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Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

The Mastersingers of Nuremberg

Music drama in three acts

Libretto by the composer,

English translation by Frederick Jameson,
revised by Norman Feasey and Gordon Kember

Hans Sachs, cobbler
Veit Pogner, goldsmith
Kunz Vogelgesang, furrier
Konrad Nachtigal, tinsmith
Sixtus Beckmesser, town clerk
Fritz Kothner, baker
Balthasar Zorn, pewterer
Ulrich Eisslinger, grocer
Augustin Moser, tailor
Hermann Ortel, soapmaker
Hans Schwarz, stocking weaver
Hans Foltz, coppersmith

Walther von Stolzing, a young knight from Franconia
David, Sachs' apprentice
Eva, Pogner's daughter
Magdalene, Eva's nurse
Nightwatchman

Sadler's Wells Opera Chorus
Sadler's Wells Opera Orchestra

Mastersingers

Norman Bailey *bass-baritone*
Noel Mangin *bass*
David Kane *tenor*
Julian Moyle *bass*
Derek Hammond-Stroud *baritone*
David Bowman *bass*
John Brecknock *tenor*
David Morton-Gray *tenor*
Dino Pardi *tenor*
James Singleton *bass*
Gerwyn Morgan *bass*
Eric Stannard *bass*

Alberto Remedios *tenor*
Gregory Dempsey *tenor*
Margaret Curphey *soprano*
Ann Robson *mezzo-soprano*
Stafford Dean *bass*

Leonard Hancock *assistant conductor*
Reginald Goodall

	Time	Page
COMPACT DISC ONE		
[1] Prelude	10:55	[p. 76]
Act I		
[2] 'As to thee our Saviour came' <i>Congregation</i>	4:00	[p. 76]
[3] 'Oh stay! A word! one single word!' <i>Walther, Eva, Magdalene, David</i>	9:47	[p. 76]
[4] 'David, come on, lend a hand!' <i>Apprentices, David, Walther</i>	2:12	[p. 80]
[5] My Lord! The Mastersinger's way' <i>David, Walther, Apprentices</i>	6:50	[p. 81]
[6] 'What's this that you've done?' <i>David, Apprentices</i>	3:48	[p. 83]
[7] 'Be well assured of my good favour' <i>Pogner, Beckmesser, Walther, Sachs, Vogelgesang, Nachtigal</i>	5:08	[p. 83]
[8] 'Now to a trial, as summoned hither' <i>Kothner, Pogner, Vogelgesang, Ortel, Zorn, Nachtigal, Moser, Apprentice, David, Sachs, Beckmesser, Eisslinger, Foltz, Schwartz</i>	3:05	[p. 85]
[9] 'The feast of John, Midsummer day' <i>Pogner, Mastersingers, Apprentices, Vogelgesang, Sachs, Kothner, Pogner, Beckmesser, Nachtigal</i>	13:22	[p. 87]
[10] '(Just as I thought!)' <i>Beckmesser, Mastersingers, Kothner, Pogner, Nachtigal, Sachs</i>	2:54	[p. 90]

	Time	Page
[11] 'By silent hearth, one winter's day' <i>Walther, Sachs, Beckmesser, Kothner, Vogelgesang, Nachtigal</i>	9:01	[p. 91]
[12] 'To make your footsteps safe and sure' <i>Kothner, Walther, Beckmesser</i>	3:22	[p. 93]
TT 74:34		
COMPACT DISC TWO		
[1] "'Now begin!" So cried the sun with the land!" <i>Walther</i>	3:47	[p. 93]
[2] 'Then have you finished?' <i>Beckmesser, Walther, Pogner, Mastersingers, Kothner, Ortel, Moser, Foltz, Nachtigal, Vogelgesang, Zorn</i>	2:34	[p. 94]
[3] 'Stay, Masters! Why so much haste?' <i>Sachs, Beckmesser, Nachtigal, Kothner, Pogner, Mastersingers, Walther, Apprentices</i>	8:18	[p. 95]
Act II		
[4] Prelude	0:55	[p. 98]
[5] 'Midsummer day! Midsummer day!' <i>Apprentices, David, Magdalene, Sachs</i>	3:21	[p. 99]
[6] 'We'll see if Master Sachs is there' <i>Pogner, Eva, Magdalene</i>	6:08	[p.100]
[7] 'A pretty secret, that!' <i>Eva, Sachs, David</i>	1:02	[p.102]

	Time	Page
[8] 'The elder's scent, how tender' <i>Sachs</i>	7:05	[p.102]
[9] 'Good evening, Master!' <i>Eva, Sachs, Magdalene, Pogner</i>	12:14	[p.103]
[10] 'He's here now!' <i>Eva, Magdalene, Walther, Nightwatchman, Sachs</i>	9:09	[p.108]
[11] 'What? Sachs? He too?' <i>Walther, Eva, Sachs</i>	1:17	[p.110]
[12] 'Jerum! Jerum! Hal-la-hal-lo-he! O-ho!' <i>Sachs, Beckmesser, Walther, Eva</i>	12:16	[p.111]
[13] "I see now dawning daylight" <i>Beckmesser, Sachs, David, Kothner, Neighbours</i>	5:58	[p.116]
[14] 'The devil take your song, accursed rogue!' <i>David, Magdalene, Beckmesser, Neighbours, Journeymen, Apprentices, Women, Pogner, Walther, Sachs, Nightwatchman</i>	5:33	[p.118]

TT 79:54

COMPACT DISC THREE

Act III

[1] Prelude	7:40	[p.122]
[2] 'Here, master, here!' <i>David, Sachs</i>	7:57	[p.122]

	Time	Page
[3] 'Fools! Fools! Ev'rywhere fools' <i>Sachs</i>	8:00	[p.124]
[4] 'My friend, good morning!'	4:57	[p.125]
[5] 'My friend, in joyful days of youth' <i>Sachs, Walther</i>	5:20	[p.126]
[6] "Warm in the sunlight, at dawning of day" <i>Walther, Sachs</i>	12:11	[p.127]
[7] Interlude	3:34	[p.129]
[8] 'A Trial Song by Sachs! Is it true?' <i>Beckmesser, Sachs</i>	4:25	[p.129]
[9] 'It was here, the paper!' <i>Sachs, Beckmesser</i>	8:35	[p.131]
[10] 'Here's Eva! I had wondered where she was!' <i>Sachs, Eva</i>	4:58	[p.134]
[11] "Lured from their dances, the stars glided down" <i>Walther, Sachs</i>	3:00	[p.135]
[12] 'The life of a cobbler's nothing but woe!' <i>Sachs</i>	1:35	[p.136]
[13] 'O Sachs! My friend! So kind thou art!' <i>Eva, Sachs</i>	4:30	[p.136]

TT 76:50

	Time	Page
COMPACT DISC FOUR		
[1] 'A child has been created' <i>Sachs</i>	4:04	[p.137]
[2] 'Radiant as the dawning that enchants my sight' <i>Eva, Walther, Sachs, Magdalene, David</i>	5:26	[p.137]
[3] 'Now, Walther come! You must be brave!' <i>Sachs</i>	2:25	[p.139]
[4] 'Saint Crispin, Saint Crispin!' <i>Shoemakers, Tailors, Bakers, Apprentices</i>	4:08	[p.139]
[5] 'You dance? Look out if the Masters see you!' <i>David, Apprentices, Journeymen</i>	2:40	[p.140]
[6] Entrance of the Mastersingers – “Silentium! Silentium!” <i>Apprentices, People</i>	4:04	[p.140]
[7] 'Awake! The dawn of day draws near' <i>People</i>	3:38	[p.140]
[8] 'Words light to you' <i>Sachs, Pogner, Beckmesser, Kothner, People, Apprentices</i>	8:14	[p.141]
[9] “Bathing in sunlight at dawning of day” <i>Beckmesser, Mastersingers, People, Kothner, Nachtigal, Vogelgesang, Ortel, Foltz</i>	4:05	[p.143]
[10] 'The song, in truth, is not by me' <i>Sachs, Mastersingers, People, Apprentices</i>	4:53	[p.144]

	Time	Page
[11] “Warm in the sunlight, at dawning of day” <i>Walther, Mastersingers, People, Sachs, Pogner, Eva</i>	7:29	[p.145]
[12] 'The witness has been duly tried' <i>Sachs, People, Mastersingers, Pogner, Walther</i>	2:09	[p.146]
[13] 'Do not disdain our Masters thus' <i>Sachs, People</i>	8:04	[p.146]

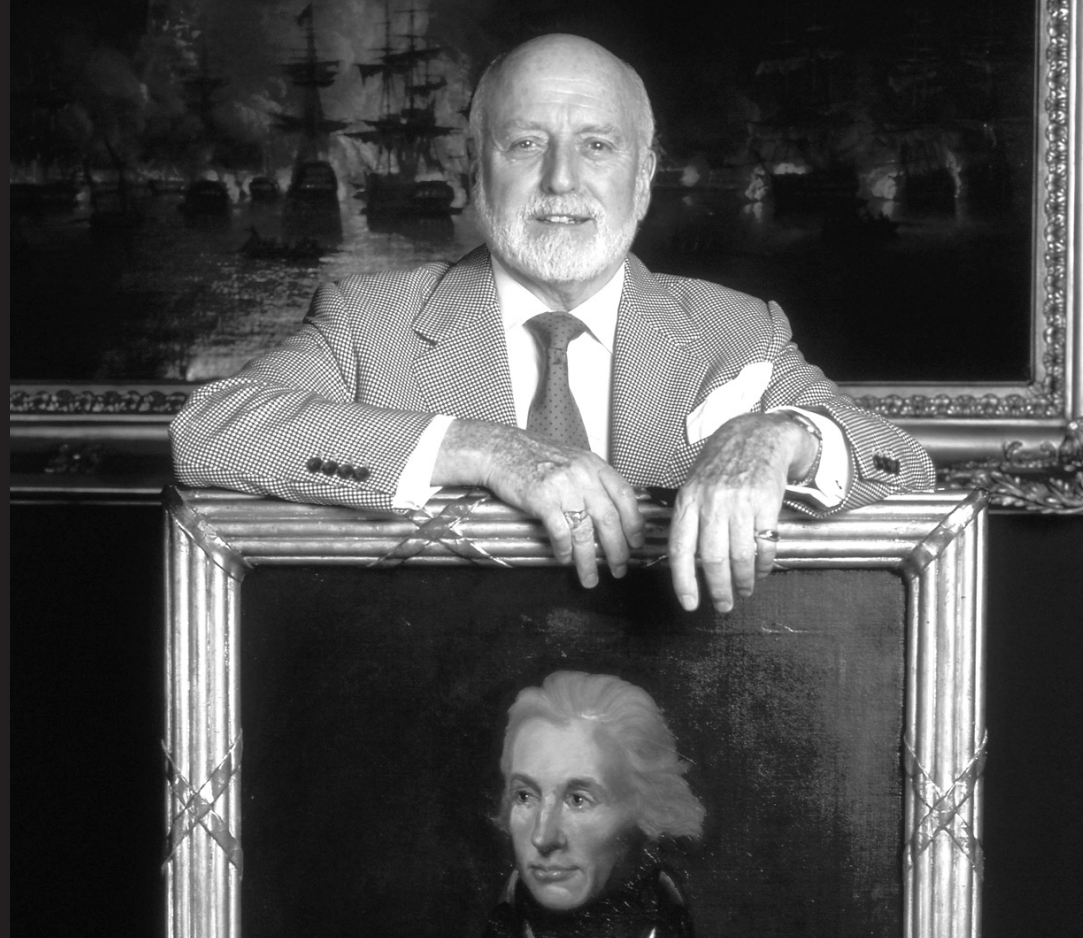
TT 61:26

It was the resounding success of Reggie Goodall's *Mastersingers* that led to his conducting an 'English' *Ring* at the London Coliseum in the 1970s. That *Ring* moved me so intensely that I decided the performance must not be allowed to fade into the past, and sent me knocking on doors to preserve it on record. So I am thrilled that we have been able to add *The Mastersingers* to our Opera in English catalogue, alongside Reggie's superb *Ring*.

Sir Peter Moores, CBE, DL
July 2008

Peter Moores

Sir Peter Moores with a portrait of Admiral Lord Nelson
by Lemuel Francis Abbott, acquired for Compton Verney
© Lyndon Parker



The Mastersingers of Sadler's Wells

On the day before the premiere of Sadler's Wells Opera's new production of *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*, its Managing Director Stephen Arlen gave a talk to the first ever Arts Council-sponsored Arts Administration Course at the London Polytechnic in Mortimer Street. For him, I suspect, it was a matter of duty and, though open and engaging, he appeared apprehensive. As one of that initial 1967/68 intake of students, I asked him what we might expect of his new *Mastersingers*. He replied:

'Either it will be a catastrophe, or it will be the greatest success in the history of Sadler's Wells.' The following evening, 31 January 1968, another of the students, Brian McMaster, and I stood next to each other for over five hours in the five shilling (25 pence in new money) Upper Circle Slips and witnessed history being made.

Sadler's Wells Theatre in those days was the home of a substantial opera company. It employed more than forty principal singers on full-time contract. There were over 110 musicians in the orchestra, and a full complement of music staff. The chorus numbered ninety-six; and there was an Opera Ballet of twenty-four dancers. Or rather, this

ensemble was the sum of two companies, the Sadler's and the Wells. Together they were responsible for the majority of opera touring in England. Welsh National Opera still had an amateur chorus and no resident orchestra. Another decade would pass before the founding of Opera North. So, the equally resourced Sadler's and Wells companies, led by separate Musical Directors Bryan Balkwill and Mario Bernardi, alternated between London and the regions.

During and after the Christmas holiday period each year, most of the suitable receiving theatres were occupied with pantomime; and in 1967/68 the familiar winter visit to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford became no longer possible. So Arlen and his directors decided to bring together the divided companies for a major joint project, taking advantage of the relatively generous rehearsal time that became available only at this midpoint of the season because of the lull in the otherwise relentless touring routine.

One of those directors was Edmund Tracey, an ex music critic who had become Literary Manager, or Dramaturg, with responsibility

for the translations of this English language company. Tracey had belonged to a small group of influential critics, which included Andrew Porter, David Cairns and Peter Heyworth, who espoused the cause of Reginald Goodall as a pre-eminent conductor of Wagner, largely on the evidence of four legendary performances of *Die Walküre* on the Covent Garden Opera's tour in 1954. Goodall had joined Sadler's Wells Opera during World War Two and had conducted the premiere of *Peter Grimes* for the reopening of the theatre in 1945, but soon after he had moved to Covent Garden as a staff conductor. He was ill-attuned to routine revivals of the Italian and French repertory, and by the end of the 1950s his conducting assignments had dwindled, though he remained valued as a singers' coach. Even so, he led occasional performances of *The Mastersingers* at Covent Garden as late as 1960, but his method suffered from the patchy casting and lack of rehearsal time then prevalent. Goodall's first Wagner for Sadler's Wells was a revival of *Tannhäuser* in January 1961, which was marred by undernourished strings and an unprepossessing old production. On that evidence, it must have required an act of faith by Arlen, Tracey and their fellow directors, who included Glen Byam

Shaw (production), Edward Renton (music administration) and John Snape (finance), to entrust Goodall with the greater assignment of the company's first post-war production of *The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*.

Crucially, what they provided was time. That meant not only the concentrated production rehearsal time made available in December 1967 and January 1968 when the companies were not engaged in touring, but the vital preliminary musical coaching where Goodall's knowledge and understanding and persistence were supreme. With the exception of Hans Sachs, for which they engaged Norman Bailey, an experienced British singer then working in Germany, the cast belonged to the existing ensemble and were singing their roles for the first time. So, they could be available to work on them over an extended period of time, with sympathetic music staff led by a conductor who had inhabited the music for half a lifetime. That was the key secret which unlocked the talents of a generation of British Wagnerians. For example, Alberto Remedios, who had contributed a rather raw Walther von der Vogelweide to that earlier *Tannhäuser*, was taught not only the notes of Walther von Stolzing but also how to sing them softly and as a poet.

The other vital condition, a secret now lost, was the nature of the company at Sadler's Wells. *The Mastersingers* is an ensemble opera in a sense which Wagner's other operas are not. Indeed, the impulse to set to work on what the composer called 'a popular comic opera' derived from the impossibility of casting the title roles of Tristan and Isolde and the consequent failure to secure a performance of that opera. 'This time,' Wagner boasted to his publisher, 'I shall need neither a so-called first tenor nor a great tragic soprano.' Sure, the central character of Hans Sachs, the opera's 'jovial-poetic' hero, is a big role, but he is only one of the twelve titular mastersingers (thirteen if you count the absentee Niklaus Vogel). Every master has his apprentice, and beyond them stands the vital presence of the large chorus who make up the populace of sixteenth-century Nuremberg: the congregation in St. Catherine's Church in Act I; the disturbed neighbourhood of Act II; and, above all, the great community in the festival meadow beside the river Pegnitz in Act III. Wagner's poem may extol 'holy German art,' but his model was the communal experience of Ancient Greek drama.

To bring this ideal to convincing life, it is not enough to assemble an array of eminent

guest artists. You need a group of people who have lived together long enough to know intimately each other's strengths and weaknesses. You want the kind of company which grew up and still exists in parts of Germany and Eastern Europe but which is becoming increasingly rare in today's global labour market. In the 1960s, Sadler's Wells did not have *Mastersingers* buried in its soil, as a German theatre of the time would have, but it was a tilled field ready to be ploughed.

Nonetheless, the labour ahead of Goodall and his team was immense. Wagner's vision of an easy-to-perform, popular comic opera was overtaken by a structure and subject matter altogether more ambitious and profound. By the time of its completion and performance in Munich in 1868, he could write to King Ludwig of Bavaria: 'It is impossible that you should not have sensed, under the opera's quaint superficialities of popular humour, the profound melancholy, the lament, the cry of distress of poetry in chains, and its re-incarnation, its new birth, its irresistible magic power achieving mastery over the common and the base.'

Directors and conductors interpret the balance between these elements in different ways. In our lifetime, the horrors of Germany during the

Nazi years have led to understandably strong reactions against the tribute to a nationalist art. So, it is perhaps more productive to focus on some musical judgments about where the kernel of the opera lies.

Hans Knappertsbusch, the doyen of German conductors of the old school whom Goodall especially admired, believed that the true climax of the opera was the quintet which concludes Act III Scene I. It is the still moment when the five central characters combine in harmony to dedicate the new work of art. For Rudolf Kempe, whom Goodall assisted in preparing the work at Covent Garden in 1963, everything led towards the great choral outburst of 'Wach' auf' ('Awake!'), when Hans Sachs, poised to make his introductory speech before the song contest, is surprised by the whole community joining to sing the poem of hope beginning 'Wach' auf, es nahet gen den Tag', which he wrote thirty-seven years earlier in his youth. In the theatre, the effect was spine-tingling. Georg Solti, who conducted a new production at Covent Garden only a year after Goodall's at Sadler's Wells, was at his most seductive in summoning the magic of Midsummer's Eve in Act II, when Sachs evokes the subtle interrelation of humanity and nature in his 'Fliedermonolog', his musings

under the elder tree. For Joseph Keilberth, Music Director of the Bavarian State Opera in Munich during its golden age in the 1960s, the heart of the opera was the prelude to Act III, which plumbs the depths of Sachs's melancholy and leads into his 'Wahnmonolog' with its Schopenhauer-like pessimism about the folly of man.

Goodall's *Mastersingers* does not fall short at any of these crucial moments, but I believe that for him the heart of the matter, and his more passionate outpouring, was the section beginning 'O Sachs, mein Freund,' ('O Sachs! My friend!') when Eva, after she has been surprised by Walther's preview of the prize song, turns instead towards Sachs to express her realisation that he has sacrificed his own feelings for her in favour of the younger man. The rise and fall of Goodall's orchestra is drenched in tears which encompass both supreme joy and unrequited sorrow. Goodall, and his Sachs Norman Bailey, understood the boiling exasperation in the middle-aged cobbler's heart and its overriding generosity.

A decade or so after the Sadler's Wells *Mastersingers*, I came to know Goodall when we worked together on his first production of *Tristan und Isolde* at Welsh National Opera. Struggling to write the programme notes, I

asked him what that opera was about, and he confessed that he had not yet penetrated to its dark heart. He thought the other mature Wagner operas were easier to understand. *The Ring* was about nature; *Parsifal* about compassion. For him, *Mastersingers* was by then in the past, and he did not want to conduct it again.

No doubt, this or that passage has been better sung or played, and will be in the future; but I think that Goodall sensed that the generosity of spirit which inhabited Sadler's Wells and its company in the final years at that theatre would never be recaptured.

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Synopsis

COMPACT DISC ONE

[1] Prelude

Act I

The interior of the Church of St Catherine in Nuremberg

[2]–[6] At the conclusion of the afternoon service a young knight, Walther von Stolzing, manages to speak to Eva, with whom he

has already fallen in love. He learns that her father, Veit Pogner, the goldsmith, has offered her hand as a prize to the Master who shall prove the victor at the Singing Contest which is to be held the next day. Eva's companion, Magdalene, is in love with David, the youthful apprentice of Hans Sachs, the cobbler, and as she is leaving the church with Eva, she tells David to instruct Walther in the many complicated rules of Mastersinging so that her mistress may perhaps win the man she really loves.

[7]–[10] The Mastersingers arrive, among them the fussy and pedantic Town Clerk, Sixtus Beckmesser, who also aspires to Eva's hand. [11] He is overjoyed that he is to act as 'Marker' when Walther sings his trial song, for his duty is to mark down all violations of the official rules.

COMPACT DISC TWO

[1] He quickly sees that the young knight is a formidable rival in love, [2] and he plays a prominent part in securing his rejection as a candidate for the contest. [3] The meeting breaks up in confusion and it is only Hans Sachs who discerns the beauties and genius of Walther's song, which all the other Masters

reject out of hand. He sees that the young man has the power which, under proper guidance, may lead the art of the Mastersingers away from the decaying paths of tradition to a new and more noble ideal.

Act II

A street in Nuremberg with a view of the houses of Hans Sachs and Veit Pogner

[4] Prelude. [5] It is Midsummer Eve and as David and the other apprentices are putting up the shutters. Magdalene comes to ask for news of Walther's trial with the Mastersingers. She is dismayed to hear that he was not considered fit for admission to the Guild. Hans Sachs returns to his shop, dismisses David for the night and sets to work to finish a pair of shoes for Beckmesser.

[6]–[9] Meanwhile, Pogner and Eva have also returned to their own house, which is opposite that of Hans Sachs. After her father has gone indoors, Eva learns the news of Walther's failure from Magdalene, who also tells her that Beckmesser is on his way to serenade her. It is agreed that Magdalene is to dress herself in Eva's clothes and take her place at the window. [10] Walther comes to find Eva and as he realises that he cannot now hope to gain her hand as a Mastersinger, he decides to elope with her

that evening. Before their plan (which has been overheard by Sachs) can be put into operation, the lovers hear the sound of approaching footsteps and they are compelled to hide. The newcomer is the importunate Beckmesser. [11] As he begins his serenade, [12] Sachs starts to sing a rollicking song from his work-bench. This does not suit Beckmesser's plan and he invites Sachs to listen to his song and criticize it so that he may correct any faults in time for his performance the next day. [13] Sachs agrees to do so and in his post as 'Marker' contrives to carry on his work and to hammer on his last with increasing regularity throughout Beckmesser's song.

The noise wakes David, who begins to cudgel the serenader unmercifully. [14] The disturbance soon arouses all the neighbours who join in the riot, not knowing what it is about. Suddenly the Nightwatchman's horn is heard, the confusion quickly subsides, and Sachs gives Walther shelter in his house. The houses are shut up and the sleepy Watchman passes slowly along the empty street.

COMPACT DISC THREE

Act III

Inside Sachs' workshop the following morning

[1] Prelude. [2] David, dressed in his finery for the Festival of St John's Day, repeats his verses to his master. [3] After he has gone Sachs reflects gravely on human folly and the unruly proceedings of the previous night. [4]–[5] Walther appears and tells Sachs of a beautiful dream from which he has just awakened. The cobbler entreats him to sing it to him in the form of as Mastersong, while the vision is still fresh in his mind. [6] As Walther sings, Sachs writes down the words, offering some technical advice from time to time, sensing that here is the song which will undoubtedly win the prize. Sachs and Walther go off to dress for the festival. [7] Interlude.

[8] Beckmesser, still smarting from his beating the night before, enters and chances upon the paper on which Sachs has just written the words of Walther's prize song. Thinking that Sachs himself has decided to enter the contest, he steals the paper, but is surprised on the return of the cobbler. [9] Realising what has happened Sachs gives the song to Beckmesser and tells him that he may sing the song himself if he wishes. Beckmesser retires in triumph, thinking that with a song by the great Sachs, he is sure to be the winner.

[10] Eva comes with the excuse that her new shoes are hurting her. [11]–[13] Walther returns

and, at the sight of Eva, bursts forth into the final stanza of his song, in a sudden flood of inspiration.

COMPACT DISC FOUR

[1]–[3] Magdalene and David appear, and after Sachs has formally promoted the latter from an apprentice to a journeyman, the five voices join in a quintet based upon the melody of Walther's song.

[4]–[8] The scene changes to an open space on the banks of the river Pegnitz where all the Guilds are gathered together for the great Festival. [9] Beckmesser is the first to sing, but as he has been quite unable to memorise his words correctly, he fails miserably. He rushes away in shame and fury amid the derision of the crowd. [10] Sachs now calls upon Walther, as the real author of the song, to step forward. [11]–[12] His impassioned and inspired performance completely wins the hearts of all his listeners. He is crowned by Eva as the victor of the contest, [13] and the opera ends with a jubilant chorus in praise of Hans Sachs.

Born in South Africa, the bass-baritone **Norman Bailey** (Hans Sachs) studied in Vienna and spent his early career singing in

Austria and Germany. He then returned to the United Kingdom where he has sung with all the major opera companies. As one of the leading Wagner singers of his generation he is associated particularly with the title role in *Der fliegende Holländer* and Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. He has also sung the Landgraf in *Tannhäuser* with Opera North and Wotan / the Wanderer and Gunther with English National Opera, where as company member he also sang Pizarro (Beethoven's *Leonore*), Count di Luna (*Il trovatore*), Alfio (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Scarpia (*Tosca*), the Father (*Hansel and Gretel*), Prince Gremin (*Eugene Onegin*), Kutuzov (Prokofiev's *War and Peace*) and the Forester (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) among other roles.

With The Royal Opera, Covent Garden he has appeared as Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*, also on tour to Palermo) and as **Germont** père (*La traviata*), Ford (*Falstaff*), Wolfram (*Tannhäuser*), Kurwenal (*Tristan und Isolde*), Donner (*Das Rheingold*), Wotan (*Die Walküre*), Klingsor and Amfortas (*Parsifal*), Jochanaan (*Salome*) and the Music Master (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). Other roles have included Oroveso (*Norma*), Banquo (*Macbeth*), the King (*Aida*), the Doctor (*Wozzeck*) and Schigolch (*Lulu*). His

international career has taken him to major opera stages and festivals throughout Europe and the United States, including several seasons at Bayreuth, and to collaborations with conductors such as Sir Colin Davis, Sir Georg Solti, James Levine, Carlo Maria Giulini, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Claudio Abbado and Daniel Barenboim. For Chandos he has recorded the title role in Sir Michael Tippett's *King Priam*.

Alberto Remedios (Walther von Stolzing), 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*), 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. In his retirement he took up residence in Australia.

The English baritone **Derek Hammond-Stroud** (Sixtus Beckmesser) studied with Elena Gerhardt and Gerhard Hüsch in Munich and London, and his career has embraced both the recital platform and the operatic stage. He has sung with all the major British opera companies while his engagements in Europe have included the Bavarian State

Opera, the Theater an der Wien, the Theater am Gärtnerplatz and three seasons with The Netherlands Opera. In South and North America he has sung at the Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires and with The Metropolitan Opera, New York and San Diego Opera among many others. Major roles have included Dr Bartolo, Rigoletto, Fra Melitone (*La forza del destino*), Sharpless, Tonio (*Pagliacci*), Papageno, Alberich, Beckmesser, Faninal (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Krušina (*The Bartered Bride*) and Sir Robert Cecil (*Gloriana*) besides numerous roles in works by Gilbert and Sullivan and by Offenbach. He has taken part in several first British stage productions, including Haydn's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (as Creonte), Rossini's *La pietra del paragone* (as Pacuvio), *War and Peace* (as Napoleon, with English National Opera) and Gottfried von Einem's *Der Besuch der alten Dame* (as the Schoolmaster, at Glyndebourne). He created the role of the Old Fisherman in the world premiere of Malcolm Williamson's *The Violins of Saint-Jacques* at Sadler's Wells. He has received many honours including, in 1987, the OBE.

John Brecknock (Balthasar Zorn) comes from Nottinghamshire. He joined Sadler's

Wells (later English National Opera). Major roles included Don Ottavio, Belmonte, Ferrando, Count Ory, Almaviva (*The Barber of Seville*), Alfredo, des Grieux (*Manon*), Tamino, the Duke (*A Night in Venice*) and Werther. His roles for The Royal Opera have included Fenton (*Falstaff*) and Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*), and he also has sung Gennaro (*Lucrezia Borgia*) with Dame Joan Sutherland. John Brecknock has performed frequently throughout Europe, including at the Vienna Staatsoper, and in the Americas. His roles abroad include Don Ottavio at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Ernesto (*Don Pasquale*) and Fenton in Miami, the Duke (*Rigoletto*) in Houston, Count Ory in Ottawa, Werther in Rouen and San Diego, Ramiro in Buenos Aires, and Idomeneo and Ramiro in Paris.

