





AKG

Richard Wagner

Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

### Twilight of the Gods

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

Music drama in a prelude and three acts

Poem by Richard Wagner

English translation by Andrew Porter

Siegfried .....Alberto Remedios *tenor*  
 Gunther .....Norman Welsby *baritone*  
 Hagen .....Aage Haugland *bass*  
 Alberich .....Derek Hammond-Stroud *baritone*  
 Brünnhilde .....Rita Hunter *soprano*  
 Gutrune .....Margaret Curphey *soprano*  
 Waltraute.....Katherine Pring *mezzo-soprano*

### Norns

First Norn .....Anne Collins *contralto*  
 Second Norn .....Gillian Knight *mezzo-soprano*  
 Third Norn .....Anne Evans *soprano*

Rhinemaids

Woglinde.....Valerie Masterson *soprano*  
Wellgunde .....Shelagh Squires *mezzo-soprano*  
Flosshilde .....Helen Attfield *contralto*

Chorus: Vassals and Women

English National Opera Orchestra and Chorus

Kenneth Cleveland chorus master

Reginald Goodall



Reg. Wilson

The three Norns, Prelude

## COMPACT DISC ONE

	Time	Page
<b>Prelude</b>		
[1] 'What light shines down there?' <i>Three Norns</i>	8:08	[p. 150]
[2] 'Wotan made holy laws and treaties' <i>Second Norn</i>	2:25	[p. 151]
[3] 'That mighty hall the giants have raised' <i>Three Norns</i>	4:47	[p. 151]
[4] 'Now the god will seize the spear that was shattered' <i>Three Norns</i>	4:35	[p. 152]
[5] Dawn music <i>Orchestra</i>		
'To deeds of glory' <i>Brünnhilde, Siegfried</i>	7:32	[p. 153]
[6] 'Ah, but to prove you love me' <i>Brünnhilde, Siegfried</i>	2:36	[p. 154]
[7] 'Love, I leave you alone' <i>Siegfried, Brünnhilde</i>	2:48	[p. 154]
[8] 'So by your daring I am fired' <i>Siegfried, Brünnhilde</i>	1:42	[p. 154]
[9] 'O heavenly rulers!' <i>Brünnhilde, Siegfried</i>	1:42	[p. 155]
[10] Siegfried's Rhine Journey <i>Orchestra</i>	7:38	[p. 155]

**Act I****Scene 1**

[11] 'Now hear, Hagen' <i>Gunther, Hagen</i>	2:37	[p. 156]
[12] 'What woman should I wed...?' <i>Gunther, Hagen, Gutrune</i>	2:39	[p. 156]
[13] 'At Neidhöhle the Nibelung gold was guarded' <i>Hagen, Gunther</i>	2:58	[p. 157]
[14] 'You mock me, wicked Hagen!' <i>Gutrune, Hagen, Gunther</i>	3:31	[p. 157]
[15] 'Merrily seeking adventures and fame' <i>Hagen, Gunther, Siegfried</i>	4:15	[p. 158]

**Scene 2**

[16] 'Which is Gibich's son?' <i>Siegfried, Gunther, Hagen</i>	2:27	[p. 159]
[17] 'I welcome you, my friend' <i>Gunther, Siegfried, Hagen</i>	2:11	[p. 159]
[18] 'That treasure I quite forgot' <i>Siegfried, Hagen, Gunther</i>	2:17	[p. 160]
[19] 'Welcome, O guest, to Gibich's house!' <i>Gutrune, Siegfried, Gunther</i>	4:41	[p. 160]

TT 71:33



COMPACT DISC TWO

[1]	'With your brother I promised to serve' <i>Siegfried, Gunther</i>	3:18 [p. 161]
[2]	'I fear not the flames' <i>Siegfried, Gunther</i>	1:42 [p. 162]
[3]	'Flourishing life's refreshing blood' <i>Siegfried, Gunther, Hagen</i>	4:10 [p. 162]
[4]	'Now on our way!' <i>Siegfried, Gunther, Gutrune, Hagen</i>	2:54 [p. 163]
[5]	'I sit here and wait' (Hagen's Watch) <i>Hagen</i>	8:42 [p. 164]
<b>Scene 3</b>		
[6]	'Sounds I once knew so well' <i>Brünnhilde, Waltraute</i>	6:29 [p. 164]
[7]	'You've come to me?' <i>Brünnhilde, Waltraute</i>	4:55 [p. 165]
[8]	'Fear and dread I read in your features!' <i>Brünnhilde, Waltraute</i>	1:29 [p. 165]
[9]	'Hear me with care, and I will tell you!' <i>Waltraute</i>	4:26 [p. 166]
[10]	'He sits there, speaks no word' <i>Waltraute</i>	6:46 [p. 166]
[11]	'These tales of evil fancies' <i>Brünnhilde</i>	1:33 [p. 167]
[12]	'Upon your hand, the ring' <i>Waltraute, Brünnhilde</i>	3:29 [p. 167]
[13]	'Go home to the sacred clan of the gods!' <i>Brünnhilde, Waltraute</i>	2:22 [p. 168]

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[14]	'Borne on the wind' <i>Brünnhilde</i>	3:59 [p. 168]
[15]	'Brünnhild! Your husband comes' <i>Siegfried, Brünnhilde</i>	3:31 [p. 169]
[16]	'The night draws on' <i>Siegfried, Brünnhilde</i>	3:58 [p. 170]
[17]	'Now nothing can save me' <i>Brünnhilde, Siegfried</i>	2:58 [p. 170]

TT 66:45

COMPACT DISC THREE

Act II

Scene 1

[1]	Prelude <i>Orchestra</i>	3:40 [p. 171]
[2]	'Sleep you, Hagen, my son?' <i>Alberich, Hagen</i>	3:51 [p. 171]
[3]	'The might of the gods' <i>Hagen, Alberich</i>	3:34 [p. 171]
[4]	'That ring shall be Hagen's' <i>Hagen, Alberich</i>	4:29 [p. 172]

Scene 2

[5]	'Hoiho! Hagen! Fast asleep?' <i>Siegfried, Hagen, Gutrune</i>	3:06 [p. 173]
[6]	'Yet my Siegfried was with Brünnhild?' <i>Gutrune, Siegfried</i>	1:25 [p. 174]

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[7] 'I can see a sail in the distance' <i>Hagen, Siegfried, Gutrune</i>	1:05	[p. 174]
<b>Scene 3</b>		
[8] 'Hoiho! Hoihohoho!' (Hagen summons the vassals) <i>Hagen, Vassals</i>	2:56	[p. 175]
[9] 'Come to my call, and arm yourselves!' <i>Hagen, Vassals</i>	3:40	[p. 175]
[10] 'Glad times have come' <i>Vassals, Hagen</i>	3:04	[p. 177]
<b>Scene 4</b>		
[11] 'Welcome, Gunther!' <i>Vassals, Gunther</i>	3:50	[p. 177]
[12] 'I greet you, noble friend' <i>Gunther, Vassals, Siegfried, Brünnhilde, Hagen</i>	4:51	[p. 178]
[13] 'A ring I saw upon your hand' <i>Brünnhilde, Siegfried, Gunther</i>	1:40	[p. 178]
[14] 'Ha! – Siegfried stole it' <i>Brünnhilde, Siegfried, Hagen, Gutrune, Vassals, Women</i>	2:23	[p. 179]
[15] 'Hear in Walhall, mighty immortals!' <i>Brünnhilde, Gunther, Women, Vassals</i>	3:26	[p. 180]
[16] 'Would you defile your name so lightly?' <i>Siegfried, Brünnhilde, Vassals, Women, Gunther, Gutrune, Hagen</i>	4:08	[p. 180]
[17] 'Shining steel! Holiest weapon!' <i>Siegfried, Brünnhilde, Vassals</i>	3:15	[p. 181]
[18] 'Gunther, look to your wife there' <i>Siegfried</i>	6:08	[p. 182]

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<b>Scene 5</b>		
[19] 'Dark, unholy powers lie here around me!' <i>Brünnhilde</i>	3:20	[p. 182]
[20] 'Have trust in me, offended wife!' <i>Hagen, Brünnhilde</i>	2:55	[p. 183]
[21] 'Can no weapon's point then pierce him?' <i>Hagen, Brünnhilde, Gunther</i>	3:04	[p. 183]
[22] 'Deceived am I – and deceiver!' <i>Gunther, Hagen</i>	2:15	[p. 184]
[23] 'He betrayed you' <i>Brünnhilde, Hagen, Gunther</i>	3:10	[p. 184]
[24] 'Since this blow must be dealt her' <i>Hagen, Gunther, Brünnhilde</i>	3:39	[p. 185]
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<b>Act III</b>		
[1] Prelude <i>Orchestra</i>	3:42	[p. 186]
<b>Scene 1</b>		
[2] 'Fair sunlight, shine on us in splendour' <i>Woglinde, Wellgunde, Flosshilde</i>	2:23	[p. 186]
[3] 'Fair sunlight, send to us the hero' <i>Woglinde, Wellgunde, Flosshilde</i>	2:07	[p. 187]

	Time	Page
[4] 'A goblin led me astray' <i>Siegfried, Woglinde, Wellgunde, Flosshilde</i>	1:45	[p. 187]
[5] 'Siegfried, if we find your bear' <i>Woglinde, Siegfried, Wellgunde, Flosshilde</i>	2:53	[p. 187]
[6] 'Why should I let them laugh and jeer?' <i>Siegfried, Flosshilde, Woglinde, Wellgunde</i>	1:46	[p. 188]
[7] 'Siegfried!... Evil lies in that ring' <i>Woglinde, Wellgunde, Flosshilde, Siegfried</i>	2:32	[p. 189]
[8] 'Siegfried!... Give heed to our words' <i>Woglinde, Wellgunde, Flosshilde, Siegfried</i>	2:49	[p. 189]
[9] 'Come, sisters! Flee from this madman!' <i>Woglinde, Wellgunde, Flosshilde, Siegfried</i>	4:20	[p. 190]
<b>Scene 2</b>		
[10] 'Hoiho!' <i>Hagen, Vassals, Siegfried</i>	2:14	[p. 191]
[11] 'You drove the game away from us' <i>Hagen, Siegfried</i>	2:56	[p. 191]
[12] 'Drink, Gunther, drink' <i>Siegfried, Gunther, Hagen</i>	3:03	[p. 192]
[13] 'Mime was a hideous dwarf' (Siegfried's Narration) <i>Siegfried</i>	1:24	[p. 193]
[14] 'Now you must hear what happened next' <i>Siegfried, Hagen, Vassals</i>	1:47	[p. 193]

	Time	Page
[15] 'Ring and Tarnhelm – both I had found' <i>Siegfried, Hagen, Vassals</i>	2:48	[p. 193]
[16] 'In grief I watched the branches above' <i>Siegfried, Hagen, Gunther, Vassals</i>	6:00	[p. 194]
<b>TT 44:33</b>		
<b>COMPACT DISC FIVE</b>		
[1] 'Brünnhilde! Holiest bride!' <i>Siegfried</i>	4:21	[p. 195]
[2] Siegfried's Funeral March <i>Orchestra</i>	8:01	[p. 195]
<b>Scene 3</b>		
[3] 'Was that his horn?' <i>Gutrune</i>	3:45	[p. 196]
[4] 'Ah, if Siegfried were back!' <i>Gutrune, Hagen, Gunther</i>	3:21	[p. 196]
[5] 'Cast not the blame on me' <i>Gunther, Hagen</i>	2:36	[p. 197]
[6] 'Peace with your cries of useless lament!' <i>Brünnhilde, Gutrune</i>	2:05	[p. 198]
[7] 'Poor creature, peace!' <i>Brünnhilde, Gutrune</i>	2:44	[p. 198]

	Time	Page
8 'Sturdy branches, building his pyre' (Brünnhilde's Immolation) <i>Brünnhilde</i>	2:57	[p. 198]
9 'The sun in radiance shines from his eyes' <i>Brünnhilde</i>	2:38	[p. 199]
10 'O you, you guardians' <i>Brünnhilde</i>	4:26	[p. 199]
11 'My heritage I claim from the hero' <i>Brünnhilde</i>	3:06	[p. 200]
12 'Fly home, you ravens!' <i>Brünnhilde</i>	1:41	[p. 200]
13 'Grane, my horse!' <i>Brünnhilde</i>	2:31	[p. 200]
14 'Give back the ring!' <i>Hagen</i>	5:27	[p. 201]

TT 49:40



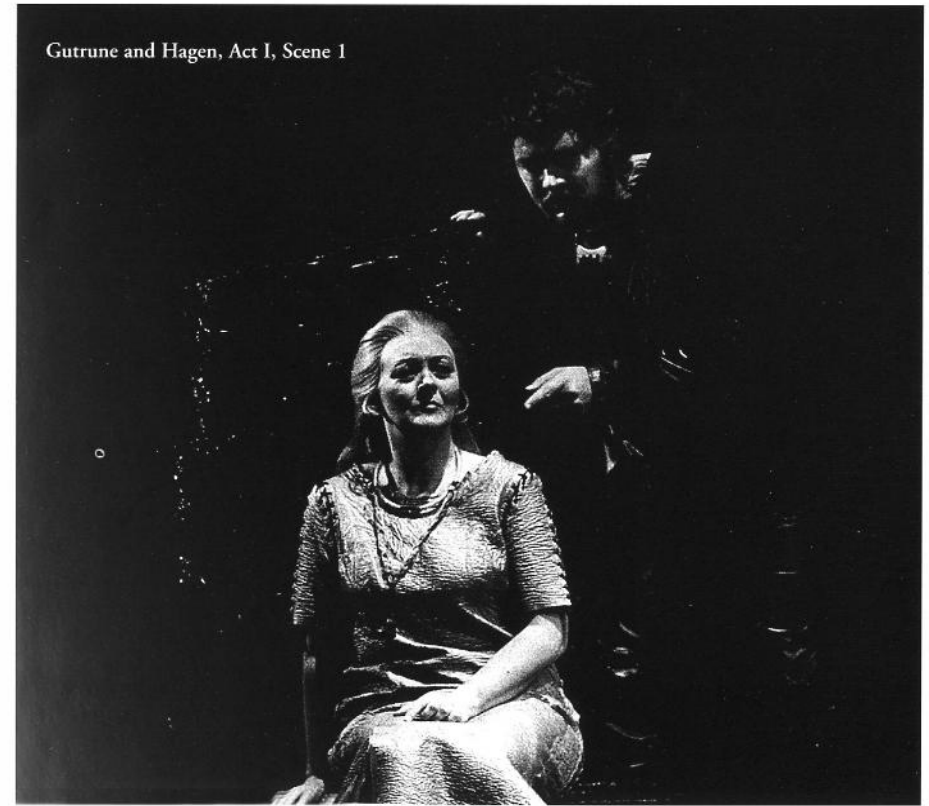
Siegfried and Brünnhilde, Prelude





Reg. Wilson

Siegfried and Brünnhilde, Prelude



Gutrune and Hagen, Act I, Scene 1

John Garner/English National Opera Archive

## Richard Wagner: Twilight of the Gods

### 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.

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### Twilight of the Gods

Whether *Twilight of the Gods* is Wagner's greatest opera is a question that can keep Wagnerians happily occupied for hours on end. A case can be made for *Tristan and Isolde*, *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg* and, above all, for *Parsifal*. But there can be no question that it is the greatest of the four *Ring* operas (which is not to say that it should be everybody's favourite).

To Bernard Shaw *Twilight of the Gods* (along with the last scene of *Siegfried*) was a disappointing regression from innovative music drama to traditional grand opera: he compared the chorus of the vassals to the static ensembles by Donizetti, Meyerbeer and Verdi, and naughtily described Siegfried's apostrophe to Brünnhilde as 'the tenor stabbed to death and then coming to life to sing pretty things about his love before he expires, just like Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*' (or, *mutatis mutandis*, he might have added, just like any number of Verdi heroes and heroines).

It is true that the chorus and the trio are old-fashioned in conception. This was partly because Wagner had written the words of *Twilight of the Gods* back in 1848; another reason was that under the influence of Schopenhauer's belief in the superiority of music over all other art forms he had resiled from his earlier theories about the equal importance of words and music. It no longer mattered that characters would sometimes obscure the words by singing simultaneously. However, Wagner's instinct was sure, and both the chorus and trio in Act II and Siegfried's dying words in Act III produce a profound dramatic effect.

One of the features that make *Twilight of the Gods* even greater than its predecessors in the *Ring* cycle is the skill with which Wagner, writing at the height of his powers, marshals his melodic and harmonic material. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that every bar in the orchestral texture throws a psychological light on the dramatic situation. The leitmotifs are often heard so fleetingly, and in such subtle combinations, as to be perceptible only after repeated hearings. Here are two examples, then, which are easy to spot: in the closing bars of Act I, when Siegfried (disguised as Gunther) prepares to bed down chastely with Brünnhilde, the woodwind derisively echo the phrase with which, in the Prelude, Brünnhilde had urged him on 'to deeds of glory'; and at the end of Act II, under the blare of the wedding procession, the brass and the lower strings viciously remind us that the two bridal couples are merely puppets controlled by Hagen.

It is Hagen, the villain of the piece, who dominates the action until Brünnhilde finally supplants him. Alberich, denied love, had bribed a woman for the specific purpose of fathering a son to carry out his plans; another parallel, of course, with Wotan. That woman was Queen Grimhilde, the mother of Gunther

and Gutrune. The position of an illegitimate son at court would seem to be equivocal; however, not only is Hagen accepted by his siblings but Gunther even praises their mother for having borne him. The wonder is that Gunther and Gutrune do not see through his scheming. In fact they are accomplices in providing Siegfried with the amnesia-aphrodisiac, while unaware that he has already awoken Brünnhilde on her flame-girt rock and enjoyed an unusually brief honeymoon.

Hagen's character is explored by Wagner in three great set pieces. In the first, which comes at the end of Act I, Scene 2, Hagen is brooding on his plans for regaining the ring. One of his motifs, the sinister falling diminished fifth (the tritone, known to medieval theorists as the *diabolus in musica*, 'the devil in music'), growls away in the bass, while another motif, a distorted version of the Rhinemaidens' 'Rhinegold! Rhinegold!' theme, is heard in the woodwind like the cawing of some monstrous bird of prey. Hagen's soliloquy begins and ends in E flat minor; but many remote keys are traversed in between, including the seemingly impossible one of F flat minor, bringing about a strong sense of dislocation in the listener.

