricka à un douloureux changement de décision. Fricka, en sa qualité de gardienne des liens sacrés du mariage, est profondément offensée par l'union incestueuse des deux Walsungen, et elle l'oblige à contredire son ordre. Siegmund doit mourir.

Cependant, émue par la dévotion évidente du couple, et sachant que Sieglinde est enceinte de Siegmund, Brünnhilde défie son père en tentant de protéger le Walsung au moment du combat. Mais Wotan interpose sa lance sur laquelle se brise l'épée de Siegmund, et Hunding tue son adversaire maintenant sans défense. Horrifiée par ce spectacle, Brünnhilde réunit les fragments de l'épée, et se sauve avec

Sieglinde évanouie en travers de son cheval. Wotan jure de se venger de la désobéissance de sa fille, et se lance à leur poursuite.

A l'Acte III, Brünnhilde confie les morceaux de l'épée à Sieglinde et l'aide à trouver refuge dans une forêt profonde vers l'Est – où Wotan s'aventure rarement, car c'est dans cet endroit que Fafner garde l'anneau maudit. Elle est ensuite appelée par son père à répondre de sa conduite. Il la réprimande avec colère pour avoir désobéi, et ordonne son châtiment: elle n'est plus désormais celle qui répond à ses vœux, ni une Walkyrie; il la renie. Ayant perdu sa divinité, elle est banie pour toujours et condamnée à demeurer sans défense sur un rocher, prisonnière d'un sommeil magique, et la proie du premier humain qui la découvrira.

Elle implore sa clémence – en lui désobéissant, n'a-t-elle pas répondu à son véritable souhait? – mais Wotan demeure inflexible. Alors, supplie Brünnhilde, si sa sentence est irréversible, qu'il ait au moins la bonté d'entourer la montagne d'un cercle de feu afin que seul le mortel le plus courageux ose le braver. Wotan ne peut résister à cette ultime demande et, après avoir sommé Loge d'entourer le sommet de la montagne d'une muraille de feu, il fait tristement ses adieux à sa fille bien-aimée.

## Argument

### Disque Compact Un

[1] Le Prélude de *Siegfried* nous informe que nous nous trouvons dans la grande forêt où se trouve la caverne de Fafner. C'est ici que Mime a découvert Sieglinde sur le point de mettre au monde Siegfried. Elle est morte après la naissance de l'enfant, et le Nibelung a élevé Siegfried en lui faisant croire qu'il n'avait pas d'autre parent. Mime a pour dessein de s'approprier l'anneau et le pouvoir qu'il confère, et espère que Siegfried tuera le dragon Fafner avec l'épée Notung.

### Acte I

#### *Une forêt*

[2] Une caverne dans laquelle se trouve une forge. Tandis que le rideau se lève, Mime travaille à son enclume: tous ses efforts pour reforgé les morceaux de Notung ont échoué jusqu'à présent; Siegfried a brisé toutes les épées faites pour lui, aussi les chances de Mime apparaissent-elles minces, et son désespoir est évident. [3] Siegfried arrive avec un ours qu'il lance contre Mime, pour qui il n'a que haine et mépris; après s'être amusé de son embarras et avoir relâché

l'animal dans la forêt, il exige son épée, et arrachant des mains de Mime le résultat de ses derniers efforts, [4] il la brise une fois encore contre l'enclume avant d'éclater en un torrent de reproches. [5] Mime se plaint de son ingratitude: tout ce qu'il reçoit en remerciement pour avoir été "le père et la mère" de Siegfried ne sont qu'injures et haine. [6] Mais le jeune garçon a vu son propre reflet dans le ruisseau, et sait que cette créature difforme ne saurait être son père. Curieux de connaître la véritable identité de ses parents, [7] il finit par contraindre Mime à le lui dire, et ce dernier pour prouver qu'il lui dit la vérité, va chercher les morceaux de l'épée de Siegmund – la seule récompense, dit-il, pour tous ses ennuis. [8] Siegfried est tout excité. Avec son épée légitime reforgée, il pourra aller dans le monde et quitter Mime pour toujours. Lui criant de se hâter dans sa besogne, [9] il s'enfuit dans la forêt, car là au moins, il peut trouver parmi les bêtes sauvages la compagnie agréable à laquelle il aspire.

[10] Wotan (sous les traits du Wanderer, un chapeau à large bord lui cachant un œil et tenant une lance qu'il utilise comme canne) entre par l'arrière de la caverne tandis que Mime est en plein désespoir. Il vient offrir sa

sagesse en échange de l'hospitalité, dit-il; mais Mime, très méfiant, ne souhaite que se débarrasser de son visiteur qu'il n'a pas reconnu. Wotan, se faisant alors bienveillant, laisse entendre qu'il pourrait lui dire quelque chose dans son intérêt, et [11] propose de se livrer au jeu des énigmes, pariant sa tête qu'il peut répondre à toute question que Mime choisira de lui poser. Résumant les événements du *Ring* jusqu'à ce moment de l'action, le Wanderer répond aux trois questions du gnome: il sait que des Nibelungen ont forgé l'anneau puissant puis l'ont perdu, que le géant Fafner le détient maintenant, et que des dieux dans le Walhalla continuent à régner sur les autres. [12] Interrogé à son tour, Mime révèle alors qu'il a entendu parler des Walsungen, de Siegmund et de Sieglinde, les parents de Siegfried, et que l'épée Notung est destinée à tuer le dragon et à reprendre l'anneau. [13] Mais quant à celui qui doit forger l'épée, Mime n'en a aucune idée. Voilà la question vraiment utile qu'il aurait dû lui poser, comment le Wanderer, et il l'informe que seul celui qui ignore la peur pourra forger Notung. Et il ajoute en souriant qu'il ne réclamera pas la tête de Mime, mais la laisse en gage à ce héros sans peur.

### Disque Compact Deux

[1] Wotan disparaît au moment où [2] Siegfried revient et trouve Mime derrière l'enclume complètement ébranlé par la terreur.

Il est exaspéré de découvrir que l'épée n'est pas prête; mais, explique Mime, seul celui qui ne connaît pas la peur peut la reforgé. [3] Siegfried aurait-il une idée de la peur provoquée par la présence du grand dragon Fafner, par exemple? – Et Mime se lance dans une description vivante des symptômes. Siegfried ne connaît pas cette peur, mais désire ardemment en faire l'expérience et, irrité par l'incompétence de Mime, [4]–[5] il se met à forger lui-même l'épée. Le voyant à l'ouvrage, Mime est convaincu que malgré sa méthode peu orthodoxe, il va réussir, et tandis que Siegfried est en train de forger, il conçoit l'idée de lui faire boire un narcotique comme rafraîchissement après le combat à venir afin de pouvoir le tuer avec sa propre épée, et ainsi obtenir l'anneau et le trésor. [6] Finissant son ouvrage, Siegfried brise triomphalement en deux l'enclume avec sa nouvelle épée.

### Acte II

#### *Dans les profondeurs de la forêt*

[7]–[8] Alberich monte jalousement la garde devant la caverne de Fafner. [9]–[10] Wotan

vient lui dire que Mime est en chemin avec un héros, qui va tenter de prendre le trésor. <sup>[1]</sup> Le Wanderer et Alberich réveillent le dragon, et lui proposent de le défendre s'il leur donne l'anneau, mais Fafner refuse. <sup>[2]</sup> Wotan rit et s'en va. Pendant qu'Alberich se cache, <sup>[3]</sup> le soleil se lève et Mime entre accompagné de Siegfried. Les mises en garde contre la redoutable puissance du dragon laissent Siegfried complètement indifférent. Mime se retire dans la forêt tandis que <sup>[4]</sup> le jeune garçon s'allonge en attendant le monstre.

### Disque Compact Trois

<sup>[1]</sup> Peu à peu, Siegfried prend conscience des murmures de la forêt, et en particulier <sup>[2]</sup> du chant de l'Oiseau qui se tient dans les branches au-dessus de lui. Il semble vouloir lui dire quelque chose. Siegfried tente de converser avec l'Oiseau en s'aidant d'un roseau, mais ses sonorités sont laides et peu convaincantes. Il se met alors à jouer la musique qu'il connaît en soufflant dans son cor, <sup>[3]</sup>–<sup>[4]</sup> ce qui attire le dragon hors de sa cachette. Siegfried le défie, et après un bref combat, le frappe en plein cœur avec l'épée Notung. <sup>[5]</sup> En retirant l'épée, Siegfried est brûlé par une giclée de sang de la créature, et

se porte involontairement la main à la bouche. Il se met subitement à comprendre les voix de la nature. L'Oiseau lui dit d'entrer dans la caverne et de ne prendre que le Tarnhelm magique et l'anneau.

<sup>[6]</sup> Tandis qu'il est à l'intérieur de la caverne. Alberich et Mime se disputent à propos du butin qu'ils espèrent, <sup>[7]</sup> et se retirent discrètement quand Siegfried réapparaît. L'Oiseau dit maintenant à Siegfried qu'il va comprendre les paroles de Mime, non pas comme les flatteries qu'il compte lui faire, mais dans leur sens véritable (et c'est ainsi que nous aussi les entendons). Mime revient et <sup>[8]</sup> demande à Siegfried s'il a ou non appris la peur: la réponse est non. Mime dit alors tout simplement qu'il va donner à Siegfried un narcotique, puis le tuer et s'emparer de l'anneau. Pris d'une rage pleine de mépris, Siegfried le frappe à mort et abandonne son corps dans la caverne, <sup>[9]</sup> puis dépose la dépouille du dragon devant l'entrée pour en bloquer à jamais l'accès. S'allongeant de nouveau pour se reposer, il reprend sa conversation avec l'Oiseau, et évoque sa solitude. L'Oiseau va-t-il lui parler d'une compagne telle que les autres animaux en possèdent? Il lui dit qu'une telle compagne existe, Brünnhilde, qui repose entourée par un

feu au sommet d'une montagne, et s'élève dans le ciel pour lui indiquer la direction. Siegfried suit avec enthousiasme l'Oiseau qui le guide.

### Acte III

#### *Un endroit sauvage au pied d'une montagne rocheuse*

<sup>[10]</sup> La scène commence dans un endroit sauvage et rocheux situé au pied d'une montagne. <sup>[11]</sup>–<sup>[14]</sup> Wotan, déguisé sous les traits du Wanderer, est venu consulter Erda pour la dernière fois. Il est accablé par le pressentiment que le crépuscule des dieux est tout proche, mais obéit au conseil d'Erda d'abandonner librement son pouvoir au héros qui est leur héritier: Siegfried réveillera Brünnhilde, et rachètera le monde. Erda disparaît dans les profondeurs de la terre.

### Disque Compact Quatre

<sup>[1]</sup> Suivant toujours l'Oiseau, Siegfried arrive. <sup>[2]</sup> Ignorant qu'il se trouve en présence de Wotan, Siegfried lui révèle qu'il a reforgé la puissante épée Notung, tué le dragon et conquis l'anneau (dont il ignore totalement la valeur), et qu'il va maintenant trouver Brünnhilde pour en faire sa femme. <sup>[3]</sup> Piqué par la hardiesse et l'effronterie du jeune

garçon, Wotan lui barre le chemin avec sa lance. Siegfried la réduit en morceaux.

<sup>[4]</sup> Désormais, la route qui conduit au sommet de la montagne est libre, et Siegfried se hâte tout en faisant résonner joyeusement son cor.

Recouvrant la scène, le feu laisse la place à de sombres nuages qui se dispersent en lumière élémentaire pour dévoiler le sommet de la montagne où Brünnhilde a été déposée endormie à la fin de *Die Walküre*.

<sup>[5]</sup>–<sup>[6]</sup> Siegfried s'approche et lui retire son armure d'une main hésitante. Il recule pris de frayeur (enfin) devant cette forme inconnue de lui. Comme elle ne répond pas à son appel, il se penche pour embrasser ses lèvres et la réveille. <sup>[7]</sup> Ouvrant les yeux, elle le salue comme étant le soleil du matin, et ils s'extasient l'un l'autre de leur beauté. <sup>[8]</sup> C'est alors que s'engage non pas un "duo d'amour" ordinaire, mais, comme l'a écrit William Mann, un véritable "duo de cour, caractérisé par une humanité merveilleusement sensible". <sup>[9]</sup> Tandis que leur ardeur s'accroît, Brünnhilde se lamente un instant sur la perte de sa virginité et sur le fait qu'elle n'est plus la farouche vierge guerrière du Walhalla; elle a honte de faire face à la lumière du jour. <sup>[10]</sup> Cependant, elle est rassurée par la pureté de Siegfried et se soumet à lui dans

l'accomplissement de leur amour. Pendant que le rideau tombe, ils se jurent l'un à l'autre un amour éternel.

© EMI Records Ltd

Traduction: Francis Marchal, 2001

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 Grieux (*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 Dame 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.

Le ténor australien **Gregory Dempsey**, né à Melbourne, fit ses débuts dans le rôle de Don Ottavio avec la Melbourne National Opera Company, puis devint membre de l'Elizabethan Trust Opera Company. Après sa prestation dans le rôle de Jenik (*La Fiancée vendue*) au Sadler's Wells Opera (plus tard

rebaptisé English National Opera), il devint ténor résident de cette compagnie. Parmi les nombreux rôles qu'il a chantés figurent Florestan, Max, Erik (*Der fliegende Holländer*), David (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Mime, Don José, Canio, Gregor (*L'Affaire Makropoulos*), Skuratov (*La Maison des morts*), Tom Rakewell et Essex (*Gloriana*). Il s'est également produit très souvent au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, au Welsh National Opera et au Scottish Opera (Enée dans *Les Troyens*), et a chanté au Festival d'Edimbourg (dans la création mondiale de *Mary, Queen of Scots* de Thea Musgrave) et au Festival d'Aldeburgh (*The Prodigal Son*). A l'étranger, Gregory Dempsey s'est produit avec le San Francisco Opera (dans le rôle de Gregor), ainsi qu'à Bruxelles (dans le rôle titre de *Peter Grimes*), Stuttgart et d'autres villes européennes. Vivant maintenant en Australie, il a fréquemment chanté à l'Australian Opera (par la suite Opera Australia) dans des rôles tels que Herman (*Pique Dame*), Boris (*Káťa Kabanová*) Dimitri (*Boris Godounov*), Jim (*Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*), Valzacchi (*Der Rosenkavalier*) et Trim (*La fanciulla del West*), et au Victoria State Opera (dans le rôle titre de *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, dans celui de Nero dans *L'incoronazione*

*di Poppea*, et dans celui de Monostatos). Il s'est également produit au Festival d'Adelaïde (dans le rôle titre des *Aventures de Monsieur Brouček*, et dans celui de Mark dans *The Midsummer Marriage* de Tippett).

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 Wanderer et Gunther à l'English National Opera, où en sa qualité de membre de la compagnie il a par ailleurs incarné les rôles de Pizarro (*Leonore* de Beethoven), le Comte de Luna (*Il trovatore*), Alfio (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Scarpia (*Tosca*), le Père (*Hänsel und Gretel*), le Prince Gremine (*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 les rôles de 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.

Le baryton anglais **Derek Hammond-Stroud** a étudié avec Elena Gerhardt et Gerhard Hüsch à Munich et à Londres, et a consacré sa carrière au récital et à l'opéra. Il a chanté avec toutes les grandes compagnies d'opéra de Grande-Bretagne, et s'est produit en Europe à l'Opéra d'Etat de Bavière, au Theater an der

Wien, au Theater am Gärtnerplatz, et a chanté pendant trois saisons à l'Opéra des Pays-Bas. En Amérique du Nord et du Sud, il a chanté dans de nombreuses salles lyriques, notamment au Teatro Colón de Buenos Aires, au Metropolitan Opera de New York et à l'Opéra de San Diego. Parmi les rôles importants qu'il a interprétés figurent le Dr Bartolo, Rigoletto, Fra Melitone (*La forza del destino*), Sharpless, Tonio (*Pagliacci*), Papageno, Alberich, Bechmesser, Faninal (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Krušina (*La Fiancée vendue*) et Sir Robert Cecil (*Gloriana*), ainsi que de nombreux rôles dans des œuvres de Gilbert et Sullivan et d'Offenbach. Il a participé à plusieurs premières anglaises, incluant *Orfeo ed Euridice* de Haydn (dans le rôle de Creonte), *La pietra del paragone* de Rossini (dans le rôle de Pacuvio), *Guerre et Paix* (dans le rôle de Napoléon, avec l'English National Opera) et *Der Besuch der alten Dame* de Gottfried von Einem (dans le rôle du Maître d'école, à Glyndebourne). Derek Hammond-Stroud a créé le rôle du Vieux Pêcheur dans la première mondiale de *The Violins of Saint-Jacques* de Malcolm Williamson au Sadler's Wells Theatre. Il a reçu de nombreuses distinctions, notamment celle d'officier de l'ordre de l'empire britannique (OBE) en 1987.

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 Alvis 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.

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*.

Après avoir étudié à Liverpool avec Edwin Francis et plus tard avec Dame Eva Turner entre autres, 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.

La carrière de la soprano australienne **Maurine London** s'étendit aux domaines de l'opéra, de l'opérette et de la comédie musicale. Titulaire d'un trophée Melba, elle chanta des rôles tels

que Violetta et Zerbinetta avec l'Australian Opera Company (par la suite Opera Australia), Valencienne et Hanna Glawari dans une production australienne du Sadler's Wells de *Die lustige Witwe*. Avec la New Zealand Opera Company, elle chanta dans *Rigoletto* avant de devenir membre du Sadler's Wells Opera (plus tard rebaptisé English National Opera) en Angleterre. Parmi les rôles qu'elle y chanta figurent Euridice (*Orphée aux Enfers*), Aennchen (*Der Freischütz*), Musetta, Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), la Comtesse Adèle (*Le Comte Ory*) et Hanna Glawari. Maurine London fut invitée à se produire avec l'Opéra de Francfort en Irlande, et chanta le rôle d'Elizabeth Barrett dans une tournée régionale de la comédie musicale de Ron Grainer, *Robert and Elizabeth*.

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

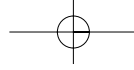
complet de *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, montée entre 1970 et 1973, et la première à être donnée en langue anglaise depuis plusieurs années. Il dirigea par la suite *Das Rheingold* et *Die Walküre* au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, *Tristan und Isolde* et *Die Walküre* au

Welsh National Opera, et *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.



Reg. Wilson

Mime and Siegfried,  
Act II, Scene 2



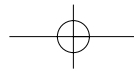
Anthony Crickmay/Theatre Museum, V & A

Siegfried and Fafner, Act II, Scene 2



Anthony Crickmay/Theatre Museum, V & A

Alberich and Mime, Act II, Scene 3



## Richard Wagner: Siegfried

### 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; Alberich, 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 a *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-Alberich" mentre Alberich, 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 Siegfried). 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 Siegfried sotto il taglio, 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 Siegfried). 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 Walhalla. 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 Arthur 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, Brünnhilde 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 *Siegfried*.

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 Florestan 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 “Walhalla” e dell’“anello” (rispettivamente nobili e funesti), che confermano o, meglio ancora, anticipano la nostra impressione che Wotan ed Alberich rappresentino 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 “Walhalla” 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.

© 2000 Richard Lawrence

Traduzione: ASA Products

### Siegfried

Chiunque abbia letto le critiche che definiscono *Siegfried* lo scherzo del *Ring*, con tutta la leggerezza e lo spirito che questo comporta, rimarrà perplesso dal preludio del primo atto. Quando lo vediamo per la prima volta, Mime lavora di martello a una spada che sta cercando di foggare per Siegfried. Ma prima che si alzi il sipario, l'orchestra descrive nei particolari i suoi pensieri più segreti. Su un lieve rullo di tamburo, due fagotti tratteggiano a sussurri il motivo conduttore dell'anello. Fafner, che aveva ucciso il fratello Fasolt per impossessarsi dell'oro del Reno, si è

trasformato in drago per proteggerlo dai furti, ma lo tiene stupidamente nascosto sotto il materasso, per così dire, anziché investirlo in azioni o titoli.

Mime medita di riconquistare l'anello, l'oggetto più importante del tesoro. Davanti ai nostri occhi, o piuttosto alle nostre orecchie, sfilano l'oro, i Nibelunghi, il sinistro potere dell'anello (una versione distorta del motivo dell'oro del Reno) e l'anello stesso. L'atmosfera è cupa e misteriosa, l'immagine sonora evocata da legni, ottoni e archi bassi. Il motivo della spada, baldanzosamente e nobilmente sbandierato nelle opere precedenti, adesso è eseguito *pianissimo* dalla tromba bassa. Persino i violini, che attaccano tardi, poco prima che Mime inizi a martellare, sono obbligati a utilizzare la sordina che, come per gli archi bassi, viene mantenuta fino all'ingresso di Siegfried e dell'orso.

Il preludio del secondo atto è altrettanto cupo. Alberich, fratello di Mime, si trova davanti all'antro di Fafner, nel cuore della foresta, in attesa. Il drago è rappresentato dai timpani, dai contrabbassi e dalla tuba contrabbassa. Legni e corni annunciano che Alberich, come sempre, continua a rimuginare sull'anello, mentre si sente, inconfondibile, il motivo della maledizione, affidato ai tromboni,

esattamente come nella sua prima apparizione orchestrale dopo la morte di Fasolt in *Das Rheingold*. Il preludio procede in un rapido crescendo fino a un *fortissimo*, prima di afflosciarsi in maniera altrettanto repentina per ricordare la sinistra atmosfera dell'inizio. Un capolavoro che evoca gli orrori di una triste foresta ancor più della scena della Valle dei lupi in *Der Freischütz* di Weber, a cui è ispirato.

Ma non tutto è fosco e desolato. Dopo l'alba inizia il Mormorio della foresta; mentre medita sui genitori che non conosce, Siegfried gradualmente si rende conto del canto degli uccelli sopra di lui e di un uccellino in particolare. Questo meraviglioso brano descrittivo inizia con una versione accelerata della figura ondulante dei violoncelli introdotta poco prima, nel momento in cui Siegfried era rimasto finalmente solo. Wagner utilizza quindi gli archi divisi per comunicare il languido stormire delle foglie variegiate nella foresta, mentre l'oboe, il flauto e il clarinetto continuano a cinguettare. È un esempio perfetto della passione per la natura caratteristica del movimento romantico in Germania.