Noel Mangin (Veit Pagner) was born in Wellington, New Zealand, and sang his first solo as a boy soprano at the age of eight. He made his debut as a tenor at the age of twenty-one after studying with Ernest Drake. He sang as a tenor for three years, before his voice underwent a change, and eighteen months later he emerged as a bass-baritone, singing Germont Père (*La traviata*) and Marcello

(*La bohème*). By the following year his voice had settled as a bass and he sang the role of Sarastro (*The Magic Flute*). He studied in Paris with Dominique Modesti, and in London with Joseph Hislop, and from 1963–67 he sang with Sadler's Wells Opera. He also made many appearances at the Hamburg Staatsoper, and Victoria State Opera, and from 1979 he regularly sang Fafner, Hunding and Hagen in Seattle Opera's *Ring* productions.

Noel Mangin's most notable roles were Don Pasquale, Ochs and Osmin, and in 1981 he was awarded an OBE. He died in 1995.

Born in Douglas on the Isle of Man, **Margaret Curphey** (Eva) trained at the Birmingham School of Music, 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 made her debut 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 Mimi and Musetta (*La bohème*), Marguerite (Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust*) and Ellen Orford

(*Peter Grimes*) among many other roles. Her renowned Wagnerian performances with the company have included Elsa (*Lohengrin*), Eva (*The Mastersingers of Nuremberg*), Sieglinde, Brünnhilde and Gutrune. She participated in the British premiere of Mozart's *Lucio Silla* at the Camden Theatre, has made guest appearances in Europe, won a medal at the International Competition in Sofia, Bulgaria, and also enjoyed an active career as a concert singer.

Stafford Dean (Nightwatchman) was born in Surrey and studied with Gordon Clinton at the Royal College of Music and with Howell Glynne and Otakar Kraus. He made his Glyndebourne debut in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Roles for Sadler's Wells included Daland, Sparafucile, Coline and Pluto (Monteverdi's *Orfeo*). Roles for The Royal Opera have included Masetto, the He-Ancient (*The Midsummer Marriage*), Publius (*La clemenza di Tito*), Don Alfonso, Bottom and Gessler (*William Tell*). His international debut was as Leporello in Germany, and he specialised in the bass and baritone repertoire of Mozart. Two roles for which he is particularly famed are Leporello (which he performed in London, Stuttgart and San

Francisco) and Figaro (with performances for Scottish Opera and the Metropolitan Opera, New York).

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*, and was a repetiteur.

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 *Parsifal* and *Tristan* 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.

MARGARET CURPHEY

with Ann Robson and Alberto Remedios (opposite)



PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

British philanthropist Sir Peter Moores established the Peter Moores Foundation in 1964 to realise his charitable aims and, to fulfill one of these, the Compton Verney House Trust in 1993 to create a new art gallery in the country. Through his charities he has disbursed many millions to a wide variety of arts, environmental and social causes ‘to get things done and open doors for people’.

Sir Peter’s philanthropic work began with his passion for opera: in his twenties he helped a number of young artists in the crucial, early stages of their careers, several of whom – Dame Joan Sutherland, Sir Colin Davis and the late Sir Geraint Evans amongst them – became world-famous.

Today, the Peter Moores Foundation supports talented young singers with scholarships, has made it possible for Chandos Records to issue the world’s largest catalogue of operas recorded in English translation, and enabled Opera Rara to record rare bel canto repertoire which would otherwise remain inaccessible to the general public.

In live performance, the Foundation has encouraged the creation of new work and schemes to attract new audiences, financed the publication of scores, especially for world premieres of modern operas, and enabled rarely heard works to be staged by British opera companies and festivals.

Projects supported by the Foundation to help the young have ranged from a scheme to encourage young Afro-Caribbeans ‘stay at school’ for further education, to the endowment of a Faculty Directorship and Chair of Management Studies at Oxford

University (providing the lead donation which paved the way for the development of the Said Business School).

In 1993 the Foundation bought Compton Verney, a Grade I Georgian mansion in Warwickshire, designed by Robert Adam, with grounds by Capability Brown. Compton Verney House Trust was set up by Sir Peter to transform the derelict mansion into a world-class art gallery that would provide an especially welcoming environment for the ‘first-time’ gallery visitor. The gallery, which houses six permanent collections, a Learning Centre for all ages, and facilities for major visiting exhibitions, was opened in March 2004 by HRH the Prince of Wales. The Compton Verney website can be found at: www.comptonverney.org.uk

Sir Peter Moores was born in Lancashire and educated at Eton College and Christ Church, Oxford. He was a student at the Vienna Academy of Music, where he produced the Austrian premiere of Benjamin Britten’s *The Rape of Lucretia*, and at the same time was an assistant producer with the Vienna State Opera, working with Viennese artists in Naples, Geneva and Rome, before returning to England in 1957 to join his father’s business, Littlewoods. He was Vice-Chairman of Littlewoods in 1976, Chairman from 1977 to 1980 and remained a director until 1993.

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 1992 he was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire by HM the Queen. He was appointed CBE in 1991 and received a Knighthood in 2003 for his charitable services to the arts.

Die Meistersinger von Sadler's Wells

Am Tag vor der Premiere der neuen Inszenierung der *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* an der Oper von Sadler's Wells hielt deren Geschäftsführender Direktor Stephen Arlen im Rahmen des allerersten vom Arts Council geförderten Studiengangs für Kulturverwaltung am London Polytechnic in der Mortimer Street einen Vortrag. Ich nehme an, für ihn war dies eher eine Pflichtveranstaltung, und obwohl er zwar offen und engagiert wirkte, schien er auch ein wenig besorgt. Als einer der Studenten dieser ersten Gruppe von 1967/68 fragte ich ihn, was wir von seinen neuen *Meistersingern* zu erwarten hätten. Er antwortete: "Entweder wird es eine Katastrophe oder es wird der größte Erfolg in der Geschichte von Sadler's Wells." Am folgenden Abend, dem 31. Januar 1968, stand ich zusammen mit Brian McMaster, einem weiteren Studenten der Gruppe, über fünf Stunden lang für 5 Shilling (25 Pence in der neuen Währung) in den oberen Rängen und war Zeuge dieser historischen Aufführung.

Das Sadler's Wells Theatre beherbergte in jenen Tagen eine großzügig ausgestattete Operntruppe. Diese umfasste rund vierzig

Prinzipale mit Vollzeitverträgen. Das Orchester zählte mehr als 110 Musiker, außerdem gab es die übliche musikalisch-technische Belegschaft. Der Chor bestand aus 96 Sängern und das Opernballett aus 24 Tänzern. Genau genommen setzte sich das Ensemble aus zwei Operntruppen zusammen, der von Sadler's und der von Wells. Zusammen waren diese für die meisten Operntourneen in England verantwortlich. Die Welsh National Opera hatte zu der Zeit nur einen Laienchor und kein festes Orchester. Bis zur Gründung der Opera North würde noch ein ganzes Jahrzehnt vergehen. Somit alternierten die ähnlich ausgestatteten und jeweils von einem eigenen Musikdirektor geleiteten Operntruppen von Sadler's (unter Brian Balkwill) und von Wells (unter Mario Bernardi) zwischen London und der Provinz.

Während und nach der Weihnachtszeit stand jedes Jahr in den meisten passenden Tourneetheatern Pantomime auf dem Spielplan, und in der Spielzeit 1967/68 war auch das übliche Wintergastspiel im Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford nicht länger möglich. Daher beschlossen

Arlen und seine Musikdirektoren, die beiden Ensembles zu einem großen gemeinsamen Projekt zusammenzubringen und die vergleichsweise großzügige Probenzeit zu nutzen, die wegen der Flaute in der sonst erbarmungslos dichten Tournee-Routine erst ab der Mitte der Spielzeit zur Verfügung stand.

Einer dieser Direktoren war Edmund Tracey, ein ehemaliger Musikkritiker, der inzwischen als Dramaturg für die Übersetzungen des Repertoires dieses englischsprachigen Ensembles verantwortlich war. Tracey hatte zu einer kleinen Gruppe einflussreicher Kritiker gehört, zu denen auch Andrew Porter, David Cairns und Peter Heyworth zählten und die sich für Reginald Goodall als herausragendem Dirigent der Musik Wagners einsetzten – dies vor allem auf der Basis von vier legendären Aufführungen der *Walküre* während der Tournee des Opernensembles von Covent Garden im Jahre 1954. Goodall wirkte seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg an der Oper von Sadler's Wells und hatte 1945 anlässlich der Wiedereröffnung des Hauses die Premiere von *Peter Grimes* geleitet, wenig später hatte er jedoch als fester Dirigent nach Covent Garden gewechselt. Er eignete sich nicht besonders für routinemäßige Wiederaufnahmen des italienischen und französischen Repertoires,

und zum Ende der 1950er Jahre waren seine Engagements als Dirigent recht rar geworden, während er als Gesangslehrer weiterhin gefragt war. Immerhin leitete er selbst 1960 noch gelegentlich Aufführungen der *Meistersinger* in Covent Garden, die zu der Zeit üblichen zusammengeflückten Besetzungen und knapp bemessenen Probenzeiten waren seiner Arbeitsweise jedoch nicht zuträglich. Goodalls erste Wagner-Aufführung für Sadler's Wells war eine Wiederaufnahme des *Tannhäuser* im Januar 1961, die unter einer zu dünnen Streicherbesetzung und einer unattraktiven alten Inszenierung litt. Vor diesem Hintergrund war es ein Zeichen großer Zuversicht seitens Arlen, Tracey und der übrigen Direktoren – darunter Glen Byam Shaw (Inszenierung), Edward Renton (Musikverwaltung) und John Snape (Finanzen) – dass sie Goodall die bedeutend größere Aufgabe der ersten Nachkriegs-Inszenierung der *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* anvertrauten.

Was sie vor allem zu bieten hatten, war genügend Zeit. Dies bedeutete nicht nur die konzentrierte Probenzeit für die Inszenierung im Dezember 1967 und Januar 1968, während der die Ensembles nicht auf Tournee waren, sondern das überaus wichtige musikalische Training vorab, bei dem Goodalls Kenntnis,

Verständnis und Beharrlichkeit besonders zur Geltung kamen. Außer dem Hans Sachs, für den der in Deutschland arbeitende erfahrene britische Sänger Norman Bailey verpflichtet wurde, wurden die Rollen mit Mitgliedern des Ensembles besetzt, die diese zum ersten Mal sangen. Die Sänger standen damit über einen längeren Zeitraum für die Arbeit an ihren Rollen zur Verfügung, begleitet von gutwilligen Musikern unter der Leitung eines Dirigenten, der sich schon sein halbes Leben lang mit diesem Werk beschäftigt hatte. Hierin lag der wesentliche Schlüssel, der die Talente einer ganzen Generation von britischen Wagnerianern aufschloss. Alberto Remedios zum Beispiel, der in der früher liegenden Inszenierung des *Tannhäuser* einen recht groben Walther von der Vogelweide geliefert hatte, lernte nun nicht nur die Noten des Walther von Stolzing, sondern auch wie er sie sanft und poetisch zu singen hatte.

Die andere wesentliche Bedingung – ein heute verlorenes Geheimnis – war der Charakter des Ensembles von Sadler's Wells. Bei den *Meistersingern* handelt es sich um eine Ensemble-Oper – in einer Weise, die für andere Opern Wagners nicht zutrifft. Eigentlich erwuchs die Intention, eine vom Komponisten so bezeichnete "volkstümliche komische Oper"

auszuwählen, aus der Unmöglichkeit, die Titelrollen von *Tristan und Isolde* zu besetzen und der daraus resultierenden Unmöglichkeit, eine Aufführung dieser Oper zu realisieren. "Dieses Mal", prahlte er gegenüber seinem Verleger, "werde ich weder einen so genannten ersten Tenor noch einen großen tragischen Sopran benötigen." Natürlich ist die zentrale Figur des Hans Sachs, des "jovial-lyrischen" Helden der Oper, eine große Rolle, doch er ist nur einer von zwölf im Titel genannten Meistersingern (bzw. dreizehn, wenn wir den abwesenden Niklaus Vogel hinzuzählen). Jeder dieser Meister hat seinen Lehrling, und hinter diesen steht unabdingbar der große Chor, der die Bevölkerung Nürnbergs im 17. Jahrhundert verkörpert – die Gemeinde der Katharinenkirche im ersten Akt, die aufgewühlten Nachbarn im zweiten und vor allem die große Versammlung auf der Festwiese am Ufer der Pegnitz im dritten. Wagners Dichtung mag zwar die "heil'ge deutsche Kunst" preisen, sein Vorbild war jedoch die gemeinschaftliche Erfahrung des antiken griechischen Dramas.

Um dieses Ideal überzeugend zum Leben zu erwecken genügt es nicht, eine Reihe namhafter Gastkünstler zu versammeln. Vielmehr bedarf es einer Gruppe von Personen,

die lange genug miteinander gelebt haben, um ihre gegenseitigen Stärken und Schwächen genauestens zu kennen. Man benötigt die Art von Gemeinschaft, die sich in Teilen von Deutschland und Osteuropa entwickeln konnte und zum Teil heute noch existiert, die jedoch auf dem gegenwärtigen globalen Arbeitsmarkt immer seltener wird. Das Sadler's Wells der 1960er Jahre hatte die *Meistersinger* zwar nicht in dem Maße im Blut wie es bei einem deutschen Opernhaus der Zeit der Fall gewesen wäre; immerhin aber könnte man die Truppe einem gepflügten Feld vergleichen, das nun bestellt werden konnte.

Trotzdem aber lag vor Goodall und seinem Team eine enorme Aufgabe. Wagners ursprüngliche Vision einer leicht aufzuführenden populären komischen Oper war einer wesentlich ambitionierteren und tiefergründigeren Struktur und Thematik gewichen. Als das Werk 1868 vollendet war und in München aufgeführt wurde, konnte er König Ludwig von Bayern schreiben: "Ihnen wird unter der anheimelnden Oberfläche volkstümlichen Humors kaum die tiefe Melancholie, die Klage, den Ruf der Verzweiflung einer geketteten Dichtkunst entgangen sein wie sodann auch ihre Reinkarnation, ihre Wiedergeburt, ihre

unwiderstehliche magische Kraft, die alles Gemeine und Niedere bezwingt."

Regisseure und Dirigenten haben die Balance zwischen diesen Elementen in unterschiedlicher Weise interpretiert. In unserer Zeit haben die Schrecken des nationalsozialistischen Regimes in Deutschland verständlicherweise zu einer starken Ablehnung dieses Tributs an eine nationalistische Kunst geführt. Es ist daher vielleicht sinnvoller, sich hier auf eine Reihe musikalischer Urteile zu beschränken, die zu erkunden suchen, wo der eigentliche Kern dieser Oper liegt.

Hans Knappertsbusch, der Wortführer der deutschen Dirigenten der Alten Schule, die Goodall ganz besonders bewunderte, sah den eigentlichen Höhepunkt der Oper in dem Quintett, das die erste Szene des dritten Akts beschließt. Dies ist der Moment der Stille, als die fünf zentralen Figuren sich harmonisch vereinen, um das neue Kunstwerk zu weihen. Für Rudolf Kempe, dem Goodall 1963 bei der Vorbereitung einer Inszenierung der Oper in Covent Garden zur Seite stand, kulminiert alles in dem großen Chorsatz des "Wach' auf", als Hans Sachs, der im Begriff steht, seine Rede zur Eröffnung des Gesangswettstreits zu halten, überrascht innehält, da die gesamte anwesende Menge gemeinsam das

Hoffnungsgedicht “Wach’ auf, es naht gen den Tag” anstimmt, das Wagner 37 Jahre zuvor in seiner Jugend geschrieben hatte. Auf der Bühne war der Effekt dieser Stelle zutiefst bewegend. Georg Solti, der nur ein Jahr nach Goodalls Produktion in Sadler’s Wells eine neue Inszenierung in Covent Garden dirigierte, hat den Zauber der Johannisnacht im zweiten Akt in ganz besonders anrührender Weise eingefangen, wo Sachs in seinem “Fliedermönolog” die subtilen Beziehungen zwischen Mensch und Natur besingt. Für Joseph Keilberth, Musikdirektor der Bayerischen Staatsoper in München während ihrer goldenen Ära in den 1960er Jahren, lag das Herz der Oper im Vorspiel zum dritten Akt, das die Tiefen von Sachs’ Melancholie auslotet und zu seinem “Wahnmonolog” mit dessen an Schopenhauer gemahnendem Pessimismus angesichts der menschlichen Torheit überleitet.

Goodalls *Meistersinger* wird jedem dieser zentralen Momente gerecht; ich glaube allerdings, dass für ihn der wesentliche Augenblick – den er auch entsprechend leidenschaftlich interpretiert – in der Passage liegt, die mit den Worten “O Sachs, mein Freund” beginnt; an dieser Stelle wendet Eva, die soeben von Walthers Kostprobe des

Preislieds überrascht wurde, sich an Sachs, um ihm gegenüber ihr Begreifen zu äußern, dass er seine eigenen Gefühle für sie zugunsten des jüngeren Mannes aufgegeben hat. Das An- und Abswellen von Goodalls Orchester ist von Tränen durchdrungen, die zugleich größte Freude und einsamen Schmerz ausdrücken. Goodall und Norman Bailey in der Rolle des Hans Sachs zeigen hier tiefes Verständnis für die akute Verzweiflung des reifen Schuhmachers, in die sich unvergleichliche Großmut mischt.

Rund ein Jahrzehnt nach den *Meistersingern* von Sadler’s Wells lernte ich Goodall persönlich kennen, als wir an seiner ersten Inszenierung von *Tristan und Isolde* an der Welsh National Opera zusammenarbeiteten. Ich mühte mich gerade mit dem Programmtext ab und fragte ihn, worum es in dieser Oper eigentlich ginge, woraufhin er eingestand, dass er noch nicht bis ins finstere Herz des Werks vorgedrungen sei. Seiner Meinung nach waren die anderen reifen Opern Wagners leichter zu verstehen. Im *Ring* ging es um die Natur, in *Parsifal* um Leidenschaft. Die *Meistersinger* lagen für ihn bereits in der Vergangenheit und er wollte sie nicht noch einmal dirigieren.

Sicherlich ist die eine oder andere Passage inzwischen besser gesungen oder gespielt

worden, und das wird auch in Zukunft vorkommen; ich glaube jedoch, dass Goodall gespürt hat, dass der großzügige Geist, der Sadler’s Wells und sein Ensemble in den letzten Jahren an diesem Opernhaus beseelte, nicht wiederkehren würde.

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Inhaltsangabe

COMPACT DISC ONE

[1] Vorspiel

Erster Akt

In der Nürnberger Katharinenkirche

[2]–[6] Nach dem Nachmittagsgottesdienst findet der junge Ritter Walther von Stolzing Gelegenheit zu einem Gespräch mit Eva, in die er sich verliebt hat. Er erfährt, dass ihr Vater, der Goldschmied Veit Pogner, ihre Hand demjenigen Meister zur Ehe versprochen hat, der aus dem am folgenden Tag stattfindenden Gesangswettstreit als Sieger hervorgehen wird. Evas Begleiterin Magdalene ist in David, den jungen Lehrling des Schusters Hans Sachs, verliebt, und als sie gemeinsam mit Eva die Kirche verlässt, bittet sie David, Walther in die

vielen komplizierten Regeln des Meistersingens einzuweisen, damit ihre Herrin vielleicht den Mann zum Gatten gewinnt, den sie tatsächlich liebt.

[7]–[10] Die Meistersinger treffen ein; unter ihnen befindet sich auch der umständliche und pedantische Stadtschreiber Sixtus Beckmesser, der sich ebenfalls um Evas Hand bemüht. [11] Er ist hochofrend darüber, dass man ihn zum “Merker” von Walthers Probegesang bestimmt hat, denn das bedeutet, dass er alle Verstöße gegen die offiziellen Regeln protokollieren soll.

COMPACT DISC TWO

[1] Er begreift schnell, dass der junge Ritter in der Liebe ein ernst zu nehmender Rivale ist, [2] und er trägt wesentlich dazu bei, dass dieser als Kandidat für den Wettstreit abgelehnt wird. [3] Die Zusammenkunft löst sich in allgemeinem Tumult auf und nur Hans Sachs erkennt die Schönheit und Genialität von Walthers Gesang, während alle übrigen Meister diesen von vornherein ablehnen. Er erkennt, dass der junge Mann die Begabung hat, unter der richtigen Anleitung die Kunst des Meistersingens weg von den Pfaden der in Verfall geratenen Traditionen und hin zu einem neuen und nobleren Ideal zu führen.

Zweiter Akt

Eine Straße in Nürnberg mit Blick auf die Häuser von Hans Sachs und Veit Pagner

[4] Vorspiel. [5] Es ist Johannistag und als David und die anderen Lehrlinge die Läden schließen, taucht Magdalene auf und erkundigt sich nach dem Ausgang von Walthers Wettstreit mit den Meistersingern. Sie ist betrübt zu hören, dass man ihn nicht in die Zunft aufnehmen will. Hans Sachs kehrt zu seiner Werkstatt zurück, entlässt David für die Nacht und macht sich daran, ein Paar Schuhe für Beckmesser fertigzustellen.

[6]–[9] In der Zwischenzeit sind auch Pagner und Eva in ihr Haus zurückgekehrt, das dem von Hans Sachs gegenüber liegt. Nachdem ihr Vater hineingegangen ist, erfährt Eva von Magdalene die Nachricht von Walthers Scheitern. Magdalene erzählt ihr außerdem, dass Beckmesser auf dem Weg zu ihr sei, um ihr ein Ständchen zu bringen. Die beiden machen aus, dass Magdalene Evas Kleider anlegen und sich an ihrer Stelle ans Fenster setzen wird. [10] Walther sucht Eva auf und als er begreift, dass er nun nicht mehr darauf hoffen kann, als Meistersinger ihre Hand zu gewinnen, beschließt er, noch am selben Abend mit ihr zu fliehen. Bevor sie ihren Plan (den Sachs mit angehört hat) ausführen

können, hören die beiden Liebenden sich nähernde Fußtritte und müssen sich verstecken. Der Neuankömmling ist der aufdringliche Beckmesser. [11] Als dieser mit seinem Ständchen beginnt, [12] fängt Sachs an seiner Werkbank an, ein ausgelassenes Lied zu schmettern. Dies passt Beckmesser gar nicht und er bittet Sachs, seinem Gesang zuzuhören und ihn zu kritisieren, damit er seine Fehler rechtzeitig vor dem Wettstreit am nächsten Tag korrigieren könne. [13] Sachs erklärt sich bereit und während er seine Rolle als “Merker” versieht, fährt er gleichzeitig mit seiner Arbeit fort und hämmert während der gesamten Darbietung Beckmessers mit zunehmender Regelmäßigkeit auf seinen Leisten.

Der Lärm weckt David, der den Serenadensänger erbarmungslos zu verprügeln beginnt. [14] Bald sind alle Nachbarn wach und stürzen sich ebenfalls in den Aufruhr, ohne dessen Ursachen zu kennen. Plötzlich ertönt das Horn des Nachtwächters; der Tumult legt sich innerhalb kurzer Zeit und Sachs gewährt Walther Schutz in seinem Haus. Die Haustüren werden verschlossen und der schläfrige Wächter entfernt sich langsam auf der nun leeren Straße.

COMPACT DISC THREE

Dritter Akt

Am darauffolgenden Morgen in der Werkstatt von Sachs

[1] Vorspiel. [2] David, der sich für das Johannisfest fein herausgeputzt hat, sagt seinem Meister noch einmal seine Verse auf. [3] Als er gegangen ist, sinniert Sachs ernsthaft über die menschliche Torheit und die turbulenten Ereignisse der vorigen Nacht. [4]–[5] Walther erscheint und erzählt Sachs von einem wunderschönen Traum, von dem er eben erwacht ist. Der Schuhmacher beschwört ihn, ihm den Traum in Form eines Meisterlieds vorzusingen, solange er diese Vision noch frisch im Gedächtnis hat. [6] Während Walther singt, schreibt Sachs seine Worte nieder und erteilt gelegentlich technische Ratschläge; er spürt, dass dieses Lied zweifellos den Preis gewinnen wird. Sachs und Walther gehen ab, um sich für den Festtag anzukleiden. [7] Zwischenspiel.

[8] Beckmesser, dem von der Prügelei am Vorabend noch alles weh tut, erscheint und entdeckt den Zettel, auf dem Sachs kurz zuvor den Text von Walthers Beitrag zum Wettstreit notiert hat. Er entwendet den Zettel in der Annahme, dass Sachs selbst beschlossen hat,

an dem Wettstreit teilzunehmen, wird jedoch von dem zurückkehrenden Schumacher überrascht. [9] Sachs begreift, was sich ereignet hat, und überlässt Beckmesser das Lied mit der Erlaubnis, er könne es selbst vortragen, wenn er wolle. Beckmesser geht triumphierend ab in dem Glauben, mit einem Lied des großen Sachs sei sein Sieg gesichert.

[10] Eva kommt herein mit der Ausrede, ihre neuen Schuhe täten ihr weh. [11]–[13] Walther kehrt zurück; als er Eva erblickt, beginnt er in einem spontanen Anflug von Inspiration die letzte Strophe seines Liedes zu singen.

COMPACT DISC FOUR

[1]–[3] Magdalene und David erscheinen, und nachdem Sachs David förmlich vom Lehrling zum Gesellen befördert hat, vereinen sich die fünf Stimmen zu einem Quintett, das sie aus der Melodie von Walthers Lied entwickeln.

[4]–[8] Die Szene wechselt zu einem offenen Gelände am Ufer der Pegnitz, wo sich sämtliche Zünfte zum großen festlichen Wettstreit versammeln. [9] Beckmesser singt als erster, doch er scheitert kläglich, da er sich seinen Text nicht korrekt hat merken können. Unter den Schmährufen der Menge läuft er voller Wut und Scham davon. [10] Sachs bitter

nun Walther – als den eigentlichen Schöpfer des Liedes – hervortreten. ^[11]–^[12] Walthers leidenschaftliche und beseelte Darbietung überzeugt die Herzen aller seiner Zuhörer. Er wird von Eva als Sieger des Wettstreits gekrönt ^[13] und die Oper endet mit einem jubelnden Chor zu Ehren von Hans Sachs.

Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

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

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

Alberto Remedios (Walther), der zu den führenden britischen Heldenentönen seiner Generation zählt, studierte in Liverpool bei Edwin Francis sowie am Royal College of Music und gab sein Debüt an der Sadler's

Wells Opera (der späteren English National Opera) als Tinca in *Il tabarro*. Zu seinen zahlreichen Rollen mit dem Ensemble zählen Don Ottavio, Tamino, Max (*Der Freischütz*), Alfredo, Faust (sowohl in Gounods gleichnamiger Oper als auch in *La Damnation de Faust* von Berlioz), Des Grieux (*Manon*), Samson (*Samson et Dalila*), Lenski, Erik (*Der fliegende Holländer*), Lohengrin, Walther von Stolzing (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Tristan, Siegmund, Siegfried und Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). An der Royal Opera Covent Garden debütierte er als Dimitri (*Boris Godunow*) und kehrte dorthin zurück, um Florestan, Aeneas (*Les Troyens*), Max, Erik, Siegfried, Bacchus und Mark (in Sir Michael Tippetts *The Midsummer Marriage*) zu singen. Er ist auch an der Welsh National Opera sowie der Scottish Opera aufgetreten und war zwei Jahre an den Städtischen Bühnen Frankfurt am Main engagiert. Sein Debüt an der Metropolitan Opera New York gab er als Bacchus, und außerdem ist er in San Francisco (als Dimitri und Don Carlos), Los Angeles, San Diego und Seattle (als Siegfried), in Boston (als Gounods Faust) und am Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires (als Peter Grimes) aufgetreten. Mit Dame Joan Sutherland war er in

Australien als Edgar (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Alfredo, Lenski und Faust auf Tournee, und seine engen Beziehungen zu dem Land hatten Aufführungen mit Opera Australia als Florestan, Siegmund, Radames und Otello zur Folge, daneben Auftritte in Melbourne, Adelaide und Brisbane. Königin Elisabeth II. hat Alberto Remedios 1981 den Orden eines Commander of the Order of the British Empire verliehen.

Der englische Bariton **Derek Hammond-Stroud** (Beckmesser) hat bei Elena Gerhardt und Gerhard Hüsch in München und London studiert, und seine Karriere erstreckt sich ebenso auf das Konzertpodium wie auf die Opernbühne. Er ist mit allen bedeutenden britischen Operntruppen aufgetreten und war auf dem europäischen Kontinent unter anderem an der Bayerischen Staatsoper, am Theater an der Wien, am Theater am Gärtnerplatz und drei Spielzeiten lang an der Nederlandse Opera engagiert. In Süd- und Nordamerika hat er am Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, an der New Yorker Metropolitan Opera, an der San Diego Opera und an vielen anderen Bühnen gesungen. Zu seinen bedeutenden Partien zählen Dr. Bartolo, Rigoletto, Fra Melitone

(*La forza del destino*), Sharpless, Tonio (*Pagliacci*), Papageno, Alberich, Beckmesser, Faninal (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Krušina (*Die verkaufte Braut*) und Sir Robert Cecil (*Gloriana*); daneben hat er zahlreiche Rollen in Werken von Gilbert und Sullivan und solchen von Offenbach gespielt. Er war an mehreren britischen Erstaufführungen beteiligt, beispielsweise an Haydns *Orfeo ed Euridice* (als Creonte), Rossinis *La pietra del paragone* (als Pacuvio), Prokofjews *Krieg und Frieden* (als Napoleon, an der English National Opera) und Gottfried von Einems *Der Besuch der alten Dame* (als der Lehrer, in Glyndebourne). Er hat anlässlich der Uraufführung von Malcolm Williamsons *The Violins of Saint-Jacques* am Sadler's Wells Theatre die Rolle des alten Fischers kreiert. Es wurden ihm viele Auszeichnungen zuerkannt, zum Beispiel 1987 der Orden Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE).

