

Das Rheingold  
(The Ring Cycle: Rhine Gold)


1984

Sunday, June 2, 1985 5:00 PM  
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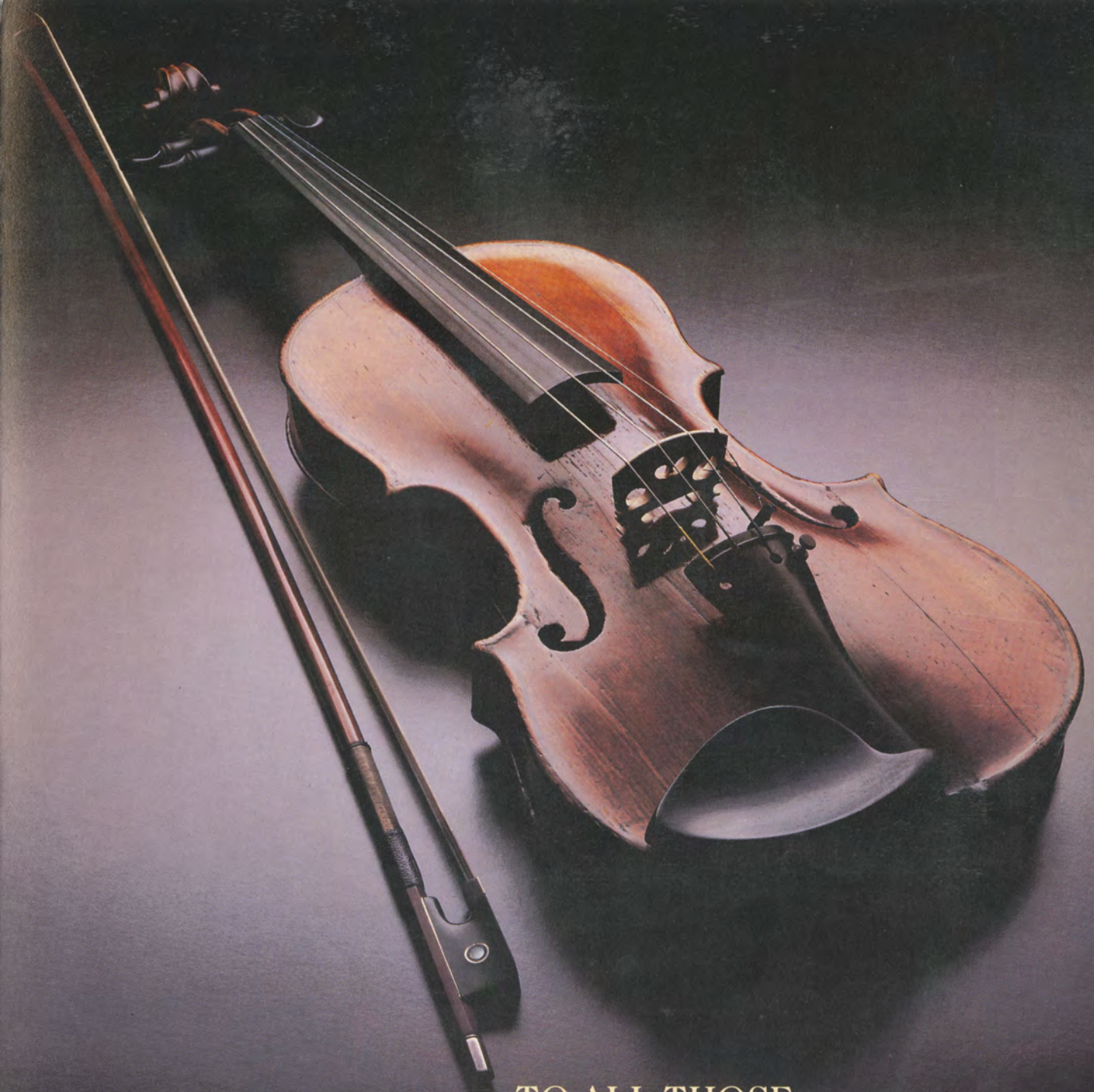


San Francisco Opera

RING SUMMER FESTIVAL 1985

Der Ring  
des Nibelungen


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Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

## *Der Ring des Nibelungen*

RING SUMMER  
FESTIVAL 1985

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# From the President

MESSICK



As I prepare to leave the Presidency of the San Francisco Opera Association, I find it impossible to convey the excitement being shared by all—not only members of the San Francisco Opera company and staff, but our devoted audience members as well—over the 1985 *Ring* Festival. Producing the *Ring* is an undertaking not unlike the scaling of a mountain—interminable planning is required, technical considerations are awesome, and once one begins, one must take it a step at a time, never losing sight of the ultimate goal. And of course, a false step at any stage of the project could spell disaster. But we have made it to the summit, and the exhilaration from this vantage point is something we can all savor together.

San Francisco Opera could never have reached this height without the generous assistance of the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation; the Sells Foundation; BankAmerica Foundation; and an anonymous friend of the San Francisco Opera. The international attention and acclaim our *Ring* has garnered is a testament to their vision and creative generosity.

The gigantic undertaking of the *Ring* also entails incurring a monumental cost.

As those of you who have read my letters in opera programs of previous years know, ticket revenues usually cover about 55 to 60 percent of our costs. The magnitude of the *Ring* is so great that, even with sold-out performances, ticket sales will recover only a little over 30 percent of the costs. Please join the major donors mentioned above and the many contributors of smaller amounts by sending a generous donation to help us recover some of the remaining 70 percent.

Finally, let me once again express our gratitude to the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, the Hotel Tax Fund, Mayor Dianne Feinstein, Chief Administrative Officer Roger Boas, the City and County of San Francisco, the San Francisco Opera Guild, and the War Memorial Board of Trustees. Let us all share in the pride as the attention of the opera world focuses on our *Ring* Festival.

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WHEREAS: The SAN FRANCISCO OPERA is an outstanding jewel in our City's performing arts' crown, and a company renowned for its innovative productions, its stellar casts and its heavenly music; and

WHEREAS: The SAN FRANCISCO OPERA's 1985 Summer Season is a presentation of Wagner's four-opera cycle, "THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG," and the largest single project ever undertaken by our OPERA; and

WHEREAS: The scope and talent involved in the OPERA's 1985 Summer Season have focused the attention of the international music community upon San Francisco, and make the "RING" cycle the preeminent musical event of the year; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT I, Dianne Feinstein, Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco, do hereby proudly proclaim June, 1985 as SAN FRANCISCO OPERA 'RING' MONTH IN SAN FRANCISCO and do commend the company, general director Terence A. McEwen, and everyone involved in this exciting enterprise for their exemplary public services.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City and County of San Francisco to be affixed this eighth day of May, nineteen hundred and eighty-five.

*Dianne Feinstein*  
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## General Director's Message

Welcome to San Francisco Opera's 1985 Summer Season, this year devoted to the presentation of Wagner's monumental *Ring* cycle. This enormous undertaking is the realization of a long-standing dream of mine, and a project I started working on right after agreeing to come to San Francisco.

The presentation of this masterpiece in the manner intended by the composer—as a festival of four operas—is a tremendous artistic and technical achievement for the San Francisco Opera, one that has already attracted world-wide attention.

In this space, I cannot begin thanking all my colleagues who have helped to make it happen. Artistic, technical and administrative forces contributed to our *Ring* a tremendous amount of effort, dedication and skill. A supreme test of teamwork, our *Ring* has already shown that our company members have conquered the challenge in every respect.

We have surrounded our three *Ring* cycles with a number of events that will complement the Wagner experience.

The performances of Weber's *Freischütz*, in concert form, will trace the source of young Wagner's artistic inspiration. The recitals, lectures and films will help to round out the portrait of one of the most amazing creative geniuses of any era.

My only twinge of regret stems from the fact that we obviously underestimated the audience interest in a world-class *Ring* that brings Wagner's work back to the romantic, beautiful surroundings it deserves. My heartfelt apologies go to the thousands who were disappointed in their attempts to obtain tickets. We hope to produce the *Ring* cycle again in 1990, at which time we shall try to satisfy a larger number of music lovers.

To those of you who are joining us in the theater and are about to take part in what I trust is going to be a remarkable experience, I extend my warmest welcome!

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Terence A. McEwen, *General Director*

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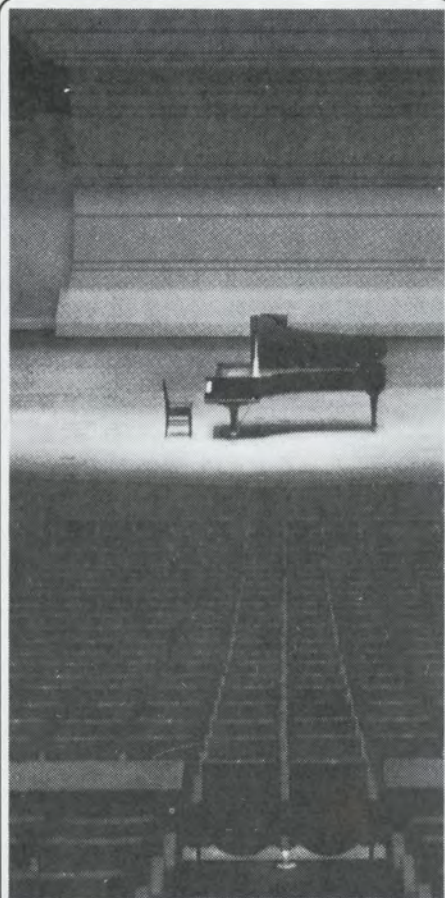
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Susan Wendt-Bogear  
Ann Williamson  
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Roberto Moreiras  
Daniel Moya  
Paul Newman  
Richard Pallowick  
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James Walker

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Raymond Dusté

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Gregory Dufford

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Elyn Pesavento

### 2nd VIOLIN

Rise Patt  
Frank Bliss  
Wendy Sharp

### VIOLA

Nathan Ladyzhensky  
Nicholas Marlowe  
Patrick Kroboth

### CELLO

Judiyaba  
Nancy Stenzen  
Melinda Wagner

### BASS

Mark Drury  
Kenneth Miller

### FLUTE/PICCOLO

Mary Hargrove

### OBOE

Robin May

### CLARINET

Clark Fobes

### HORN

Laurence Ragent

### HORN/WAGNER TUBA

Carlberg Jones *Principal*  
*Wagner Tuba*

Glen Swarts  
Max Mazenko  
Eric Achen

### BASS TRUMPET

McDowell Kenley

### TROMBONE

Hall Goff

### CONTRABASS

Donald Robinson

### PERCUSSION

Todd Manley

### HARP

Marcella DeCray

# Creating the Ring

By WILLIAM HUCK

We have gathered at the San Francisco Opera to hear and see Richard Wagner's titanic *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Each of us has set aside four evenings for the adventure. Many have further filled their schedules with chamber concerts, lectures, movies, *Der Freischütz*. Some have travelled to San Francisco to attend these events, but even for those who call the Bay Area home and who patronize the War Memorial Opera House regularly, these June weeks offer an unparalleled scope and density of musical excitement. They represent a true festival, just as Wagner wanted, dedicated to his mysterious world of gods and giants, dwarfs and men.

For the musicians and production team of the San Francisco Opera, the immersion in Wagner's world is even more complete. Conductor Edo de Waart summed up the extent of their experience: "What makes this project wonderfully interesting for me is that I will be working on it solidly for nine weeks. Six weeks of rehearsal and three weeks of performance will be concentrated on those sixteen hours of cohesive music. And that, of course, is a unique phenomenon in music. I do not know what I will be like when I come out of it," the conductor laughed. "I don't know if I will be able to do another piece that does not have all these interconnections." We all, each after his or her week, might come to echo de Waart's laugh.

The web that Wagner wove to entrance musicians and music-lovers alike, he spun not only out of the subtle symphonic connections de Waart mentioned. Wagner immerses us not only in the glorious melodies and motives of the *Ring*, but in a vast human drama as well. The composer set his story in far away mythological times, but always he kept his eye trained on the world he knew, the world in which we are still living. Stage Director Nikolaus Lehnhoff, to whose creative energies and

insights we owe this new production of the *Ring*, states categorically the relevance of Wagner's drama to the problems of today. "The *Ring* is, after all, an allegorical tragedy about men who see as their only goal a longing for endless power, while losing all sense and feeling for love and nature. For Wagner, nature was the ultimate reality, and human development was a power struggle based on a crime against nature.

"Wagner was trying to recreate the old German mythology," continues Lehnhoff, "in the light of the modern world. You could even go one step further and say that the *Ring* represents an entirely realistic diagnosis of the world in which we live today."

De Waart feels equally strongly about seeing today reflected in Wagner's *Ring* drama. "I think the *Ring* is about very base things in humanity. It is very much about greed. It is very much about power. Sometimes it is about love. There is a lot of hate in it. The whole dialogue between Mime and Siegfried is not all that pleasant.

Alberich is not a very pleasant person. It is loaded with doom, and maybe in that sense it is very appropriate for our time when greed and power have become so much more dangerous. In the old times you went out and hammered someone over the head with a sword. Now we're not feeding half our population because we need rockets to be powerful."

Though he may be overstating his case, de Waart is clearly on the right track. Lurking in the background of the *Ring of the Nibelung* is the Industrial Revolution, which so rapidly and alarmingly escalated the alienation of man from nature. Lehnhoff underscores this substratum and says that it has informed his purpose in creating the San Francisco *Ring*. "Nature was functional in the hands of man and gods and Nibelungs, as we know, since the beginning of the world. The new situation of the industrialism of the Nineteenth Century, however, exposed the destructive powers of man, on the one side, and of nature, on the other. Wagner was part of a small minority in his time who under-

stood the



MESSICK



SCHERL

William Huck is a San Francisco-based music critic and opera librettist. His writing appears in the *Sentinel*, *Opera Quarterly*, and the *Los Angeles Times*.

(left) Ring portals, which frame all four operas of the cycle, are assembled on the Opera House Stage in the summer of 1983. They are 30 feet high, 8 feet wide; visually, they represent a blending of theater and nature. (right) Ring portals at the end of *Walküre*.

stood the dangers and threats involved in man's new power over his environment."

To explain his point, Lehnhoff draws attention to Mime's speech in the third scene of *Das Rheingold*, when Wotan and Loge, after having descended into Nibelheim, ask the dwarf to explain to them the factory world they have entered. "*Sorglose Schmiede*' it starts," Lehnhoff reminds us, "a forge without sorrows." In Andrew Porter's singing translation, Mime's speech runs: "Once we were carefree, worked at our anvils, forged for our women, trinkets and jewels, delicate Nibelung toys." For Lehnhoff this opening strophe represents Wagner's vision of rewarding work, before Alberich's power through the ring "turned him into a bloody fascist and slave dealer."

Mime goes on to paint a dismal portrait of life and work under Alberich's command. "But now he compels us to creep through the mineshafts . . . [for] the golden ring has magical power to show where treasure lies hid in the rocks; and then we must mine it, forge and refine

it . . . so by day and night we serve the greed of our lord." Here Lehnhoff believes Wagner is describing the worker's life in industrialized Europe. He cites Charles Dickens and *Oliver Twist* as a parallel example; he might have gone further and mentioned Émile Zola's *Germinal* and D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* as specific visions of the miner's fate.

Yet, for Lehnhoff "Alberich's theft of the gold is secondary to Wotan's original crimes." Wagner's *Ring* is a tangle of new beginnings. In its final version, the great tetralogy opens on the sunlit banks of the Rhine. One hundred and thirty-two bars of what Wagner called "the pure triad of E-flat major" symbolizes the innocence of nature, the beginning of all beginnings. Edo de Waart sees that great arpeggiation as the "blooming up at dawn," but he hears, too, an "undertone of doom there. Something is not quite right." Patrice Chéreau in the *Ring* that was televised from Bayreuth put on top of that immense swelling up a dam and a power plant—symbols of an already industrial-

ized world. Nikolaus Lehnhoff has commented on Chéreau's design, "A lot of people thought he was wrong, but he had a point, for the tragedy has already begun before that scene on the Rhine, which we see first."

Lehnhoff refers here to what the Norns tell us in the Prologue to *Götterdämmerung* about Wotan's original crime in breaking off a branch of the World Ash-tree to use for his spear. Wagner began the writing of the *Ring* with this Norns' scene. Both the words and some of the music of it come from the earliest drafts in 1848-49. After that, Wagner backtracked several times, creating new beginnings and finally opening majestically in E-flat major.

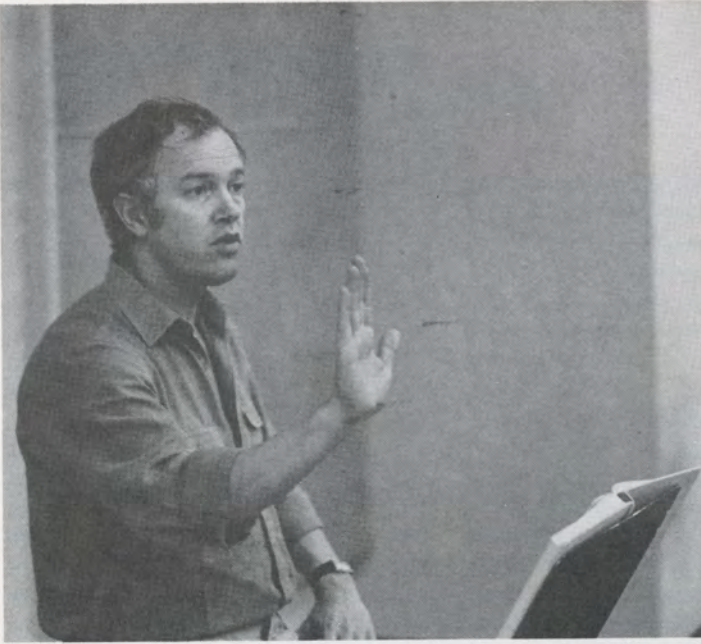
Unlike Chéreau, Lehnhoff begins his San Francisco *Ring* in accordance with the innocent nature of the music, because "I want to emphasize that there are no totally negative characters in Wagner. Alberich does not start off evil, not even Klingsor in *Parsifal* starts out negative. Perhaps Hagen is completely negative, but he is an extension of Alberich after Alberich has been hurt and frustrated by the Rhinemaidens. I have tried to emphasize this shift in Alberich by having the dwarf fall on the rocks of the Rhine when he is chasing after the Rhinemaidens. When Alberich curses love, he is covered with blood from his fall, which symbolizes the Rhinemaidens' ill-treatment of him."

Although Lehnhoff begins *Das Rheingold* innocently, he insists that the Norns' scene is the true beginning of the whole drama and that therefore what it has to say must be integrated into the production. "I give a hint in the first gods' scene that there has been a prehistory here," Lehnhoff explains. "There we see the old palace and the terrace of the gods, already slightly in decay, to show us that we have not begun our story exactly at the zero-hour, but really somewhat later in its development." From this scene on, Lehnhoff begins to create a scenic leitmotif that will give the Norns' scene its required resonance.

We see this terrace again in *Siegfried*, when Wotan calls up Erda who, however, can no longer help him. Already the great palace has fallen into decay, for Wotan has



Spring, Summer (both c.1826), Autumn and Winter (both c. 1834), drawn in pencil and sepia by Caspar David Friedrich. Kunsthalle, Hamburg.



Conductor Edo de Waart during a *Siegfried* musical rehearsal. (right) Gwyneth Jones joined the cast of *Die Walküre* in 1983 after the opera had already opened. In a staging run-through, she tried on her Brünnhilde costume and went through her scenes with Peter Hofmann who portrays Siegmund. On the right is Dagmar Thole, assistant to Director Nikolaus Lehnhoff.



neglected it. On that terrace, too, Wotan encounters Siegfried and the fearless hero breaks the god's spear. As Lehnhoff describes this scene in *Siegfried*, "The palace has begun to fall apart and you can see nature climbing up the walls, reclaiming the terrace. Then in *Götterdämmerung* you will see it in a quite different state; the degeneration has gone much further. The Norns have immigrated, the tree of life has been cut to put around Valhalla.

Behind the terrace we see Brünnhilde's rock, which we know is there from *Siegfried*, but now the fall of the gods is imminent. The terrace is doomed."

Set and costume designer John Conklin has commented on the way he and Lehnhoff developed the interconnections of the *Ring*: "Designing the *Ring* imposes a sort of web-like structure on you. You come up with something in *Siegfried* that suddenly affects the way you want to

design Nibelheim in *Rheingold*. The *Ring* is almost symphonic in the way you design it. I don't know how much people are going to see that; you don't want to make it too obvious." Lehnhoff elaborated, "We want the scenic patterns to work the way the musical patterns work: you notice them, but you don't fixate on them. They are part of the texture and development of our production, part of its hidden punch."