This feeling of unease is induced again when Hagen, in a mixture of three and four beats to the bar, summons the vassals to greet Gunther and his bride. Wagner employs duple time for the vassals' questions, triple time for the replies; the authority of 'the Niblung's son', never in doubt, is emphasised by the vassals' adoption of triple time for their salute to his uncharacteristic good humour.

The third set piece comes earlier on, at the beginning of Act II, where Alberich appears to the sleeping Hagen. A baleful orchestral prelude, in the Nibelungs' key of B flat minor, sets the scene. Alberich's music is fast and jerky, reflecting his fears that his son might betray him; Hagen's is slow and measured. Again, we are left in no doubt that Hagen is in control of events; and in the postlude the horns anticipate the vassals' football chant of 'Hagen, grim Hagen'.

Another character whom Wagner portrays with great insight is Gutrune. She is on stage for most of the first two scenes of Act I, but has only fifteen lines to sing. Most of them show her to be lacking in self-confidence, almost mousey; she blossoms briefly when offering the drugged drink to Siegfried, thanks to a leitmotif of great sweetness, but only utters a sound thereafter to ask Hagen where



the other men have gone. In Act II she is the nagging wife, pestering Siegfried for assurances of fidelity; in Act III, Scene 3 she is nervous again as she waits for Siegfried's return, but she shows real passion when she curses Gunther, Brünnhilde and Hagen in turn. In the whole immense drama she has very little to sing, yet she comes across as a believable and all-too-human figure.

As, indeed, does Brünnhilde, with the difference that she at last is fully enlightened, whether through an off-stage encounter with the Rhinemaidens or through a deeper understanding. As noted in the Introduction above, Wagner did not set his Schopenhauer version of the ending to music; but he did publish it (together with an earlier attempt), appending a note to the effect that the music itself conveyed his intended meaning – further evidence of his willing submission to Schopenhauer's views on the expressive power of music.

After Brünnhilde's peroration, and Hagen's desperate but vain attempt to seize the ring, the orchestra has the last word. As the Rhinemaidens rejoice and Valhalla is seen burning in the distance, Wagner surpasses himself in a magnificent synthesis of leitmotifs that marks the passing of the old order and

pays a final tribute to Siegfried for the part he unwittingly played in bringing it about. The very last motif is that of 'Redemption', a calm echo of Sieglinde's ecstatic outburst in Act III of *The Valkyrie*. To Shaw it was 'the most trumpery phrase in the entire tetralogy', to Vaughan Williams 'a tune which is hardly good enough for a third-rate German beer-garden'. Most listeners, surely, will find it an almost unbearably moving message of consolation and hope, transcendent in its beauty and simplicity.

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

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#### Mr Porter and Mr Goodall, meet Mr Wagner

When a man does something which is impossible, it is only proper that attention should be drawn to his achievement; when, in addition, the achievement is concerned with Wagner, it will be generally thought fitting that I should be the one to lead the applause. Be upstanding, therefore, for Mr Andrew Porter, chief music critic for what *The Daily Telegraph*, in its mean, shrivelled way, would

call 'another newspaper', but which you and I know is *The Financial Times*.

The impossible achievement of Mr Porter is to produce a translation of *The Ring* which is accurate, clear, modern, unobtrusive and singable, and it is that last quality that constitutes the impossibility of the task and provides the measure of Mr Porter's astonishing success.

To understand what I am talking about it is not necessary to know the works of Wagner (*Und wer's nie gekonnt, der stehle weinend sich aus diesem Bund*). The point is that Wagner, having devised an entirely new musical language, realised after a time that he also needed to fashion an entirely new poetic language, too, and did so. It is not of the same order of genius as his music; but it is totally his own. Based on a very short line (many hundreds of lines in *The Ring* consist of virtually nothing but a single trochee followed by a single iambus), soaked in alliterations (the notorious 'Stabreim', excessive reading of which without the music is said to have driven more Germans insane than all other forms of mental stress put together), it is like no other poetry in any age or language, and as instantly recognisable as the music itself. But it presents three insuperable difficulties to a translator,

unless it is simply a crib, not a singing translation, that he wishes to provide (as Mr William Mann, for instance, most serviceably did a few years ago for *The Ring* and *Tristan*).

The first problem has been most lucidly presented by Mr Bryan Magee in his admirable little book *Aspects of Wagner*:

If... he writes a line like 'Liebe giebt Lust zum Leben' (Love gives delight to living) the concepts involved are obviously consonant and therefore no change of key is called for. But suppose the line is 'Liebe bringt Lust und Leid' (Love brings delight and sorrow) then delight and sorrow are opposites and the music should modulate between them. What should happen is that the key in which the phrase begins on the word 'love' should remain the same through 'delight' and then change on the word 'sorrow'. But the modulation must express the interrelationship of delight and sorrow in the state of love, at the same time as their difference; it must articulate their conditioning of each other. (This, said Wagner, was something words could not do, only music.) Now supposing the next line is 'Doch in ihr Weh webt sie auch Wonnen' (which might be very freely translated 'Yet even its pain gives us joy'). Then the key of 'sorrow' from the end of the previous line should be carried through as far as 'pain', because the emotional

mood remains the same. But then the verb in this second line starts a shift of the mood back towards that of the first half of the previous line; therefore the music should start to change key on 'gives', and on the word 'joy' should arrive back at the key of 'Love gives delight'.

Now, as Mr Magee points out, 'all this is just a very simple example involving two lines and two keys'; in many passages of Wagner the relationships he describes are *hundreds* of times more numerous and complex. None of this – and this fact is the glory of Wagner, most easily accessible of geniuses – need affect the listener who does not so much as know what a key is; but it makes the translator's job impossible.

Yet on top of this musical-poetic-dramatic problem there are two more: one purely musical and one purely linguistic. The musical one is conditioned by the fact that certain sounds cannot be pronounced by the human mouth on certain notes; a soprano, for instance, at the top of her range cannot make such sounds as 'oh' or 'ay' or 'oo'. But since English words do not, except by an occasional coincidence, sound the same as the German words of which they are translations, it may be that the appropriate English word cannot be sung to the note on which its German

equivalent is written. And on top of that, the final problem is presented by the 'Stabreim' itself, and the difficulty of meeting all the other demands posed by Wagner's musical and poetic language while finding sufficient English alliteration to form an equivalent to... well, take one of the most famous passages in all Wagner, the wonderful song in which Siegmund recognises his love, his sister and the Spring, all together:

*Winterstürme wichen  
dem Wonnemond,  
in mildem Lichte  
leuchtet der Lenz;  
auf linden Lüften  
leicht und lieblich,  
Wunder webend  
er sich wiegt...*

Here is one reputable translation of that passage, published many years ago and frequently sung:

Winter storms have waned  
to the winsome moon;  
in mild ascendance  
smileth the spring.  
And swayed by zephyrs,  
soft and soothing,  
weaving wonders,  
lo! he wends...

Oh, he wends, does he? Well, let him wend out of the Stage Door and across to the pub, and stop talking such nonsense. For here (between the two stands the Frederick Jameson version, which reigned for so long at Covent Garden) is Mr Porter:

Winter storms have vanished  
at Spring's command;  
in gentle radiance  
sparkles the Spring,  
on balmy breezes,  
light and lovely,  
working wonders  
on his way...

Or take that final scene of *Siegfried*, even to think of which makes my head begin to swim and my heart to thump, like Mime trying to convey to the young hero what fear is. Wagner has:

*er ist mir ewig,  
ist mir immer,  
Erb' und Eigen,  
ein und all:  
leuchtende Liebe,  
lachender Tod!*

Jameson gives:  
he is for ever,  
is for aye  
my wealth and world!

my one and all!  
light of loving  
laughing death!  
But for Mr Porter it is:

He's mine forever,  
he is my joy,  
my wealth, my world,  
my one and all!  
Light of our loving,  
laughter in death!

– and that alone shows how he has been willing to stand on Jameson's shoulders to reach so far above him.

So it goes on, through all sixteen hours of the thing; I have been poring over works I thought I knew intimately, yet again and again, with Mr Porter to guide me, new meanings and new felicities have leapt from the familiar words. Occasionally, faced with a Wagnerian knot of more than ordinary complexity, the translator has simply seized Notung and sliced the thing through; for that terrible crux in *Götterdämmerung*, for instance, where the Vassals start back in horror as Siegfried falls dying, and Wagner has 'Hagen, was tust du?... Hagen, was tatest du?', which can only be translated, bathetically, 'Hagen, what dost thou, what didest thou?', Mr Porter [in the published edition of his translation]



gives us 'Hagen, you've killed him!... Hagen, you murdered him!', and quite right too. [In the performances recorded here the questions have been adjusted to a two-fold 'Hagen, what have you done?'] But for nine-tenths of the way or more, the translation is as faithful as it is illuminating, which is saying much.

Nothing lasts forever, and no doubt one day Mr Porter's translation will need replacing as badly as the ones his has replaced. That day, though, will not dawn for many decades, and meanwhile he will have been instrumental over the years in introducing to Wagner millions who might otherwise have gone without; it is an achievement of which any man would have a right to feel proud.

But Mr Porter's translation was not made in a void. It was in fact commissioned by Sadler's Wells for the English *Ring* that they have been slowly and patiently putting together over the past few years, and which is now complete. And this brings me to the point that all the foregoing has, in a sense, been leading up to.

I am unable to get to the first cycle, and so am going to the second. Now, Mr Reginald Goodall, presiding deity of the festivities, is, so far as I know, in good heart and fettle. All the same, he is not young, and is said to be frail. Conducting *The Ring* would exhaust a man a

third of his age, and if it should be announced at the end of the first cycle that he is unable to cope with the second, I will do such things... what they are, yet I know not, but they shall be the terrors of the earth. I have no reason to suppose that any such dreadful fate will befall, but there is no point in taking chances. So my order of the day to Lord Harewood is to make himself *personally* responsible – there must be no delegating here – for seeing that Mr Goodall, however clement the weather, never goes out without his goloshes in his pocket, nor retires for the night without his bedsocks handy. A cup of warm milk with two teaspoons of honey stirred into it should be taken by him thrice daily, and on no account is he to lift heavy objects, run after buses or sit in draughts. He should not attempt to pat strange dogs, let alone tenors, and Lord Harewood must ensure that he is not approached by officials of the Inland Revenue, insurance salesmen or gentlemen wishing to inform him that he should Repent While There Is Time.

If these rules are meticulously adhered to, I have no doubt that Mr Goodall will take his place in the pit shortly after I take mine in the auditorium. And then we can all sing together:

*Gross Glück und Heil  
lacht nun dem Rhein...*  
or, as Mr Porter has it:  
Glad times have come,  
come to our Rhine...

**Bernard Levin**

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19 July 1973

Quotation from *Aspects of Wagner*  
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#### Events preceding 'Twilight of the Gods'

In the beginning, when the world was young, the earth was peopled by a race of giants who fought and worked at simple tasks, and asked for nothing better. Above the earth the gods ruled over all, under their lord Wotan. But in subterranean caves lived a race of dwarfs, the Nibelungs, led by Alberich who schemed only to overthrow the gods and have power himself.

Power had, from the beginning, been vested in the gods. But there was an artificial means whereby anyone could gain control of the world: through the power of gold. This gold lay hidden on a rock at the bottom of the Rhine, guarded by three water sprites, the Rhinemaidens: it could only be seized by

somebody willing to forswear love for ever. If such a person were to do this, steal the gold, and forge a ring from it, he would control the world. By chance Alberich discovered this secret, forswore love, stole the gold and made not only a ring but also a magic cap with unlimited powers of transformation, the Tarnhelm. More or less simultaneously, as if sensing this threat to the authority of the gods, Wotan commissioned two giants to build a huge fortress, called Valhalla, which would be proof against all invaders. The giants' reward for their work was to be the gift of the goddess of eternal youth and beauty, Freia; when the giants claimed their prize, the gods were unwilling to part with her. The giants obligingly offered to accept as much gold as would cover her form. The gods contrived, by a trick, to force Alberich into parting with all his gold, including the ring and Tarnhelm, so as to pay for Valhalla. But Alberich laid a curse of fear and doom on everyone who owns the ring. One giant, Fafner, departed to a cave in the forest with this treasure, transformed himself into a dragon and kept watch over it.

Wotan, lord of the gods, compromised his integrity in this double-dealing, and therefore his right to rule. Yet he still wished the world to be controlled aright. He created a

bodyguard of heroes to watch over Valhalla; these heroes, slain in battle, were carried to Valhalla by a company of fearless and strong maidens, the Valkyries, daughters of Wotan by a union with Erda, Mother Earth the omniscient. Chief among the Valkyries was Brünnhilde, and she was also the incarnation of Wotan's will. Wotan also begat twin children, Siegmund and Sieglinde, by a mortal woman. It was Wotan's wish that Siegmund should grow up, independent of his father, tried by suffering, to become the world's greatest hero, who would right the primeval wrong of the gods, presumably by acquiring the ring and restoring it to its rightful place at the bottom of the Rhine.

Siegmund found Sieglinde, married unhappily to the warrior Hunding; they fell in love and ran away. Hunding called to Fricka, the goddess of domesticity, for help, and Wotan reluctantly agreed that Hunding must slay the incestuous and adulterous Siegmund. Brünnhilde, despite orders from Wotan, attempted to protect Siegmund (which was what Wotan really wished), and for her disobedience was exposed at the top of a high mountain, ringed with fire, deprived of her semi-divine privileges, and laid under a spell of sleep.

Before receiving this sentence Brünnhilde had, however, been able to rescue Sieglinde, and advised her to make for the forest depths where she was destined to give birth to Siegmund's son, who must survive to carry out the task which Wotan had laid upon his father. Sieglinde was found, half-dead and in labour, by Alberich's brother-Nibelung, Mime the smith, who gave her shelter and, after her death, brought up the baby Siegfried in the cave which was his smithy.

Siegfried grew up strong, self-willed and independent. Mime's intention was that Siegfried should slay Fafner and get the ring, which Mime would then procure for himself. Siegfried forged his father's magic sword and went with Mime to the dragon's lair. The sword did its work but Siegfried had now learned to distrust the dwarf, and instead of handing over the ring, he chopped off Mime's head, on the advice of a friendly bird which then led him to Brünnhilde's mountain. Wotan was waiting for him, in a last bid to test the independence which is the real qualification of the hero who will right the world's wrongs. The boy's sword broke Wotan's spear and with it the last authority of the gods. Siegfried climbed the mountain, woke Brünnhilde with a kiss, and claimed her as his wife.

## Synopsis

### Compact Disc One

#### Prelude

##### *On the Valkyrie rock*

We are still on the Valkyrie rock were *Siegfried* ended.

[1] Siegfried and Brünnhilde have retired to a nearby cave, and now the summit is occupied by three shadowy female figures, the Norns, or Fates, who sit and pass from one to another the rope of destiny. While our eyes become accustomed to the dark (as at the start of *The Rhinegold*) the orchestra recalls Brünnhilde's awakening and the music of Mother Erda from whom all things sprang (including Brünnhilde and the Norns); and also the mysterious chord progression of 'Destiny'. The Norns come into view and recount what the rope tells them: once, sings First Norn, they worked under the World Ash by the fountain of wisdom. [2] But Wotan, continues Second Norn, hacked down the tree, and the fountain ran dry; now they must wind their rope round this fir and this rock.

[3] The timbers of the World Ash, adds Third Norn, have been piled round Valhalla, like some funeral pyre. [4] One day

Wotan will hurl a torch at the timber and destroy the gods. All this was caused by Alberich's ring which gnaws, like the rock, at the rope; as they tug, the rope breaks, and their wisdom is ended – because with the union of Siegfried and Brünnhilde man has assumed control of his destiny, and the Norns are redundant. They descend to Mother Erda.

[5] Day dawns, with soft hints at Siegfried's horn-call and at a new, more feminine theme for Brünnhilde now that she has woken to life as a mortal. The sun bursts into the sky and the lovers leave the cave. Siegfried is off, with his wife's blessing ('To deeds of glory'), to perform fresh deeds of valour, as a hero must. Brünnhilde has taught him all her wisdom, protected him with her magic; [6] now she is powerless except through his love. [7] As a token of the vows they have sworn he gives her the ring, and she her horse, Grane, to him. [8] – [9] After loving salutations ('Hail, O Brünnhilde, glorious star!') he mounts the horse and rides downhill, [10] blowing a fanfare as he vanishes out of sight. The orchestra depicts his journey from the fire-ringed rock to the river Rhine where, we deduce, he finds a boat and, with Grane, goes aboard. As they float down the Rhine a-sense



of doom permeates the music. They are drawing nearer to the Gibichung court where the last act of the drama, the Downfall of the Gods and Siegfried's Death, is destined to take place.

## Act I

### Scenes 1 and 2

#### *The hall of the Gibichungs on the Rhine*

[1] In the palace of the Gibichungs, Gunther reigns, with his sister Gutrune. But the power behind the throne is their half-brother Hagen, who is sitting with them; for he is the child of a union, bought by deceit and bribery, between Queen Grimhilde and Alberich. And because every power works through its agent, Alberich has determined to carry out his purpose through Hagen, as Wotan must through Siegfried (though in the end Siegfried's place will be taken by another). The talk in Gunther's palace is of prestige, and Hagen is advising his half-brother and -sister to get wed; [12] – [13] for consorts they cannot choose better than the glorious maiden Brünnhilde and the fearless Siegfried. Gunther takes a modest view of his prospects (he is too cowardly to walk through fire), but [14] Hagen promises that an amnesia-aphrodisiac drug in

their medicine chest will do the trick. [15] As they conspire, Siegfried's horn is heard from the river.

Hagen hails him to land and greets him warmly – to the fateful music of Alberich's curse. [16] – [18] Gunther offers him friendship, [19] Gutrune brings out a refreshing (and drugged) drink. Siegfried drains it – with a toast to Brünnhilde's memory. As he drinks she fades from his mind, and instead he is inflamed with love for Gutrune.