Se l'elemento dello scherzo manca in questi brani orchestrali convenzionali, si trova certamente altrove. Nel primo atto le battute

che si scambiano Mime e il Viandante hanno una traccia appena stentata di allegria, ma gli esempi abbondano nel secondo atto. Il desiderio di Mime che Fafner e Siegfried si uccidano a vicenda generalmente desta il riso; poi, dopo il Mormorio della foresta, prevale uno stato d'animo più leggero, quando Siegfried cerca di imitare il canto dell'uccellino con un flauto che improvvisato tagliando una canna. Il litigio tra Alberich e Mime mentre Siegfried cerca l'oro del Reno nell'antro di Fafner è un momento veramente farsesco, mentre le vibrazioni dei legni descrivono la furia isterica di Mime. Poi c'è l'ironia della musica che comunica l'insincerità viscida di Mime, mentre Siegfried, grazie alle magiche proprietà del sangue del drago, è consapevole delle intenzioni criminali del nano. L'atto si chiude mentre l'uccellino si prende gioco di Siegfried volando qua e là, prima di fissare le mire sulla roccia di Brünnhilde e fargli strada.

Questa leggerezza di tocco è chiaramente assente nel terzo atto, anche se il grido d'allarme di Siegfried al momento di togliere la corazza a Brünnhilde addormentata, "Das ist kein Mann!" (Questo non è un uomo!), rimane un momento difficile per il cantante. Fu con quest'atto che Wagner fece ritorno al *Ring* dopo un intervallo di dodici anni e lo

sviluppo del suo stile è subito evidente dal modo con cui utilizza ben nove motivi in un'introduzione che emula il preludio del primo atto dei *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* con il suo contrappunto ingegnoso. L'abilità con cui i solenni accordi del Viandante vengono sovrapposti al resto del materiale toglie semplicemente il fiato.

Questo magnifico preludio presenta la grande scena con Erda, comparsa l'ultima volta nel *Rheingold*, come Alberich, Mime e Fafner. Travestito da Viandante, Wotan ha viaggiato in tutto il mondo, in cerca della saggezza. Adesso, finalmente, è venuto a chiedere aiuto all'onnisciente madre terra. Ma è costretto a riconoscere che Erda ha perso la propria onniscienza. Le dichiara di accettare la sconfitta degli dei e di voler lasciare il proprio regno a Siegfried, l'eroe solitario che non conosce la paura. Il discorso è sottolineato da una nuova melodia di grande respiro e nobiltà, con un lirismo di sapore quasi italiano, molto diversa dai motivi frammentari concepiti nel periodo precedente ai dodici anni di intervallo.

Dopo il fatale faccia a faccia con il Viandante, Siegfried corre tra le fiamme. Se l'inizio del secondo atto ci ricorda *Der Freischütz*, questa parte presenta un'analogia con *Orfeo ed Euridice* di Gluck; il

corno di Siegfried qui prende il posto della lira di Orfeo. E proprio come Orfeo emerge attonito nei Campi Elisi, così Siegfried può solo guardarsi intorno pieno di stupore davanti alla scena di tranquillità che lo accoglie sulla montagna di Brünnhilde. Con un colpo di suprema audacia, Wagner alleggerisce la tessitura orchestrale fino a lasciare solo i violini, che raggiungono la vetta della loro gamma, prima di scendere nuovamente. L'aria è di una purezza palpabile.

Per alcuni il duetto finale tra Siegfried e Brünnhilde può essere deludente, dopo gli splendori della parte precedente di quest'atto. Ma Wagner esprime abilmente lo sgomento di Brünnhilde alla perdita della propria divinità, seguito dall'accettazione gioiosa dell'amore umano di cui prima era stata solo testimone in *Die Walküre*. Il pubblico può scegliere se assaporare l'ironia della situazione o se rifiutarsi di accettarla fino agli accordi presaghi di sventura, eco del risveglio di Brünnhilde, con cui inizia *Götterdämmerung*.

*Siegfried* fu rappresentato per la prima volta nell'agosto del 1876, nell'ambito del primo ciclo del *Ring* al festival di Bayreuth.

© 2001 Richard Lawrence  
Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

### La genesi del "Ring" alla Sadler's Wells Opera

– Dai ricordi personali di Edmund Tracey  
Com'è nato il *Ring* inglese? Con molta fatica, lotte, con il beneficio del tempo (è un'opera lunghissima); con il giusto talento, nel posto giusto allo stesso tempo e, come succede generalmente per le grandi imprese, con congetture e con l'aiuto di Dio. Dal momento che si tratta del primo ciclo completo, dev'essere anche un evento di cui rallegrarsi. Per questo non voglio ricordare le lotte, alcune feroci; e comunque tutti gli artisti sanno che è sempre necessario lavorare sodo; ma vorrei dire qualcosa delle persone che hanno contribuito con il loro talento, perché sono loro, dopo tutto, ad aver trasformato l'idea in realtà, dandole corpo, nervi, colore e movimento.

Il primo passo significativo risale al 1967, quando decidemmo di realizzare un nuovo allestimento dei *Meistersinger*, in parte perché il 1968 era il centenario della sua prima rappresentazione e in parte perché volevamo utilizzare tutte le forze disponibili delle due compagnie allora a Sadler's Wells intorno al periodo di Natale/Capodanno. Per prima cosa chiedemmo a Glen Byam Shaw e John Blatchley di collaborare all'allestimento e invitammo Reginald Goodall a preparare la parte musicale.

Quest'ultima decisione era fondamentale per l'intero progetto. Io avevo sentito Goodall dirigere *Die Meistersinger* e *Die Walküre* alla Royal Opera House e da anni ammiravo quello che sapevo del suo modo di lavorare; ma era difficile integrarlo nell'attività di un teatro di repertorio sovraccarico. Goodall lavora al meglio in quelle che si possono definire condizioni da festival e non è disposto a compromettere i suoi alti ideali: pretende una preparazione lunga e dettagliata, esercitazioni individuali di tutti i cantanti e i gruppi strumentali, una quantità di prove d'insieme e orchestrali e una paziente costruzione dell'elaborato mosaico interno nell'arco di molti mesi. La prima volta che proposi il suo nome, incontrai una certa resistenza, ma ottenni l'appoggio di Stephen Arlen, all'epoca direttore della compagnia e persona lungimirante, oltre che amministratore immensamente abile; Goodall venne ingaggiato. In realtà la preparazione che comportarono *Die Meistersinger*, e in seguito *Der Ring*, fu indispensabile perché né i nostri cantanti né la nostra orchestra erano abituati a questo linguaggio musicale e, come gli atleti, avevano bisogno di un lungo periodo di allenamento, anche solo per acquisire la resistenza fisica che le rappresentazioni richiedevano.

È un dato storico che le prime rappresentazioni allestite al teatro di Sadler's Wells nel 1968, affascinarono Londra; il fenomeno fu ancora più marcato quando l'allestimento venne riproposto, alcuni mesi più tardi, al Coliseum, dove la compagnia si era trasferita nell'estate del 1968. Stephen Arlen aveva fatto in modo che il passo successivo fosse *Der Ring* – naturalmente, in inglese. A quell'epoca c'era ancora chi rideva all'idea del *Ring* in inglese: inebriati dalla musica e con una conoscenza molto imperfetta del tedesco, questi ascoltatori non avevano mai compreso il fascino completo del dramma. Le parole dovevano essere vere e comprensibili esattamente come la musica doveva essere cantata ed eseguita in maniera idiomatica. Pertanto io commissionai una nuova traduzione ad Andrew Porter, che aveva già creato un'ottima versione del *Rigoletto* per la compagnia ed era particolarmente desideroso di cimentarsi con il *Ring*.

Era ovvio che Reginald Goodall/Glen Byam Shaw/John Blatchley avrebbero dovuto continuare a lavorare insieme e noi stavamo già cominciando a formare l'équipe di cantanti wagneriani che abbiamo gradualmente riunito nel corso degli anni: Alberto Remedios, Norman Bailey e Margaret Curphey, che

avevano tutti riscosso molto successo in *Die Meistersinger*, furono presenti alla prima rappresentazione di *Die Walküre*, il nostro primo stadio del *Ring*; e fu in quest'opera che Rita Hunter si fece notare nel ruolo di Brünnhilde, Ava June in quello di Sieglinde, Ann Howard in quello di Fricka e Clifford Grant in quello di Hunding. Questi cantanti, insieme con Derek Hammond-Stroud e Gregory Dempsey (per cui tuttavia non esistevano ruoli nella *Walküre*) furono i soci fondatori di un gruppo molto vicino di artisti, per la maggior parte interni, che impararono gradualmente a sviluppare uno stile interno coerente e flessibile: cantare in inglese per un pubblico anglofono, riconoscendo così a Wagner i suoi meriti come drammaturgo oltre che come compositore.

Quando Glen Byam Shaw e John Blatchley mi parlarono per la prima volta della scenografia, tutti ci rendemmo conto che ci trovavamo davanti a una nuova svolta per il *Ring* con un'idea diversa da quella che Wieland Wagner aveva proposto a Bayreuth vent'anni prima, e che aveva completamente dominato gli allestimenti scenici wagneriani europei da allora. Quello che emerse fu un elemento di naturalismo, nel senso che sulla scena compaiono quasi tutte le indicazioni del

libretto wagneriano, ma trasfigurate attraverso l'originalissima fantasia di Ralph Koltai. Come Wieland Wagner aveva creato il suo *Ring* astratto nella Germania del dopoguerra, denudata della gloria imperiale, tra le rovine del suo romantico splendore, le scene di Koltai hanno suggerito a molti un'affinità con l'era spaziale di cui viviamo alle soglie. Quello che io ho sempre trovato molto soddisfacente, personalmente, è il fatto che queste belle scene hanno ospitato una produzione di profonda umanità, senza eccentricità o invenzioni fini a se stesse, ma vera, brillante e fedele alle esigenze del compositore.

La nostra versione della tetralogia del *Ring* è stata costruita nell'arco di quattro anni e ogni parte esistente è stata riproposta per accompagnare la prima presentazione della parte successiva. È stato inevitabile apportare modifiche e tentare vie diverse. Il primo approccio di Koltai alla scenografia del Reno per *Götterdämmerung* non fu soddisfacente, ma fu perfezionato l'anno dopo in *Das Rheingold*. La prima soluzione per la montagna di Brünnhilde non fu perfetta in *Die Walküre*, ma la migliorammo quando arrivammo a *Siegfried*. Molti elementi della traduzione furono affinati e perfezionati solo dopo le prove con Goodall e gli insegnanti e attraverso discussioni

approfondite con i coproduttori e i cantanti. L'approccio democratico all'opera ha permeato ogni aspetto della sua preparazione e, secondo me, rappresenta una delle ragioni del suo straordinario successo. Si tratta di un risultato di cui siamo apertamente fieri. Uno dei commentatori lo definì "il *Ring* del nostro tempo"; mi piace pensare che sarà ricordato così.

© 1973 Edmund Tracey

Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella, 2001

#### Antefatti di "Siegfried"

Wotan ha assunto due giganti, Fasolt e Fafner, per costruire una fortezza sicura, il Walhalla, e farne la dimora degli dei; in premio del loro lavoro ha promesso Freia, dea della giovinezza e della bellezza. L'accordo è stato concluso nonostante la decisa disapprovazione della sposa di Wotan, Fricka, dea del matrimonio (e sorella di Freia), in base a un suggerimento di Loge, dio del fuoco (e dell'inganno), convinto che, al momento del pagamento, sarà facile rifiutare ai due giganti il compenso dovuto.

Ma quando arriva questo momento, l'aiuto di Loge viene a mancare. Il dio ha viaggiato in tutto il mondo per cercare una scappatoia alla difficile situazione di Wotan e deve ammettere che non è riuscito a trovare un premio più

prezioso dell'amore e della bellezza femminile agli occhi degli uomini, fatta eccezione per un solo caso. Così narra gli eventi a cui si era già assistito nella scena di apertura dell'opera (*Das Rheingold*): il furto dell'oro del Reno, di proprietà delle Ondine, da parte di Alberich il Nibelungo (appartenente a una razza di nani che vivevano nelle viscere della terra). Le figlie del Reno avevano incautamente rivelato che chi sarebbe riuscito a farne un anello avrebbe avuto il potere di diventare signore del mondo, ma a patto di rinnegare l'amore. E Alberich ha già fatto la rinuncia necessaria.

Le Ondine l'hanno implorato, prosegue Loge, di rivolgersi a Wotan perché le aiuti a recuperare l'oro. Ma Wotan non ne ha alcuna intenzione. Ha subito capito che chiunque sia in possesso dell'anello, Alberich o altri, rappresenta un pericolo per gli dei, e decide di impadronirsene. Quando i giganti arrivano per reclamare il loro compenso e si dicono disposti ad accettare l'oro invece di Freia, che hanno preso come ostaggio, respinge decisamente l'appello delle Ondine, ma quando i giganti si allontanano, portando con sé Freia, gli dei cominciano a invечьiare; questo gli fa cambiare idea.

Per prima cosa, comunque, bisogna trovare l'oro. Loge è prodigo di consigli: dal momento

che è stato conquistato con il furto, la cosa più facile per impossessarsene è ricorrere a un altro furto. Insieme, Loge e Wotan scendono nel Nibelheim, riescono a sopraffare Alberich con l'inganno e si fanno consegnare con la forza il tesoro, compreso il Tarnhelm (un elmo magico che ha il potere di rendere invisibile chi lo indossa o ne cambia le sembianze) e l'anello. Ma nel separarsi dall'anello, Alberich scaglia su di esso una terribile maledizione: chi lo porterà morirà, chi lo possiederà vivrà tra gli affanni, perseguitato dall'invidia degli altri, senza conoscere pace né gioia, finché l'anello non verrà restituito alla mano che lo ha creato. E più tardi (dopo l'intervento di Erda, dea preistorica di tutta la saggezza del mondo, la quale convince Wotan che il possesso dell'anello rappresenta un pericolo per gli dei e gli fa superare la propria riluttanza a separarsene) già mentre l'anello e il tesoro vengono consegnati ai giganti e Freia viene liberata, la maledizione comincia ad avverarsi. Nella disputa per la spartizione del bottino, Fafner uccide il fratello Fasolt a bastonate.

Dopo aver effettuato il pagamento, gli dei sono finalmente liberi di entrare nella loro nuova dimora, ma mentre per raggiungerla attraversano l'arcobaleno, il ponte costruito sulla vallata da Donner, dio delle tempeste, dal

profondo si leva la voce delle figlie del Reno che piangono la loro perdita.

Per comprendere il conflitto da cui derivano le azioni di Wotan nella *Walküre*, bisogna avere una chiara idea del suo dilemma. Il suo potere (di cui è simbolo la sua lancia) si basa sui principi della legge, giustizia e lealtà. Ma adesso è in disgrazia: ha rubato l'anello ad Alberich e, anziché restituirlo alle figlie del Reno, lo ha utilizzato per pagare il proprio debito ai giganti Fafner e Fasolt. Questa violazione indebolisce le basi della sua supremazia, minacciata dall'esterno anche dal potere funesto dell'anello (ormai in mano di Fafner). Che fare?

Dall'ultima volta che l'abbiamo incontrato, in *Das Rheingold*, Wotan non è rimasto con le mani in mano. Dopo una lunga visita a Erda, ha ottenuto da lei molti saggi consigli e generato nove figlie, le Valchirie. Adesso utilizza queste selvagge vergini guerriere per radunare le anime degli eroi caduti in battaglia e portarle nel Walhalla. Così sta creando un esercito e si rafforza, in vista dell'inevitabile scontro con le forze malvage dell'anello.

Ma finché non avrà rimediato al torto perpetrato e restituito l'oro del Reno alle sue naturali proprietarie, le Ondine, non potrà mai sentirsi sicuro. L'anello adesso appartiene a

Fafner, che l'ha nascosto in una caverna e, trasformatosi in drago con la magia del Tarnhelm, lo veglia giorno e notte. Wotan non può tentare di sottrarglielo con la forza per due ragioni. Si tratta del compenso versato a Fafner per la costruzione del Walhalla, e riprenderselo adesso per il dio sarebbe sleale. Poi, c'è la maledizione che Alberich ha scagliato sull'anello. Come abbiamo visto, Wotan ha una certa esperienza della sua efficacia e, sebbene si auguri di essere sfuggito alle conseguenze del suo possesso perché ha abbandonato immediatamente il talismano, è comunque ben deciso a non averlo mai più tra le mani.

E se a riprendere l'anello per restituirlo al Reno fosse qualcun altro? Dovrebbe trattarsi di qualcuno che non riceva aiuto da lui, che non può rinnegare la promessa fatta a Fafner. Ma se l'impresa fosse affidata a un libero agente, che affrontasse il rischio della maledizione, Wotan potrebbe liberarsi di tutti i suoi problemi. Per questo ha sposato una mortale e generato due figli, Siegmund e Sieglinde. (Ha assunto il nome di Wälse e i figli sono detti Wälzung.)

Li incontriamo entrambi nella prima scena della *Walküre* quando, durante una tempesta, Siegmund, sfinito e disarmato dopo una lotta

tribale, trova riparo nell'abitazione di Hunding, marito di Sieglinde, nella foresta. Mentre la donna gli cura le ferite, egli le narra la sua storia ed entrambi si sentono istintivamente attratti, senza rendersi conto di essere fratello e sorella, da lungo separati. Al suo ritorno a casa, Hunding vede subito in Siegmund un nemico: avrà diritto all'ospitalità per la notte, ma l'indomani mattina dovrà essere preparato a combattere con lui.

Più tardi la stessa notte, Sieglinde esce dalla sua camera per tornare da Siegmund, che riposa davanti al fuoco morente della sala principale. Gli rivela che Hunding dorme, ubriaco, e prosegue raccontando la storia del suo matrimonio senza amore e gli indica una spada (Notung) sepolta fino all'elsa nel tronco dell'albero che costituisce il supporto principale della casa. Era stata collocata qui da Wälse (Wotan, come sappiamo) e può essere estratta solo da un eroe: molti hanno provato, ma tutti hanno fallito. Riconoscendo in essa l'arma che suo padre gli aveva promesso un tempo nell'ora del bisogno, con un potente sforzo, Siegmund la estrae trionfante dal suo nascondiglio. Ormai perdutamente innamorati, fratello e sorella fuggono insieme nella notte primaverile.

Nel secondo atto, Hunding supera i

fuggitivi su un valico di montagna; il suo combattimento con Siegmund è imminente. Wotan ha ordinato alla figlia prediletta, la Valchiria Brünnhilde, di aiutare Siegmund nella lotta, ma è obbligato a un angoscioso cambiamento di decisione da Fricka, custode dei vincoli matrimoniali, profondamente indignata dall'unione incestuosa dei due Wälsung, e revoca il proprio ordine. Siegmund deve morire.

Infine, commossa dall'evidente devozione della coppia e sapendo che Sieglinde porta in grembo il figlio di Siegmund non ancora nato, Brünnhilde sfida il padre e tenta di proteggere il Wälsung nel momento della battaglia. Ma Wotan interpone la sua lancia, la spada di Siegmund si spezza su di essa e Hunding uccide l'avversario ormai indifeso. Inorridita, Brünnhilde raccoglie i frammenti della spada e corre via portando sul suo cavallo Sieglinde, priva di sensi. Wotan si lancia all'inseguimento, giurando vendetta contro la figlia che lo ha disobbedito.

Nel terzo atto, dopo aver aiutato Sieglinde a fuggire con i frammenti della spada nel cuore delle foreste orientali, dove Wotan si avventura raramente, perché qui si trova Fafner a guardia dell'anello maledetto, Brünnhilde viene chiamata dal padre che pretende una

spiegazione. Furibondo, il dio la rimprovera per la sua disobbedienza e ordina la sua punizione: non sarà più la sua Valchiria prediletta. Perduta la propria divinità, sarà bandita per sempre dalla sua vista e condannata a giacere indifesa sulla roccia, strettamente incatenata dai vincoli del sonno, preda del primo uomo che la troverà.

A nulla valgono gli appelli di Brünnhilde alla clemenza – con la sua disobbedienza, in fondo non ha esaudito il vero desiderio del padre? Se non intende revocare il suo decreto, almeno che circondi la montagna con un cerchio di fiamme; in tal modo solo il più coraggioso mortale avrà il coraggio di affrontarle. Wotan non riesce a resistere a quest'ultima preghiera e, dopo aver chiamato Loge perché circondi la cima della montagna con un muro di fuoco, dice tristemente addio all'amata figlia.

#### Trama

#### Primo Compact Disc

<sup>[1]</sup> Il preludio a *Siegfried* ci dice che ci troviamo nella grande foresta in cui si trova la caverna di Fafner. Mime ha trovato qui Sieglinde, sul punto di dare alla luce Siegfried.

La donna è morta di parto e il Nibelungo ha allevato il bambino dicendogli di essere suo padre. Mime progetta di ottenere l'anello e il suo potere per sé e spera che Siegfried uccida il drago Fafner, con la spada Notung.

#### Atto I

##### Foresta

<sup>[2]</sup> La caverna di un fabbro. Il sipario si alza e troviamo Mime che lavora all'incudine: finora, tutti i suoi sforzi per riunire i frammenti di Notung sono falliti e Siegfried ha distrutto tutte le spade costruite per lui, quindi le possibilità del nano sembrano scarse e la sua disperazione è molto evidente. <sup>[3]</sup> Entra Siegfried portando al guinzaglio un orso che aizza contro Mime, per cui nutre solo odio e disprezzo: dopo essersi divertito alla sua sconfitta e aver lasciato libero l'animale nella foresta, chiede la sua spada e, strappando l'ultima fatica di Mime dalla sua mano, <sup>[4]</sup> ancora una volta la scaglia sull'incudine prima di esplodere in un torrente di rimproveri. <sup>[5]</sup> Mime piagnucola di fronte alla sua ingratitudine: tutto quello che ottiene dopo aver fatto da "padre e madre" a Siegfried sono insulti e odio. <sup>[6]</sup> Ma il giovane ha visto il proprio riflesso nel ruscello e sa che quella creatura deforme non può essere suo padre.