In der Nähe von Nottingham in England geboren, studierte **John Brecknock** (Zorn) an der Birmingham School of Music und bei Denis Dowling. Er trat der Sadler's Wells Opera (später: English National Opera) bei, wo er unter anderem Don Ottavio, Belmonte Ferrando, den Grafen Ory, Almaviva

(*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Alfredo, Des Grieux (*Manon*), Tamino, den Herzog (*Eine Nacht in Venedig* von Johann Strauß (Sohn)) und Werther gegeben hat und in *L'italiana in Algeri*, *Die lustige Witwe* und *La gazza ladra* aufgetreten ist. An der Royal Opera, Covent Garden war er als Fenton (*Falstaff*), Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*), Iopas (*Les Troyens*) und Gennaro (*Lucrezia Borgia*) zu sehen. Darüber hinaus hat er an der Welsh National Opera gesungen. Zu seinen Engagements außerhalb Großbritanniens zählen *Don Giovanni* in New York (Metropolitan Opera), Ottawa und Buenos Aires, *Die Zauberflöte* in New York (Metropolitan Opera), New Orleans und Ottawa, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* in San Francisco, Miami und Wien, *La Cenerentola* in Paris (an der Opéra), Buenos Aires und Kapstadt, *Werther* in Rouen, Buenos Aires und San Diego, *La traviata* in Kapstadt und Ottawa, *Les Pêcheurs de perles* in Rouen und Paris sowie *Le Comte Ory* in Ottawa, *Rigoletto* in Houston und *Falstaff* in Miami. Auf Tonträger hat er unter anderem Offenbachs *Robinson Crusoe* für die Reihe Opera Rara und *La traviata* für Chandos und die Peter Moores Foundation aufgenommen.

Noel Mangin (Pogner) wurde in Wellington in Neuseeland geboren und sang sein erstes Solo

als Knabensopran im Alter von acht Jahren. Sein Debut als Tenor feierte der 21-jährige nach Studien bei Ernest Drake. Nachdem er drei Jahre als Tenor gesungen hatte, veränderte sich seine Stimme, und 18 Monate später trat er als Baßbariton in den Rollen des Germont Père (*La traviata*) und des Marcello (*La Bohème*) auf. Im darauffolgenden Jahr hatte seine Stimme das Niveau eines Basses erreicht, und er sang die Rolle des Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*). Er studierte bei Dominique Modesti in Paris und bei Joseph Hislop in London und wirkte von 1963 bis 1967 an der Sadler's Wells Opera. Außerdem trat er häufig an der Hamburger Staatsoper und der Victoria State Opera auf und sang ab 1979 regelmäßig den Fafner, Hunding und Hagen in Inszenierungen von Wagners *Ring* an der Seattle Opera.

Noel Mangins bekannteste Rollen waren die des Don Pasquale, Ochs und Osmin, und 1981 wurde er mit einem OBE ausgezeichnet. Er starb 1995.

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

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

Stafford Dean (Nachtwächter) wurde in Surrey geboren und studierte bei Gordon Clinton am Royal College of Music sowie bei Howell Glynne und Otakar Kraus. Er debütierte in Glyndebourne in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Für Sadler's Wells sang er Daland, Sparafucile,

Coline und Pluto (Monteverdis *Orfeo*). An der Royal Opera Covent Garden trat er als Masetto, He-Ancient (*The Midsummer Marriage*), Publius (*La clemenza di Tito*), Don Alfonso, Bottom und Gessler (*William Tell*) auf. Sein internationales Debüt kam als Leporello in Deutschland, und er spezialisierte sich nun auf das Bass- und Baritonrepertoire von Mozart. Zwei Partien, die ihn berühmt gemacht haben, sind Leporello (London, Stuttgart und San Francisco) und Figaro (Scottish Opera und Metropolitan Opera New York).

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

Im Juni 1945 dirigierte er als Mitglied der Sadler's Wells Opera (der späteren English National Opera) die Uraufführung von *Peter Grimes* im neu eröffneten Sadler's Wells Theatre. Im Jahr darauf wechselte er sich in der ersten Nachkriegsspielzeit des Glyndebourne Festival bei den ersten Aufführungen von Brittens *The Rape of Lucretia* als Dirigent mit Ernest Ansermet ab.

Kurz darauf trat er dem musikalischen Stab der Royal Opera Covent Garden bei, wo er über die folgenden fünfundzwanzig Jahre hin ein Repertoire dirigierte, das von *Il trovatore* bis *Troilus and Cressida* reichte.

Nur selten erhielt er Gelegenheit, Opern seines Lieblingskomponisten Richard Wagner zu leiten. Diese Unterlassungssünde wurde 1968 wettgemacht, und zwar nicht von der Royal Opera, sondern von Sadler's Wells, wohin er eingeladen wurde, eine Neuinszenierung der *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* zu dirigieren. Der Erfolg war so durchschlagend, dass er an das Haus zurückkehrte, um seine heute legendäre vollständige Produktion vom *Ring des Nibelungen* zu erarbeiten, die zwischen 1970 und 1973 Gestalt annahm und seinerzeit die erste seit vielen Jahren war, die auf Englisch gesungen wurde. Später leitete er *Das Rheingold*

und *Die Walküre* an der Royal Opera, *Tristan und Isolde* und *Die Walküre* an der Welsh National Opera sowie *Tristan* und *Parsifal* an der English National Opera. 1975 wurde

er mit dem Orden CBE ausgezeichnet und 1985 zum Ritter geschlagen. Reginald Goodall verstarb 1990 im Alter von achtundachtzig Jahren.

ALBERTO REMEDIOS

with Margaret Curphey and Norman Bailey



Les Maîtres chanteurs du Sadler's Wells

La veille de la création de la nouvelle production du Sadler's Wells Opera, *Les Maîtres chanteurs de Nuremberg*, son directeur administratif Stephen Arlen s'adressa au premier Arts Administration Course à avoir jamais été sponsorisé par le Arts Council, au London Polytechnic (Mortimer Street). J'ai le sentiment que pour lui c'était en quelque sorte une obligation et, en dépit de son apparente cordialité, il semblait anxieux. En tant qu'étudiant de cette première promotion en 1967/68, je lui demandai ce que l'on pouvait attendre de sa nouvelle production. Il répondit: "Ce sera soit une catastrophe, soit le plus grand succès de l'histoire du Sadler's Wells". Le lendemain, le 31 janvier 1968, un autre étudiant, Brian McMaster, se retrouva avec moi pendant plus de cinq heures dans les places à cinq shillings (25 pence actuels) des Upper Circle Slips et nous vîmes s'écrire l'histoire.

À cette époque le Sadler's Wells Theatre abritait une importante compagnie d'opéra. Plus de 40 chanteurs principaux y avaient un contrat à temps plein. L'orchestre comptait plus de 110 musiciens, et une équipe musicale

complète s'y ajoutait. Il y avait 96 choristes et l'Opera Ballet disposait de 24 danseurs. En réalité, cette compagnie était le résultat de la fusion de deux autres compagnies: Sadler's et Wells. Ensemble, elles assuraient la majorité des tournées d'opéra en Angleterre. Le Welsh National Opera avait encore un chœur d'amateurs, mais n'avait pas d'orchestre résident. Une nouvelle décennie allait s'écouler avant la fondation de l'Opera North. Et donc les compagnies Sadler's et Wells dont les ressources étaient identiques et qui avaient l'une et l'autre leur directeur musical, Bryan Balkwill et Mario Bernardi, alternaient entre Londres et les régions.

Chaque année, pendant et après les vacances de Noël, la plupart des théâtres qui s'y prêtaient étaient réservés à la pantomime; en outre, en 1967/68, la visite d'hiver habituelle au Shakespeare Memorial Theatre à Stratford ne fut plus possible. Arlen et ses directeurs décidèrent donc de réunir les deux compagnies autour d'un projet commun d'envergure, mettant à profit un temps de répétition relativement important dont on ne pouvait disposer qu'en milieu de saison lors

de la pause dans l'incessante succession des tournées.

L'un de ces directeurs était Edmund Tracey, ancien critique musical devenu directeur littéraire ou dramaturge qui avait la responsabilité des traductions de cette compagnie de langue anglaise. Tracey avait appartenu à un petit groupe de critiques influents dont faisaient partie aussi Andrew Porter, David Cairns et Peter Heyworth, qui défendait la cause de la prééminence de Reginald Goodall quant à la direction des œuvres de Wagner, fait attesté par quatre exécutions légendaires de *Die Walküre* lors de la tournée du Covent Garden Opera en 1954. Goodall avait rejoint le Sadler's Wells Opera pendant la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et avait dirigé la création de *Peter Grimes* pour la réouverture du théâtre en 1945, mais peu après il était parti à Covent Garden comme chef répétiteur. Il n'était pas en accord avec la routine des reprises du répertoire italien ou français et vers la fin des années cinquante, il fut de moins en moins appelé à la direction d'orchestre bien qu'il demeurât apprécié comme répétiteur pour les chanteurs. Il dirigea toutefois occasionnellement *Les Maîtres chanteurs* à Covent Garden jusqu'en 1960, mais sa méthode souffrit

de la distribution inégale et du manque de répétitions, phénomène fréquent à cette époque. Le premier opéra de Wagner que Goodall dirigea pour le Sadler's Wells fut une reprise de *Tannhäuser* en janvier 1961, gâchée par des cordes trop peu fournies et la qualité médiocre de cette ancienne production. Au vu de cette évidence, il fallut certes un acte de foi à Arlen, Tracey et leur équipe dont faisaient partie aussi Glen Byam Shaw (mise en scène), Edward Renton (direction musicale) et John Snape (administration financière) pour confier à Goodall cette mission bien plus importante qu'était la direction de la première production des *Maîtres chanteurs de Nuremberg* d'après-guerre de la compagnie.

Le temps nécessaire fut mis à disposition, et ce fut essentiel. Non seulement le temps pour les répétitions du spectacle lui-même prévu en décembre 1967 et janvier 1968 lors de l'interruption des tournées, mais aussi pour les indispensables répétitions musicales préliminaires au cours desquelles Goodall brilla tant par ses connaissances que par sa compréhension et sa persévérance. Exception faite du rôle de Hans Sachs pour lequel Norman Bailey – un chanteur anglais expérimenté qui travaillait en Allemagne – fut engagé, seuls figuraient dans la distribution des

interprètes de l'ensemble qui tous chantaient leur rôle pour la première fois. Ils purent donc se rendre disponibles pour le travailler au cours d'une longue période, avec une équipe musicale compréhensive dirigée par un chef qui avait vécu au cœur même de la musique pendant la moitié de sa vie. Tel fut le secret qui ouvrit la porte à l'épanouissement du talent d'une génération de wagnériens britanniques. Alberto Remedios, par exemple, qui s'était montré assez inexpérimenté dans son interprétation de Walther von der Vogelweide dans l'ancienne production de *Tannhäuser* apprit non seulement les notes de Walther von Stolzing, mais aussi la manière de les chanter tout en douceur, comme un poète.

L'autre condition vitale, un secret perdu à présent, fut la nature même de la compagnie du Sadler's Wells. *Les Maîtres chanteurs* est un opéra d'ensemble, mais pas au sens où le sont les autres opéras de Wagner. En effet, l'impulsion quant au projet de s'atteler à ce que le compositeur appelait "un opéra comique populaire" fut donnée par l'impossibilité d'assurer la distribution des rôles de Tristan et Isolde et donc d'exécuter cet opéra. "Cette fois", dit-il avec fierté à son éditeur, "je n'aurai besoin ni d'un fort ténor ni d'une grande soprano dramatique". Bien sûr, le caractère

central de Hans Sachs, le héros "poético-jovial" de l'opéra est un grand rôle, mais il n'est que l'un des douze maîtres chanteurs titulaires (treize si l'on tient compte de l'absence de Niklaus Vogel). Chaque maître a son apprenti, et il y a, en outre, la présence vitale du grand chœur qui représente la population de la ville de Nuremberg au seizième siècle: la congrégation de l'église Sainte-Catherine dans l'Acte I, le voisinage en émoi dans l'Acte II et surtout, la grande foule réunie dans la prairie où a lieu le festival sur les rives du Pegnitz dans l'Acte III. Le poème de Wagner magnifie peut-être le "saint art allemand", mais son modèle fut l'expérience du drame grec antique.

Pour que la réalisation de pareil idéal soit une réussite, rassembler un éventail d'artistes invités éminents ne suffit pas. Il est indispensable de disposer d'un groupe de personnes qui ont vécu ensemble assez longtemps pour connaître intimement les forces et les faiblesses de chacun. Il faut une compagnie comme celles qui se sont formées et qui existent encore dans certaines régions d'Allemagne et d'Europe orientale, mais qui se font de plus en plus rares sur le marché du travail mondialisé d'aujourd'hui. Dans les années soixante, le Sadler's Wells n'avait pas de *Maîtres chanteurs* ensevelis dans son sol comme

cela aurait pu être d'un théâtre allemand de l'époque, mais c'était un champ prêt à être labouré.

Le travail qui attendait Goodall et son équipe était néanmoins titanesque. La vision qu'avait Wagner d'un opéra comique populaire d'exécution facile fut débordée par une structure et un sujet bien plus ambitieux et profond. Quand l'œuvre fut achevée et exécutée à Munich en 1868, Wagner écrivit au roi Louis de Bavière: "Il est impossible que vous n'ayez pas perçu sous le pittoresque de l'humour populaire, la profonde mélancolie, la plainte, le cri de détresse de la poésie enchaînée, et sa réincarnation, sa renaissance, son irrésistible magie qui l'emporte sur le commun et l'ordinaire."

Directeurs et chefs d'orchestre ont interprété la balance entre ces éléments de différentes manières. Les horreurs de l'Allemagne nazie ont provoqué à notre époque des réactions virulentes bien compréhensibles à tout hommage rendu à l'art nationaliste. Peut-être est-il donc plus fécond de prêter attention à certaines opinions émises quant à l'essence même de l'opéra.

Hans Knappertsbusch, le doyen des chefs d'orchestre de l'ancienne école que Goodall admirait tout particulièrement, estimait que

le véritable climax de l'opéra était le quintette qui conclut l'Acte III, Scène I, ce moment de calme lors duquel les cinq protagonistes entonnent ensemble dans une parfaite harmonie, la consacrant ainsi, la nouvelle création artistique. Selon Rudolf Kempe que Goodall assista dans la préparation de l'œuvre à Covent Garden en 1963, tout mène à la grande explosion du chœur "Wach' auf" ("Réveillez-vous!") lorsque Hans Sachs qui est sur le point de prononcer le discours d'ouverture du concours de chant est surpris par la foule qui d'une même voix chante le poème d'espérance "Wach' auf, es nahet gen den Tag" qu'il a écrit trente-sept ans auparavant. Tout le théâtre en frissonnait. Georg Solti qui dirigea une nouvelle production à Covent Garden un an seulement après Goodall au Sadler's Wells réussit à séduire surtout en évoquant la magie de la nuit de la Saint-Jean dans l'Acte II quand Sachs rêve sous le sureau et chante dans son "Fliedermonolog" le lien subtil qui unit l'homme à la nature. Joseph Keilberth, directeur musical de l'Opéra d'État de Bavière à Munich pendant son âge d'or dans les années soixante, estimait que le cœur de l'opéra était le prélude à l'Acte III qui sonde les profondeurs de la mélancolie de Sachs et mène à son "Wahnmonolog" qu'imprègne un

pessimisme à la Schopenhauer induit par la folie humaine.

Ces grands moments sont tous présents dans *Les Maîtres chanteurs* de Goodall, mais je pense que pour lui le cœur même de l'œuvre, et l'épisode où la passion qu'il y insuffle atteint son paroxysme, est la section commençant par "O Sachs, mein Freund" ("Oh Sachs, mon ami") quand Eva, surprise d'abord par Walther dont elle entend le chant en avant-première, se tourne vers Sachs plutôt pour exprimer qu'elle sait qu'il a sacrifié ses sentiments pour elle en faveur du jeune homme. L'orchestre de Goodall quand il s'envole et s'apaise est comme baigné de larmes, des larmes qui expriment à la fois la joie suprême et la tristesse non partagée. Goodall et son Sachs, Norman Bailey, comprirent les tourments qui consumaient le cœur du cordonnier, cet homme d'âge mûr dont la générosité eut raison.

Une dizaine d'années après les *Maîtres chanteurs* du Sadler's Wells, j'appris à connaître Goodall lorsque nous collaborâmes à sa première production de *Tristan et Isolde* au Welsh National Opera. M'échinant à écrire la notice du programme, je lui demandai quel était le sujet de cet opéra, et il avoua qu'il n'avait pas encore pénétré les profondeurs de l'œuvre. Il pensait que les autres opéras de

la maturité de Wagner étaient plus faciles à comprendre. Le sujet du *Ring* était la nature, et celui de *Parsifal*, la compassion. Pour lui, *Les Maîtres chanteurs* faisaient alors partie du passé déjà et il ne voulait plus diriger l'œuvre.

L'un ou l'autre passage a certes été mieux chanté ou exécuté par l'orchestre et le sera dans le futur, mais je pense que Goodall sentit intuitivement qu'il était impossible que renaisse un jour la générosité qui animait le Sadler's Wells et sa compagnie dans les dernières années.

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Synopsis

COMPACT DISC ONE

[1] Prélude

Acte I

L'intérieur de l'église Sainte-Catherine à Nuremberg

[2]–[6] À la fin du service religieux de l'après-midi, un jeune chevalier, Walther von Stolzing, réussit à adresser la parole à Eva dont il est tombé amoureux. Il apprend que le père d'Eva, Veit Pogner, l'orfèvre, a offert la main de sa fille

en récompense au maître qui sera vainqueur du concours de chant qui aura lieu le lendemain. La nourrice d'Eva, Magdalene, aime David, le jeune apprenti de Hans Sachs, le cordonnier, et en quittant l'église avec Eva, elle dit à David d'expliquer à Walther les règles complexes qu'il faut observer pour ce chant de maîtrise afin qu'Eva puisse éventuellement conquérir le cœur de l'homme qu'elle aime.

[7]–[10] Les Maîtres chanteurs arrivent. Il y a parmi eux le secrétaire municipal tatillon et pédant, Sixtus Beckmesser, qui lui aussi espère obtenir la main d'Eva. [11] Il est ravi d'avoir été désigné comme "marqueur" et d'avoir donc pour tâche de noter, lorsque Walther chantera pour l'épreuve préliminaire, toutes ses erreurs.

COMPACT DISC TWO

[1] Il perçoit aussitôt que le jeune chevalier sera un très dangereux rival en amour, [2] et le rôle qu'il joue dans le refus de la candidature de Walther est important. [3] L'assemblée se disperse dans la confusion et seul Hans Sachs perçoit la beauté et le génie du chant de Walther que tous les autres Maîtres ont rejeté d'emblée. Il voit que le jeune homme est capable, avec une aide adéquate, de mener l'art des Maîtres chanteurs vers un idéal nouveau,

plus noble, s'éloignant ainsi des sentiers décadents de la tradition.

Acte II

Une rue à Nuremberg, et les maisons de Hans Sachs et Veit Pogner

[4] Prélude. [5] C'est la nuit de la Saint-Jean et tandis que David et les autres apprentis ferment les volets, Magdalene vient demander des nouvelles de l'épreuve préliminaire de Walther. Elle est déçue d'apprendre qu'il n'a pas été jugé admissible au concours. Hans Sachs retourne dans son magasin, congédie David pour la nuit et se met au travail afin de terminer une paire de chaussures pour Beckmesser.

[6]–[9] Entre temps Pogner et Eva ont aussi regagné leur logis, en face de la maison de Sachs. C'est après que son père est rentré qu'Eva apprend par Magdalene l'échec de Walther; Magdalene lui dit aussi que Beckmesser va lui chanter une sérénade. Il est alors convenu que Magdalene revêtira les habits d'Eva et prendra sa place à la fenêtre. [10] Walther vient trouver Eva et comme il sait qu'il ne peut plus espérer obtenir sa main comme Maître chanteur, il décide de fuir avec elle pendant la soirée. Avant que leur plan (dont Sachs a eu vent à leur insu) puisse

être mis à exécution, les amants entendent un bruit de pas qui s'approchent et sont obligés de se cacher. Les pas ne sont autres que ceux de Beckmesser, l'importun. [11] Alors qu'il entonne sa sérénade, [12] Sachs qui travaille à son établi commence à chanter une chanson bouffonne. Ceci ne fait pas l'affaire de Beckmesser qui invite Sachs à écouter son chant et à en faire la critique pour qu'il puisse corriger toute erreur avant le concours du lendemain. [13] Sachs accepte; devenu "marqueur", il poursuit son travail et frappe sur l'enclume à un rythme de plus en plus rapide pendant que Beckmesser chante.

Le bruit réveille David qui s'en prend sans pitié à l'auteur de la sérénade. [14] L'incident ameute bientôt tout le voisinage qui se joint à la bagarre ne sachant quel en est la cause. Soudain la trompe du Veilleur de nuit retentit, ramenant le calme, et Sachs héberge Walther. Les portes se ferment et le Veilleur, somnolent, arpente la rue, vide maintenant.

COMPACT DISC THREE

Acte III

Dans l'atelier de Sachs le lendemain matin

[1] Prélude. [2] David, paré de ses plus beaux atours pour le Festival de la Saint-Jean, répète

son texte devant son maître. [3] Après son départ, Sachs réfléchit avec gravité à la folie humaine et aux incidents de la nuit précédente.

[4]—[5] Walther apparaît et raconte à Sachs le rêve merveilleux qu'il vient de faire. Le cordonnier l'engage à le lui chanter comme si c'était un chant de maîtrise pendant qu'il se souvient encore de tous les détails. [6] Tandis que Walther chante, Sachs note les paroles et lui donne quelques conseils, percevant que c'est sans aucun doute le chant qui sera primé lors du concours. Sachs et Walther disparaissent pour aller revêtir leur habit de cérémonie.

[7] Interlude.

[8] Beckmesser, tout fier encore de sa victoire la veille au soir, entre et trouve par hasard le papier sur lequel Sachs vient de griffonner les paroles du chant de Walther. Pensant que Sachs lui-même a décidé de participer au concours, il vole le papier, mais le cordonnier rentre et s'en aperçoit. [9] Comprenant ce qui se passe, Sachs donne le texte à Beckmesser et lui dit qu'il peut le chanter lui-même s'il le souhaite. Beckmesser se retire triomphant, pensant qu'avec un chant de la main du grand Sachs il est certain de gagner le concours.

[10] Eva apparaît sous prétexte que ses nouveaux souliers lui font mal. [11]—[12] Survient alors Walther qui, voyant Eva et sous le coup

d'une inspiration soudaine, entonne la dernière strophe de son chant.

COMPACT DISC FOUR

[1]—[3] Magdalene et David surgissent, et après que Sachs a officiellement nommé l'apprenti compagnon, les cinq voix s'unissent pour chanter un quintette inspiré de la mélodie du chant de Walther.

[4]—[8] La scène change et c'est dans une grande prairie sur les rives du Pegnitz que sont assemblées les corporations pour le festival.

[9] Beckmesser est le premier à chanter, mais comme il n'a pas été capable de mémoriser son texte parfaitement, il se couvre de ridicule. Furieux et honteux, il prend la fuite, raillé par la foule toute entière. [10] Sachs invite alors Walther à s'avancer en temps qu'auteur véritable du chant. [11]—[12] Son interprétation passionnée et authentique va droit au cœur de l'assemblée. Eva couronne le vainqueur [13] et l'opéra se termine par un hymne de joie chanté par le chœur en hommage à Hans Sachs.

Traduction: Marie-Françoise de Meeûs

Né en Afrique du Sud, la basse-baryton **Norman Bailey** (Hans Sachs) a fait ses études

à Vienne, puis a passé les premières années de sa carrière à chanter en Autriche et en Allemagne. Il est ensuite revenu au Royaume-Uni où il s'est produit avec toutes les grandes compagnies d'opéra. Salué comme l'un des plus remarquables chanteurs wagnériens de sa génération, son nom est particulièrement associé au rôle titre de *Der fliegende Holländer* et à celui de Hans Sachs dans *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Il a également chanté le Landgrave (*Tannhäuser*) à l'Opera North, Wotan/le Voyageur et Gunther à l'English National Opera, où en sa qualité de membre de la compagnie il a par ailleurs incarné les rôles de Pizzaro (*Leonore* de Beethoven), le Comte de Luna (*Il trovatore*), Alfio (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Scarpia (*Tosca*), le Père (*Hänsel und Gretel*), le Prince Gremin (*Eugène Onéguine*), Kutuzov (*Guerre et Paix* de Prokofiev), et le Forestier (*Le Petit Renard rusé*). Au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, Norman Bailey s'est produit dans Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*, également en tournée à Palerme), Germont (*La traviata*), Ford (*Falstaff*), Wolfram (*Tannhäuser*), Kurwenal (*Tristan und Isolde*), Donner (*Das Rheingold*), Wotan (*Die Walküre*), Klingsor et Amfortas (*Parsifal*), Jochanaan (*Salome*), et le Maître de musique (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). Récemment, il a également chanté

Oroveso (*Norma*), Banquo (*Macbeth*), le Roi (*Aida*), le Docteur (*Wozzeck*) et Schigolch (*Lulu*). Sa carrière internationale l'a conduit à se produire sur les grandes scènes lyriques et dans les festivals de toute l'Europe et des États-Unis, incluant plusieurs saisons à Bayreuth. Il a collaboré avec des chefs aussi importants que Sir Colin Davis, Sir Georg Solti, James Levine, Carlo Maria Giulini, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Claudio Abbado et Daniel Barenboim. Pour Chandos, Norman Bailey a enregistré le rôle titre dans *King Priam* de Sir Michael Tippett.

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

(*Ariadne auf Naxos*). Il a fait ses débuts au Royal Opera de Covent Garden dans le rôle de Dimitri (*Boris Godounov*), et a chanté par la suite Florestan, Enée (*Les Troyens*), Max, Erik, Siegfried, Bacchus et Mark (*The Midsummer Marriage* de Sir Michael Tippett). Il s'est également produit au Welsh National Opera et au Scottish Opera, et a passé deux ans à l'Opéra de Francfort. Il a fait ses débuts au Metropolitan Opera de New York dans le rôle de Bacchus, et a également chanté à San Francisco (dans les rôles de Dimitri et de Don Carlos), à Los Angeles, San Diego et Seattle (le rôle de Siegfried), à Boston (le rôle de Faust de Gounod) et au Teatro Colón de Buenos Aires (le rôle de Peter Grimes). Avec Joan Sutherland, Alberto Remedios a effectué des tournées en Australie interprétant les rôles d'Edgar (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Alfredo, Lenski et Faust; il est souvent revenu dans ce pays, chantant les rôles de Florestan, Siegmund, Radames et Otello avec l'Opera Australia, et se produisant également à Melbourne, Adelaïde et Brisbane. Alberto Remedios a été fait commandeur de l'ordre de l'empire britannique (CBE) en 1981.

Le baryton anglais **Derek Hammond-Stroud** (Beckmesser) a étudié avec Elena Gerhardt et

Gerhard Hüsch à Munich et à Londres, et a consacré sa carrière au récital et à l'opéra. Il a chanté avec toutes les grandes compagnies d'opéra de Grande-Bretagne, et s'est produit en Europe à l'Opéra d'État de Bavière, au Theater an der Wien, au Theater am Gärtnerplatz, et a chanté pendant trois saisons à l'Opéra des Pays-Bas. En Amérique du Nord et du Sud, il a chanté dans de nombreuses salles lyriques, notamment au Teatro Colón de Buenos Aires, au Metropolitan Opera de New York et à l'Opéra de San Diego. Parmi les rôles importants qu'il a interprétés figurent le Dr Bartolo, Rigoletto, Fra Melitone (*La forza del destino*), Sharpless, Tonio (*Pagliacci*), Papageno, Alberich, Beckmesser, Fanal (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Krušina (*La Fiancée vendue*) et Sir Robert Cecil (*Gloriana*), ainsi que de nombreux rôles dans des œuvres de Gilbert et Sullivan et d'Offenbach. Il a participé à plusieurs premières anglaises, incluant *Orfeo ed Euridice* de Haydn (dans le rôle de Creonte), *La pietra del paragone* de Rossini (dans le rôle de Pacuvio), *Guerre et Paix* (dans le rôle de Napoléon, avec l'English National Opera) et *Der Besuch der alten Dame* de Gottfried von Einem (dans le rôle du Maître d'école, à Glyndebourne). Derek Hammond-Stroud a créé le rôle du

Vieux Pêcheur dans la première mondiale de *The Violins of Saint-Jacques* de Malcolm Williamson au Sadler's Wells Theatre. Il a reçu de nombreuses distinctions, notamment celle d'officier de l'ordre de l'empire britannique (OBE) en 1987.

Né près de Nottingham, le ténor **John Brecknock** (Zorn) fit ses études à la Birmingham School of Music et avec Denis Dowling. Il devint membre du Sadler's Wells Opera (plus tard English National Opera) où il chanta de nombreux rôles, notamment Don Ottavio, Belmonte, Ferrando, le Comte Ory, Almaviva (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Alfredo, des Grieux (*Manon*), Tamino, le Duc (*Eine Nacht in Venedig* de Johann Strauss II) et Werther. Il se produisit également dans *L'italiana in Algeri*, *Die lustige Witwe* et *La gazza ladra*. Au Royal Opera de Covent Garden à Londres, il a chanté Fenton (*Falstaff*), Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*), Iopas (*Les Troyens*) et Gennaro (*Lucrezia Borgia*). Il s'est également produit au Welsh National Opera. À l'étranger, il a chanté dans *Don Giovanni* au Metropolitan Opera de New York, Ottawa et Buenos Aires; dans *Die Zauberflöte* à New York (Metropolitan Opera), New Orleans et Ottawa; dans *Il barbiere di Siviglia* à San Francisco, Miami

et Vienne; dans *La Cenerentola* à l'Opéra de Paris, Buenos Aires et Cape Town; dans *Werther* à Rouen, Buenos Aires et San Diego; dans *La traviata* à Cape Town et Ottawa; dans *Les Pêcheurs de perles* à Rouen et Paris, et dans *Le Comte Ory* à Ottawa, *Rigoletto* à Houston et *Falstaff* à Miami. Parmi ses enregistrements, on citera *Robinson Crusoe* d'Offenbach pour Opera Rara et *La traviata* pour Chandos et la Peter Moores Foundation.