### Compact Disc Two

[1] Gunther gladly accepts his proposals, [2] especially when Siegfried willingly offers to win Brünnhilde (whose name now strikes no response in his memory) by disguising himself as Gunther with the Tarnhelm's aid. [3] Siegfried and Gunther swear blood-brotherhood ('Flourishing life's refreshing blood'), Hagen abstaining on the pretext that his cold blood would foul such heroic enterprises. [4] The blood-brothers hasten to the Rhine, Brünnhilde-wards. [5] Hagen is left to guard the palace and brood in a grim soliloquy ('I sit here and wait') on this Nibelung triumph. A trumpet echoes his melody while the scene changes.

## Scene 3

### *The rocky height, as in the Prelude*

The orchestral interlude returns us to the Valkyrie rock where [6] Brünnhilde, blissfully admiring her fated love-pledge, is interrupted by sounds of Valkyrie-riding. [7] – [9] Her sister Waltraute has sought her out, defying Wotan's ban, to warn her of impending disaster ('Hear me with care, and I will tell you!'). [10] It is in the power of Brünnhilde alone, Wotan has admitted, to avert destruction of Valhalla by returning to the Rhinemaidens their ring which she now wears and which is accursed. [11] – [13] Brünnhilde, intoxicated with Siegfried's love, is slow to comprehend Waltraute's message; and then she indignantly rejects the idea as treacherous and vile. For her this is Siegfried's ring, not Alberich's. Waltraute departs in despair; but Brünnhilde will soon discover the importance of the advice she has been given. [14] Almost immediately the curse sets to work. The fire begins to glow. 'Siegfried', cries Brünnhilde, but [15] – [16] the figure who leaps in sight wears the likeness and has assumed the name and vocal range of Gunther. Aghast, Brünnhilde learns that she is to be abducted, and after a struggle the ring, her only protection, is snatched from her, and [17] she is driven into

the cave. Her abductor, when he resumes Siegfried's voice and form, promises that his sword, Notung, shall separate the two during the night, so that the loyalties of blood-brotherhood are upheld.

## Compact Disc Three

### Act II

#### *An open space on the shore*

[1] The orchestral prelude is all darkness and despair in B flat minor, strong and grim with Hagen's theme. He is asleep outside the Gibichung palace by the Rhine, and his dreams are full of his father, Alberich, who crouches beside him, [2] – [3] exhorting him to action: to destroy the forces of light, represented by Siegfried, and recover Alberich's ring. Alberich warns urgently, Hagen answers leisurely from the depths of dream. [4] With dawn Alberich vanishes. [5] Suddenly here is Siegfried bringing Hagen, and Gutrune too, news of success. [6] – [7] He assures her that he has respected their betrothal. [8] Hagen calls up the Gibichung troops with crude blasts on his cow-horn, to a theme of woe. [9] The troops are surprised to learn that they are assembled not for battle but for sacrificial thanksgiving and festivity. This is the first

appearance of any chorus in *The Ring*, and Wagner makes the most of it, following the initial agitated exchange with, first, [10] a burly chorus of jocular high spirits and then, as Gunther and Brünnhilde step ashore, [11] a slow, solemn chorus of welcome ('Welcome, Gunther!'). [12] Brünnhilde's misery is turned to an appalled swoon when she meets and is unrecognised by Siegfried, but [13] when she sees the ring on his finger rage takes control. [14] She sees through every explanation and, urged on by Hagen, accuses Siegfried of deceit and theft. [15] She calls on the gods to aid her ('Hear in Walhall, mighty immortals!'), protesting before them all that Siegfried is her husband. [16] He denies the charge and, provoked by Guttrune, Gunther and the troops, [17] vows his innocence with an oath on Hagen's spear ('Shining steel! Holiest weapon!'); if he is guilty may this blade strike him dead. Brünnhilde breaks into the ritual circle to confirm the truth of her own charges. [18] Siegfried takes Gunther aside, advises him to cool his wife's anger with rest for a while, whispers that perhaps the disguise was incomplete, then summons the troops to the wedding feast.

[19] Brünnhilde, frustrated, suspicious, desperate, remains behind, Hagen and

Gunther close by. [20] Hagen offers his strength to help her in revenge on Siegfried, whose death alone will right this terrible wrong; [21] although Brünnhilde's spells have protected her lover from harm in battle, knowing his bravery she left his back unprotected. There, answers Hagen, my blade shall strike home. [22] – [23] They round on Gunther, and persuade him, part by bribe, part by outraged protestation, that he must agree to Siegfried's death. [24] All join in a grand conspiratorial oath ('It shall be so! Siegfried dies then!'), calling on Wotan – and Hagen on Alberich – to approve the unholy plot. The bridal procession leaves the palace, and Gunther with Brünnhilde joins it, while themes of woe and guile curdle the jubilation of C major.

#### Compact Disc Four

#### Act III

##### Scenes 1 and 2

*A wild, wooded and rocky valley on the Rhine*

[1] Hunting calls tell us that Siegfried and the Gibichung are in the forests of the Rhine after big game. [2] – [3] Here, by the river, the Rhinemaidens hymn the sunlight and await Siegfried's coming. He has their ring; how can

he be persuaded to surrender it? [4] Siegfried reaches the bank, having lost his companions as well as the bear he was hunting; the Rhinemaidens call his name. [5] At first they try to barter the ring, then to wheedle it by flirtation, finally [6] they warn him solemnly of the curse upon it, and [7] of sudden doom if he does not surrender the ring. [8] – [9] He rejects their warning: Alberich's curse means nothing to a man who has never learned what fear is. [10] – [11] Gunther and Hagen, with the troops, find Siegfried here and jibe at his failure in the hunt. [12] Gunther is in poorest spirits, uneasy when Siegfried relates the mermaids' prophecy of doom, wretched when he mixes their blood-brotherly stoups of wine, and spiritless in assent when, at Hagen's request, Siegfried offers to sing songs of his youth to cheer Gunther's spirits. [13] – [15] Nevertheless Siegfried narrates his earlier adventures, as told in the previous opera ('Mime was a hideous dwarf'). He stops at the death of Mime. The huntsmen question him further, and so Hagen charges Siegfried's drinking horn with a memory restorative. [16] The 'Brünnhilde' theme steals back as he drinks, and he goes on quite innocently to tell ('In grief I watched the branches above') how he found the maid Brünnhilde asleep on the

fire-girt rock, woke and won her to wife. Gunther hears the story aghast; it has been kept from him. Hagen espies two ravens in the sky; if Siegfried knows bird-language, what are these saying? Siegfried turns, and Hagen, calling aloud 'Vengeance! That's what they cry!', plunges his spear in Siegfried's back. The troops are horrified, Siegfried too weak to defend himself with his shield. Hagen strides proudly into the dusk.

#### Compact Disc Five

[1] But Siegfried is not yet dead. He has life enough to finish his reprise of Brünnhilde's awakening before he sinks back for ever. [2] At Gunther's bidding his corpse is lifted aloft on sturdy shoulders, and carried home, while the orchestra reviews his ancestry, life and glorious deeds in the 'Funeral March' interlude.

#### Scene 3

*The hall of the Gibichungs*

We are back in Gunther's palace, at night.

[3] Guttrune is waiting for her husband, unable to sleep for anxiety. [4] Hagen approaches the palace, grimly inviting her to see the spoils of the chase. A wild boar has struck down Siegfried, and here is his corpse. Guttrune falls



sobbing on top of it. Gunther tries to comfort her, but she accuses him of murder ('No! Treacherous brother!'). [5] Not I, answers her brother; Hagen is the wild boar. Hagen, still proud of the deed, a triumph for Alberich's son, attacks Gunther and fells him, then turns to pull the ring from Siegfried's body ('Mine, the ring!').

But Wotan's purpose, symbolised by the 'sword' motif, is stronger than death: the corpse raises an arm to defend the ring, and as Hagen steps back in astonishment, a solemn, dedicated figure enters the hall. [6] It is Brünnhilde, come to mourn the great hero who was her husband, and to complete his work. Gutrune pours hysterical reproaches upon this fatal woman, but [7] Brünnhilde, in this supreme moment, can bear reproach and answer it kindly. Gutrune collapses. The others have stepped awe-struck into the shadow. Brünnhilde is in complete control; it is upon her that Wotan's lost authority has settled. [8] She commands a great funeral pyre to be built for Siegfried on the banks of the Rhine ('Sturdy branches, building his pyre') and his horse to be brought out. Grane and Brünnhilde will follow him into the flames. [9] She sings her funeral oration to a lover and hero ('The sun in radiance shines from his

eyes') and [10] this central section of her great monologue ends with a prayer for Wotan's repose ('Rest now, rest now, O god!').

[11] The authoritative music returns as she puts the ring on her finger before returning it to the daughters of the Rhine. [12] She snatches a torch and brandishes it towards Valhalla in the sky, calling Wotan's ravens ('Fly home, you ravens!') to warn the gods of their impending end. She hurls the torch on to the pyre, which blazes up. [13] Then she greets her horse ('Grane, my horse!'), and as she sings of the last journey that they will make together, the woodwind introduces a noble, hovering theme, not heard since Sieglinde in *The Valkyrie* first learned of the baby Siegfried in her womb; it represents the sacrifice which completes the pattern of a life's achievement, and it will dominate the music to the end of the opera. Brünnhilde leaves the hall to mount her horse and ride into the flames, which leap heavenwards. The fire on earth is quenched by the Rhine which bursts its banks and floods the hall. The Rhinemaidens swim up to get the ring from the pyre embers. [14] Hagen makes a last effort to abstract it, but is pulled into the waters. The flames have reached Valhalla which can be seen consumed by them. Earth and heavens are purified now, and

the hovering theme is left alone, symbol of a world made clean from evil by Brünnhilde's loving self-sacrifice.

**William Mann**

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

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

The baritone **Norman Welsby** was born in Warrington, Lancashire and received his musical training at the Royal Manchester College of Music (later the Royal Northern College of Music). After two seasons with the Glyndebourne Festival Opera, where among others he sang the title role in *Falstaff*, he joined Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera), making his debut as Masetto (*Don Giovanni*). A variety of roles with the

company stretched from Liberto in *The Coronation of Poppea* to Pentheus in the British premiere of Hans Werner Henze's *The Bassarids*, and included also the title role in *The Marriage of Figaro*, the Speaker (*The Magic Flute*), Alfio (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Silvio (*Pagliacci*), Escamillo (*Carmen*) and Schlemil (*The Tales of Hoffmann*). He also sang many roles with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

**Aage Haugland** was born in Copenhagen of Norwegian parents. Having studied medicine and music at the University of Copenhagen, he became a principal first with The Norwegian Opera, then with Bremen Opera. After joining The Royal Danish Opera, Copenhagen, he obtained a permanent contract as First Bass and in 1988 was appointed Royal Court Singer by Queen Margrethe II. He made his debut with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden as Hunding and with English National Opera as Hagen. Wagnerian roles subsequently earned him world-wide renown: they also included Daland (*Der fliegende Holländer*), King Heinrich (*Lohengrin*), Fasolt, Fafner, King Marke (*Tristan und Isolde*) and Klingsor (*Parsifal*). Appearing in the world's leading opera houses,

he performed a repertoire, however, that ranged from Beethoven to Shostakovich: Baron Ochs (*Der Rosenkavalier*) at the Grand Théâtre in Geneva, Varlaam (*Boris Godunov*) at the Paris Opéra, Ochs and Boris Godunov at the Dresden State Opera, Ivan Khovansky (*Khovanshchina*) at the Hamburg State Opera, Boris (*Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*) at the Cologne Opera, and Varlaam and Khovansky at the Vienna State Opera, among others. He also appeared at the Festivals of Bayreuth (as Hagen), Salzburg (as Rocco in *Fidelio* and as Varlaam) and Aix-en-Provence (as Ochs). At The Metropolitan Opera, New York his numerous roles included Dikoy (*Kát'a Kabanová*) and Prince Gremin (*Eugene Onegin*). He visited Japan with the Cologne, Metropolitan and Vienna State Operas. His many recordings include, for Chandos, Delius's *Fennimore and Gerda*, Nielsen's *Saul and David*, Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale*, and the complete songs by Mussorgsky. Aage Haugland died in December 2000.

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 ones at 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.

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 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 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 achieved great success in the Italian repertoire of Norma, Abigaille (*Nabucco*), Lady Macbeth, Leonora and Aida, but also performed leading



roles in *Idomeneo*, *Turandot*, *Lohengrin*, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Elektra*. She 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 received many honours including, in 1980, a CBE. She died in April 2001.

Born in Douglas on the Isle of Man and trained at the Birmingham School of Music, the lyric soprano **Margaret Curphey** toured with Opera for All and spent two years in the chorus of the Glyndebourne Festival before joining Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera), where she debuted as Micaela (*Carmen*) and went on to sing La Musica (Monteverdi's *Orfeo*), the Countess (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Pamina, Ninetta (*The Thieving Magpie*), Mary Stuart (Donizetti's opera of that name), Violetta, Elisabeth de Valois (*Don Carlos*), Santuzza (*Cavalleria rusticana*), both Mimì and Musetta (*La bohème*), Marguerita (Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust*) and Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*) among many other roles. Her renowned Wagnerian performances with the company have included Elsa (*Lohengrin*), Eva

(*The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*), Sieglinde, Brünnhilde and Gutrune. She participated in the British premiere of Mozart's *Lucio Silla* at the Camden Theatre, have made guest appearances on several opera stages on the European continent, won a medal at the International Competition in Sofia, Bulgaria, and also enjoyed an active career as a concert singer.

The mezzo-soprano **Katherine Pring** made her operatic debut as Flora (*La traviata*) at the Grand Théâtre in Geneva. Joining Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera), she sang such roles as Ottavia (*The Coronation of Poppea*), Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*), Azucena (*Il trovatore*), Princess Eboli (*Don Carlos*), Suzuki (*Madam Butterfly*), Carmen, and Agave in the British stage premiere of Henze's *The Bassarids*. She has also sung at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, at the Glyndebourne Festival, at English National Opera North (later Opera North), in Düsseldorf, Frankfurt and at the Paris Opéra. She made her American debut as Carmen at San Diego Opera, returning two years later to sing Princess Eboli. As an established concert and recital singer she has performed with world-renowned conductors such as Claudio

Abbado, Christoph von Dohnányi and Sir Charles Mackerras.

The contralto **Anne Collins** studied at the Royal College of Music and made her London debut with a recital in the Purcell Room. Soon after, she joined Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera) where her repertoire has encompassed roles in *The Coronation of Poppea*, *Count Ory*, *A Masked Ball*, *Madam Butterfly* and *Arabella*, as well as Dame Quickly (*Falstaff*), Katisha (*The Mikado*), Mrs Sedley (*Peter Grimes*) and several parts, including most famously Erda, in Wagner's *Ring* cycle. She has sung frequently with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden and has also performed with Welsh National Opera (Filipyevna in *Eugene Onegin*), Opera North (the Nurse in *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* and Auntie in *Peter Grimes*) and Scottish Opera (James MacMillan's *Ines de Castro*), 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 ones at The Metropolitan Opera in New York. She has made many recordings, among them, for Chandos, the *Grammy*-award-winning *Peter Grimes* under Richard Hickox.

The English mezzo-soprano **Gillian Knight** studied at the Royal Academy of Music and at Open University. After six seasons with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company she joined Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera) where she sang Carmen, Isabella (*The Italian Girl in Algiers*) and Juno (*Semele*) among other roles. Having stepped in at short notice to sing Carmen for The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, she became a member of the company, singing such roles as Juno and Ino (*Semele*), Maddalena (*Rigoletto*), Erda, Waltraute, Herodias (*Salome*), Kabanicha (*Kat'a Kabanová*), Mrs Sedley (*Peter Grimes*), Mrs Grose (*The Turn of the Screw*) and Helen (*King Priam*). She performed the title role in the British stage premiere of Gerhard's *The Duenna* with Opera North and has also appeared with Welsh National Opera. Her international career began in Spain, where she sang Carmen with Plácido Domingo, and it has since taken her to France, Germany and Italy, to North America, and to Israel, Tokyo,

Singapore and Cape Town. She appears in many audio and video recordings and is an active concert artist. She has given master-classes both in Britain and in North America and was recently awarded a Fellowship at the Royal Academy of Music.

The soprano **Anne Evans** is one of Great Britain's most internationally successful singers, having appeared in opera and concert in most of the world's major musical centres. She sang Brünnhilde at the Bayreuth Festival with Daniel Barenboim from 1989 to 1992 and has performed the role also with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, at the Royal Albert Hall (in a semi-staged version with Bernard Haitink), with Welsh National Opera and in Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Nice, Cleveland (in concert with Christoph von Dohnányi) and Buenos Aires. Other acclaimed Wagnerian interpretations have been those of Sieglinde in San Francisco and Isolde at Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, the Ravello Festival and in Paris, Brussels, Berlin and Dresden. Her repertoire in recent years has ranged from Beethoven to Britten and included Leonore (*Fidelio*) performed at the Edinburgh Festival, in Stuttgart and at The Metropolitan Opera, New York; the

Marschallin (*Der Rosenkavalier*) at English National Opera; and Ariadne at the Edinburgh Festival. She has also appeared in *The Turn of the Screw* at the Théâtre royal de la Monnaie in Brussels. As a concert artist she has recently performed at the Royal Festival Hall, the Wigmore Hall, in The Netherlands, Geneva and Barcelona, and participated at the BBC Promenade Concerts on the 'Last Night of the Proms'.

Born in Birkenhead and having studied in London and Milan on scholarships, the soprano **Valerie Masterson** sang at the Salzburger Landestheater for one season before joining the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company as Principal Soprano. She has sung with all the major British opera companies, including the Glyndebourne Festival Opera, and abroad has appeared at the Aix-en-Provence Festival, the Paris Opéra, and at opera houses in Toulouse, Nancy, Montpellier, Geneva, Prague, Munich, Milan, Barcelona, Dublin, Santiago, San Francisco, Houston, Chicago and New York. Her vast repertoire ranges from Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* to Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, in addition to which she also sang in the world premiere of Henze's *We Come to the River* and

the British premiere of Sallinen's *The King Goes Forth to France*, both at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Her many recordings include, for Chandos, *Julius Caesar* and *La traviata*, both in association with the Peter Moores Foundation. She was awarded the CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List in 1989.