Curioso di sapere chi sono i suoi veri genitori, [7] alla fine riesce a strappare la storia a Mime che, come prova della sua veridicità, tira fuori i pezzi della spada di Siegmund – unica ricompensa, dice, per tutte le sue fatiche. [8] Siegfried è molto eccitato. Con questa, la sua vera spada, ritemperata, potrà andare per il mondo e abbandonare Mime per sempre. Gli urla di affrettarsi e poi [9] corre nella foresta, dove almeno riesce a trovare tra gli animali la compagnia piacevole che desidera.

[10] La disperazione di Mime viene interrotta da Wotan (travestito da viandante, con un cappello a tesa larga calato su un occhio e con una lancia come bastone), che entra dal fondo della caverna. È venuto a chiedere ospitalità e offrire saggezza in cambio, dice, ma Mime, profondamente sospettoso, vuole solo sbarazzarsi di questo visitatore che non ha riconosciuto. In tono amichevole, Wotan insinua che può dirgli qualcosa di utile e [11] propone un gioco di indovinelli. Scommette la testa che saprà rispondere a tre domande di Mime. Riassumendo gli eventi del *Ring* fino a questo momento, il Viandante risponde alle domande del nano, rivelando di conoscere la storia dei Nibelunghi che hanno foggato il potente anello e l'hanno perduto, del gigante

Fafner che adesso lo custodisce, e degli dèi del Walhalla che regnano ancora sugli altri.

[12] Quando tocca a lui rispondere alle domande, Mime dimostra che ha sentito parlare dei Walsung, Siegmund e Sieglinde, genitori di Siegfried, e sa che la spada Notung è destinata a uccidere il drago e riconquistare l'anello. [13] Ma per quanto riguarda chi forgerà la spada, Mime non ha risposta: questa era l'unica domanda utile che avrebbe dovuto fare a se stesso, commenta il Viandante, e gli dice che solo chi non conosce la paura può ritemperare Notung. Per quanto riguarda la testa di Mime, prosegue sorridendo il Viandante, lui non ha intenzione di chiederla, ma la lascia in pegno a quest'eroe senza paura.

### Secondo Compact Disc

[1] Il Viandante scompare proprio mentre  
[2] Siegfried ritorna e trova il nano accasciato dal terrore sotto l'incudine.

Il giovane è esasperato perché la spada non è pronta; ma, come spiega Mime, solo chi non conosce la paura può foggiarla nuovamente.

[3] Per esempio, Siegfried ha idea di quanta paura proverà davanti al grande drago Fafner? – e si lancia in una vivace descrizione dei sintomi. Siegfried risponde di no, ma desidera

provare quella sensazione ed, esasperato dall'incompetenza di Mime, [4]–[5] comincia a lavorare per foggare la spada da sé. Vedendolo così impegnato, Mime si convince che, a dispetto dei suoi metodi poco ortodossi, ci riuscirà, e mentre Siegfried adopera il martello, gli viene l'idea di offrirgli una pozione drogata come rinfresco dopo la lotta, in modo da poterlo uccidere con la sua stessa arma e ottenere l'anello e il tesoro. [6] Terminato il lavoro, Siegfried trionfante rompe in due l'incudine con la sua nuova spada.

### Atto II

#### *Nel cuore della foresta*

[7]–[8] Alberich sorveglia gelosamente l'antro di Fafner. [9]–[10] Wotan va a dirgli che Mime sta conducendo fin là un eroe che tenterà di prendere il tesoro. [11] Il Viandante e Alberich svegliano il drago, e gli propongono di difenderlo in cambio dell'anello, ma Fafner rifiuta. [12] Wotan ride e si allontana. Mentre Alberich si nasconde, [13] si leva il sole e Mime entra con Siegfried. Gli ammonimenti sui terribili poteri del drago non suscitano alcun timore in Siegfried e Mime si ritira nella foresta mentre [14] il giovane si sdraia per attendere il mostro.

### Terzo Compact Disc

[1] Gradualmente, Siegfried comincia ad ascoltare mormorio della foresta e, in particolare, [2] il canto di un uccellino sui rami sopra la sua testa. Sembra che cerchi di dirgli qualcosa. Il giovane cerca di conversare con l'animale tagliere di Mime (ma produce un suono rozzo e poco convincente. Allora fa ricorso al proprio corno, e [3]–[4] questo fa uscire il drago dal suo nascondiglio. Siegfried lo sfida e, dopo una breve lotta, riesce ad immergergli nel cuore Notung. [5] Mentre estrae la spada, Siegfried viene scottato da un fiotto di sangue dell'animale e involontariamente si porta la mano alla bocca. Adesso, improvvisamente, comprende le voci della natura. L'uccellino gli dice di entrare nella caverna e di prendere solo il magico Tarnhelm e l'anello.

[6] Mentre si trova nella caverna, Alberich e Mime litigano pensando al bottino e [7] fuggono via quando ricompare Siegfried. L'uccellino adesso dice a Siegfried che comprenderà nel loro vero significato le parole falsamente lusinghiere di Mime (ed è così che anche noi le ascoltiamo). Mime ritorna e [8] chiede a Siegfried se ha imparato cos'è la paura: il giovane risponde di no. Sembra che

Mime dica chiaramente che darà a Siegfried una pozione per addormentarlo, lo ucciderà per impadronirsi dell'anello. Sopraffatto dal disprezzo e dall'ira, Siegfried l'uccide e lascia il suo corpo nella caverna, [9] sposta il cadavere del drago fino all'apertura e la richiude così sempre. Fermandosi ancora una volta per riposare, il giovane riprende la conversazione con l'uccellino e gli confessa la propria solitudine. L'uccellino può parlargli di una compagna come quelle che hanno gli altri animali? L'uccellino gli dice che ne esiste una, Brünnhilde, che giace circondata dal fuoco in cima a una montagna e si libra nell'aria per indicargli la via. Siegfried segue avidamente l'uccellino che lo guida.

### Atto III

*Un luogo selvaggio ai piedi di una montagna rocciosa*

[10] Si inizia alle pendici selvagge e rocciose di una montagna. [11]–[14] Wotan, travestito da Viandante, è venuto per consultare Erda per l'ultima volta. È oppresso dalla consapevolezza che si avvicina il crepuscolo degli dèi, ma obbedisce al consiglio di Erda di cedere liberamente il suo potere all'eroe che è il suo erede: Siegfried sveglierà Brünnhilde e salverà il mondo. Erda si ritira, sprofondando nella terra.

### Quarto Compact Disc

[1] Entra Siegfried, sempre guidato dall'uccellino. [2] Ignaro di trovarsi di fronte a Wotan, rivela che è stato lui a ritemperare la potente spada Notung, uccidere il drago e conquistare l'anello (del cui valore è completamente all'oscuro), e adesso va a trovare Brünnhilde per farne la sua sposa.

[3] Stupito dall'atteggiamento coraggioso e insolente del giovane, Wotan gli sbarra la strada con la sua lancia. Siegfried la spezza.

[4] Adesso il suo fiero cammino verso la cima della montagna è libero, e Siegfried si affretta, suonando allegramente il corno.

Il fuoco copre la scena, lasciando il posto a nubi scure che si disperdono nella luce degli elementi per rivelare la cima della montagna dove Brünnhilde era stata deposta a dormire alla fine della *Walküre*. [5]–[6] Siegfried si avvicina, le toglie con esitazione la corazza e indietreggia con paura (finalmente) davanti alle sue forme, così diverse da tutte quelle che ha visto prima. Lei non risponde al suo richiamo, e quindi egli si china per svegliarla con un bacio sulle labbra. [7] Lei apre gli occhi e lo saluta come il sole del mattino; l'uno esalta la bellezza dell'altra. [8] A questo punto segue un "duetto d'amore" straordinario, anzi,

per dirla con William Mann, un vero e proprio "duetto di corteggiamento, caratterizzato da un'umanità meravigliosamente sensibile". [9] Mentre la passione aumenta, Brünnhilde rimpiaange per un attimo la propria verginità, di non essere più l'orgogliosa vergine guerriera del Walhalla; si vergogna di guardare la luce del giorno. [10] Ma si sente rassicurata dalla purezza di Siegfried e si abbandona tra le sue braccia. Mentre cala il sipario, i due si giurano eterno amore.

© EMI Records Ltd

Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella, 2001

**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*), Tristan, Siegmund, Siegfried 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 Florestan, Enea (*Les Troyens*), Max, Erik, Siegfried, Bacco e Mark (*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 Siegfried), 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 Florestan, 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 tenore australiano **Gregory Dempsey**, nato a Melbourne, ha esordito nelle vesti di Don Ottavio per la National Opera Company della sua città, prima di entrare a far parte della Elizabethan Trust Opera Company. In seguito alla sua apparizione nel ruolo di Jenik nella *Sposa venduta* con la Sadler's Wells Opera (poi divenuta English National Opera) veniva nominato tenore stabile della compagnia. Tra i suoi numerosi ruoli vanno ricordati Florestan, Max, Erik (*Der fliegende Holländer*), David (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Mime, Don José, Canio, Gregor (*L'affare Makropulos*), Skuratov (*Da una casa di morti*), Tom Rakewell ed Essex (*Gloriana*). È stato inoltre frequente ospite della Royal Opera, Covent Garden, della Welsh National Opera e della Scottish Opera (Enea in *Les Troyens*); ha cantato al Festival di Edimburgo (prima mondiale di *Mary, Queen of Scots* di Thea Musgrave) e al Festival di Aldeburgh (*The Prodigal Son*). All'estero è comparso con la San Francisco Opera (Gregor) oltre che a Bruxelles (ruolo di protagonista, *Peter Grimes*), Stoccarda e altre città europee. Oggi abita in Australia, dove si è esibito spesso con l'Australian Opera (poi divenuta Opera Australia) in diversi ruoli tra cui Herman (*La dama di picche*), Boris (*Káťa Kabanová*),

Dimitri (*Boris Godunov*), Jim (*Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*), Valzacchi (*Der Rosenkavalier*) e Trim (*La fanciulla del West*) e con la Victoria State Opera (protagonista, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, Nerone nell'*Incoronazione di Poppea* e Monostatos). Inoltre è apparso al Festival di Adelaide (protagonista in titre, *Viaggi del signor Brouček*, e Mark in *The Midsummer Marriage* di Tippett).

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 Viandante 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 Prokof'ev) 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.

Il baritono inglese **Derek Hammond-Stroud** ha studiato con Elena Gerhardt e Gerhard Hüsch a Monaco e a Londra; la sua carriera lo ha portato sulle pedane del recital e sulle scene del

teatro lirico. Ha cantato con le principali compagnie liriche britanniche; in Europa è stato impegnato, tra l'altro, con l'Opera nazionale della Baviera di Monaco, il Theater an der Wien, il Theater am Gärtnerplatz, e con l'Opera dei Paesi Bassi per tre stagioni. Nell'America del nord e del sud ha cantato al Teatro Colón di Buenos Aires, al Metropolitan Opera di New York e all'Opera di San Diego, tra l'altro. Tra i suoi ruoli principali vanno ricordati Dottor Bartolo, Rigoletto, Fra Melitone (*La forza del destino*), Sharpless, Tonio (*Pagliacci*), Papageno, Alberich, Beckmesser, Faninal (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Krušina (*La sposa venduta*) e Sir Robert Cecil (*Gloriana*) oltre a numerosi personaggi delle opere di Gilbert e Sullivan e di Offenbach. Ha partecipato a diverse prime teatrali britanniche, tra cui quelle di *Orfeo ed Euridice* di Haydn (nel ruolo di Creonte), *La pietra del paragone* di Rossini (Pacuvio), *Guerra e Pace* di Prokof'ev (nel ruolo di Napoleone, con l'English National Opera) e *Der Besuch der alten Dame* di Gottfried von Einem (nelle vesti del Maestro a Glyndebourne). Ha creato il ruolo del Vecchio pescatore nella prima mondiale di *The Violins of Saint-Jacques* di Malcolm Williamson a Sadler's Wells. Ha ricevuto numerose onorificenze, tra cui un OBE nel 1987.

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 Alvise 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.

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 Comte Ory*, *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*.

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 Prokof'ev) oltre ad altri ruoli. Ha attratto l'attenzione del mondo musicale al principio degli anni '70 per le sue interpretazioni nella parte di Brünnhilde, 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 Brünnhilde 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 Brünnhilde 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.

Nella sua carriera, il soprano australiano **Maurine London** è stata impegnata in opere, operette e commedie musicali. Vincitrice di un premio Melba, la cantante ha interpretato i ruoli di Violetta e Zerbinetta con l'Australian Opera Company (poi divenuta Opera Australia), oltre che quelli di Valencienne e Hanna Glawari in un allestimento australiano dell'operetta *Die lustige Witwe* di Sadler's Wells. Con la New Zealand Opera Company ha cantato in *Rigoletto* e successivamente è

passata alla Sadler's Wells Opera (successivamente divenuta English National Opera) in Inghilterra. Qui ha affrontato, tra l'altro, i ruoli di Euridice (*Orphée aux enfers*), Aennchen (*Der Freischütz*), Musetta, Adele (*Die Fledermaus*), la Contessa Adèle (*Le Comte Ory*) e Hanna Glawari. È stata ospite dell'Opera di Francoforte in Irlanda e ha interpretato il ruolo di Elizabeth Barrett in una tournée regionale del musical *Robert and Elizabeth* di Ron Grainer.

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.



Mime and Siegfried, Act II, Scene 3



The Wanderer and Erda, Act III, Scene 1

Anthony Crickmay/Theatre Museum, V & A



Siegfried and the Wanderer (Gwynne Howell), Act III, Scene 2

John Garner/English National Opera Archive

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

A forest

[1] *The foreground represents part of a cave in the rocks, extending inwards more deeply to the left, but occupying about three-quarters of the stage-depth to the right. There are two natural entrances to the forest, the one to the right opening directly, and the other, broader one opening sideways, to the background. On the rear wall, to the left, is a large smith's forge, formed naturally from pieces of rock; only the large bellows are artificial. A rough chimney, also natural, passes through the roof of the cave. A very large anvil and other smith's tools.*

Scene 1

**Mime** (*sits at the anvil and with increasing anxiety hammers at a sword; at length he stops working, in ill humour*)

[2] Wearisome labour!  
Work till I drop!  
The strongest sword  
I struggle to make,  
an amazing weapon,  
fit for a giant:  
but when I have made it,  
that insolent Siegfried  
just laughs and snaps it in two,  
as though I'd made him a toy!

*(In ill humour, Mime throws the sword down on the anvil, places his arms akimbo, and gazes at the ground in thought.)*

I know one sword  
that could not be shattered:  
Notung's fragments  
he never would break,  
if only I could forge  
those pieces,  
if but my skill  
could achieve that deed!

If I could forge those fragments,  
all my shame would change into joy!  
*(He sinks back further and lowers his head in thought.)*

Fafner, the mighty dragon,  
lies there within these woods  
and protects with his monstrous bulk  
the Niblung gold,  
guarding it well.

Siegfried's conquering strength  
could quickly lay Fafner low:  
the Niblung's ring  
would then come to me.

And one sword's all that I need,  
and Notung only will serve,  
when Siegfried deals him the blow:  
and I cannot forge it,  
Notung, the sword!

*(He has readjusted the sword, and returns to his hammering in deepest dejection.)*  
Wearisome labour!

Work till I drop!  
The strongest sword  
that ever I make  
will prove too weak  
for that one mighty deed!  
I tinker and tap away  
because Siegfried commands:  
he laughs and snaps it in two,  
and scolds me, if I don't work!

*(He lets the hammer fall.)*

**Siegfried** (*in rough forest dress, with a silver horn slung from a chain, comes in boisterously from the forest. He has bridled a large bear with a bast rope, and in exuberant high spirits he sets it at Mime*)

[3] Hoiho! Hoiho!  
Come in! Come in!  
Bite him! Bite him,  
the lazy smith!

*(He laughs. Mime drops the sword in his fright, and runs behind the forge. Siegfried urges the bear to chase him about.)*

**Mime**  
Off with that beast!  
Why bring me a bear?

**Siegfried**  
He came with me  
to teach you to hurry:  
Bruin, beg for the sword!

**Mime**

Hey! let him go!  
There lies your weapon,  
forged and finished today.

**Siegfried**

Well, then today you are free!  
*(He releases the bear, and gives him a flick on the back with the rope.)*

Off, Bruin!  
You're needed no more.

*(The bear runs off into the forest.)*

**Mime** (*comes out trembling from behind the hearth*)

To killing bears  
I've no objection,  
but why bring live ones  
inside the cave?

**Siegfried** (*sits down to recover from his laughter*)

I wanted a better comrade  
than the one I leave at home;  
and so I called with my horn,  
set the forest glades resounding:  
Would I find what I longed for,  
a faithful friend? –  
that's what I asked with my call!  
From the bushes came a bear,  
who growled as I played my tune;  
and I liked him better than you –  
though better still I shall find!

So I bridled him  
and brought him along  
to see if the sword had been finished.

*(He jumps up and goes across to the anvil.)*

**Mime** *(takes the sword to give it to Siegfried)*

I made it keen and sharp,  
and its shine will gladden your heart.

*(Anxiously he holds on to it, but Siegfried snatches it from him.)*

**Siegfried**

What use is this shiny sharpness  
if the steel's not hard and true!  
*(testing the sword with his hand)*

Hey! what a useless  
thing you've made!  
A feeble pin!  
Call it a sword?

*(He smashes it on the anvil, so that the splinters fly about. Mime shrinks in terror.)*

<sup>4</sup> Well, there are the pieces,  
blundering boaster;  
I should have smashed it  
there on your brainpan!  
Now will the liar  
brag any longer,  
talking of giants,  
and boldness in battle,  
and deeds of daring,  
and fearless defence?  
And weapons you'll forge me,

swords you'll handle,  
praising your skill,  
and proud of your craft?  
Yet will I handle  
what you have fashioned –  
a single blow  
destroys all your trash!  
If he were not  
too mean for my rage,  
I should sling in the fire  
the smith and his works –  
the aged doddering dwarf!  
My anger would then have an end!

*(In a rage Siegfried flings himself down on a stone seat to the right. Mime has carefully kept out of his way.)*

**Mime**

Again you rage like a fool,  
ungrateful, heartless boy!  
Maybe today I've failed you;  
but when my work is not good  
then you at once forget  
the good things I have done!  
Must I once more remind you  
that you should be more grateful?  
And you should learn to obey me,  
who always showed you such love.  
*(Siegfried turns away crossly, his face to the wall, his back to Mime.)*  
Now once again you're not listening!  
*(He stands perplexed, and then goes to the cooking pots at the fireplace.)*

But food is what you need:  
come, try this meat I have roasted;  
or would you prefer this soup?  
For you, all is prepared.

*(He brings food to Siegfried, who without turning round knocks bowl and meat out of Mime's hands.)*

**Siegfried**

Meat I roast for myself:  
you can drink your slops alone!

**Mime** *(in a querulous screech)*

Fine reward  
for all my loving care!  
Thus the boy repays  
what I've done!

<sup>5</sup> A whimpering babe,  
born in these woods –  
Mime was kind  
to the tiny mite;  
feeding you well,  
keeping you warm,  
sheltering you safe  
as my very self.  
And as you grew older  
I was your nurse;  
when you were sleepy  
I smoothed your bed.  
I made you nice toys  
and that shining horn,  
toiling away,

trying to please:  
my clever counsels  
sharpened your wits;  
I tried to make you  
crafty and bright.  
Staying at home  
I slave and sweat,  
while you go  
wandering around.  
I toil for your pleasure,  
think only of you,  
I wear myself out –  
a poor old dwarf!

*(sobbing)*

Then you repay me  
for all that I've done  
with your furious scolding  
and scorn and hate!

*(Siegfried has turned round again and looks steadily into Mime's eyes. Mime encounters his gaze and tries timidly to conceal his own.)*

**Siegfried**

<sup>6</sup> Much you've taught to me, Mime,  
and many things have I learnt;  
but one thing you most long to teach me,  
that lesson I never learn:  
how not to loathe your sight.  
When you bring food  
and offer me drink,  
my hunger turns to disgust;  
when you prepare

soft beds for my rest,  
 then sleep is driven away;  
 when you would make me  
 clever and wise,  
 I would be deaf and dull.  
 I am repelled  
 by the sight of you;  
 I see that you're evil  
 in all that you do.  
 I watch you stand,  
 shuffle and nod,  
 shrinking and slinking,  
 with your eyelids blinking –  
 by your nodding neck  
 I'd like to catch you,  
 and end your shrinking,  
 and stop your blinking!  
 So deeply, Mime, I loathe you.  
 If you're so clever,  
 then tell me something  
 which long I have sought in vain:  
 through the woods roaring,  
 trying to avoid you –  
 what is it that makes me return?  
 Everything to me  
 is dearer than you:  
 birds in branches  
 and fish in the brook –  
 all are dear to me,  
 far more than you.  
 What is it then makes me return?  
 If you're wise, then tell me that.

**Mime** (*sits facing him, familiarly, a little way off*)  
 My child, that shows quite clearly  
 how dear to your heart I must be.

**Siegfried** (*laughing*)  
 I cannot bear the sight of you –  
 have you forgotten that?

**Mime** (*shrinks back, and sits down again at the side, facing Siegfried*)  
 That comes from your wild young heart,  
 from the wildness you must tame.  
 Young ones are ever yearning  
 after their parents' nest;  
 love's the cause of that yearning:  
 and that's why you yearn for me:  
 you love your dear old Mime –  
     you must learn to love me!  
 What the mother-birds are to fledglings,  
 while in the nest they lie,  
 long before they can flutter,  
 such to you, dearest child,  
 is wise and careful old Mime –  
     such must Mime be!