Noel Mangin (Pogner) naquit à Wellington en Nouvelle-Zélande, et chanta son premier solo comme garçon soprano à l'âge de huit ans. Il fit ses débuts de ténor à l'âge de vingt-et-un ans après avoir étudié avec Ernest Drake. Il chanta des rôles de ténor pendant trois ans, puis sa voix changeant de registre, il reparut dix-huit mois plus tard comme basse-baryton, chantant Germont le père (*La traviata*) et Marcello (*La bohème*). L'année suivante, sa voix se fixa dans le registre de basse, et il chanta le rôle de Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*). Il vint à Paris étudier avec Dominique Modesti, et à Londres avec Joseph Hislop. De 1963 à 1967, il chanta au Sadler's Wells Opera. Il se produisit également au Staatstoper de Hambourg et au Victoria State Opera. A partir de 1979, il chanta régulièrement les rôles de Fafner,

Hunding et Hagen dans les productions du *Ring* données à l'Opéra de Seattle.

Les rôles les plus notables de Noel Mangin furent Don Pasquale, Ochs et Osmin. Il fut décoré de l'Ordre de l'Empire britannique (OBE) en 1981. Noel Mangin est mort en 1995.

Née à Douglas sur l'Île de Man, la soprano lyrique **Margaret Curphey** (Eva) a fait ses études musicales à la Birmingham School of Music. Elle a ensuite effectué des tournées avec "Opera for All" et a passé deux ans dans le chœur du Glyndebourne Festival avant de devenir membre du Sadler's Wells Opera (plus tard rebaptisé English National Opera), où elle a fait ses débuts dans le rôle de Micaela (*Carmen*), puis a continué avec La Musica (*Orfeo* de Monteverdi), la Comtesse (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Pamina, Ninetta (*La gazza ladra*), Mary Stuart (*Maria Stuarda* de Donizetti), Violetta, Elisabeth de Valois (*Don Carlos*), Santuzza (*Cavalleria rusticana*), Mimì et Musetta dans *La bohème*, Marguerite (*La Damnation de Faust* de Berlioz), Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*), ainsi que de nombreux autres rôles. Ses célèbres interprétations wagnériennes avec cette compagnie incluent Elsa (*Lohengrin*), Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*),

Sieglinde, Brünnhilde et Gutrune. Margaret Curphey a pris part à la création anglaise de *Lucio Silla* de Mozart au Camden Theatre, et s'est produite dans plusieurs salles lyriques d'Europe. Elle a remporté une médaille au concours international de Sofia en Bulgarie, et a mené une importante carrière de concertiste.

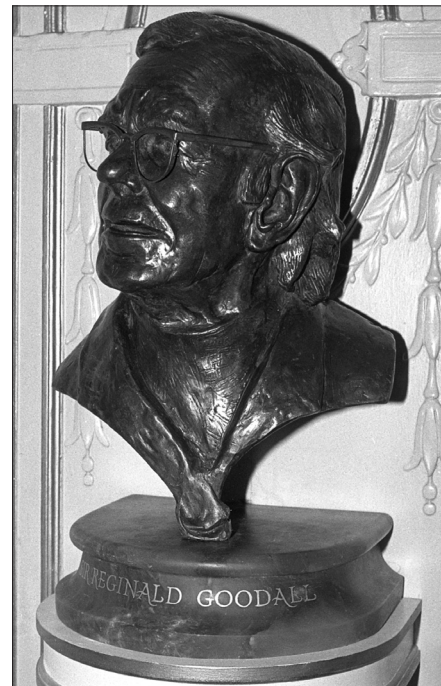
Né en Angleterre dans le Surrey, **Stafford Dean** (le Veilleur de nuit) a étudié avec Gordon Clinton au Royal College of Music de Londres et avec Howell Glynn et Otakar Kraus. Il a fait ses débuts à Glyndebourne dans *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Au Sadler's Wells il a interprété entre autres Daland, Sparafucile, Coline, Pluto (*Orfeo* de Monteverdi), et au Royal Opera de Covent Garden Masetto, l'Ancien (*The Midsummer Marriage*), Publius (*La clemenza di Tito*), Don Alfonso, Bottom et Gessler (*Guillaume Tell*). Il a fait ses débuts internationaux avec le rôle de Leporello en Allemagne, et s'est spécialisé dans répertoire de basse et de baryton des opéras de Mozart. Stafford Dean est particulièrement réputé pour son interprétation de Leporello (qu'il a chanté à Londres, Stuttgart et San Francisco) et de Figaro (qu'il a chanté au Scottish Opera et au Metropolitan Opera de New York).

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

En sa qualité de membre du Sadler's Wells Opera (plus tard rebaptisé English National Opera) Reginald Goodall dirigea en juin 1945 la première représentation de *Peter Grimes* au Sadler's Wells Theatre récemment réouvert. L'année suivante, il partagea avec Ernest Ansermet les premières représentations de *The Rape of Lucretia* de Britten pendant la première saison d'après-guerre du Festival de Glyndebourne. Peu après, il devint membre du Royal Opera de Covent Garden où pendant vingt-cinq ans il allait diriger un répertoire allant de Verdi (*Il trovatore*) à Walton (*Troilus and Cressida*).

Reginald Goodall n'eut que rarement la possibilité de diriger les opéras du compositeur qu'il admirait le plus, Richard Wagner. Cette omission fut rectifiée en 1968, non pas par le Royal Opera de Covent Garden mais par le Sadler's Wells Opera qui l'invita à diriger une nouvelle production de *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Ce fut un tel succès qu'il fut réinvité à diriger une production maintenant légendaire du cycle complet de *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, montée

entre 1970 et 1973, et la première à être donnée en langue anglaise depuis plusieurs années. Il dirigea par la suite *Das Rheingold* et *Die Walküre* au Royal Opera de Covent Garden, *Tristan und Isolde* et *Die Walküre* au Welsh National Opera, *Tristan und Isolde* et *Parsifal* à l'English National Opera. Reginald Goodall devint commandeur de l'ordre de l'empire britannique (CBE) en 1975, et fut anobli en 1985. Il mourut en 1990 à l'âge de quatre-vingt-huit ans.



Bust of Sir Reginald Goodall at the Royal Opera House

NORMAN BAILEY

with Margaret Curhpey (opposite)



Il giorno precedente la prima dei *Maestri cantori di Norimberga* in un nuovo allestimento dell'Opera di Sadler's Wells, il Direttore generale della compagnia, Stephen Arlen pronunciò un discorso in occasione del primo Corso di amministrazione artistica sponsorizzato dall'Arts Council presso il London Polytechnic di Mortimer Street. Probabilmente sentiva questo incarico come un dovere e, per quanto aperto e accogliente, aveva l'aria ansiosa. Io, che facevo parte del contingente iniziale di studenti per l'anno 1967/68, gli chiesi cosa potevamo attenderci dai suoi *Maestri cantori*. La risposta fu: "O sarà una catastrofe o sarà il più grande successo nella storia di Sadler's Wells". La sera successiva, il 31 gennaio 1968, in piedi nei posti più economici del loggione, accanto a un altro studente, Brian McMaster, per oltre cinque ore, fui testimone di un evento che avrebbe fatto storia.

All'epoca il teatro di Sadler's Wells ospitava una compagnia lirica consistente: più di 40 cantanti solisti con contratti a tempo pieno; un'orchestra di oltre 110 musicisti più altro personale musicale. Il coro era formato da

96 elementi e il corpo di ballo riuniva 24 ballerini. Per la precisione, si trattava di due compagnie, quella di Sadler's e quella di Wells, responsabili, insieme, della maggior parte delle rappresentazioni itineranti di opere liriche in Inghilterra. Alla Welsh National Opera esisteva ancora solo un coro di dilettanti e mancava un'orchestra residente. Opera North sarebbe stata fondata un decennio dopo. Così, il personale delle due compagnie di Sadler's e di Wells, guidato da due diversi direttori musicali, Bryan Balkwill e Mario Bernardi, si alternava tra Londra e le altre regioni.

Ogni anno, durante il periodo natalizio e quello appena successivo, la maggior parte dei teatri era occupata dalle rappresentazioni delle tradizionali "pantomime" e nel 1967/68 la regolare tappa invernale presso lo Shakespeare Memorial Theatre di Stratford non fu più possibile. Così Arlen e i suoi direttori decisero di riunire entrambe le compagnie per un importante progetto congiunto, sfruttando il periodo relativamente lungo disponibile per le prove solo in questo momento della stagione, grazie alla pausa nel ritmo incessante della tournée.

Uno di questi direttori era Edmund Tracey, ex critico musicale divenuto Direttore letterario o Drammaturgo, responsabile delle traduzioni per questa compagnia di lingua inglese. Tracey aveva fatto parte di un piccolo gruppo di critici influenti, che comprendeva Andrew Porter, David Cairns e Peter Heyworth, sostenitori dello stile di direzione di Reginald Goodall nel repertorio wagneriano per lo più in base alle quattro leggendarie rappresentazioni di *Die Walküre* nella tournée del 1954 del Covent Garden. Goodall era entrato alla Sadler's Wells Opera durante la Seconda Guerra mondiale e aveva diretto la prima di *Peter Grimes* alla riapertura del teatro nel 1945, ma poco dopo si era trasferito al Covent Garden come direttore dell'organico. Non essendo in piena sintonia con i normali revival del repertorio italiano e francese, alla fine degli anni Cinquanta i suoi incarichi di direzione erano diminuiti, per quanto fosse sempre apprezzato come istruttore dei cantanti. Comunque, aveva diretto di tanto in tanto rappresentazioni dei *Meistersinger* al Covent Garden fino al 1960, ma il suo metodo risentiva delle stranezze nell'assegnazione delle parti e dello scarso tempo destinato alle prove prevalenti all'epoca. La prima opera wagneriana diretta da Goodall per Sadler's Wells fu un

revival del *Tannhäuser* nel gennaio 1961, rovinato dalla debolezza degli archi e da un allestimento brutto e superato. Sulla base di questa prova sicuramente fu necessario un atto di fede da parte di Arlen, di Tracey e degli altri direttori, che comprendevano Glen Byam Shaw (produzione), Edward Renton (amministrazione musicale) e John Snape (finanza), per affidare a Goodall l'impegnativo incarico del primo allestimento dei *Maestri cantori di Norimberga* del dopoguerra per la compagnia.

Ma fu determinante la quantità di tempo a disposizione – non solo il periodo delle prove tra dicembre 1967 e gennaio 1968 quando le compagnie non erano impegnate in tournée – e soprattutto le ore destinate all'indispensabile preparazione musicale preliminare in cui emergevano Goodall eccelleva per conoscenza, comprensione e ostinazione. Fatta eccezione per il personaggio di Hans Sachs, affidato a Norman Bailey, un cantante britannico esperto che lavorava in Germania, il cast era composto di elementi dell'organico e gli interpreti affrontavano i ruoli per la prima volta. Così erano disposti a lavorare a lungo, con personale musicale solidale guidato da un direttore che conosceva la musica da una vita. Questo fu il segreto fondamentale che mise in luce i talenti

di una generazione di cantanti wagneriani britannici. Per esempio, Alberto Remedios, che era stato un Walther von der Vogelweide piuttosto rozzo nel precedente allestimento del *Tannhäuser*, oltre alle note di Walther von Stolzing, imparò anche a interpretarle con poetica dolcezza.

L'altra condizione indispensabile, un segreto ormai perduto, stava nella natura della compagnia di Sadler's Wells. *I Maestri cantori* è un'opera d'insieme diversa dalle altre del repertorio di Wagner. L'impulso di impostarla come "opera comica popolare", secondo la definizione del compositore, era scaturito dall'impossibilità di affidare in precedenza i ruoli di protagonisti di Tristano e Isolde, per cui l'opera non poté essere rappresentata. "Questa volta", disse il compositore al proprio editore, "non avrò bisogno né di un sedicente primo tenore né di un grande soprano tragico". Certo, il personaggio centrale di Hans Sachs, eroe "gioviiale-poetico" dell'opera, è impegnativo, ma è solo uno dei dodici maestri cantori titolari (tredici, se si conta anche l'assente Niklaus Vogel). Ogni maestro ha il suo apprendista e, oltre a questi interpreti, si delinea l'indispensabile presenza di un grande coro che rappresenta il popolo della Norimberga del sedicesimo secolo: la

congregazione della chiesa di Santa Caterina nell'Atto I, i vicini rissosi dell'Atto II e, soprattutto, la grande comunità nel prato della festa accanto al fiume Pegnitz nell'Atto III. Il poema di Wagner esalta sì la "sacra arte tedesca", ma il suo modello è l'esperienza comune del dramma dell'antica Grecia.

Per realizzare questo ideale in maniera convincente non basta riunire alcuni prestigiosi artisti ospiti. È necessario un gruppo di persone che abbiano vissuto abbastanza insieme da conoscere intimamente a vicenda i propri punti di forza e le proprie debolezze. Bisogna avere una compagnia che è cresciuta ed esiste ancora in alcune parti della Germania e dell'Europa orientale, ma che si fa sempre più rara nel mercato globale del lavoro odierno. Negli anni Sessanta, Sadler's Wells non aveva dei *Maestri cantori* radicati nel territorio, a differenza dei teatri tedeschi dell'epoca; ma la terra era già dissodata, pronta da arare.

Goodall e il suo gruppo avevano davanti un compito enorme. L'ideale wagneriano di un'opera popolare comica facile da eseguire era superato da una struttura e da un argomento molto più ambizioso e profondo. All'epoca del suo completamento e della rappresentazione a Monaco nel 1868, il compositore poté scrivere a re Ludwig di Baviera: "È impossibile che non

abbiate percepito, sotto le superfici pittoresche di umorismo popolare dell'opera, la profonda melanconia, il lamento, il grido di dolore di una poesia in catene, e la sua reincarnazione, la rinascita, l'irresistibile potenza magica che acquista supremazia sulle cose comuni e basse".

I registi e direttori d'orchestra interpretano l'equilibrio tra questi elementi in maniera diversa. Dagli orrori della Germania nazista sono scaturite reazioni comprensibilmente forti nei confronti dell'omaggio all'arte nazionalista. Quindi forse è più produttivo incentrare l'attenzione sui giudizi musicali a proposito dell'identificazione del nucleo dell'opera.

Secondo Hans Knappertsbusch, decano dei direttori tedeschi della vecchia scuola, particolarmente ammirati da Goodall, il vero punto culminante dell'opera era il quintetto che conclude la prima scena del terzo atto. È il momento di quiete dove i cinque personaggi principali si combinano in armonia per dedicare la nuova opera d'arte. Per Rudolf Kempe, con cui Goodall collaborò durante la preparazione dell'opera al Covent Garden nel 1963, tutto portava verso la grande esplosione corale di "Wach' auf" ("Svegliatevi!"), quando Hans Sachs, sul punto di pronunciare il suo discorso di presentazione della gara di canto, è sorpreso dal fatto che l'intera comunità

intoni il poema di speranza "Wach' auf, es nahet gen den Tag" una sua composizione giovanile risalente a trentasette anni prima. In teatro l'effetto fu elettrizzante. Georg Solti, che dicesse un nuovo allestimento al Covent Garden solo un anno dopo quello di Goodall a Sadler's Wells, evocò con il massimo fascino la magia della vigilia di San Giovanni nell'atto II, quando Sachs riflette sul delicato intreccio di umanità e natura nel suo "Fliedermonolog", che prende spunto dal profumo del lillà. Per Joseph Keilberth, direttore musicale dell'Opera di Monaco durante il periodo aureo negli anni Sessanta, il cuore dell'opera stava nel preludio dell'atto III, che sonda le profondità della malinconia di Sachs e conduce al "Wahnmonolog" con il suo pessimismo di stampo schopenhaueriano sull'umana follia.

La lettura dei *Maestri cantori* di Goodall si rivela all'altezza della situazione in tutti questi momenti cruciali, ma io ritengo che per lui il nocciolo della questione e la sua espressione più appassionata si trovasse nella sezione che inizia con "O Sachs, mein Freund," ("O Sachs! Amico mio!") quando Eva, sorpresa dall'anteprima della canzone premiata di Walther, si rivolge invece a Sachs per comunicargli che ha indovinato il sacrificio dei suoi sentimenti personali a favore del giovane.

L'ascesa e la discesa orchestrale di Goodall sono intrise di lacrime che esprimono gioia suprema e dolore non ricambiati. Goodall e il suo Sachs, Norman Bailey, compresero l'ardente esasperazione del cuore del non più giovane calzolaio e la sua suprema generosità.

A circa un decennio di distanza dai *Mastersingers* di Sadler's Wells, io imparai a conoscere Goodall quando collaborammo al suo primo allestimento del *Tristan und Isolde* alla Welsh National Opera. Trovandomi in difficoltà nello scrivere le note del programma, gli chiesi di cosa parlasse l'opera e lui mi confessò che non era ancora riuscito a penetrarne il cuore tenebroso. Per lui le altre opere mature di Wagner erano più facili da capire: il *Ring* era legato alla natura, *Parsifal* alla compassione. Ma i *Meistersinger* erano ormai nel passato e non voleva più dirigere quest'opera.

Sicuramente questo o quel passaggio sarà stato cantato o eseguito meglio in passato e altrettanto accadrà in futuro; ma secondo me Goodall intuì che la generosità di spirito che aleggiava a Sadler's Wells e nella compagnia durante gli ultimi anni in quel teatro non sarebbe mai ritornata.

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Sinossi

COMPACT DISC ONE

[1] Preludio

Atto I

L'interno della chiesa di S. Caterina a Norimberga

[2]–[6] Al termine della funzione pomeridiana un giovane cavaliere, Walther von Stolzing, si incontra con Eva, della quale si è innamorato, e viene a sapere che il padre di lei, l'orefice Veit Pagner, ha offerto in premio la sua mano al maestro cantore che vincerà la gara di canto prevista per il giorno successivo. Magdalene, che accompagna Eva, è innamorata di David, il giovane apprendista del calzolaio Hans Sachs, e mentre esce dalla chiesa con Eva, chiede a David di insegnare a Walther le complicate regole dei Maestri cantori, per aiutare la sua amica a conquistare l'uomo che veramente ama.

[7]–[10] Arrivano i Maestri cantori, tra cui il segretario municipale Sixtus Beckmesser, pignolo e pedante, anche lui aspirante alla mano di Eva; [11] a lui viene affidato il ruolo di "marcatore" quando Walther esegue la sua prova di canto. La cosa lo rende felice perché

gli permette di segnare tutti gli errori contro le regole ufficiali.

COMPACT DISC TWO

[1] Ben presto vede che il giovane cavaliere è un formidabile rivale in amore [2] e fa di tutto perché venga respinto come candidato per la gara. [3] L'incontro termina tra la confusione: di fronte all'ostilità di tutti gli altri Maestri, solo Hans Sachs si accorge della bellezza e del genio del canto di Walther e intuisce che il giovane è dotato del potere di allontanare l'arte dei Maestri cantori dai sentieri decadenti della tradizione, verso un nuovo e più nobile ideale.

Atto II

Una strada di Norimberga con una veduta delle case di Hans Sachs e Veit Pagner

[4] Preludio. [5] È la vigilia della festa di san Giovanni: David e gli altri apprendisti stanno per chiudere bottega. Arriva Magdalene per chiedere notizie della prova di Walther con i Maestri cantori ed è delusa nel sapere che non è stato ammesso nella corporazione. Hans Sachs torna nella sua bottega, licenzia David per la sera e si mette a lavorare per finire un paio di scarpe per Beckmesser.

[6]–[9] Nel frattempo anche Pagner ed Eva sono ritornati nella loro casa, che si trova dirimpetto a quella di Hans Sachs. Quando suo padre è entrato, Eva viene informata da Magdalene dell'insuccesso di Walther e dell'imminente arrivo di Beckmesser che desidera farle una serenata. Le due donne decidono che Magdalene indosserà gli abiti di Eva e prenderà il posto dell'amica alla finestra. [10] Arriva Walther, venuto a cercare Eva; avendo perso ogni speranza di conquistare la sua mano come Maestro cantore, vuole fuggire con lei quella sera stessa. Ma prima che possano mettere in atto il loro piano (che è stato ascoltato da Sachs), gli innamorati sono costretti a nascondersi perché sentono avvicinarsi qualcuno. Il nuovo arrivato è l'importuno Beckmesser, [11] che intona la sua serenata. [12] Sachs comincia a cantare un motivo spensierato dal suo banco di lavoro. Irritato, Beckmesser invita Sachs ad ascoltare la sua canzone e criticarla in modo da permettergli di correggere eventuali errori in tempo per la sua esibizione del giorno dopo. [13] Sachs accetta e assume il ruolo di "Marcatore", segnalando con fragorosi colpi di martello gli errori con crescente regolarità.

Il rumore sveglia David, che prende a manganellate senza pietà il cantore della

serenata. [14] Il trambusto ben presto richiama tutti i vicini che si lasciano coinvolgere nella baruffa, pur non conoscendone la causa. All'improvviso risuona il corno della guardia notturna, la confusione viene sedata e Sachs offre riparo a Walther nella sua casa. Le case vengono chiuse e l'assonnata guardia attraversa lentamente le vie deserte.

COMPACT DISC THREE

Atto III

La bottega di Sachs la mattina dopo

[1] Preludio. [2] David, vestito di tutto punto per la festa di San Giovanni, ripete i suoi versi al padrone. [3] Quando è uscito, Sachs medita gravemente sulla follia umana e sugli eventi turbolenti della sera precedente. [4]–[5] Entra Walther e gli racconta di aver fatto un bel sogno. Il calzolaio gli chiede di usarlo come soggetto per la canzone da presentare alla gara, mentre ha ancora fresche le immagini in mente. [6] Mentre Walther canta, Sachs scrive il testo, offrendo qualche consiglio tecnico di tanto in tanto, consapevole che questa canzone indubbiamente vincerà il premio. Sachs e Walther vanno a vestirsi per la festa. [7] Interludio.

[8] Entra Beckmesser, ancora indolenzito dalle percosse della sera precedente, e per caso

vede la carta su cui Sachs ha scritto il testo della canzone di Walther. Pensando che lo stesso Sachs abbia deciso di partecipare alla gara, se ne impossessa, ma viene sorpreso dal ritorno del calzolaio. [9] Avendo intuito l'accaduto, Sachs offre la canzone a Beckmesser e gli dà il permesso di cantarla se lo desidera. Beckmesser si allontana, trionfante, certo di avere la vittoria in tasca.

[10] Arriva Eva con la scusa che le scarpe nuove le fanno male. [11]–[13] Ritorna Walther e, alla vista di Eva, erompe nell'ultima stanza della sua canzone, in un improvviso flusso di ispirazione.

COMPACT DISC FOUR

[1]–[3] Arrivano Magdalene e David, che viene formalmente promosso da apprendista a operaio qualificato da Sachs, e le cinque voci si uniscono in un quintetto basato sulla melodia della canzone di Walther.

[4]–[8] La scena cambia e si sposta nello spazio aperto sulle rive del fiume Pegnitz, dove sono riunite tutte le Corporazioni per la grande festa. [9] Il primo a cantare è Beckmesser ma, poiché non è riuscito a memorizzare bene le parole, fallisce miseramente e si allontana correndo, pieno d'ira e di vergogna, tra lo

scherno della folla. [10] Adesso Sachs chiede a Walther di farsi avanti: è lui il vero autore della canzone. [11]–[12] La sua interpretazione appassionata e ispirata conquista fino in fondo tutti gli ascoltatori. Il giovane viene incoronato vincitore della gara da Eva [13] e l'opera si conclude con un coro esultante di lode per Hans Sachs.

Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

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

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

Alberto Remedios (Walther), tra i principali tenori eroici inglesi della sua generazione, ha studiato a Liverpool insieme a Edwin Francis ed al Royal College of Music, facendo la sua

prima comparsa a teatro con la Sadler's Wells Opera (che più tardi diventò l'English National Opera) nella parte di Tinca ne *Il tabarro*. Con quella compagnia è comparso nei ruoli di Don Ottavio, Tamino, Max (*Der Freischütz*), Alfredo, Faust (nell'opera di Gounod e nella *Damnation de Faust* di Berlioz), Des Grieux (*Manon*), Sansone (*Samson et Dalila*), Lenski, Erik (*Der fliegende Holländer*), Lohengrin, Walther (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Tristano, Siegmund, Sigfrido e Bacco (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). Ha fatto il debutto alla Royal Opera, Covent Garden nella parte di Dimitri (*Boris Godunov*) ed è ritornato nella parte di Florestano, Enea (*Les Troyens*), Max, Erik, Sigfrido, Bacco e Marco (*The Midsummer Marriage* di Sir Michael Tippett). Si è anche esibito con la Welsh National Opera e la Scottish Opera ed ha passato due anni con l'Opera di Francoforte. Ha fatto la sua prima comparsa alla Metropolitan Opera, New York nella parte di Bacco ed è anche apparso a San Francisco (nella parte di Dimitri e Don Carlos), a Los Angeles, San Diego e Seattle (come Sigfrido), a Boston (nella parte di Faust di Gounod) ed al Teatro Colón a Buenos Aires (nella parte di Peter Grimes). Con Dame Joan Sutherland ha fatto una tournée in Australia nel ruolo di Edgar (*Lucia di Lammermoor*),

Alfredo, Lenski e Faust, e contatti stretti con quel paese gli hanno permesso di fare comparse nelle parti di Florestano, Siegmund, Radames e Otello con l'Opera Australia oltre a spettacoli a Melbourne, Adelaide e Brisbane. In Inghilterra, Alberto Remedios ha ricevuto l'onorificenza del CBE in occasione del compleanno della Regina nel 1981.

Il baritono inglese **Derek Hammond-Stroud** (Beckmesser) ha studiato con Elena Gerhardt e Gerhard Hüsch a Monaco e a Londra; la sua carriera lo ha portato sulle pedane del recital e sulle scene del teatro lirico. Ha cantato con le principali compagnie liriche britanniche; in Europa è stato impegnato, tra l'altro, con l'Opera nazionale della Baviera di Monaco, il Theater an der Wien, il Theater am Gärtnerplatz, e con l'Opera dei Paesi Bassi per tre stagioni. Nell'America del nord e del sud ha cantato al Teatro Colón di Buenos Aires, al Metropolitan Opera di New York e all'Opera di San Diego, tra l'altro. Tra i suoi ruoli principali vanno ricordati Dottor Bartolo, Rigoletto, Fra Melitone (*La forza del destino*), Sharpless, Tonio (*Pagliacci*), Papageno, Alberich, Beckmesser, Faninal (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Krušina (*La sposa venduta*) e Sir Robert Cecil (*Gloriana*) oltre

a numerosi personaggi delle opere di Gilbert e Sullivan e di Offenbach. Ha partecipato a diverse prime teatrali britanniche, tra cui quelle di *Orfeo ed Euridice* di Haydn (nel ruolo di Creonte), *La pietra del paragone* di Rossini (Pacuvio), *Guerra e Pace* di Prokof'ev (nel ruolo di Napoleone, con l'English National Opera) e *Der Besuch der alten Dame* di Gottfried von Einem (nelle vesti del Maestro a Glyndebourne). Ha creato il ruolo del Vecchio pescatore nella prima mondiale di *The Violins of Saint-Jacques* di Malcolm Williamson a Sadler's Wells. Ha ricevuto numerose onorificenze, tra cui un OBE nel 1987.

Nato nei pressi di Nottingham, il tenore **John Brecknock** (Zorn) ha studiato presso la Birmingham School of Music e con Denis Dowling. È entrato alla Sadler's Wells Opera (successivamente divenuta English National Opera), dove ha interpretato numerosi ruoli, tra cui Don Ottavio, Belmonte, Ferrando, il conte Ory, Almaviva (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Alfredo, Des Grieux (*Manon*), Tamino, il Duca (*Eine Nacht in Venedig* di Johann Strauss figlio) e Werther, oltre a comparire in *L'italiana in Algeri*, *Die lustige Witwe* e *La gazza ladra*. Alla Royal Opera del Covent Garden

ha interpretato, tra l'altro, il ruolo di Fenton (*Falstaff*), Rinuccio (*Gianni Schicchi*), Iopaas (*Les Troyens*) e Gennaro (*Lucrezia Borgia*). Ha cantato anche con la Welsh National Opera. All'estero, è stato impegnato, tra l'altro, nel *Don Giovanni* a New York (Metropolitan Opera), Ottawa e Buenos Aires; in *Die Zauberflöte* a New York (Metropolitan Opera), New Orleans e Ottawa; nel *Barbiere di Siviglia* a San Francisco, Miami e Vienna; ne *La Cenerentola* a Parigi (Opéra), Buenos Aires e Città del Capo; nel *Werther* a Rouen, Buenos Aires e San Diego; ne *La traviata* a Città del Capo e Ottawa; in *Les Pêcheurs de perles* a Rouen e Parigi; in *Le Comte Ory* a Ottawa, nel *Rigoletto* a Houston e *Falstaff* a Miami. La sua discografia comprende *Robinson Crusoe* di Offenbach per Opera Rara e *La traviata* per la Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation.