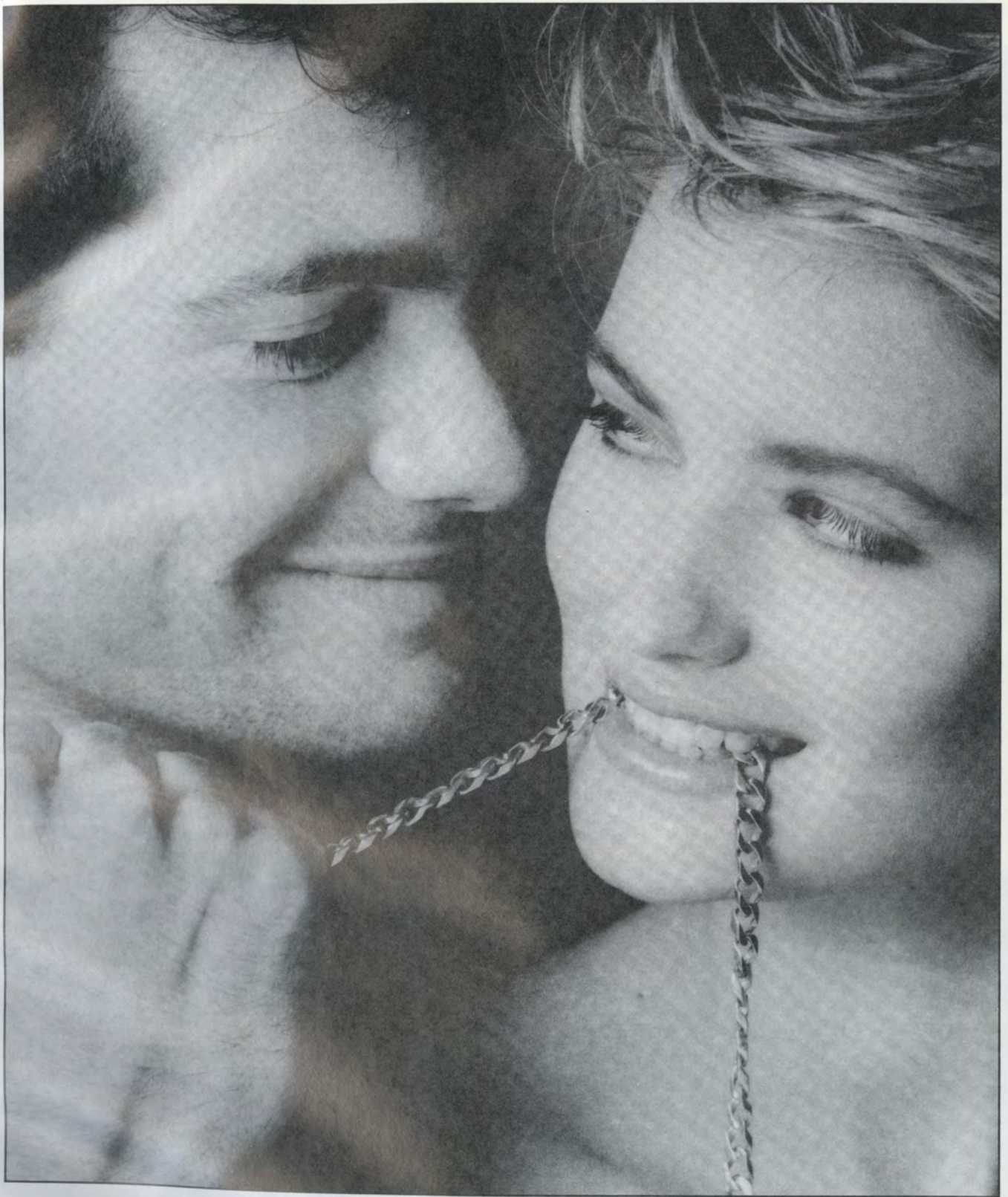
The fulcrum of Wagner's *Ring* comes in



Swatches of cloth samples are about to be matched with costume designs during a long session that preceded 1983 productions of *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*.



Jenny Green, San Francisco Opera Costume Director, discusses some *Rheingold* fabrics with the *Ring* designer John Conklin.



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Three parts of a Siegfried rehearsal: Director Nikolaus Lehnhoff explains the intended effect to Helmut Pampuch, who portrays Mime (above left); the two rehearse in tandem (above center); they join the reclining Siegfried (René Kollo) as part of a rehearsal of the Forest Scene from Act II. (above right)

the second act of *Die Walküre* when Brünnhilde learns the meaning of love. Wotan has sent his daughter down to Siegmund to announce the hero's death and to bring him back to Valhalla. After Sieglinde falls magically asleep, the brass intone a funeral march, and Brünnhilde summons the hero, "*Siegmond, sieh auf mich.*" The Valkyrie appears in front of a scaled-down, all-white version of her rock. Lehnhoff explains the effect he was after: "Of course, at that moment the

viewer cannot know that this little white island reflects the scene of Brünnhilde's sleep and awakening, but it is all related. The scene in *Walküre* Act II is a dream sequence. What I like there is that we have moved into a kind of science fiction mode because when Siegmund gets up from bending over Sieglinde and goes to look at the apparition, he is so tall, almost taller than the little island. Your whole sense of dimension is lost. Look at it, the next time. For me it is always breathtaking. You see it



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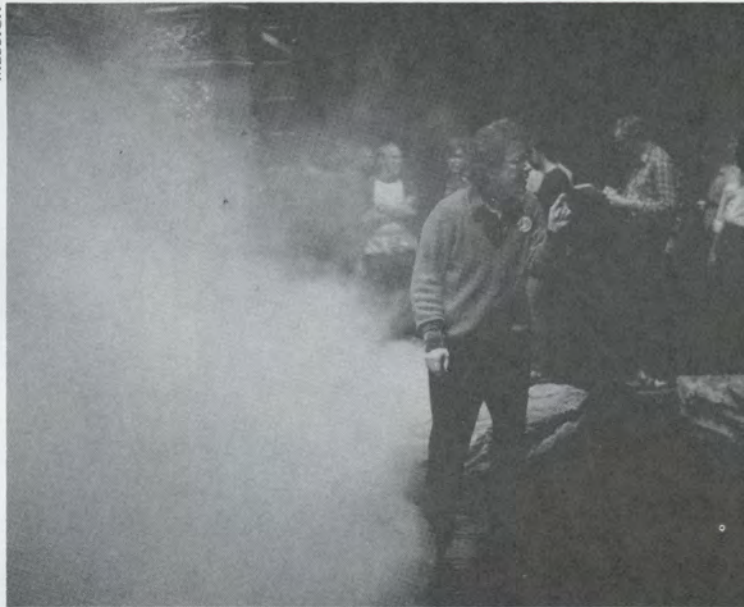
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Walter Berry and Nikolaus Lehnhoff going through Alberich's Rheingold paces.





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Director Lehnhoff and the stage crew during a test of the over-vigorous steam machine.

as if you were in a trance. Yet the means for creating this illusion are so simple. We have just made the proportions small and when Siegmund goes up in front of Brünnhilde's island, you feel as if he is already half-a-step into another world.

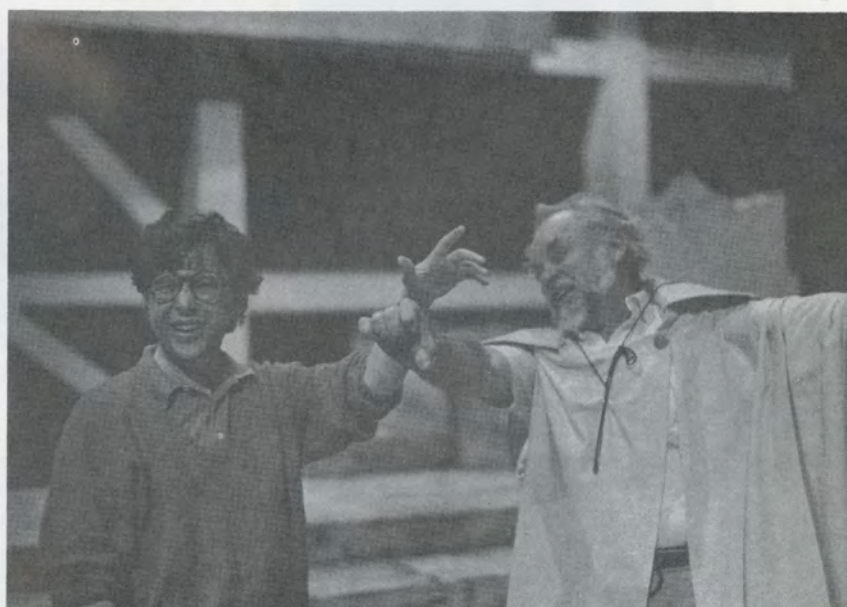
"To give a secret away," Lehnhoff continues, "this scene comes back in *Götterdämmerung* in the death of Siegfried. In the moment when Brünnhilde's music comes back, he gets up, stares out into the audience and wants to grab at something,

because he sees a vision in the audience. With this action and this music, the island comes up and then the moment Siegfried collapses the island disappears."

Underlying these scenic leitmotifs is Lehnhoff and Conklin's larger intention to portray the cycle of the *Ring* in terms of the yearly seasons. For Lehnhoff, "it is quite obvious that the cycle of the seasons is interwoven into Wagner's *Ring* drama, and our production makes this visible for the audience to see." In visualizing their

interpretation of the *Ring*, the director and designer have turned to the work of the German Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich. For example, Friedrich's seascape, *Arctic Shipwreck*, hinted at in the beginning of *Das Rheingold*, returns at the end of *Götterdämmerung*, and a four-part series of the seasons painted by Friedrich has helped Lehnhoff and Conklin to envision their own seasonal cycle in the *Ring*.

Lehnhoff describes the Friedrich series,



Director Nikolaus Lehnhoff in three lighter moments of *Ring* rehearsals: (left) with William Lewis who portrays Loge in *Das Rheingold*; (above left) with a group of Valkyries in *Die Walküre*; (above right) with Thomas Stewart who portrays the Wanderer in *Siegfried*.



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Dale Wibben of the San Francisco Opera Costume Shop (5 ft. 9 in.) during a giant's costume fitting. David Clover, one of the giant supernumeraries, has already achieved his 7-foot height.

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A stage in the preparation of giants' boots. Since the height of all the men who play the giants is between 6 ft. and 6 ft. 6 in., the added elevation of the boots varies between 6 and 12 inches. That way, all giants come out an even 7 feet. The boots start out as a regular pair of army boots, which is set into foam, which is in turn contained by a fiberglass mold. After this stage, the boots are covered with scuffed leather and provided with rubber soles.



Assistant stage director Robin Thompson impersonates Alberich during a rehearsal with the Nibelung 'gnomes.'

now residing in the Hamburg Kunsthalle: "The first is Spring, and in it you see untouched, unhurt nature, the *Urzeit* or the beginning of all beginnings. In the second, you see amid the natural scene little cottages and a couple dressed in the costumes of the Middle Ages. Civilization is appearing in nature. In Fall, Friedrich put into the background a large city with towers and churches. In Winter, you come to the ruins—a cemetery and two old people. It's the same cycle as the *Ring* embodies, from the *Urzeit* to the beginning of civilization, which to these artists was the Middle Ages, and then finally to the time of downfall and decay, which for Friedrich as for Wagner was the time in which he lived.

"I do not want to suggest that Wagner and Friedrich were identical in their feelings and observations. No, they were both individuals with their separate vision. But the parallels are very rich. When you look at them together, they say a great deal about one another.

"So I have used Friedrich often in this production to show the power of nature opposite the smallness of man. His landscapes are mirrors of the soul, just as Wagner's music is. "Do you know" the director questions, "Friedrich's famous line, 'A painter should not paint only what he sees in front of him, but what he sees inside of him. If he doesn't see anything inside of him, then he shouldn't paint.' That is Wagner all over again. Both these artists have an ambiguous perspective

about nature and man. On the one side, there is the utopian feeling that there will be a better world, but on the other, there is pessimism, a foretelling of the downfall of man and the revenge of violated nature."

At this point, Lehnhoff returns in his thoughts to the cycle of seasons. "I found a quotation from Friedrich about Winter, as the *Endzeit*, the decay, but he did not see it in the Wagner-Schopenhauer way as the absolute end. He has a feeling there will be a new beginning. He says about Winter that it is 'a large white linen, the incarnation of highest purity, underneath which nature prepares herself for a new life.'"

If every *Ring* production must unravel the tricky business of how to begin, so each must likewise comprehend to what end Wagner was moving. Does all the white and ice of Lehnhoff's *Götterdämmerung* production mean that he sees an end beyond which nothing else shall come, or is nature beneath this blanket of white preparing for a new life?

"The destructive forces of human nature," Lehnhoff explains, "become so explosive in *Götterdämmerung* that they lead up naturally to the final catastrophe. Mankind is going to get devoured by the powers of nature. The circle of the *Ring* closes there, but has the audience witnessed a terminal drama or will there be a renewal?

"As you know," Lehnhoff continues, "Wagner wrote three different endings to

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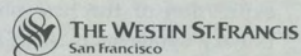
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Jean Herzberg at the San Francisco Opera Costume Shop during a molding of her Ortlinde costume. She is first outfitted with a wax paper skirt, then wrapped in plastic (by Gloria Nusse of the Costume Shop), sprayed with non-stick oil, and outfitted with a cast-dipped bodice. The dried bodice mold is then cut through and used as a base for the rest of the armor-like costume top. Craft supervisor Tom Collins is seen cutting the finished mold.



the immolation scene. First, there is what I call the 'Bakunin ending.'" Wagner wrote this ending in Dresden during the years of revolution, when the composer was an active supporter of the Russian emigré-revolutionary, Mikhail Bakunin. Much of the doom that casts such a long shadow over the *Ring* was originally an optimistic expression of the first phase of revolutionary upheaval. It was a parallel expression to Bakunin's famous war-cry, "The urge to destruction is a creative urge." The old corrupt order of Europe was to be succeeded by what Lehnhoff, following Wagner, calls "a Hellenistic-optimistic world, a kind of communistic, idealistic

society of free people, exalting love as the only valid part of life."

Lehnhoff goes on, "This is the first ending. Then a little later Wagner wrote a 'Schopenhauer ending,' in which he turned toward Buddhism and transformed destruction as a constructive act into self-destruction. The first *Ring* concept asked for a total renewal, but with age and the disappointment of exile, Wagner turned action into passion, destruction into self-destruction.

"The final version was highly influenced by Cosima, and I think it speaks for itself, without any extra moralizing. It does not give you an answer and leaves

you quite purposely alone with a question mark. At the very end of *Götterdämmerung*, there might be a possible new beginning, a new utopia, or the cycle can start all over again, with the same ending. But if the cycle must start all over again, there is a hint that it will not end better for Man. Brünnhilde in her immolation scene turns to the Rhinemaidens to warn them to be more careful next time about guarding the gold. There is in Brünnhilde's speech the admonition that in the next world there might be no Brünnhilde, no redeemer. I think this is very important. You can feel the terror of this admonition, but it is not like in the earlier versions

The evolution of Fabrics: the dragon.

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Parts of Valhalla litter the floor of the San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios during the spring of 1983.



The gilding of Valhalla.

where everything is spelled out."

For Lehnhoff, "The subtlety Wagner put into his final ending is very important. After all this singing about the end, Wagner does not leave us the question because he does not have an answer. No, not at all. He knows what he believes, but I think he imaginatively throws the ball to the audience and says, 'Now, after what you have seen, make up your own mind what you want. Just keep thinking. I don't want to give you the answer, you must make up your own.'"

By the concluding orchestral postlude, Wagner as both composer and librettist has built up sixteen hours of some of the greatest music and drama man has ever known. Then he concludes it with a passage of pure rapture. If there is hope at the end of *Götterdämmerung*, it resides in

Wagner's ability to create an even more beautiful moment here than any that has preceded it. Bleak as is the story he tells, there is a shimmering glory to its end.

Like Wagner, let us give the final say to the conductor. De Waart reminisced about his first exposure to the *Ring*: "I was about 20 years old. I had gotten the Solti box and when we came to the end of the immolation scene, when she has to jump, I thought to myself how can Wagner after all these many hours of magnificence top what he has already accomplished. But then he does it. Those incredible last few minutes from the pit cleanse everything and say, well, maybe, it is not as bad as it looks, if we just trust ourselves. It is a fantastic achievement, and I am extremely thankful that I am going to be part of this great music." ■



# The evolution of Fafner, the dragon.

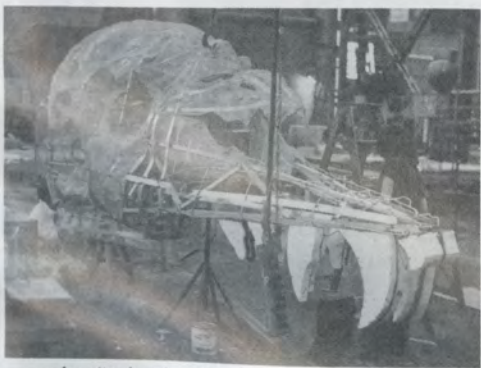
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Daniel Nelson of the San Francisco Opera Scenic Construction Shop tries the controls inside the giant skull, while the constructed object is still just a skeleton made of steel.



The head is covered with a wire screen...



...and outfitted with rudimentary teeth.



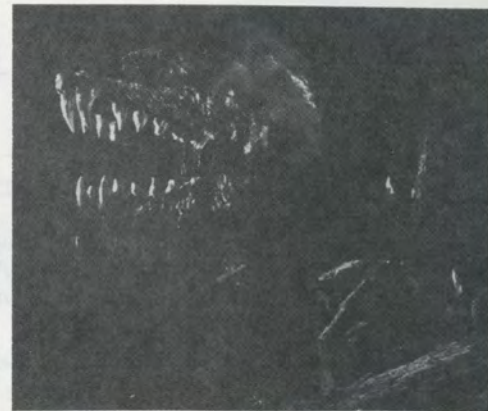
The teeth have been properly shaped and are now being properly darkened. This is done by means of gauze dipped in colored glue, which is applied to the basic structure. Elizabeth Jennings and Donna Mossbacher are in charge of this part of the operation.



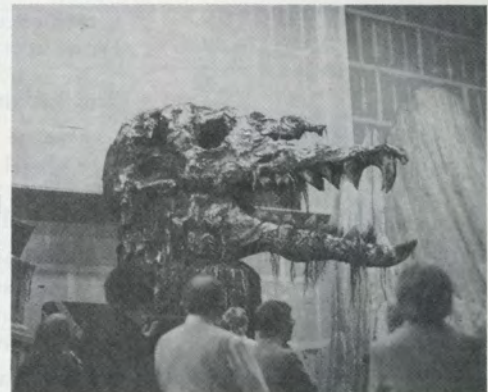
The finished product, at this point, is propped up and secured by means of pieces of string.



Fafner gets some 'gold' foil and moss applied to his physiognomy.



The same scene in a final dress rehearsal.



Wheeled backstage, Fafner meets members of the media during a press conference.



General director Terry McEwen and Ring conductor Edo de Waart check out the dragon's teeth.

Moved from the San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios to the Zellerbach rehearsal facility, Fafner meets René Kollo in a first rehearsal of the dragon-slaying scene.