**Siegfried**  
 Hey, Mime, if you're so clever,  
 there's something else you can teach me!  
     The birds were singing  
     so sweetly in spring,  
 their songs were loving and tender:  
 and you replied,  
     when I asked you why,

that they were fathers and mothers.  
     They chattered so fondly,  
     and never apart;  
     then building a nest,  
     they brooded inside,  
     and soon little fledglings  
     were fluttering there;  
 the parents cared for the brood.  
     And here in the woods  
     the deer lay in pairs,  
 and savage foxes and wolves, too:  
     food was brought to the den  
     by the father,  
 the mother suckled the young ones.  
     I learnt from them  
     what love must be;  
     I never disturbed them  
     or stole their cubs.  
     You must tell me, Mime,  
     where your dear little wife is.  
 Where is my mother, tell me!

**Mime** (*crossly*)  
     Why do you ask?  
     Don't be so dull!  
 For you're not a bird or a fox!

**Siegfried**  
     'A whimpering babe,  
     born in these woods,  
     Mime was kind  
     to the tiny mite...'
   
     But who created

that whimpering babe?  
 For making a babe  
 needs a mother too!

**Mime** (*in great embarrassment*)  
 I'll explain it,  
 try to believe me:  
 I'm your father  
 and mother in one.

**Siegfried**  
 You're lying, foul little dwarf!  
 Every young one is like his parents;  
 I know, for I've seen it myself.  
 One day in the shining stream  
     I could see every tree  
     and forest creature,  
     sun and shadow,  
     just as they are,  
 reflected below in the brook.  
     And there in the stream  
     I saw my face –  
     it wasn't like yours,  
     not in the least,  
     no more than a toad  
     resembles a fish.  
 No fish had a toad for a father!

**Mime** (*much vexed*)  
     What an absurd  
     and stupid idea!

**Siegfried** (*with increasing animation*)  
     See here, at last

it's clear to me,  
 what before I pondered in vain:  
 through the woods I wandered  
 trying to avoid you –  
 do you know why I returned?  
*(He leaps up.)*  
 Because you alone can inform me  
 what father and mother are mine!

**Mime** *(shrinking from him)*  
 What father? What mother?  
 Meaningless question!

**Siegfried** *(seizes him by the throat)*  
 Well then I must choke you,  
 force you to tell me!  
 All kindness  
 is wasted on you!  
 You'll only answer  
 when I thrash you.  
 If I had not taught you  
 to teach me,  
 I would not even know  
 how to speak!  
 Now out with it,  
 rascally wretch!  
 Who was my father and mother?

**Mime** *(having nodded his head and made signs  
 with his hands, is released by Siegfried)*  
 You nearly choked me to death!  
 Let go! What you're eager to learn  
 I'll tell you, all that I know.

O hard-hearted  
 ungrateful child!  
 Now hear, and learn why you hate me!  
 I'm not your father,  
 not kin to you,  
 and yet you owe everything to me!  
 You're no kin to me,  
 and yet I was kind,  
 and my pity alone  
 gave you this home:  
 a fine reward I receive!  
 What a stupid fool I have been!

7 I found once in the wood  
 a woman who lay and wept:  
 I helped her here to my cave,  
 and by the fire there I warmed her.  
 A child stirred in her body;  
 sadly she gave it birth.  
 That birth was cruel and hard;  
 I helped as best I could.  
 Great was her pain! She died.  
 But Siegfried, you were born.

**Siegfried** *(lost in thought)*  
 She died, my mother, through me?

**Mime**  
 To my charge she entrusted the child:  
 I gladly cared for you.  
 What love I lavished on you!  
 What kindness and care you received!  
 'A whimpering babe,  
 born in these woods...'

**Siegfried**  
 I think I have heard that before!  
 But say: why am I called Siegfried?

**Mime**  
 The wish of your mother –  
 that's what she told me:  
 as 'Siegfried' you would grow  
 strong and fair.  
 'And Mime was kind  
 to the tiny mite...'

**Siegfried**  
 Now tell me the name of my mother.

**Mime**  
 Her name I never knew.  
 'Feeding you well,  
 keeping you warm...'

**Siegfried**  
 Her name I told you to tell me!

**Mime**  
 Her name I forget. No, wait!  
 Sieglinde, now I remember;  
 I'm sure that that was her name.  
 'And sheltering you safe  
 as my very self...'

**Siegfried** *(even more urgently)*  
 Now tell me, who was my father?

**Mime** *(roughly)*  
 His name I never knew!

**Siegfried**  
 Did my mother say what his name was?

**Mime**  
 He fell in battle,  
 that's all that she said.  
 The tiny orphan  
 was left in my care;  
 'And as you grew older  
 I was your nurse;  
 when you were sleepy  
 I smoothed your bed...'

**Siegfried**  
 Stop that eternal  
 snivelling!  
 If I am to trust your story,  
 if truth at last you're speaking,  
 then I must see some proof!

**Mime**  
 But what proof can I show you?

**Siegfried**  
 I trust you not with my ears;  
 my eyes alone I'll believe:  
 what witness can you show?

**Mime** *(reflects for a moment, and then fetches the  
 two pieces of a broken sword)*  
 This, this your mother gave me;  
 for payment, food, and service,  
 this was my wretched wage.  
 Look here, just a broken sword!

She said your father had borne it  
when he fought his last, and was killed.

**Siegfried** (*excited*)

- 8 And now these fragments  
Mime will forge me:  
I've found my father's sword!  
So! hurry up, Mime!  
Back to your work;  
show me your skill;  
employ all your craft!  
Cheat me no more  
with worthless trash.  
These fragments alone  
serve for my sword!  
But if I find  
flaws in your work,  
if you should spoil it,  
this splendid steel,  
you'll feel my blows on your hide;  
I'll make you shine like the steel!  
Today, I swear, hear me!  
I will have my sword;  
the weapon today shall be mine.

**Mime** (*alarmed*)

But why do you need it today?

**Siegfried**

Through the wide world  
I shall wander,  
never more to return!  
I am free now,  
I can leave you,

nothing binds me to you!  
My father you are not,  
in the world I'll find my home;  
your hearth is not my house,  
I can leave your rocky lair.

As the fish swims  
through the waters,  
as the bird flies  
through the branches,  
so I shall fly,  
floating afar,  
like the wind through the wood  
wafting away!

Then, Mime, I'll never return.

(*He rushes out into the forest.*)

**Mime** (*in the utmost terror*)

Siegfried! Stop there!  
Stop there! Come back!  
(*He calls into the forest at the top of his voice.*)

Hey! Siegfried!  
Siegfried! Hey!

(*He gazes in astonishment as Siegfried rushes away,  
then returns to the forge and sits behind the anvil.*)

- 9 He storms away!  
And I sit here,  
my former cares  
joined by a new one.  
I'm helpless, caught in my trap!  
Now what can I say?  
And when he returns  
then how can I lead him

to Fafner's lair?  
I can't forge these pieces  
of obstinate steel!  
For no fire of mine  
can ever fuse them;  
nor can Mime's hammer  
conquer their hardness.  
This Nibelung hate,  
toil and sweat,  
cannot make Notung new,  
can't forge the sword once again!

(*Mime crouches in despair on the stool behind the  
anvil.*)

## Scene 2

*The Wanderer (Wotan) comes in from the forest by  
the entrance at the back of the cavern. He is  
wearing a long dark-blue cloak, and uses his  
spear as a staff. On his head is a large hat with a  
broad round brim, which hangs over his missing  
eye.*

**Wanderer**

- 10 Hail there, worthy smith!  
This wayweary guest  
asks to rest  
awhile by your fire!

**Mime** (*starting up in fright*)

Who's there? Who has sought me  
here in the woods?  
Who disturbs me in my retreat?

**Wanderer** (*very slowly, advancing just a step at a  
time*)

'Wanderer', so I am called:  
widely have I roamed,  
on the earth's broad surface  
travelling afar.

**Mime**

Then travel some more,  
live up to your name;  
let the Wanderer move on!

**Wanderer**

Good men ever give me welcome;  
gifts from many have I gained;  
for ill fate falls only  
on evil men.

**Mime**

Ill fate haunts me  
here in my home;  
why do you want to increase it?

**Wanderer** (*still advancing slowly*)

Much I sought for,  
and much I found.  
I have often  
taught men wisdom,  
often lightened  
heavy sorrows,  
eased their afflicted hearts.

**Mime**

Much you have learnt  
maybe much you have found;

but don't you come seeking in my house.

I don't need you,  
and I live alone.

Loiterers cannot stay here.

**Wanderer** (*again advancing a little*)

Many fancy  
wisdom is theirs,  
but what they most need,  
that they don't know.  
When they ask me,  
freely I answer:  
wisdom flows from my words.

**Mime** (*increasingly uneasy, as he watches the Wanderer advance*)

Useless knowledge  
many ask for,  
but I know all that I need.  
(*The Wanderer has advanced right up to the hearth.*)

And my wits are good;  
I want no more.

So, wise one, be on your way!

**Wanderer** (*sitting at the hearth*)

<sup>11</sup> I sit by your hearth,  
and wager my head –  
it's yours if I prove not wise.  
My head is yours,  
it falls to your hand,  
if I, when you ask  
all you want,  
fail to redeem it aright.

**Mime** (*has been staring open-mouthed at the Wanderer; he shudders, and says timorously to himself*)

How can I get rid of this spy?  
I'll ask him three tricky questions.  
(*With an effort he recovers himself.*)  
Your head pays me  
if you fail:  
take care, use cunning to save it!  
Three the questions  
that I shall ask!

**Wanderer**

Three times I must answer.

**Mime** (*racks his brains*)

You've wandered so far  
on the earth's wide surface,  
and long you've roamed through the world:  
and so you should know  
what dusky race  
dwells on the earth's deep caverns?

**Wanderer**

In the earth's deep caverns,  
that's where the Niblungs dwell;  
Nibelheim is their land.  
Black elves, those Niblungs;  
Black-Alberich  
once was their master and lord!  
By a magic ring's  
all-conquering spell,  
he ruled that hard-working race.

Richest treasures,  
shimmering gold,  
he made them find,  
to buy all the world for his kingdom –  
I've answered: what else would you ask?

**Mime** (*thinking still harder*)

Much, Wanderer,  
much you know  
of the earth's dark secret caves.  
But now can you say,  
what mighty race  
dwells on the earth's broad surface?

**Wanderer**

On the earth's broad surface,  
that's where the giants dwell;  
Riesenheim is their land.  
Fasolt and Fafner,  
the giants' chieftains,  
envied the Nibelung's might;  
and his powerful hoard  
they gained for themselves –  
and in that hoard was the ring.  
To gain that treasure  
the brothers fought,  
and Fasolt fell then.  
In dragon shape  
Fafner now guards all the gold –  
One question still you have left.

**Mime** (*rapt in thought*)

Much, Wanderer,  
much you know

of the earth and all her dwellers.  
And now can you say,  
what lordly race  
dwells on cloud-hidden heights?

**Wanderer**

On cloud-hidden heights,  
that's where the gods dwell;  
Walhall is their home.  
Light-spirits are they;  
Light-Alberich,  
Wotan, rules o'er that clan.  
From the world-ashtree's  
sacred branches  
Wotan once tore his spear:  
dead the tree –  
but still mighty the spear;  
and with that spear-point  
Wotan rules the world.  
Bargains and contracts,  
bonds and treaties,  
deep in that shaft he graved.  
Who holds that spear-shaft  
rules the world;  
and that spear-shaft  
by Wotan's hand is held.  
In thrall to him  
the Nibelung band;  
the giants' strong race  
bows to his will;  
all must obey him as master –  
that spear's all-powerful lord.  
(*As if involuntarily, he strikes the ground with his*

*spear; a slight thunder is heard, which terrifies Mime.)*

Now tell me, crafty dwarf,  
were all my answers right?  
And have I redeemed my head?

**Mime** (*after carefully observing the Wanderer with the spear, falls now into a state of great terror, searches in confusion for his tools, and timidly averts his glance*)

The answers were right;  
your head is safe:  
now, Wanderer, go on your way!

**Wanderer**

<sup>12</sup> What you needed to know  
you should have asked me,  
while I had wagered my head.  
You merely asked me  
what you knew,  
so now we'll stake your head in turn.  
You refused greeting  
to your guest,  
and so I had  
to risk my head  
to gain some rest at your hearth.  
The law demands  
your head in turn,  
if you should fail  
to answer me well.

So, Nibelung, sharpen your wits!

**Mime** (*very timidly and hesitantly, at length composing himself in nervous submission*)

I left home

many years ago;  
years ago I left  
my mother's womb.

I shrink beneath Wotan's glances;  
he came to spy in my cave:  
his glance frightens  
my wits away.

But now I must try to be wise;  
Wanderer, ask what you will!  
Perhaps good luck will help me;  
the dwarf still can save his head?

**Wanderer** (*again seating himself comfortably*)

Now, worthiest dwarf,  
answer me truly:  
What's the name of the race  
that Wotan treated harshly  
and yet holds most dear in his heart?

**Mime** (*gaining courage*)

I'm no expert  
in heroes' families  
but what you ask I can soon guess.

The Wälsungs must be  
that chosen race  
that Wotan cared for  
and loved so dearly,  
though he was cruel and harsh:  
Siegmund and Sieglind,  
children of Wälse,  
that wild and desperate  
twin-born pair.  
Siegfried, he was their child,

the Wälsungs' brave mighty son.

So this time, Wanderer,  
have I saved my head?

**Wanderer** (*pleasantly*)

Yes, it is safe,  
for your answer was right:  
it's not easy to catch you!  
But though you guessed  
the first one right,  
my second may prove too hard.  
A wily Niblung  
cared for Siegfried,  
planned that he should kill Fafner,  
gain the ring for the Niblung,  
and make him lord of the world.

Name the sword  
that Siegfried must strike with,  
if he's to kill the foe.

**Mime** (*forgetting more and more his present situation, and keenly interested in the topic, rubs his hands with pleasure*)

Notung, that's the name  
of the sword,  
the sword that Wotan struck  
into an ashtree:  
and one alone could win it,  
he would draw it forth.  
Where mighty warriors  
struggled in vain,  
Siegmund the Wälsung  
drew it forth;

thus he mastered the sword,  
till by Wotan's spear it was snapped.

Now the bits are saved  
by a wily smith;  
for he knows that only  
with Wotan's sword  
a brave but foolish boy,  
Siegfried, can kill the dragon.  
(*highly delighted*)  
Now twice the dwarf  
has rescued his head?

**Wanderer** (*laughing*)

The wittiest  
and the wiliest Niblung!  
the cleverest dwarf I've known!  
But since you're so wise  
to use for your purpose  
the youthful strength of the hero,  
let me ask  
my final question now.  
Tell me, you wily  
weapon-smith:  
Whose hand can make new those fragments?  
Notung, the sword – who will forge it?

**Mime** (*jumps up in extreme terror*)

<sup>13</sup> The fragments! The sword!  
Alas! You've caught me!  
What can I say?  
What can I do?  
Accursed steel!  
Would I'd never seen it!

To me it has brought  
only pain and woe!  
Stubborn and hard,  
my hand cannot weld it;  
heat and hammer,  
all are in vain!

*(As if demented, he throws his tools about, and gives way to total despair.)*

The wisest of smiths  
fails at the task.  
Who can forge that sword  
if my hand fails?  
How can I give you an answer?

**Wanderer** *(has risen calmly from the hearth)*

Thrice you asked me your questions,  
thrice I answered you right:  
but what you asked  
was meaningless;  
you gave no thought to your need,  
failed to ask what was required.

Now when I tell it  
you'll feel despair.  
Your wily head  
I can claim as my prize!  
So, Fafner's dauntless destroyer,  
hear, you wretched dwarf:  
'One who has never  
learnt to fear –  
he makes Notung new.'  
*(Mime stares at him wide-eyed; he turns to go.)*  
Your wily head –  
guard it with care!

I leave it forfeit to him  
who has never learnt to fear.

*(He turns away smiling and disappears quickly into the forest. As if crushed, Mime has sunk down on the stool behind the anvil.)*

## COMPACT DISC TWO

### Scene 3

**Mime** *(stares out before him into the sunlit forest, and is seized increasingly by violent shudders)*

1 Accursed light!  
The air is aflame!  
What's flickering and flashing,  
what flutters and swirls,  
what floats in the air  
and swirls in the wind?  
What glistens and gleams  
in the sun's bright glow?  
What hisses and hums  
and roars so loud?  
It growls and it heaves,  
comes crashing this way!  
It breaks through the trees;  
where can I hide?

*(He leaps up in terror.)*

The threatening monster  
opens its jaws;  
the dragon will catch me!  
Fafner! Fafner!

*(With a shriek he collapses behind the anvil.)*

**Siegfried** *(breaks through the thicket and calls out, still off-stage, his movements evident from the snapping of the undergrowth)*

2 Hey there! You idler!  
Say, have you finished?  
*(He enters the cave and pauses in surprise.)*

Quick, I've come for my sword.

But where's the smith?

Stolen away?

Hey, hey! Mime, you coward!

Where are you? Come out, I say!

**Mime** *(in a feeble voice, from behind the wall)*

It's you then, child?  
Are you alone?

**Siegfried** *(laughing)*

Under the anvil?

Say, what work took you there?

Were you sharpening my sword?

**Mime** *(coming out much confused and disturbed)*

The sword? The sword?

How can I forge it?

*(half to himself)*

'One who has never  
learnt to fear –

he makes Notung new.'

So how could I  
undertake such work?

**Siegfried** *(violently)*

Give me an answer!

Want me to help you?

**Mime** *(as before)*

No man can help in my need.

My wily head –

I had to stake,

I've lost it; it's forfeit to him

'who has never learnt to fear'.

**Siegfried** *(impatiently)*

Trying to escape me?

Still no reply?

**Mime** *(gradually recovering himself a little)*

I fear this youth

who knows not fear!

But wait: though I was eager to teach him,

yet, fool, I forgot

to teach him fear.

Love was the main thing

that I tried for;

but alas, that lesson failed!

So how can I teach him to fear?

**Siegfried** *(seizes him)*

Well, must I help you?

What work has been done?

**Mime**

I thought of your good;

I sank into brooding,

thinking of weighty things to teach you.

**Siegfried** *(laughing)*

You certainly sank –

under the anvil:

what weighty advice did you find?

**Mime** (*steadily regaining self-possession*)

What fear is, that's what I learnt;  
that's what I mean to teach you.

**Siegfried** (*with quiet curiosity*)

And what can this fear be?

**Mime**

You've not learnt to fear,  
and you'd leave the world,  
go forth in the wood?

Oh, what use is the mightiest sword  
till you can fear as well?

**Siegfried** (*impatiently*)

Foolish words  
I hear from your lips!

**Mime** (*approaching Siegfried ever more  
confidingly*)

They are your mother's words,  
heard from her lips;  
words that I promised  
one day I'd teach you.  
In the wide wicked world  
I shan't let you venture,  
until you can fear as well.

**Siegfried** (*brusquely*)

Is it a skill,  
a craft I should learn?  
Then speak, and teach me what fear is!

**Mime**

<sup>3</sup> Have you not felt  
within the woods,

as darkness fell  
in dusky glades,  
a dreadful whisper,  
hum and hiss,  
savage, growling  
sounds draw near?  
Dazzling flashes  
wildly flicker;  
howling, roaring  
assail your ears.

Have you not felt mysterious horrors  
that threaten to harm you?

Shivering and shaking,  
quivering and quaking,  
while your heart trembles and faints,  
wildly hammers and leaps?

Till you have felt these things  
then fear to you is unknown.

**Siegfried** (*thoughtfully*)

Wonderful feelings  
those must be!

Yet my heart  
firmly beats in my breast.

The shivering and shaking,  
the glowing and sinking,  
burning and fainting,  
trembling and quaking:

I am yearning to feel them.  
When may I taste these joys?

Can I learn them

Mime, from you?  
How can a coward instruct me?

**Mime**

Easily learnt!

The way I know well:  
brooding brought it to mind.  
I know where a dragon dwells,  
who lives and feeds on men.  
Fear you'll learn from Fafner;  
follow me; we'll find his den.

**Siegfried**

And where is his den?

**Mime**

Neidhöhle,  
that's what it's called:  
to the east, at the edge of the wood.

**Siegfried**

Is that not near to the world?

**Mime**

From Neidhöhle the world isn't far.

**Siegfried**

Then lead me on to your Fafner.

Fear he can teach me,  
then forth to the world!

Now quick! Forge me the sword!  
In the world I have to wield it.

**Mime**

The sword? Ah no!

**Siegfried**

On with your forging!  
Show me your skill!

**Mime**

Accursed steel!  
My skill is too weak for the task.  
No dwarf can forge it  
or master the magic spell.  
One who fear does not know,  
he might more easily succeed.

**Siegfried**

Lazy scoundrel,  
lying to cheat me,  
making excuses,  
trying to delay.

So Mime is too weak for the task!

<sup>4</sup> Give me these pieces,  
I'll have to teach you!

(*striding to the hearth*)  
My father's sword  
yields to his son;

and I'll forge it myself!

(*He sets to work impetuously, pitching Mime's tools  
about.*)

**Mime**

If you'd been careful  
to learn your craft,  
then now you'd have your reward;  
but you were always  
lazy and slow,  
and now you'll wish you'd obeyed me.

**Siegfried**

When my teacher has failed,  
could I be successful

if I had always obeyed?  
*(He cocks a snook at him.)*  
 So move aside,  
 out of my way,  
 or else with the sword I'll forge you!

*(He has heaped up a mass of charcoal on the hearth, and he keeps the fire going while he fixes the fragments of the sword in a vice and files them to shreds.)*

**Mime** *(who has sat down rather to one side, watches Siegfried at work)*  
 You're doing it wrong!  
 There is the solder,  
 prepared, melted and hot.

**Siegfried**  
 Off with your trash!  
 I need it not.  
 No solder patches my sword.

**Mime**  
 But the file is finished,  
 the rasp is ruined!  
 You're filing the steel to splinters!

**Siegfried**  
 It must be splintered  
 and ground into shreds;  
 what is broken, this way I mend.  
*(He files on vigorously.)*

**Mime** *(aside)*  
 My skill is useless,  
 I see that now  
 only his folly  
 can serve in his need!  
 See how he toils  
 with mighty strokes!  
 The steel is in shreds,  
 yet he is not warm!  
*(Siegfried has fanned the forge fire to its brightest glow.)*  
 Though I grew as old  
 as cave and wood,  
 no sight like this would I see.  
*(While Siegfried with furious energy goes on filing down the fragments of the sword, Mime seats himself still further away.)*

He will forge that sword,  
 I see that now;  
 fearless, he will succeed.  
 The Wanderer's words were true!  
 Though I must hide  
 my fearful head,  
 or else it falls to the boy,  
 if I can't teach him to fear!  
*(With increasing anxiety he leaps up, and cringes.)*  
 But woe to Mime!  
 That dragon is safe  
 if he can teach fear to the boy.  
 Then how would I gain the ring?  
 Accursed problem!  
 I'm caught in a trap

if I can't find some way  
 by which Siegfried is bent to my will.