Noel Mangin (Pogner) nasceva a Wellington, in Nuova Zelanda e già a otto anni compariva in pubblico come voce bianca solista. Esordiva come tenore all'età di ventuno anni dopo aver studiato con Ernest Drake. Per tre anni avrebbe continuato a cantare ruoli da tenore, ma poi la sua voce subiva un cambiamento; diciotto mesi dopo interpretava due ruoli per baritono basso, Germont padre (*La traviata*) e Marcello (*La*

bohème). L'anno successivo la sua voce si era stabilizzata nel registro di basso e il cantante interpretava il ruolo di Sarastro (*Il flauto magico*). Ha studiato a Parigi con Dominique Modesti e a Londra con Joseph Hislop; nel periodo 1963–67 si è esibito con la Sadler's Wells Opera, oltre a comparire spesso all'Opera di Amburgo e alla Victoria State Opera. Dal 1979 in poi avrebbe interpretato regolarmente i ruoli di Fafner, Hunding e Hagen negli allestimenti del *Ring* dell'Opera di Seattle.

I ruoli più memorabili di Noel Mangin sono stati quelli di Don Pasquale, Ochs e Osmin. Nel 1981 veniva insignito della carica onoraria di OBE. È morto nel 1995.

Nata a Douglas nell'Isola di Man e dopo aver studiato alla School of Music di Birmingham, la soprano lirica **Margaret Curphey** (Eva) ha fatto una tournée con l'Opera for All ed ha passato due anni nel coro del Festival di Glyndebourne prima di entrare nella Sadler's Wells Opera (che più tardi diventò l'English National Opera), dove ha fatto la sua prima comparsa nella parte di Micaela (*Carmen*) continuando nel ruolo di La Musica (*Orfeo* di Monteverdi), la Contessa (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Pamina, Ninetta (*La gazza ladra*), Maria Stuarda (nell'omonima opera di Donizetti),

Violetta, Elisabetta de Valois (*Don Carlos*), Santuzza (*Cavalleria rusticana*), sia come Mimì che come Musetta (*La bohème*), Marguerita (*La Damnation de Faust* di Berlioz) ed Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*) oltre a molti altri ruoli.

Le sue interpretazioni in opere di Wagner hanno incluso Elsa (*Lohengrin*), Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Sieglinde, Brunilde e Gutrun. Ha preso parte alla prima rappresentazione nel Regno Unito di *Lucio Silla* di Mozart al Camden Theatre, è comparsa in partecipazione straordinaria in parecchie opere in Europa, ha vinto un'onorificenza alla Gara Internazionale di Sofia in Bulgaria, e continua anche una carriera attiva come cantante in concerti.

Stafford Dean (Guardia notturna), nato nel Surrey, ha studiato con Gordon Clinton presso il Royal College of Music, oltre che con Howell Glynne e Otakar Kraus. Ha esordito a Glyndebourne ne *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. Per Sadler's Wells ha interpretato, tra l'altro, i ruoli di Daland, Sparafucile, Colline e Plutone (*Orfeo* di Monteverdi). Per la Royal Opera è stato Masetto, He-Ancient (*The Midsummer Marriage*), Publio (*La clemenza di Tito*), Don Alfonso, Bottom e Gessler (*Guglielmo Tell*). Il debutto internazionale è stato nelle vesti di

Leporello in Germania. L'artista, specializzato nel repertorio mozartiano per basso e baritono, è particolarmente apprezzato per il ruolo di Leporello (interpretato a Londra, Stoccarda e San Francisco) e quello di Figaro (allestimenti per la Scottish Opera e la Metropolitan Opera di New York).

Il direttore d'orchestra inglese **Reginald Goodall** nacque nel 1901 e studiò con Malcolm Sargent e Constant Lambert al Royal College of Music. Dal 1929 al 1936 fu organista e maestro del coro a St Alban the Martyr, Holborn, dove condusse le prime esecuzioni in Inghilterra delle composizioni corali di Bruckner, Stravinsky e Szymanowski, oltre che le prime composizioni di Britten. Verso la fine degli anni '30 lavorò per assistere, tra gli altri, Albert Coates e Malcolm Sargent. All'inizio della seconda guerra mondiale diventò direttore della Wessex Philharmonic Orchestra con base a Bournemouth. Durante il mese di giugno 1945, facendo parte della Sadler's Wells Opera (che più tardi diventò l'English National Opera), diresse la prima esecuzione di *Peter Grimes* al Sadler's Wells

Theatre appena riaperto. L'anno seguente prese parte con Ernest Ansermet alle prime esecuzioni del *Rape of Lucretia* di Britten durante la prima stagione del dopoguerra del Glyndebourne Festival. Immediatamente dopo si associò al Covent Garden, dove per venticinque anni successive diresse un repertorio che andava da *Il trovatore* a *Troilus and Cressida*.

Solo raramente ebbe la possibilità di dirigere opere del compositore che più ammirava, Richard Wagner. Questa lacuna fu colmata nel 1968, non dalla Royal Opera ma dalla Sadler's Wells, che lo invitò a dirigere una nuova produzione dei *Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Il suo successo fu così straordinario che ritornò alla compagnia per dirigere quella leggendaria produzione completa del *Ring des Nibelungen*, costruita tra il 1970 ed il 1973 e la prima data in inglese per molti anni. Continuò poi a dirigere *Das Rheingold* e *Die Walküre* per la Royal Opera, *Tristan und Isolde* e *Die Walküre* per la Welsh National Opera e *Tristan e Parsifal* alla English National Opera. Ottenne l'onorificenza del CBE nel 1975 e fu fatto cavaliere nel 1985. Reginald Goodall morì nel 1990 ad ottantotto anni.

NOEL MANGIN



GREGORY DEMPSEY

DEREK HAMMOND-STROUD



COMPACT DISC ONE

[1] Prelude

Act I

The interior of the Church of St. Catherine. Eva and Magdalene are sitting in the last row of seats; Walther von Stolzing stands at some distance at the side.

Chorale

Congregation

- [2] As to thee our Saviour came,
Was baptized in God's own name,
Chose to be the sacrifice,
For our sins to pay the price,
So must we His children be,
Worthy of His agony.
Blessed preacher, holy teacher!
Bless us with Thy hand,
There on Jordan's strand.
(*The congregation slowly disperses.*)

Walther (*to Eva*)

- [3] Oh stay! A word! one single word!

Eva (*to Magdalene*)

My kerchief, see! 'tis left behind.

Magdalene

Forgetful girl! Now I must look!

(*She looks for the kerchief.*)

Walther

Maiden, forgive my bold approach.
Tell me but one thing, tell me, I pray you.
For just one word I dare to ask you!
If life be mine, or death,
If blest I be or cursed?
One single word will my fate decide:
Fair maiden say...

Magdalene

I've found it now.

Eva

Oh dear! the clasp.

Magdalene

Is that left too?
(*She searches for the buckle.*)

Walther

If light and life, or night and death
Whether I learn the tidings I long for,
Whether I hear the words that I dread:
Fair maiden, say...

Magdalene

Now you have the clasp.
Come love, for now you have them both.
Oh dear, now I've left my book behind!

Walther

The word I crave, you will not speak,
The word that will decide my fate?
Yes or no! 'tis quickly told.
Fair maiden, say, are you betroth'd?

Magdalene

Good Sir, I thank you. We are in deed obliged;
For Eva's escort we give you grateful thanks.
May I tell Master Pogner that soon you come to
visit him?

Walther

Would I never had seen his house!

Magdalene

Why sir, what is this that you say?
Although you've only just come to Nuremberg,
Have you not found a friendly welcome?
What kitchen, cellar, hearth and home could give,
Does that deserve no thanks?

Eva

Good Lene, ah, he means it not so;
He is only eager to know,
How shall I say...?
Bewildered am I! I feel as though it all were a
dream!
He asks, am I betrothed!

Magdalene

Oh Lord! Don't speak so loud!
Let us now go home my dear...
If folks should see us here!

Walther

No, first give me your reply!

Eva

'Tis safe, the folk are gone.

Magdalene

That makes it all the worse!
Sir Walther, some other time!

Walther

No! First this word!

Eva

This word!
(*Magdalene turns and sees David.*)

Magdalene (*aside*)

David? Eh? David here?

Eva

How can I? Speak for me!

Magdalene

Good sir, the question that you now ask,
To answer is no easy task.
Though Eva is betroth'd indeed...

Eva
But yet has no one the bridegroom beheld!

Magdalene
The bridegroom's name will not be known
Until tomorrow; it shall be shown,
When a Mastersinger the prize has won.

Eva
And my own hand will place the crown.

Walther
A Mastersinger?

Eva
Are you not one?

Walther
A trial song?

Magdalene
Before the Guild!

Walther
The prize is won?

Magdalene
By the Master's favour.

Walther
The bride will choose?

Eva
You and no other!

Magdalene
What, Eva! Eva! Think what you're saying!

Eva
Good Lene, help now to win me my lover!

Magdalene
Yesterday only you saw him first!

Eva
Even at once was my heart aflame;
Long had I gazed on his image fair!
Say, is he not like to David there?

Magdalene
Are you mad? Like David?

Eva
The picture, I mean!

Magdalene
Ah! mean you the King, with harp and sceptre,
And flowing beard on the Masters' shield?

Eva
No! he who boldly defeated Goliath,
With sword at side his hand holds the sling,
His head aglow with locks of gold,
As drawn by Master Dürer of old.

Magdalene
Oh, David! David!

David (*returning*)
Yes, here I am, who calls?

Magdalene
Ah, David see how much pain you cause!
The darling rogue! Surely he knows?
Oh look, I fear he has lock'd us in now!

David
Just you in my heart!

Magdalene
How faithful he is!
Come tell, the reason for this nonsense?

David
Defend us! Nonsense! A serious thing!
For the Masters I set out the ring.

Magdalene
What? Will there be singing?

David
Just a trial today;
The pupil's way will be made open
If no rules of the Tabulatur are broken.
Master may he become, with luck.

Magdalene
So then, the Knight has come here just in time.
Now Eva, come, we must go home.

Walther
To Master Pagner let me now escort you.

Magdalene
No, wait for him here, he soon will come.
If for Eva's hand you're striving,
Then time and place are on your side.
Now come, we must hurry.

Walther
What am I to do then?

Magdalene
Let David now teach you the rules of the trial.
David, this Knight must here with you stay.
Look after him, and help him well, I pray.
I'll cook as fine a dish
As you could ever wish,
And tomorrow, your love may be bolder,
If he today becomes a Master.

Eva
When shall I see you?

Walther
This evening be sure! Nought shall dismay me,
No pow'r shall stay me!
New is my life, new my life.

New now are all things for which I strive!
I know but one aim,
Only this one thought doth burn within me,
How I long to win thee!
If sword avail not for me to conquer,
Then as a Master, I'll win by singing.
For thee all I hold, for thee poet's love untold!

Eva
My heart's love untold,
For thee, loving thought doth hold.

Magdalene
Come home! or else all will go wrong.

(Magdalene and Eva go off quickly.)

David
A Master! O-ho! You're bold!

Second Scene

(More Apprentices have entered. They bring benches and place them in position, preparing everything for the sitting of the Mastersingers.)

Apprentices

- [4] David, come on, lend a hand!
Come and help us with the stand.

David
I'm always the one who is working;
Work now yourselves, and leave me in quiet.

Apprentices

Oh! Oh! Such airs! How proud and haughty!
Because he gets strapped when he's naughty!
He sits and cobbles with a feather!
Makes poems with thread and string!
He writes his verses on greasy leather!
He knows too, how it can sting.

David *(to Walther)*
Now begin!

Walther
What for?

David
Now begin! So cries the Marker –
Then you start singing! Don't you know that?

Walther
Who is the Marker?

David
Don't you know that? Have you not been at a
Singing Trial?

Walther
Not yet, where the judges were craftsmen.

David
Are you a 'Poet'?

Walther
Would I were!

David
Are you a 'Singer'?

Walther
Would I knew!

David
But 'Student' surely, or 'Scholar' you've been?

Walther
But all these words sound strange to me!

David
And yet you would be a Mastersinger?

Walther
You think I am inviting disaster?

David
O Lene! Lene!

Walther
What do you mean?

David
O Magdalene!

Walther
Counsel me well!

- David
[5] My Lord! The Mastersinger's way
Cannot be found in just one day.
In Nuremberg, the finest Master
Is now the great Hans Sachs:
For full a year he has taught me,
So that a scholar I wax.
Shoe-maker's craft and Poet's art,
Both, daily I learn by heart:
First all the leather, smooth I hammer,
Then all the vowels and consonants stammer;
Next, must the thread be stiff with wax,
Then must I learn, it rhymes with Sachs.
With thread and needle make stitches neat
And then I learn about time and beat
With leather and last, the slow, the fast,
The hard, the light, gloomy or bright,
The scissors and snippings, and word clippings,
The pauses, the corns, the flowers and thorns,
I learn'd all this with care and pains;
To what now, think you, that it attains?

Walther
Surely, a pair of well-made shoes?

David
Ah, there is time enough for that!
A 'Bar' of many stanzas is made;
And the rules alone would break your head,

And rightly stitched and truly pitched,
Must word to tone be mated,
Well soled and heeled and fitted!
And then there comes the After-song,
One not too short and not too long,
And in it no rhyme may sound,
That in the stanza is found.
When all this you've read, marked and learned
You have still the name of Master not earned.

Walther
O Heav'n! Teach me no cobbler's trade!
Rather tell me how a singer's made!

David
Ah, that would already a singer I were!
Who knows what time it needs and care!
The Masters' tones and measures
Are many in name and kind;
The strong ones and the gentle
Who at once their names can find?
So learn this lesson well,
Beware the Master spell!
Till Singer and Poet he has been,
No one the Master's crown can win.

Apprentices
David! Come here! David!

Walther
What makes a 'Poet?'

David
Wait a while! Wait! A Poet, you ask?
When as a singer you've graduated
And the Master tones have sung as I've stated
If you yourself, in true accord,
Find and unite both rhyme and word,
So that they fit some Master-tone:
Then you've made the Poet's prize your own.

Apprentices
Hey! David! must we then call your master?
Will you never have done with your chatter?

David
Ho! Ho! I see, if I leave you for long,
Ev'ry thing you do, goes completely wrong!

Walther
But, tell me, who as 'Master' you name?

David
My Lord, a Master, we thus proclaim;
The Poet who by faithful striving,
To words and rhymes, he himself has found,
A melody adds of his own contriving,
He will as 'Mastersinger' be crowned.

Walther
One path alone then, to Master's name!
That by heaven, grace may be given,
Rightly to fashion a Master-strain.

David (*to Apprentices*)
[6] What's this that you've done? When I'm not at hand.
You all go wrong with the chair and the stand.
Is it not Song-School? That you know!
The chair must be here! It's trials today!

(*The Apprentices, who had put up a large stage, put it aside under David's direction and substitute a smaller one.*)

Apprentices
Such a scholar as David, we've never yet seen;
Glory and honour, he surely must win:
Perhaps he may be freed today;
The finest of singers he long has been.
The Strap-leather mode has made him smart,
The Hunger tune he knows by heart!
And the Hearty-kick mode he carefully learns,
His Master employs them all by turns.

David
Yes laugh away! but not at me.
Another candidate you will see.
Who's not a Scholar, nor a Singer,
As Poet too, he's a beginner,
A gallant knight, he. In a single flight
Now hopes without ruin or disaster,
Today to be Master.
So quickly make ready the Marker's place!
Here now! There now! The black slate on the stand,
All ready for the Marker's hand.

Ah, yes, the Marker! Do you grow pale?
Before him many candidates fail.
Seven faults the Marker lets by,
With chalk they are marked on the slate:
If more than seven faults he should spy,
Then the singer has met his fate!
So you must take care, the Marker's there!
Good luck to Mastersinging,
May you, your garland be winning!
The silken garland of flowers bright,
Will that, by good fortune be yours by right?

Apprentices
The silken garland of flowers bright,
Will that, by good fortune be yours, Sir Knight?

Third Scene

(*The Apprentices separate in alarm as the sacristy opens and Pogner enters with Beckmesser.*)

Pogner
[7] Be well assured of my good favour;
What I have planned, will serve you well:
Success will go with your endeavour;
Who wields like you the Master's spell?

Beckmesser
But won't you make this one concession,
For I confess, I'm doubtful still
If Eva's wish may choose her lover,
What good is all my Master-skill?

Pogner

And yet, I feel that first of all,
 You should try to learn how well you stand,
 For if her heart you fail in winning,
 How then can you desire her hand?

Beckmesser

Ah, yes, quite true! I therefore pray you,
 That to the child you speak for me.
 Say I am kind and very gentle,
 And that Beckmesser you approve.

Pogner

With right good will!

Beckmesser (*aside*)

(He won't give way!
 I view the future with dismay!)

Walther

Your pardon Master!

Pogner

What, Sir Walther?
 You seek me in the Singing-School?

Beckmesser

(If women had wits! but high sounding folly
 Pleases them more than poetry's charms!)

Walther

That here you find me is only right;
 For, you must know I left my home
 And came to Nuremberg town,
 For love of art alone.
 Until today I failed to say it;
 Now, must I openly proclaim it;
 A Mastersinger I would be!
 Pray, of your Guild now make me free!

(*The Mastersingers enter one by one.*)

Pogner

Kunz Vogelgesang! Friend Nachtigal!
 Here is a most unusual case:
 This noble Knight, to me well known,
 To our Master art, his thought would turn.

Beckmesser

(Once more I will ask him, and if he refuses me
 With song I will charm the maiden to choose me.
 I'll sing at night for her ears alone:
 Perhaps by singing, may she be won.)
 (*seeing Walther*)
 What man is that?

Pogner

Warm is my heart!
 The days of old are born anew.
 What you desire, if mine to grant,
 You can command.

Gladly I helped you your land to sell,
 To our Guild, I welcome you now as well.

Beckmesser

(He displeases me! Why is he here
 With his laughing looks?
 Holla Sixtus! beware of him!)

Walther

For all your goodness, most deeply I thank you,
 And dare I to hope then, the way now is open
 For me, the prize to claim of Mastersinger's
 name?

Beckmesser

(O-ho! So fast! Then the Knight's on his mettle!)

Pogner

Sir Walther, we must respect procedure.
 Today is trial, but have no fear,
 I gain from the Masters, a willing ear.

(*Sachs enters last of all.*)

Sachs

God greet you, Masters!

Vogelgesang

Are we all here now?

Beckmesser

Yes, Sachs has arrived.

Nachtigal

Then call the names out.

Kothner

^[8] Now to a trial, as summoned hither,
 Masters in council are come together:
 Of one and all, the names I call,
 And as the last elected Master,
 I name myself and call Fritz Kothner.
 Are you there Veit Pogner?

Pogner

Here at hand!

Kothner

Kunz Vogelgesang?

Vogelgesang

Here I stand.

Kothner

Hermann Ortel ?

Ortel

Comes when he ought.

Kothner

Balthazar Zorn?

Zorn

Here on the spot.

Kothner
Konrad Nachtigal?

Nachtigal
True to his lay.

Kothner
Augustin Moser?

Moser
Never away!

Kothner
Niklaus Vogel? Well?

Apprentice
He's ill!

Kothner
Good health to the Master!

Mastersingers
Amen!

Apprentice
His thanks!

Kothner
Hans Sachs?

David
He's there now!

Sachs
Have you got fleas? Forgive, Masters,
Here, if you please!

Kothner
Sixtus Beckmesser?

Beckmesser
Always with Sachs.
Thus the rhyme I learn, to 'bloom' and 'wax'.

Kothner
Ulrich Eisslinger?

Eisslinger
Here!

Kothner
Hans Foltz?

Foltz
Here, too.

Kothner
Hans Schwartz?

Schwartz
At last, praise God!

Kothner
The council, I declare, is met.
Shall we make choice of a Marker now?

Vogelgesang
The festival first.

Beckmesser
So pressing sirs? My place to you gladly I yield.

Pogner
Not so; my Masters, let that alone,
A weighty matter I would make known.

Kothner
Now, tell us, Master, speak!

Pogner
Then hear, and attend ye well.
[9] The feast of John, Midsummer day,
Ye know we keep tomorrow.
In meadows green, by hedges gay,
With song and dance among the hay,
With heart so full of gladness,
Forgetting all his sadness,
Let each rejoice as best he may.
The Singing-School will raise on high
A hymn of praise and glory,
With joyous sounds and hearts aglow,
Into the meadows we will go,
Amid the Festive thronging.
The folk shall hear resounding,
The songs that Mastersingers know.
When gifts are won in strife of song,
That blithely swells and rises,
Then acclamations loud and long,

Will greet both songs and prizes.
As God made me a wealthy man,
And each one gives as best he can,
I sought among my treasure,
A gift beyond all measure,
Lest I to shame be brought;
I found then, what I sought.
In all my journeys far and wide,
I oft was angered greatly,
Finding we burghers were decried
As selfish and unfriendly.
In castle and in humble hut,
The evil slander ended not,
That only treasure and gold,
Our burghers' dreams can hold!
Though in our country's spacious bounds,
The arts, we alone have tended,
For this we are little commended.
But how our deeds do honour us all,
And how, in steadfast mood,
We cherish the fair and good,
The pow'r of art and all its worth,
To that, I would here bear witness on earth:
This gift, then, I choose as prize:
May ye Masters think it wise!
To him whose song, among the rest,
In contest here, you judge the best,
On John the Baptist's day,
Let him be whom he may,
Him give I, a Mastersinger of Nuremberg,
Veit Pogner, with all I possess and all I hold,
Eva, my only child, as bride.

Mastersingers

His words are brave; like word, like man!
 He speaks as only Nurembergers can!
 We'll sing your praises, far and wide,
 Our worthy burgher, Pogner Veit.

Apprentices

All our days, we will raise Pogner's praise!

Vogelgesang

Who would not now un-wedded be?

Sachs

There's some would give their wives with glee!

Kothner

Now single men! Do what you can.

Pogner

Now Masters, hear what I decree!
 A lifeless gift I will not give,
 The maid herself will help to judge.
 The prize shall go as wills the Guild;
 But maiden's hearts may not be willed;
 And whom the Masters choose,
 The bride may still refuse.

Beckmesser

You think that wise? There's danger there!

Kothner

I understand. You place us in the maiden's hand?
 Must we agree?
 Who then could call the Masters' judgement free?

Beckmesser

Whom she loves, let her heart proclaim,
 And leave the Mastersong out of the game!

Pogner

Not so! And why? Let me explain!
 If your judgement elects a man
 Who fails to gain her favour,
 Unwedded she lives then forever.
 A Mastersinger must he be:
 He whom ye crown, and none but he!

Sachs

Aha, I think you've gone too far.
 A maiden's love and Master's aim
 Will hardly burn with equal flame;
 A woman's thought, the people's mind,
 They are to me alike in kind.
 If you would clearly show your neighbours
 How well you love your art,
 And let Eva choose the man she favours,
 Yet not have your verdict barred,
 So let the folk, the judges be,
 With the maid, I'm certain,
 They will agree.

Mastersingers

O-ho! The folk? Aye, that would be good!
 Farewell then, Art and Masterhood!

Kothner

Nay, Sachs! indeed, that's plainly absurd!
 Why give the folk the final word?

Sachs

But hear me out! Why argue so?
 Confess, the rules right well I know:
 And that those rules should suffer no slight,
 Has been my endeavour, day and night.
 But once ev'ry year, it might be better,
 To put those rules themselves to a test,
 To find out if, following custom for ever,
 Their force and life be still at their best!
 And if you would be sure
 You follow Nature's law,
 Ask folk unskilled,
 Who don't know of the rules of our Guild.

(The Apprentices spring up and rub their hands.)

Beckmesser

(Hey! See how the boys make merry!)

Sachs

I'm sure you will not regret it,
 If only on each Midsummer's day,
 Turning aside from custom's way,

You leave your realm of mist and cloud
 And turn yourselves towards the crowd.
 To give the people some pleasure
 We know our aim to be;
 We'd lay before them the matter,
 And ask them if they agree.
 Thus, Folk and Art, both bloom and grow.
 It well might be! Hans Sachs thinks so!

Vogelgesang

You mean right well.

Kothner

And yet you're wrong.

Nachtigal

If mobs may speak, I hold my tongue!

Kothner

But shame will fall upon our Art,
 If in our work the crowd takes part.

Beckmesser

Shame has he brought who talks so loud:
 Writing doggerel rhymes for the crowd.

Pogner

Friend Sachs! What I mean is quite new,
 Too much at one time we should rue!
 I ask then, if all Masters allow,
 Prize and reasons, as I state them now.

Sachs

Let the maiden choose and I agree.

Beckmesser

(This shoemaker enrages me!)

Kothner

Who comes as a suitor here?

Now bachelors, all draw near!

Beckmesser

Perhaps to a widower,

Just ask Hans Sachs!

Sachs

Not so, dear Marker!

A younger man than I or you, must the suitor be,

If Eva's choice with ours agree.

Beckmesser

Than you or I? Ill-mannered boor!

Kothner

Who comes a wooing? Why be afraid?

Is any one here who wishes to wed?

Pogner

Now Masters, to duty let us turn!

And hear from me the news,

That as a Master should

A youthful Knight I present you,

Who wills that we elect him

And here as Master, make him free.

The Knight von Stolzing, here you see!

Beckmesser

[10] (Just as I thought!)

Is that the plan, Veit?

Masters, perhaps the time is too late!

Mastersingers

A Knight, indeed? Should we be glad?

Is there danger here?

None the less, it must have great weight

That Master Pogner for him speaks!

Kothner

Yet, if the Knight is to join our Guild,

He first must be tried and duly passed.

Pogner

Mistake me not! Friend, though he be,

By rules alone, you must your verdict agree.

Put, Master, the questions.

Kothner

Then first let the Knight first tell us:

Are his birth and standing approved?

Pogner

That question I will answer,

For I myself his bond will be

That he is nobly born and free.

The Knight von Stolzing from Frankenland,

By name and letters to me well known,

As last descendant of his line,

He lately left his home and lands, and came

To Nuremberg here, to join our Burghers' Guild.

Beckmesser

Raw, pompous upstart, waste of time!

Nachtigal

Friend Pogner's word is good enough.

Sachs

The rule by the Masters, was made of old,

That lord and peasant, alike we hold:

Here nought is prized but Art alone,

In those who seek the Master's crown.

Kothner

Then his answer I claim:

His Master now let him name.

(Walther takes his place and sings.)

Walther

[11] By silent hearth, one winter's day,

When locked in snow, the castle lay,

How once the laughing Spring did reign,

And sleeping now, should wake again,

An ancient book, to heart and brain,

The blessed tidings brought me:

Sir Walther of the Vogelweid,

Was then, the Master who taught me.

Sachs

A worthy Master.

Beckmesser

But long since dead;

From him, I wonder, what rules could be learned!

Kothner

In what School of Art and singing

Did you receive your instruction ?

Walther

Then when the frost had pass'd away

And sunshine fill'd each summer's day;

What, during winter's dreary spell,

That ancient book had told so well,

That song I heard, o'er moor and fell,

Through field and forest ringing;

From birds' songs on the Vogelweid,

'Twas there I learned my singing

Beckmesser

O-ho. The finches and thrushes,

Taught you our Mastersinging?

What manner of teaching was theirs?

Vogelgesang

Two pleasing verses he has just sung.

Beckmesser

You praise him, Master Vogelgesang,

Since from the birds, he has learned all his song?

Kothner

What say you, Masters, should we end here?
The Knight already is wrong, I fear.

Sachs

We must not judge too lightly!
If Art has taught him rightly;
and good in sound and thought,
Who minds by whom he was taught?

Kothner

Are you prepared to show us all?
If you have found a Mastersong
With words and tune well mated
And by yourself created?

Walther

The secret deep of Winter's sleep,
Of woods in Summer's glory,
The hidden word of book and bird,
Revealed in Poet's story;
The warlike clash, when weapons flash,
And music for a merry dance,
Within my heart are ringing;
These now, to gain life's highest prize,
Must I proclaim in singing.
A song my own, in word and tone,
I gladly now will bring you,
A Mastersong, if I am right,
My Masters, I will sing you.

Beckmesser

What sense is in these whirling words?

Vogelgesang

In truth, 'tis bold!

Nachtigal

Strange is the case.

Kothner

Now Masters, with your leave,
The Marker takes his place.
Does the Knight choose a holy theme?

Walther

My holy sign, the banner of love,
Waving o'er me, floats above!

Kothner

That call we worldly. Therefore now,
Master Beckmesser, take your place.

(Beckmesser goes to the Marker's box.)

Beckmesser

A bitter task today I fear!
The chalk will be busy, well I know!
Young Knight, take care:
Sixtus Beckmesser marketh here:
Here will he lurk

And silently do his rigorous work.
Seven faults he letteth pass by,
With chalk they are marked on the slate:
But, if more than seven faults he should spy,
Then, Sir Knight, you have met your fate.
His ears are keen; but, lest your soul,
If he were seen, should be distressed,
He leaves you at rest.
And hides himself away;
God grant you His grace today.

(goes behind the curtains)

Kothner

^[12] To make your footsteps safe and sure,
These rules come from the Tabulatur.
A song hath 'bars', as the Masters teach
Which duly present a measure each:
For this are sundry stanzas needed,
With laws that must be heeded.
In a stanza, first you put together
Two strophes, sung to one melody;
And each to several lines extend.
Each line or verse, a rhyme must end.
There follows then, the Aftersong,
Which is several verses long.
This also must have its melody,
But this must not like the Strophe be.
The Songs with 'bars' of such a measure,
As Mastersongs we duly treasure.
Of sequent notes as used before,
Our rules allow not more than four.

Who sings a song upon this wise,
Shall gain thereby, the Master's prize!
Be seated in the Singer's chair!

Walther

Here in this chair?

Kothner

'Tis custom here!

Walther *(aside)*

(For thee, beloved, this shall be!)

Kothner

The Singer sits!

Beckmesser *(from behind the curtain)*
Now begin!