**Shelagh Squires** studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She has appeared with English National Opera, at the Glyndebourne Festival and Touring Operas, and The Metropolitan Opera, New York among others; she has also performed at the Bergen International Festival and in Vienna and Japan. Her wide repertoire includes Ottavia (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), Marcellina (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Ulrica (*Un ballo in maschera*), Magdalene (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Herodias (*Salome*), Annina (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Adelaide (*Arabella*), Martha (*Faust*), the Witch (*Rusalka*) and Filipyevna (*Eugene Onegin*).

The contralto **Helen Attfield** studied at the Royal Academy of Music where she won many awards. With the English Opera Group she sang in the world premiere of Britten's *Death*

*in Venice*. Besides having sung several roles with English National Opera, she appeared as Maddalena (*Rigoletto*) with Welsh National Opera and also performed with the Handel Opera Society and, abroad, with Brussels Opera.

**The Chorus of English National Opera** is one of the Company's finest assets. In countless English National Opera productions they have thrilled audiences with the power of their singing and the intensity of their acting. There are sixty-eight choristers and the wide range of skills and experience they bring to performances distinguish any production in which they appear. Particular triumphs for the Chorus have been Prokofiev's *War and Peace*, Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, Britten's *Billy Budd* and *Peter Grimes*, Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, Bizet's *Carmen* and Verdi's *Otello*. Their recording of the last, in Jonathan Miller's production conducted by Mark Elder, is soon to appear on Chandos under the sponsorship of the Peter Moores Foundation. Other Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation recordings are *Julius Caesar*, *Mary Stuart*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Rigoletto* (Jonathan Miller's production) and *La traviata*.



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

The English conductor **Reginald Goodall** was born in 1901 and studied conducting under

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

In June 1945, as a member of Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera), he conducted the first performance of *Peter Grimes* at the newly reopened Sadler's Wells Theatre. In the following year he shared with Ernest Ansermet the first performances of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* during the Glyndebourne Festival's first postwar season. Shortly afterwards he joined the music staff at Covent Garden, where for the next twenty-five years he conducted a repertoire ranging from *Il trovatore* to *Troilus and Cressida*.

Only rarely was he given the chance to conduct operas by the composer he most admired, Richard Wagner. This omission was

rectified in 1968, not by The Royal Opera but by Sadler's Wells, which invited him to conduct a new production of *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*. So remarkable was its success that he returned to the company to conduct its now legendary complete production of *The Ring of the Nibelung*, built up between 1970 and 1973 and the first to be given in

English for some years. He went on to conduct *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* for The Royal Opera, *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Walküre* for Welsh National Opera, and *Tristan* and *Parsifal* at English National Opera. He received a CBE in 1975 and was knighted in 1985. Reginald Goodall died in 1990 at the age of eighty-eight.

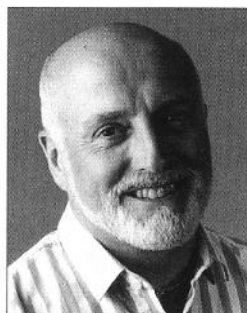
## PETER MOORES, CBE, DL

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

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

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

Whilst still in his early twenties, Peter Moores had started



Christina Burton/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 repertory 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.



Siegfried, Hagen and Gunther, Act I, Scene 2



Siegfried, Hagen and Gunther, Act I, Scene 2



COMPACT DISC ONE

Prelude

On the Valkyrie rock

*The scene is the same as at the close of The Valkyrie. It is night. Firelight shines up from the depths of the background.*

*The three Norns, tall female figures in long, dark veil-like drapery. The first (oldest) is lying in the foreground on the right, under the spreading pine tree; the second (younger) reclines on a rock in front of the cave; the third (youngest) sits in the centre at the back on a rock below the peak. Gloomy silence and stillness.*

First Norn (without moving)

1 What light shines down there?

Second Norn

Can it be day so soon?

Third Norn

Loge's flames  
leap and flicker round the rock.  
It is night.  
And so we must sing as we spin.

Second Norn (to the first)

Let us be spinning and singing;  
but where, where tie the cord?

First Norn (rises, unwinds a golden rope from herself, and ties one end of it to a branch of the pine tree)

Though good or ill may come,

weaving the cord, I'll sing now.

At the World Ash-tree  
once I wove,  
when fair and green  
there grew from its branches  
verdant and shady leaves.

Those cooling shadows  
sheltered a spring;  
wisdom's voice  
I heard in its waves;

I sang my holy song.

A valiant god  
came to drink at the spring;  
and the price he had to pay  
was the loss of an eye.

From the World Ash-tree  
mighty Wotan broke a branch;  
and his spear was shaped  
from that branch he tore from the tree.

As year succeeded year,  
the wound slowly weakened the tree;  
dry, leafless, and barren –  
death seized on the tree;  
whispering waters  
then failed in the spring;  
grief and sorrow  
stole through my song.

And so I weave  
at the World Ash-tree no more;  
today I use these branches  
to fasten the cord.  
Sing, my sister,

take up the thread:  
what will happen now?

Second Norn (winds the rope that has been thrown to her round a projecting rock at the entrance of the cave)

2 Wotan made  
holy laws and treaties;  
then Wotan  
cut their words in the spear:  
he held it to rule all the world,  
until the day  
a hero broke it in two;  
with shining sword  
he destroyed the god's holy laws.  
Then Wotan ordered  
Walhall's heroes  
to hack down  
the World Ash's trunk,  
and to cut its branches to pieces.  
The Ash-tree fell;  
dry were the waters of the spring!  
And so today  
I must tie our cord to the rock.  
Sing, my sister,  
take up the thread.  
What will happen now?

Third Norn (catching the rope and throwing the end behind her)

3 That mighty hall  
the giants have raised –

there the gods and heroes  
all have assembled;  
there sits Wotan on high.  
But all around it  
there are heaped  
like a wall  
huge, mighty branches:  
the World Ash-tree once they were!  
When that wood  
blazes furious and bright,  
when the flames  
seize on that glorious abode,  
the rule of the gods is ended;  
darkness falls on the gods.

What happens then?  
Oh, take up the cord and the song;  
from the north  
I now must give it to you.  
Spin, my sister, and sing on!

*(She throws the rope to the Second Norn. The Second Norn casts it to the First, who loosens the rope from the branch and fastens it to another.)*

First Norn (looking toward the back)

Is that the day  
or the flickering firelight?  
For sadness dims my eyes;  
I see no longer  
those sacred visions  
which Loge once  
would light up in radiant fire.  
Tell me, what was his fate?

**Second Norn** (*once again winding the rope that has been thrown to her around the rock*)

By the spear's enchantment  
Wotan enslaved him;  
Loge counselled the god.  
But he longed for freedom,  
tried to escape him,  
broke the laws on the spear.  
Then, once again  
by the spear he was summoned;  
ordered by Wotan,  
Brünnhilde's rock he surrounded.  
Know you what happens now?

**Third Norn** (*again throwing behind her the end of the rope as it comes to her*)

[4] Now the god will seize  
the spear that was shattered,  
drive it deep  
in the breast of the fiery god:  
then the flames  
leap from the spear,  
those flames he'll cast  
at the World Ash-tree  
whose branches are heaped around Walhall.

(*She throws the rope back; the Second Norn coils it and throws it back to the First.*)

**Second Norn**

Let us discover  
when that will be.  
Spin, then, sisters, our cord!

**First Norn** (*fastening the rope again*)

The night fades;  
dark are my senses:  
these feeble threads  
have slipped from my grasp;  
the rope is tangled and frayed.  
A hideous sight  
wounds me, clouding my eyes:  
the Rhinegold,  
that which Alberich stole –  
say, what became of him?

**Second Norn** (*with anxious haste winds the rope around the jagged rock at the mouth of the cave*)

The threads are breaking,  
cut by the crag;  
the rope loses  
its hold on the rock;  
it hangs ravelled and torn;  
while need and greed  
rise from the Nibelung's ring:  
and Alberich's curse  
tears at the strands of the cord.  
Ah, what will happen next?

**Third Norn** (*hastily catching the rope thrown to her*)

The rope is too slack;  
it reaches not.  
If I must cast it  
back to the north,  
the sagging rope must be stretched.  
(*She tugs at the rope, which breaks in the middle.*)  
It splits!

**Second Norn**

It splits!

**First Norn**

It splits!

(*The three Norns start up in terror, and gather at the centre of the stage; they grasp the pieces of the broken rope and bind their bodies together with them.*)

**The Three Norns**

An end now to our wisdom!  
The world hears  
our counsel no more.

**Third Norn**

Away!

**Second Norn**

To Erda!

**First Norn**

Away!

(*They vanish.*)

[5] Dawn. The red glow of sunrise grows; the firelight from below grows fainter. Sunrise. Broad daylight. Siegfried and Brünnhilde enter from the cave; he is fully armed; she leads her horse by the bridle.

**Brünnhilde**

To deeds of glory,  
brave beloved!  
My love for you

bids you be gone.  
One care constrains me,  
makes me linger,  
I've not repaid you  
for all you gave.

What gods have given me,  
I've given you:  
all that they taught me,  
now is yours;  
all of this maiden's  
wisdom and strength  
given to the man  
who is now my master.

I'm wise no more,  
but my heart is full:  
in love I'm rich,  
though emptied of power,  
I fear that you  
may now despise me;  
how can I serve you?  
I've no more to give!

**Siegfried**

More you have given to me  
than I can rightly grasp.  
Forgive me if your lessons  
have left me still untaught.  
One lesson I know I've learnt:  
that by Brünnhild I'm loved;  
one command I'll not forget:  
Brünnhilde to remember!

**Brünnhilde**

- [6] Ah, but to prove you love me,  
remember only yourself;  
recall your deeds of glory;  
recall that raging fire,  
whose fury could not fright you,  
when it blazed around my rock!

**Siegfried**

Brünnhilde I was seeking!

**Brünnhilde**

Recall how I lay on that rock,  
and that long, deep sleep which bound me,  
till your kiss awoke me to life.

**Siegfried**

Brünnhilde to awaken!

**Brünnhilde**

Recall the promise  
that unites us;  
recall the pledges  
that we plighted;  
recall you love me,  
and I love you:  
Brünnhilde burns forever,  
ever deep in your breast.  
(*She embraces Siegfried.*)

**Siegfried**

- [7] Love, I leave you alone,  
but the flames will guard you again;  
(*He has drawn Alberich's ring from his finger and  
now offers it to Brünnhilde.*)

in return for all you've taught me,  
let me give you this ring.  
For the power of all I have done  
resides within this gold.  
And to gain it a dragon was killed,  
who guarded the ring with its life.  
Now you must guard it for me;  
this ring will tell all my love!

**Brünnhilde** (*putting on the ring, in rapture*)

I'll guard it so long as I live!

For the ring, I give you my horse!

Though he longs to fly  
with me through the storm clouds,  
with me

he lost his enchanted power;  
through the skies above,  
through lightning and thunder,  
no more

Grane can fly on his way;  
but wherever you lead,  
even through fire,  
fearlessly Grane will bear you:  
for you, my hero,  
you are his master.  
Oh, guard him well;  
he'll heed your voice:  
oh, let your Grane  
hear Brünnhilde's name!

**Siegfried**

- [8] So by your daring I am fired,  
and all my deeds shall be your deeds!

All my battles you will choose,  
all my victories you shall achieve,  
when on your steed I'm mounted,  
when by your shield I'm saved:  
so Siegfried I am no more,  
I am but Brünnhilde's arm.

**Brünnhilde**

I wish that Brünnhild were your soul, too!

**Siegfried**

Her soul burns bright in my breast.

**Brünnhilde**

Then you are Siegfried and Brünnhild!

**Siegfried**

Where I am, then we're united.

**Brünnhilde**

Then my mountain must soon be bare?

**Siegfried**

Ah no, both here in you!

**Brünnhilde** (*with great emotion*)

- [9] O heavenly rulers!  
Holy immortals!  
Turn your eyes  
on this true, loving pair!  
Apart, who can divide us?  
Divided, still we are one!

**Siegfried**

Hail, O Brünnhilde,  
glorious star!  
Hail, love in its radiance!

**Brünnhilde**

Hail, O Siegfried,  
conquering light!  
Hail, life in its radiance!

**Both**

Hail! Hail! Hail! Hail!

- [10] (*Siegfried leads the horse quickly towards the edge  
of the rocky slope; Brünnhilde follows him.  
Siegfried disappears with the horse down behind  
the protecting rock, so that he is no longer visible to  
the audience; Brünnhilde stands thus suddenly  
alone at the edge of the slope and watches Siegfried  
as he descends. Siegfried's horn is heard from below.  
Brünnhilde listens. She steps further out on the  
slope, and again catches sight of Siegfried down  
below; she greets him with a gesture of delight. Her  
joyful smiles seem a reflection of the cheerful  
demeanour of the departing hero. The curtain falls  
swiftly.*)

**Act I**

**The hall of the Gibichungs on the Rhine**

*This is quite open at the back. The background  
itself presents an open shore as far as the river; rocky  
heights border the shore.*

**Scene 1**

*Gunther and Gutrune sit enthroned at one side;  
before them is a table with drinking vessels on it;  
Hagen is seated in front of the table.*



**Gunther**

- 11 Now hear, Hagen;  
answer me true:  
is my fame along the Rhine  
worthy of Gibich's name?

**Hagen**

You, trueborn son,  
awaken my envy;  
and she who bore us both,  
fair Grimhild, taught me to honour you.

**Gunther**

Don't envy me;  
let me envy you.  
I am the elder son,  
yet you're the one who's wise:  
half-brothers we;  
no one knows you better.  
And I praise you, praise your wisdom,  
when I ask about my fame.

**Hagen**

My wisdom is weak;  
your fame is not great:  
I know some wondrous treasures  
which the Gibichungs have not yet won.

**Gunther**

If that is so,  
I blame you, too.

**Hagen**

In ripeness and strength of summer,

Gibich's children rule;  
you, Gunther, have no wife;  
you, Gutrun, are unwed.

*(Gunther and Guttrune are lost in silent thought.)*

**Gunther**

- 12 What woman should I wed  
to make my fame more great?

**Hagen**

There's one woman,  
the noblest in the world:  
a rocky crag her home;  
a fire encircles the rock:  
one hero will brave that fire,  
then Brünnhild his bride shall be.

**Gunther**

Is my strength enough for the deed?

**Hagen**

It requires a stronger man than you.

**Gunther**

Who is this noblest of men?

**Hagen**

Siegfried, the Walsung son,  
there is the chosen man.  
The Walsung twins  
whom love united,  
Sigmund and Sieglind,  
created this brave, noble son.

In the woods he grew to be strong;  
with this man Gutrun should wed.

**Gutrune** *(beginning shyly)*

What deed did he accomplish,  
to be hailed as the bravest of men?

**Hagen**

- 13 At Neidhöhle  
the Nibelung gold  
was guarded by Fafner the giant:  
Siegfried closed up  
his threatening jaws,  
and killed him with his conquering sword.  
That great and valiant deed  
has won him a hero's name.

**Gunther** *(thoughtfully)*

The Nibelung hoard is famous;  
I've heard men tell of its gold...

**Hagen**

And he who commands its power  
can bend all the world to his will.

**Gunther**

And Siegfried won it himself?

**Hagen**

Slaves are the Niblungs to him.

**Gunther**

And Brünnhild must fall to his might?

**Hagen**

He alone can pass through the flame.

**Gunther** *(rises impatiently from his seat)*  
So why then mention this bride?

And why arouse my hopes  
with dreams of a treasure  
that cannot be mine?

*(He paces the hall in agitation. Hagen, without leaving his seat, by a mysterious gesture arrests Gunther as he approaches him.)*

**Hagen**

What if Siegfried  
should win the bride –  
might he not give her to you?

**Gunther** *(turns away again in doubt and discontent)*

But how could I urge this man  
to win the bride for me?

**Hagen** *(as before)*

Your word would easily urge him,  
were but Gutrun his wife.

**Gutrune**

- 14 You mock me, wicked Hagen!  
For how could Siegfried love me?  
If he's the bravest  
of men in the world,  
then earth's most lovely women  
long since have known his love.

**Hagen** *(leaning over confidentially to Guttrune)*

Remember that drink in the chest;  
*(more secretly)*  
and trust in me; I know its power.

That hero for whom you long,  
 he can be conquered by you.  
*(Gunther has again come to the table and, leaning upon it, listens attentively.)*  
 Now let our Siegfried come:  
 we'll give him the magical drink;  
 he'll forget all women but you;  
 the past will fade from his mind;  
 all memory he will have lost.  
 Now tell me,  
 how like you Hagen's plan?

**Gunther** *(starting up with animation)*  
 I praise our mother Grimhild,  
 who bore a son so wise!

**Gutrune**  
 And will Siegfried come this way?

**Gunther**  
 How can we draw him here?

*(A horn sounds from the background on the left. Hagen listens.)*

**Hagen**  
 [15] Merrily seeking  
 adventures and fame,  
 he sails the Rhine,  
 he roams the world:  
 his journey will bring him this way,  
 to the Gibich's home on the Rhine.

**Gunther**  
 Gladly I welcome him here.

*(The horn sounds closer, though still distant. Both listen.)*

On the Rhine I can hear a horn.

**Hagen** *(has gone to the shore; he looks downstream, and calls back)*

I see a vessel – man and horse!  
 Ha! Hear the sound of his horn!

With a powerful stroke,  
 yet with leisurely ease,  
 he drives the boat,  
 braving the stream:  
 such force in his arms  
 as he plies the oars!  
 Yes, it is he  
 who destroyed the giant.  
 Siegfried's coming, he and no other!

**Gunther**  
 Will he go by?

**Hagen** *(calls towards the river through his cupped hands)*

Hoiho! You boarman,  
 where are you bound?