**Siegfried** *(has filed down the pieces and put them in a melting-pot which he now places in the forge fire)*

Hey, Mime! Tell me  
 the name of the sword  
 which I have filed into pieces.

**Mime** *(gives a start, and turns to Siegfried)*  
 Notung, that is  
 the name of the sword:  
 for your mother told me its name.

**Siegfried** *(during the following blows up the fire with the bellows)*

<sup>5</sup> Notung! Notung!  
 Sword of my need!  
 What mighty blow once broke you?  
 I've filed to splinters  
 your shining steel;  
 the fire has melted and fused them.  
 Hoho! Hoho!  
 Hohi! Hohi! Hoho!  
 Bellows, blow!  
 Brighten the glow!

Wild in the woodlands  
 grew that tree  
 I felled in the forest glade;  
 I burnt to ashes  
 branches and trunk;  
 on the hearth it lies in a heap.

Hoho! Hoho!  
 Hohi! Hohi! Hoho!  
 Bellows, blow!  
 Brighten the glow!  
 The blackened charcoal  
 so bravely burns;  
 how bright and fair its glow!  
 A shower of sparks  
 is shooting on high:  
 Hohi! Hoho! Hohi!  
 and fuses the splintered steel.  
 Hoho! Hoho!  
 Hohi! Hohi! Hoho!  
 Bellows, blow!  
 Brighten the glow!  
**Mime** *(still to himself; sitting apart)*  
 The sword will be forged  
 and Fafner conquered:  
 all that I can clearly foresee.  
 Gold and ring  
 will pass to the boy:  
 can I capture them both for me?  
 By wit and guile  
 I must obtain them,  
 and save my head as well.  
**Siegfried** *(back at the bellows)*  
 Hoho! Hoho!  
 Hohi! Hohi! Hohi!  
**Mime** *(in the background, to himself)*  
 After the fight he'll be tired,  
 and I'll quench his thirst with a drink;

from roots of flowers  
which I have gathered  
I'll make a dangerous draught.  
If he drinks but one drop  
of my potion,  
sound sleep follows at once.

Then I'll seize that weapon,  
the sword that he's forging;  
I'll simply chop off his head;  
then mine are the ring and gold.  
*(He rubs his hands in glee.)*

Hey, wise old Wanderer,  
am I so dull?  
Do you not approve  
my crafty plan?  
Have I found  
my path to power?

**Siegfried**

Notung! Notung!  
Sword of my need!  
I smelt your shining steel!  
The fiery stream  
must fill this mould.

*(He pours the glowing contents of the melting-pot  
into a mould, which he holds aloft.)*

And now you are shaped as my sword!  
*(He plunges the filled mould into the water-trough;  
steam and loud hissing ensue from its cooling.)*

In the water flowed  
a fiery flood:  
fury and hate  
hissed from the blade!

That fire was soon quenched  
by the fiery flood;  
no more it stirs.

Strong, stubborn and hard,  
there lies my new-made sword.

Burning blood  
soon wets your blade!  
*(He thrusts the steel into the forge fire, and  
vigorously plies the bellows.)*

Once more I must heat you,  
so I can shape you,  
Notung, sword of my need!  
*(Mime has jumped up in delight; he fetches various  
vessels, and from them shakes spices and herbs into  
a cooking-pot, which he tries to put on the hearth.  
Siegfried, during the work, watches Mime, who  
carefully puts his pot on the fire from the other side  
of the hearth.)*

But what's the booby  
doing with the pan?  
I work with steel;  
you're cooking soup there?

**Mime**

The smith is put to shame:  
the teacher is taught his craft.  
When the master finds his skill has gone,  
as cook he serves the child.  
You make a broth of the steel;

old Mime stirs the pan  
and makes soup.

*(He goes on with his cooking.)*

**Siegfried**

Mime the craftsman  
turns to cooking;  
his anvil pleases him no more.  
All the swords he made  
broke into pieces;  
what he cooks, I never will eat!

*(During what follows Siegfried takes the mould  
from the fire, breaks it, and lays the glowing steel  
on the anvil.)*

What fear is  
I hope I shall soon discover.  
Out there one dwells who can teach me;  
seeing Mime can't help,  
he's no use to me;  
whatever he does, he does badly!

*(during the forging)*  
[6] Hoho! Hoho! Hohi!

Forge me, my hammer,  
a hard strong sword!  
Hoho! Hahi!  
Hoho! Hahi!  
Your steely blue  
once flowed with blood;  
its ruddy trickling  
reddened my blade;  
cold laughter you gave,  
the warm blood cooled on your heart!  
Hiaho, haha,  
hahiaha!  
But now with fire  
you redly gleam,

and your weakness yields  
to my hammer's blow.  
Angry sparks you are showering  
on me who conquers your pride!  
Hiaho! Hiaho!  
Hiahohoho!  
Hahi!

**Mime** *(aside)*

He's forging a bright, sharp sword.  
Fafner will feel it  
and meet his end.  
I've brewed a deadly drink;  
Siegfried will follow  
when Fafner's dead.  
The ring will gain me the prize;  
the ring and gold will be mine!

*(During what follows, he busies himself with  
pouring the contents of the pot into a flask.)*

**Siegfried**

Hoho! Hoho!  
Hahi!  
Forge me, my hammer,  
a hard strong sword!  
Hoho! Hahi!  
Hoho! Hoho!  
This cheerful sparkling  
delights my heart;  
this flash of anger  
suits well my blade.  
Now you laugh at your lord,  
though you pretend to be grim!

Hiaho, haha,  
 hahiaha!  
 Both hear and hammer  
 serve me well;  
 with sturdy strokes  
 I beat you straight.  
 Now banish your blush of shame,  
 and be cold and hard as you can.  
 Hiaho! Hiaho!  
 Hiahohoho!  
 Hiah!

*(He swings the steel and plunges it into the water-trough. He laughs at the loud sizzling. While Siegfried fastens the forged blade into a hilt, Mime fusses about in the foreground with his flask.)*

**Mime**

Once my brother forged  
 a bright shining ring,  
 and in it he worked  
 a powerful spell.  
 That shining gold  
 will belong to me,  
 soon I will control it.  
 I'm master now!  
*(While Siegfried is tapping with the small hammer and grinding and filing, Mime skips about vivaciously, with increasing glee.)*  
 Alberich too,  
 who made me slave,  
 will bend his knee  
 and beg for my grace;

as Nibelung prince,  
 all will obey me;  
 that Niblung band  
 will bow to me!  
 And the boy they despised  
 they will treat as a king!  
 All the heroes and gods  
 will respect my gold;  
*(with ever more lively gestures)*  
 the world will cower  
 when I command;  
 they'll beg my favour,  
 fearing my frown!  
 For me they'll labour,  
 to make me rich.  
 For me they'll labour,  
 to make me rich.  
 Mime the conqueror,  
 Mime is king now,  
 prince of the Niblungs,  
 lord of the world!  
 Hi! Mime, you fortunate smith!  
 For who would believe such luck!  
**Siegfried** *(during Mime's song has given the final blows to flatten the rivets on the hilt. He takes up the sword)*  
 Notung! Notung!  
 Sword of my need!  
 You are fixed again firm in the hilt.  
 Snapped into two,  
 once more you are whole;  
 no stroke again shall ever smash you.

You broke when my father  
 was doomed to death;  
 his living son  
 forged you again:  
 for me now you laugh and shine,  
 and your gleaming edge will be keen.  
*(brandishing the sword)*

Notung! Notung!  
 Sword of my need!  
 To life once more I have waked you.  
 You lay there  
 so cold and dead,  
 but shine now defiant and fair.  
 Let every traitor  
 quail at your gleam!  
 Strike at the false one,  
 strike at the rogue!  
 See, Mime, you smith:  
*(He raises the sword to strike.)*  
 so strong is Siegfried's sword!

*(He strikes the anvil, which splits from top to bottom and falls apart with a great crash. Mime, who has jumped up onto a stool in his exaltation, falls to the ground with fright and lands on his bottom. Triumphantly Siegfried holds the sword on high. The curtain falls.)*

**Act II**

**In the depths of the forest**

<sup>7</sup> *At the very back, the entrance to a cavern. The ground rises towards the centre of the stage, where it forms a small knoll; from there it descends to the*

*cavern, so that only the upper part of the entrance is visible to the spectator. To the left, through the forest trees, a fissured cliff-face can be discerned. Dark night, at its darkest towards the back, where to start with the spectator can distinguish nothing.*

**Scene 1**

**Alberich** *(stationed at the cliff-face, gloomily brooding)*

<sup>8</sup> In gloomy night  
 by Fafner's cave I wait,  
 my ears alert,  
 keeping careful watch.  
 Fateful day,  
 when will you break?  
 When will the dawn  
 drive this dark away?  
*(A stormy wind blows from the forest on the right; a bluish gleam shines from there.)*  
 Is a light glittering there?  
 Nearer and nearer  
 it seems to shine;  
 it runs like a fiery steed,  
 breaks through the wood,  
 rushing this way.  
 Can it be him I'm waiting for,  
 author of Fafner's death?  
*(The stormwind subsides; the gleam fades away.)*  
 The light has gone;  
 the glow fades from my sight.  
 Night and darkness!

*(The Wanderer enters from the wood, and pauses opposite Alberich.)*

Who comes there, lighting the shadows?

**Wanderer**

<sup>9</sup> To Neidhöhl  
by night I have come:  
Who is hid in the darkness there?  
*(As if through a cloud suddenly rent, the moonlight breaks through and lights the Wanderer's face.)*

**Alberich** *(recognises the Wanderer, flinches in fear, but then instantly breaks out in rage)*

You dare show yourself here?

I jeer at your face.

Out of my sight!

Go elsewhere, shameless thief!

**Wanderer** *(calmly)*

Black-Alberich,  
lurking here?  
watching over Fafner's hoard?

**Alberich**

Driven by your greed  
to new evil deeds?  
Go on your way,  
take yourself elsewhere!  
Too long we have suffered,  
tricked by your scheming and lies.  
So, you traitor,  
leave us in peace!

**Wanderer**

The Wanderer watches,  
takes no action.

Who dares to bar Wanderer's way?

**Alberich** *(laughs maliciously)*

You false, infamous schemer!

I am not so stupid  
as once you found me,  
when you and Loge tricked me.

It's not so easy  
again to capture my treasure!

Beware! I am warned,  
wise to your schemes.

I know your weakness;  
nothing's hid from the Niblung.

My stolen treasure  
saved you from ruin;  
my ring paid  
for the giants' work,  
who built that hall where you rule.

The terms of that bargain,  
all that you swore then,  
are graved for ever more  
on that spear you hold in your hand.

You dare not  
ever take back by force  
that fee you paid to the giants:  
for if you paid it  
you would break the bond,  
and in your hand  
the shaft of your spear,  
so mighty, would snap like a straw!

**Wanderer**

Yet no bonds nor graven bargains  
bound evil

Alberich to me:

By force, I bent your will to mine;  
my spear brings victory in war.

**Alberich**

How grand you sound,  
how proudly you stand there,  
and yet in your heart there is fear!

The dragon must die,  
for, by my curse

on the gold, I've doomed him:  
then who shall inherit?

Will the glittering gold  
belong once again to the Niblung?  
That thought gives you endless torment!

Just wait till I grasp  
the ring in my hand.

I'm not a foolish giant.

I'll use that magic spell:  
till you and your heroes  
tremble before me!

Alberich's army  
conquers Walhall's height:  
the world then shall be mine!

**Wanderer** *(calmly)*

Though I know what you plan,  
I care not at all.  
The ring's new master,  
he shall be lord.

**Alberich**

How darkly you tell me  
what so clearly I know!

A hero helps you,  
that's what you plan,  
that son who was born from your blood?  
Have you not raised up a hero  
in hopes that he will gather  
that fruit you dare not pluck?

**Wanderer**

<sup>10</sup> Not my plan!  
Struggle with Mime;  
your brother threatens your hopes:  
to this place he's leading the boy,  
and Fafner will fall to him.  
He knows naught of me,  
but Mime urges him on.  
So mark my words, good friend:  
you may act as you please!  
*(Alberich makes a gesture of urgent inquiry.)*

Take my advice,  
be on your guard!

The boy knows naught of the ring,  
till Mime tells him the tale.

**Alberich** *(eagerly)*

And will you play no part at all?

**Wanderer**

Since I love him,  
I must refuse to help him;

he stands or he falls  
unhelped by me:  
gods rely only on heroes.

**Alberich**  
With only Mime  
I strive for the ring?

**Wanderer**  
Only you and he  
have plans on the gold.

**Alberich**  
And yet I can't make it my own?

**Wanderer** (*quietly drawing nearer*)  
A hero nears  
to rescue the hoard;  
two Nibelungs long for the gold:  
Fafner falls,  
he who guards the ring.  
When it's seized – luck to the winner!  
Would you know more?  
There Fafner lies:  
(*He turns towards the cave.*)  
why not warn him of death?  
Maybe he'll give you the ring.  
I'll wake him up with my call.

(*He takes up a position on the knoll in front of the cave, and calls into it.*)

**Wanderer**  
[11] Fafner! Fafner!  
You dragon, wake!

**Alberich** (*excited and astonished, to himself*)  
Has he lost his senses?  
Can it be mine now?

(*From the dark depths of the background Fafner's voice is heard through a powerful speaking-trumpet.*)

**Fafner**  
Who wakes me from sleep?

**Wanderer** (*facing the cave*)  
A friend has arrived here,  
warning of danger;  
he hopes that he can save you –  
will you reward his help  
with the treasure that you're guarding?

(*He inclines his ear towards the cave, listening.*)

**Fafner**  
What would he?

**Alberich** (*has joined the Wanderer, and calls into the cave*)  
Waken, Fafner!  
Dragon, awake!  
A valiant hero comes  
to try his strength against yours.

**Fafner**  
Then food is near!

**Wanderer**  
Bold is his youthful heart,  
sharp-edged is his sword.

**Alberich**  
The golden ring,  
that's all he wants:  
just give that ring to me,  
and then he won't fight.  
You keep all the rest,  
and live your life in peace!

**Fafner**  
I'll keep what I hold –  
(*yawning*)  
let me slumber!

**Wanderer** (*laughs aloud, and turns back to Alberich*)

[12] Now, Alberich! That plan failed!

Yet call me not a rogue!  
Still more I'll tell you;  
heed my advice!

(*approaching him confidentially*)  
All things go their appointed way;  
their course you cannot alter.

I'll leave you alone here,  
be on your guard!  
Beware of Mime, your brother;  
he is your kind, and you understand him.  
(*turning to go*)

But stranger things  
you'll learn in good time!

(*He disappears into the forest. A stormy wind rises, a bright gleam breaks out; then both quickly subside.*)

**Alberich** (*gazes after the Wanderer as he rides away*)  
He rides on his way  
on fiery steed,  
and leaves me to care and shame.

Yet laugh away,  
you light-spirited,  
self-worshipping  
clan of immortals!  
One day  
I shall see you all fade!  
So long as gold  
reflects the light,

here a wise one will watch:  
watching, waiting to strike!

(*He slips aside into the cleft in the rocks. The stage remains empty. Day dawns.*)

## Scene 2

*As day breaks, Mime and Siegfried enter. Siegfried is wearing the sword in a belt of bast-ropes. Mime examines the place carefully; he looks at last toward the background, which remains in deep shadow even while, later on, the knoll in the middle foreground is lit up ever more brightly by the sun; then he addresses Siegfried.*

**Mime**  
[13] We go no further!  
Here's the place!

**Siegfried** (*sits down under a large lime tree and gazes around*)  
Here, then, shall this fear be taught me?

So far I've let you lead me;  
for the whole night long we've wandered  
through this dark wood, side by side.

Mime, I need you  
no longer!  
If I don't learn  
what I've come to find,  
alone I shall go onward;  
from Mime, I must be free!

**Mime** (*sits down opposite Siegfried, where he can  
keep one eye on the cave*)

Child, believe me,  
if you do not learn  
to fear today,  
no other place,  
no other time,  
can ever teach you fear.  
Look back there;  
do you see that dreadful cave?  
Deep inside  
there lives a cruel dragon,  
terribly big,  
and savage and fierce.  
As soon as he sees you  
he'll open his jaws,  
to eat you whole.  
In one single gulp –  
the brute will gobble you down!

**Siegfried**  
Well then, in order to stop him,  
I'll close up his jaws with my sword.

**Mime**

Poisonous foam  
he will pour from his mouth;  
if you are splashed  
by one single drop,  
it shrivels your body and bones.

**Siegfried**

But that poisonous foam cannot harm me,  
if I step neatly aside.

**Mime**

A scaly tail  
he lashes around:  
and if you should be caught,  
he'll coil it tight;  
your bones will be broken like glass!

**Siegfried**

Then that scaly tail must not catch me;  
I'll have to watch it with care.

But tell me one thing:  
has the brute a heart?

**Mime**

A merciless, cruel heart.

**Siegfried**

And is that heart  
in the usual place,  
at the left of his breast?

**Mime**

Of course; dragons  
have hearts just like men.  
Does your heart begin to feel fear?

**Siegfried** (*who has so far been lolling carelessly,  
quickly sits up erect*)

Notung! Notung!  
I'll thrust in that heart!  
In that way may fear be taught me?  
Oh, you're stupid!  
Have you brought me  
all this way  
to teach me that?

Mime, be off and leave me;  
since fear I shall never learn here.

**Mime**

Just wait a while!  
You think I've told you  
trifling and empty tales:  
but Fafner  
you must see for yourself;  
for Fafner can teach you to fear.

When your eyes grow dim,  
your body grows weak,  
when trembling shudders  
fill your heart,  
(*very affectionately*)  
you'll thank the dwarf who has brought you,  
be glad of Mime's love.

**Siegfried**

You must not love me!  
Did you not hear?  
I hate the sight of you!  
Leave me alone:  
I'll hear no more talk about love;  
don't dare to love me again!

That shuffling and slinking,  
those eyelids blinking –  
how long must I  
endure the sight?  
When shall I be rid of this fool?

**Mime**

I'll leave you now,  
at the stream I'll cool myself.  
Wait by the cave;  
soon, when the sun is in the sky,  
watch for the dragon.  
From his cave he'll slowly emerge,  
wind his way  
past this place,  
to reach the cooling stream there.

**Siegfried** (*laughing*)

Mime, wait by the stream,  
and let the dragon catch you there:  
I can wait here  
till Fafner has found you,  
then we can fight –  
after you've been swallowed.  
Or else, take my advice,  
better not stay by the stream;  
hurry away  
as fast as you can,  
and don't come back to me!

**Mime**

When after the fight  
you'll need refreshment,  
won't you be glad to see me?

*(Siegfried shoos him away.)*

Call for my help  
if you should need me.

*(Siegfried impatiently repeats the gesture.)*

Let me know when your fear has been learnt.  
*(Siegfried rises, and drives Mime off with furious gestures.)*

*(to himself, as he goes)*

Fafner and Siegfried,  
Siegfried and Fafner –  
if only each would kill the other!

*(He disappears in the forest on the right.)*

**Siegfried** *(stretches himself out comfortably under the lime tree, and watches Mime's departure)*

<sup>14</sup> So he's no father of mine:  
that thought fills my heart with joy!

Now I delight  
in this fair green wood;  
I delight  
in this glorious day,  
now I'm free from that loathsome dwarf,  
and I won't have to see him again!

*(He falls into silent reverie.)*

My father, how did he look?  
Why, of course, like his son!  
If Mime had fathered a son,  
wouldn't he look  
just like Mime?  
Shuffling and slinking,  
grizzled and gray,  
small and crooked,

with insolent hunchback,  
insolent bearing,  
eyes that are bleary...  
Off with the imp!

I hope he's gone for good!  
*(He leans back and looks up through the branches. Deep silence. Forest murmurs.)*

### COMPACT DISC THREE

<sup>1</sup> Could I but know  
what my mother was like!  
That's something  
I cannot imagine!

Her eyes must have shone  
with soft gentle light,  
like the eyes of the roedeer,  
only more lovely!  
In fear and grief she bore me,  
but why did she die through me?  
Must every human mother  
die when her children  
come to the world?

Sad the world must be then!  
Ah, how this son  
longs to see his mother!

<sup>2</sup> See my mother –  
who lived and died!  
*(He sighs gently and leans back still further. Deep silence. The forest murmurs increase. Siegfried's*

*attention is then caught by the song of the forest birds. He listens with growing interest to a bird in the branches above him.)*

You lovely woodbird,  
how sweet is your song:  
here in the wood is your home?  
I wish I could understand you!  
I'm sure you've something to tell –  
perhaps of a loving mother?

A surly old dwarf  
said to me once  
that men could learn  
the language of birds,  
and know what they were saying.

How can I learn the tongue?  
*(He reflects. His glance falls on a clump of reeds not far from the lime tree.)*

Hey! Let me try –  
pipe your notes  
on a reed, copy your chirping!

Your song I will echo,  
mimic your warbling;  
while your tune I am piping,  
perhaps I shall learn what you say!  
*(He runs to the stream nearby, cuts a reed with his sword, and quickly whittles a pipe from it. He listens again.)*

He stops and waits:  
well, let me begin!  
*(He blows on the pipe, breaks off, cuts it again to improve it, pipes again, shakes his head, and cuts the pipe once more. He tries again, gets angry,*

*pinches the reed with his hand, and makes another attempt. Then, he gives up.)*

Well, that's not right;  
and this reed won't serve  
to capture the lilt of your song.  
Woodbird, I think  
I must be dull;

From you I cannot learn.  
*(He bears the bird again, and looks up at it.)*

You put me to shame  
as you perch there and hallo;  
you wait – and I cannot answer.  
Hey then! Then hear  
the call of my horn.