COMPACT DISC TWO

Walther

^[1] 'Now begin!'
So the cried the sun with the land;
Loud echoed her command,
And through the forest flying,
Scarce reached its farthest bound,
When distant glens replying,
Gave back a mighty sound.
The woods are long and filled with song
And sweetly sounding voices;

Now loud and clear, the sound draws near;
 The tumult swells, like pealing bells,
 And ev'ry creature rejoices!
 All heard spring's word, and answered to her call,
 New life she'd given all;
 Raised on high, the tender song of spring.
 Deep hid in thorny cover,
 Consumed by wrath and hate,
 Now once his reign is over,
 Old Winter lies in wait:
 In gloom of deepest woods,
 He cowers there and broods,
 How all this joyful singing,
 He may to woe be bringing!
 But, 'Now begin!'
 So rang the cry in my breast,
 Before I had heard love's behest.
 I thought I woke from dreaming;
 Deep down my spirit was thrilled,
 My fevered pulse was leaping,
 My being with joy was filled;
 My blood on fire, with wild desire,
 Some new emotion thronging;
 Through sultry night,
 With greatest might,
 Tempests of sighs, in tumult rise,
 And tell my passion of longing;
 I heard Spring's word
 And answer'd to her call.
 New life she'd given to all;
 Aloud I sang the glorious song of love.

(Beckmesser comes out of the box.)

Beckmesser

^[2] Then have you finished?

Walther

Why do you ask?

Beckmesser

See, the slate here with your faults is full.

Walther

But wait! Unto my lady's praise,
 A fitting lay, now would I raise.

Beckmesser

Sing where you will!
 Here, fixed is your fate!
 Ye Masters, turn your eyes on the slate;
 The like of this was never heard!
 No, never, though you pledge your word

Walther

I ask you, Master is this not wrong?
 May no one hear me end my song?

Pogner

One word, Sir Marker! Be not unjust.

Beckmesser

Be Marker henceforth, who ever will.
 But, that the Knight has failed beyond all doubt,

That will I prove to all the Masters' Guild.
 But, heavy toil the task will be!
 Where begin it, what sense no man can see?
 Mistakes in quantity and rhyme,
 This time I will ignore.
 Too short, too long, with no thought for time,
 Have you heard, such nonsense before?
 His 'hazy meaning', that's bad enough.
 Tell me what sense you find in this stuff?

Mastersingers

I found no sense, I must confess!
 I could see no end.

Beckmesser

And then the mode, what medley it showed,
 Of 'Bold Adventure,' 'Blue Rider spur' mode,
 'High Firtree' 'Proud Stripling' tone!
 No form or pause, no coloratur,
 Of melody no trace could I hear!

Kothner

I understood nothing at all.

Ortel

Who calls that a song?

Moser

We listen too long!

Foltz

Who calls that a song?

Nachtigal

We listen too long!

Vogelgesang

Empty noise I find it!

Zorn

There's nothing behind it!

Kothner

And from his seat he jumps while he's singing!

Beckmesser

Do you wish me to show what I have detected,
 Or at once declare he is rejected?

Sachs

^[3] Stay, Masters! Why so much haste?
 Not ev'ry one does share your taste.
 The Singer's bold intention,
 I found it new, but hardly wrong;
 Though he does scorn convention,
 His step was firm and ever strong.
 If by the rules you'd measure
 What does not with your rules agree;
 Forget the laws you treasure,
 Seek out first, what his rules may be.

Beckmesser

A-ha, 'tis well! Now hear him, pray!
 For Sachs to bunglers shows the way,
 Where they may roam at their pleasure,

With none to take their measure!
Sing to the mob in the streets and the market,
Here, singers are ruled by the laws of singing.

Sachs

Friend Marker, why so hotly burning?
You are upset, I fear.
Your judgment might be more discerning
Had you a keener ear!
And so, now hear my final word,
That the singer to the end must be heard.

Beckmesser

The Masters' Guild and all the Schools,
Set against Sachs are nought but fools!

Sachs

Now God forbid that I should claim
To flout our laws or deny their aim!
'Tis written in this fashion:
The Marker shall be chosen so,
'That, free from hate and passion,
He shall not swerve for friend or foe.'
Now if our Marker goes a wooing,
Can he refrain his best from doing
To make his rival seem a fool,
And shame him here before the School?

Nachtigal

You go too far!

Kothner

Our wrath beware!

Pogner

I pray you, Masters, no more strife!

Beckmesser

Ei! What is it to Master Sachs then,
What I may see fit to do?
Let him pay more attention to cobbling,
And make a better shoe!
But since my cobbler has taken to verse,
The shoes he makes, have grown worse and worse;
Unsound throughout, they flap all about!
This stuff he loves to scrawl.
He can just keep it all
His lays and plays, his farcical muse,
If he'll just bring me my fine new shoes!

Sachs

That's true I must admit,
But do you think it fit,
That if I write a paltry verse
On the donkey-driver's shoe,
Our wise and learned Sir Town Clerk
Should not have his verses too?
But verses worthy of your choice,
Among all the humble poems I voice,
Found I as yet not one!

But now, perhaps 'twill come,
When Sir Walter's Song I've heard,
Let him sing on now undisturbed!

Mastersingers

No further! an end! No more, no more!

Sachs (*to Walther*)

Sing, just to make the Masters roar!

Beckmesser

What use is all our schooling?
Such singing is but fooling!

Walther

Now from the thorny thicket,
The owl flies through the wood.
With hoots and cries,
He wakens the raven's croaking brood;
Now calls the dusky crowd
To rise and shriek aloud:
With voices hoarse and hollow,
The crows and jackdaws follow!
Up then soars, on golden pinions borne,
A bird to greet the morn,
With wondrous plumage o'er me,
Serene in Heaven high;
It gleams and floats before me,
And lures me on to fly.
Now swells my heart, with tender smart,
As wings by need are given;

To mountain height, in dauntless flight,
From city's tomb, towards its home,
Its wings are surely driven,
To meadows where the song of birds,
The Master first revealed in words;
Where I my song will raise
In fairest woman's praise:
There on high,
Though ravenmasters croak and cry,
My song of love shall swell!
On earth, ye Masters, farewell!

(The utmost confusion breaks out during Walther's song.)

Beckmesser

Every fault, both great and small!
Look you here – do but see the slate.
'Faulty verse' – 'unsingable phrases'
'Word clippings' – I reprehend.
'Aequivocal' – 'Rhymes in unfit places!'
'Reversed', 'misplaced' from end to end.
A 'Patchwork Song' here, filling the pauses!
'Hazy meaning', see everywhere.
'Unmeaning words', 'Breaking off', 'Lame clauses'.
There 'Faulty breathing', 'Surprises' here!
Incomprehensible melody.
A mixing up of all tones that be.
If you are equal to this strain,
Masters, count all his faults again.
Already at the eighth he was cast,
But so long as he, no man did ever last.

Well over fifty, that is clear!
Say, shall the Knight now be Master here?
Now Masters, judge aright!

Mastersingers

Ah, yes, how true, for with each verse,
The young Knight goes from bad to worse.
Let Sachs think of him as he may choose,
Him, we refuse!
Shall any Master, spite our denial,
As Master choose, whomever he will?
May all come in without a trial?
What good then, to Masters, their skill?
Hei! see how the Knight is distraught,
Though Sachs for him well has fought.
'Tis not to be borne! Now make an end!
Each Master, speak, and uplift his hand.
Rejected is the Knight!

Sachs

Ah! what a fire, the heavens inspire.
Ye Masters, let him be heard.
Hear, if Sachs gives his word.
Sir Marker, there, let us have rest.
Let others hear him, grant that at least.
In vain! a vain endeavour.
Nought is heard, I may hold my tongue;
No use, though he sing for ever.
In truth 'tis brave, striving so long.
With heart in its place aright,
A true born Poet-Knight.
Hans Sachs may make both verse and shoe,

But Knight is he, Knight and Poet, too.

Pogner

Ah, yes, indeed, right well I see,
My Knight will ne'er a Master be.
If I should be overborne,
I fear the outcome I shall mourn.
How gladly would I welcome him.
Such kinsmen would I not refuse;
[But when the winner comes a-wooing,
Who knows if him, my child will choose?
I fear me, when he woos,
The maid, his suit will refuse.

Apprentices

Good luck to Mastersinging!
Your garland then may you be winning!
The silken garland of flowers bright,
Will that, by good fortune, be yours, Sir Knight?

(Walther leaves the scene contemptuously amid the uproar.)

Act II

^[4] Prelude

First Scene

*The street before the houses of Pogner and Sachs.
A summer evening.*

Apprentices

^[5] Midsummer day! Midsummer day!
Flowers and ribbons, wear while you may!

David *(aside softly)*

The silken garland of flowers fine,
Would that tomorrow it might be mine!

Magdalene *(Magdalene has come from Pogner's house.)*

Hist! David!

David *(turning towards the alley)*

Still are you calling?
Why should I sing your silly ditties!

Apprentices

David, give ear. Proud, be not here.
Turn but your eyes, if you are wise.
'Midsummer day, Midsummer day,'
And he cannot see his Lene, and turns away!

Magdalene

David! Listen! Turn round my dear.

David

Ah, Magdalene, you are here.

Magdalene *(pointing to her basket)*

Look in and see what is inside;
I brought it for my sweet-heart, dear.
But tell me first, what luck had Sir Walther?
You gave him advice? Did he win the crown?

David

Ah, Magdalene, 'twas unlucky,
He was rejected all hope is gone.

Magdalene

Rejected? No hope?

David

What is that to you?

Magdalene

Hands from the basket! Do not touch it!
Alas! Now misfortune I see!

(She goes back into the house. David looks after her.)

Apprentices

Hail! Hail! our young man wants to wed!
How kindly he is received!
We heard and saw all that was said,
He offered her his heart, his life if she'd but ask it,
But she would not give him her basket!

David

Go back to your work! Stop fooling about!

Apprentices *(they make a ring and dance)*

'Midsummer day! Midsummer day'
Each man must wed as best he may:
The master weds, the prentice weds,
Fortune will follow the bold ones,

When grey beards wed the youngest maids,
The prentices wed the old ones.
Juch hei! Juch hei!
Midsummer day, Midsummer day!

Sachs
What's this? Must you be always in fights?

David
Not I, they were all teasing me!

Sachs
Pay no heed, learn better than they!
Go in, lock up! Bring me a light!

David
Have I to sing now?

Sachs
No, no song
To pay for your cheeky interruptions!
Now on the last, put the shoes and leave me!

(David and Sachs enter the workshop.)
(Enter Pogner and Eva.)

Pogner *(peeping through a chink in Sachs' shutter)*
[6] We'll see if Master Sachs is there. I'd speak with him;
Shall I go in?

Eva *(peeping)*
I think he's in; his light still shines.

Pogner
Shall I? What use though?
Better not.
(He turns away.)
On ent'ring some new venture,
No man wants words of censure,
And he 'twas who said I went too far!
And yet old custom not heeding,
I followed on his leading!
But yet perhaps 'twas vanity.
(He turns to Eva.)
And thou, my child? Hast thou no word?

Eva
A child obeys and is not heard.

Pogner
How wise! How good!
Come sit down here and talk awhile with me my child.

Eva
Is it not too cool? Though the day's been warm.

Pogner
Ah no, the air is kindly,
And soft the night and friendly:
'Tis promise that the fairest day,
Tomorrow will be dawning.

O child! Does not thy heart tell thee,
What joy tomorrow thine may be,
When Nuremberg, in all her state,
With acclamations ringing,
Will come with folk both small and great,
To see thee crown our singing,
And thou as bride shalt crown the man
Who gaineth thee as prize,
The Master of thy Choice?

Eva
Dear father, must he a Master be?

Pogner
Yes, child, a Master of thy choice.

Eva *(Magdalene appears at the door.)*
Yes, of my choice but now go in.
(to Magdalene)
Yes, Lene, yes, 'tis supper time!

Pogner
But we have no guest?

Eva
Not Sir Walther?

Pogner
How so?

Eva
Did you not see him?

Pogner
He pleased me not. But yet! What now?
Ah! I'm a fool!

Eva
Dear father, now quick! Go change your gown.

(He goes into the house.)

Pogner
Hm! What thoughts in my head go round.

Magdalene *(to Eva)*
What have you heard?

Eva
No word he spoke.

Magdalene
My David says, your lover has failed.

Eva *(alarmed)*
Sir Walther? Ah me! What shall I do?
Ah, Lene, my fears! How to allay them?

Magdalene
Perhaps from Sachs?

Eva *(cheerfully)*
Ah! He loves me well: to him I will go.

Magdalene

Beware of your father,
For he will notice if you are late.
In a while I'll meet you and tell you a secret
That someone confided to me lately.

Eva

Who then? Sir Walther?

Magdalene

Not he! No, Beckmesser.

Eva

[7] A pretty secret, that!

*(She goes into the house, Magdalene follows her.)
(Sachs has returned from the inner room. He turns to David.)*

Sachs

Lets see. That's good,
Here at the door, put my stool and tools now
outside.
Then go to bed, be up in time,
Sleep off your folly, tomorrow be wise!

David

More work this evening?

Sachs

What's it to you?

David *(aside)*

But why does Lene sleep tonight?
Why does the Master work tonight?

Sachs

You still here?

David

Sleep well, Master!

Sachs

Good night.

(David goes into the room.)

[8] The elder's scent, how tender,
How mild, how rich it falls,
It bids my soul surrender,
Words from out my heart it calls.
And yet such words are hard to find
For one like me, simple of mind!
Though for my work I've no liking,
Dear friend, let me go free,
I'd better get back to my working,
And let all this poetry be!
(He begins to work then leans back in thought.)
And yet, it haunts me still,
I feel, yet follow it ill,
Cannot forget it, yet still cannot grasp it,
It slips from my hand, e'en when I clasp it,
But yet, how could I measure,
What no earthly measure could fit?
It flouted all that we treasure,
Yet in it no fault I find.

It seemed so old, yet new did it ring,
Like morning song of birds in spring.
One who heard, and madly dared
That song to sing again,
Would reap but scorn and shame.
Spring's sweetest strain,
Its wondrous pain,
These taught him what he must say:
Then sang he, in Nature's way,
And Nature's way, he captured,
I saw him so enraptured.
The bird who sang today,
From Mother Nature learned his singing;
Masters may show dismay,
Hans Sachs will ever hear it ringing!

Eva (stands unnoticed by Sachs' door)

[9] Good evening, Master!
You're still working?

(Sachs starts in agreeable surprise.)

Sachs

Ah, child! Sweet Eva! Still awake?
And yet I think I know the reason:
The new-made shoes?

Eva

You are quite wrong!
The shoes hardly have been in my mind;
They are so fine, so richly made,

That they on my feet,
Have not even been tried.

Sachs

Tomorrow you will wear them as bride?

Eva

But who will the bridegroom be?

Sachs

Who can tell?

Eva

Can you say I'll be a bride?

Sachs

Ah well, ev'ry one knows.

Eva

Yes, ev'ry one knows,
Friend Sachs, wiser and wiser grows!
I thought he knew more.

Sachs

What should I know, then?

Eva

Ah, look now! Must I my secret show you?
Am I, then, so dull?

Sachs

I don't say that.

Eva
Are you, then, so crafty?

Sachs
I don't know that.

Eva
You know naught! You say naught!
Ah, friend Sachs,
Now I see truly, pitch is not wax.
I thought that your cunning was finer.

Sachs
Child, both wax and pitch are known to me,
The wax strengthens the silken stitching,
With which for you those dainty shoes I sewed;
Now here are some shoes that call for pitching,
To help a clown on his stony road.

Eva
Who, then is he? Someone great?

Sachs
Yes, truly! A Master proud who boldly woos,
Expecting to triumph by his singing:
For Beckmesser's feet I make these shoes.

Eva
Then pitch in plenty, let there be:
May he stick there and leave me free.

Sachs
He hopes to win you with his singing.

Eva
A man like that!

Sachs
He's bachelor.
We have but few unmarried men.

Eva
Might not a widower go a-wooing?

Sachs
My child he'd be too old for thee.

Eva
Ah, what too old? What wins is Art;
And all who sing, to woo are free.

Sachs
Don't try to pull wool o'er my eyes.

Eva
Not I, you, 'tis you that are cunning!
Your falseness you dare not deny.
Only God knows now who's taking your fancy!
For many a year I dreamed 'twas I.

Sachs
Because in my arms oft I cradled you?

Eva
I see now, why you were childless then.

Sachs
I once had wife and children in arm.

Eva
But dead is your wife, and I am grown?

Sachs
So tall and fair!

Eva
The thought would come,
That I might be wife and child in one.

Sachs
Then I should have child and also wife!
How happy then would be my life!
Yes, yes, your plot is quite clear to me!

Eva
I think the Master is laughing at me!
I'm sure 'twill cause him but little sorrow,
If under his nose, from all, tomorrow,
Old Beckmesser wins me with his song.

Sachs
If he's successful, what can be done?
Only your father can advise.

Eva
Where does a Master then keep his eyes?
Would I ask you now, if that were so?

Sachs
Ah yes, that's true, I am dense I know.
All day in thought I've tossed and turned,
But still it seems I've nothing learned.

Eva
Was it in the Song School? Today you met?

Sachs
Yes, child, at that hearing I was upset,

Eva
Ah Sachs! If only you'd mentioned the matter,
I'd not have wearied you with my chatter.
But say, what man your favour has sought?

Sachs
A noble man, and quite untaught.

Eva
A noble? O tell, and did he succeed?

Sachs
On no, my child, we disagreed.

Eva
Oh Sachs, do tell, how did it go?
Can I be calm if it plagues you so?
Did he have no luck then? Was he so wrong?

Sachs
For the Knight, all hope of success is gone.

Magdalene (*comes out of the house*)
Eva!

Eva (*to Sachs*)
Is it hopeless? Why?
Is there no way that one could try?
Was he so wrong, so much at fault,
That none of the Masters would take his part?

Sachs
My child, the man who meets such disaster,
No Master will be in any land.
For one who's born as a Master,
Receives from his Masters no helping hand.

Magdalene
Your father calls.

Eva (*still more urgently to Sachs*)
Can I not be told
If none of the Masters, the Knight would
uphold?

Sachs
Would that be likely?
Who'd be his friend,
One who made all Masters feel they were small?
That haughty noble, devil take him!
Let the world outside awake him!
What we have learnt with toil and care,
Let him leave us in peace, to enjoy it.
Why should he come here and destroy it?
His fortune, let him seek elsewhere.

Eva
Yes! Elsewhere then, 'twill come I know!
Though you may try to spoil his chances,
Where hearts with loving ardour glow
In spite of nasty Master Hanses!
Yes, Lene, yes! I'm coming now!
Fine consolation I get here!
The smell of pitch could do him harm.
Let him burn it and keep himself warm.

(*She crosses the street with Magdalene.*)
(*Sachs looks after her.*)

Sachs
(I thought as much, now I must help!)

Magdalene
My dear, why are you out so late?
Your father called.

Eva
You go instead and say that I am gone to bed.

Magdalene
No, no, listen! This you should know!
Beckmesser found me and would not go
Until I promised that I would bring you
Tonight to your window, then he will sing you
The song that he's hoping will win him the prize,
And earn him favour now in your eyes.

Eva
Must I bear that too? (I long for him!)

Magdalene
Has David been here?

Eva
What's he to me?

Magdalene (*aside*)
I was too hard; now he'll be pining.

Eva
No one in sight?

Magdalene
It sounds like someone coming.

Eva
Walther!

Magdalene
Come, it's time to go in!

Eva
Not yet, until I my dear one have seen!

Magdalene
I made a mistake, it was not he.
Now come, or soon your father will suspect!

Eva
I'm so afraid!

Magdalene
Now let us be thinking,
How we can send that Beckmesser packing.

Eva
Go to the window instead of me.

Magdalene
What? Me? How great would be David's jealousy!
He sleeps by the street there – Hi! Hi! what fun!

Eva
I hear footsteps.

Magdalene (*to Eva*)
Come in, now you must.

Eva
Now nearer!

Magdalene

You're wrong, there's no one there.
Now in you come, till your father's in bed.

Pogner (*Pogner's voice from inside*)

Ho! Lene! Eva!

Magdalene

'Tis high time. Listen!
Come! It cannot be he!

(*Walther appears.*)

Eva

¹⁰ He's here now!

Magdalene

The time has come to use our wits!
(*She enters the house.*)
Ah, my own love, ah my true love!
All I tell thee, for thou knowest;
All compels me and I know it:
You are truly Hero, Poet,
And my only friend.

Walther

Ah, th'art wrong, thy friend am I,
But as Poet not yet worthy,
And the Masters all do spurn me.
All my passion met with scorning,
And I know it; vain my yearning
For my lady's hand.

Eva

Oh how wrong! Her hand alone
Will give the victor's prize,
And as thy heart now lives in mine,
Now shall the crown be thine.

Walther

Ah no! Th'art wrong, my lady's hand,
Though no one else should gain it,
Yet if thy father's will must stand,
Never may I attain it!
'A Mastersinger must he be!
He who is crown'd and none but he!
Those words your father firmly spake,
Though he should wish, he cannot break!
That promise gave me hope;
And all around me was transformed.
I sang, by love inspired,
That I, the Master's crown might gain.
But all these Masters! Ha! These Masters!
All these rhyme-besotted, old-fashioned poets.
With shame and fury my heart is fired,
Cursing the pitfall to which I was lured.
I must seek freedom,
Back in my own house where I am Master by
right.
Will you come with me?
I bring you freedom, come and leave here tonight!
All hope has left me,
There's no choice before me!
Ev'rywhere Masters, like evil creatures,
Round me they're flocking, jeering and mocking,

Ev'rywhere judges, Markers with grudges,
Out of the alleys, making their sallies,
Crowding and hustling, Masters are bustling;
In jeering grimaces, twisting their maces
In circles about you, so to flout you;
Snuffling and screeching, your hand beseeching;
As Master's plaything, on the chair they place
you,
Trembling and quaking, there to disgrace you!
And I must bear it, tamely attend them,
Dare not raise a hand to slay them.

(*The horn of the Nighwatchman is heard.*)

Eva

Beloved, curb your scorn,
That was the nightwatchman's horn.
Under the linden, hide yourself quickly,
For here the watchman will pass.

Magdalene

Eva, now come, it is time.

Walther

Oh, stay!

Eva

I must be gone.

Walther

But why?

Eva

The Masters' decree.

(*She disappears with Magdalene into the house.*)

Nightwatchman (*The Nightwatchman passes by.*)

Hark to what I say, good people,
The clock strikes ten in the steeple;
Keep guard now, over your fire and light,
That none may take harm this night.
Praise ye God the Lord!

(*exit*)

Sachs (*who has listened to the conversation from
behind the door*)

Now some mischief seems to be planned.
Is an abduction near at hand?
I'll watch out! This must not be.

Walther

Will she not come back? Oh, what pain!
(*Eva comes in Magdalene's dress out of the house.*)
But look is that she?
Ah no! 'Tis the older one.
(*Eva sees Walther and hastens towards him.*)
Yet surely; yes!

Eva

The foolish child, she's here now! Here!

Walther (*carried away*)

But no more delaying, gazing in your eyes,
I know I've won the Master-prize!

Eva

Away now! Away now! If only we were gone!

Walther

Here, through the alley, then; ready beyond the
gate,
Squire and horses wait.

*(As they both turn to go, Sachs opens the shutter
so that Eva and Walther suddenly find themselves
clearly illuminated.)*

Eva (*hastily drawing Walther back*)

Alas, the cobbler!

If he should see!

Hide, now keep from out of his way!

Walther

What other way leads to the gate?

Eva

Round by the street there;

But how it goes, I'm not sure I know,

And there we'd be seen by the watchman.

Walther

So then, through the alley.

Eva

But we must wait till the cobbler goes.

Walther

I'll make him turn from his window.

Eva

Keep out of sight, he knows you.

Walther

The cobbler?

Eva

'Tis Sachs.

Walther

Hans Sachs? My friend!

Eva

Not so! For he speaks of you only to flout you.

Walther

[11] What? Sachs? He too? I'll put out his light.

Eva

No, No! But hark!

(Enter Beckmesser, who begins to tune his lute.)

Walther

That's a lute I hear.

Eva

Ah! my distress!

*(As Sachs hears the lute he withdraws his light a
little.)*

Walther

What do you fear?

The cobbler see, has moved his light:

Now let us go!

Eva

Ah! See you not there,

Another comes and takes his stand?

Walther

I hear and see: he has a lute;

But why's he here so late at night?

Eva

'Tis Beckmesser, Ah!

Sachs (*Sachs overhears Eva's cry*)

So I was right!

Walther

The Marker? He? and here in my power?

Then on, he'll get what he deserves!

Eva

Now God forbid! Would you awake my father?

He'll sing a song, and then he'll go

Come let us hide beside this wall here!

Ah, me what trouble these love can bring!

(She draws Walther under the lime tree.)

*(Beckmesser strums loudly on his lute, and when he
is prepared to sing, Sachs strikes a heavy blow with
his hammer.)*

Sachs

[12] Jerum! Jerum! Hal-la-hal-lo-he! O-ho!

*(Beckmesser springs up angrily and perceives Sachs
at work.)*

Tra-la-lei! Tra-la-lei! O-Ho!

Beckmesser

What can that be? Accursed noise!

Sachs

As Eve from Paradise was cast,

Her sin she soon repented,

For, limping o'er the stony path,

Her feet were sore tormented.

Beckmesser

What's on that stupid cobbler's mind?

Walther

What can he mean? He sings your name.

Eva
I also heard; it is not I;
Yet hidden malice I can hear.

Walther
Why must we stay? The time goes by!

Sachs
That filled the Lord with woe,
Her feet he cherished so:
And then an angel He did choose
To make for her a pair of shoes;
And since poor Adam, as I know,
Against the stones had stubbed his toe,
To help him walk without a care,
He made for him another pair.

Beckmesser
What? Master? Up? and so late at night?

Sachs
Why Beckmesser, not asleep?
Your shoes cause you a needless worry!
You see they'll be done, if I but hurry!

Beckmesser
Give the devil the shoes! Here. I want peace!

Sachs
Jerum! Hal-la-hal-lo-he O-ho!
Tra-la-lei! Tra-la-lei! O-he!

Beckmesser
Oh God, she will think 'tis I who sing!

Sachs
Eva, hear my tale of woe
And let us mourn together!
The world condemns the cobbler's soul
And tramples on his leather!
Without an angel there,
To drive away my care,
And call me up to Paradise,
I'd leave this work that I despise!
But when enthroned in Heav'n on high,
The world beneath my feet would lie,
Then, born anew,
Hans Sachs a shoemaker and a poet too!

Beckmesser
(The window is opening!)

(Magdalene, in Eva's dress, cautiously shows herself.)

Eva
His song so pains me, I know not why!
Away! let us hasten!

Walther
Yes, now, with my sword.

Eva
Not that! Ah, no!

Beckmesser
Good lord! 'Tis she!

Walther *(taking his hand from his sword)*
Scarce worth the while.

Eva
Yes, patience is best!

Beckmesser
Now if he sings longer, I shall be lost.

Eva
O best of men!
That I should cause you so much pain!

(Beckmesser comes up to Sachs playing his lute sideways, as to Magdalene at the window.)

Beckmesser
Friend Sachs! Let me but speak a word!

Walther *(to Eva)*
Who's at the window?

Eva
'Tis Magdalene.

Beckmesser
Why let the shoes so much distress you?
I give my word, I'd clean forgot them.
As shoemaker I know your worth,

In Art your worth,
In Art your place is first on earth.

Walther
That's turning the tables! I can't help laughing.
If only he would begin his story

(Walther and Eva follow the scene between Sachs and Beckmesser with growing interest.)

Beckmesser *(Beckmesser strums repeatedly on his lute)*
Your judgment, too, is seldom wrong;
I beg you, hear this little song;
For help from you, I'd gladly borrow,
That I may win the prize tomorrow.

Sachs
A-ha! Flattery will not hold me!
Ne'er again will I let you scold me.
For since your cobbler took to verse,
The shoes he makes have grown worse and worse;
Unsound throughout, they flap all about!
Therefore on verse and rhyme, no more I'll waste
my time,
My skill, my wit, no longer I'll use,
So that tomorrow, you'll have your shoes!

Beckmesser
No, let that be! 'Twas only a jest.
My true feelings you might have guessed.
The folk think well of you,

And the maiden esteems you too:
When for tomorrow's Prize,
I sing to win her favour,
In vain, I would endeavour,
If my song she should despise.
So listen now to me and tell me honestly,
Where it is right and wrong,
And I'll improve my song!

Sachs
Oh, that could never be;
How could such honour fall to me?
If nought but doggerel rhymes I can stammer,
Then doggerel rhymes I sing, as my leather I
hammer!
Jerum! Jerum! Hal-la-hal-lo-he!

Beckmesser
Accursed rogue! All my senses leave me,
Amid his song that reeks of blacking.

Sachs
O-ho! Tra-la-lei! Tra-la-lei! O-he!

Beckmesser
Silence! You'll wake the neighbours up.

Sachs
They're used to it, they will not stir.
'O Eva, O Eva!'

Beckmesser
Oh, you base, black-hearted rascal!
More tricks like this you'll not play here!
Now at once, stop all that howling,
Or you'll repent your trick I swear!
(*He strums furiously.*)
You are always so envious:
Though you think yourself so clever:
That other men have wits, always enraged you:
But I know you well and can see through you!
That you cannot play the Marker's part,
So grieves your cantankerous, cobbler's heart.
Ah, well, so long as Beckmesser sings;
While a single rhyme to his lips he brings;
So long as I, among Masters, am famed,
Though Nuremberg bloom and wax,
I swear to you, Hans Sachs,
Never shall you as Marker be named.

Sachs (*Sachs has listened to him quietly and
attentively.*)
Was that your song?