# San Francisco Opera

## *The Ring*

### June Calendar

<b>2</b> Sunday	<p><b>Cycle I — DAS RHEINGOLD</b></p> <p>Hanna Schwarz, Nancy Gustafson, Mariana Paunova, Deborah Sasson, Jean Herzberg, Alexandra Hughes/James Morris, Walter Berry, William Lewis, Helmut Pampuch, Roland Bracht, James Patterson, John Del Carlo, Walter MacNeil</p> <p>Edo de Waart/Nikolaus Lehnhoff/John Conklin/Thomas J. Munn</p> <p><i>Performance to be followed by a Twilight Celebration throughout the Opera House.</i></p> <p><b>Cycle I — Das Rheingold</b></p> <p>Closed-circuit Telecast With Supertitles</p>	<p>Opera House 5 p.m.</p> <p>Davies Symphony Hall 5 p.m.</p>
<b>3</b> Monday	<p><b>Ring Insight</b></p> <p>Preview of <i>The Ring</i> By Michael Mitchell, Seattle Opera</p>	<p>Herbst Theatre 6 p.m.</p>
<b>4</b> Tuesday	<p><b>Cycle I — DIE WALKÜRE</b></p> <p>Gwyneth Jones, Jeannine Altmeyer, Helga Dernesch, Nancy Gustafson, Jean Herzberg, Susan Quittmeyer, Susan Neves, Donna Bruno, Carla Cook, Laura Brooks Rice, Dolora Zajic/ Peter Hofmann, James Morris, John Tomlinson</p> <p>Edo de Waart/Nikolaus Lehnhoff/John Conklin/Thomas J. Munn</p> <p><b>Cycle I — Die Walküre</b></p> <p>Closed-circuit Telecast With Supertitles</p>	<p>Opera House 7 p.m.</p> <p>Davies Symphony Hall 7 p.m.</p>
<b>5</b> Wednesday	<p><b>Cycle I — SIEGFRIED</b></p> <p>Eva Marton, Hanna Schwarz, Cheryl Parrish/René Kollo, Thomas Stewart, Helmut Pampuch, Walter Berry, James Patterson</p> <p>Edo de Waart/Nikolaus Lehnhoff/John Conklin/Thomas J. Munn</p> <p><b>Cycle I — Siegfried</b></p> <p>Closed-circuit Telecast With Supertitles</p>	<p>Opera House 7 p.m.</p> <p>Davies Symphony Hall 7 p.m.</p>
<b>6</b> Thursday	<p><b>Wagner Chamber Music Concert</b></p> <p>Nikki Li Hartliep, <i>soprano</i> Donna Bruno, <i>mezzo-soprano</i> John Fiore and Jeffrey Goldberg, <i>pianists</i></p>	<p>Green Room War Memorial Veterans Building 8 p.m.</p>
<b>7</b> Friday	<p><b>Cycle II — DAS RHEINGOLD — With Supertitles</b></p> <p>(Same cast as June 2)</p>	<p>Opera House 8 p.m.</p>

<b>8</b> Saturday	<b>Cycle I — GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG</b> Eva Marton, Kathryn Bouleyn, Helga Dernesch, Mariana Paunova, Deborah Sasson, Jean Herzberg, Alexandra Hughes/René Kollo, Michael Devlin, John Tomlinson, Walter Berry Edo de Waart/Nikolaus Lehnhoff/John Conklin/Thomas J. Munn	<b>Opera House</b> 6:30 p.m.
	<b>Cycle I — Götterdämmerung</b> Closed-circuit Telecast With Supertitles	<b>Davies Symphony Hall</b> 6:30 p.m.
<b>9</b> Sunday	<b>Cycle II — DIE WALKÜRE — With Supertitles</b> (Same cast as June 4)	<b>Opera House</b> 2 p.m.
<b>10</b> Monday	<b>Ring Insight</b> Directing <i>The Ring</i> With Nikolaus Lehnhoff <b>Wagner on the King of Instruments</b> Organ transcriptions played by organists Anthony Newman and John Balka With participation of the San Francisco Opera Chorus	<b>Herbst Theatre</b> 6 p.m.  <b>Davies Symphony Hall</b> 8:30 p.m.
<b>11</b> Tuesday	<b>Cycle II — SIEGFRIED — With Supertitles</b> (Same cast as June 5)	<b>Opera House</b> 7 p.m.
<b>12</b> Wednesday	<b>Cycle III — DAS RHEINGOLD — With Supertitles</b> (Same cast as June 2) <b>Wagner Chamber Music Concert</b> Nikki Li Hartliep, <i>soprano</i> Donna Bruno, <i>mezzo-soprano</i> John Fiore and Jeffrey Goldberg, <i>pianists</i>	<b>Opera House</b> 8 p.m.  <b>Green Room War Memorial Veterans Building</b> 8 p.m.
<b>13</b> Thursday	<b>Cycle II — GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG — With Supertitles</b> (Same cast as June 8)	<b>Opera House</b> 6:30 p.m.
<b>14</b> Friday	<b>Der Freischütz — A Concert Performance</b> Pilar Lorengar, Ruth Ann Swenson/William Johns, Michael Devlin, Roland Bracht, Timothy Noble, Stanley Wexler, Jacob Will, Christopher Henry/Ray Reinhardt, narrator Heinrich Hollreiser, conductor	<b>Opera House</b> 8 p.m.
<b>15</b> Saturday	<b>Cycle III — DIE WALKÜRE — With Supertitles</b> (Same cast as June 4)	<b>Opera House</b> 7 p.m.
<b>16</b> Sunday	<b>Cycle III — SIEGFRIED — With Supertitles</b> (Same cast as June 5)	<b>Opera House</b> 2 p.m.
<b>17</b> Monday	<b>Wagner Chamber Music Concert</b> Nikki Li Hartliep, <i>soprano</i> Donna Bruno, <i>mezzo-soprano</i> John Fiore and Jeffrey Goldberg, <i>pianists</i>	<b>Green Room War Memorial Veterans Building</b> 8 p.m.
<b>18</b> Tuesday	<b>Ring Insight</b> A Singers' Roundtable, with Robert Jacobson, <i>Opera News</i> <b>Der Freischütz — A Concert Performance</b> (Same cast as June 14)	<b>Herbst Theatre</b> 6 p.m.  <b>Opera House</b> 8 p.m.



<b>19</b> Wednesday	<b>Cycle III — GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG — With Supertitles</b> (Same cast as June 8)	<b>Opera House</b> 6:30 p.m.
<b>20</b> Thursday	<b>Magic Fire — a 1954 Trucolor film by William Dieterle</b> Erich Wolfgang Korngold, <i>music director</i> With Alan Badel (Wagner), Yvonne de Carlo (Minna Wagner), Peter Cushing, Frederick Valk, Carlos Thompson, Valentina Cortese <b>Siegfried — Fritz Lang's 1923 film</b> With Wagner's music keyed to the action; compiled by Burton Wilner	<b>Herbst Theatre</b> 6:00 p.m.  <b>Herbst Theatre</b> 8:30 p.m.
<b>21</b> Friday	<b>Der Freischütz — A Concert Performance</b> (Same cast as June 14)	<b>Opera House</b> 8 p.m.
<b>22</b> Saturday	<b>Wagner: A day-long feature film by Tony Palmer</b> Richard Burton, Vanessa Redgrave, John Gielgud, Ralph Richardson, Laurence Olivier, Gwyneth Jones, Peter Hofmann, Jess Thomas. Opera sequences conducted by Georg Solti (Intermission: 2:30-3:00; Dinner break: 5:30-7:30; Intermission: 9:30-10:00)	<b>Opera House</b> 12 noon
<b>23</b> Sunday	<b>All-Wagner Concert at Stern Grove</b> A Part of the Midsummer Music Festival San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Chorus under the direction of Maestro Kurt Herbert Adler With special guest artists Pilar Lorengar and Jess Thomas	<b>Sigmund Stern Grove</b> 19th Avenue at Sloat Blvd. 2 p.m.
<b>30</b> Sunday	<b>A Waterfront Concert</b> Sponsored by the Friends of the Port San Francisco Opera Orchestra and Soloists under the direction of Resident Conductor Andrew Meltzer	<b>Ferry Plaza</b> Market at Embarcadero 2 p.m.

The production of the RING has been made possible by the BankAmerica Foundation, the Carol Buck Sells Foundation, the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, and an anonymous friend of the San Francisco Opera.

SUPERTITLES are paraphrases in English of the sung lines. These appear above the proscenium and can be read by patrons who wish to understand the general meaning of the German text. Supertitles are by Jerry Sherk and Francesca Zambello of the San Francisco Opera.

Program and casting is subject to change without notice.

Box Office information: (415) 864-3330

Box Office hours: Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

A Ring-related exhibit has been put together by the Archives for the Performing Arts. It can be viewed before the performances and during intermissions at the Opera House Museum, located on the south mezzanine (box) level, adjacent to the Opera Boutique.

Vorpal Gallery (393 Grove, between Franklin and Gough) is the site of several Ring-related events: Painter-designer Ariel will show her "For the Ring" items, which include three 4'x5' panel paintings, a dragon mask, sketches and gouaches; there will be a rare showing of the Ferdinand Leeke series of paintings on the Ring; and on June 17 at 6 p.m. and June 20 at 6:30 p.m., there will be a showing of a 40-minute color film "100 years of Richard Wagner," supplied through the courtesy of the Goethe Institute, preceded by the Bugs Bunny Wagner short, "What's Opera, Doc?" Gallery hours are 11 to 6 p.m., 7 days a week; for more information, call 397-9200.



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A L T I F O R N I A

Die Walküre, Act I, as seen in the work's first Bayreuth presentation, in 1876. The set designs were by Josef Hoffmann. (below) Act I of Die Walküre at the San Francisco Opera, 1983.



# Wagner's Visible Theater

By ANDREW PORTER

Wagner's various endeavors to explain in words what the *Ring* is about are confused and contradictory. In an 1856 letter, he owned that "something quite different came into being from what I had originally planned . . . I was unconsciously following a different, much deeper view of things" and, "instead of one phase in the evolution of the world, was seeing the very essence of the world, in every imaginable phase." Over the years, there

were still further developments. The *Ring* became at once a world history, starting with man's first attempts to harness nature to his use; a contemporary parable about capitalism and its attendant evils; and a dramatic image, apt for Jungian exposition, of the human psyche. From the start, it had also been an adventurous narrative—a rousing old tale of gods, giants, men, and dwarfs; of magic, murder, and love; unfolding in grandly picturesque Rhine scenery. Work on it

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*Andrew Porter has concerned himself with opera as critic, director, translator, and librettist. He is music critic of The New Yorker. His latest staging was of Handel's Tamerlano, in Bloomington, Indiana. He*

*has made the modern English singing versions of The Ring, Tristan and Isolde, and Parsifal. He wrote the libretto for John Eaton's opera The Tempest, due in Santa Fe in July.*

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HISTORICAL PHOTOS COURTESY LIM M. LAI—BORI: WAGNER IN BILDERN, 1938



Heinrich and Therese Vogl as Siegmund and Sieglinde in the Munich world premiere of *Die Walküre* in 1870.



Janis Martin as Sieglinde; Jon Vickers as Siegmund in San Francisco Opera's 1976 presentation of *Die Walküre*.

was to be completed in the theater, where, Wagner said, "it is the performers who play the essential artistic part." The composer's contribution was to be assessed by the extent to which he had been able to inspire the drama enacted there: "By drama, I mean not the dramatic poem or text but the drama we see taking place before our eyes, the visible counterpart of the music." In a famous phrase, he described his music-dramas as "deeds of music made visible."

The varied enactments of those "deeds" across a century can be followed by paging through any of the numerous Wagner picture books. In rude, insufficiently qualified summary, the progress is this: first, realistic scenery at the original Bayreuth productions, and elsewhere. (Covent Garden's postwar stagings of *The Flying Dutchman* and of *Parsifal*, which I grew up with, were still in prewar decors close to the Bayreuth originals.) Then, avant-garde attempts, most striking in the twenties and thirties, to break radically with tradition. At Bayreuth in 1951, Wieland Wagner's starkly simplified and impressive decors, which set the tone for Wagner stagings all over the world in subsequent decades. In the seventies, a new dominance of "director's theater," *Regie-Oper*, of productions extravagantly "different," in which the composer's stage directions are scrapped in favor of action

newly written by the director. And, most recently, a return to treating the music dramas as integrated works of art all of whose original elements—verbal, musical, and scenic—call for serious, imaginative interpretation.

There are two famous, much-quoted remarks by the composer which are often trotted out to defend departure from his clearly expressed intentions. One is:

Now that I've created the invisible orchestra, I feel like inventing the invisible stage.

Cosima reported it in her diary for September 23, 1878, when Wagner was working on Act II of *Parsifal* and reflecting ruefully on the flesh-and-blood forms in which his visions would take theatrical shape. The continuation of his little joke is usually left unquoted: "... and then I'll have to invent the inaudible orchestra!" Richard Strauss went even further, feeling a need for inaudible singers, if it's true that at the rehearsals for *Elektra* he cried to the play's orchestra in exasperation, "Louder, louder, I can still hear Frau Heink." (Ernestine Schumann-Heink was the first Klytemnestra.) Well, we've all heard—not heard—inaudible singers. And dimly lit, all-but-invisible productions of the *Ring* and of *Tristan* have not been uncommon. Persistent stage gloom has three bad effects. Because it's depressing. Because it makes the words less intelligi-

ble (since one "reads the libretto off the singers' lips"). And because, after the voice, the main means of communication between people is through the eyes. Wagner's librettos are filled with references to the precise quality of a glance or a gaze. Think of the first act of *Die Walküre*. Here's a passage from it chosen at random—Hunding's entry:

Hunding turns to Sieglinde with a look of stern inquiry. Sieglinde says in answer



Hans Hotter in the title role of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* at the San Francisco Opera in 1954.



Marianne Brandt as Kundry, Bayreuth, 1882.

to Hunding's look . . . Siegmund (*watching Hunding calmly and firmly*) . . . Sieglinde *involuntarily turns her eyes again to Siegmund. Hunding looks keenly and with astonishment at Siegmund's features, and says, "A glittering snake seems to shine in both their glances" . . . Siegmund gazes thoughtfully in front of him. Sieglinde fastens her eyes on Siegmund, with evident sympathy and intentness. Hunding observes them both . . . Siegmund looks up and gazes into Sieglinde's eyes . . .*

Or think of Wotan's Farewell in Act III, "Der Augen leuchtendes Paar"; it's all about eyes. Or, in *Tristan*, of that wonderful moment "Er sah' mir in die Augen." If you can't see Isolde's own eyes as she sings that line, it loses much. The nineteenth-century critics were forever going on about the expressive power of great prima donnas' eyes—the flash and fire in them, or huge swimming tenderness. But although I've seen Birgit Nilsson in all her Wagnerian roles many times, I've still no idea even what color her eyes are. Eyes, glances, and the particular quality and expressiveness of those glances form a vital part of Wagner's imagery.

Eduard Hanslick in his review of the first *Ring* production, in 1876, declared: "Wagner could as little have composed the *Ring* before the invention of electric light as before that of the harp and the bass tuba." That's how important light is.

Hanslick also says, "A dazzling electric light plays upon the features of the principal singer"—even in the night scenes! We do have our own "invisible stage," too; it's provided by phonograph and radio. In the theater, let's be able to see!

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The other quotation (it's often slightly misquoted) is:

Kinder! macht Neues! Neues! und abermal Neues!

Children, do something *new! new*, and yet again *new!*

It's become a parrot-cry raised in defense of ridiculous innovations: the Rhinemaidens as three harlots in button boots, improbably employed as nightwatchladies atop a rusting hydroelectric dam; the Woodbird as a caged canary; and much worse. But when we put Wagner's remark into context, it provides no warrant for revamping or dramatically reinterpreting a carefully conceived work of the past. Quite the reverse, in fact. Wagner made the remark in a letter to Liszt, on September 8, 1852, in which he deplored any attempt to "galvanize and resuscitate" past works that had not succeeded. He was specifically deploring the attempt to remodel Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* for Weimar presentation. In effect, he says, "If you don't believe in a piece on its own terms, then leave it alone and go on to do something new."

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And in that very same letter, Wagner tells Liszt that he has drawn up precise and detailed instructions for the staging of his *Tannhäuser*; he has had them printed; he has sent them to all theaters that plan to produce *Tannhäuser*; and if these ideas are not exactly observed, he says, then the orchestra might as well play a march from *Norma* or from Donizetti's *Belisario* as play his music. But if his music is going to be played, then his staging must be followed, else the music won't make sense. So much for "macht Neues!" as a sanction for rewriting the scenic elements of a composition in which words, music, actions, and scenery are intended as parts of a whole.

That assertion raises the question: to what extent today should we respect Wagner's staging as faithfully and accurately as we respect his sung words and

was. But remember how often he was dissatisfied, too, with the singing and the playing of his operas. The moral to be drawn from his dissatisfactions is that *we* should strive the harder toward as perfect as possible a realization of his visions, in sound and sight combined.

Let's consider a brief specific example of staging as he tried to prescribe it—the Flying Dutchman's first entrance:

The first note of the ritornello (the double basses' E sharp) is accompanied by the Dutchman's first step on shore. The unsteadiness of his motion, like that of seamen who after a long voyage first set foot on land, accompanies the wave-like figure of the cellos and the violas. At the first quarter note of the third measure, he takes his second step . . . His third and fourth steps coincide

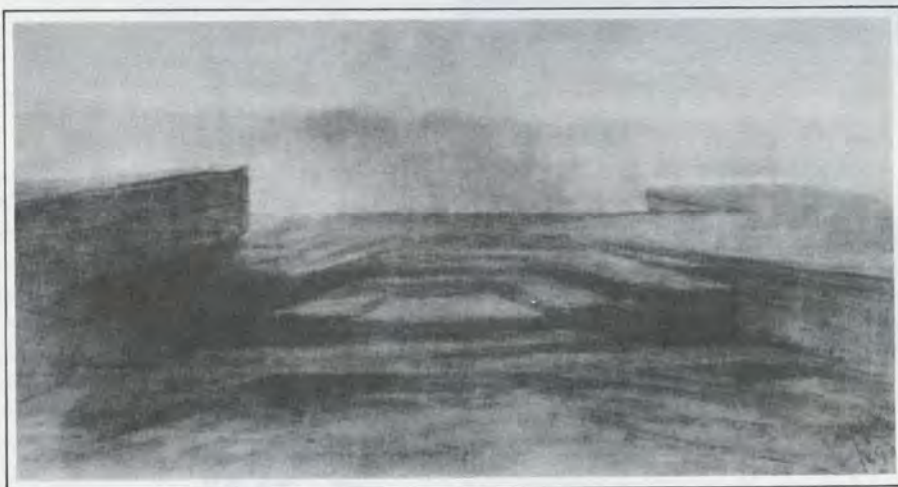
these instructions and does not consider them seriously, a conductor who has not considered exactly what his orchestral players are depicting, a designer who makes it difficult for the Dutchman to move tellingly, and a baritone who stands stock-still from the beginning to the end of "Die Frist ist um" give us only a partial and not a complete performance of Wagner's opera. I would insist that Wagner intended to work through both our ears and our eyes at once, and that his "composition" was in both media at once. He didn't simply write the music and leave it for some director to "compose the action." A precise visible, as well as audible, musical theater was his aim, as it was Verdi's. One proof of that can be deduced from his various letters explaining why he had found it needful, essential, to expand his *Siegfried's Death* first into two, then into four operas—because an audience had to see happen, had to take in with all their senses, what in *Siegfried's Death* had been merely narrated.

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It is true that his visions outstripped the technical theater resources of his day. He knew as much, and often said so. "Oh, how I hate the thought of all those costumes and greasepaint. When I think that characters like Kundry will now have to be costumed, then those dreadful fancy-dress balls come to mind." Kundry, he said, should really appear to Parsifal perfectly naked, like Titian's Venus. There would be no particular outrage problem today in playing Kundry starkers, if anyone wanted to. ("Thais led the way," to quote a line from *Alexander's Feast*.) But there might be physical drawbacks. (My first Kundry was Kirsten Flagstad, a noble, majestic woman; Wagner's was Amalie Materna, then Marianne Brandt; and both, I'm sure, were more convincingly seductive when skillfully draped.) But questions of style, of convention, of artistic focus, of distraction would arise.

There are some aspects of Wagner's visions that still cannot be effectively achieved—except perhaps on film. Not in the theater. One of them is Brünnhilde's horse, Grane. It's easy enough to bring on a docile horse. They did so at Bayreuth in 1876, and Hanslick wrote, not unfairly, I'm sure, about "the aging nag, held fast by a cord underneath the stage," the "miserable Rosinante" that Brünnhilde did not mount but simply led off quietly into the wings. Richard Fricke, the stage manager

THEATER MUSEUM, MUNICH



Adolphe Appia's sketch for *Das Rheingold*, Scenes 2 and 4.

his notes? I don't find it a difficult question, but before trying to answer it, let's try some of the arguments used by those who would scrap his stage directions.

(1) Wagner's own visual taste was execrable. Untrue: his responsiveness to great art and architecture, as to natural scenery, can be discovered by dipping almost anywhere into Cosima's diaries and learning what he admired, what moved him.

(2) Wagner worked at a time when visual standards were generally low. Untrue: witness the revaluation on every hand of nineteenth-century art once despised in the swings of taste and fashion.

(3) Wagner himself was dissatisfied with the stagings of the *Ring* and of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth. Perfectly true; he

with the (accented) notes in measures eight and ten . . .

And so on. Phrase by phrase, move by move, Wagner goes on describing not only the gestures and movements but also the vocal colors, the nuances, the kind of enunciation required. And at the same time he verbalizes the Dutchman's inner thoughts, what the singer and actor of the role must try to express, and also the inner meaning of whatever the orchestra is doing. (It's significant that he talks of the moves accompanying the music, not vice versa.)

I'm not suggesting that what we want is an elaborate, exaggerated pantomime of an old sea dog lurching ashore. Tiny shifts of balance might be enough to make explicit what the music is about. But I would say that a director who discounts

MORTON



Die Walküre, Act III at the San Francisco Opera in 1935. Please note that this is a photo of the set, not a sketch. The designer was Julian Dové.

MORTON



A group of Valkyries in San Francisco Opera's 1935 presentation of the Ring cycle.

of the 1876 *Ring*, left an account of the rehearsals. A good deal of temperament flew about, but (in Ernest Newman's version of Fricke):

There was one member of the company with whom Wagner had no trouble from first to last, one artist by grace of God who did cheerfully and with the highest competence whatever was demanded of him, who never felt a single pang of jealousy of his colleagues, never considered himself slighted or underpaid, never whined, never stormed, never sulked, never threatened to throw up his part. This was the gifted horse who played Grane. He was nine years old and gentle as a lamb, accepting guidance from any hand that might be suspected to have a piece of sugar concealed in it. He never lost his nerve even in the most trying situations, accompanying Brünnhilde without a tremor over the steepest and rockiest of stage mountains. It is sad to have to record that in the end he was excluded from one of his best scenes—the moving scene in *Die Walküre* in which Brünnhilde forewarned Siegmund that he would be slain in the coming fight—simply because Wagner was afraid he would steal the act. For he drew all eyes to himself, and kept the spectators wondering what effect from his extensive repertory he would produce next.

Grane was allowed to keep his role in *Götterdämmerung*, however. But two years later, Wagner remarked to Cosima, apro-

pos of Brünnhilde's and Grane's leap into the blazing pyre: "It's in the stage directions, and it's part of the action; but if the audience's attention is going to be monopolized by it—out it goes." In the Paris Opera's 1977 *Walküre*, Gwyneth Jones appeared with a friendly pony, which nuzzled and was fed lumps of sugar by the shining, terrible Messenger of Death.

The Valkyries ride flying horses across the background at the start of *Die Walküre*, Act III. In Munich in 1870, at the first *Walküre*, royal stable boys from King Ludwig's household, dressed as Valkyries, rode hobbyhorses pulled on wires. But six years later at Bayreuth, the improved electrical technology made it possible to use magic-lantern projections, whisked across the backcloth. The designs for them look rather splendid. The *Siegfried* bear should present no problem: every self-respecting opera house has a bearskin in the wardrobe, needed for Cavalli's *Calisto*, for *The Bartered Bride*, for *The Invisible City of Kitezh*, for *Petrushka*. If the bear adds a touch of humor to the scene, so much the better; this episode of *Siegfried* is larky and high-spirited. The *Ring* menagerie epitomizes points of our discussion. The beasts play roles both symbolic and picturesque. After all, the last, great, extended speech of the *Ring* is addressed to a horse, and the previous speech to a pair of ravens. (Wagner once declared that every animal was dearer to him than the whole race of mankind.)