*(He holds up the reed and tosses it far away.)*

I can pipe no tune  
on a feeble reed.  
But I'll play you  
a tune on my horn,  
a song that will ring through the woodlands –  
a song that I hoped  
may find me a friend:  
though no one heard me  
but wolf and bear.

Now let us see  
who'll answer my call –  
the friend whom I'm longing to find?  
*(He takes the silver horn and blows on it. At each long-sustained note he looks up expectantly at the bird. There is a stir in the background. Fafner, in the form of a huge, scaly dragon, has risen from his lair in the cave; he breaks through the undergrowth*

*and drags himself up from below to the higher ground until the front part of his body rests on this, whereupon he utters a loud noise like a yawn. Siegfried looks round, and fastens his astonished gaze on Fafner.)*

3 Ha ha! At last with my call  
I have lured something lovely!  
What a pretty playmate I've found!

**Fafner** *(at the sight of Siegfried has paused on the knoll, and remains there)*

Who is there?

**Siegfried**

Hi, so you're a beast  
that can speak to me;  
perhaps you've some news to tell me?  
Can you tell me  
what fear might be:  
are you prepared to teach me?

**Fafner**

You are far too bold!

**Siegfried**

Bold, maybe far too bold,  
I know not!  
I know that I will fight you,  
if you can't teach me to fear.

**Fafner** *(makes a laughing noise)*

Drink I wanted,  
now I have found food!

*(He opens his jaws and shows his teeth.)*

**Siegfried**

What a splendid array  
of dazzling teeth,  
glinting and glistening  
within those jaws!

Well, maybe it's wiser to close them:  
those jaws are open too wide.

**Fafner**

For idle chatter.  
far too wide;  
but all the better  
for my meal.

*(He threatens with his tail.)*

**Siegfried**

Oho! You cruel  
merciless brute!  
But I've no wish  
to be your breakfast.

Far better plan, I think,  
to destroy you here on the spot.

**Fafner** *(roaring)*

Pruh! Come,  
insolent boy!

**Siegfried**

Take care, growler!  
The boy draws near!

*(He draws his sword, springs towards Fafner, and stands in an attitude of defiance. Fafner drags himself further up the knoll and spits from his*

*nostrils at Siegfried. Siegfried avoids the venom, leaps nearer, and stands to one side. Fafner tries to reach him with his tail. When Fafner has nearly caught Siegfried, the latter leaps with one bound over the dragon, and wounds him in the tail. Fafner roars, draws his tail back quickly, and rears up the front part of his body to throw its full weight on Siegfried, thus exposing his breast. Siegfried quickly notes the place of the heart and plunges his sword in there up to the hilt. Fafner rears up still higher in his pain, and sinks down on the wound, as Siegfried lets go of the sword and leaps to one side.)*

So there, merciless brute!  
Notung now has destroyed you!

**Fafner** *(in a weaker voice)*

4 Who are you, youthful hero,  
who has pierced my breast?  
Who roused up your fearless heart  
to this murderous deed?  
And who told you to do  
what you have done?

**Siegfried**

Not much have I learned;  
I know not who I am;  
but you roused me to kill you,  
prompted my deed by your threat.

**Fafner**

So bold, youthful, and fearless,  
unknown to yourself:

now let me tell you  
whom you've killed.  
The giants who ruled on the earth,  
Fasolt and Fafner,  
the brothers, both have now fallen.  
For the cursed gold  
we gained from the gods,  
I put Fasolt to death.  
In dragon shape,  
the treasure's guardian,  
Fafner, the last of the giants,  
falls at the hand of a boy.  
Guard yourself well,  
bold, fearless hero!  
He who urged you on to this deed,  
has planned next this bold hero's death.  
Mark how it ends then!  
*(dying)*  
Recall my fate!

**Siegfried**

Who was my father?  
Do you not know?  
Wisdom inspires you  
now you are dying:  
maybe my name will tell you:  
Siegfried, that is my name.

**Fafner**

Siegfried!...

*(He raises himself with a sigh, and expires.)*

**Siegfried**

5 The dead can tell no tidings.

To life I'll be led  
by the light of my sword!

*(Fafner, in dying, has rolled on his side. Siegfried draws the sword from his breast, and in doing so smears his hand with blood. He draws back his hand violently.)*

Like fire burns his blood!

*(Involuntarily he puts his fingers to his mouth to suck the blood from them. As he gazes thoughtfully before him, his attention is caught increasingly by the song of the forest birds.)*

Almost, it seems,  
the woodbirds are speaking to me.

Is it a spell  
that lies in the blood?  
My woodbird's there again;  
hark he sings to me!

**Voice of a Woodbird** *(from the branches of the lime tree above Siegfried)*

Hi! Siegfried inherits  
the Nibelung hoard;  
O, there it is lying  
within that cave!

There is the Tarnhelm, whose magic  
will serve him for glorious deeds;  
and if he discovers the ring,  
it will make him the lord of the world!

**Siegfried** *(has listened with bated breath and enraptured look)*

Thanks, dearest woodbird,  
for your advice!

I'll do as you say!

*(He turns towards the back, descends into the cave, and at once disappears from sight.)*

**Scene 3**

*Mime slinks on, peering round timidly to assure himself that Fafner is dead. Simultaneously, Alberich emerges from the cleft on the other side. He observes Mime closely. Mime, seeing that Siegfried is no longer there, is going warily towards the cave at the back, when Alberich rushes forward and bars his way.*

**Alberich**

6 Hehe! Sly  
and slippery knave,  
where are you going?

**Mime**

Accursed brother,  
I need you not!  
What brings you here?

**Alberich**

Pestilent imp,  
you'd steal my gold?  
You covet my wealth?

**Mime**

Off on the instant!  
The place here is mine:  
you've no business here!

**Alberich**

Do I disturb  
a thief at his work?  
Caught in the act?

**Mime**

What I've achieved  
through years of toil  
shall not escape me.

**Alberich**

Was it then you  
who robbed the Rhine of its gold?  
And was it your hand  
that worked the spell in the ring?

**Mime**

Who made the Tarnhelm,  
changing your shape at will?  
Though you desired it,  
that helm was made by me!

**Alberich**

You miserable bungler,  
mine was the skill that inspired you!  
My magic ring  
showed how the helm could be made.

**Mime**

And where is that ring?  
You coward, the giants have seized it.

What you have lost,  
I can gain by guile for myself.

**Alberich**

What the boy has won  
will the miser lay hands on?  
When the hero finds it,  
that hero will keep his prize.

**Mime**

I brought him up;  
for my care now he can pay;  
for years I slaved;  
my labours have won their reward!

**Alberich**

So you brought him up!  
Does the beggarly,  
miserly knave  
think he's earned  
such pay? King he would be?  
A flea-bitten dog  
had better right  
than you to the gold!  
You'll never win,  
you schemer, that mighty ring!

**Mime** *(scratches his head)*

Well, keep it then,  
and guard it well,  
that shining ring!  
You be lord:  
but still treat me as brother!  
Give me the Tarnhelm

which I have made,  
you keep the gold;  
then both are paid;  
each of us shares in the prize.

*(He rubs his hands insinuatingly.)*

**Alberich** *(laughing scornfully)*

Share it with you?  
And the Tarnhelm yours?  
How sly you are!  
Not one moment's peace  
I'd have from your scheming!

**Mime** *(beside himself)*

You won't share them?  
You won't bargain?  
Nothing for me?  
All must be yours!

*(screaming)*

Not one thing will you leave me?

**Alberich**

Not a trinket!  
No, not a nail-head!  
All I deny you.

**Mime** *(in a towering rage)*

Neither ring nor Tarnhelm  
then shall reward you!  
I'll bargain no more!  
But I'll set against you  
Siegfried himself  
with his cruel sword;  
that fearless boy  
will pay you, brother of mine!

*(Siegfried appears in the background.)*

**Alberich**

Better turn round!  
From the cavern, see where he comes.

**Mime**

Trinkets and toys  
he's sure to have found.

**Alberich**

He's found the Tarnhelm!

**Mime**

Also the ring!

**Alberich**

Accurst! The ring!

**Mime** *(laughing maliciously)*

Get him to give you the ring, then!  
Yet all the same I shall win it!

*(He slips back into the forest.)*

**Alberich**

Just wait, in the end  
it will belong to its master.

*(He disappears into the cleft. During the foregoing, Siegfried has come slowly and thoughtfully from the cave with the Tarnhelm and ring. He regards his prizes meditatively, and pauses on the knoll in the middle of the stage, near the tree.)*

**Siegfried**

<sup>7</sup> Tarnhelm and ring,  
here they are:  
I chose these things  
from the hoard of heaped-up gold,  
because the woodbird said I should.  
I know not their use:  
yet they'll serve to remind me –  
these toys are the proof  
that I conquered Fafner in fight;  
but what fear is, that I've not learned!

*(He puts the Tarnhelm in his belt and the ring on his finger. Dead silence. The forest murmurs increase. Siegfried again involuntarily becomes aware of the bird, to whose song he listens with bated breath.)*

**Voice of the Woodbird**

Hi! Siegfried discovered  
the Tarnhelm and ring!  
Now let him beware  
of the treacherous dwarf!  
Oh, let Siegfried attend  
to the crafty words Mime speaks!  
What he really means  
you will now understand,  
made wise by the taste of the blood.

*(Siegfried's demeanour and gestures show that he has understood the sense of the bird's song. Seeing Mime approach, he remains motionless, leaning on his sword, observant and self-contained, in his place on the knoll, until the end of the following scene.)*

**Mime** *(slinks on and observes Siegfried from the foreground)*

He broods, and he wonders  
what he's found:  
can he have met  
a wily Wanderer,  
roaming around,  
advising the boy  
with crafty talk and tales?  
Doubly sly  
I'll have to be:  
my cunningest snares  
for him I shall lay,  
and use my friendliest,  
falsest flattery  
to capture this obstinate boy.

*(He comes closer to Siegfried, welcoming him with wheedling gestures.)*

<sup>8</sup> Be welcome, Siegfried!  
Say, my brave one,  
tell me if fear has been learned?

**Siegfried**

No teacher here could be found.

**Mime**

But that cruel dragon –  
I see that you've slain him?  
Did he not inspire you with fear?

**Siegfried**

Though he was cruel and fierce,  
his death fills me with grief,

when far wickeder scoundrels  
live their lives still unpunished.  
He who brought me here to fight  
I hate far more than my foe!

**Mime** (*very affectionately*)

Now gently! for soon  
you'll see me no more:  
when death has closed  
your eyes in dark, eternal sleep!

For all that I needed  
(*as if praising him*)  
you have achieved;  
one thing but remains  
for me to do: to win the treasure.  
I think that task should be easy;  
you were never hard to deceive!

**Siegfried**

Deceive me, and then destroy me?

**Mime** (*astonished*)

Is that what I said?  
(*continuing tenderly*)  
Siegfried! Hear me, my dear son!  
You and all your kind  
in my heart I have hated;  
and love played no part  
in bringing you up.  
The gold that's hid in Fafner's cave,  
that gold alone I sought to win.  
(*as if he were promising him something pleasant*)  
Give me all  
that shining treasure, or else –

(*as if he were ready to lay down his life for him*)

Siegfried, my son,  
you see it's quite clear,  
(*with affectionate jocular*)  
your life you'll just have to yield me.

**Siegfried**

Learning you hate me,  
brings me joy:  
as for my life, why should I yield it?

**Mime** (*angrily*)

I did not say that!  
You have heard me all wrong!  
(*He produces his flask, and takes evident pains to  
be convincing.*)

After your fighting  
I know you're tired;  
after such toil you are hot;  
let me refresh you  
with cooling drink;  
Mime knew what you'd need.  
While your sword you were forging,  
I made some broth;  
drink but a drop,  
and then I will seize your sword  
and gain the gold as well!

(*He sniggers.*)

**Siegfried**

So you'd seize my sword  
and all that it's won me;  
ring and Tarnhelm, you'd take them?

**Mime** (*vehemently*)

Why can't you hear what I say!  
Tell me, am I not clear?  
I'm being so careful,  
choosing my words,  
and hiding my meaning,  
trying to deceive you;  
and the foolish booby  
misinterprets my words.  
Open your ears now,  
and attend to me!  
Listen what Mime plans!  
(*again very affectionately, with an evident effort to  
make himself understood*)  
Take this and drink it to cool you!  
My drinks pleased you before:  
when you were thirsty,  
tired or hot,  
I brought you drink;  
you grumbled, but you still drank it.

**Siegfried** (*without altering his expression*)

A refreshing drink  
I should like:  
but say how this one was brewed.

**Mime** (*gaily joking, as if describing how pleasant  
and merry the brew will make him*)

Hi! Just drink it,  
trust to my skill!  
And you'll be seized  
by sleep that you cannot resist:  
you will sink unconscious,

drugged, drowsy, and helpless.

While you're asleep  
I'll easily  
steal the ring and the Tarnhelm,  
but if once you should wake,  
then from you  
I'd never be safe,  
even as lord of the ring.  
So with the sword  
that you made so sharp,  
(*with a gesture of uncontrolled merriment*)  
I will just crop  
your head right off;  
then I will be safe, I'll have the ring!

(*He chuckles again.*)

**Siegfried**

While I'm sleeping you plan to kill me?

**Mime** (*in a furious rage*)

To kill you? Why do you say that?  
(*He makes an effort to assume his most charming  
tone of voice.*)  
I merely plan  
(*with meticulous clarity*)  
to chop your head right off!  
(*with an expression of heartfelt anxiety for  
Siegfried's health*)  
Not only because  
I hate you so;  
not only because  
I have suffered such scorn and shame,

and long to take my vengeance;  
(*gently*)

but because I must destroy you;  
if I plan to kill you,  
how could I be sure of my treasure,  
since Alberich covets it too?

(*He pours the brew into the drinking-horn and offers it to Siegfried with pressing gestures.*)

Now, my Walsung!  
You Wolf's son!

Drink and choke to death!  
You'll never drink again!

(*Siegfried raises his sword, and as if seized by violent loathing aims a swift blow at Mime, who immediately falls down dead.*)

**Siegfried**

Taste then my sword,  
horrible babbler!

(*Alberich's mocking laughter is heard from the cleft. Siegfried quietly puts his sword back again, gazing at the fallen body.*)

Hatred's paid  
by Notung:  
that's why I needed to forge it.  
(*He picks up Mime's body, carries it to the knoll at the entrance to the cave, and throws it down inside.*)

In the cavern there,  
lie with the hoard!  
You schemed so long  
and strove for that gold;  
so now take your joy in that treasure!

Let me place this guardian  
there by your side,  
so from all thieves you'll be safe.  
(*With a great effort he drags the body of the dragon to the entrance to the cave, blocking it completely.*)

9 You lie there too,  
mighty dragon.

The glittering gold  
you now can share  
with your foe who longed for its gleam;  
and so you both have found your rest!  
(*He gazes thoughtfully down into the cave for a while, and then returns slowly to the foreground, as if tired. It is noon. He passes his hand over his brow.*)

I'm worn out  
by the heavy task.  
Fever seems  
to burn my blood.

This hand burns on my brow.  
High stands the sun above me;  
his brilliant eye  
gazes down  
from the blue and beats on my head.

Here it's cooler;  
I'll rest under these branches.  
(*He lies down under the lime-tree and again looks up into the branches.*)

You're back then, dearest woodbird,  
not flown away  
after the fight?  
Let me hear again your singing!

On a branch I see you  
swaying and swinging;  
chirping and chirruping  
brothers and sisters  
surround you with laughter and love!  
But I am quite alone,  
have no brothers nor sisters,  
and my mother died,  
my father fell,  
unknown to their son!

One comrade was mine,  
a detestable dwarf.  
Love was never known  
between us;  
loving and sly,  
he wanted to catch me;  
so at last I was forced to kill him!  
(*Sadly, he looks up again to the branches.*)

Dear little woodbird,  
can you be my guide?  
Can you tell me  
where I'll find a friend?  
You must know some way to help me.  
So often I've called  
and yet no one has come.  
You, my woodbird,  
you might do better,  
for you've advised me so well.  
Now sing! I'm listening for your song.

**Voice of the Woodbird**  
Hi! Siegfried is free  
from the evil dwarf!

Next he must awake  
his glorious bride:  
high on a mountain she sleeps,  
guarded by threatening flames.  
Who goes through the fire,  
wakens the bride,  
Brünnhilde then shall be his!

**Siegfried** (*leaps up impetuously from his seat*)

O joyful song!  
Sweet, happy strain!  
Your glorious words  
strike fire in my breast;  
like flames they burn me,  
kindle my heart!  
What new thought inspires  
my heart and senses?  
Tell me, my dear, sweet friend!

**Voice of the Woodbird**

Gaily in grief,  
I sing of love;  
joyful in woe,  
I weave my song;  
and lovers can tell what it means.

**Siegfried**

Joy fills me,  
shouting with gladness,  
forth I shall go to that rock!  
But one thing more tell me,  
dearest woodbird:  
say, can I pass through the fire?  
Can I awaken the bride?

**Voice of the Woodbird**

Who wakens the maid,  
Brünnhild the bride,  
no coward can be:  
one unacquainted with fear!

**Siegfried** (*laughs with delight*)

A foolish boy,  
unacquainted with fear,  
dear woodbird, why, that is me!

Today in vain  
I attempted to learn –  
I hoped that the dragon could teach me.  
Now joy fills my heart,  
since from Brünnhild I'll learn it!

What way must I take to the rock?  
(*The bird flutters out, circles over Siegfried, and then flies off hesitatingly.*)

Fluttering overhead, you guide me;  
and where you flutter,  
there I shall go!

(*He pursues the bird, which for a while teasingly leads him in different directions: then it takes a definite course towards the background and flies away. Siegfried follows. The curtain falls.*)

**Act III**

**A wild place at the foot of a rocky mountain**

<sup>10</sup> *which rises steeply at the left towards the back. Night: storm, lightning and violent thunder; the latter ceases after a while; the lightning continuing to flash through the clouds.*

**Scene I**

**Wanderer** (*strides resolutely to a vault-like cavernous opening in a rock in the foreground and stands there, leaning on his spear, while he calls the following towards the mouth of the cave*)

<sup>11</sup> Waken, Wala!

Wala! Awake!  
From lasting sleep  
rise and appear at my call.

I call you again:  
Arise! Arise!  
From earth's hidden caves,  
imprisoned in darkness, arise!

Erda! Erda!  
Woman all-wise!  
From silence and darkness  
rise to the world!  
With spells I rouse you,  
rise up and answer;  
your slumbering wisdom  
I would awake.

All-knowing one!  
Wisdom's guardian!

Erda! Erda!  
Woman all-wise!  
Waken, awaken,  
O Wala! Awaken!

(*The cavern begins to glow with a bluish light, in which Erda is seen rising very slowly from the depths. She appears to be covered by hoar-frost: her hair and garments give out a glimmering shine.*)

**Erda**

<sup>12</sup> Strong is your call,  
mighty spells have roused me.  
From wisdom's dreams,  
I rise at your call.  
Who drives my slumber hence?

**Wanderer**

The Wanderer wakes you;  
I need your wisdom;  
my spells have called you  
from caverns far below.  
On earth I've wandered,  
far I have roamed;  
I searched for wisdom,  
strove day and night to achieve it.

No one on earth  
is wiser than you;  
you know what's hid  
in the caves of night,  
what hill and dale,  
air and water do hold.

Where life is found,  
Erda is stirring;  
where brains are brooding,  
you stir their thoughts.  
All things, all things,  
all you must know.  
Seeking your wisdom and counsel,  
I arouse you from sleep!

**Erda**

My sleep is dreaming;  
my dreaming, brooding,

my brooding brings all my wisdom.

But while I sleep  
the Norns are waking,  
and winding their cord,  
and weaving all that I know:  
the Norns can give your answer.

**Wanderer**

They weave for the world,  
spin what you tell them,  
but cannot change that world with their weaving.  
But you are wiser,  
you can advise me  
if the cruel wheel of fate can be stopped?

**Erda**

Deeds of men  
have beclouded all my thoughts;  
my wisdom itself  
once felt a conqueror's force.  
A brave daughter  
I bore to Wotan:  
at his command  
she chose heroes for Walhall.  
She's valiant  
and wise as well:  
so why wake me?  
You'll learn your answer  
from Erda's and Wotan's child.

**Wanderer**

My Valkyrie daughter,  
Brünnhild the maid?  
She disobeyed the lord of the tempest

when he'd controlled the storm in his breast:

When my son was in need  
I longed to help him,  
yet I renounced him  
and doomed him to death.  
She knew my will,  
yet she defied me

and dared to break my commandment –  
Brünnhild herself in her pride.

I had to  
deal with the maid;  
so I closed her eyelids in sleep;  
on that rock asleep she lies.

Our holy maid  
can be awakened alone,  
roused by some man who makes her his bride.  
What can I learn from the maid?

**Erda** (*is lost in dreams; she begins again after a long silence*)

My waking  
leaves me confused:  
wild and strange  
seems the world.  
The Valkyrie,  
the Wala's child,  
lay in fetters of sleep,  
while her all-knowing mother slept?  
How can pride's teacher  
punish pride?  
He who urged the doing,  
punish the deed?

He who rules by right,  
to whom truth is sacred,  
scorn what is right,  
rule by falsehood?  
I'll return to the dark,  
seal in slumber my wisdom!

**Wanderer**

O woman, you may not leave:  
You are bound by my sorcerer's might.  
All-wise one,  
you drove a thorn  
of cares and sorrows  
in Wotan's fearless heart:  
with fear of ruin,  
shameful downfall  
you filled my spirit,  
with words of warning and doom.  
If you are the world's  
wisest of women,  
say to me now:  
how a god can master his care?

**Erda**

You are not  
what you declare!  
Why come here, stubborn and wild one,  
to trouble the Wala's sleep?

**Wanderer**

You are not  
what you have dreamed.  
Wisdom of ages

finds its ending:  
your wisdom grows weak  
before my wishes.

Know you what Wotan wills?