**Siegfried's Voice** *(in the distance, from the river)*  
 To Gunther, son of Gibich.

**Hagen**  
 His hall awaits you; be welcome here.  
*(Siegfried appears at the shore in a boat.)*  
 Siegfried! Siegfried! See! Hail!

## Scene 2

*Siegfried brings his boat alongside and, after Hagen has made it fast with a cable, leaps on shore, with his horse.*

**Hagen**  
 Hail! Siegfried, valiant man!

*(Gunther has joined Hagen on the shore. From the throne, Gutrune looks at Siegfried in astonishment. Gunther prepares to offer friendly greetings. All are fixed in mute mutual contemplation.)*

**Siegfried** *(leaning on his horse, remains quietly standing by the boat)*

[16] Which is Gibich's son?

**Gunther**  
 Gunther, I whom you seek.

**Siegfried**  
 Gunther is praised  
 along the Rhine:  
 now fight with me,  
 or be my friend!

**Gunther**  
 Come in peace!  
 And be welcome!

**Siegfried** *(looking around calmly)*  
 Who'll care for my horse?

**Hagen**  
 I'll give him rest.

**Siegfried** *(turning to Hagen)*  
 You called me Siegfried:  
 how did you know?

**Hagen**  
 I knew when I saw  
 your mighty strength.

**Siegfried** *(as he gives the horse to Hagen)*  
 Take care of Grane:  
 in all the world  
 you'll never find  
 a horse more noble than he.

*(Hagen leads the horse away to the right, behind the hall. While Siegfried looks thoughtfully after him, Gutrune, at a gesture of Hagen's unnoticed by Siegfried, goes out through a door on the left leading to her room. Gunther advances into the hall with Siegfried, inviting him to accompany him.)*

**Gunther**  
 [17] I welcome you, my friend,  
 within the hall of my fathers;  
 the hall you stand in,  
 and all you see,  
 freely you may command them;  
 share in my birthright,  
 land and men:  
 by my life let me swear it!  
 Me, too, you may command.

**Siegfried**  
 No land nor men I have to give,

no father's house or hall:  
all my birthright  
my sturdy limbs,  
useless things when I'm dead.  
Yet a sword have I;  
I forged it:  
by my sword let me swear, then!  
Body and sword shall be yours.

**Hagen** (*has returned, and now stands behind Siegfried*)  
But the Nibelung gold, they say,  
belongs now to you.

**Siegfried** (*turning round to Hagen*)  
18 That treasure I quite forgot;  
I held it of little worth!  
I left it lying in a cavern,  
where a dragon used to dwell.

**Hagen**  
And took no gold away?

**Siegfried** (*indicating the steel chainmail hanging from his belt*)  
Only this; I know not its use!

**Hagen**  
The Tarnhelm truly,  
the Nibelung's wonderful work:  
for this, when placed on your head,  
can transform you to any shape;  
and take you to any place:  
you just wish, and you are there!  
What else did you take from the cave?

**Siegfried**  
Just a ring.

**Hagen**  
And where is it now?

**Siegfried**  
Kept safe on a fair woman's hand.

**Hagen** (*aside*)  
Brünnhild's!

**Gunther**  
Now, Siegfried, naught you need give me.  
I could make no fit return  
even if you took all I have;  
out of friendship, you I shall serve.

(*Hagen has gone to Gutrune's door and now opens it. Gutrune comes out and approaches Siegfried, carrying a filled drinkhorn.*)

**Gutrune**  
19 Welcome, O guest,  
to Gibich's house!  
Let his daughter give you this drink.

**Siegfried** (*bows to her politely and takes the horn. Holding it up thoughtfully, he says softly:*)

Though I forget  
all else that you gave,  
one holy lesson  
I shall recall:  
this drink, the first  
I taste as lover,

Brünnhild, I drink to you!  
(*He raises the horn and takes a long draught. He returns the horn to Gutrune, who casts down her eyes before him in shame and confusion. Siegfried fixes his gaze on her with suddenly inflamed passion.*)

Those eyes with a flash  
have looked into mine;  
why lower your glorious gaze?  
(*Gutrune, blushing, raises her eyes to his face.*)

Ah, fairest maid!  
Close them again;  
the heart in my breast  
burns in their beams;  
the blood in my veins is kindled  
to scorching fiery streams!  
(*with trembling voice*)  
Gunther, what is the name of your sister?

**Gunther**  
Gutrune.

**Siegfried** (*softly*)  
Do I read a welcome  
here in the shining eyes of Gutrun?  
(*Ardently and impetuously he seizes Gutrune's hand.*)

#### COMPACT DISC TWO

- 1 With your brother I promised to serve;  
his pride refused my help.  
Will you, like him, reject my plea?  
Or may I serve with you?

(*Gutrune involuntarily catches Hagen's eye. She bows her head and, with a gesture as if she felt herself unworthy, she leaves the hall with faltering steps.*)

**Siegfried** (*watched closely by Hagen and Gunther, gazes after Gutrune as if bewitched; then, without turning round, he asks:*)  
Gunther, have you a wife?

**Gunther**  
No wife have I yet;  
the wife I long for  
will be hard to find,  
for I have set my desire  
on a maid whom I cannot win!

**Siegfried** (*turns with animation to Gunther*)  
Whom can you not win,  
with me to help?

**Gunther**  
A rocky crag her home...

**Siegfried** (*breaking in hastily in astonishment*)  
'A rocky crag her home'...?

**Gunther**  
...a fire surrounds the rock –

**Siegfried**  
...a fire surrounds the rock'...?

**Gunther**  
One hero will brave that fire –



**Siegfried** (*striving with intense effort to remember something*)

'One hero will brave the fire'...?

**Gunther**

Then Brünnhild his bride shall be.

(*Siegfried shows by a gesture that at the mention of Brünnhilde's name his memory has quite faded.*)

I dare not set foot on the mountain;  
that fire would make me fear!

**Siegfried** (*comes to himself from his dreamy state, and turns to Gunther with cheerful self-confidence*)

- 2 I fear not the flames,  
and for you I shall win the bride;  
for your friend am I,  
and my strength is yours,  
if I can have Gutrun as wife.

**Gunther**

Gutrun I'll give to you gladly.

**Siegfried**

Brünnhilde then is yours.

**Gunther**

But how will you deceive her?

**Siegfried**

By the Tarnhelm's art  
I can be changed into you.

**Gunther**

Then let us swear by a vow!

**Siegfried**

Blood-brotherhood  
joins us as one!

(*Hagen fills a drinkhorn with fresh wine; he holds it out to Siegfried and Gunther, who cut their arms with their swords and hold them for a moment over the top of the horn. Both lay two fingers on the horn, which Hagen continues to hold between them.*)

**Siegfried**

- 3 Flourishing life's  
refreshing blood  
we have shed in this cup.

**Gunther**

Bravely blended  
brotherly love,  
born in the cup from our blood!

**Both**

Truth I swear to my friend!  
Fair and free,  
the blood is our bond;  
blood-brotherhood here!

**Gunther**

If one friend should be false –

**Siegfried**

If one friend should betray –

**Both**

Then not drops of blood –

all his life blood  
shall flow in streams from his veins;  
traitors so must atone!

**Gunther** (*drinks and hands the horn to Siegfried*)

I swear to be true!

**Siegfried**

I swear to be true!

(*He drinks and holds out the empty drinkhorn to Hagen. Hagen strikes the horn into two with his sword. Gunther and Siegfried join hands.*)

**Siegfried** (*observes Hagen, who has stood behind him during the oath*)

But you did not join us in our oath!

**Hagen**

My blood would spoil all your drink;  
my blood's not pure  
and noble like yours;  
stubborn and cold,  
slow to stir,  
my blood flows slowly and strangely:  
I take no part  
in fiery vows.

**Gunther** (*to Siegfried*)

Leave this unhappy man!

**Siegfried** (*takes up his shield again*)

- 4 Now on our way!  
There lies my boat:  
swiftly sail to the mountain!

For the night I'll leave you;  
then, when I've won her,  
your bride you shall bring home!

(*He turns to leave, and beckons to Gunther to follow him.*)

**Gunther**

Will you not rest a while?

**Siegfried**

On returning, then I'll rest.

(*He goes to the shore to cast the boat loose.*)

**Gunther**

You, Hagen, keep watch over the palace!

(*He follows Siegfried to the shore. Siegfried and Gunther, after they have laid their arms in the boat, put up the sail and make all ready for departure; Hagen takes up his spear and shield. Gutrune appears at the door of her room just as Siegfried pushes off the boat, which floats at once into midstream.*)

**Gutrune**

So fast! Where have they gone to?

**Hagen** (*while he slowly seats himself in front of the hall, with shield and spear*)

They've sailed – Brünnhild they'll find.

**Gutrune**

Siegfried?

Hagen

See, see his haste!  
He's eager to win you!

Gutrune

Siegfried – mine!

*(She returns to her room in excitement. Siegfried has seized an oar and with its strokes he drives the boat down the stream so that it is quickly lost to view.)*

Hagen *(sits motionless, leaning his back against the doorpost of the hall)*

- [5] I sit here and wait,  
watching the house,  
guarding the hall from the foe.  
Gibich's son  
is borne by the wind,  
away to his wooing he's gone.  
His ship is steered  
by his fearless friend,  
who'll brave the fire in his place:  
and he will bring  
his bride to the Rhine;  
with her, he brings me the ring!  
You sons of freedom,  
joyful companions,  
merrily sail on your way!  
Though you may scorn me,  
you'll serve me soon,  
the Niblung's son.

*(A curtain, attached to the front of the hall, closes, and cuts off the stage from the audience.)*

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### Scene 3

#### The rocky height, as in the Prelude

*Brünnhilde is sitting at the entrance to the cave, in mute contemplation of Siegfried's ring. Overcome by joyful memories, she covers it with kisses. Distant thunder is heard; she looks up and listens. Then she turns again to the ring. A flash of lightning. Brünnhilde listens again and looks into the distance, where a dark thundercloud is seen approaching the rocky height.*

Brünnhilde

- [6] Sounds I once knew so well  
steal on my ear from the distance.  
I see it –  
there's a Valkyrie horse:  
through the clouds it's speeding  
here to my rock.  
Who dares to seek me again?

Waltraute's Voice *(from the distance)*

Brünnhilde! Sister!  
Wake from your slumber!

Brünnhilde *(leaping up)*

Waltraute's call;  
so joyful the sound!  
*(calling to the wing)*  
Welcome sister!

Boldly flying to my rock!  
*(She hastens to the edge of the rocks.)*

There in the wood –  
you know now the place –  
leap from your horse,  
and leave him safely to rest.  
*(She runs into the wood, from which a loud sound like a thunderclap is heard. Brünnhilde comes back, very excited, with Waltraute; she remains in joyful excitement, without observing Waltraute's anxious fear.)*

- [7] You've come to me?  
Are you so bold,  
daring to seek me,  
Brünnhild, here on her rock?

Waltraute

You alone  
are the cause of my haste!

Brünnhilde *(in joyous excitement)*

For love of me, for Brünnhilde's sake,  
Wotan's command you've broken?

Or perhaps – oh, say –  
can it be true? –  
Wotan's mind is changed?  
When against his anger  
Siegmund I guarded,  
that deed – I know it –  
that deed fulfilled his desire.

And I know that his anger  
is no more.  
For although I was bound in sleep,  
left all alone on that rock,  
meant as a prize for the man

who might pass and wake me to life,  
to my sad entreaty  
he granted grace:  
with ravening fire  
he surrounded the rock,  
so that none but a hero could pass.

So my blessing  
I gained by my sentence:  
the noblest of men  
has won me as wife!  
Blessed by his love,  
in light and laughter I live.  
*(She embraces Waltraute, who attempts with anxious impatience to restrain her.)*  
Ah, were you drawn here by my fate?  
You've come to join me,  
gaze on my rapture,  
share all that I have won?

Waltraute *(vehemently)*

Share all the frenzy  
that has maddened your brain?  
In anguish I come to your rock,  
breaking Wotan's command.

*(Brünnhilde here first observes with surprise Waltraute's extreme agitation.)*

Brünnhilde

- [8] Fear and dread  
I read in your features!  
So the god has pardoned me not?  
You still are afraid of his wrath?

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Waltraute (*gloomily*)

If still I feared him,  
I should have nothing else to fear!

Brünnhilde

Sister, I do not understand!

Waltraute

Then you must listen,  
pay good heed to my words!  
To Walhall that dread  
must make me return,  
which from Walhall drove me away.

Brünnhilde (*alarmed*)

What harm can assail the immortals?

Waltraute

- [9] Here me with care, and I will tell you!  
Since you and he were parted,  
we've fought no more battles  
for Wotan.  
Dazed and doubting,  
we Valkyries rode to the field –  
Walhall's valiant heroes  
all left leaderless!  
Alone on his horse,  
without peace or rest,  
through the world as a wanderer he rode.  
But then he came home;  
in his hand  
his sacred spear was splintered,  
that spear which a hero had shattered.

He gave a sign:

Walhall's heroes  
went to cut down  
the World Ash-tree in pieces.

The sacred branches  
he bade them break,  
then pile in a heap  
all around the glorious hall.

The holy clan  
came as he called them;  
then Wotan, on high,  
took his place.  
By his side  
in fear and dismay they assembled:  
in ranks around the hall  
he stationed his heroes.

- [10] He sits there,  
speaks no word,  
enthroned in silence,  
stern and sad;  
his spear in splinters  
grasped in his hand.  
Holda's apples  
tastes he no more.  
Fearful and trembling,  
the gods look on in silence.  
All his ravens  
sent he forth on their journeys;  
when they return  
and bring the news he awaits,  
then for the last time  
a smile of joy

will shine on the face of the god.

At his feet are gathered,  
in anguish, we Valkyries;  
blind, he will not heed  
our entreaties:  
and we are consumed,  
filled with an endless dismay.  
Then on his breast  
I wept in my sorrow;  
his glance grew more mild;  
he remembered, Brünnhilde, you!  
He sighed in grief,  
closed his eye,  
and deep in dreaming,  
whispered these words:

'If once the Rhine's fair daughters  
win back their ring from Brünnhild again,  
then the curse will pass;  
she'll save both god and the world!'

So then I thought;  
I left our father,  
and through the silence  
stole from the hall;  
in secret haste  
I mounted my horse,  
and rode in storm to your rock.  
Hear, O sister,  
and grant my prayer:  
ah, you alone  
can help in our need!

End our remorse and our grief!

(*She has thrown herself at Brünnhilde's feet.*)

Brünnhilde (*quietly*)

- [11] These tales of evil fancies  
hold no meaning for me!  
The gods and all Walhall's  
cloudy splendours,  
I, poor fool, have escaped;  
so how can Walhall concern me?  
Strange and senseless,  
all that you say:  
and in your eyes,  
so wild and weary,  
gleam flames of desire.  
With pallid features,  
unhappy sister,  
oh, tell me, what would you ask?

Waltraute (*vehemently*)

- [12] Upon your hand, the ring,  
that ring! Hear me, I beg:  
for Wotan, cast it away!

Brünnhilde

The ring? My ring?

Waltraute

Let the Rhinemaidens have it again!

Brünnhilde

The Rhinemaidens? – I? – The ring?  
Siegfried's pledge to me?  
Your words are madness!

Waltraute

Hear me, hear my despair!



The world's future  
all depends on the ring.  
Cast it from you,  
down in the waters;  
Walhall's grief shall be ended,  
when you fling it back in the Rhine.

**Brünnhilde**

Ha! Learn now what it means to me!  
How can you grasp it,  
unfeeling maid!  
More than Walhall's pleasures,  
more than the fame of the gods,  
more is this ring.  
One glance at its shining gold,  
one flash of its holy fire  
I hold dearer  
than all the gods'  
eternal, joyless delights.  
The shine of this gold  
tells me that Siegfried loves me!  
Siegfried loves me!  
O joy that transfigures my being!  
Love lives in the ring.  
[13] Go home to the sacred  
clan of the gods!  
And of my ring  
you may give them this reply:  
my love shall last while I live,  
my ring in life shall not leave me!  
Fall first in ruins  
Walhall's glorious pride!

**Waltraute**

This is your loyalty?  
So to sorrow,  
to grief you abandon your sister?

**Brünnhilde**

Back to your horse!  
Fly on your way!  
The ring remains on my hand!

**Waltraute**

Sorrow! Sorrow!  
Woe my sister!  
Woe to Walhall, woe!

*(She rushes away. A stormy thundercloud soon rises from the wood.)*

**Brünnhilde** *(as she watches the departure of the brightly flashing thundercloud, which is soon lost in the distance)*

[14] Borne on the wind,  
through flashing stormclouds,  
fly on your way:  
to me you need not return!  
*(Evening has fallen. From below, the light of the fire gradually grows brighter. Brünnhilde looks quietly out on the landscape.)*  
Dark shades of evening  
veil the heavens;  
brightly blazes  
the guardian fire of the rock.  
*(The firelight approaches from below. Tongues of flame, growing continually brighter, dart up over the rocky edge.)*

The flames leap wildly,  
but why do they flare up on high?

The mountain peak  
is walled by a rampart of flame.  
*(Siegfried's horn-call sounds from below. Brünnhilde listens, and starts up in delight.)*  
Siegfried!

Siegfried returns,  
and his call rings in my ears!  
Ah! Ah, I must meet him!  
My god returns to me!

*(She hastens to the rocky parapet in the highest delight. Flames shoot up from them; Siegfried leaps forward onto a high rock: the flames immediately draw back again and shed their light only from below. Siegfried, with the Tarnhelm on his head, which hides the upper half of his face and leaves only his eyes free, appears in Gunther's form.)*

**Brünnhilde** *(shrinking in terror)*  
Betrayed! Who dares come here!

*(She flies to the foreground, and gazes at Siegfried in speechless astonishment.)*

**Siegfried** *(remaining on the rock at back, leans on his shield, motionless, observing her for a while. Then, in a feigned – and deeper – voice, he addresses her:)*

[15] Brünnhild! Your husband comes;  
I have sought you through the fire.

I claim you as my wife:  
now you belong to me!

**Brünnhilde** *(trembling violently)*

Who is the man  
who dares to come here  
where the bravest alone may climb?