What of the two dragons: Alberich's transformation in *Das Rheingold* and Fafner-as-dragon in *Siegfried*? Both are

meant to be fearsome and menacing, but it does no harm if they are entertaining, too. Wotan bursts out laughing at Alberich's dragon impersonation; he should have something to laugh at. And in *Siegfried*? The Bayreuth dragon in 1876 was a wretched, lizard-like little thing. Fricke tried to persuade Wagner to keep it out of sight. But something more impressive had been ordered, from a British firm that specialized in pantomime beasts. The head and body were safely delivered to Bayreuth; the neck that should have joined them, it's said, went to Beirut. At Bayreuth, the bits were joined as best as possible, but the result was less than fearsome.

All the same, the *Siegfried* dragon is also meant, I'm sure, to be entertaining as well as formidable. Mime finds it formidable, but *Siegfried* doesn't. The text runs: The dragon laughs, and *Siegfried* says, "What a splendid array of glittering teeth!" The dragon replies, "All the better to eat you with!" (I'm not making this up.) And *Siegfried* says, "Hoho! But I've no intention of being your breakfast!" In other words, there is playfulness here, just as there are jokes in *Hamlet*, in *King Lear*, in *Don Giovanni*; and they call for visual, not only verbal, representation.

Fricka is another character who is formidable but is also viewed sometimes as a shade absurd. (And in the *Ring* we need every possible viewpoint to be shown.) Hagen makes a joke about her in *Götterdämmerung* when, with a trill on "gebe" he imitates the bleating of her rams, and the vassals "break out into





Tannhäuser and Venus in a caricature by Charles Philippon, published in the "Journal Amusant," Paris, in 1861.

ringing laughter." In *Die Walküre*, the orchestra has made the same joke, imitating that bleat. What's the designer to do about Fricka's rams? In 1876 they were mechanical rams, and in photographs they look absurd in the wrong way: like fleecy toys with clockwork inside them.

Enough of animals. Let us consider some of Wagner's imagery that can be achieved with no difficulty whatsoever. Among them are the precise moments of curtain rise and of curtain fall. These are composed into the music, part of the texture of "music made visible." When a director misplaces them, it's much as if the conductor had instructed his horns to come in four measures earlier than the score indicates. That's something easy to get right. Something more difficult, which I once thought could never be brought off as Wagner's stage directions prescribe, is the Venusberg bacchanale in *Tannhäuser*—that orgy of youth and maidens, of nymphs and satyrs lost in amorous delights. In 1880, Wagner said: "Staging that scene would be a task fit for a king: to spend a long time preparing it, so that it would be done really beautifully; for it calls for choreography of a new kind, and there should be actors in it, too." Usually, what goes on in the Venusberg is tactfully hidden in dimness. But in Bayreuth one year Birgit Cullberg gave us a kind of bright, brisk sexual Swedish drill—copulation by numbers from the right—that was absurdly ill-matched to the richness of the music. And then, at the Met, Otto

Schenk and Günther Schneider-Siemssen showed that it *could* all be done successfully, and more or less in accord with the composer's stage directions, by bringing together belief in those directions, imagination, and all the resources of modern lanterns, projectors, paints, and scenic materials.

Adolphe Appia's book *The Staging of Wagnerian Drama*, which appeared in 1895, was, and still is, influential—though Appia's ideas have lately been put into practice as developed by Wieland Wagner, enriched by his particular genius, or else at two removes, blunted by Wieland's less talented emulators. Cosima Wagner, when she was presented with a copy of the book, was scornful. She declared that the staging of her late husband's works had been precisely determined by the score and that therefore "Appia's work is of no value." (Caustically, she added, "It might be of some use in France.")

Cosima was no hidebound conservative. She was a declared foe of unthinking "tradition." Of *Tristan*, for example, she said, "We must abolish everything that is merely conventional, everything realistic." She had the right basic idea: Wagner's score does determine the staging. What she missed was the fact that Appia's ideas, too, are determined by Wagner's scores—sometimes even too schematically so. The music, Appia felt, somehow defined the physical spaces. He aimed to make musical space visible. I think he paid too little attention, maybe, to the simple theatrical and pantomime

elements that are also a part of Wagner's compositional armory. Nevertheless, in Appia's designs, all the actions that Wagner requires can take place. On his *Walküre* rock we find all the things that are needed and referred to: a proper peak, a cave on the left, a fir tree on the right. His *Walküre* Act I is a properly closed scene: a place of refuge for Siegmund, flying from the storm; on the other hand, a place of confinement for Sieglinde; with walls and roof to contain the mounting tensions, until the great door flies open and deeds of music and psychological development both achieve symbolic theatrical visualization. Even if this were not all spelled out in the stage directions, it is obviously required by the drama. Yet it has not been obvious at all to many modern designers.

Wieland Wagner, who frankly acknowledged his debt to Appia, declared that Appia's ideas had become realizable only with the newly developed technical resources of his, Wieland's, day—especially in the field of lighting. Wieland's settings were sometimes deplorably dark, but in several memorable scenes he lit Appiesque spaces with floods of glowing, or brilliant, or smoldering color. Color is important in Wagner, and it's been much neglected in our day. We've had *Ring* after *Ring* in shades of gray and black, with the magic fire reduced to a dusky flicker, the bright blue sky that Siegfried sings of



Amalie Materna and Grane at Bayreuth in 1876.

turned to drabness, and Brünnhilde waking to greet the sun in radiant words, radiant music, and (one hopes) radiant tones, but beneath a relentlessly sullen sky.

Wagner found the inspiration for his *Parsifal* Grail Hall when, in 1880, he visited the Siena Cathedral. Cosima's diary reads: "A visit to the the cathedral! Richard moved to tears, the greatest impression he has ever received from a building." It's a black-and-white building. But when Paul von Joukowsky, the designer of the first *Parsifal*, who was traveling with Wagner at the time, converted the Siena Cathedral into Bayreuth's Grail Hall, he covered it with

tremendous collisions of Sword against Spear—of the individual rebel against the established power, of the new order against the old—or whatever values one chooses to place on those central symbols. The clash of Sword and Spear is one of the things that can and should be represented. Another is the visual separation of Tristan and Isolde in the opening scenes of their opera. Throughout the voyage from Ireland she has been brooding about him; he's very close—aboard a small ship—yet she hasn't spoken to him or seen him. In Wagner's staging, in Appia's (which Toscanini brought to the stage of La Scala in 1923), and on into every *Tristan* of my youth, this separation was always there.

whereas a symbol is "an indefinite expression with many meanings." Wagner worked with symbols: the many different meanings that have been read into the *Ring* bear witness enough to that. The visual symbols—"indefinite expressions with many meanings"—are described in the stage directions. Directors and designers diminish their emotional and effective power when they turn them into mere signs—when a single, specific interpretation is read into the cycle, and mythical settings of manifold meaning are reconceived in the light of it.

I'm not blowing a trumpet for literal nineteenth-century stage reconstructions, with all their failings as well as their merits. But I'd blow a thousand and one trombones for the proposition that, just as we don't rewrite, reorchestrate, recompose nineteenth-century music in a twentieth-century manner but play the notes that Wagner, Verdi, or Brahms composed, so we shouldn't recompose Wagner's (or Verdi's) stage settings and stage actions and replace them with other stage settings and actions, but should realize them, interpret them, bring them to life as fully, faithfully, and imaginatively as possible with every means at our disposal. There's a distinction to be made between willful novelty—"étonne-moi, Jean-Pierre"—and attempts to realize Wagner's visions more precisely and more beautifully than was possible with the stage equipment of his day.

As I suggested in that summary history of Wagnerian stage manners, the latest steps are in that direction. Although there is still plenty of *Regie-Oper* around, theater people are gradually beginning to catch up with the kind of thinking that in recent decades has transformed so many aspects of musical performance. My brief here is not to blow a trumpet for the San Francisco *Ring*; but my admiration for visual aspects of the production as evinced in *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, and *Siegfried* is on record in the columns of *The New Yorker*. When Terence McEwen announced the cycle, he did so in words that found a sympathetic chime:

Our San Francisco *Ring* has been planned as a return to romanticism, to color, to the kind of majestic beauty that the music suggests. This is not to say it will look like something produced in the nineteenth century . . . But we have worked in the spirit of the music and in the sense of the words. ■



Prelude to *Götterdämmerung*, Bayreuth, 1968. Production by Wieland Wagner.

bright polychrome mosaics. Earlier that year, in Ravello, they had discovered the inspiration for Klingsor's enchanted garden in a luxuriant garden there; at Bayreuth, Joukowsky designed a tropical garden ablaze with brilliant reds and greens. We seldom see anything like it now.

The specifics of the stage plans are also important on the "integrated" level. In many modern *Ring* productions, Act II of *Die Walküre* is so awkwardly laid out that Wotan cannot get his spear anywhere near Siegmund's sword, to shatter it, and so one of the big symbolic climaxes of the *Ring* is muffed: the first of the two

Lately, I've seen several productions where the two could see one another, across an open deck, and we could see *both*, from the very start; and that wonderful moment when Isolde first sees Tristan, when the obsessive presence becomes a physical presence, and Isolde sings "Mir erkoren, mir verloren" loses its full eloquence, because the essential stage directions have been ignored, and so the dramatic vision is unrealized.

A last objection: to single-minded simplified statements, however striking, where Wagner intended something more complicated. Jung's distinction between a "sign" and a "symbol" may be helpful here: a sign "always has a fixed meaning,"

# Richard Wagner

## 1813-1883

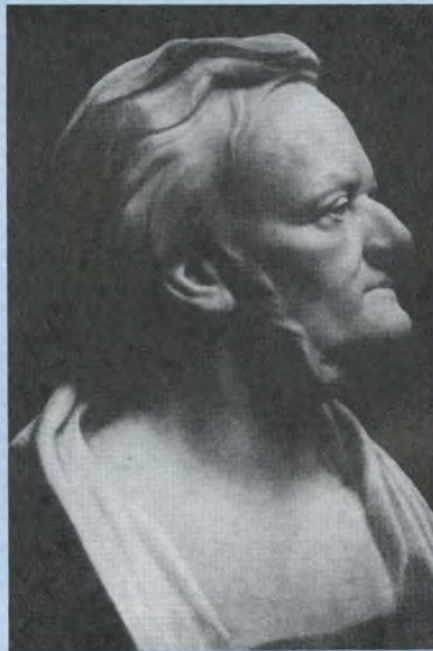
Compiled for San Francisco Opera by Christopher Hunt

- 1791 *Death of Mozart*
- 1800 *Accession of Tsar Alexander I of Russia*
- 1801 *Jefferson elected third President of the US*
- 1804 *Napoleon crowned Emperor in Paris*
- 1808 *Goethe: Faust Part I. Beethoven: 5th Symphony*
- 1809 *Death of Haydn. Birth of Mendelssohn*
- 1810 *Goya: The Disasters of War. Schlegel & Tieck: final volume in their German translation of Shakespeare. De la Motte-Foqué: Der Held des Nordens, popularizes the Siegfried legend in Germany*
- 1811 *Birth of Liszt and Gilbert Scott*
- 1812 *Hegel: Logik. Napoleon's retreat from Moscow*
- 1813 *Jane Austen: Pride & Prejudice. Birth of Verdi, Büchner, and Kierkegaard*
- The youngest of nine children, Richard Wagner born on May 22 in Leipzig, to Johanna, wife of the police actuary Friedrich Wagner, who died on November 23 that year**
- 1814 *Walter Scott: Waverley. Beethoven: Fidelio (final version). Stephenson's 'Rocket'*
- [age 1] **Johanna Wagner marries Ludwig Geyer, Jewish poet, painter, & innovative actor, assumed by some to have been Wagner's real father. The family moves to Dresden**
- 1815 *Battle of Waterloo. Nash: Brighton Pavilion*
- 1816 *Rossini: Barber of Seville*
- 1817 *Drury Lane Theatre in London the first to have gas lighting. Jefferson starts building University of Virginia in Charlottesville*
- 1818 *Keats: Endymion. Mary Shelley: Frankenstein. Birth of Karl Marx. First iron steamship launched*
- 1819 *Byron: Don Juan. Géricault: Raft of the Medusa. Schopenhauer: The World as Will and Idea*
- 1820 *Constable: The Haywain. Venus de Milo discovered. Faraday's first electric motor*

[age 8] **On the death of Geyer (30 Sept) Wagner's elder sister Rosalie, an actress, supports the family**

1822 *Turks massacre the Greeks at Chios. Death of ETA Hoffmann*

[9] **Wagner enters Dresden Kreuzschule where he develops an interest in classical Greek drama and literature**



Bust of Wagner by Bernhard Bleeker.

1823 *The 'Monroe Doctrine' in the US*

1824 *Beethoven: 9th Symphony. Caspar David Friedrich: Arctic Shipwreck. First public zoo, in London*

1825 *First passenger railway*

[12] **Wagner teaches himself composition from J.B. Logier's recently published "Thoroughbass"**

1826 *Fennimore Cooper: The Last of the Mohicans. Niépce starts experiments leading to photography*

[13] **Carl Maria von Weber dies. Wagner as a child knew him in Dresden: "He was my true begetter, arousing in me**

**a passion for music."** Elsewhere in Germany the 17-year old actress Minna Planer, later to be Wagner's first wife, gave birth to an illegitimate daughter by a cavalry captain

1827 *Joseph Smith founds Mormon Church. Death of Beethoven and William Blake. Deinhardstein: Hans Sachs*

1828 *Death of Schubert. 'Minstrelsy' songs become popular in US. Raupach: Der Nibelungenhort*

[15] **Wagner family moves back to Leipzig. RW enters Nicolai-gymnasium where he neglects school work in favor of theater (Shakespeare, Schiller, Goethe) and music (Mozart, Beethoven, Weber). Writes prose tragedy "Leubald"**

1829 *Rossini: William Tell. First trade unions, in England*

[16] **Now obsessed with music, takes some harmony lessons, but mainly studies by himself. Uses Mozart's "Don Giovanni" as textbook for orchestration. Composes a string quartet with two piano sonatas (lost). Hears Wilhelmine Schröder-Devrient who was later to create the roles of Adriano ("Rienzi"), Senta ("Flying Dutchman") and Venus ("Tannhäuser")**

1830 *Stendhal: Le Rouge et le Noir. First computing machine*

[17] **Enters the Thomasschule in Leipzig, attached to the Thomaskirche where a century earlier J.S. Bach had been cantor. Arranges Beethoven's 5th Symphony for piano solo, which he offers to the publishers Schott, who reject it. Composes three orchestral overtures, in C major, in B flat (performed on Christmas Eve in Leipzig's Theater), and to Schiller's play "The Bride of Messina"**

1831 *Bellini: Norma and La Sonnambula*

[18] **Enters Leipzig University where he studies music with Theodor Weinlig, the Thomaskantor. Piano Sonata in B flat published by Breitkopf at Weinlig's instigation**

1832 *Death of Goethe and Jeremy Bentham. Berlioz: Symphonie Fantastique*

[19] Writes his first theater music, incidental music to Raupach's tragedy "King Enzo." Piano Sonata in A. Weinlig declares his studies complete. Travels to Prague, writing his first opera "Die Hochzeit", which he later destroyed. Also his Symphony in C, performed at the Prague Conservatory. Two months before his death Wagner conducted this symphony again in Venice

1833 *Birth of Brahms. First US trade unions. Pushkin: Eugene Onegin. Mendelssohn: Italian Symphony*

[20] Symphony in C performed at the Leipzig Gewandhaus. In January joins Würzburg Theater as Chorus Master, at behest of his elder brother Albert, a singer in the company. Starts composing his second opera "Die Feen", based on Gozzi's "La donna serpente." In a letter rejects use of any librettist but himself for his operas. "Die Feen" was not produced until after his death, in 1888

1834 *Slavery abolished in British Empire. Braille invents reading system for the blind. Hokusai: 36 Views of Mount Fuji*

[21] Finishes "Die Feen" in January, and leaves Würzburg to join Heinrich Bathmann's experimental theater company as music director, based in Magdeburg. Sketches scenario for his third opera, "Das Liebesverbot," based on Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure." Publishes essay "Die deutsche Oper," first of more than 100 essays on cultural and political matters. In Magdeburg meets actress Minna Planer, a member of the company

1835 *Donizetti: Lucia di Lammermoor. Colt's patented revolver. Hans Christian Andersen's first Fairy Stories. H. Bulwer-Lytton: Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes. J. Grimm: Deutsche Mythologie. Schinkel designs the fairy-tale castle Schloss Babelsberg. Halévy: La Juive*

[22] On an audition tour to find singers for Magdeburg visits Bayreuth and Nuremberg for first time. Is in contact with the antipuritanical revolutionary group Younger Europe. Composes Overture: "Columbus." Becomes engaged to Minna Planer

1836 *Glinka: A Life for the Tsar*

[23] "Das Liebesverbot," with location changed from Vienna to Palermo in honor of Bellini; premiere at Magdeburg March 29. Moves to Königsberg to join

Minna, now at the Königsberg Theatre, and marries her Nov. 24. During time in Würzburg and Magdeburg has conducted operas by Hérold, Paër, Cherubini, Weber, Beethoven, Rossini, Meyerbeer, Marschner, Bellini, Paisiello, Weigl, Spohr, Auber and Boieldieu, a total of 29 works. All of these are composers then still living or only recently dead

1837 *Büchner dies leaving Woyzeck unfinished. Queen Victoria ascends British throne. Pitman invents shorthand. First electric telegraph. Dickens: Oliver Twist. Zuccalmaglio publishes essay Die deutsche Oper advocating the Siegfried story as basis of national opera*

[24] Appointed Music Director in Königsberg April 1st. Starts writing his third opera "Rienzi." In June Minna



House in which Wagner was born in 1813. The building was torn down in 1886.

elopes with rich businessman Dietrich. Wagner pursues her to Dresden, noting in his diary: "Whips, pistols. D already gone." On July 25 is appointed Music Director in Riga; sketches scenario for projected comic opera on themes from "1001 Nights." In October Minna rejoined him in Riga

1838 *Turner: The Fighting Temeraire. Hugo: Ruy Blas*

[25] Conducts a wide range of operas in Riga, and organizes independent symphony concerts which he conducts, with inter alia, six of Beethoven's symphonies, one of Mozart's, and overtures by Weber and Mendelssohn. Adds Mozart's "Figaro" and "Magic Flute" to his conduct-

ing repertoire, as well as Bellini's "Norma" and Méhul's "Joseph." Is influenced by hearing Halévy's "La Juive" and Spontini's "Fernand Cortez."