Beckmesser
The devil take it!

Sachs
The rules were lacking, but brave the sound.

Beckmesser
Will you not listen?

Sachs
For Heaven's sake, then, sing on,
While soles for your shoes I'm making.

Beckmesser
But, you'll keep quiet?

Sachs
Oh, please sing on!
My cobbling, look, is not yet done!

Beckmesser
That accursed knocking passes all bearing.

Sachs
How else can your shoes be fit for wearing?

Beckmesser
How can I sing through so much clamour?

Sachs
Yours is the song, mine the shoe and hammer!

Beckmesser
I don't want the shoes!

Sachs
That's where you're wrong,
For tomorrow you'll sing a different song.
But wait! Perhaps it can be done;
As partners, we can work as one.
Though to your shoes I must keep turning,

The art of Marker, I would be learning.
In that you have no peer, 'tis true:
How could I learn, if not from you?
Then sing away, and I will mark,
And still make progress with my work.

Beckmesser
Mark for me, then, and if I go wrong,
Score with your chalks, as I sing my song.

Sachs
No sir! With chalk, can no shoes be nailed.
With my hammer on the last – I'll mark where
you've failed.

Beckmesser
(Accursed malice! God, now it's late!
I must strike up soon or the maid won't wait!)

(*He strums eagerly.*)

Sachs
Now begin, time flies, or I'll sing again.

Beckmesser
No, not that! Be silent!
(The Devil! How troublesome!)
Now if you're going to mark, you must watch me,
That's right, just strike with the hammer when
you catch me;
But you must abide by the rules alone;
Do not mark phrases the rules may allow.

Sachs
On the cobbler's rules, then, I take my stand,
Though his work is burning beneath his hand.

Beckmesser
By Masters' rule?

Sachs
And cobbler's tool!

Beckmesser
Never a fault, then: fair and good?

Sachs
Then you tomorrow, go unshoed!

Walther (*to Eva*)
(Are we all mad, or in a dream?
I'm still there in the School, it seems.)

Sachs
Sit you down here!

Beckmesser
Stand here, I'd rather.

(*The nightwatchman's horn is heard in the distance.*)

Eva
Sweet sleep, enfold me like a spell:
For good or evil, who can tell?

Sachs
But why so far?

Beckmesser
Because the Marker, must not be seen, so says
the rule.

Sachs
Won't hear you from there!

Beckmesser
My voice is full; more sweetly to your ear 'twill
sound.

(*He takes his place opposite the window.*)

Sachs
(How fine!) Ready then! Ready now!

Beckmesser (*Beckmesser tunes down the D string which he has unconsciously screwed up in his rage.*)
[13] 'I see now dawning daylight that gives me delight
true;
(*Sachs raises his hammer then strikes.*)
And wakes in me a gay light... heart and
courage.'
(*Sachs strikes again.*)
Is that a joke? What fault can you find there?

Sachs
Better have sung there,
'And wakes in me a gay, light heart and courage.'

Beckmesser
Pray how would it rhyme, then,
With 'Now dawning daylight?'

Sachs
Is accent to you so small a matter?
I think the phrase should fit the rhyme!

Beckmesser
I will not argue!
Stop all that chatter, or you will repent!

Sachs
You're wasting time.

Beckmesser
I'm all upset.

Sachs
Begin it once more:
Three faults I pass, as marked before.

Beckmesser
(I'll take no notice of what he may say,
As long as she likes the way I play!)
'I see now dawning daylight,
That gives me delight true;
And wakes in me a gay, light
Heart and a courage new.
I think not now of dying:
Rather of trying a young maiden to win.'
(*Sachs strikes with his hammer several times.*)

'Why think I of this day,
It other days doth excel?
Loudly to all I say it,
That I love a damsel.
Whose father gives me truly,
Promises duly,
I as bridegroom shall stand.
Let all who dare,
Now come and stare,
Here upon the maiden so fair,
With whom I fondly hope to pair.
Therefore seemeth brighter the air,
Today in all the land.'
(*Sachs has hammered furiously throughout the foregoing.*)

Sachs
Say, are you finished?

Beckmesser
Why ask you now?

Sachs
Since the shoes are both quite ready, now.
I call that a proper Marker's shoe!
My Marker's poem's finished too!

Beckmesser
That I, Master was duly chosen,
I'd show to her;
To win the prize I truly burn
With thirst and hunger.

The Nine Muses I summon,
That they may come on
And my attainments prove.
I've kept the rules exactly,
Measure and beat I know;
And if my song goes roundly,
Some slips may be let go,
If with heart, full of terror,
He makes some error,
Who seeks for a maid's love.
For, by the Muse,
My skin I'd lose,
My office, rank, the goods I use,
That you, the prize should not refuse,
And me, the young damsel should choose
If she, my song approve.

Sachs

By long and short strokes beaten,
Upon your sole 'tis written;
Now read it well
And what it tells,
Remember evermore.
Good song keeps tune and proper rhyme,
And lest your pen forget it,
Upon your shoes, I have set it.
Now take your road;
You're rightly shod;
These shoes will fit your feet,
Their soles will mark the beat!

(David opens the window.)

David
Who ever's this?
(sees Magdalene)
And who's up there?
That's Lene, there, it's her, I'm sure.
Good Lord, 'twas he!
She told him to come.
This then, is the fellow that she prefers.
Wait till I begin!
I'll polish your skin.

(David comes back armed with a cudgel. More and more neighbours open the windows and look out.)

Kothner and other Neighbours

Who's howling there? Who cries so loud?
late at night, is that allowed?
Keep quiet there! It's time for bed.
That donkey's bray would wake the dead,
Ah! hear but how he brays!
Go and try some other place.

(The neighbours have come down to the street in their nightclothes. Sachs watches the growing tumult. David throws himself on Beckmesser.)

David

14 The devil take your song, accursed rogue!

Magdalene

Oh, heaven! David! Good Lord! what ill-luck.
Oh, stop them! They will both be dead.

Beckmesser

Accursed knave! let me go free!

David

Not yet! I'll thrash you 'til you can't stand.

Magdalene

David! are you mad?
Hear me, David! Let the Marker there, go free.
He has not done me harm!
Good Lord, he has him still.
Lord save us all, if this cannot be stopped.
I can't hear my own voice.
David! 'tis Beckmesser!

(More and more people enter.)

Neighbours

Look out! Come on!
Two men are fighting there
You there, let him go.
Let go your hold, or we'll fight, too!

(They begin to fight amongst themselves.)

Journeyman

Hey, all you fellows, there!
The sound of strife and blows, I hear.

Come on, there's fighting close at hand;
All journeymen, come take your stand.
'Tis the weavers! 'tis the tanners.
The bargain-spoilers, now tan them well.
'Tis as I thought! always at their games.
Still they come, the fight is getting hot.
There, the butcher, Klaus, I plainly see.
The fifth is tomorrow.
Somewhere there's a fire.
Hey, there go their cudgels.
Tailors with their measures.
Now let us gaily go and joy the fray.
Hello! now get you gone!
We get here just in time.
What, would you, then, block the way
By force against us?
Make room we come to fight.
Girdlers! Tinkers! Pewterers! Wax-boilers!
Glue-boilers. Get you gone, yourselves.
Never waver! knock them over!
Cloth-cutters! Flax-weavers!
Come along, if you dare.
Get you home yourselves and go to bed.
Comrades, comrades! All the Guilds, come out!

Neighbours

At once, let one another go!
What seek you here? What's that to you?
What have they done to you?
All know you well! They know you better!
Donkey! Stupid! are you afraid, then?
What! has your wife been cross?

That for the payment!
 See how the cudgels fall!
 Blockhead I take that!
 What, not yet found your wits?
 You rascal, let me catch you,
 Then I'll pay you out.
 Take that for payment.
 Short-weight! I've owed that, long.
 Take yourself home, you'll catch it from your wife!
 What's that to you, if I won't go?
 Send home the journeymen!
 Hold your noise! Knock them over.
 We won't give way. Never waver!

(The confusion increases.)

Apprentices

Come on! They're fighting here.
 'Tis the cobblers. 'Tis the tailors.
 Drunken wretches. Starving beggars.
 We know the locksmiths!
 Surely they're the ones who started this.
 I know the joiners there
 I see the butchers there!
 I know the barbers at a glance!
 Come on, come on and join the dance!
 Still they come! They're at it, tooth and nail,
 Grocers, too! a timid band,
 With barley-sugar sticks in hand,
 With pepper-corns and cinnamon!
 They smell alright but spoil the appetite!
 They smell alright, but hesitate to fight.

Do you wish to speak to me?
 Be still! Am I meant to speak to you?
 See, that one there,
 His nose is everywhere!
 Still they're coming on. Gaily, bravely!
 And now the fun begins!
 Hey! there goes! Crack!
 One for your snout!
 Crack! like a thunderclap.
 Where that fell, the hair won't grow soon.
 Like hailstones now, the blows come down.
 They'll soon be bloody heads, arms and legs.
 Let them all get home who will not fight.
 Hold your own, though journeymen should come!
 If you give way, 'twould be a shame.
 Hey! Hurrah! Freely and merrily lay on
 Strike with might and main.
 All stand together, like one man.

(The street is full of a struggling mass of people.)

Women

If only father were not there!
 My husband, surely will be there!
 Look over there! The noise and strife
 Freezes up the blood.
 Listen, you below there!
 Do have a little sense.
 Are you then, all alike,
 So ready for a fight?
 There, my man's in the fight!

Are your heads all full of wine?
 Oh! – alas, what a sight!
 Have you then, all gone mad?
 Look at Christian beating Peter black and blue!
 Look at Michael there!
 His club gave Stephen one!
 Murder! Hans has got a broken head.
 Lord, I am certain they will kill my boy!
 How they wrestle, how they stagger to and fro!
 Lord save us all, if this fight cannot be stopped.
 Hey! my husband boldly joins the fight!
 Not one, her own voice can hear.
 Lord, what ill-luck!
 The heads and pigtails waggle up and down!
 Franz, have a little sense.
 Ah! how will it finish?
 We cannot hear a single word.
 What a clatter! Up! bring us water here!
 Pour water on their heads below.
 Quick! call the Watchman!
 Cry out 'murder!' and 'fire'!
 Call for help and call out loud.
 Quick! Water here! Water here!
 To the window! to the window!
 Ever madder grows the riot,
 Wrangling, fighting! Water is our only help.
 Bowls and buckets! pots and pitchers!
 Fill them full and pour them on their heads!

Pogner (appears in his nightgown at the window)

How now! Eva! Come in!
 I'll see below if all is well!

(Eva and Walther have been hiding from the friar and they now try to escape.)

Walther

Now comes the time!
 Let us fight our way through.

(The Nightwatchman's horn suddenly rings out.)

Pogner (on the steps)

Ho! Lene, where are you?

Sachs

Go in, Mistress Lene.

(Eva and Pogner go into the house. Sachs leads Walther into his own house. The crowd quickly disperses and the windows of the houses are closed up. The Nightwatchman enters.)

Nightwatchman

Hark to what I say, good people.
 Eleven strikes in the steeple.
 Defend yourselves from spectre and sprite
 That no power of ill, your souls affright.
 Praise ye, God the Lord.

(The moon shines out on the empty street as the Nightwatchman goes slowly off.)

COMPACT DISC THREE

Act III

[1] Prelude

Inside Sachs' workshop. The morning sun shines through the window. David comes in from the street as Sachs is reading a large book.

David

[2] Here, master, here!

The shoes were taken early to Master Beckmesser's house,
I thought just now you were calling?
(*aside*)
(He acts as if I were not here!
He must be cross, or he would speak.)
Oh, Master, won't you forgive?
Did a perfect prentice yet live?
If you knew my Lene as I,
Your forgiveness, you'd not deny.
She is so good, so sweet to me,
And looks at me oft so tenderly.
When you are harsh, then she is kind;
Her smiles would drive all care from my mind;
When I am hungry, she brings me food,
And she is always so sweet and good!
But last night, when she heard of Sir Walther
She took away the basket I longed for.
That made me sad;

And when I saw last evening, a man outside the house,
Who sang to her and howled like mad,
I fell upon him tooth and nail
Why make so great a matter of that?
Besides, for our love, it has turned out well
And Lene has explained the matter to me,
And today, ribbons and flowers sent to me,
Ah, Master, speak one word, I pray.
(If I'd only thought to take the food away!)

(*Sachs has read on undisturbed. He now closes his book.*)

Sachs

Flowers and ribbons do I see?
They look so fresh and so fair.
How do they come to be there?

David

Ah Master! Today's a festival day,
When each one dresses as best he may.

Sachs

Is it a wedding day?

David

Ah, so it could be, if Lene would marry me!

Sachs

A bachelor party was last night?

David

(Bachelor party? Now trouble's in sight!)
Forgive me, Master, forget, I pray!
Today is St. John's Midsummer day.

Sachs

Midsummer day?

David

(Deaf he must be!)

Sachs

You know your verses? Then sing to me!

David

My verses? Yes, you will see.
(*'Tis well! The Master is pleased with me.*)
'St. John baptized in Jordan's Tide...'

Sachs

What's that?

David

Forgive me again! I sang you the bachelor party tune.
'St. John baptized in Jordan's stream
All folk of ev'ry nation;
From Nuremberg a woman came
To seek from him salvation;
Her little child was by her side,
And took both time and blessing,
Then glowing with maternal pride,

To Nuremberg returning,
She soon found in her native land,
That he who took, by Jordan's strand,
Johannes, for his name.
On the Pegnitz, changed to Hans,
Hans? Hans? Ah, Master!
It is your Saint's day too!
How could I be so forgetful now!
Here, take these flowers –
They are yours.
The ribbons, and now, what else have I got?
Oh, yes, look Master, look at this pastry!
And here's a sausage, oh, won't you taste it?

Sachs (*quietly, without changing his position*)

Best thanks, my boy! Keep them yourself.
To Festival, with me shall you go.
With ribbons and flow'rs and fine array,
You shall go as my Page today!

David

Might I not be your best man instead?
Master, ah, Master, once more you must wed.

Sachs

Would you have then, a Mistress here

David

The house would look so much finer I'm sure.

Sachs

Who knows? But time may tell.

David
Time's here.

Sachs
Then may the answer soon appear.

David
Of course! Ev'rybody says the same thing,
That Beckmesser will have no chance if you sing!
I think that today, he will not succeed.

Sachs
Quite likely, That was also my thought,
Now go, disturb not Sir Walther's rest.
Come back again, when you are dressed.

David
(He was always so kind, though never like this.
Now the feel of his leather strap, has gone from
my mind.)

*(David puts his things together and goes inside.
Sachs' talk with David does not seem to have
disturbed his own meditation.)*

Sachs *(alone)*
[3] Fools! Fools! Ev'rywhere fools
All vainly, do I look and seek, in ancient book,
The cause of these delusions,
That drive men on to fight,
And fill their minds with confusion
And aimless, crazy spite!

For only grief is their reward;
They fly the fox, yet think they pursue him.
Hear not their own wild cry of pain,
When their own flesh, they tear and maim
And glory in their anguish!
For this, how find a name?
The folly's still the same.
It haunts our footsteps ever,
And spoils our best endeavour!
Stayed in its course,
It sleeps, but greater strength to gain:
Soon it awakes, and lo!
Who can restrain it then?
In peaceful ways well grounded,
Content in fruitful work,
By friendly folk surrounded,
My cherished Nuremberg.
But on an evening late,
A maiden and her lover
Their youthful passions discover,
And then, careless of fate,
A shoemaker interfering,
Sets the old folly stirring:
Then soon his neighbours awaken,
By rage and anger shaken,
Man, wife, and youth and child,
Rush to the fray, as though gone wild;
And Folly brings its blessing
Of strife and blows unceasing,
Each fellow must belabour
With furious rage, his neighbour.
God knows how that befell

Some spirit wove the spell.
A glow worm sought his mate in vain;
From him it was, the mischief came.
The scent of trees, Midsummer eve!
But now has dawned Midsummer day!
Now let us see what Sachs can do,
So that the folly may be turned
And used for nobler work.
For if it still can lurk,
E'en here, in Nuremberg.
We'll set it such a task
As seldom can succeed without it,
And needs one who is mad, to start it.
(Walther enters.)
[4] My friend, good morning! Rested I hope?
Your night was short, I trust you slept?

Walther
A little, but my sleep was good.

Sachs
So then you rise in better mood?

Walther
I had a rare and wondrous dream.

Sachs
A welcome sign: what dreamt you pray?

Walther
I dare not think what it could mean
For fear that it should fade away.

Sachs
My friend, that is the poet's task
To seek in dreams, what comes to pass.
In truth, the deepest wisdom man has known,
Has been what dreams have shown.
All verses that our poets write,
Are truths, that dreams have brought to light.
Did not your dream suggest a way
To win the Master's crown today?

Walther
But, from your Guild and all its Masters,
My dream would bring me new disasters.

Sachs
Yet might it teach the magic spell
To make you Mastersinger?

Walther
Can you think, since what befel,
That any hope may linger?

Sachs
Yet hope is still within me burning
It fills my heart to overflowing.
Were't not so, 'stead of your flight delaying,
I myself with you, now were going!
I beg you no more anger feel!
You have with men of honour to deal.
They make mistakes, all unawares,
And think the only right way, is theirs;
And surely, a man who grants a prize,

May ask, what he finds pleasing in his eyes.
Your song has filled them with dark dismay;
And with good cause, for, truth to say,
A song, so full of poet's passion,
May kindle our daughters, in wicked fashion.
But to praise, long, lasting, married bliss,
We've other words and tunes than this.

Walther

I know what you mean; I've heard them too,
For only last night they rang through the street!

Sachs

Yes, Yes, That's true!
My beating, mind, you heard that too!
But let that go, and hark to my counsel!
Short and good, fashion to a Master-song your
role!

Walther

A beauteous song, a Master-song:
I've always thought that they were one.

Sachs

- [5] My friend, in joyful days of youth,
When first our souls are captured,
By joy of love enraptured,
When hearts are beating, proud and high,
The gift of song is given,
To all, by kindly heaven:
'Tis spring that sings, not we,

Through summer, autumn, winter's chill,
When cares of life are pressing,
Though marriage brings its blessing,
Children and business, strife, ill-will,
Only those, who still have kept then
This gift of song, from heaven,
Then Masters they will be.

Walther

I love a maid and long to prove,
In lasting wedlock, all my love.

Sachs

Then let the Master's rules now speed you,
That they may truly guide and lead you,
And help to keep untainted,
What youth and spring have planted
Amidst youth's pleasures.
So the treasure,
Deep in the heart in secret laid,
Through pow'r of song, shall never fade!

Walther

Tell me, then, if so high they stand,
By whom, of old, the Rules were planned?

Sachs

By Masters, worn by pain of living,
With world's distress and anguish, striving:
By heavy cares o'er-weighted,
A vision they created,

Thus to recapture their youthful rapture
And keep the mem'ry fresh and true,
Of all the Springs, that once they knew.

Walther

But when their Spring had long been over,
What then, could they, in dreams recover?

Sachs

On dreams we feed, as best we can,
So let me, as a humble man,
Teach you our Rules of Singing,
In them, you may find new meaning.
Pen, ink and paper, ready you see:
I'll write the words you sing to me!

Walther

I know not how I shall begin.

Sachs

Think only of your morning dream.

Walther

Through all the rules that you have taught,
It seems, my dream has come to naught.

Sachs

Then you, the Poet's Art must try:
Dreams that are lost, can be found thereby:

Walther

Was it no dream, but only Art?

Sachs

The two are friends, not far apart.

Walther

But how should I by Rule begin?

Sachs

First make your rules, then follow them.
Think only of your dream of beauty:
All else, shall be Hans Sachs' duty.

(Sachs writes down Walther's poem as he sings.)

Walther

- [6] 'Warm in the sunlight, at dawning of day,
When blossoms rare, made sweet the air,
With beauty glowing, past all knowing,
A garden round me lay,
Cheering my way.'

Sachs

That was a 'Strophe', now heed my word,
That one just like it, must now be heard.

Walther

But why, just like?

Sachs

That men may know,
A wife like yourself, you've chosen so.

Walther
'High o'er the garden, a tree did arise;
Its golden store, its branches bore,
So richly thronging, stirred my longing,
When in the verdant shade,
I saw the prize.'

Sachs
You ended in another key, that Master's blame
you know;
But I Hans Sachs your meaning see,
In Springtime it must be so.
Now sing to me an 'After-Song.'

Walther
What does that mean?

Sachs
If you succeed, in mating this a good pair,
The children will be so fair,
The stanzas similar, not the same,
With their own rhyme and tone and name;
All must be neat and perfectly styled,
All parents welcome such a child:
And your fine stanzas make an end,
Where all things together may blend.

Walther
'How shall I name the radiant wonder there
revealed?
A woman fair, my vision blessed,
Her peer, no mortal e'er beheld:

Bride-like she came and folded me fast on her
breast;
Her hand uprising and gently gazing,
Where shone the fruit's golden hue,
She shewed the place where grew
The laurel tree.'

Sachs (*moved*)
In truth I call that an Aftersong!
See, how the verse now flows along!
But with the melody, you were a trifle free.
Now, I don't say that seems a fault to me.
Just that, at first, it's perplexing,
And to old men, that is vexing.
A second verse must you now compose,
To fix in mind, how the first one goes.
But still I'm not sure, so good does it seem,
How much is poem, and how much dream.

Walther
'Sunset was glowing with heavenly light,
O'er dying day, while there I lay;
My heart on fire, with one desire,
From eyes so wondrous bright,
To drink delight.
Night close around me to darken the place
Afar, yet near, two stars appear,
In day's declining, softly shining
Their balm of heav'nly grace
Falls on my face.
There, on a height, a crystal fountain at my feet,
From earth outpours its limped stream,

With swelling tone, so full and sweet,
Sparkling and bright; new gathering stars
On me gleam, as gaily dancing,
Through branches glancing
Their golden lustre they shed;
Not fruit, but stars, o'erspread
The laurel tree.'

Sachs
Friend, your dream told you the truth,
And bravely, you sing the second verse.
Make a third one now, to show more clearly,
Your vision's meaning, in all its glory.

Walther
How can I now? Enough of words!

Sachs
Then deed and rhyme, at proper time!
I beg you, well the tune remember;
Right well it goes, with such a theme,
And when before the folk you sing it,
Hold fast in your mind, that morning dream.

Walther
What is your plan?

Sachs
Your trusty squire
Followed you here, with your attire;
The clothes, that for the wedding feast at home
You would be wearing,

Your squire, has now come hither bearing
An angel, must have shewn the nest
In which his master dreamed.
So, to your room, now follow me.
With garments richly trimmed,
Should we both today, apparelled be;
Since Fate has called to daring deed.
Now come, if we are both agreed.

(*Sachs leads Walther into the interior room.*)

[7] Interlude

(*Beckmesser appears in great perturbation and, finding the shop empty, he enters hurriedly. He is still smarting from his discomfiture of the night before and at length, his glance falls on a paper in Sachs' handwriting. He takes it up, out of curiosity and after reading it with growing excitement, he breaks out in fury.*)

Beckmesser
[8] A Trial Song by Sachs! Is it true?
Ha! now all is clear to me.

(*Sachs returns, dressed for the Festival and Beckmesser hurriedly stuffs the paper into his pocket.*)

Sachs
What you, Sir Marker! Here so early?
Your shoes do not still give trouble, surely?

Beckmesser

The devil! So thin, worse than you made before;
Through them I feel the smallest stone!

Sachs

On Marker's art, blame that alone;
Marking your faults has made them so thin.

Beckmesser

Now, no more tricks! Though your wit is keen,
I know, friend Sachs, just what you mean.
Your trick of yesterday, you will not soon forget.
So that I should not obstruct your way,
You'd rouse the neighbours and make 'em fight.

Sachs

'Twas a bachelor party, let me remind you;
And the folk today, a bride may assign you:
The madder the fun, you see,
The better your luck will be!

Beckmesser

Oh, cobbler full of cunning,
I see such trouble coming
You always were my foe,
And now your craft I know.
The maid for whom I've waited,
For me alone created,
All widowers to shame,
On her you fix your aim!
'Tis Master Sachs' pleasure,

To win the Goldsmith's treasure,
And so, before the Guild,
Our ears with stuff he filled;
A maiden's fancy fooling,
That she might heed his schooling
And, to the shame of all,
Her choice on him might fall.
And so! And so! Ah, now I know,
With voice and hammer ringing,
You sought to drown my singing,
Lest she should understand,
Another stood there at hand.
Aye, Aye! Ho, Ho! 'tis even so?
Directed by your cunning,
The boys, in packs came running
With cudgels for the fray,
To drive me from your way!
Ow, ow! I'm black and blue,
And shamed before the maiden, too!
With tooth and nail, they tore me:
Ne'er a tailor could restore me!
Suspicion fill me,
They meant to kill me!
Yet, by luck I got away,
That I my debt might pay.
Go forth, when all assemble,
Today your voice may tremble.
Though I've been thrashed,
Don't laugh too soon,
For I can still put you out of tune!

Sachs

Good friend, your wits are overcast.
Think what you will, of what is past:
Through all your jealousy, you're blind
For wooing never crossed my mind.

Beckmesser

That's a lie! I know you better.

Sachs

What fancy is this, Master Beckmesser?
What I have in mind concerns you not;
But trust that no wooing was in my mind.

Beckmesser

You will not sing?

Sachs

Not as suitor.

Beckmesser

Not sing, today?

Sachs

You need not fear.

Beckmesser

But what if I have a proof you mean to?

Sachs (*looks on the table*)

⁹ It was here, the paper! You took it then?

Beckmesser (*producing the paper*)

Is this not your hand?

Sachs

Ah, was it that?

Beckmesser

The writing is fresh!

Sachs

And the ink is still wet!

Beckmesser

May be, 'tis a biblical song?

Sachs

To count on that, you would be wrong!

Beckmesser

Well then?

Sachs

How now?

Beckmesser

You ask?

Sachs

What more?

Beckmesser

That you, with your integrity,
The worst of rogues and tricksters I find.

Sachs

May be; but yet, I was never known
To pocket things I did not own.
And so, that you may not be called a thief,
To save you from that, I give you the leaf.

Beckmesser

(Good Lord! A song? A song by Sachs?
But wait, should he try to trick me again...!)
The song you have, no doubt, memorised?

Sachs

You need have no fear on my account.

Beckmesser

You give me the song?

Sachs

Your conscience to clear.

Beckmesser

To use as I like?

Sachs

Yes, if you dare.

Beckmesser

The song I may sing?

Sachs

Yes, if you dare!

Beckmesser

And if I succeed?

Sachs

I'll be surprised, I swear,

Beckmesser (*with complete trust*)

You rate yourself really, much too poorly,
A song by Sachs! 'Tis worth something, surely!
And see now! I'm in a mess,
As no doubt you can guess.
The whole day I have smarted,
To think how I was display'd,
Thanks to the row you started,
The maiden was surely dismay'd.
How could this poor, battered lover,
Find time to write a song?
I'm burning and aching all over,
It would take me too long.
Wedlock and wooing tender,
For these I truly pray,
Yet, must all hope surrender,
If I've no song today,
A song by Sachs! Ah, surely I know,
With that, each hindrance will quickly go.
Let this gift make our peace, then,
And happily cease, then,
Our quarrels and strife,
That made us foes for life!

And yet, if this were another trap?

But yesterday, you were my foe:
How is it, after all that has passed,
I find, in you such a friend?

Sachs

I sat up late your shoes to make,
Who would do that for a foeman's sake?

Beckmesser

Yes, quite true! Yet you must swear,
That whenever this song is heard
You never will say it is yours,
And though I should win
You will make no claim.

Sachs

I swear it, and I give my word,
No claim to that song,
From me will be heard.

Beckmesser

Could I want more? My troubles over:
Beckmesser now will henceforth live in clover.

Sachs

My friend; I've no wish to alarm you,
But, quite sincerely, now I warn you
Study it long and hard,
Not easy is the song.
Be sure you choose the right Mode,
Take care the Tune's not wrong.

Beckmesser

Friend Sachs, as poet, you have first place,
But when Tones and Modes are in hand,
Confess, that I need have no fear.
Then open well your ear,
And 'Beckmesser! No one better!'
And all your doubt will cease,
If you'll just let me sing in peace.
But now I must learn it well by heart:
That no time may be wasted, I must depart,
Hans Sachs, my comrade, your heart I misread;
By the Knight of Stolzing, I was misled:
We well can spare such as he!
We Masters, from him, now are free!
But all my senses scatter and leave me!
Are my wits dazed and all astray?
The stanzas, the accents, the measure, the verses!
I stay here and chatter, with feet all on fire.
Farewell! I must go: we meet again.
Thanks in sincerity for all your friendliness;
Your word is my command, all of your works
I'll buy,
You shall our Marker be, but only chalk we use;
Mark not with hammer blows!
Marker! Marker! Marker, Hans Sachs,
That Nuremberg ever may bloom and wax!

(*Beckmesser, dancing about, takes leave of Sachs and hurries stumbling to the door. Sachs, thoughtfully smiling, follows Beckmesser with his eyes.*)

Sachs

The man's malice will not last for long;
It cannot endure day and night.

Though we may often do what is wrong,
We still can tell what is right.

The hour of weakness comes for each one,
Then is the time, when he will see reason.

That Master Beckmesser stole the song,
Will help my little scheme along.

(Eva enters from the street.)

[10] Here's Eva! I had wondered where she was!
(Eva is richly dressed, but she seems pale and sad.)

Good day, my Eva!

Why, how splendid you look, how sweet and
fine!

The hearts of old and young surrender,
When you so brilliantly shine.

Eva

Master, you flatter me too much;
And though my dress may be right,
You can't know what pain I'm enduring,
Because my shoe is tight!

Sachs

The wicked shoe! But don't blame me,
You should have tried it on before.