(*long silence*)

<sup>13</sup> You unwise one,  
learn what I will,  
then carefree you may sleep in peace!  
That the gods will die soon  
gives me no anguish;  
I have willed that end!  
What in an hour of fiercest anguish  
despairing once I resolved,  
freely and gladly  
I shall now bring to pass.  
Once I declared in my loathing  
the Niblung might claim all the world;  
today to the Wälsung  
I have bequeathed my realm.  
One who has never known me,  
though chosen by me,  
a youth of dauntless daring,  
unhelped by Wotan,  
has gained the Nibelung's ring.  
Free from hate,  
joyful and loving,  
that youth is not harmed  
by Alberich's curse,  
for he knows naught of fear.  
She whom you once bore,  
Brünnhild,  
wakes to that hero's kiss.

Then your wisdom's  
child will achieve  
that deed that will free our world.

So back to your dreams;  
dream on in darkness;  
dream of the gods' destruction.

Whatever may happen  
the god will gladly  
yield his role to the young!  
Return then, Erda!  
Mother of dread!  
World-sorrow!  
Return! Return  
to endless sleep!

(*Erda has already closed her eyes and begun to descend gradually. She now disappears entirely; the cavernous opening too has become quite dark. The moon lights the scene. The storm has ceased.*)

**Scene 2**

*The Wanderer has advanced close to the cavern: he leans with his back against the rock, facing the stage.*

**Wanderer**

<sup>14</sup> I see that Siegfried's near.

(*He remains in his position by the cave. Siegfried's woodbird flutters towards the foreground, then suddenly stops, flutters hither and thither as if alarmed, and disappears hastily at the back.*)

COMPACT DISC FOUR

**Siegfried** (*enters in the foreground, right, and pauses*)

- 1 My woodbird fluttered away  
with sweetest songs,  
and sweetest voice,  
gaily he showed me my path;  
but now he's fluttered away!  
So I'll discover  
the rock for myself.  
The path my bird pointed out,  
that path I must pursue.

(*He goes further towards the back.*)

**Wanderer**

- 2 Young man, hear me;  
where are you going?

**Siegfried** (*pauses and turns round*)

Who speaks to me?  
Can he show me my path?  
(*He comes closer to the Wanderer.*)  
I must find a mountain;  
by blazing fire it's surrounded:  
there sleeps a maid:  
I must waken her!

**Wanderer**

Who told you then  
to seek this mountain?  
Who said this maid would be found there?

**Siegfried**

I heard a lovely  
woodbird:  
it told me of the mountain.

**Wanderer**

A woodbird chirps as it pleases;  
but men can't understand;  
so how did you know  
what it was singing?

**Siegfried**

I tasted a drop  
of a dragon's blood,  
who fell at Neidhöhl before me;  
and when I'd tasted  
that fiery blood,  
then the birdsong I heard clean as speech.

**Wanderer**

To fight so fierce a foe,  
who urged you on,  
if you have really killed the dragon?

**Siegfried**

My guide was Mime,  
an evil dwarf,  
when fear he wanted to teach me;  
and then the dragon  
urged me himself,  
dared me to use my sword,  
when he opened threatening jaws.

**Wanderer**

Who forged your sword  
so sharp and true,  
that it slew so fierce a foe?

**Siegfried**

I forged it myself,  
when the smith was beaten:  
swordless else I should be.

**Wanderer**

But who made  
those mighty fragments,  
from which the sword could then be forged?

**Siegfried**

Ha! How can I tell?  
I only knew  
that the broken sword was useless,  
till I had forged it myself.

**Wanderer** (*breaks into a happy, good-humoured laugh*)

That's certainly true!  
(*He looks at Siegfried approvingly.*)

**Siegfried** (*surprised*)

You're laughing at me  
with your questions!  
Mock me no more,  
keeping me here with your chatter.  
Old man, if you  
can help me, then do so,  
and if you can't,  
then hold your tongue!

**Wanderer**

Young man, be patient!  
If I seem old,  
then you should honour the aged.

**Siegfried**

Honour the aged!  
When all my life  
there stood in my path  
an aged fellow;  
now I have swept him away.

If you stay longer,  
trying to obstruct me,  
have a care, old one,  
or else, like Mime you'll fare!  
(*He goes up closer to the Wanderer.*)

How strange you look!  
Why do you wear  
that great big hat?

Why have you pulled it down over your face?

**Wanderer** (*still without changing his position*)

That's how the Wanderer wears it,  
when against the wind he must go!

**Siegfried** (*observes him more closely*)

But an eye underneath it you're lacking?  
No doubt some stranger  
once struck it out  
when you decided  
to bar his way?  
Out of my way,  
or else you may lose  
the other eye that is left you.

**Wanderer**

I see, my son,  
one thing you know –  
to get your way as you want it.  
Yet be careful,  
for with eyes quite as blind  
as that eye I've lost, you are gazing  
on the eye that is left me for sight.

**Siegfried** (*who has listened thoughtfully, now involuntarily bursts out laughing*)

At least you're good for a laugh, then!  
But hear, I'm getting impatient;  
at once, show me my path,  
then your own way find for yourself.

What use  
is a foolish old man?  
So speak, or I'll push you aside!

**Wanderer** (*softly*)

- 3 Child, if you knew  
who I am,  
you'd then spare me your scorn!  
Sad from one so dear  
sounds such scornful defiance.  
Dear to my heart  
is your glorious race –  
though I was harsh  
and they shrank from my rage.  
You, whom I love so,  
youthful hero!  
do not waken that rage;  
it would ruin both you and me!

**Siegfried**

Still no reply,  
stubborn old fool!  
Out of my way then,  
for that path, I know,  
leads to the slumbering maid.  
I learnt from the woodbird  
who now has fluttered away.  
(*It quickly becomes quite dark again.*)

**Wanderer** (*breaking out in anger, imperiously*)

It left you to save its life!  
The ravens' ruler  
it knew was here.  
Ill fate follows its flight!  
The path that it showed you  
you shall not tread!

**Siegfried** (*astonished, steps back in a defiant attitude*)

Ho! Ho! So you'd stop me!  
Who are you then  
to say I can't go on?

**Wanderer**

I am the rock's defender!  
And mine the spell  
that enfolds the slumbering maid.  
He who can wake her,  
he who can win her,  
makes me powerless for ever!  
A sea of flame  
now circles the maid,  
burning and blazing

protects the rock.  
He who seeks the bride  
must brave that barrier of flame.  
(*He points with his spear to the rocky heights.*)

Look, on the heights!  
Can you see that light?  
The splendour grows,  
the flames leap high;  
fire clouds are rolling,  
lightnings are flashing,  
raging and rearing  
and coming this way.  
A light-flood  
now shines round your head;  
(*On the summit, a flickering fire becomes more and more clearly visible.*)  
and soon that fire  
will seize and destroy you.  
Stand back, then, foolhardy boy!

**Siegfried**

Stand back, old boaster, yourself!  
There, where the flames are burning,  
to Brünnhilde now I shall go!  
(*He advances; the Wanderer bars his way.*)

**Wanderer**

If you've no fear of the fire,  
(*stretching out his spear*)  
the shaft of my spear bars your way!  
I grasp in my hand  
that mighty shaft:  
the sword that you bear

was broken by this shaft;  
and once again  
I'll break it on this my spear!  
(*He stretches out his spear.*)

**Siegfried** (*drawing his sword*)

Then my father's foe  
faces me here?  
Glorious vengeance  
I've found at last!  
Stretch out your spear:  
and see it break on my sword!

(*Siegfried with one blow strikes the Wanderer's spear in two: a flash of lightning darts from it towards the summit, where the flames, glowing dully before, now break out more and more brightly. The blow is accompanied by violent thunder that quickly dies away. The fragments of the spear fall at the Wanderer's feet. He quietly picks them up.*)

**Wanderer** (*falling back*)

Pass on! I cannot prevent you!  
(*He suddenly disappears in complete darkness.*)

**Siegfried**

- 4 With his spear in splinters,  
he has escaped me!  
(*Siegfried's attention is caught by the growing brightness of the fire-clouds as they roll down the mountain.*)  
Ha! Flame of delight!  
Glorious blaze!  
Shining, my pathway

opens before me.  
 In fire I should find her!  
 Through fire I shall make her mine!  
 Hoho! Hahi!  
 My comrade shall wake to my call!  
*(Siegfried raises his horn to his lips and, playing his call, plunges into the sea of fire, which has swept down from the heights and is spreading over the foreground. Siegfried appears to be going towards the heights; soon he is no longer visible. The flames reach their brightest, and then begin to fade, gradually dissolving into a finer and finer mist, lit as if by the red of the dawn.)*

**Scene 3**

*The clouds, which have become increasingly thin, dissolve into a fine rosy mist, which now divides. The upper part drifts away altogether, revealing at last only the bright blue sky of day, while on the edge of the rocky height, which now becomes visible – exactly the same scene as in Act III of The Valkyrie – there hangs a veil of reddish morning mist, suggesting the magic fire that still rages below. The arrangement of the scene is precisely as at the end of The Valkyrie: in the foreground, under the wide-spreading fir-tree, lies Brünnhilde in full shining armour, her helmet on her head, and her long shield covering her. She is in a deep sleep.*

**Siegfried** *(reaches the rocky summit of the cliff from the back. At first only the upper part of his body is visible. He looks around for a while in astonishment)*

5 Here, in the sunlight,  
 a haven of calm!  
*(He climbs right to the top and, standing on a rock at the edge of the precipice at the peak, surveys the scene with wonder. He looks into the wood at the side and takes a step or two towards it.)*  
 What lies there sleeping  
 in the shade of the pines?  
 A horse there,  
 resting in deepest sleep.  
*(Coming forward slowly, he pauses in astonishment as he sees Brünnhilde's form some distance away.)*  
 What flashes in the sunlight?  
 What glittering steel is there?  
 Is it the fire  
 still dazzling my eyes?  
*(He comes closer.)*  
 Shining armour?  
 Let me approach!  
*(He raises the shield and sees Brünnhilde's form, though her face is still largely concealed by the helmet.)*  
 Ha! in armour, a man.  
 My heart most strangely is stirred!  
 His noble head  
 pressed by the helm?  
 Shall I loose it,  
 easing his rest?  
*(He carefully loosens the helmet and removes it from the sleeper; long curling hair falls down. Siegfried starts.)*  
 Ah! How fair!

*(He is rapt in the sight.)*  
 Shimmering clouds  
 encircle in splendour,  
 a holy, heavenly sea;  
 glorious sunlight  
 streams from his face,  
 shines through the clouds all around!  
*(He bends lower towards the sleeper.)*  
 The weight of the armour  
 bears on his breast!  
 Shall I unfasten the breastplate?  
*(Carefully, he tries to loosen the breastplate.)*  
 6 Come, my sword!  
 Cut through the metal!  
*(He draws his sword, and gently and carefully cuts through the rings of mail on both sides of the armour. Then he lifts off the breastplate and the greaves; Brünnhilde lies before him in soft woman's drapery. He starts back in astonishment and alarm.)*  
 It's not a man!  
*(He stares at the slumbering form with wildest emotion.)*  
 Burning enchantments  
 burn in my breast;  
 fiery spells  
 dazzle and blind me;  
 my heart grows feeble and faint!  
*(in desperation)*  
 On whom shall I call?  
 Ah, who can help me?  
 Mother! Mother!

Remember me!  
*(He sinks, as if fainting, on Brünnhilde's breast. Long silence. He rises with a sigh.)*  
 How waken the maid,  
 and see her eyes gently open?  
 Her eyes gently open?  
 Will they not dazzle and blind?  
 How can I dare  
 to gaze on their light?  
 Beneath my feet  
 the ground seems to sway!  
 Anguish and yearning  
 conquer my courage;  
 on my heart, beating wildly,  
 trembles my hand!  
 Am I a coward?  
 Is this what fear is?  
 O mother! Mother!  
 Your bold fearless child!  
 A woman lies here in sleep,  
 and she now has taught me to fear!  
 How conquer my fear?  
 How steel my heart?  
 If I'm going to wake myself,  
 first the maid must awaken.  
*(As he approaches the sleeper anew he is again filled with tender emotion at the sight of her. He bends lower over her.)*  
 Sweet and quivering  
 her lovely mouth.  
 A quaking madness  
 draws fear from my heart!

Ah! How enchanting  
her ever warming breath!  
Awaken! Awaken!  
Holiest maid!  
*(He gazes upon her.)*  
She hears me not.  
*(slowly, with tense and urgent expression)*  
Then life I shall gather  
from lips filled with sweetness;  
what though I die by this kiss!

*(He sinks, as if dying, on the sleeping figure, and with closed eyes presses his lips on her mouth. Brünnhilde opens her eyes. Siegfried starts up and stands before her. Brünnhilde slowly rises to a sitting position. She raises her arms in solemn gestures, greeting the heaven and earth that now she sees again.)*

**Brünnhilde**

7 Hail, bright sunlight!  
Hail, fair sky!  
Hail, O radiant day!  
Long was my sleep;  
but now I wake:  
Who is the man  
wakes me to life?

**Siegfried** *(deeply moved by her look and her voice, stands as if rooted to the spot)*  
I have braved the dangers  
baking around your rock;  
from your head I unclasped the helm;  
Siegfried wakes you,  
brings you to life.

**Brünnhilde** *(sitting straight up)*

Wotan, hear me!  
Hear me, world!  
Hear me, glorious nature!  
My sleep is at an end;  
awake, I see  
Siegfried! Siegfried  
has brought me life!

**Siegfried** *(breaking out in ecstasy)*

I bless my mother,  
giving me birth!  
bless the earth  
that gave me my strength!  
Now I behold those eyes,  
bright stars which laugh on my joy!

**Brünnhilde** *(in impassioned accents)*

I bless your mother,  
giving you birth!  
bless the earth  
that gave you your strength!  
Your eyes alone could behold me,  
my heart to you alone wakes!  
*(Each remains lost in radiant, rapt contemplation of the other.)*

8 Siegfried! Siegfried!  
Glorious hero!  
Victorious conqueror,  
conquering light!  
O learn from me, joy of the world,  
how I have always loved you!  
You were my gladness,

my cares as well!  
Your life I sheltered,  
in Sieglinde's womb;  
before she had borne you,  
I was your shield.  
So long I have loved, Siegfried!

**Siegfried** *(softly and shyly)*  
My mother is alive, then?  
Sleep enfolded her here?

**Brünnhilde** *(smiles, and stretching out her hand to him affectionately)*

O innocent child!  
Nevermore you'll look on your mother.  
But we are one,  
if you can grant me your love.  
What you would learn,  
learn it from me;  
for wisdom fills my soul,  
now that I love you!  
O Siegfried! Siegfried!  
conquering light!  
I loved you always,  
for I divined  
the thought that Wotan had hidden,  
guessed the secret thought  
I dared not even whisper;  
I did not shape it,  
rather I felt it;  
and so I fought,  
urged by that deed,  
when I defied the god

who conceived it;  
and then I suffered,  
slept on that rock,  
for that thought still secret,  
that thought I felt!  
Know what that thought was;  
ah, you can guess it!  
That thought was my love for you!

**Siegfried**

Ah, glorious song,  
enchanting to hear;  
but yet the meaning is dark.  
I can see your eyes  
that shine so bright;  
I can feel your warm  
and fragrant breath;  
I can hear your song  
so clear and sweet:  
but what your singing can mean,  
how can I understand?  
You sing of the past,  
but how can I listen,  
while I have you beside me,  
see and feel you?  
In bonds of fear  
I have been bound:  
from you alone  
could I learn how to fear.  
Since you have bound me  
in powerful fetters,  
give me my freedom again!

*(He remains in profound agitation, directing on her a look of yearning.)*

**Brünnhilde** *(gently turns her head aside and looks towards the wood)*

9 And there is Grane,  
my sacred horse;  
he grazes in gladness  
where once he slept!  
Like me, to Siegfried he wakes.

**Siegfried** *(remaining in the same position)*

My eyes are grazing  
on pastures more lovely;  
with passionate thirst  
my lips too are burning,  
for they long to graze where my glance does!

**Brünnhilde** *(points to her weapons, which she now perceives)*

And there is my shield  
that sheltered heroes;  
beside it the helmet  
that hid my head.  
They shield, they hide me no more!

**Siegfried**

Now a glorious maid  
has wounded my heart;  
wounds in my head  
were struck by that maid:  
I came with no shield or helm!

**Brünnhilde** *(with increasing sadness)*

And there is the steel

that guarded my breast.  
A shining sword  
cut it in two,  
when the maid was stripped  
of all her defence.

I have no defence, no shield;  
quite unarmed, a sorrowing maid!

**Siegfried**

Through furious fire  
I fared to your rock;  
no breastplate, no armour  
guarded my breast;  
the flames have broken through  
to my heart.

My blood's ablaze  
and burns in my breast;  
a passionate fire  
within me is kindled;  
that blaze which guarded  
Brünnhilde's rock

now flames fiercely in my breast!  
O maid, you started the fire!  
You can extinguish the flame!

*(He has embraced her ardently. She springs up, repulses him with the utmost strength of terror, and flies to the other side.)*

**Brünnhilde**

No god dared to come near!  
The heroes bowed  
and knelt to the maiden:  
holy came she from Walhall.

Sorrow! Sorrow!  
Woe for my shame,  
how keen my disgrace!  
And he who wakes me  
deals me the wound!

He has broken breastplate and helm:  
Brünnhilde am I no more!

**Siegfried**

You're still to me  
that slumbering maid;  
Brünnhilde's sleep  
still binds her fast.

Awaken, you are my bride!

**Brünnhilde**

My mind's in confusion,  
my reason sways:  
must all my wisdom fail me?

**Siegfried**

You said  
that all your wisdom came  
by the light of your love for me.

**Brünnhilde** *(staring in front of her)*

Shadows and darkness  
close on me now.  
My eyes are blinded,  
my sight grows dim.  
Night falls around.  
From darkness and gloom  
wildly my fears  
seem to seize on me.

Dreadful horrors  
arise in the dark!

*(Impulsively she covers her eyes with her hands.)*

**Siegfried** *(gently removing her hands from her eyes)*

Night enfolds  
those eyes you've hidden.  
When I free them  
all gloomy fears depart.  
Rise from the darkness, and see:  
bright as the sun, here shines the day!

**Brünnhilde** *(profoundly agitated)*

Bright as the sun  
shines but the day of my shame!

O Siegfried! Siegfried!  
See my dismay!

*(Brünnhilde's expression reveals that a pleasing idea has come to her mind, and at this she turns again and looks tenderly at Siegfried.)*

10 Oh! I cared always.  
Oh! I shall always  
care with sweet,  
warm, tender longing –  
yes, always for your dear life!

O Siegfried,  
glorious hero!  
Wealth of the world!  
Fair, laughing hero!  
Light of the earth!  
Leave, ah, leave,  
leave me in peace!  
Do not come near me

with passionate frenzy,  
do not pursue me  
with masterful might,  
or else you'll destroy all our love!  
You've seen your face  
in the shining stream?  
And it delighted your eyes?  
But when that water  
is stirred by a wave,  
your smiling reflection  
breaks and is gone;  
your face greets you no more  
when that shining stream is disturbed!  
So disturb me no more,  
trouble me not!  
Ever bright,  
may you ever see  
in me your reflection,  
brave and smiling and fair!  
O Siegfried!  
Laughing youth!  
Love yourself,  
and leave me in peace;  
destroy not this maid who's yours!

**Siegfried**

I love you:  
did you but love me!  
Mine I am no more:  
were you but mine!  
A sea of enchantment  
flows around;  
with all my senses

I see alone  
those surging, glorious billows.  
Though in the deep  
I may not see my face,  
burning, I long  
for those cooling waters;  
and now, as I am,  
leap in the stream –  
if only those waves  
could engulf me forever,  
my yearning would fade in the flood!  
Awaken, Brünnhilde!  
Waken, O maid!  
Live in laughter,  
sweetest delight.  
Be mine! Be mine! Be mine!

**Brünnhilde** (*with intensity*)

O Siegfried! Yours  
I've always been!

**Siegfried** (*ardently*)

If you were mine,  
be mine again!

**Brünnhilde**

Yours ever  
I shall be!

**Siegfried**

If you'll be mine,  
be so today!  
When in my arms  
I hold you embraced,

feeling your glance,  
hearing beside me,  
joining our glances,  
sharing one single breath,  
eyes together,  
mouth to mouth:  
then I shall know  
that you are truly mine!  
End my doubts, let me now be sure  
that now Brünnhilde's mine!

(*He has embraced her.*)

**Brünnhilde**

That I am yours?  
Godly composure  
change into wildness;  
virginal light  
flare into frenzy;  
heavenly wisdom  
fly to the winds:  
love, and love alone  
inspires all my heart!  
That I am yours?  
Siegfried! Siegfried!  
Can you not see?  
When my eyes blaze on you,  
then are you not blind?  
When my arm's embrace  
not set you on fire?  
By the heat of my blood  
in its passionate surge,  
a fire is kindled –

can you not feel?  
Tell me then, Siegfried,  
do you not fear  
this wild, passionate maid?  
(*She embraces him passionately.*)

**Siegfried** (*in joyous terror*)

Ha!  
In the fire our blood has kindled,  
in the flames that glow from our glances,  
in our burning, ardent enchantments,  
I find again  
my boldness of heart,  
and what fear is, ah!  
I have failed to learn;  
what fear is, not even  
you can teach!  
My fear, I find,  
has faded and gone like a dream!

(*At the last words he has involuntarily released Brünnhilde.*)

**Brünnhilde** (*laughing wildly in an outburst of extreme joy*)

O radiant youth!  
O glorious hero!  
My proudly fearless,  
brave, noble boy!  
Laughing I shall love you,  
laughing, welcome my blindness,  
laughing, let us be lost together,  
with laughter die!

Farewell, Walhall's  
bright glittering world!  
Your glorious halls  
now may fall to dust!  
Farewell, proud, radiant,  
godly race!  
End in joy,  
you eternal clan!  
And rend, O Norns,  
that rope you weave!  
Gods may sink  
to eternal night!  
Twilight and darkness  
seize all the clan!  
I live by the light  
of Siegfried's bright star!  
He's mine forever,  
he is my joy,  
my wealth, my world,  
my one and all!  
Light of our loving,  
laughter in death!