1839 *Chopin: 24 Preludes. Birth of Cézanne. Auber's Muette de Portici (Masaniello) causes political revolution in Brussels*

[26] To escape creditors flees in March from Riga to Paris by way of London. A storm en route forces his ship into a fjord in Norway, giving him the inspiration to start writing the poem for "Flying Dutchman." Arriving in Paris in September, he finishes "Rienzi". Meets Berlioz and Meyerbeer. Hears Berlioz's "Romeo & Juliet" and "Damnation of Faust"

1840 *First postage stamps, in England. Lortzing: Hans Sachs. Proudhon: What is Property? ("Property is Theft")*

[27] Jailed for debt in Paris. To earn a living arranges piano-vocal scores of operas by Donizetti and Halévy, and writes semiautobiographical novella "A Visit to Beethoven," and "An End in Paris". First encounters the Lohengrin and Tannhäuser legends

1841 *Thomas Cook organizes first package tour*

[28] Finishes "Flying Dutchman," originally planned in a single act

1842 *Ozone discovered. Gogol: Dead Souls. Doppler defines certain sound effects. Gervinus: History of German National Poetry*

[29] Meets Liszt for the first time, in Paris. "Rienzi" accepted by Dresden. Travels to Dresden by way of the Wartburg, and on vacation in Teplitz writes poem for "Tannhäuser" and the Song Contest at the Wartburg. Premiere of "Rienzi" in Dresden, Oct 20, successful

1843 *Kierkegaard: Fear & Trembling. Ruskin: Modern Painters I*

[30] Conducts premiere of "Flying Dutchman" in Dresden (Jan. 2). Appointed Music Director at Saxon court in Dresden. Revises "Rienzi." Starts composing "Tannhäuser"

1844 *YMCA founded in London. Dumas: Trois Mousquetaires. Vischer: Kritische Gänge, advocating Nibelungenlied as basis for a national German theater*

[31] Reads Vischer, and others on ancient Germanic mythology. Conducts

"Flying Dutchman" in Berlin. Writes poem for "Lohengrin." Arranges reburial of Weber's remains in Dresden, and writes the music for the interment ceremony

1845 *Lortzing: Undine. Mérimée: Carmen novella. USA war with Mexico*

[32] Starts unfinished opera "Die Sarazenin." Writes first sketch for "Meistersinger" on vacation in Marienbad, where also reads Wolfram von Eschenbach's poem "Parzifal." Conducts premiere of "Tannhäuser" in Dresden (Oct 19)

1846 *First Christmas Card. Deinhardstein: Der Waffenschmied*

[33] Conducts Beethoven 9th Symphony for first time, in Dresden. Works

*national opera. Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood founded. Irish potato famine*

[35] Meets Russian anarchist Bakunin in Dresden, after abortive Prague uprising. Plans music drama "Jesus von Nazareth," with Jesus as political activist. Essay "Art & Revolution" uses term 'Gesamtkunstwerk' for first time. Publishes two essays on the Nibelung myth. In November sketches outline poem "Siegfrieds Tod," later developed as "Götterdämmerung"

1849 *First cast-iron buildings in the US. The Finnish Kalevala published. Who's Who first appears*

[36] Sketches drama on legend of Wieland the Smith. Publishes essays "Art & Revolution," and "The Art-Work of the

Goethe's birthday (Aug. 28). Edits Mozart's "Don Giovanni" for performance in Zurich. In a letter outlines idea for a festival theater in Zurich to give three performances of projected festival dramas on the Siegfried theme, after which the theater would be pulled down, and the music burned

1851 *First sewing machine (Singer). Verdi: Rigoletto. London Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace.*

[38] Continues series of published essays working out his ideas for a new form of music drama, and the place of art in society. Publishes texts of "Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin" with explanatory preface "A communication to my Friends." Frau Julie Ritter of Dresden grants him annuity, paid until 1859. Sends young pianist Hans von Bülow to study with Liszt in Weimar

1852 *First public library, in Manchester, England. Schopenhauer's works first made widely known*

[39] Revises "Flying Dutchman" for Zurich. Writes text for "Die Walküre" and then "Das Rheingold"

1853 *H.B. Stowe: Uncle Tom's Cabin*

[40] Writes piano sonata in Zurich for Mathilde Wesendonk, wife of local businessman and supporter/patron of Wagner's. Conducts concerts at Wagner Festival in Zurich, "Tannhäuser" given in Kassel (conducted by Spohr) and Leipzig "Flying Dutchman" in Weimar (cond. Liszt). On vacation in La Spezia in November awakes with the music of opening of "Rheingold" in his ears; starts composing again after a break of six years

1854 *Tennyson: Charge of the Light Brigade. Start of the Crimean War. John Martin: The Great Day of Wrath*

[41] Finishes "Rheingold" and starts "Walküre." Encounters Schopenhauer's "Will & Idea." Writes Liszt about projected Tristan drama

1855 *Whitman: Leaves of Grass. Growth of club life in London*

[42] Revises 1840 "Faust" Overture. Conducts series of concerts in London (March-June), where his vigorous and passionate style contrasts unfavorably with the public's favored Mendelssohnian delicacy. He conducts Mendelssohn's works wearing kid gloves, discarding them for his own music

1856 *Flaubert: Madame Bovary. Pasteur starts bacteriological experiments.*



Interior of the Bayreuth Festival Theater during a performance of *Das Rheingold*. Engraving after a sketch by L. Bechstein, late 19th century.

on "Lohengrin." Edits Gluck's "Iphigénie en Aulide"

1847 *Gold discovered in California. 10-hour working-day law in England. E. Brontë: Wuthering Heights. Verdi: Macbeth*

[34] Finishes "Lohengrin." Writes no more music until 1853. Sketches text for projected opera on Frederick Barbarossa

1848 *Revolutions throughout Europe. Marx/Engels: Communist Manifesto. Franz Joseph becomes Emperor of Austria. Dumas (fils): La Dame aux Camélias. E.A. Poe: The Raven. Moniuszko: Halka, the first Polish*

Future." In May is implicated in Dresden Uprising, and flees to Switzerland to escape arrest for revolutionary activities, helped by Liszt in Weimar. In Switzerland writes first draft of poem which becomes "Siegfried"

1850 *Millet: The Sower. Bachgesellschaft established*

[37] In Paris in February plans elopement with pupil Jessie Laussot (unfulfilled). Revises "Siegfrieds Tod" and sketches some music for it. Publishes essay, "Jewishness in Music," attacking Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer. Liszt gives "Lohengrin" premiere in Weimar in Wagner's politically-enforced absence, on

Discovery of Neanderthal Man. First artificial dyes (mauve). Birth of Freud

[43] Finishes "Die Walküre" and starts "Siegfried." Sketches plot for projected Buddhist opera "Die Sieger." Leaves off "Siegfried" in the middle of Act II, to start writing poem for "Tristan und Isolde," perhaps inspired by continuing affair with Mathilde, wife of Otto Wesendonk. Conducts Liszt tone poems in Zurich and is much influenced by Liszt's harmonic daring, an influence he later tries to conceal

1857 Indian Mutiny. Crinolines in fashion. Garibaldi forms Italian National Association. Baudelaire: Les Fleurs du Mal, 'the birth of modern literature'

[44] Works on "Tristan." Sketches outline poem for "Parsifal." Moves into 'Asyl' Zurich house provided for him by Otto Wesendonk. Writes "Wesendonklieder" for Mathilde, two of which are studies for "Tristan." In Weimar, Liszt's daughter Cosima marries Hans von Bülow

1858 Offenbach: Orpheus in the Underworld. Bernadette has vision in Lourdes. Birth of Puccini

[45] Minna Wagner reads letter to Wagner from Mathilde Wesendonk, precipitating final separation. In August Wagner leaves for Venice, where he continues writing "Tristan." The 12-year old future king Ludwig II first reads and hears Wagner's works

1859 Darwin: Origin of Species. Gounod: Faust

[46] Finishes "Tristan" Act II in Venice but is obliged by authorities to quit the city. Finishes "Tristan" in Lucerne on August 9

1860 Burckhardt: Culture of the Renaissance in Italy. Birth of Mahler and Hugo Wolf

[47] Writes Venusberg scene in preparation for performances of "Tannhäuser" in Paris, where he meets Rossini. Official German exile ended. In a letter to Berlioz declares: "I took my stand on the position which art once occupied towards the public life of the [ancient] Greeks," i.e. as a religious festival

1861 American Civil War. Italian Unification. Emancipation of the Russian serfs. Salvation Army founded. Hebbel: Die Nibelungen

[48] Paris "Tannhäuser" performances disastrously interrupted by clique

from the Jockey Club. Baudelaire writes defense of Wagner, who goes to Vienna, where he hears a performance of "Lohengrin" for the first time. Writes outline of "Meistersinger"

1862 Bismarck becomes Prussian premier. Birth of Debussy

[49] Finishes "Meistersinger" poem in Paris in January. Moves to Bierbrich on the Rhine near Mainz, the traditional site of much of the Siegfried legend. Writes prelude to "Meistersinger" (April). Travels to Russia for successful series of concerts, and for less successful ones in Vienna, where Brahms acts as copyist

1863 Abolition of slavery in the U.S. First underground railway opens in London. Manet: Déjeuner sur l'herbe



Newspaper ad for the world premiere presentations of the Ring in 1876, as printed in the Kölner Nachrichten.

[50] Despairing of ever completing the Ring cycle, publishes the complete poems separately. Continues career as international conductor with concerts in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Breslau, (Buda) Pesth, and Karlsruhe where Turgenev hears him conduct segments from "Rheingold" and "Walküre." Settles in Penzing, a suburb of Vienna

1864 William Morris designing furniture and glass in London

[51] Flees Vienna in debt (March 23). Eventually settles in Stuttgart whence, from the utmost impoverishment, he is summoned by Ludwig II,

newly ascended to the Bavarian throne, with the promise of all necessary facilities in Munich to write and produce the "Ring" and "Tristan." Cosima von Bülow joins him in Munich, pursued by her husband, for whom Wagner secures a position at the Court Theater

1865 Assassination of Lincoln. Invention of the bicycle. Schubert's Unfinished Symphony first performed. Tolstoy: War and Peace. Lewis Carroll: Alice in Wonderland. Ibsen: Brand

[52] Premiere of "Tristan" in Munich, conducted by von Bülow. Wagner sends prose outline of "Parsifal" to Ludwig II. Resumes work on "Siegfried." Obligated to leave Munich in December under court pressure, on account of his liaison with Cosima von Bülow, and of his general tiresomeness. Starts writing his autobiography "Mein Leben"

1866 Austro-Prussian War. Mary Baker Eddy founds Christian Science. Smetana: Bartered Bride

[53] Minna Wagner dies in January while Wagner is in south of France. Moves into Tribschen, house on Lake Geneva rented for him by Ludwig II. Continues working on "Meistersinger"

1867 Nobel produces dynamite. J. Strauss: Blue Danube Waltz. Lister patents first antiseptic. Typewriter invented

[54] Cosima gives birth to Wagner's daughter Eva. Finishes "Die Meistersinger" full score October 24

1868 Brahms: Ein deutsches Requiem. Death of Rossini. Alcott: Little Women. Dostoevsky: The Idiot

[55] "Meistersinger" premiere in Munich on Johannestag (June 21) conducted by von Bülow, with Hans Richter as chorus master. Sketches drama "Luthers Hochzeit." Cosima moves to Tribschen

1869 Suez Canal opens. Birth of Gandhi. Death of Berlioz. Railroad completed across the US

[56] Prints eighteen private copies of "Mein Leben" for friends. Ludwig presents premiere of "Das Rheingold" in Munich, against Wagner's wishes. Cosima gives birth to Wagner's son, Siegfried. Finishes composing "Siegfried" and starts "Götterdämmerung"

1870 Franco-Prussian War & Siege of Paris. Papal infallibility declared. Schliemann excavates Troy. Brooklyn Bridge begun

[57] von Bülow divorces Cosima. Wagner and she marry (Aug. 25). Writes "Siegfried Idyll" for her birthday (Christmas Day) in honor of their son Siegfried. Ludwig II presents "Die Walküre" in Munich, again against Wagner's wishes. Wagner continues to issue essays on art and politics

1871 *Unification of Germany, the creation of the Reich*

[58] Goes to Bayreuth to look for a suitable theater for festival production of Ring cycle. Continues writing "Götterdämmerung"

1872 *Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy. Whistler: The Artist's Mother*

[59] Buys land in Bayreuth and lays foundation stone for Festival Theater, conducting Beethoven's 9th Symphony at ceremony

1873 *Rimbaud: Une Saison en Enfer. Zola: Thérèse Raquin*

[60] Topping-out ceremony in Bayreuth, August 2. Starts building home next door to theater, Wahnfried. Still working on "Götterdämmerung"

1874 Word "Impressionism" first used to describe new group of French painters. *Mussorgsky: Boris Godunov*

[61] Finishes full score of "Götterdämmerung" on November 21, the end of the Ring cycle first begun 26 years earlier. Cosima and Wagner move into Wahnfried. Principal singers start "Ring" rehearsals in Bayreuth

1875 *Bizet: Carmen. Th. Eakins: The Gross Clinic*

[62] Rehearsals with orchestra under Hans Richter at Bayreuth. Wagner revises "Flying Dutchman" again, for Vienna

1876 *Brahms: 1st Symphony. Ponchielli: La Gioconda. Edison starts experiments leading to the gramophone. The last German meistersinger dies in Ulm. Bell invents the telephone. Degas: L'Absinthe*

[63] Writes Centennial March for Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. And on August 13, 14, 16 & 17 "Der Ring des Nibelungen" is given its first complete performance in the Festival Theater at Bayreuth, 28 years from its conception in 1848. Ludwig II attends dress rehearsal, first time for six years that he and Wagner have spoken. Tchaikovsky is among celebrities from all over the world who attend performances

1877 *Verdi: Otello. Saint-Saëns: Samson et Dalila*

[64] Finishes poem for "Parsifal" and starts composition. Conducts series of financially-disastrous concerts in London. Considers selling Bayreuth theater to pay debts, and moving to America

1878 *Microscope invented. Wallace: Ben Hur*

1879 *Tchaikovsky: Eugene Onegin. Muybridge: Locomotion studies. H. James: Daisy Miller. First electric train*

1880 *Maupassant: Boule de Suif. Böcklin: Isle of the Dead. Zola: Nana. Pavlov begins dog-studies. First electric street lighting in New York*



Cosima Wagner with her grandson Wieland in a photo taken in 1918.

1881 *Tsar Alexander II assassinated. President Garfield assassinated. Electric lighting first used in a theater, the Savoy in London. Gilbert & Sullivan: Patience. Ibsen: Ghosts. Birth of Bartók & Picasso. First cabaret in Paris*

[65-68] In failing health, Wagner continues composing "Parsifal," taking long journeys to better climates for his health. Writes more essays on music and politics, notably in his own publication "Bayreuther Blätter," including "Heroism & Christianity;" "Religion & Art;" "On

the Application of Music to Drama;" etc. Through lack of funds there are no performances at Bayreuth

1882 *Koch discovers tuberculosis bacillus. Berlin Philharmonic founded. Birth of Stravinsky. First airship with electric motor*

[69] Finishes "Parsifal," which is given at Bayreuth with 16 performances, opening July 26. In September goes to Venice for the winter. Conducts his youthful Symphony in C at the Teatro La Fenice on Christmas Eve for family and friends

1883 *Kruger becomes President of South Africa. Monet at Giverny. Metropolitan Opera opens in New York. First skyscraper, in Chicago. Birth of Anton von Webern*

Plans a series of one-movement orchestral symphonies. While working at his desk in Venice suffers a fatal heart attack on February 13. His body is taken to Bayreuth and interred in the tomb he had designed for himself and Cosima, who survived to run the Festival Theater, and present all Wagner's mature works there, until her death in 1930

1884 *Puccini: Le Villi. Huysmans: Au Rebus. Massenet: Manon. First moving films*

1885 *Brahms: 4th Symphony. Birth of Alban Berg. Mark Twain: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Renoir: Grandes Baigneuses. First Wagner opera at the Met (Die Walküre)*

1886 *Death of Liszt. First automobile (Daimler). Symbolist Manifesto. Statue of Liberty. Ludwig II declared insane, commits suicide. Tristan und Isolde given at Bayreuth for the first time. Tristan and Meistersinger heard in New York for first time*

1887 *Debussy: Printemps. Hertz discovers radio waves. Alfons Mucha moves to Paris*

1888 *Premiere of Wagner's Die Feen. Munich. Electric light replaces gas in Bayreuth's theater. Nietzsche: The Case of Wagner. Mahler: 1st Symphony*

1889 *First American Ring cycle, New York*

1893 *Verdi: Falstaff. Dvořák: Symphony From the New World. Puccini: Manon Lescaut. Oscar Wilde: Salomé*

1902 *Debussy: Pelléas et Mélisande*

1911 *Cosima Wagner publishes censored edition of Mein Leben ■*

# Der Ring des Nibelungen

## THE MUSIC

By WILLIAM MANN

By the time Wagner completed his sixth opera, *Lohengrin*, in 1847, he knew that he was done with German romantic opera: his stage works in future must be as closely knit as Beethoven's symphonies, without the stop-and-start conventions of the "number opera," without anything resembling recitative, and without concerted vocal ensembles which prevented the audience from hearing and appreciating the words. The works that Wagner proposed to write could no longer be called operas: the name "music-drama" was wished upon them, but Wagner found that unsatisfactory, too—he wanted a term meaning "deeds of music made visible." The word for that is still "opera."

Wagner's change of artistic direction was caused by his planning of an opera about the death of Siegfried, the hero of Norse and Teutonic sagas. He isolated the subject in 1848, and soon found that the epic nature of the tale demanded a dramatic and musical treatment such as German romantic opera, even his own *Lohengrin*, could not supply. The language had to be flexible in order to comprehend a scenario that insisted on expanding until one opera, *Siegfried's Death*, became the last of four: *The Rhine Gold*, *The Valkyrie Maiden*, *Siegfried*, and *Twilight of the Gods*. The right language for this symphonic super-opera would, Wagner realized, require a web of recurrent melodic elements, spreading the length and breadth of his dramatic frame, constantly evolving and being transformed by allusive recollection. The "melodic elements" are musical themes, usually short and greatly striking, capable of suggesting several facets of any particular topic. German musicologists quickly named them *Leitmotive*, or "signpost themes"; nowadays we lazily tend to anglicize the term as "leit-

motif." Some more specific themes, such as "the unlucky Volsung family" or "annunciation of death," are longer and more lyrical; and most spacious of all is the "loving self-sacrifice" theme sung by Sieglinde in the third act of *Walküre*, and then not again heard until the close of Brünnhilde's Immolation solo at the end of *Götterdämmerung*.

I shall draw attention to the more important of these "signpost themes" in commenting on the music of each opera in

conducted by Wagner's orchestra, and the symphonic interludes and preludes provide moments for substantial musical summary; they are often heard as concert excerpts, such as "Siegfried's Rhine Journey," "Ride of the Valkyries," or "Forest Murmurs"—the last two include singing voices as well, when we hear them in the theater. Most of us go to our first *Ring* because we already know and enjoy some of these glorious set-pieces for orchestra. We will discover, I hope, that the *Ring* is a



Fanfares to the Ring operas in Wagner's handwriting.

the *Ring*. They are not just business convention identification labels: indeed sometimes it is hard to find a label that fits every appearance of the theme; but they are the subject matter of the world's hugest, most splendid, involving, and inexhaustible piece of music-theater (Wagner might have accepted our modern name for it).

The symphonic argument is largely

great singers' opera, with principal roles that encourage true *bel canto*, and with words and musical line perfectly matched by the author of both. The *Ring* is also a great morality play, an allegory of world society yesterday, today and, I fear, forever. It is not for people in a hurry, and it will survive all the investigation we care to give it for so long as we bring our ears and brains to bear upon its contents. ■

William Mann is the author of books on the operas of Mozart and Richard Strauss. He recently retired from the staff of The Times, London, after 34 years, 22 of them as chief music critic. He is an associate editor of Opera magazine.





EDO DE WAART

To resounding acclaim, **Edo de Waart** concluded his eight-year tenure as music director and conductor of the San Francisco Symphony in May. Before taking up his new post as music director of the Netherlands Opera in his native Amsterdam, Maestro de Waart returns to San Francisco Opera to lead three Wagner *Ring* cycles. He made his Company debut in 1983 with the first two *Ring* operas and conducted *Siegfried* last summer. Under his leadership, the San Francisco Symphony achieved national recognition, initiating annual tours and receiving many awards for adventurous programming, as well as performing in weekly radio broadcasts over more than 200 stations nationwide and in Europe and on outstanding recordings for the Philips label. Maestro de Waart also created the nation's first annual Beethoven Festival in San Francisco, founded the Symphony's Youth Orchestra and established a practice of annual commissions and premieres of new music. The New and Unusual Music Series he started five years ago has become a model for the composer-in-residence programs of other major American orchestras. His conducting career began at age 23 when he won the Mitropoulos Competition and became assistant conductor to Leonard Bernstein at the New York Philharmonic. Returning to his native land, he was appointed assistant conductor of the Concertgebouw Orchestra, where he had formerly been associate principal oboist. In 1967 he became music director of the Netherlands Wind Ensemble, whose celebrated recordings soon brought him international renown, and in 1973 he became music director of the

Rotterdam Philharmonic. He was named principal guest conductor of the San Francisco Symphony in 1974 and its music director in 1977. He has appeared as guest conductor with many of the world's greatest orchestras: the Boston, Chicago and London Symphonies; the Berlin, New York and the Los Angeles Philharmonics; the Concertgebouw, Philadelphia and Cleveland Orchestras; the Leipzig Gewandhaus and the Dresden State Orchestra, and again this past season with the Rotterdam Philharmonic. His opera engagements have included *Lohengrin*, to open the 1979 Bayreuth Festival; *The Flying Dutchman* at Santa Fe in 1971; *Parsifal* and *Arabella* with the Netherlands Opera. He has also conducted *Parsifal* with the Bavarian State Opera and *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Covent Garden. During his first season as music director of the Netherlands Opera he will conduct *Die Meistersinger*, *Fidelio*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Arabella* and a double-bill of Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg* and Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*.

**Nikolaus Lehnhoff** is the director of all four productions in San Francisco Opera's new *Ring of the Nibelung*, the first staging of Wagner's whole cycle in his distinguished career. Following a stint as an assistant director at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin, Lehnhoff became assistant to Wieland Wagner at Bayreuth and worked with him on the last *Ring* produced by the composer's grandson in 1965-66. He also worked with Herbert von Karajan on his Salzburg *Ring* production, which was later taken to the Metropolitan Opera, and from 1966 to 1971, he was an assistant director at the Met. He made his debut at the Paris Opera with the 1972 production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, conducted by Karl Böhm, with Leonie Rysanek and Christa Ludwig. The young German first came to San Francisco Opera to direct *Salome* in 1974 and returned here two years later to stage *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, again conducted by Böhm. His staging of Strauss' allegorical drama won him critical praise in Stockholm, where he directed Birgit Nilsson's first *Dyer's Wife*, Düsseldorf, and in San Francisco where he recreated the work in 1980. In the Fall of 1982 he returned to direct and design a much-discussed new production of



NIKOLAUS LEHNHOFF

*Salome*. Lehnhoff has directed *Tristan und Isolde* at the Orange Festival in France and in Frankfurt, *Elektra* for Chicago, *Fidelio* with newly-conceived narration by Hans Magnus Enzensberger in Bremen, and in Düsseldorf he staged his first Mozart opera, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, which he also directed in Bonn. His credits include *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Nuremberg, Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* and Debussy's *La Chute de la Maison Usher* at the Berlin Festival, Marschner's *Hans Heiling* in Zurich, *Salome* in Rio de Janeiro with designs by Tobias Hoheisel, a highly praised *Così fan tutte* in Bonn and *Die Zauberflöte* with the American painter Susan Pitt. For the Beethoven Festival in Bonn, he staged an acclaimed *Fidelio* in 1984 with Hildegard Behrens and René Kollo, and designs by Erich Wonder. Last fall he directed the world premiere of Rudolf Kelterborn's *Cherry Orchard* (after Anton Chekhov) for the reopening of the Zurich Opera House. Future plans include *La Clemenza di Tito* in Hamburg and a soon-to-be-announced new European production of Wagner's *Ring* cycle.