**Siegfried** *(as before)*

A hero come to tame you,  
if you resist my might.

**Brünnhilde** *(seized with fear)*

A demon  
come to usurp the rock!  
An eagle has flown here  
to tear me to pieces!  
Who are you, dreadful one?  
Are you a mortal?  
Are you a demon  
sent here from hell?

**Siegfried** *(as before, beginning with a slightly trembling voice, but continuing more confidently)*

A Gibichung am I,  
and Gunther is my name;  
now, maid, you follow me.

**Brünnhilde** *(breaking out in despair)*

Wotan! You cruel,  
merciless god!  
Ah! Now my sentence  
I understand!  
To shame and sorrow  
I am condemned.

Siegfried (*leaps down from the rock and approaches*)

- 16 The night draws on:  
and there in your cave  
you must obey your husband!

Brünnhilde (*stretching out threateningly the finger on which she wears Siegfried's ring*)  
Stand back! See I am guarded!  
No man can force me to shame,  
so long as this ring is my guard.

Siegfried  
You shall be conquered by Gunther;  
and that ring makes you his wife!

Brünnhilde  
Stand back, stand back!  
Foolhardy thief!  
Beware me, and do not come near!  
Stronger than steel  
makes me the ring;  
No! None steals from me!

Siegfried  
From you I shall take it,  
taught by your words!

(*He presses toward her. They struggle together. Brünnhilde wrenches herself free, flies, and turns as if to defend herself. Siegfried seizes her again. She flees; he reaches her. Both wrestle violently together. He seizes her by the hand and draws the ring from her finger. Brünnhilde shrieks violently. As she sinks down into his arms, as if broken, her unconscious look meets Siegfried's eyes.*)

Siegfried (*lets her fainting body sink to the stone bench at the entrance to the cave*)

Now you are mine.  
Brünnhilde, Gunther's wife,  
there we shall stay in your cave!

Brünnhilde (*stares fainting before her, exhausted*)

- 17 Now nothing can save me,  
ill-fated wife!

(*Siegfried drives her on with a gesture of command. Trembling, and with faltering steps, she goes into the cave.*)

Siegfried (*draws his sword; in his natural voice:*)  
Now, Notung, witness here  
how I shall keep my vow.  
I keep my word to my brother!  
Part me now from Gunther's bride!

(*He follows Brünnhilde. The curtain falls.*)

### COMPACT DISC THREE

#### Act II

##### An open space on the shore

*In front of the Gibichung hall: on the right, the open entrance to the hall; on the left, the bank of the Rhine, from which, slanting across the stage to the back at the right, rises a rocky height cut by several mountain paths. There Fricka's altar-stone is visible; higher up is a larger one for Wotan and, on the side, a similar one dedicated to Donner. It is night.*

#### Scene 1

- 1 Hagen, his spear on his arm, his shield at his side, sits sleeping, leaning against one of the doorposts. The moon suddenly shines out and throws a bright light on him and his surroundings; Alberich is seen crouching before him, leaning his arms on Hagen's knees.

Alberich (*softly*)

- 2 Sleep you, Hagen, my son?  
You sleep, and hear me not;  
through sleep I lost my might!

Hagen (*softly, without moving, so that he appears to be sleeping on although his eyes are open*)

I hear you, crafty Niblung;  
what have you now to tell my slumber?

Alberich

Remember the power  
that you were born with,  
if you've the courage  
that your mother gave you at birth!

Hagen (*as before*)

My courage came from her;  
no thanks for that I'll grant her,  
for she was bought by your gold.  
Old in youth, gaunt and pale,  
hating the joyful,  
I'm never glad!

Alberich (*as before*)

Hagen, my son!

Cherish that hatred!  
Then your unhappy,  
joyless father  
you will love as you should!  
Now be cunning,  
strong and bold!  
Those whom with weapons  
of darkness we fight,  
soon they'll be destroyed by our hate.  
He stole the ring from my hand,  
Wotan, that treacherous robber,  
but now he's been vanquished  
by one of his heroes;  
to the Wälsung he lost  
dominion and might;  
with his band of gods and heroes  
in dread he waits for the ending.  
He's no threat to me:  
gods and heroes will perish!  
Sleep you, Hagen, my son?

Hagen (*motionless, as before*)

- 3 The might of the gods,  
who wins it then?

Alberich

I and you!  
The world shall be ours,  
if I can trust  
my scheming son,  
if truly you share my hate.  
Wotan's spear  
was broken by the Wälsung,

and Fafner, the dragon,  
 was killed by his hand,  
 and he took the ring as his prize.  
 Power and might  
 passed to the Wälsung;  
 Walhall and Nibelheim  
 own him as lord.  
 But that boldest of heroes  
 is safe from my curse;  
 for he knows not  
 the might of the ring;  
 he makes no use  
 of its magical power.  
 Laughter and love fill his heart,  
 gaily he wastes all his life.  
 We must destroy him  
 before we can conquer.  
 Sleep you, Hagen, my son?

**Hagen (as before)**  
 Towards his destruction  
 Siegfried is bound.

**Alberich**  
 That golden ring,  
 that ring – you have to win it!  
 For he is loved  
 by a woman who's wise;  
 if she advise  
 that he return it,  
 if the Rhinemaidens,  
 whom once I pursued,  
 by chance recover the ring,

we've lost it; gone is our gold,  
 and no craft can win it again.  
 Wake from your slumber,  
 strive for the ring!  
 For fearless and bold  
 you were bred;  
 so that you'd fight my foes  
 when I needed.  
 Though you were too weak  
 to fight with the dragon,  
 whom only Siegfried could slay,  
 yet deadly hatred  
 I bred in Hagen  
 and he can avenge me;  
 the ring he'll win me,  
 though Wälsung and Wotan conspire!  
 Swear to me, Hagen, my son!

*(From this point a gradually darkening shadow  
 again covers Alberich. At the same time, day begins  
 to dawn.)*

**Hagen (still as before)**  
 [4] That ring shall be Hagen's;  
 leave me in peace!

**Alberich**  
 Swear to me, Hagen, my son!

**Hagen**  
 To myself swear I;  
 trust me, and fear not!

**Alberich (gradually disappearing from sight, while  
 his voice becomes ever less audible)**  
 Be true, Hagen, my son!

Trusty hero! Be true!  
 Be true! True!

*(Alberich has entirely disappeared. Hagen, who has  
 remained in the same position, gazes motionless and  
 with fixed eyes towards the Rhine, over which the  
 light of dawn is spreading. The Rhine begins to  
 glow more and more brightly with the red light of  
 dawn.)*

## Scene 2

*Hagen starts violently. Siegfried appears suddenly  
 from behind a bush close to the shore. He appears  
 in his own shape but still has the Tarnhelm on his  
 head. He takes it off and hangs it from his belt as  
 he comes forward.*

**Siegfried**  
 [5] Hoiho! Hagen!  
 Fast asleep?  
 Did you not see me?

**Hagen (rising leisurely)**  
 Heil, Siegfried!  
 You're back so early!  
 Say, where have you been?

**Siegfried**  
 At Brünnhilde's rock!  
 And there I drew the breath  
 with which I just called:  
 the Tarnhelm carried me fast.

Slowly there follow a pair;  
 by boat they will arrive!

**Hagen**  
 You conquered Brünnhild?

**Siegfried**  
 Where's Gutrune?

**Hagen (calling towards the hall)**  
 Hoiho! Gutrune!  
 Hasten here!  
 Siegfried is back:  
 come, welcome him.

**Siegfried (turning to the hall)**  
 I'll tell you both  
 how I won Brünnhild's hand.  
*(Gutrune comes from the hall to meet him.)*  
 Now make me welcome,  
 Gibich maid!  
 I bring the news you long to hear.

**Gutrune**  
 Freia smile on you  
 in the name of all lovely women!

**Siegfried**  
 One alone  
 is all I care for!  
 As wife, I've won you today.

**Gutrune**  
 And so Brünnhild's with my brother?

**Siegfried**  
 Soon she was won as his bride.



**Gutrune**

Was he unharmed by the fire?

**Siegfried**

He could have passed through the flames,  
but in his place I went instead,  
for thus I planned to win you.

**Gutrune**

And you? You were not hurt?

**Siegfried**

I laughed at the threat of the flames.

**Gutrune**

Did Brünnhild think you were Gunther?

**Siegfried**

No one could tell us apart;  
the Tarnhelm served me well,  
as Hagen told me it would.

**Hagen**

I gave you good advice.

**Gutrune**

You mastered that fearless maid?

**Siegfried**

She felt – Gunther's force.

**Gutrune**

But she gave herself to you?

**Siegfried**

Through the night the dauntless Brünnhild  
obeyed her husband and lord.

**Gutrune**

But that husband was really you?

**Siegfried**

To Gutrune I was faithful.

**Gutrune**

[6] Yet my Siegfried was with Brünnhild?

**Siegfried** (*pointing to his sword*)

Between the east and west lies north:  
so near was Brünnhild – yet so far.

**Gutrune**

Then how did Gunther obtain his bride?

**Siegfried**

When the dawn came, the firelight was fading,  
the mists fell as she followed  
down to the vale below;

and by the shore  
there we changed  
the places, Gunther and I:  
and by the magic Tarnhelm

I returned here to you.

The wind is fair, and soon  
the lovers will reach the shore.

Let's welcome them when they come.

**Gutrune**

Siegfried! Mightiest of men!

I feel strange fear of you!

**Hagen** (*looking down the river from a height at the back*)

[7] I can see a sail in the distance.

**Siegfried**

Then give the herald thanks!

**Gutrune**

Let's prepare a splendid welcome,  
and make her glad to stay among us.

You, Hagen,

call the vassals together,  
in Gibich's hall we'll feast them!

Lovely women

I'll bring with me.

They'll join us here, share in our joy.

(*As she goes towards the hall, she turns round again.*)

Siegfried, will you rest?

**Siegfried**

Helping Gutrun gives me rest.

(*He gives her his hand and goes into the hall with her.*)

### Scene 3

**Hagen** (*has mounted a rock high at the back of the stage. He places his cowhorn to his lips and sounds it, turning to the countryside.*)

[8] Hoiho! Hoihohoho!

You Gibich vassals,  
answer my call.

Waken! Waken!

Hear me! Hear me!

Arm all our land!

Bring your weapons!

Mighty weapons!

Sharp and bright!

Foes are here!

Foes! Waken! Waken!

Hoiho! Hoihohoho!

(*Hagen remains in the same position on the rock. He blows his horn again. Other horns answer from different parts of the countryside. By different paths, armed vassals rush on hastily; first singly, then in increasing numbers, assembling on the shore in front of the hall.*)

**The Vassals** (*first singly, then joined by the newcomers*)

We hear the horn!

Who sounds the alarm?

We come with our arms!

We come with our weapons!

Hagen! Hagen!

Hoiho! Hoiho!

What's the danger here?

Say what foe is near!

Who comes to fight?

Is Gunther in need?

Who is in need?

We come with our weapons,

with weapons of might.

Hoiho! Ho! Hagen!

**Hagen** (*still from the height*)

[9] Come to my call,

and arm yourselves!

Gunther soon shall return;

his wife joins us today.

**The Vassals**  
What is his need?  
Who is his foe?

**Hagen**  
His Valkyrie wife  
joins us today.

**The Vassals**  
And he is pursued  
by furious kinsmen?

**Hagen**  
No one follows them;  
they're alone.

**The Vassals**  
Then his danger is past?  
And his fight has been won?  
Tell us all!

**Hagen**  
The hero has  
found him his maid;  
Siegfried, his friend,  
saved him from harm!

**Some Vassals**  
Then why have you called us together?

**Other Vassals**  
Then why have we been called?

**Hagen**  
Sacred oxen  
must be slaughtered;

on Wotan's altars  
pour forth their blood!

**Some Vassals**  
Then, Hagen, what would you have us do?

**Other Vassals**  
What would you have us do?

**Yet Others**  
What should we do?

**All**  
What would you have us do?

**Hagen**  
Take a lusty he-goat,  
kill him for Froh;  
and a goat in his prime – ha! –  
strike down for Donner!  
Sheep should then  
be slaughtered for Fricka,  
so she will smile on this wedding!

**The Vassals (with ever-increasing hilarity)**  
After these offerings,  
what next should we do?

**Hagen**  
Your drinkhorns take,  
and ask your women  
to fill with wine  
till they overflow!

**The Vassals**  
The drinkhorn in hand,  
what ought we then to do?

**Hagen**  
Seize them, and drink  
till you drink no more!  
So shall our gods be honoured,  
and they will grant us their blessing!

**The Vassals (break into ringing laughter)**  
[10] Glad times have come,  
come to our Rhine,  
when Hagen, grim Hagen,  
with laughter can shine!  
Our hedge's thorn  
pricks us no more;  
our bridal herald  
calls us to wine!

**Hagen (who has remained very grave, has come down to the vassals and now stands among them)**

Now stop your laughing,  
faithful vassals!  
Receive Gunther's bride!  
Brünnhilde soon shall be here.

*(He points towards the Rhine. Some of the vassals hasten to the height, while others take up a position on the shore to see the arrival. Hagen approaches some of the vassals.)*

Honour your lady,  
come to her aid;  
if she is wronged,  
you must revenge her!

*(He turns slowly aside towards the back. During the following chorus, the boat with Gunther and Brünnhilde appears on the Rhine.)*

**The Vassals (first singly, then more, then all)**  
Hail! Hail!  
Be welcome! Be welcome!  
*(Some vassals leap into the river and draw the boat to the shore. All press closer to the bank.)*  
Be welcome, Gunther!  
Hail! Hail!

#### Scene 4

*Gunther steps out of the boat with Brünnhilde: the vassals range themselves respectfully to receive them. During the following, Gunther ceremoniously leads Brünnhilde forward by the hand.*

**The Vassals**  
[11] Welcome, Gunther!  
Hail to you, and to your bride!  
Welcome, Gunther,  
home with Gunther's bride!  
Be welcome!

*(They clash their weapons noisily together.)*

**Gunther (presenting Brünnhilde, who follows him with pale face and downcast eyes, to the vassals)**  
Brünnhild, my fairest bride,  
joins us beside the Rhine.

And no man could win  
a nobler woman.  
The Gibichungs have been blessed;  
gods show their grace once again.  
To new renown  
we rise today!

**The Vassals** (*clash their weapons*)  
Hail, lord,  
glorious Gibichung!

(*Gunther leads Brünnhilde, who has never raised her eyes, to the hall, from which Siegfried and Gutrune now come forth, attended by women.*)

**Gunther** (*stops before the hall*)  
[12] I greet you, noble friend,  
and you, lovely sister!  
Gladly I see you beside him,  
my friend who won you for wife.

Two pairs in wedlock  
here shall find blessing.  
(*He draws Brünnhilde forwards.*)  
Brünnhild and Gunther,  
Gutrun and Siegfried!

(*Brünnhilde, startled, raises her eyes and sees Siegfried; her look remains fixed on him in amazement. Gunther, who has released Brünnhilde's violently trembling hand, shows, as do all, blank astonishment at Brünnhilde's behaviour.*)

**Some Vassals**  
What ails her? Is she distraught?

(*Brünnhilde begins to tremble.*)

**Siegfried** (*goes a few steps towards Brünnhilde*)  
What clouds Brünnhilde's brow?

**Brünnhilde** (*scarcely able to command herself*)  
Siegfried... here...! Gutrune...?

**Siegfried**  
Gunther's gentle sister,  
won by me,  
as, by Gunther, you.

**Brünnhilde** (*with fearful vehemence*)  
I... Gunther...? You lie!  
(*She appears about to fall. Siegfried, beside her, supports her.*)  
My eyes grow dim...  
(*In Siegfried's arms, she looks up faintly at his face.*)  
Siegfried – knows me not?

**Siegfried**  
Gunther, your wife is troubled!  
(*Gunther comes to them.*)  
Arouse yourself!  
Here stands your husband.

**Brünnhilde** (*sees the ring on Siegfried's outstretched finger, and starts with terrible vehemence*)  
Ha! The ring –  
upon his hand!  
He... Siegfried?

**Some Vassals**  
What's this? What's this?

**Hagen** (*advancing among the vassals, from the back*)  
Now mark her words,  
let her charge be heard!

**Brünnhilde** (*tries to recover herself, while she forcibly restrains the most terrible excitement*)  
[13] A ring I saw

upon your hand;  
that ring was stolen,  
it was taken,  
(*pointing to Gunther*)  
seized by him!  
So how did you gain  
that ring from his hand?

**Siegfried** (*attentively observes the ring on his finger*)  
This ring? –  
I had it not from him.

**Brünnhilde** (*to Gunther*)  
You who did steal my ring  
and forced me to be your bride,  
now claim it as your right;  
make him return the ring!

**Gunther** (*in great perplexity*)  
The ring? I give him nothing:  
yet – are you sure it's yours?

**Brünnhilde**  
What did you do with the ring,  
after you stole it from me?

(*Gunther, greatly confused, is silent.*)

**Brünnhilde** (*breaking out in violent passion*)  
[14] Ha! – Siegfried stole it;  
he took the ring from me:  
Siegfried, a traitor and thief!

(*All look expectantly at Siegfried, who is absorbed in distant thoughts while contemplating the ring.*)

**Siegfried**  
No woman's hand  
gave me this ring,  
nor was it stolen  
from any woman's hand:  
I know full well  
where I found this ring,  
for at Neidhöhl I won it myself,  
when I fought with Fafner the giant.

**Hagen** (*coming between them*)  
Brünnhild, are you sure  
you recognise the ring?  
For if it is Gunther's ring,  
if it is his,  
then Siegfried was false to his friend;  
he must pay then for his treachery!

**Brünnhilde** (*crying out in most terrible anguish*)  
Betrayed! Betrayed!  
Shamefully betrayed!  
Deceit! Deceit!  
How can I be revenged?

**Gutrune**  
Betrayed? By whom?

**Vassals**  
Betrayed? Betrayed?

**Women**  
Betrayed? By whom?



**Brünnhilde**

15 Hear in Walhall,  
mighty immortals!  
Have you ordained  
this dark decree?  
Why have you doomed me  
to anguish and grief?  
Why have you plunged me  
in sadness and shame?  
Teach me a vengeance  
more cruel than my grief!  
Stir me to rage  
still more keen than my shame!  
Ah, though Brünnhilde's  
heart may be broken;  
bring her betrayer  
soon to his death!