Eva

Ah no, my trust was far too great.
The Master was not all I thought.

Sachs

Oh, that's a shame! I'll put it right!
Just try to tell me where it's tight.

Eva

When I stand, it slips away;
But when I move, it wants to stay.

Sachs

Then on the stool here, place your shoe,
And I will see what I can do.
What's wrong with that?

Eva

You see, too broad!

Sachs

Child, that is only vanity;
The shoe fits tight.

Eva

I told you that!
That's why it presses my toes so hard.

Sachs

Here, left?

Eva

No, right.

Sachs

Here, at the heel?

Eva

More on the instep.

Sachs

What, there as well?

Eva

Ah, Master! Do you know better than I
Where the shoe hurts most?

(Enter Walther.)

Sachs

I wonder why, if it's too broad,
It still pinches you so!

(Eva looks at Walther.)

Eva

Ah!

Sachs

A-ha! 'Tis here! Now the reason I know.
Child, you are right: something is wrong.
(Sachs take no notice of Walther.)

Be patient, to mend it won't take long;
(Walther remains standing in the doorway.)

Stay where you are; I'll work with the shoe
On the last for a moment, your pain will soon
pass.

*(Sachs gently draws Eva's shoe from her foot and goes
to the work table.)*

Always cobbling, that is now my fate,
By night, by day, both early and late.
Child, now hear what plan I have in mind,
That all these hours of hard work may end.
Why should I not be your suitor today?

Some reward as a poet I'd gain that way.
You pay no heed? Come, speak up clear;
You know quite well that was your idea!
Ah, well! I see! 'Stick to your shoes!'

Lately I heard a most wonderful song!
Only today it charmed my ear:
Ah, if only a third verse I could hear.

Walther *(gazing at Eva)*

[11] 'Lured from their dances, the stars glided down,
New light so clear, shone in her hair,
On her attending, beauty tending,
And round her head there shone a starry crown.'

Sachs *(still working)*

Oh, child! that is a Mastersong.

Walther

'Wonder on wonder revealed to me there;
A two-fold morn, now seemed to dawn,
Her eyes in glory, shone before me,
Those eyes outshone the sun's,
Radiance pure and rare.'

Sachs *(aside to Eva)*

(Such songs are heard now, in my own house.)

Walther

'Hallowed the scene,
That met my ever wond'ring gaze!
The sunlight garland shed its rays,
The first pale glimmer was then ablaze!
(*Sachs brings back the shoe.*)
'Loving and mild, her hand
Wove its leaves round my head:
Where love has bound me,
There fame has crowned me:
I drink from radiant eyes
All joys of paradise,
In love's dream.'

Sachs

Let's see, now perhaps the shoe is right?
I really think, my work is over!
Just try, stand up! Say, how is it now?
(*Eva, who has stood as if enchanted, bursts into tears. Walther has come to them; Sachs at length controls himself and tears himself moodily away.*)
[12] The life of a cobbler's nothing but woe!
And were I not a poet too,
Henceforth, I'd never make a shoe!
No rest, never free, to all a slave!
Too loose for this one, for that one, too tight!
From ev'ry quarter, naught but abuse.
It flaps perhaps, or nips or grips!
The cobbler must have skill unending,
Patch up, what's in need of a mending.
Or if he be a poet too,
For that, not a moment of peace will he know;

Should he by chance, a widower be,
A fool he must be, all agree;
The youngest maidens, when wooers fail,
Expect him to listen to their tale;
He sees the trap, or if he does not,
'Tis naught if he agrees or not.
And then, if he smells of pitch,
They call him fool, rascal and wretch!
Ah! Most of all for my prentice, I grieve,
For no heed to me will he pay:
For Lene's driving him out of his wits,
As she stuffs his stomach all day.
Now, they're hurting him for this delay?

Eva

[13] O Sachs! My friend! So kind thou art!
How shall I praise thy noble heart?
Thy love alone has taught me,
What were I, but for thee?
A child, now, would I still be,
Had thou not wakened me.
Through thee, my wisdom I have won;
Through thee, my spirit I have known;
Through thee, I wake, through thee,
I make me noble, brave and true,
Through thee, I'm born anew!
Dear master, tho' I've wounded you,
Yet I know that my heart was true,
And if my soul gave voice, and were my heart
my own;
Then thou would'st be my choice,
The prize, thine alone.

But now, I feel the power that tears my will apart,
And were I wed this hour,
All choice would be in vain
To stem the torrent in my heart
You, dearest Master, would not dare.

Sachs

My child, of Tristan and Isolde,
A grievous tale I know:
Hans Sachs was wise
And would not endure King Marke's woe.
'Twas time I found the man to wed,
Or else, I too, would have lost my head.
A-ha! now Magdalene is about!
Come along! Ho, David! Time to come out!
(*Magdalene and David, dressed for the festival, appear at the same time.*)
The witnesses here, a christening at hand!
So, for the naming, All take your stand!
(*All look at him in surprise.*)

COMPACT DISC FOUR**Sachs**

[1] A child has been created,
Let its name now here be stated.
This is by use, the Master's right,
For when a Mastersong is brought to light,
The song by a goodly name they call,
By which, henceforth 'tis known to all.
Now know, worthy people, who hear me,

Why I call you near me.
Since a Mastersong was fashioned newly,
And by Sir Walther, was sung before us truly;
He asks if Eva and I would rather,
Attend him as godmother and godfather.
Since to his song, we both have listened,
And all have come, that it may be christened,
That we who have heard, attest its fitness,
Let David and Lene now stand to witness.
But, as no prentice, a witness may be,
And David today, sang right well to me,
A Journeyman I will make of him here.
Kneel, David now, and take this on the ear!
(*Sachs gives him a smart box on the ear.*)
Arise, 'my man' this blow do not forget;
The christening it will fix in your pate.
If not well done, no blame is ours:
Who knows how the need for a christ'ning arose?
That the song's good fortune may not be broken,
By me, let its name now be spoken
The 'Heavenly Morning-Dream Love Story',
So be it named, to its Master's glory.
Now strong may it grow and win each heart,
And now let the godmother play her part.

(*He moves from the middle of the half circle which the others have formed round him, so that Eva stands now in the centre.*)

Eva

[2] Radiant as the dawning that enchants my sight,
So, this lovely morning promises delight:

Dream of endless glory, heav'nly morning glow:
 Who can tell the story? Who the meaning show?
 In this music, pure and tender, lies a message of
 gladness,
 And it eases my heart's sweet pain,
 Mingling joy with sadness.
 Is it but a morning dream?
 I hardly dare to hear its theme,
 But this melody confided gently to me here,
 Bright and clear in the Masters' Guild shall rise,
 There to win you the highest prize.

Walther

Love alone has brought me sudden gladness,
 Easing all my pain.
 A joy that mingles with sadness,
 Is it still the morning dream?
 Dare I think what it may mean?
 What this melody, once again to me confides
 In stillness here, bright and clear,
 In the Master's Guild shall rise,
 There to win me the highest prize.

Sachs

To this lovely child here, I long now to sing of
 sadness,
 But must hide my heart's sweet pain, make
 pretence of gladness.
 Such a wondrous morning dream;
 Dare I think what it may mean?
 But this melody, once again,

So gently confides in stillness here,
 Makes it so clear.
 Love of youth, that never dies,
 Blooms only through Poet's Prize.

Magdalene

Is this a vision or a dream?
 I cannot tell what it may mean,
 Are my senses so deceived?
 What I see, I can't believe.
 He, no longer an apprentice?
 I, his bride, before the altar, at his side?
 Ah! I know it! My heart sighs!
 He, as Master, shall rise.
 Yes, I know it, he will soon as a Master rise!

David

Is this a vision or a dream?
 I cannot tell what it may mean.
 Are my senses so deceived?
 What I see I can't believe.
 I, no longer an apprentice?
 She my bride? Before the altar, at my side?
 Now, my heart in answer cries,
 Win the Master's prize!
 Master! I will soon as Master rise!

Sachs (turning to the others)

Now let's be off! Your father greet!
 Off to the fields! There shall we meet!
(Eva and Magdalene go.)

(to Walther)

- [3] Now, Walther come! You must be brave!
 David, my man, see that all is safe!

*(As Sachs and Walther go together into the street,
 David sets himself to lock up the shop doors. The
 orchestra continues to play throughout the change
 of scene for the last Finale. When the curtain rises
 again, the scene represents an open meadow on the
 banks of the river Pegnitz, thronged with parties of
 Burghers of the different Guilds and their families.)*

Shoemakers

- [4] Saint Crispin, Saint Crispin!
 He was a holy man,
 Did all a cobbler can.
 The poor then had a merry time;
 They all wore well-made shoes;
 If leather lacked, he turned to crime,
 And stole what he could use.
 A cobbler's conscience is not queasy,
 And little makes him feel uneasy,
 When from the tanner the skin we get,
 Then beat, beat, beat!
 Leather serves but to shoe our feet!

*(The town watchmen come on, followed by the town
 pipers, lute makers, etc.)*

Tailors

When Nuremberg a siege withstood,
 And famine filled the land,

We would have lost our town for good,
 Without a tailor to hand.
 Boldly then this trick he planned.
 In a goatskin safe himself he sews.
 On the wall, to take a walk he goes,
 And there so gaily springing,
 He sets the welkin ringing.
 The foe make off with flying feet:
 The town they deem the devil's seat,
 Where goats yet so merrily bleat,
 Who'd think that a tailor would have such wit?

(The Bakers, coming on with their banner flying.)

Bakers

Famine dread! Famine dread!
 From that, may God defend us
 Bakers must bring us our daily bread,
 Or hunger soon would end us.
 Wheat makes the bread we eat:
 So hunger we defeat.

*(Next comes a group of young girls in rich, peasant
 dresses. The Prentices run to the back.)*

Apprentices

Look here! Maidens from Fürth!
 Town pipers, play! and make us gay.

*(The Apprentices dance with the girls. David comes
 forward and looks on disapprovingly.)*

David

- [5] You dance? Look out if the Masters see you!
(The prentices make fun of him.)
 Don't care? Well then, make room for me too.

(David seizes a pretty young girl and joins in the dance with great ardour. The Apprentices make signs to David.)

Apprentices

David! Your Lene looks on!

(David, startled, quickly lets the girl go.)

David

Stop fooling now and leave me alone!

Apprentices

The Mastersingers!

(The Prentices immediately stop dancing and hurry to the bank.)

Journeyman

The Mastersingers!

David (to the girls)

Goodbye, you pretty creatures!

- [6] Entrance of the Mastersingers

(The Prentices arrange themselves to receive the Mastersingers: the people freely make way for them. The procession reaches the platform, where Kothner plants the banner: Pogner leads forward Eva by the hand. She is accompanied by girls richly dressed, among them is Magdalene. The Apprentices advance to the platform in proper order and turn round to the people.)

Apprentices

'Silentium! Silentium!

Speak no word, let no sound be heard!'

(Sachs rises and comes forward. At the sight of him, all press forward, hats and caps are doffed. All point to him.)

People

'Tis Sachs. Ha! Sachs!

See, Master Sachs! Begin!

(All present except Sachs, join in this strophe. Beckmesser, hidden behind the other Masters, is busy trying to learn his song by heart.)

- [7] Awake! The dawn of day draws near:
 From green depths of the woods I hear
 A soul-enchanting nightingale;
 His voice resounds o'er hill and dale;
 The night sinks down in western skies,
 The day from eastern realms doth rise,
 The red glow of the dawn awakes and
 Through the dusky cloudbank breaks.

(The people resume their jubilation.)

Hail! Hail! Hail!

Hail, to thee, Hans Sachs!

Hail, Nuremberg's Sachs!

Sachs (begins in a voice at first veiled by emotion, but which quickly becomes firmer)

- [8] Words light to you, bow me to earth;
 Such praise is far beyond my worth.
 Only one honour I have,
 That I am worthy of your love.
 Already, honour you did pay,
 By naming me Speaker for today.
 So hear my speech and heed it well!
 I shall a tale of honour tell.
 Our Art, I know you highly prize,
 It serves to bring you pleasure,
 But we who love it in true wise,
 Hold Art beyond all praises.
 A Master rich, a man of pride,
 Will show the love he professes:
 His daughter fair, his heart's delight,
 And all he possesses.
 He offers this, before you all,
 To him, on whom the choice shall fall
 To prove that Art alone
 Can win the highest crown.
 So, hark you all, to what I cry.
 The poets all are free to try.
 Ye Masters, who will sing today,
 To you, before all folk I say:

Think well, how rare a prize it is,
 That all may surely bring her,
 A heart and voice, both pure and clear,
 As suitor and as singer.
 Let this your hearts embolden;
 That ne'er in present times or olden,
 Was crown so nobly high upholden,
 As by this maiden tender;
 May fate from harm defend her,
 That Nuremberg, her voice may raise for Art,
 And in her Masters' praise!

(Great and general commotion. Sachs goes up to Pogner.)

Pogner

Oh, Sachs, my friend! What thanks I owe!
 The weight upon my heart you know.
 You ventured much, that I can tell.
 Now Marker, say, d'you feel well?

(Beckmesser has been constantly taking the poem from his pocket and trying to learn it by heart.)

Beckmesser

Oh! What a song! It sounds so strange,
 And yet I've studied it enough.

Sachs

My friend, you are not forced to choose it.

Beckmesser

With mine all is over, I cannot use it.
The fault was yours!
Help me then to win:
To leave me now, t'would be a sin!

Sachs

I thought you'd give up.

Beckmesser

And why, I pray?
The others will not stand in my way;
If you do not sing.

Sachs

That we shall see!

Beckmesser

The song by no one will be understood;
But I bank upon your favour with the crowd.

Sachs

Well then, if Masters and folk agree,
To hear the Singers we now are free.

Kothner

Unmarried Masters, all be prepared!
The eldest man shall first be heard.
Friend Beckmesser, now begin: 'tis time!

(The Apprentices lead Beckmesser to a small mound of turf in front of the platform.)

Beckmesser

The devil! How rickety! Now make it firm!

(The Apprentices laugh among themselves and ram down the turf. The people humorously nudge one another.)

People

He woos? What, he?
In the maiden's place, I would not choose him!
Surely she'll refuse him!
Be still, for he's a skilful Master!
Still, and make no jest!
He has in council, vote and seat.
Ah, he cannot even stand!
He cannot keep his feet!
He is the Town Clerk, Master Beckmesser.
How could he win her hand?
He'll tumble soon!
Lord what a fool!

Apprentices

Silentium! Silentium!
Speak no word! Let no sound be heard.

Kothner

Now begin!

(Beckmesser blinks with embarrassment and tries to calm his uneasiness with a prelude on the lute.)

Beckmesser

9 'Bathing in sunlight at dawning of day,
With bosom bare, to greet the air;
With beauty glowing, faster snowing,
A garden roundelay, wearied my way.'

(The Mastersingers murmur softly to each other.)

Mastersingers

What is that? He's lost his senses!
But where has he ever discovered such fancies?
This case is so strange!
What can he mean? Can that be right?

People

What roundelay? Can that be right?
'Garden roundelay wearied his way?'
You heard? Curious! How can that be?
Passing strange! Can that be right?

Beckmesser *(Beckmesser secretly draws the paper forth and hurriedly looks into it then pockets it again anxiously.)*

'Sigh for the bard, on a tree did he rise,
A golden sore, its branches tore,
(He peeps at the paper.)
With midges thronging, broke my longing,
When dark and bare, the prize hooked on my eyes!'

(He totters and perspires with anxiety.)

People

Dainty wooer! His due he soon will get.
He'll end on the gallows!
Yes that is clear!

Mastersingers

Has he gone mad? What is the meaning?
His song is utter nonsense!

Beckmesser *(rouses himself with an effort of despair and rage)*

'What is her name?
What radiant thunder clearly pealed?
A woman's hair, in fashion dressed:
With clear, immortal air it swelled.
Bridling she came and folded me there in a chest;
Intently gazing, her sound was grazing
And gleaned the roots old and new:
She sowed the space with rue,
The seed of strife!'
(All break into mocking laughter.)
(Beckmesser rushes towards Sachs.)
Accursed cobbler, yours the design!
The song, in truth is none of mine:
But Sachs, whom you so much revere,
He wrote the song I sang you here!
Now, through his shameful trick I see!
His wretched song, he puts on me.

(He rushes away in fury and loses himself in the crowd.)

People

Hey! What can that mean? No one can conceive it!
The song's by Sachs? We cannot believe it!

Kothner (*to Sachs*)

Explain, then Sachs!

Nachtigal (*to Sachs*)

What a disgrace!

Vogelgesang (*to Sachs*)

The song's by you?

Ortel and Foltz

How strange the case!

Sachs (*has quietly taken up the paper which Beckmesser threw down*)

- [10] The song, in truth, is not by me:
Friend Beckmesser's wrong, you soon will see.
So may he himself, say where he found it:
As for me, I dare not boast I wrote it:
A song, like this, so fine in thought,
Never could Hans Sachs have wrought.

Mastersingers

What? Fine? All that senseless trash?

People

Hear! Sachs makes fun!
He says it but in jest.

Sachs

I tell you, friends, the song is fine;
And it should not take you long to divine
That friend Beckmesser, sang it wrong,
I tell you, you will like the song,
If rightly sung you hear it,
By one who knows its secret;
And he who can show he has the key,
Will prove himself the poet,
A worthy Mastersinger he;
All who have ears will know it.
I am accused, and take my stand:
So let me call my witness here to hand.
If one who knows the truth be near,
Let him as witness now appear!
(*Walther steps forward from the crowd with knightly courtesy.*)
Bear witness, this song is none of mine,
And witness too, the song is fine;
That all may agree
My praise was not too free.

Mastersingers

Ah Sachs, your wit is keen! But you today, again
will win.

Sachs

Old rules are best and will stand wear and tear
And now and then exceptions will bear.
Masters and folk, 'tis your will
That my witness now shall show his skill?

Sir Walther von Stolzing, sings the song!
Ye Masters, see if he goes wrong.

(*He gives Kothner the paper to follow the song.*)

Apprentices

None speaks a word, but all are dumb;
Then we need not call out 'Silentium'.

Walther (*Walther firmly steps on to the mound.*)

- [11] 'Warm in the sunlight, at dawning of day,
While blossoms rare, made sweet the air,
With beauty glowing past all knowing,
A garden round me lay;
And there beneath a wondrous tree,
With fruit so richly thronging,
My poet's dream revealed to me
The goal of all my longing,
And life's most glorious prize,
A woman fair: Eva in Paradise.'

(*Kothner deeply moved, here lets the paper fall.
He and the rest listen with interest.*)

Mastersingers

Ah, yes, I see 'tis another thing,
If you wrongly or rightly sing.

People

Who would have thought it?
Who could have known?
How much lies hid in words and 'Tone'.

Walther

'Darkness had fallen and night closed all around;
Alone I strode the rugged road,
Where on a mountain, rose a fountain
That lured my steps with its sound:
And there, beneath a wondrous tree,
Where shining stars were showing,
In poet's dream, there smiled on me,
With holy radiance showing,
My muse, who from the sacred fount, bedewed
my head.
The Muse of Parnass.'

Mastersingers

'Tis daring, that is true; But good are rhymes and
singing too!

Sachs

Witness true indeed! To the end proceed!

People

How sweet the strain, how high its theme,
And yet it seems to us as though
We lived within the dream!

Walther

'Oh, hallowed day, on which my poet's dream
took flight!
That Paradise, my vision shewed,
Revealed anew in heaven's light,
Shining now lay; and there, laughing now,
A stream, the path did show to where in wonder,

In radiant splendour, the garden's maiden so fair,
 As Muse before me stood, in holy calmness there.
 That maid I boldly wooed;
 And there in light of Heaven,
 The prize of song was given,
 Parnass and Paradise!'

People

Enchanted by this beauteous dream,
 Scarce can I read its meaning plain.
 Grant him his own! His be the crown,
 Right such as his, none here hath shown.

Mastersingers

Yes, gracious singer, take thine own!
 Thy song hath won the Master's crown,

Pogner

Oh, Sachs! Thou bring'st me peace at last:
 Now all my heart's distress is past!

(Walther has been conducted to the steps of the platform and kneels before Eva.)

Eva *(Eva crowns him with a wreath of laurel and myrtle.)*

No one but thou, so clear a right hath shown!

Sachs *(turning to the people and pointing to Walther and Eva)*

^[12] The witness has been duly tried;
 Are you with Sachs dissatisfied?

People

Hans Sachs! No! That was finely planned!
 Once more, indeed, your wit the day has gained.

Mastersingers *(the Mastersingers solemnly turning to Pogner)*

Up, Master Pogner! 'Tis your right.
 Now as a Master, You name the knight!

Pogner *(offering a golden chain to Walther)*
 Now take from me King David's shield.
 I make you free of the Masters' Guild.

Walther *(refusing impetuously)*

Not Master! No!
(He looks tenderly at Eva.)
 One better way to Heav'n I know!

(All look at Sachs in great perplexity.)

Sachs *(Sachs comes to Walther and takes him by the hand)*

^[13] Do not disdain our Masters thus,
 But honour well their Art!
 That which they love and prize the most,
 Has made them take your part,
 'Twas not your father's name and worth,
 Nor yet your title, wealth, or birth;
 It was your Poet's Art, that won a Master's heart.
 Him must you thank, for all your bliss.
 So think with thankfulness on this.
 Who could an Art like ours, despise,

That brings him such a noble prize?
 This Art our Masters well did guard.
 They knew its true estate
 And in its spirit firm they stood
 Thus have they kept it great;
 And though, not honoured as of old.
 When courts and king its glories told;
 When strife and turmoil grew,
 Nobly it stood and true;
 And though our art was honoured less
 Throughout the years of storm and stress,
 You see, 'tis highly honoured still.
 Then have the Masters done so ill?
 Look out, ill times now threaten all;
 And if we German folk should fall
 And foreign men should rule our land,
 No king his folk would understand,
 And foreign rule and foreign ways
 Would darken all our German days;
 The good and true were soon forgot
 Did they not live in Master art.
 I say to you, honour your noble Masters,
 Thus you will shun disasters;
 If you hold them close to your heart;
 Then may depart, the fame of ancient Rome;
 We have, at home, our sacred German Art.

(During the following finale Eva takes the wreath from Walther's head and places it on Sachs', who takes the chain from Pogner's hand and hangs it round Walther's neck. Pogner kneels as if in homage before Sachs.)

People

Honour your noble Master
 If ye would shun disaster;
 Let each one hold this in his heart,
 Then may depart, the fame of ancient Rome;
 No change will come to holy German Art.
 Hail Sachs! Nuremberg's Poet, Sachs!

(The people wave hats and kerchiefs in excitement, the Prentices dance and joyously clap their hands as the curtain falls.)



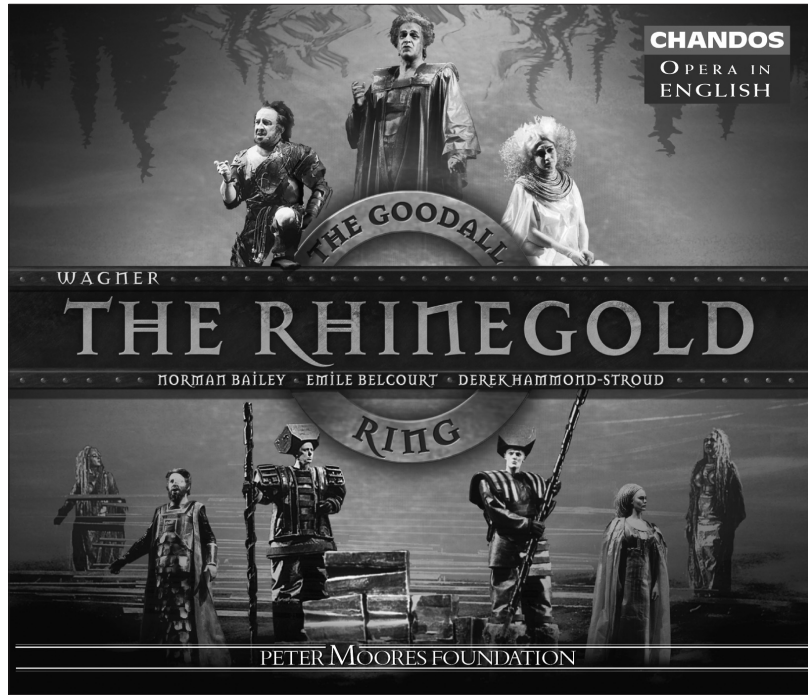
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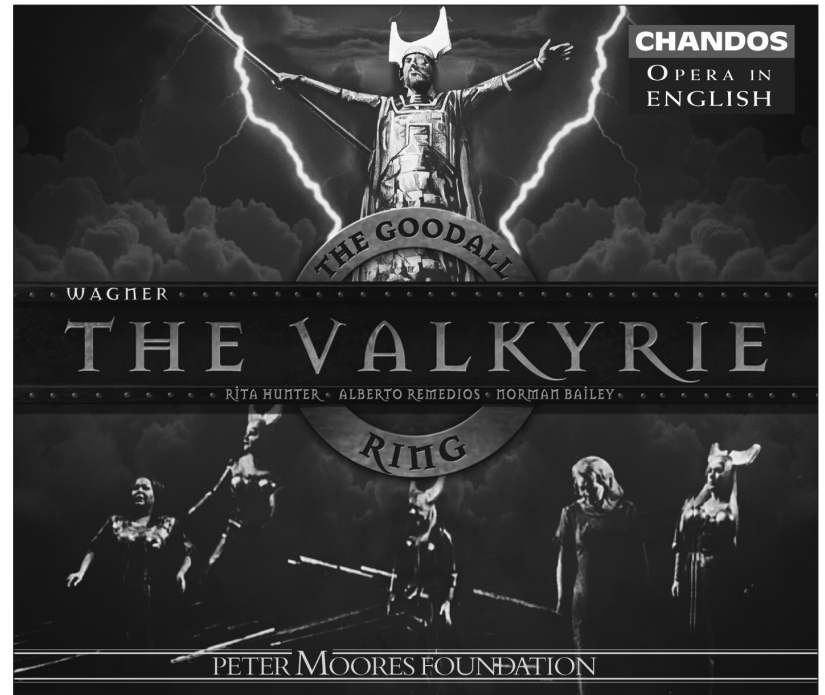
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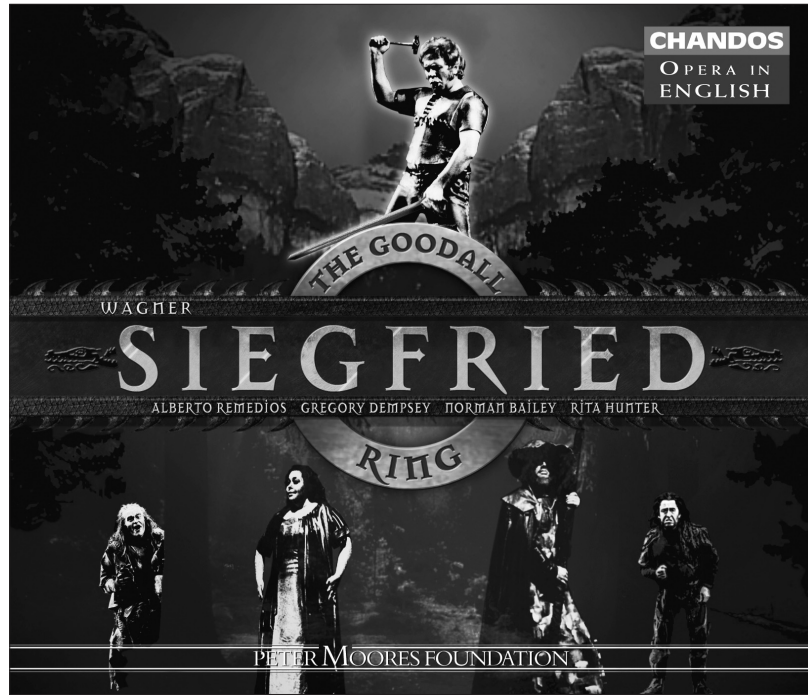
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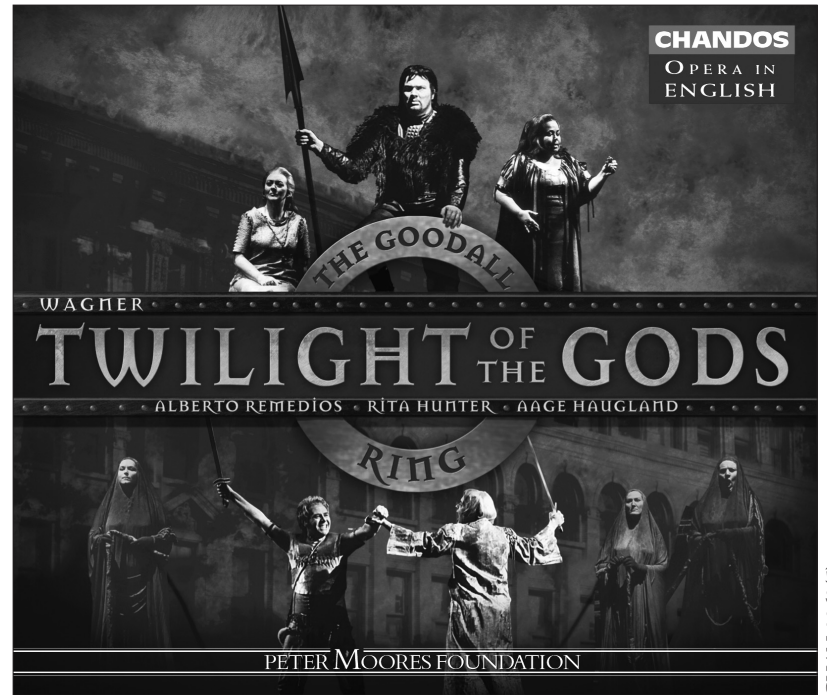


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