**John Conklin** completes the concept and design of his first *Ring of the Nibelung* with this summer's performances of the new San Francisco Opera production of *Götterdämmerung*. His set and costume designs for *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* were unveiled during the 1983 Summer Season and his *Siegfried* had its premiere last summer. The production of *Don Pasquale* which he designed for San Francisco Opera in 1980 was again shown during

## CONDUCTOR AND PRODUCTION TEAM



JOHN CONKLIN

the 1984 Summer Season. Conklin's work is seen as much in legitimate theater as in opera. He has created designs for such companies as The New York Shakespeare Festival, the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, the Arena Theater in Washington, D.C., the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, and the Hartford Stage Company. He has also designed for the Joffrey Ballet and London's Royal Ballet. During his long association with Santa Fe Opera, Conklin has designed productions of *Così fan tutte*, *Salome*, *Fedora*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Lulu* in its three-act version American premiere in 1979, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and the American premiere of Henze's *We Come to the River* in 1984. For New York City Opera his productions include *Il Turco in Italia*, the world premiere of Argento's *Miss Havisham's Fire*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Among his other credits are productions for St. Louis Opera, including a memorable 1982 *Così fan tutte* directed by Jonathan Miller and conducted by the late Calvin Simmons; also designs for the Washington Opera Society, Pittsburgh Opera and Scottish Opera. Last summer, his design for *Così fan tutte* was seen at the Holland Festival. Next year he will undertake his first Metropolitan Opera assignment: designing costumes for *Khovanshchina*. Conklin was first noted here for his Spring Opera Theater renditions of *Orfeo* in 1972, *Death in Venice* in 1975 and 1979, and *Julius Caesar* in 1978. His Fall Season debut with San Francisco Opera was with *Un Ballo in Maschera* in 1977. This production also opened the 1982 Fall Season and will return to the War Memorial in the Fall of 1985.



THOMAS J. MUNN

Since 1976 **Thomas J. Munn** has designed the lighting and special effects for more than 70 San Francisco Opera productions, including all four operas in this year's complete *Ring* cycles. In the 1984 Fall Season he created the lighting for seven productions: *Ernani*, *Carmen*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Elektra*, *Khovanshchina*, *Rigoletto* and *Don Giovanni*. In addition to the *Ring* operas, in the last two summer seasons Munn has designed the lighting for *Don Pasquale*, *Aida*, *Die Fledermaus* and *Carmen*. His Fall 1983 assignments included new lighting designs for *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein*, *Boris Godunov*, and the American premiere of *The Midsummer Marriage*. Among the productions for which he has designed the lighting as well as realized the scenery are *Nabucco* and *Salome* in 1982, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in 1981, *Roberto Devereux* and *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1979, and *Billy Budd* in 1978. In addition to his many credits for the War Memorial stage, Munn has designed for Broadway, Off-Broadway, and regional theaters throughout the U.S. and Europe. Recent projects include productions for the Hartford Ballet, Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Netherlands Opera. Among his television credits are San Francisco Opera productions of *La Gioconda* (for which he won a 1979 Emmy Award), *Samson et Dalila* in 1980, *Aida* in 1981, and the Pavarotti concert in 1983. This spring he served as TV lighting consultant to American Ballet Theatre for an upcoming television series and is at work on sets and lighting for a new Hartford Ballet multi-media production of *Coppélia* which will have its premiere in April of 1986.

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Music drama in one act by RICHARD WAGNER  
Text by the composer

# Das Rheingold

(in German)

## Der Ring des Nibelungen — Prologue

*Conductor*  
Edo de Waart  
*Production*  
Nikolaus Lehnhoff  
*Set and Costume Designer*  
John Conklin  
*Lighting Designer and  
Special Effects*  
Thomas J. Munn  
*Projections*  
Ron Scherl  
*Sound Designer*  
Roger Gans  
*Musical Preparation*  
Kathryn Cathcart  
Philip Eisenberg  
John Fiore  
Jeffrey Goldberg  
James Johnson  
Jonathan Khuner  
Susanna Lemberskaya  
*Prompter*  
Philip Eisenberg  
*Assistant to Edo de Waart*  
David Agler  
*Assistant to Nikolaus Lehnhoff*  
Dagmar Thole  
*Assistant Stage Director*  
Robin Thompson  
*Choreographic Assistance, Rhine Scene*  
Marika Sakellariou  
*Stage Manager*  
Jerry Sherk

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Munich, September 22, 1869

First San Francisco Opera performance:  
November 1, 1935

SUNDAY, JUNE 2 AT 5:00  
FRIDAY, JUNE 7 AT 8:00  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12 AT 8:00

Supertitles on June 7 and 12 by Jerry Sherk and  
Francesca Zambello, San Francisco Opera.

Funding for Supertitles provided through generous grants from  
ComputerLand Corporation and the Millard Family Foundation.

## CAST

(in order of appearance)

*Woglinde* Deborah Sasson  
*Wellgunde* Jean Herzberg  
*Flosshilde* Alexandra Hughes\*  
*Alberich* Walter Berry  
*Fricka* Hanna Schwarz  
*Wotan* James Morris  
*Freia* Nancy Gustafson  
*Fasolt* Roland Bracht\*\*  
*Fafner* James Patterson  
*Froh* Walter MacNeil  
*Donner* John Del Carlo  
*Loge* William Lewis  
*Mime* Helmut Pampuch  
*Erda* Mariana Paunova

*Nibelungs, giants*

\*\*American opera debut

\*San Francisco Opera debut

## TIME: Legendary

*Scene 1:* The river Rhine  
*Scene 2:* Terrace of the gods  
*Scene 3:* Nibelheim  
*Scene 4:* Terrace of the gods

PERFORMED WITHOUT INTERMISSION

*Latecomers will not be seated during the  
performance after the lights have dimmed.*

*The use of cameras and any kind of recording  
equipment is strictly forbidden.*

*The performance will last approximately two  
hours and thirty-five minutes.*

# Das Rheingold/Synopsis

SCENE 1 — The Nibelung Alberich steals the gold of the primeval Rhine from its guardians, the Rhinemaidens. They have rashly revealed to him that the gold, when forged into a Ring, will bring its wearer power over the whole world—though such a Ring can only be forged by one who has renounced forever the possibility of loving or being loved. Frustrated beyond hope by the heartless teasing of the Rhinemaidens, Alberich makes that vital renunciation.

SCENE 2 — Meanwhile, in the realm of the gods far above, a great new palace has been built for Wotan and his fellow deities by the giants Fafner and Fasolt, who have agreed to do the work in return for receiving Freia, goddess of love, beauty and youth. The terms of the giants' contract with Wotan are irrevocably engraved in sacred runes on Wotan's spear. Wotan's authority as chief of the gods rests upon the enforcement of laws and contracts, so he cannot himself break the pledge. Instead, he has relied upon Loge, the cunning spirit of fire, who has promised to find a way around the contract's fulfillment. But when the giants come to claim their payment, there is no sign of Loge, and Wotan, failing to dissuade Fafner and Fasolt, can barely restrain the other gods, especially Donner with his thunderbolt-hammer, from using force. Finally Loge does appear but at first offers no solution. In all his travels, he says, he has found no alternative to Freia. He has, however, heard an unusual story, of the Nibelung Alberich, who by renouncing love and beauty has been able to acquire the wealth of the Rhine-gold and, with the Ring he has forged from it, untold power. The giants, fascinated, suggest that they might accept the Nibelung's hoard in place of Freia. Taking Freia with them as hostage, they promise to return for a final answer that evening. Without Freia the gods rapidly begin to grow old. Faced with the fearful reality of

his agreement's consequences, Wotan is persuaded to accompany Loge to Nibelheim, Alberich's empire, to secure the only means of bringing Freia back to the gods.

SCENE 3 — In his underground empire, Alberich has not only forged from the Rhine-gold the Ring that has brought him absolute power over the Nibelungs; he has also forced the skilled jeweler Mime to make from it a magic helmet, the Tarnhelm, whose powers of invisibility and transformation he spitefully demonstrates to the cringing Mime. When Wotan and Loge arrive, they have little difficulty learning the Tarnhelm's secret from Mime while Alberich is away forcing the Nibelungs, whom he has completely enslaved, to build up his treasure-hoard. Playing on the returned dwarf's vanity, Loge tempts Alberich to reveal the Tarnhelm's power, which he at once does by transforming himself into a frightful dragon. With mock admiration Loge professes himself duly astonished, though he doubts if Alberich's magic could work in the reverse direction, a transformation into something really small. Proudly the dwarf immediately turns himself into a toad. Wotan captures the toad, and as Alberich returns squirming to his own form, Wotan snatches the Tarnhelm from his head. Binding the Nibelung, Wotan and Loge drag him back to the terrace of the gods.

SCENE 4 — Emerging from the dark of Nibelheim into the mountain light, Wotan forces Alberich to have his slaves bring his treasure to the surface. Loge throws the Tarnhelm on the pile, and Wotan, dashing Alberich's hopes, pulls the Ring from the Nibelung's finger. Entranced at the prospect of its power, he puts it on. With terrible anger Alberich lays his curse upon the Ring and all who shall wear it. By now it is evening, and the giants return to negotiate Freia's ransom. Still torn

between love and power, they demand as much gold as will completely conceal Freia's standing figure. All the treasure will barely do it; the Tarnhelm, too, must go; yet still Freia's eyes are visible through a chink in the pile. The Ring itself must join the heap. But Wotan wants it for himself. Only the magical appearance from the depths of the earth of Erda the Earth Mother, warning him of the strength of Alberich's curse, finally persuades the king of the gods to add the Ring to the ransom-pile, and complete his contract. As Freia is released to the rejuvenated gods, the Nibelung's curse begins its fatal course: Fafner, determined that the Ring shall be his alone, kills his brother giant. Gathering up his treasure, he stumbles off with it into the forest, leaving Wotan filled with foreboding. The gods are now free to enter their great new palace, shrouded behind mists throughout the day's uncertainty. Its glory is revealed by Donner, who summons the thunderclouds to clear the sky. And the gods' access is made possible by Froh, god of light, who throws a rainbow-bridge from the mountain terrace across the Rhine in the gorge below, to the steps of Valhalla—for so Wotan now names it. In pondering the doom-ridden consequences of his contact with the Nibelung's Ring, he thinks first of force, symbolized by the powerful first appearance in the orchestra of the sword-motif. And then the idea occurs to him of creating a race of warrior-maidens, Valkyries, who will choose the greatest heroes from the battlegrounds of man, bringing them after death on the field to defend Valhalla, "Hall of the Chosen." As Wotan leads the gods to the rainbow-bridge, his anxiety is rekindled by the complaints of the Rhinemaidens far below demanding the return of their gold. Putting their cries aside, and unaware of the cynical doomsaying of Loge, Wotan leads Fricka and the other gods towards Valhalla—and their doom.

# Das Rheingold

Photos taken in rehearsal  
by David Powers

*Entrance of gods into Valhalla*



blog



Hanna Schwarz, Nancy Gustafson

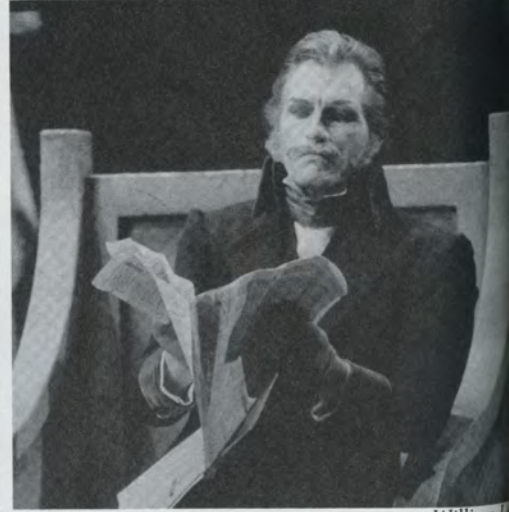


John Del Carlo, William Lewis



Deborah Sasson, Jean Herzberg, Alexandra Hughes

Walter Berry



William L



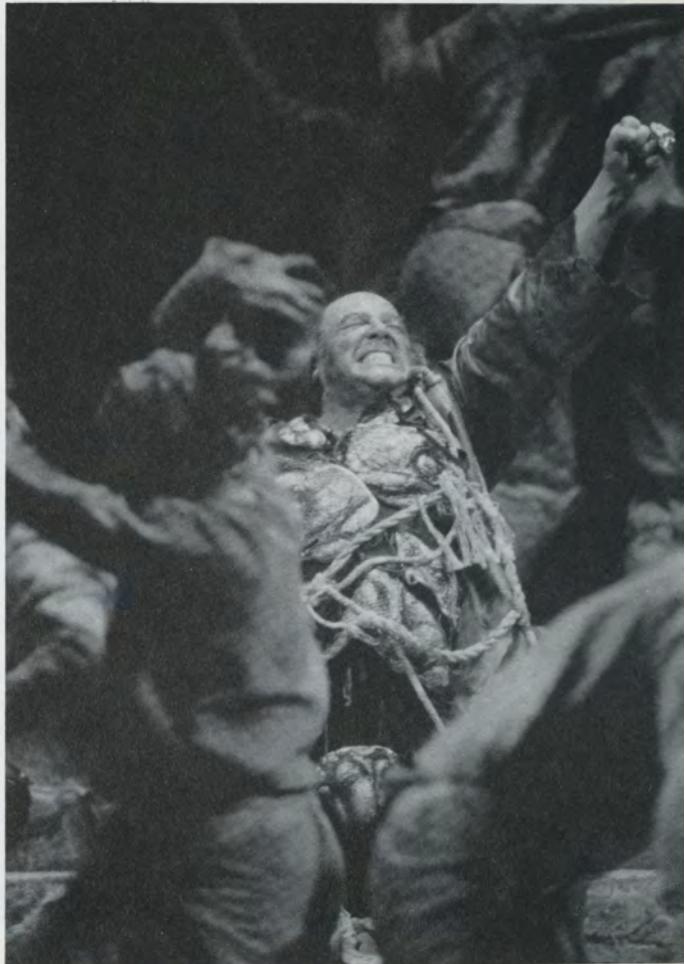
Walter MacNeil



James Morris

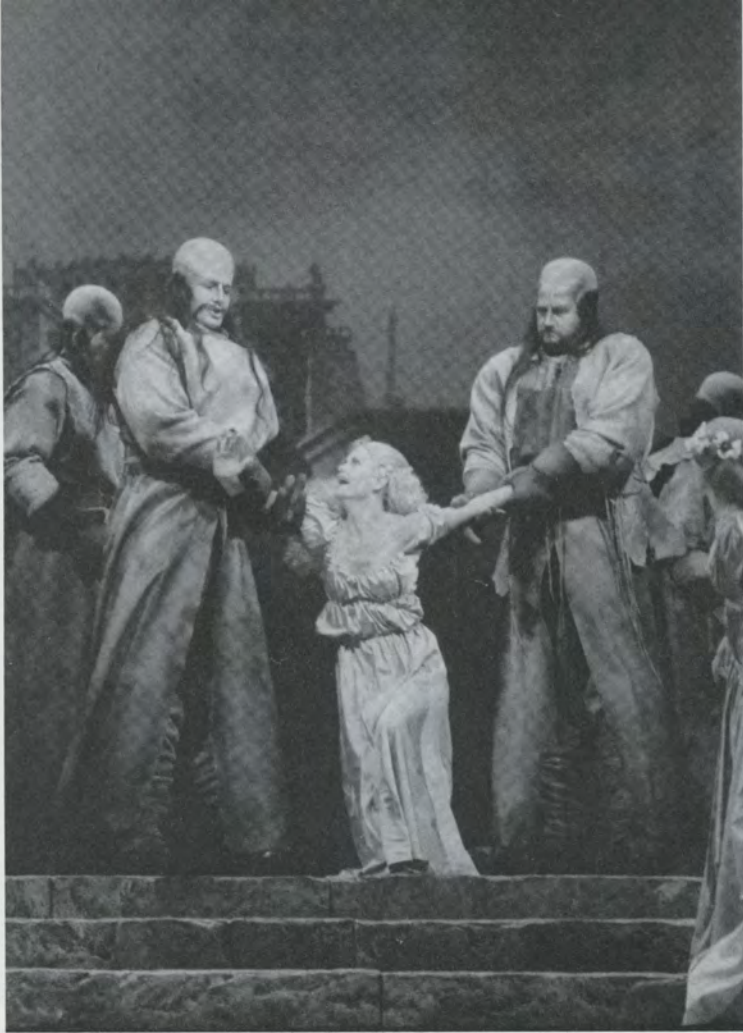


Helmut Pampuch



Walter Berry





*James Patterson, Nancy Gustafson, Roland Bracht*



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*Nibelheim Scene*

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## ARTIST PROFILES



HANNA SCHWARZ

German mezzo-soprano **Hanna Schwarz** made her American debut as Fricka in *Das Rheingold* at San Francisco Opera in 1977. She returned to the War Memorial stage in the same role in Summer 1983 and sings Fricka in the current *Ring* cycles during which she also portrays Erda in *Siegfried*. With the Company she has sung the roles of Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* in 1978 and Carmen in the 1981 Fall Season. She made her Bayreuth debut in 1975 and sang each year in the Chéreau *Ring* production, telecast in the U.S. in 1983. She also recently appeared in a film version of *Tristan und Isolde* as Brangäne, which was directed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle and conducted by Daniel Barenboim, and is this year's Fricka and Waltraute in the Bayreuth *Ring* directed by Peter Hall. Miss Schwarz appears in Munich as the Principessa in *Adriana Lecouvreur* with Margaret Price and Neil Shicoff, a production which will soon be recorded. She can be heard on a recent recording of Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* with Margaret Price, conducted by Colin Davis. She has also filmed Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and *Missa Solemnis* with Leonard Bernstein conducting, and recently sang as mezzo-soprano soloist in Verdi's Requiem along with Mirella Freni, José Carreras and Martti Talvela. Next season she will be seen as Marina in *Boris Godunov*, Penelope in Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno D'Ulisse in Patria*, Judith in Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, Giulietta in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and Eboli in *Don Carlo*.



NANCY GUSTAFSON

Soprano **Nancy Gustafson** sings her first Freia in *Das Rheingold* in the *Ring* cycles, as well as the role of Helmwig in *Die Walküre* which she performed for her Company debut in the summer of 1983 along with that of Woglinde in *Das Rheingold*. During the 1984 Fall Season, she sang performances of Emma in *Khovanshchina* and also appeared in *Elektra* and *Madama Butterfly*. As a 1984 Adler Fellow of the San Francisco Opera Center, she created the role of the Mother in the world premiere of Conrad Susa's *The Love of Don Perlimplin*. Miss Gustafson made her San Francisco Symphony debut last year with performances of Mahler's Eighth Symphony, conducted by Edo de Waart. In December of 1984, she made her European debut at the Théâtre Musical de Paris/Châtelet as Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus* in a production which was also seen at the Grand Théâtre de Nancy, in March, 1985. During the summer of 1983, the young artist sang her first performances of Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* for the Carmel Bach Festival and also appeared as soprano soloist in Bach's *St. John Passion*. She participated in the 1982 Merola Opera Program during which she appeared in *The Magic Flute* and *Rigoletto* and was heard as Sicle in the 1983 San Francisco Opera Center Showcase production of *L'Ormino*. A native of Illinois, Miss Gustafson was educated at Mount Holyoke College and has completed extensive graduate work at Northwestern University. While in the Chicago area, she

## DAS RHEINGOLD



MARIANA PAUNOVA

appeared in productions of *La Bohème* (Musetta), *The Rape of Lucretia* (Female Chorus) and *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Diana). This fall, she returns to the San Francisco Opera as Madame Jouvenot in *Adriana Lecouvreur*.

Bulgarian contralto **Mariana Paunova** made her San Francisco Opera debut as Laura in *La Gioconda* in the fall of 1983. This summer's *Ring* will mark her initial appearance in the Wagnerian repertoire when she portrays Erda in *Das Rheingold* and the First Norn in *Götterdämmerung*. During the 1983/84 season she made her Vienna State Opera debut as Azucena in *Il Trovatore* and Marina in *Boris Godunov*. After making her Metropolitan Opera debut in *Eugene Onegin* and her Carnegie Hall debut in Rossini's *Tancredi*, she was invited to the Rome Opera for Amneris in *Aida*, Dalila in *Samson et Dalila* in Lisbon, Amneris and Azucena in Frankfurt, as well as the Principessa in *Adriana Lecouvreur* with the Houston Grand Opera. She then appeared as Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Washington, Azucena in Philadelphia, Adalgisa in *Norma* in South Africa, *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Sofia, Bulgaria, and also in Mexico and South America. She recently toured Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the title role of *Carmen*, as Dalila, and as Orfeo in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Miss Paunova is also a concert soloist and has performed with the orchestras of Cleveland, Dallas, Cin-



DEBORAH SASSON

cinnati, Montreal, the National Symphony of Washington, D.C. and L'Orchestre National de Radio France in Paris. She has recorded the role of Ariadne in the world premiere pressing of *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* by Paul Dukas, and will record Prokofiev's *War and Peace*, both on the Erato label.