**Gunther**

Brünnhild, beloved!  
Calm yourself!

**Brünnhilde**

Away, betrayer,  
self-betrayed one!  
All of you, hear me:  
not he  
but – Siegfried there  
claimed me as wife.

**Women**

Siegfried? Gutrune's husband?

**Vassals**

Gutrune's husband?

**Brünnhilde**

He forced delight  
and love from me.

**Siegfried**

16 Would you defile  
your name so lightly?  
Then hear me – I'll defend it,  
for I accuse you of falsehood!  
Hear how I kept my word!

Blood-brotherhood  
I and Gunther had sworn:  
Notung, my faithful sword,  
guarded that holy vow;  
this shining blade divided me  
from this unhappy wife.

**Brünnhilde**

You crafty man,  
hear how you lie!  
Calling on the sword  
which shared in your shame!  
I know its shining sharpness;  
I know, too, the scabbard  
in which it hung  
all night on the wall –  
Notung, that trusty sword –  
while its master was faithless to his word.

**The Vassals (gathering indignantly)**

Was Siegfried a traitor,  
tarnishing Gunther's honour?

**The Women**

Siegfried a traitor?

**Gunther (to Siegfried)**

My name's dishonoured,  
stained with disgrace,  
you must deny it;  
swear that she lies!

**Gutrune**

Faithless Siegfried,  
false to your vow?  
Assure me that all  
she says is a lie!

**The Vassals**

Answer the charge,  
if you are true!  
Swear on a spear-point!  
Swear with a vow!

**Siegfried**

I shall answer,  
swearing a vow:  
which of you warriors  
will lend me a spear?

**Hagen**

Let my spear-point serve you!  
Swear by the spear:  
my spear shall witness your vow!

(The vassals form a ring round Siegfried and  
Hagen. Hagen holds out his spear; Siegfried lays  
two fingers of his right hand upon the spear-point.)

**Siegfried**

17 Shining steel!  
Holiest weapon!  
Help me defend my honour!  
On this shining spear-point  
sworn is my vow:  
spear-point, witness my word!  
If I acted falsely,  
strike at my heart;  
and when death comes to claim me,  
yours be the stroke:  
if what she says be true,  
if I my brother betrayed!

*Brünnhilde (strides wrathfully into the circle, tears  
Siegfried's hand away from the spear, and seizes the  
point with her own hand)*

Shining steel!  
Holiest weapon!  
Help me defend my honour!  
On this shining spear-point  
sworn is my vow:  
spear-point, witness my word!  
Devote your mighty strength  
to his destruction!  
For his treachery he must die,  
strike him and kill him!  
For he has betrayed every vow,  
and falsehood now he has sworn!

**The Vassals (in wild excitement)**

Help, Donner!

Send us your thunder,  
to silence this shameful disgrace!

**Siegfried**

<sup>[18]</sup> Gunther, look to your wife there;  
she dares to slander your name.  
Grant her time and rest,

this furious mountain maid,  
until her frenzied rage is over;

I fear some demon's  
evil spell  
makes her so fierce with us all!  
You vassals, leave her alone!  
Leave this woman to scold!  
Like cowards, men quit the field  
when it's a battle of words.  
(*He comes close to Gunther.*)

Friend, it grieves me more than you  
that she could have guessed our plan;  
the Tarnhelm, I suspect,  
had slipped and left a crack.

But women's rage  
is soon at an end:  
she will soon learn to love you;  
then she will thank me as well.  
(*He turns again to the vassals.*)

Follow, you vassals!

On to the feast!

(*to the women*)

Come, fair women,  
help at our wedding!  
Share my delight

laugh at my joy!  
In house and field,  
carefree and merry  
you shall find me today.  
When by love I am blessed,  
I want only laughter;  
all of you share in my joy!

(*In exuberant merriment he throws his arm round Gutrune and leads her away with him into the hall. The vassals and the women, carried away by his example, follow him. Only Brünnhilde, Gunther and Hagen remain behind. Gunther, with covered face, has seated himself on one side in fearful dejection. Brünnhilde, standing in the foreground, gazes sorrowfully after Siegfried and Gutrune for a while, and then droops her head in thought.*)

**Scene 5**

**Brünnhilde** (*engrossed in contemplation*)

<sup>[19]</sup> Dark, unholy powers  
lie here around me!  
Dark, enchanted spells  
spun for my doom!  
What use is my wisdom  
against this witchcraft?  
What use is my reason  
to solve these riddles?  
Oh sorrow! Sorrow!  
Grief and sorrow!  
All my wisdom

I gave to him!  
And I remain  
held by his might;  
and now he holds me here  
as his hostage,  
shamed, helpless; and in my shame  
gladly he gives me away!  
Whose hand can help me now?  
Whose sword can sever my bonds?

**Hagen** (*coming close to Brünnhilde*)

<sup>[20]</sup> Have trust in me,  
offended wife!  
I can revenge  
such treachery.

**Brünnhilde** (*looking round wearily*)

On whom?

**Hagen**

On Siegfried, he who was false.

**Brünnhilde**

On Siegfried?... You?  
(*smiling bitterly*)  
One single flash  
from the eyes of the hero,  
even veiled by the Tarnhelm's disguise,  
such as lighted on me,  
and in fear  
your courage would falter!

**Hagen**

But on my spear-point  
he swore his falsehood?

**Brünnhilde**

Truth and falsehood,  
what do they mean!  
With stronger spells  
you must arm your spear-point,  
if you would strike at his strength!

**Hagen**

I know of Siegfried's  
conquering might,  
and of his strength in a battle;  
so whisper to me  
some crafty means  
by which he can fall to my spear.

**Brünnhilde**

Ungrateful! Shameful return!

By magic art  
I wove a spell,  
to protect his life from his foes!  
My charms surround him  
and guard his life;  
my magic keeps him safe from harm.

**Hagen**

<sup>[21]</sup> Can no weapon's point then pierce him?

**Brünnhilde**

In battle, none; yet –  
if at his back you strike...  
Siegfried, I knew it,  
he'd never flee,  
nor turn his back upon his enemy:  
and there I gave him no blessing.

**Hagen**

My spear knows where to strike!  
(*He turns quickly from Brünnhilde to Gunther.*)

Up, Gunther,  
noble Gibichung!

Here stands your valiant wife:  
so why give way to grief?

**Gunther** (*starting up passionately*)

Oh shame!  
Oh sorrow!  
Woe is me,  
of all men living the saddest!

**Hagen**

Your shame overwhelms you:  
that I grant.

**Brünnhilde** (*to Gunther*)

Oh cowardly man!  
Falsest of friends!  
Hidden behind him,  
scared by the flames,  
and then when he'd won me,  
daring to claim me!  
Deep has sunk  
your glorious race,  
to bear such a coward as you!

**Gunther** (*beside himself*)

<sup>[22]</sup> Deceived am I – and deceiver!  
Betrayed am I – and betrayer!  
So crushed be my bones!  
And broken my heart!

Help, Hagen!  
And save my honour!  
Help for your mother,  
for I, too, am her son!

**Hagen**

No hand can help,  
no deed can atone,  
but only – Siegfried's death!

**Gunther** (*seized with horror*)  
Siegfried's death!

**Hagen**

His death purges your shame!

**Gunther** (*staring before him*)

Blood-brotherhood  
freely we swore!

**Hagen**

He broke that bond;  
blood must atone!

**Gunther**

Broke he the bond?

**Hagen**

By betraying you!

**Gunther**

Am I betrayed?

**Brünnhilde**

<sup>[23]</sup> He betrayed you;  
and me – you all have betrayed me!

If I had my rights,  
all the blood of the world  
could not suffice me for your crime!  
So the death of one  
now must content me:  
Siegfried's death  
atones for his crime, and yours!

**Hagen** (*to Gunther, secretly*)

I'll kill him – you shall gain!  
All the world is yours to command  
when you set hands on the ring  
that in death alone he will yield.

**Gunther** (*softly*)

Brünnhilde's ring?

**Hagen**

The Niblung's golden ring.

**Gunther** (*sighing deeply*)

So Siegfried's doom's decided!

**Hagen**

His death will serve us all.

**Gunther**

Yet Gutrune, ah!  
Gutrune loves him!  
If he should fall at our hands,  
how can I return to her?

**Brünnhilde** (*starting up in a rage*)

What use was my wisdom?  
What use was my reason?

In heart-breaking anguish  
all is revealed:  
Gutrune, she's the enchantress;  
by her spells she stole his love.  
My curse on her!

**Hagen** (*to Gunther*)

<sup>[24]</sup> Since this blow must be dealt her,  
we must conceal our deed.

And so tomorrow  
when we are hunting,  
our hero will run on ahead:  
we'll find him killed by a boar.

**Gunther and Brünnhilde**

It shall be so!  
Siegfried dies then!  
Freed from the shame  
cast by his crime!  
The vows that he swore,  
those vows he has broken:  
and with his blood  
he shall atone!  
All-guiding  
god of revenge!  
All-powerful  
lord of vows!  
Wotan!  
Come to my call!  
Call up your fearful  
heavenly host;  
they will obey you:  
revenge my wrong!



### Hagen

Siegfried will die,  
destroyed in his pride!  
Mine is the ring,  
my hand soon shall hold it.  
I'll have that ring;  
I shall hold it!  
Nibelung father,  
you fallen lord!  
Night guardian!  
Nibelung lord!  
Alberich!  
Look upon me!  
Call once again  
all your Nibelung host;  
they will obey you,  
the ring's true lord!

*(As Gunther turns impetuously with Brünnhilde to the hall, the bridal procession coming out of it meets them. Boys and girls, waving branches of flowers, leap joyously in front. Siegfried on a shield and Gutrune on a seat are carried by the men. On the rising ground at the back, by various mountain tracks, serving-men and maids bring sacrificial implements and beasts to the altars, and deck them with flowers. Siegfried and the vassals sound the wedding-call on their horns. The women invite Brünnhilde to accompany them to Gutrune's side. Brünnhilde stares blankly at Gutrune, who beckons to her with a friendly smile. As Brünnhilde is about to withdraw impetuously, Hagen steps between*

*them and forces her towards Gunther, who seizes her hand again, whereupon he allows himself to be raised on a shield by the men. As the procession, scarcely interrupted, quickly starts moving again, towards the height, the curtain falls.)*

### COMPACT DISC FOUR

#### Act III

#### A wild, wooded and rocky valley on the Rhine

#### Scene 1

- [1] *The three Rhinemaidens, Woglinde, Wellgunde and Flosshilde, rise to the surface and swim about, circling as in a dance.*

#### The Three Rhinemaidens *(pausing in their swimming)*

- [2] Fair sunlight,  
shine on us in splendour;  
night lies in the waters:  
they once were bright,  
when through the waves  
our father's gold shone in its splendour!  
Rhinegold,  
shining gold!  
How bright was once your radiance,  
noble star of waters!  
*(They swim about again as in a dance.)*  
Weialala leia,  
wallala leialala.  
*(A distant horn-call. They listen. They joyfully splash the water.)*

- [3] Fair sunlight,  
send to us the hero,  
with our gold, which he can give us!  
Then once again,  
when it's returned,  
we shall enjoy its shining splendour!  
Rhinegold,  
shining gold!  
How fair will be your radiance,  
noble star of waters!

*(Siegfried's horn is heard from the heights.)*

#### Woglinde

And there is his horn.

#### Wellgunde

The hero's near.

#### Flosshilde

Let us take counsel!

*(All three dive down quickly. Siegfried appears on the cliff, fully armed.)*

#### Siegfried

- [4] A goblin led me astray,  
and now the bear I have lost.  
You rogue! Have you concealed him?  
What have you done with my bear?

*The Three Rhinemaidens (rise to the surface again and swim in a ring)*

Siegfried!

#### Flosshilde

You're grumbling there on the land!

#### Wellgunde

Has a goblin made you angry?

#### Woglinde

Are you annoyed by a gnome?

#### All Three

Tell us, Siegfried, speak to us!

*Siegfried (looking at them with a smile)*

Have you enticed away  
that shaggy-coated creature  
that I have lost?  
Was he your playmate?  
If he was your friend,  
I'll leave him to you.

*(The maidens laugh.)*

#### Woglinde

- [5] Siegfried, if we find your bear,  
how will you then reward us?

#### Siegfried

I've had no luck today;  
I've nothing with me to give!

#### Wellgunde

A golden ring  
gleams on your finger!

#### All Three

Come, give it!

**Siegfried**  
But to gain this ring  
I took a dragon's life;  
but to give that for a paltry bear-skin is  
hardly a fair exchange!

**Woglinde**  
Are you so mean?

**Wellgunde**  
So miserly, too?

**Flosshilde**  
When maidens  
have asked a boon, men should give!

**Siegfried**  
But then if I waste my wealth,  
I'm sure that my wife will scold.

**Flosshilde**  
Is she so stern?

**Wellgunde**  
She strikes you then?

**Woglinde**  
Has the hero felt her hand?  
*(They burst out laughing.)*

**Siegfried**  
Well, laugh then if you will!  
In grief you will be left:  
you ask me for the ring –  
I'll never give it to you.

*(The Rhinemaidens have again resumed their dance.)*

**Flosshilde**  
So fair!

**Wellgunde**  
So strong!

**Woglinde**  
And made for love!

**All Three**  
How sad that he is mean to us!

*(They laugh and dive down.)*

**Siegfried** *(comes down lower)*  
[6] Why should I let them  
laugh and jeer?

Can I bear their scorn?

If they return  
to the shore again,  
the ring I shall surrender.

Hey! Hey, hey! You merry  
water maidens!

Come back! I'll give you the ring!

*(He has drawn the ring from his finger and holds it  
on high. The Rhinemaidens rise again to the  
surface. They appear grave and solemn.)*

**Flosshilde**  
Now hold the ring,  
and guard it well,  
and learn the evil that lies –

**Woglinde and Wellgunde**  
– that lies within the ring.

**All Three**  
Then you will be glad  
you're freed by us from the curse.

**Siegfried** *(quietly places the ring back on his finger)*  
Then tell me what you know.

**The Rhinemaidens**  
[7] Siegfried! Siegfried! Siegfried!  
Evil lies in that ring.

**Wellgunde**  
And if you keep it,  
you then are doomed.

**All Three**  
From the Rhine's pure gold  
that ring was forged.

**Wellgunde**  
And the Niblung who made it  
and lost it again –

**All Three**  
– laid a curse on it;  
and all who own  
the ring – they must die,  
doomed by the curse.

**Flosshilde**  
As you killed the dragon –

**Wellgunde and Flosshilde**  
– so you shall die.

**All Three**  
You die today:  
unless you obey  
and give the ring to our care.

**Wellgunde and Flosshilde**  
Our holy Rhine  
can release you.

**All Three**  
Our stream alone  
purges the curse!

**Siegfried**  
So scheming and cunning –  
say no more!  
By your craft you'll not catch me,  
by your threats still less can you frighten me!

**The Rhinemaidens**  
[8] Siegfried! Siegfried!  
Give heed to our words.  
Siegfried! Fly from the curse!  
By Norns at dead of night  
it was woven  
in the rope of fate's decrees!

**Siegfried**  
My sword has shattered a spear:  
in the rope of fate's  
eternal decrees,  
what though the Norns

have woven a curse –  
 Notung can cut it asunder!  
 Though Fafner once warned me  
 to flee the curse,  
 yet he could not teach me to fear.  
*(He contemplates the ring.)*  
 The world's wealth  
 I could win me by this ring:  
 for a glance of love  
 I would exchange it;  
 if you had smiled the ring would be yours.  
 But you threatened my limbs and my life:  
 now that the ring  
 had no worth at all,  
 you still would not get it from me,  
 my limbs and my life! –  
 See! So  
 freely I'd fling away!

*(He lifts a clod of earth from the ground, holds it above his head, and with the last words throws it behind him.)*

**The Rhinemaidens**

- 9 Come, sisters!  
 Flee from this madman!  
 He thinks he is wise, and clever,  
 he thinks he is strong,  
 but he's stupid and blind as a child!  
*(They swim, wildly excited, in wide circles close to the shore.)*  
 Vows he swore once –  
 he's false to his vow!

He was wise once –  
 he's wise no more!

**Flosshilde, then Woglinde**

A glorious gift  
 lay in his grasp.

**All Three**

Now he has lost it,  
 thrown it away; –

**Flosshilde**

– but the ring...

**Wellgunde**

...that will bring him his death, –

**All Three**

– the ring he will not surrender!

Farewell! Siegfried!

You die today;

and your ring returns to Brunnhild;  
 by her, our prayer will be heard:  
 to her! To her! To her!

*(They turn quickly to their dance, in which they slowly swim away to the back. Siegfried looks after them, smiling, then places one foot on a rock on the shore and stays there with his chain resting on his hand.)*

**The Rhinemaidens**

Weialala leia,  
 wallala leialala.

**Siegfried**

On land and now on water

I have learnt what women are:  
 for if you defy their smiles,  
 they think that threats can frighten you:  
 and if you scorn their threats,  
 they sting you with scolding tongues!  
*(The Rhinemaidens have now quite disappeared.)*

And yet,  
 were I not Gutrun's man,  
 I'd try to capture  
 one of these pretty maids –  
 make her mine!

*(He looks calmly after them.)*

**The Rhinemaidens** *(very far away)*

La, la!

*(Hunting horns approach on the heights.)*

**Scene 2**

**Hagen's Voice** *(from the distance)*

- 10 Hoiho!

*(Siegfried starts from a dreamy reverie, and answers the call with his horn.)*

**Vassals** *(off-stage)*

Hoiho! Hoiho!

**Siegfried** *(answering)*

Hoiho! Hoiho! Hoiho!

**Hagen** *(appears on the height, followed by Gunther. Seeing Siegfried:)*

Now we have found you;  
 where have you been hiding?

**Siegfried**

Join me here! Here it's fresh and cool!