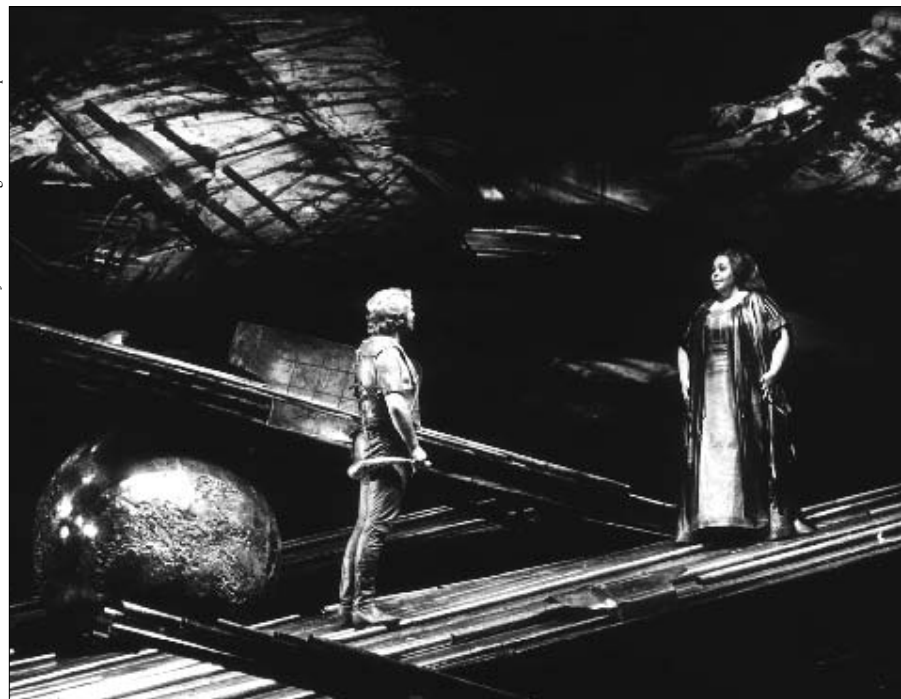
**Siegfried**

Laughing, you wake  
in gladness to me!  
Brünnhilde lives,  
Brünnhilde laughs!  
Blessed the days  
that shines around us!  
Blessed the sun  
that lights our way!  
Blessed the light  
that dispels the night!  
Blessed the world  
where Brünnhilde lives!  
She wakes, she lives,  
she greets me with laughter.  
All my light  
in Brünnhilde's star!  
She's mine forever,  
she is my joy,  
my wealth, my world,  
my one and all!  
Light of our loving,  
laughter in death!

*(Brünnhilde throws herself into Siegfried's arms.  
The curtain falls.)*

Translation © 1976 by Andrew Porter  
Reproduced by permission of  
Faber Music Ltd, London

John Garner/English National Opera Archive



Siegfried and Brünnhilde, Act III, Scene 3



Brünnhilde, Act III, Scene 3

John Garner/English National Opera Archive



Siegfried and Brünnhilde, Act III, Scene 3

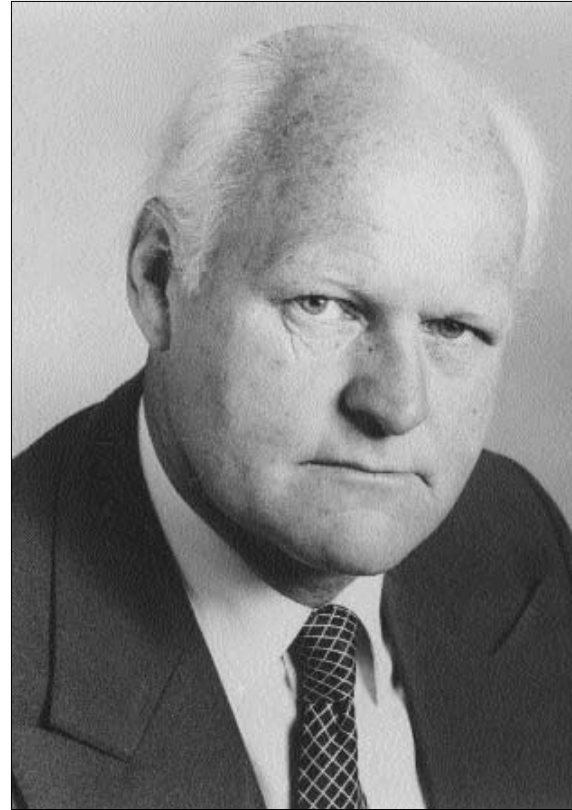
John Garner/English National Opera Archive



John Garner

Alberto Remedios

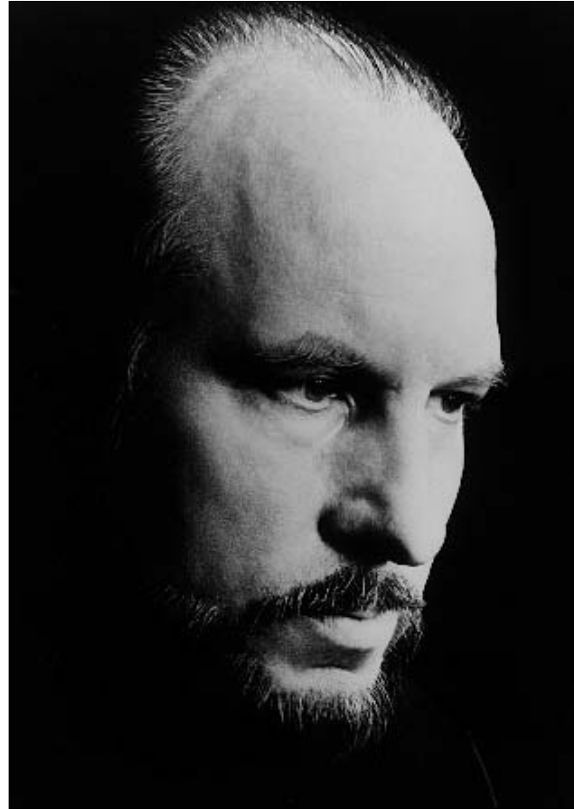
180



Courtesy Opera Australia

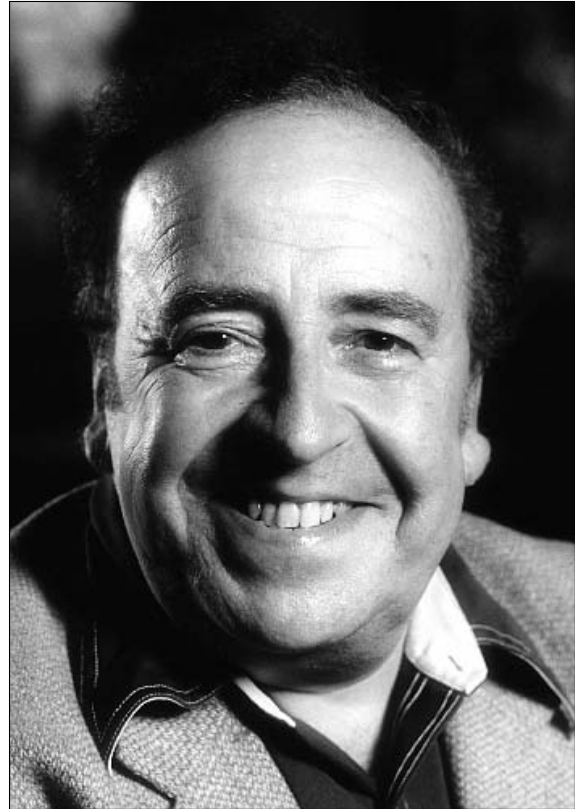
Gregory Dempsey

181



Norman Bailey

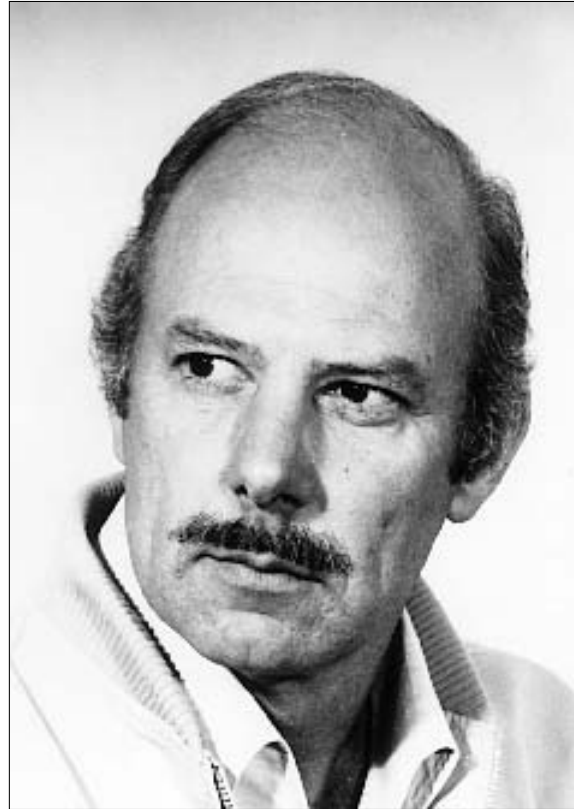
182



Derek Hammond-Stroud

183

Clive Bards



Clifford Grant

184



Anne Collins

185



Rita Hunter

186



Maurine London

John Garner

187

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3000(2)



CHAN 3008(2)



CHAN 3014(3)

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3004



CHAN 3003

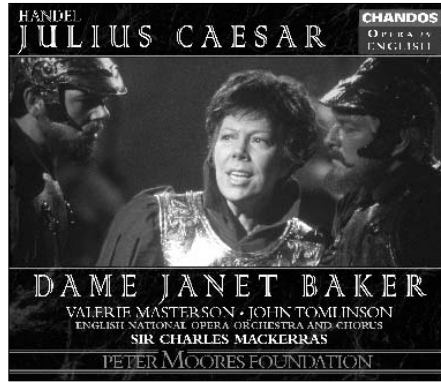


CHAN 3029

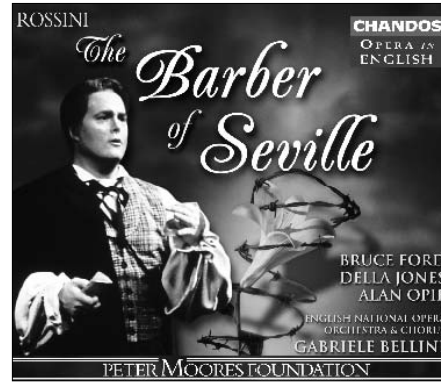
Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3017(2)



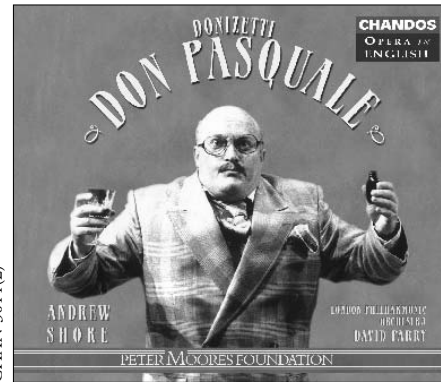
CHAN 3019(3)



CHAN 3025(2)



CHAN 3023(2)



CHAN 3011(2)

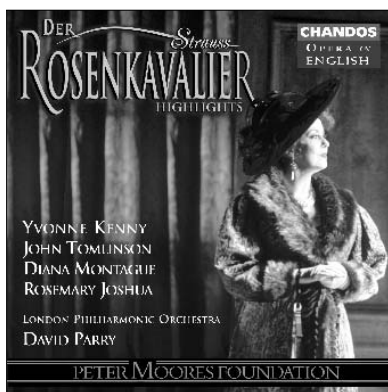


CHAN 3027(2)

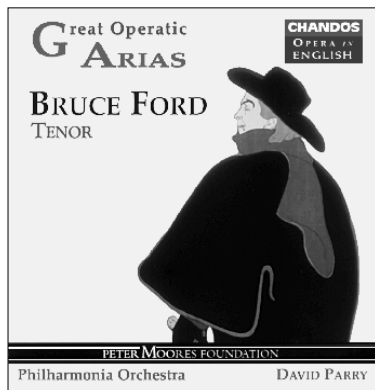
Opera in English on Chandos



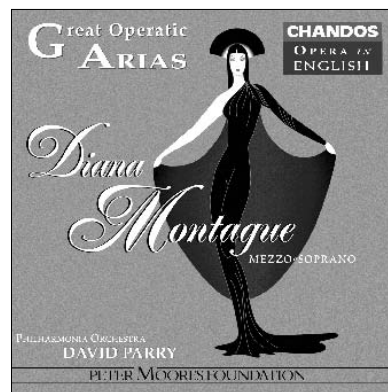
CHAN 3007



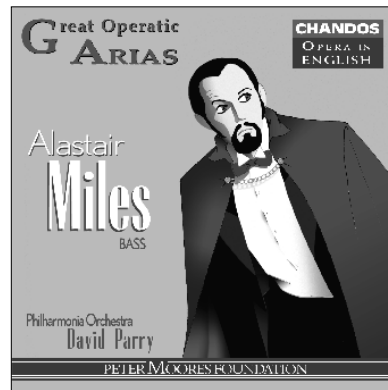
CHAN 3022



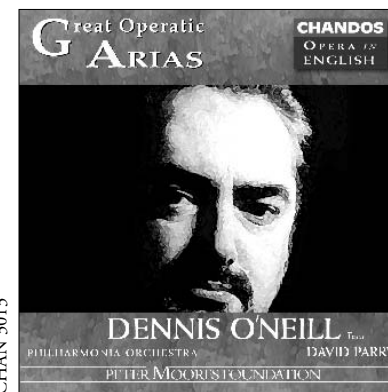
CHAN 3006



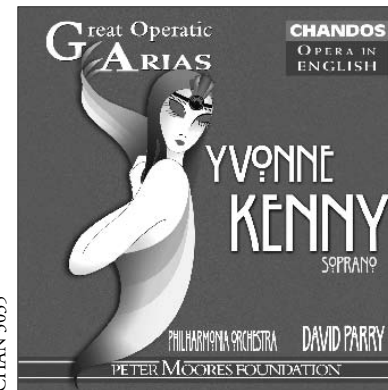
CHAN 3010



CHAN 3032



CHAN 3013



CHAN 3035

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3005(2)

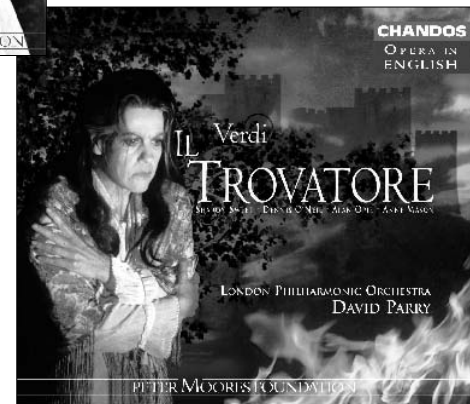
CHAN 3030(2)



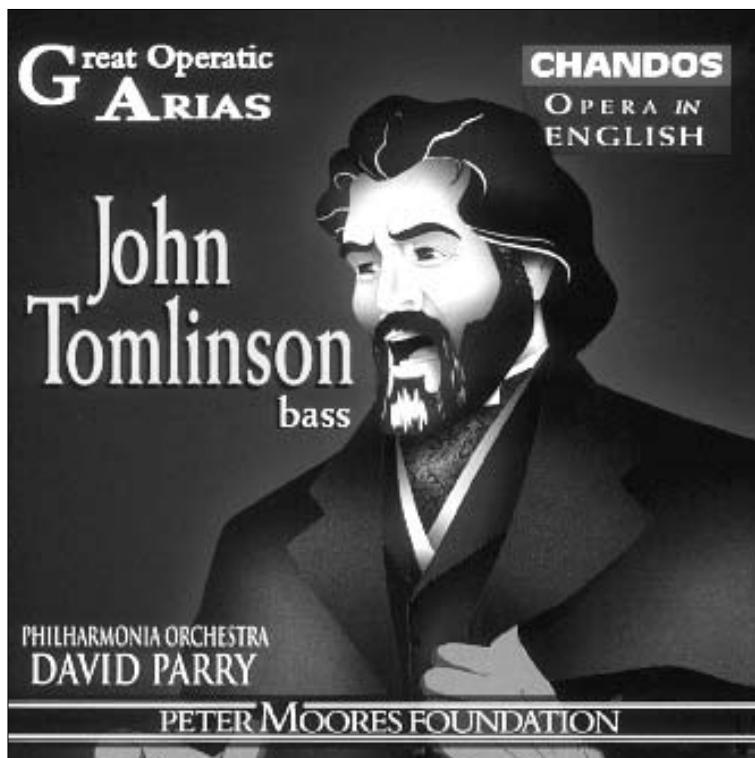
CHAN 3033(2)

Opera in English on Chandos

CHAN 3036(2)

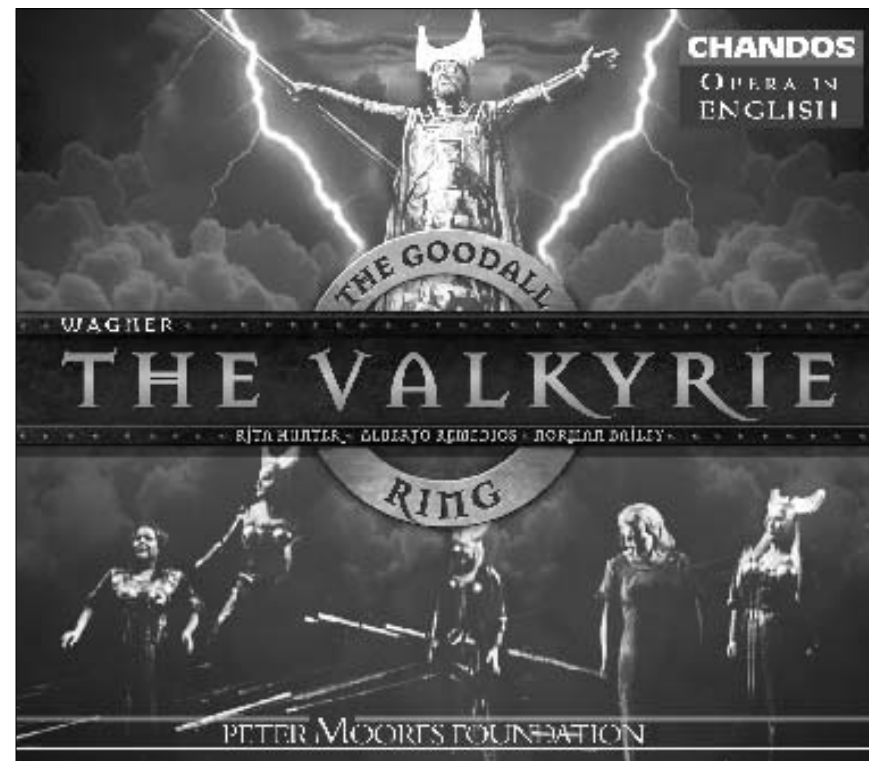


Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3044

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3038(4)

Anthony Crickmay/Theatre Museum, V & A



Siegfried listening to the Woodbird, Act II, Scene 2

198

You can now purchase Chandos CDs directly from us. For further details please telephone +44 (0) 1206 225225 for Chandos Direct. Fax: +44 (0) 1206 225201. Chandos Records Ltd, Chandos House, Commerce Way, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HQ, UK E-mail: [chandosdirect@chandos.net](mailto:chandosdirect@chandos.net) Website: [www.chandos.net](http://www.chandos.net)

Any requests to license tracks from this or any other Chandos disc should be made directly to the Copyright Administrator, Chandos Records Ltd, at the above address.

All booklet photographs from the Sadler's Wells Opera production of *Siegfried* conducted by Reginald Goodall

**Recording producer** Ronald Kinloch Anderson

**Sound engineers** Stuart Eltham and Robert Gooch

**Recording venue** London Coliseum, live; 2, 8 & 21 August 1973

**Front cover** Montage of photographs by Anthony Crickmay, courtesy of the Theatre Museum, V & A, and John Garner, courtesy of English National Opera Archive, from the Sadler's Wells Opera production of *Siegfried* conducted by Reginald Goodall

**Back cover** Photograph of Reginald Goodall by John Garner

**Design** Cass Cassidy

**Booklet typeset by** Dave Partridge

**Booklet editor** Finn S. Gundersen

© 2001 Chandos Records Ltd digitally remastered from a © 1974 recording

© 2001 Chandos Records Ltd

Chandos Records Ltd, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HQ, England

Printed in the EU

199

WAGNER: SIEGFRIED

**CHANDOS** DIGITAL 4-disc set **CHAN 3045(4)**



RICHARD WAGNER (1813–1883)

# SIEGFRIED

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

Music drama in three acts

Poem by Richard Wagner

English translation by Andrew Porter

Siegfried .....	<b>Alberto Remedios</b> <i>tenor</i>
Mime .....	<b>Gregory Dempsey</b> <i>tenor</i>
Wanderer .....	<b>Norman Bailey</b> <i>bass-baritone</i>
Alberich .....	<b>Derek Hammond-Stroud</b> <i>baritone</i>
Fafner .....	<b>Clifford Grant</b> <i>bass</i>
Erda .....	<b>Anne Collins</b> <i>contralto</i>
Brünnhilde .....	<b>Rita Hunter</b> <i>soprano</i>
Voice of the Woodbird .....	<b>Maurine London</b> <i>soprano</i>

**Sadler's Wells Opera Orchestra**

Barry Tuckwell solo horn

## REGINALD GOODALL

COMPACT DISC ONE  
TT 63:40

COMPACT DISC TWO  
TT 67:34

COMPACT DISC THREE  
TT 74:33

COMPACT DISC FOUR  
TT 73:01

(ADD)

CHANDOS

**CHANDOS RECORDS LTD**  
Colchester . Essex . England

© 2001 Chandos Records Ltd digitally remastered from a © 1974 recording  
© 2001 Chandos Records Ltd Printed in the EU

SOLOISTS/SADLER'S WELLS OPERA ORCHESTRA/GOODALL

CHAN 3045(4)