Soprano **Deborah Sasson** returns to San Francisco Opera as Woglinde in both *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*. She first appeared with the Company last summer as Adele in *Die Fledermaus*. A Metropolitan Opera Auditions finalist, Miss Sasson made her European debut in the 1979 Hamburg Staatsoper production of *West Side Story*. She then undertook a two-year engagement at the Aachen Opera House and since 1981 has appeared at the Bayreuth Festival and with the opera companies of Hamburg, Berlin and Venice. Her repertoire includes such roles as Musetta and Mimì in *La Bohème*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. Miss Sasson has appeared as soloist with a number of major American orchestras including the Boston Symphony with whom she recorded Mahler's Eighth Symphony under Seiji Ozawa. For CBS she has also recorded a recital of Italian arias and the recently released *Bernstein on Broadway* with Peter Hofmann and Michael Tilson Thomas.



JEAN HERZBERG

Soprano **Jean Herzberg**, featured in three roles of the *Ring* cycle, adds the role of Wellgunde in *Götterdämmerung* to those of Ortlinde in *Die Walküre* and Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold*, parts she also sang at her debut with the Company in the summer of 1983. She has performed extensively on the concert stage, making her Kennedy Center debut in 1983 in Beethoven's Ninth with the National Symphony under Robert Shaw, who also conducted the Atlanta, Knoxville and Pittsburgh Symphonies for her solo appearances with them. Miss Herzberg was recently soprano soloist in Verdi's Requiem during the San Francisco Festival of Masses, also conducted by Robert Shaw. She participated in the 1982 Merola Opera Program, appearing as Pamina in *The Magic Flute* and winning the Leonardo da Vinci Award at the Grand Finals, and again in 1983, receiving the Cenacolo Award and touring with Western Opera Theater in the title role of *Madame Butterfly*. Last November she was a winner of the Great Lakes District Metropolitan Opera Auditions. Miss Herzberg's repertoire includes Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Musetta and Mimì in *La Bohème*, Alice Ford in *Falstaff* and Nedda in *I Pagliacci*. She appeared on PBS in the title role of Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* and as soprano soloist in Britten's *War Requiem*.



ALEXANDRA HUGHES

Mezzo-soprano **Alexandra Hughes** makes her San Francisco Opera debut in the *Ring* cycles as Flosshilde in both *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*. She performed both roles, as well as that of Grimgerde in *Die Walküre*, in her first appearances with Seattle Opera in the Pacific Northwest Wagner Festival last summer and will return there to re-enact them later this year. She returns to Seattle in 1986 as Olga in *Eugene Onegin*. Miss Hughes is a native New Yorker and holds a master's degree from the Juilliard School. In addition to being an apprentice artist with the Santa Fe Opera for two seasons, she was recently artist-in-residence with Opera/Omaha where she portrayed Nicklausse in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*. With Michigan Opera Theatre she has sung the role of Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, with the Opera Ensemble of New York, the Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and with the Pennsylvania Opera Festival the role of Erika in *Vanessa*. She also portrayed Berthe in the recent New York premiere of Robert Ward's *Abelard and Heloise*.



JAMES MORRIS

Bass **James Morris** portrays Wotan in both *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* for the first time during the current *Ring* cycles. In the 1981 Fall Season he made his Company debut as Assur in *Semiramide*. He has recently sung Wotan in *Die Walküre* for his debut with the Vienna State Opera, following his first performance of the role with the Opera Company of Baltimore, his birthplace, in 1983. Morris became the youngest male singer on the Metropolitan Opera roster when he was 23. Four years later, a last-minute cancellation put him on the Met stage as Don Giovanni, a role he has sung to critical and public applause in many subsequent Met seasons, as well as those of the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Claggart in *Billy Budd*, and leading roles in *Macbeth*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Don Carlo*, *Otello*, *Carmen*, *Peter Grimes* and *The Barber of Seville*, among others. In recent seasons Morris sang his first Dutchman in *Der Fliegende Holländer* at Houston Grand Opera and appeared as Silva in *Ernani* with Miami Opera. He has also performed with Chicago Lyric Opera, as Henry VIII in *Anna Bolena* with the Canadian Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre, and was heard as Méphistophélès in Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust* with the Philadelphia Opera. Morris has appeared at the Salzburg and Edinburgh Festivals and has sung the role of Banquo in *Macbeth* at the Glyndebourne Festival. Elsewhere in Europe, Morris has been heard at Strasbourg's Opéra du Rhin in *Les Contes*



WALTER BERRY

*d'Hoffmann*, at Florence's Teatro Comunale in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, in Madrid in *Norma* and in Barcelona in *La Traviata*. In great demand also as a concert singer, he was soloist last March in the Verdi Requiem with Edo de Waart and the San Francisco Symphony. His numerous recordings include Haydn's *Creation* and operas of Mozart, Massenet, Donizetti and Verdi. Next fall Morris returns to San Francisco Opera as Claggart in *Billy Budd* and will sing his first Scarpia in *Tosca*.

Versatile Viennese bass-baritone **Walter Berry** portrayed Alberich in *Das Rheingold* for the first time in his distinguished career during the 1983 San Francisco Opera Summer Festival. In the 1985 *Ring* cycles he returns for that role and also to portray Alberich in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. In the fall of 1983 Berry appeared as the Music Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. San Francisco audiences were treated to two of his renowned comic roles in 1978: Leporello in *Don Giovanni* and Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*. His 1976 Company debut was as Barak in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, a role he interpreted at the opera's Metropolitan premiere in 1967 and re-enacted at the Met in 1971 and 1978. It was his debut role at Covent Garden in the 1975-76 season, and he has also sung it at the Salzburg Festival where he made his debut in 1952 under Wilhelm Furtwängler, and at the Hamburg, Paris



WILLIAM LEWIS

and Vienna Operas. Under his mentor, Karl Böhm, Berry sang the title role in *Wozzeck* at the reopening of the Vienna Staatsoper in 1955 and has performed there regularly ever since. Renowned as a Mozart interpreter, he has frequently sung the roles of Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Figaro, and both Guglielmo and Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*. In addition to appearing in leading roles in all of the world's great opera houses, he is an illustrious lieder and oratorio singer. His film credits include *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte* and *Tosca*. His extensive discography includes three versions of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and of *Die Zauberflöte*, two each of *Don Giovanni* and *Die Fledermaus*, and many other works ranging from Haydn's *The Seasons* to Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*.

**William Lewis** sang his first Loge in the 1983 San Francisco Opera Summer Season *Das Rheingold* and now recreates that role. Since his Company debut in the dual roles of Erik and the Steersman in the 1975 Ponnelle production of *Der Fliegende Holländer*, the tenor has been applauded by San Francisco audiences in such diverse roles as Frank Sargent in the world premiere of Andrew Imbrie's *Angle of Repose* (1976), Matteo in *Arabella* (1980), Kent in the American premiere of Reimann's *Lear*, Sergei in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and the title role of *Le Cid* (all 1981), and Golitsin in *Khovanshchina* in



HELMUT PAMPUCH

Fall 1984. He also appeared here in three Janáček operas, portraying Albert Gregor in *The Makropulos Case* (1976), Boris in *Katya Kabanova* (1977) and Števa in *Jenůfa* (1980). On the Metropolitan Opera roster since his 1958 debut as Narraboth in *Salome*, Lewis has appeared there in such varied roles as Aeneas in *Les Troyens*, Romeo in *Roméo et Juliette*, Arrigo in *I Vespri Siciliani*, Gherman in *The Queen of Spades*, Hoffmann in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Alwa in *Lulu*, and the title roles of *Idomeneo* and *Oedipus Rex*. He made his Covent Garden debut in the 1982-83 season in *Simon Boccanegra* and *Hoffmann*, and has been heard in Salzburg in *The Magic Flute*, *Idomeneo* and *Hoffmann*. Earlier this year he sang with the Concert Opera Association of San Francisco as Paolo in *Francesca da Rimini*.

German tenor **Helmut Pampuch**, who was highly acclaimed in his American debut with San Francisco Opera last summer as Mime in *Siegfried*, now recreates that role and sings his first Mime in *Das Rheingold* in this country. Born in Oberschlesien (now part of Poland), he graduated from the Conservatory of Nürnberg and studied with Willy Domgraf-Fassbänder before his professional debut in Regensburg. Engagements in other German houses followed and since 1973 he has been a member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf.

He has also appeared in Berlin in *The Flying Dutchman*, as Beppe in *I Pagliacci* and Wenzel in *The Bartered Bride*; in Geneva as Mime in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*, also as David in *Die Meistersinger*, and at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich as Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, as Beppe, and as Pedrillo in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Last year he sang Pedrillo in the new Giorgio Strehler production in Venice and Naples. Pampuch took part in the world premiere of the three-act version of *Lulu* in Paris, where he also appeared as Monostatos and as Mime in *Das Rheingold* conducted by Solti. He traveled with the Paris Opera to Milan for a repeat of *Lulu* and has since fulfilled numerous guest engagements in the opera houses of Amsterdam, Bordeaux, Rouen, Genoa, Stuttgart, Hamburg and Lisbon. At Bayreuth he has performed in *Tristan und Isolde*, *Parsifal*, *Die Meistersinger* and *Das Rheingold* in which he sang Mime in 1978, '79 and '80 and in the film televised in 1983. Other TV and film credits include *The Bartered Bride* for German TV, *Lulu* with the Paris Opera, as well as the Wagner operas from Bayreuth. Early in 1984 he scored a major success as Mime in a new production of *Siegfried* at the Teatro Verdi in Trieste and this year he appears at La Scala as Monostatos in a production of *The Magic Flute* conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch. Pampuch will be at the Frankfurt Opera in December 1985 as Mime in *Das Rheingold*.

German bass **Roland Bracht** makes his American opera debut during this San Francisco Opera 1985 summer season as Fasolt in *Das Rheingold* and as the Hermit in the special performances of Weber's *Der Freischütz*. Born in Munich, son of a bass in the Bavarian State Opera, he became a member of its Opera Studio in 1971 and made his debut at the National Theater as one of the Deputies in *Don Carlo*. In 1972 Wolfgang Windgassen engaged Bracht for the Stuttgart Staatsoper. He has been a leading member of that company ever since. Bracht sang his first Fasolt there in the 1977 Jean-Pierre

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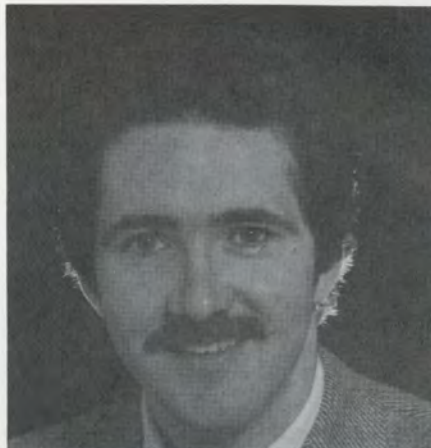
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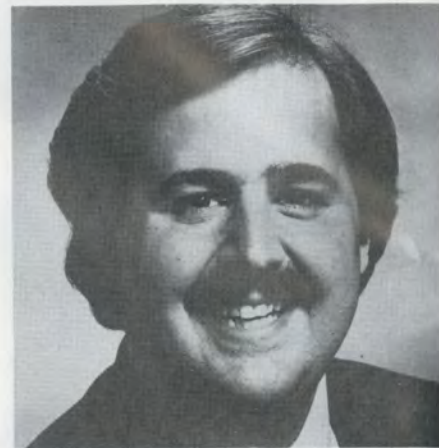
ROLAND BRACHT

Ponnelle production of *Das Rheingold*. This was followed by his first Seneca in *The Coronation of Poppea* directed by Günther Rennert in 1978, his first Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* and his first Arkel in Götz Friedrich's production of *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1979. He made his La Scala debut in May of 1981 as Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro* under the baton of Riccardo Muti in Giorgio Strehler's production. He appeared as Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra* at Stuttgart in 1982. Bracht has sung the major bass roles in the operas of Wagner and Mozart and has been a guest artist in the opera houses of Berlin, Dresden, Munich, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Brussels, Lisbon, Rome and Barcelona. His most recent performances of the Hermit in *Der Freischütz* were at Stuttgart last spring. In addition to his operatic appearances, he has recorded the roles of Fasolt, Sarastro, Masetto in *Don Giovanni* and Osmin in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*.



JAMES PATTERSON

Bass **James Patterson** is Fafner in both *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*. In San Francisco Opera's 1984 Fall Season he sang four roles: Zuniga in *Carmen*, Alessio in *La Sonnambula*, Orest's Guardian in *Elektra*, and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*. The young Canadian was an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center in 1983 and 1984, after participating in the 1982 Merola Opera Program, during which he sang in *The Magic Flute* and *Rigoletto*. He made his Company debut in the 1983 Summer Festival *La Bohème* and appeared that Fall Season in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *La Traviata*, *La Gioconda* and *Boris Godunov*. In summer 1984 he portrayed Fafner in *Siegfried* and the King of Egypt in *Aida*. For the 1984 Opera Center Showcase he sang the role of Osmin in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and in 1983 appeared in *L'Ormino* and *The Rape of Lucretia*. Last summer he sang at the Pacific Northwest Wagner Festival in Seattle as Fafner in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*. Next Fall he rejoins San Francisco Opera for roles in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Werther*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Lear*.



JOHN DEL CARLO

Bass-baritone **John Del Carlo**, who sings the role of Donner in *Das Rheingold*, as he did here in Summer 1983, is a favorite of Bay Area audiences who have watched him advance from the Opera Chorus, in which he sang from 1973 to 1976, into important roles. A native of San Francisco, he entered the Merola Opera Program and won first place in its Auditions Grand Finals in 1977. In 1978 he bowed with Spring Opera Theater in Handel's *Julius Caesar*, and sang for two more seasons with SPOT. During the 1982 Fall Season he scored a triumph as Alidoro in *La Cenerentola*. He was a winner in the 1982 Pavarotti International Voice Competition and then appeared with Pavarotti in the Philadelphia Opera productions of *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *La Bohème*. Del Carlo's more than 20 appearances with San Francisco Opera include Abimélech in *Samson et Dalila* and Rangoni in *Boris Godunov* in Fall 1983, and Dr. Dulcamara in *L'Elisir* last fall. He made his San Francisco Symphony debut in Beethoven's *Mass in C* in 1983 and returned last March as soloist in the world premiere of Gordon Getty's *Plump Jack, Scene I*. His debut roles with Seattle Opera last summer were Donner and Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*. After his Chicago Lyric Opera debut in 1981, he returned in 1982 for *Madama Butterfly* and will perform there in 1985 in that opera and in *Die Meistersinger*.



WALTER MacNEIL

Tenor **Walter MacNeil** made his Company debut in Summer 1983 as Froh in *Das Rheingold* and returns to sing that role during this year's *Ring* cycles. Last Fall he portrayed Pinkerton in the Family performances of *Madama Butterfly* and in Fall 1983 he appeared as Roderigo in *Otello*, Edmondo in *Manon Lescaut* and as Alfredo in the Family performances of *La Traviata*. A winner of the 1982 Metropolitan Opera Council auditions, the New York City native toured with Western Opera Theater in 1982 as the Duke in *Rigoletto* and sang the role of Belmonte in the 1984 Opera Center Showcase *Abduction from the Seraglio*. MacNeil made his New York City Opera debut in 1984 as Tamino in *The Magic Flute*. He has appeared at Carnegie Hall in concert versions of *Semiramide* and Handel's *Semele*. In 1983 he was heard at the Carmel Bach Festival as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* and in the premiere season of Opera Colorado as Cassio in *Otello*. He has recently sung Rodolfo in *La Bohème* with Opera Columbus and Alfredo in *La Traviata* with Houston Grand Opera. He made his New Orleans Opera debut in November as Alfredo opposite the Germont of his father, Cornell MacNeil. In San Francisco Opera's 1985 Fall Season he will appear as Fenton in *Falstaff*.

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# Das Rheingold , The Music

By WILLIAM MANN

The effect of Wagner's *Ring* is cumulative, over its four evenings, and so we may expect the music of *Das Rheingold*, which Wagner called the preliminary evening to his trilogy (thus demonstrating that 4=3), to fulfill an expository role, setting us carefully and firmly on our long journey to the end of *Götterdämmerung*, not upsetting our balance or sense of direction with head-spinning climaxes too soon or too often. But this exposition also acts as an invigorating aperitif, and includes its share of grand moments.

Anybody tempted to complain of long, unexciting passages between those great moments may be reminded that Wagner

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*Opening scene of Das Rheingold in San Francisco Opera's new production of Der Ring des Nibelungen.*



NORTON



Rehearsing the second appearance of the Nibelungs for the 1967 Rheingold: John Modenos, who portrayed Alberich, is at upper left; the late David Ward awaits his entrance at right.

composed *Rheingold* first, and audibly enriched his creative vocabulary during the 20 or so years that he spent completing the *Ring*; perhaps those people may be persuaded to read the text several times in English (a modern translation for quickest appreciation), and even relate the German words to their English equivalents where possible, and then come back and see a later performance—there aren't any dull bits in *Rheingold*, once you know what's going on.

An exposition starts with first things, and so does this one, back to primeval nature, Mother Earth, and the depths of the river Rhine where three mermaids, the daughters of an unseen river-god, keep watch over a precious, probably



Nibelung gnomes scatter in fear after delivering the gold hoard to their master Alberich.

sacred lump of gold. Pure basic Nature, to a musician, means the harmonic series of natural overtones, or upper partials, such as a horn or trumpet without valves can produce. The introduction to *Rheingold* softly discloses this harmonic series' in the key of E flat, a note at a time, then the whole repeated like a canon or round by eight horns, and followed by amplified variations, the first of which also gives the theme of Mother Earth (Erda, who will appear later in *Rheingold*).

The Rhinemaidens sing a folksy variant (like black notes only on a keyboard instrument) and, when the Gold begins to gleam in the reflected sunlight, its theme is a very simple version of the first Nature theme. Many other themes in the *Ring*, and especially *Rheingold*, clearly derive from that harmonic series' basic theme, such as Valhalla at the start of the second scene, when it at once also shows its kinship to the theme of the *Ring*, rather

more sinuous and non-nature-based. Wotan's Power theme, sometimes called "Treaty," scaled on the brass, and actually signifying the contractual limits of his authority, is also basic, like the theme of the giants, and of their contract with Wotan (one instrument stating the simple terms, another echoing them), and the theme of Freia's rejuvenating golden apples. These are all themes of straightforward simplicity. Alberich, who comes to play with the fishy Rhine daughters, brings some comic relief for a while, but he is not a straightforward person. At his entrance, hardly visible in the gloom, we can hear him arrive in the music which at once changes character and color, discreetly yet distinctively. When he grows disheartened by vain chasing, his theme of unhappiness introduces a strong new mood with sighs and groans: it will be used throughout for superficial distress. When Woglinde recalls that the Gold can

MERBACH: RICHARD WAGNER, BERLIN, 1925  
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The original Bayreuth 1876 Rhinemaidens were (l. to r.) Minna Lammert, Lilli Lehmann and Marie Lehmann.

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Three groups of San Francisco Opera Rhinemaidens: (top right) In 1935, as seen in a scene from Götterdämmerung, (left) in 1967, and (bottom right) in 1983.

# THE RING.



DAS RHEINGOLD



DIE WALKÜRE



SIEGFRIED



GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

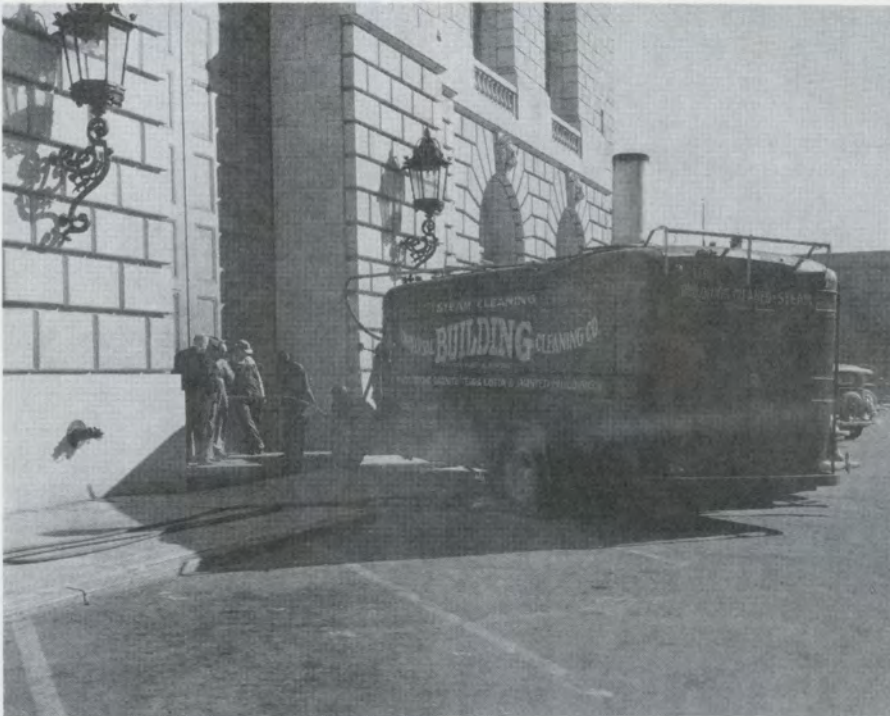
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only be stolen by someone who gives up love forever, it is to a melody which will often return, to signify either Love or doing without it—we have to hear which is meant from the context, and there is never any doubt: a derivative, prominent in the second scene, refers specifically to Man's high regard for Womankind (therefore, refusal to give up Love).