*(The vassals all reach the height and now come down with Hagen and Gunther.)*

**Hagen**

Let's rest a while,  
 for here we can feast!  
*(They lay the game in a heap.)*  
 Lay down your game bags,  
 and open the wineskins!

*(Wineskins and drinkhorns are produced. All settle down.)*

- 11 You drove the game away from us;  
 so let us hear the story  
 of Siegfried and his chase.

**Siegfried** *(laughing)*

Ah! Nothing much to tell,  
 instead I'll ask you  
 if I can share your meal!

**Hagen**

No game at all?

**Siegfried**

I set forth after a bear,  
 but waterfowl were all that I found:  
 if I'd known that I'd have caught them,  
 and I had bagged a brood  
 of frolicsome water maidens;  
 they sang on the Rhine their warning:  
 my death awaits me today.



*(He sits down between Gunther and Hagen.  
Gunther shudders and looks darkly at Hagen.)*

**Hagen**

A cruel and evil hunt,  
if the bear should get away,  
and then a boar should kill you!

**Siegfried**

I'm thirsty!

**Hagen** *(while he has a drinkhorn filled for  
Siegfried, and then hands it to him)*  
I've heard men saying, Siegfried,  
that when the birds are singing  
you know what they say:  
but can that be true?

**Siegfried**

For a long while I've paid  
no heed to their song.

*(He grasps the horn and turns with it toward  
Gunther. He drinks, and then offers Gunther the  
horn.)*

<sup>12</sup> Drink, Gunther, drink;  
your brother drinks with you!

**Gunther** *(looks into the horn broodingly and  
gloomily; dully:)*

The wine is thin and pale!  
*(more gloomily still)*  
Your blood alone I see!

**Siegfried** *(laughing)*

I'll mingle it with your blood!

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*(He pours from Gunther's horn into his own so that  
it overflows.)*

Now yours and mine run over;  
and earth, our mother,  
receives the noble draught.

**Gunther** *(with a deep sigh)*

You overjoyful man!

**Siegfried** *(softly, to Hagen)*

He broods on Brünnhilde's words?

**Hagen** *(softly, to Siegfried)*

Her voice is not so clear  
as the songs of birds to you!

**Siegfried**

Since women have sung their songs to me,  
I've cared for the birdsong no more.

**Hagen**

Yet once you knew it well?

**Siegfried** *(turning with animation to Gunther)*

Hei, Gunther,  
unhappy man!  
If you would like,  
I'll sing you the story  
of all my young adventures.

**Gunther**

I'd like to hear.

*(All gather round Siegfried, who alone sits upright  
while the others lie stretched out.)*

**Hagen**

Now, hero, sing!

**Siegfried**

<sup>13</sup> Mime was  
a hideous dwarf;  
and he brought me up,  
driven by greed,  
so that when I'd grown  
to be manly and strong,  
I could kill for him a dragon  
who long had guarded a hoard of gold.

He made me his pupil,  
and taught me forging.  
One task that Mime  
could not achieve,  
a pupil's skill  
could teach to the master:  
out of a shattered weapon's splinters,  
new, I fashioned a sword.

My father's sword,  
forged by his son,  
strong and sharp,  
glittering Notung.  
Then I was judged  
ready to fight;  
so into the woods we went...  
Soon the dragon, Fafner, was dead.

<sup>14</sup> Now you must hear  
what happened next:  
wondrous things I can tell you.  
From the dragon's blood

my fingers were burning;  
I raised them up to my mouth:  
and when the blood  
had wetted my tongue,  
then what the birds were singing –  
I heard that song like speech.  
In the tree above me one sang:  
'Hei! Siegfried inherits  
the Nibelung gold!  
Oh, there it is waiting  
within that cave!  
There is the Tarnhelm, whose magic  
will serve him for glorious deeds;  
and if he discover the ring,  
it will make him the lord of the world!'

**Hagen**

Ring and Tarnhelm,  
soon they were found?

**Some Vassals**

The woodbird, what did it say then?

**Siegfried**

<sup>15</sup> Ring and Tarnhelm –  
both I had found.  
I heard again  
the song of the woodbird;  
it sat above me and sang:  
'Hei! Siegfried discovered  
the Tarnhelm and ring.  
Now, let him beware  
of the treacherous dwarf!  
For Mime is planning to kill him

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and take all the gold for himself.  
See him lurking, waiting for Siegfried!  
Oh, Siegfried, beware of Mime!

**Hagen**

The warning was right?

**Four Vassals**

What happened to Mime?

**Siegfried**

A poisonous drink  
he'd brewed for my death;  
scared and shaking,  
he showed me his baseness:  
Notung ended his life!

**Hagen** (*laughing harshly*)

Unable to forge it,  
still he could feel it!

**Two Groups of Vassals** (*one after the other*)

What heard you then from the woodbird?

**Hagen** (*has another drinkhorn filled, and squeezes the juice of a herb into it*)

Drink first, hero,  
from my horn.

I've made you a noble drink:  
let its freshening power wake your remembrance  
(*He hands Siegfried the horn.*)  
so none of the past escapes you.

**Siegfried** (*looks thoughtfully into the horn, and then drinks slowly*)

<sup>[16]</sup> In grief I watched

the branches above;  
the bird was there, and sang:  
'Heil 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!'

**Hagen**

And did you take  
the woodbird's counsel?

**Siegfried**

Yes, I arose  
and went on my way,  
(*Gunther listens with increasing astonishment.*)  
till I came to that fiery peak.

I passed through those dangers;  
I found the maid...  
sleeping... my glorious bride!  
In shining armour she lay.  
The helmet  
I took from her head;  
my kiss awakened the bride.  
Oh, then like burning fire  
I was held by lovely Brünnhilde's arms!

**Gunther** (*springing up with the utmost dismay*)

What hear I!

(*Two ravens fly up out of a bush, circle over Siegfried, and then fly away towards the Rhine.*)

**Hagen**

And can you tell  
what those ravens have said?  
(*Siegfried stands up suddenly and, turning his back to Hagen, looks after the ravens.*)  
Vengeance! That's what they cry!

(*He thrusts his spear into Siegfried's back. Gunther – too late – seizes his arm. Siegfried swings his shield on high with both hands, as if to crush Hagen with it; his force fails him; the shield falls backwards and he himself falls down on the shield.*)

**Four Vassals** (*who have in vain tried to hold Hagen back:*)

Hagen, what have you done?

**Two Others**

What have you done?

**Gunther**

Hagen, what have you done?

**Hagen** (*gesturing at the outstretched body*)  
Falsehood punished.

(*He turns calmly away and disappears, alone, over the heights, where he is seen walking slowly through the dusk which began to fall when the ravens appeared. Gunther bends down, grief-stricken, over Siegfried. The vassals, filled with sympathy, surround the dying man.*)

## COMPACT DISC FIVE

**Siegfried** (*supported by two vassals in a sitting position, opens his eyes radiantly*)

<sup>[1]</sup> Brünnhilde!

Holiest bride!

Now wake! Wake from your slumber!

Who has forced you  
back to your sleep?

Who bound you in slumber again?

Your bridegroom came;  
he kissed you awake;  
he freed you, his bride,  
breaking your fetters.

He lived in Brünnhilde's love!

Ah! See those eyes,  
open forever!

Ah! Feel her breathing,  
loving and tender!

Joyful surrender!

Sweet are these terrors!

Brünnhild waits for me here!

<sup>[2]</sup> (*He sinks back and dies. The rest stand around him in sorrow without moving. Night has fallen. At Gunther's mute command the vassals raise Siegfried's body and carry it away in a solemn procession over the height. Gunther follows beside the body. The moon breaks through the clouds, and lights up the funeral procession ever more brightly as it reaches the heights. Then mists rise from the Rhine and gradually come forward to fill the whole stage, on which the funeral procession becomes*

invisible. During the musical interlude, the stage is completely veiled. When the mists divide again, the hall of the Gibichungs, as in the first act, is gradually revealed.)

### Scene 3

#### The hall of the Gibichungs

It is night. Moonlight is reflected on the Rhine. Gutrune comes from her room into the hall.

#### Gutrune

- 3 Was that his horn?  
(*She listens.*)  
No!  
He hasn't returned.  
Dreams of evil  
drove away my sleep.  
Wild neighs I heard from his horse;  
Brünnhilde's laughter  
then woke me from sleep.  
And was it she  
I saw there, walking by the shore?  
I fear this Brünnhild!  
Is she still here!  
(*She listens at the door on the right, and calls softly.*)  
Brünnhild! Brünnhild!  
Are you there?  
(*She opens the door hesitatingly, and looks into the room.*)  
No, she has gone.  
Then it was she  
whom I saw walking there.

(*She shudders, and listens to some distant sound.*)

Was that his horn?  
No!  
All silent!

- 4 Ah, if Siegfried were back!

(*She sets out to return to her room, but hearing Hagen's voice, she stops and, stricken with fear, remains for a while motionless.*)

**Hagen's Voice** (*calling from without, as he approaches*)

Hoiho! Hoiho!  
Awake! Awake!  
Torches, torches!  
Light the torches!  
Hunters come back  
with their pray.  
Hoiho! Hoiho!

(*Increasing fire glow from without. Hagen enters the hall.*)

#### Hagen

Up, Gutrun!  
And greet your Siegfried!  
That mighty man  
is coming home.

**Gutrune** (*in great terror*)

What is that? Hagen?  
I heard not his horn!

(*Men and women, with torches and firebrands, accompany the procession returning home with Siegfried's body; Gunther is among them.*)

#### Hagen

Your wounded hero  
will sound it no more;  
no more will he hunt,  
no more can he fight,  
no more will he woo lovely women.

**Gutrune** (*with increasing horror*)

Who's coming there?

(*The procession reaches the middle of the hall and the vassals set down the body on a mound.*)

#### Hagen

A ferocious boar has slain him;  
Siegfried, your husband, is dead.

(*Gutrune cries out and falls on the body. General horror and mourning*)

**Gunther** (*supports his swooning sister*)

Gutrun! Gentle sister!  
Hear me and answer;  
speak to me!

**Gutrune** (*coming to herself again*)

Siegfried! Siegfried is murdered!  
(*She repels Gunther violently.*)

No! Treacherous brother!  
You murderer of my husband!  
Oh, help me! Help me!

Sorrow! Sorrow!  
My husband Siegfried is murdered!

#### Gunther

- 5 Cast not the blame on me,  
but cast the blame on Hagen.  
He is the boar who killed him;  
by Hagen's spear he was slain.

#### Hagen

And you blame me for that!

#### Gunther

Yes, I blame you;  
curse you forever!

**Hagen** (*stepping forward with terrible defiance*)

Well then! I own that I killed him:

I, Hagen,  
put him to death.  
With my spear I took his life,  
for by that spear he swore.  
Rightly he fell to me;  
now I shall be rewarded:  
and so I claim here the ring.

#### Gunther

Stand back! For I declare  
that golden ring is mine!

#### Hagen

You vassals, grant me my right.

#### Gunther

This ring is Gutrune's treasure,  
you shameless Niblung son!



**Hagen** (*draws his sword*)

The Niblung's treasure  
comes to me, his son.  
(*He rushes upon Gunther, who defends himself;  
they fight. Vassals throw themselves between.  
Gunther falls dead from a stroke of Hagen's.*)  
Mine, the ring!

(*He reaches towards Siegfried's hand, which raises  
itself threateningly. Gutrune and the women cry out  
in fear. All remain motionless with terror. From the  
background, Brünnhilde advances firmly and  
solemnly to the front.*)

**Brünnhilde** (*still in the background*)

- [6] Peace with your cries  
of useless lament!  
For you all have betrayed him;  
for vengeance here I have come.  
(*She comes further forward.*)  
Children here  
are whining for their mother  
because some milk has been spilled;  
I hear no cries  
of true lamentation  
to mourn this hero's death.

**Gutrune** (*rising impetuously from the ground*)  
Brünnhilde! Cruel and envious!  
You brought this shame on our house;  
your words aroused the men against him.  
Cursed be the day you came!

**Brünnhilde**

- [7] Poor creature, peace!  
For you and he never were wed:  
his mistress,  
but never his wife!  
But I was his own true wife;  
eternal devotion he'd sworn,  
ere Siegfried ever saw you!

**Gutrune** (*breaking out in sudden despair*)

Accursed Hagen!  
By your advice I gave him  
the drink that made him forget!  
Ah, sorrow!  
My eyes are opened.

Brünnhild was his true love,  
whom through the drink he forgot!

(*Filled with shame, she turns away from Siegfried  
and, abandoning herself to grief, bends over  
Gunther's body; so she remains, motionless, till the  
end. Hagen, defiantly leaning on his spear, stands  
sunk in gloomy brooding, on the opposite side.*)

**Brünnhilde** (*alone in the centre; after remaining  
long absorbed in contemplation of Siegfried's face,  
first with profound shock, then, with almost  
overwhelming despair, she turns to the men and  
women in solemn exaltation. To the vassals:*)

- [8] Sturdy branches,  
building his pyre  
now bring to the shore of the Rhine!  
Bright and clear,  
kindle the flame:

let the hero blaze  
in splendour and radiance on high.  
His horse bring to my side;  
he and I together must join him.

I shall share that pure, holy flame  
with my Siegfried;  
we both shall blaze in the fire.  
Obey Brünnhild's command!  
(*During the following, the younger men raise a  
huge funeral pyre of logs before the hall, near the  
bank of the Rhine: women decorate this with  
coverings on which they strew plants and flowers.  
Brünnhilde becomes again absorbed in  
contemplation of Siegfried's body. Her features  
become increasingly transfigured with tenderness.*)

- [9] The sun in radiance  
shines from his eyes:  
the purest hero,  
though he was false!  
Untrue to Brünnhild,  
true to friendship!  
From the wife who loved him,  
while he betrayed her,  
he was barred by his sword.  
Never was man  
more loyal to friendship;  
never was man  
more true to his promise;  
never was known  
love more faithful.  
And yet he was faithless,  
broke every promise;

a treacherous lover –  
none falsier than he!  
Know you why that was?  
(*looking upward*)

- [10] O you, you guardians,  
look down and hear me!  
Turn your regard  
on my shame and my grief;  
and learn your eternal disgrace!  
And Wotan, hear,  
you mighty god!  
By his most valiant deed  
he fulfilled your desire,  
but he was forced  
to share in your curse –  
that curse which has doomed your downfall.

He, truest of all men,  
betrayed me,  
that I in grief might grow wise!  
Now I know what must be.  
All things, all things,  
all I know now;  
all to me is revealed!

Call back your ravens  
hovering round me;  
they'll bring to you those tidings  
you have both feared and desired.  
Rest now, rest now, O god!  
(*She gives a sign to the vassals to bear Siegfried's  
body on to the pyre; at the same time she draws the  
ring from Siegfried's finger and gazes at it  
thoughtfully.*)

- [11] My heritage  
I claim from the hero.  
Accursed gold!  
Terrible ring!  
My hand grasps you  
to cast you away.  
You sisters  
who are wise and graceful,  
you Rhinemaidens who dwell in the waters,  
I shall obey your advice.  
What you desire  
I'll give to you:  
and from my ashes  
gather your treasure!  
This fire, burning my frame,  
cleanses the curse from the ring!  
There in the Rhine,  
the ring shall be pure;  
preserve it,  
and guard your shining gold  
whose theft has caused all our woe.  
*(She has placed the ring on her finger, and now turns to the pile of logs on which Siegfried's body is laid. She seizes a great firebrand from one of the vassals and gestures towards the back.)*
- [12] Fly home, you ravens!  
And tell your lord the tidings  
that here by the Rhine you have learned!  
Past Brünnhilde's mountain  
take your flight,  
where Loge is burning!  
Summon Loge to Walhall!

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For the gods' destruction  
soon shall be here.  
So cast now the flame  
at Walhall's glorious hall.  
*(She flings the brand on the pyre, which quickly breaks out into bright flames. Two ravens fly up from the rocks on the shore and disappear in the background. Brünnhilde sees her horse which has been led in by two young men. She hastens towards it, takes hold of it and quickly removes the bridle; then she leans over it confidently.)*

- [13] Grane, my horse!  
I greet my friend!  
Can you tell, my friend,  
to where I must lead you?  
In fiery glory  
blazes your lord,  
Siegfried, my hero and love.  
To follow your master,  
ah! You are neighing!  
Lured by the fire,  
the light and its laughter?  
I, too, am yearning  
to join him there;  
glorious radiance  
has seized on my heart.  
I shall embrace him,  
united with him,  
in sacred yearning,  
with him ever one!  
Hiayoho! Grane!  
Ride to your master!

Siegfried, Siegfried! See!  
Brünnhild greets you as wife!

*(She has mounted the horse, and leaps with a single bound into the blazing pyre. The flames immediately blaze up so that they fill the whole space in front of the hall, and appear to seize on the building itself. The men and women press to the extreme front in terror. When the whole space of the stage seems filled with fire, the glow suddenly subsides, and only a cloud of smoke remains; this drifts to the background and lies there on the horizon as a dark bank of cloud. At the same time the Rhine overflows its banks in a mighty flood which pours over the fire. On the waves the three Rhinemaidens swim forwards and now appear above the pyre. Hagen, who since the incident of the ring has observed Brünnhilde's behaviour with increasing anxiety, is seized with great alarm at the appearance of the Rhinemaidens. He hastily throws aside spear, shield, and helmet and rushes like a madman into the flood.)*

Hagen

- [14] Give back the ring!

*(Woglinde and Wellgunde twine their arms around his neck and draw him with them into the depths as they swim away. Flosshilde, swimming in front of the others towards the back, joyously holds up on high the regained ring. Through the cloudbank, which has settled on the horizon, a red glow breaks out with increasing brightness. By its light, the three Rhinemaidens are seen, swimming in circles,*

*merrily playing with the ring on the calmer waters of the Rhine, which has gradually returned to its bed. From the ruins of the fallen hall, the men and women, in great agitation, watch the growing firelight in the heavens. When this reaches its greatest brightness, the hall of Walhall is seen, in which gods and heroes sit assembled, just as Waltraute described them in the first act. Bright flames seize on the hall of the gods. When the gods are entirely hidden by the flames, the curtain falls.)*

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