The orchestral interlude after the first scene is the first symphonic meditation on given musical ideas and, with the transformation of the Ring into Valhalla, an impressive one: for they are power symbols of the principal antagonists, Alberich and Wotan. Neither has his own theme though Wotan may be suggested by Valhalla, as in his opening solo "Vollendet das ewige Werk," or by his Power theme. Similarly Loge, who is employed by Wotan to facilitate dubious enterprises, is represented by themes really concerned with slippery guile and deceit, his main characteristic, and with flickering fire, which is his element. With Wotan's castle-in-the-air, Valhalla, the four elements are all accounted for, and one part of the exposi-

tion completed, by the time Erda, Mother Earth, makes her appearance in the last of *Rheingold's* four scenes.

The second scene introduces more characters, each with some appropriate new music: Wagner releases the new themes quite sparingly, and lets each one make its impression before the next one arrives. Wotan's wife Fricka has only one theme associated with her; it refers always to marital happiness and she first sings it when admitting that she looks forward to life in Valhalla, "desirable residence, domestic bliss," as she puts it, like any real estate agent. The Giants now arrive to demand their fee: their theme is primitive and galumphing. Their recompense, already promised by Wotan, is possession of the goddess of eternal youth, Freia, whose theme is quite long and lyrical, associated later with either running away or more generally "the course of true love" never running smooth. Freia is the guardian of the golden apples, represented by another lyrical tune, which keep the gods eternally young. Loge, in a long and sparkling



Jean Merrill as Freia in *Das Rheingold* in San Francisco Opera's 1936 staging.

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*Das Rheingold at the San Francisco Opera in 1977: (l. to r.) Alexander Malta (Fasolt), Carol Todd (Freia) and Aldo Bramante (Fafner).*

monologue, tells them about Alberich's possession of the Gold, from which he has forged an all-powerful Ring. Gods and Giants alike are eager to possess the treasure. The Giants offer their ultimatum: either the Gold or Freia, but in the meantime they take her as hostage back home with them, and the remaining gods grow suddenly old and weak, as shown in a passage of eerie tranquillity. Wotan decides to annex the Gold and together with Loge descends from his high mountain top into the bowels of the earth, where Alberich and his Nibelung slaves ceaselessly forge the Gold into large lumps. Their downward journey is described in the next musical interlude, a grandly dramatic exploration of already familiar themes. As they approach Nibelheim we hear the thunder of hammer-on-anvil (Wagner prescribes 18 anvils) in a bouncing rhythmical figure always associated with tireless and humdrum physical work, and a melody of unhappiness that is usually labeled "Slavery"—long, anguished, and deeply stirring in a good performance.

Nibelheim, with its cavern, is revealed. Alberich gets the Tarnhelm from Mime, and tries it on. This magic cap has its own theme, the first new one to figure in the scene: it is a thin, faint sequence of minor-key chords, in the alto or tenor register, featuring soft horns. After a noisy drubbing from Alberich, Mime is left to lick his sores, and is soon able to recount his wrong to Loge and Wotan in a sizable, musically allusive solo. One theme is new: at "Wer halfe mir?" (Who will help me?), bassoons in thirds spell out a question mark, which will always tell us that the cunning, ignorant dwarf is furiously cudgeling his brains—especially at the start of *Siegfried*. The gods now meet Alberich at his most domineering and truculently proud, most obviously at the size of his hoard of gold—a slow, despondent melody in the bass, the gold heavy to lift: a responsibility, no cause for gladness. Alberich's solo, threatening the comfortable gods upstairs with insurrection and defeat, gives us our first insight into his personality, and his capacity for lyrical singing: the once prevalent "Bayreuth

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A scene from *Das Rheingold* at the San Francisco Opera in 1935, with Friedrich Schorr as Wotan and Hans Clemens as Loge. (right) The same scene, 37 years later, with Thomas Stewart and Richard Holm.



bark," often affected by Alberich's, had nothing to do with Wagner, and was perhaps encouraged by his widow Cosima in the interests of clear verbal declamation, an unmusical and quite un-Wagnerian distortion. Wagner wanted all his music to be sung properly; also naturalistically expressed and acted. Alberich's transformation into a monster, though comical in effect, even deliberately so (Wotan and Loge are both amused) is made to a "monster" writhing theme in the bass that should sound really frightening—the music is what Alberich desires it to be. When he reduces himself to a toad, Wagner's vivid accompaniment may remind us of Mime at the beginning of this scene, dragged by the ear into our sight, on the end of his brother's arm.

Alberich is caught, bound with a rope, and pulled by Loge aloft, back to the mountain top outside Valhalla. Again the

orchestral interlude, this time beginning with the ring of Nibelung anvils, and even more thrilling. Wagner's music reminds us that Alberich is there to supply the fee for Valhalla, fixed by the Giants as gold instead of Freia's golden apples. Alberich hopes that, with the Ring on his finger, he may survive this indignity without more than a temporary loss of face and funds. The Nibelung dwarfs bring up his golden ransom, and this is another marvelous orchestral passage, crowned by the high-pitched screams of the dwarfs that occur when Alberich flashes the Ring at them. But then, Wotan seizes the Ring from him. It is Alberich's own Ring, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, the title of the work, and the object for which he gave up the supreme consolation of Love (there's a musical allusion here so that we get the message). Wotan has overreached the authority by which he was allowed to rule. Henceforth

he is not fit for world-sovereignty any more. Wagner has to mark this crisis, the moment where the tragedy properly begins (fortunately for us not the last of such great moments): he does so in the solo of Alberich's solemn Curse upon those who wear his Ring, which will be in effect until it returns to his own finger. The Verdi devotee will instantly remember Monterone's similarly awesome curse in *Rigoletto*: Alberich's solo is less melodious, and much longer because it is more comprehensive, therefore musically richer, since Wagner knew how much of anything was required at each particular moment. The music of this terrible monologue, worthy of Verdi's Iago, if I may be truthful, dwells on the new signpost-theme identified with Alberich's Curse, and also dwells on a vaguely flesh-creeping harmonic idea which has to do with disreputable machination. This

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last one made an unexplained appearance in the first scene, before Alberich even contemplated such strategy, and it becomes mightily important as the Ring progresses; conspiracy runs rife in these operas, since they are a legacy of the Ring's existence which always arouses envy. In *Die Walküre* the Ring is never seen, and so the music is forthright. Wagner's planning of the Ring is as logical as if it had been done by a Frenchman: perhaps that is why he made such an impact in France, with Franck and his solemn *Schola Cantorum*, with Chabrier and his more entertaining hero-worship, eventually with Debussy whose *Pelléas et Mélisande* was the logical successor of Wagner's last opera *Parsifal*.

After Alberich's departure, you can hear how immersed Wotan is in possession of this famous Ring: he has not even taken notice of the Curse. He soon will. The gods and giants return to the scene; Freia's stature is measured against the Nibelung gold; the giants demand more, even the Ring, which Wotan refuses. So Erda rises from subterranean slumber, to deliver a grand solo of prophecy. She foretells the End, and musically it is evoked as an inversion of her theme as originator: it is the theme called "Twilight of the Gods" (*Götterdämmerung*). As usual, Wagner lets us hear it alone, before filtering it into the development cauldron. Erda sinks downward, the Giants get their Gold, including the Ring, and one kills the other during their squabble about partition: the Curse has begun to work.

Wotan tells Donner to exercise his thunderbolt, thus provoking a lusty solo, followed by one for Froh, who gently indicates the rainbow bridge across to Valhalla. Wotan is moved to another glorious monologue, "Abendlich strahlt," which ends by unexpectedly introducing a new theme for trumpet, which is called "Wotan's Purpose," though it usually relates to the sword Nothung. The opera ends with Loge's rejection of the Gods, the Rhinemaidens lamenting the theft of their own property, and the Gods' splendid procession towards that not quite impregnable palace, which has cost Wotan so dearly. ■

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Music drama in three acts by RICHARD WAGNER  
Text by the composer

# Die Walküre

(in German)

## Der Ring des Nibelungen — Part I

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Edo de Waart  
*Production*  
Nikolaus Lehnhoff  
*Set and Costume Designer*  
John Conklin  
*Lighting Designer and  
Special Effects*  
Thomas J. Munn  
*Projections*  
Ron Scherl  
*Sound Designer*  
Roger Gans  
*Musical Preparation*  
Kathryn Cathcart  
Philip Eisenberg  
John Fiore  
Jeffrey Goldberg  
Mark Haffner  
Jonathan Khuner  
*Prompter*  
Philip Eisenberg  
*Assistant to Edo de Waart*  
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SUNDAY, JUNE 9 AT 2:00  
SATURDAY, JUNE 15 AT 7:00

Supertitles on June 9 and 15 by Jerry Sherk and  
Francesca Zambello, San Francisco Opera.

Funding for Supertitles provided through generous grants from  
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## CAST

(in order of appearance)

*Sieglinde* Jeannine Altmeyer  
*Siegmund* Peter Hofmann  
*Hunding* John Tomlinson  
*Wotan* James Morris  
*Brünnhilde* Gwyneth Jones  
*Fricka* Helga Dernesch  
*Gerhilde* Susan Neves\*  
*Ortlinde* Jean Herzberg  
*Helmwige* Nancy Gustafson  
*Schwertleite* Dolora Zajic  
*Waltraute* Susan Quittmeyer  
*Siegfrune* Donna Bruno  
*Rossweisse* Carla Cook  
*Grimgerde* Laura Brooks Rice

*Hunding's men, warriors*

\*San Francisco Opera debut

## TIME: Early Civilization

ACT I Hunding's house

## INTERMISSION

ACT II, Scene 1 Wotan's fortress  
Scene 2 Barren landscape

## INTERMISSION

ACT III Valkyrie island

*Latecomers will not be seated during the  
performance after the lights have dimmed.*

*The use of cameras and any kind of recording  
equipment is strictly forbidden.*

*The performance will last approximately four  
hours and thirty-five minutes.*

## Die Walküre/Synopsis

Wandering the earth disguised as the human Wälse, Wotan has fathered by a mortal woman twin children, the Wäl-sungs Siegmund and Sieglinde. To train Siegmund for his task, Wotan has separated the twins in infancy, leaving Sieglinde to enter a loveless marriage with Hunding, and putting Siegmund through endless trials of misery, pursued by disaster and ignorant of his parentage and destiny.

Siegmund, who calls himself *Wehwalt* ("Woeful"), has killed some brothers who were forcing their sister into a detested marriage. Though unhurt in the struggle, Siegmund has lost his weapons, but a great storm aroused by Wotan has separated him from the brothers' pursuing kinsmen.

ACT I — Exhausted from his flight, Siegmund seeks shelter from the raging storm in a house built around a great ash-tree. Collapsing unconscious on the floor, he is found by Sieglinde, who offers him water and mead. She reveals only that the house is Hunding's and she is Hunding's wife. As they talk, an exalted and overpowering attraction for each other infuses the two of them.

When Hunding returns and hears *Wehwalt* recount his history, he reveals that he is himself one of the pursuing kinsmen. The laws of hospitality demand that he offer strangers shelter for one night; but in the morning *Wehwalt* must fight, weaponless or not. Sending his wife to prepare him a drink, Hunding leaves Siegmund alone by the dying fire, where he recalls that Wälse had vowed to provide his son with a sword in his hour of need.

Sieglinde, after drugging her husband's drink, returns to Siegmund and tells him of a one-eyed stranger at their marriage-feast who had driven a sword deep into the ash-tree, saying that only a great hero would retrieve it. Many had tried and all

had failed. Still ignorant of their identities, Wälse's children give way to their passionate love. Magically, the great door opens after the storm, and spring moonlight streams in on the embracing lovers. From *Wehwalt*'s mention of his father's name, Sieglinde understands who he is. Joyfully she calls him by his true name, Siegmund. Seizing the hilt of the sword, Siegmund names it *Nothung*, the Needed One. Drawing it from the tree, he presents it as a bridal gift to Hunding's wife. From her response he, too, understands that they are brother and sister, united in love and in blood.

ACT II — Wotan, his plans developing just as he intended, instructs his favorite Valkyrie, Brünnhilde, to ensure that Siegmund kills Hunding in the impending fight. But no sooner has Brünnhilde left than Fricka, Wotan's wife and goddess of marriage and the home, arrives angrily protesting the sacrilege of Sieglinde's incest and flight from her husband. Miserably Wotan must concede that Fricka is right, finally swayed by the realization that in *Nothung* Siegmund has an instrument of the gods and is therefore no longer an untrammelled innocent. Brünnhilde's exuberant return is cut short by Wotan. Utterly downcast, he foresees now only the end of the gods. Revealing to Brünnhilde the whole story of the Ring, he commands her to withdraw *Nothung*'s power. When Brünnhilde protests, Wotan irately instructs her to ensure Siegmund's death in the approaching fight. Leaving her to carry out his bidding, he departs in angry distress. Miserable over her obligation, Brünnhilde watches the Wäl-sung twins flee into a clearing in the forest. Exhausted, frightened and guilt-ridden, Sieglinde sinks to sleep in her brother's arms. Brünnhilde approaches Siegmund and tells him he must die, but that she will take his soul to join the heroes of Valhalla.

Siegmund, learning that Sieglinde can never join him there, refuses, saying he would rather kill himself and his sister than allow anyone else to touch her. His devotion arouses such pity in the war-like Valkyrie that she vows to disobey Wotan. Experiencing feelings of love for the first time, she prepares to protect Siegmund as Hunding's hounds are heard in the forest nearby. But Wotan's purposes are not so easily deflected. Furious at Brünnhilde's disobedience, the king of the gods returns and, with his spear, shatters *Nothung*. When Hunding has killed Siegmund, Wotan contemptuously dismisses him. Brünnhilde takes the unconscious Sieglinde and the broken *Nothung* with her and flees.

ACT III — On the isle of the Valkyries, Brünnhilde's sisters are assembling with newly slain heroes they have gathered for Valhalla's guard. The fleeing Brünnhilde brings to them Sieglinde, now distractedly awake. When her sister-warriors refuse their help, Brünnhilde reveals that Sieglinde is carrying Siegmund's child, destined to become the greatest of heroes and to bear the name of Siegfried. Giving Sieglinde the shattered *Nothung*, Brünnhilde sends her to safety in the surrounding forest. Sieglinde has hardly left before Wotan arrives. Shielded at first by the other Valkyries, Brünnhilde turns to face her furious father. Wotan tells her she has forfeited her rights as a demi-god; she shall be cast into a deep sleep on an open rock, prey to any man that finds her. Her pleading softens Wotan's anger, and finally he agrees to her request: Only the greatest of heroes shall be able to take her. Sadly, Wotan bids farewell to his best-loved daughter; he tells her she shall be surrounded by a wall of flame, and with a final kiss he removes her divine attributes. Gesturing with his spear, he commands Loge, the spirit of fire, to encircle her with flame.

# Die Walküre

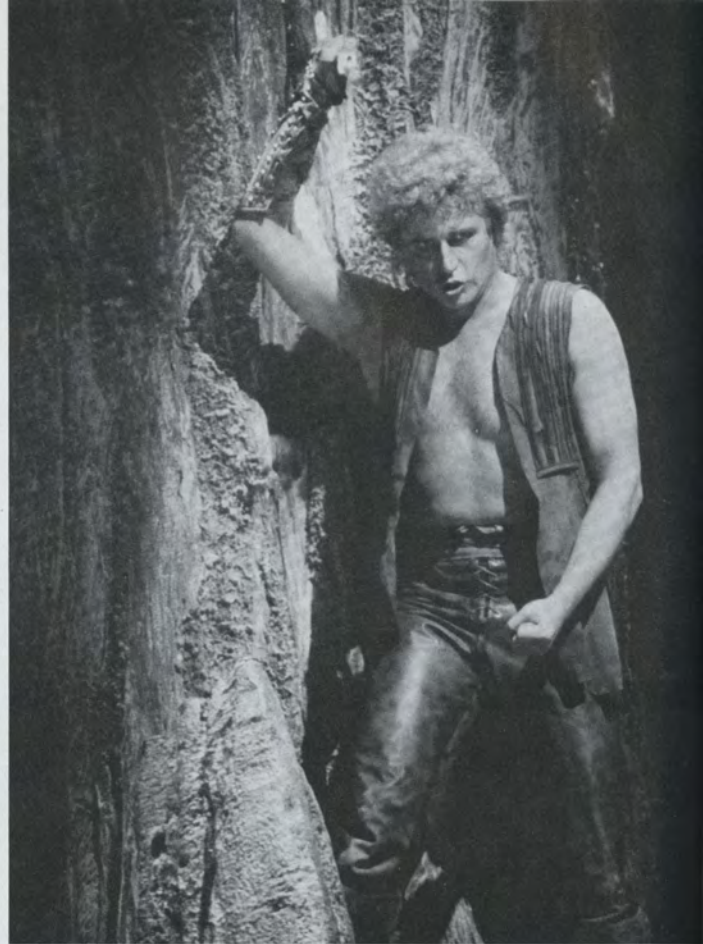
Photos taken in rehearsal by David Powers

*James Morris, Gwyneth Jones*





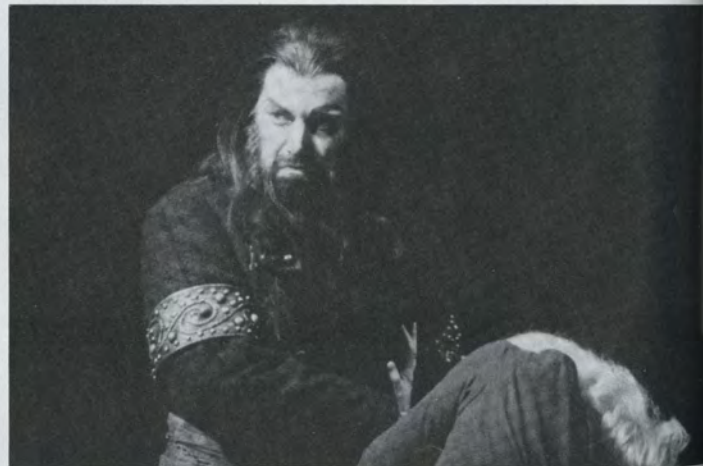
(above) James Morris



(above) Peter Hofmann



(below) Jeannine Altmeyer





*Gwyneth Jones*



*(above) Helga Dernesch*



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GWYNETH JONES

Welsh soprano **Gwyneth Jones** returns to San Francisco Opera as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, the role she sang here during the 1983 Summer Season. Celebrated worldwide as a Wagner interpreter, she portrayed Brünnhilde in the 1976 Bayreuth centennial *Ring* (telecast nationally in the U.S. in 1983), and has appeared there as Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Kundry in *Parsifal*, and both Elisabeth and Venus in *Tannhäuser*. She made her Metropolitan Opera debut in 1972 as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*. The role of Leonore in *Fidelio* has played a vital part in Miss Jones' career. It was the vehicle of her brilliant debuts at the Berlin and Vienna State Operas in 1966; the role of her La Scala debut in 1967; of her San Francisco Opera debut in 1969, and of her triumph in the 1970 Beethoven Bicentennial production at the Theater an der Wien under Leonard Bernstein. She recreated the role in the 1978 San Francisco Fall Season. Her other roles with the Company have been Aida in 1969, Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* in 1974, the first Isolde of her career in 1980, and Tosca in 1978 and 1982. Miss Jones has also won international renown for her portrayals of Strauss heroines—Salome, *Die Aegyptische Helena*, and the Marschallin in *Der Rosenkavalier*. She sang her first Elektra in Cologne in 1983 and appeared in that role last season at the Vienna State Opera, as well as in *Die Walküre* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Miss Jones added *Turandot* to her repertoire last summer when London's



JEANNINE ALTMAYER

Royal Opera visited Los Angeles and opened its 1984-85 season at Covent Garden in that role. She is one of the stars of *Wagner: The Film* which will be shown at the Opera House as part of this summer's *Ring* Festival.

Soprano **Jeannine Altmeyer** made her San Francisco Opera debut as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* during the 1983 Summer Festival. This year she sings the role of Sieglinde in the same opera, a role she has performed in many recent *Ring* productions, among them the Chéreau-Boulez and Hall-Solti *Rings* in Bayreuth and the Ponnelle *Ring* in Stuttgart. A native of Los Angeles, Miss Altmeyer began her studies in singing and acting with Martial Singher and Lotte Lehmann in Santa Barbara. In recent years she regularly studied with soprano Gladys Kuchta and Maestro Max Epstein. After winning the Metropolitan Opera Auditions in 1971, she appeared at the Met in *The Magic Flute*, *Parsifal* and *Carmen*. Her 1972 Chicago Lyric Opera debut as Freia in *Das Rheingold* led to an invitation to perform the role under Herbert von Karajan's direction at the Salzburg Easter Festival which marked her European debut. Since then, Miss Altmeyer has been a guest artist in all of the major opera houses. Her repertoire includes most roles of her vocal category in German as well as in Italian operas. She recently added to her list of roles Leonore



HELGA DERNESCH

in *Fidelio* (in the staging by Nikolaus Lehnhoff), Isolde and Tosca. Miss Altmeyer's recordings include Sieglinde in the complete Pierre Boulez *Ring* cycle, Brünnhilde in the complete Marek Janowski *Ring*, and Leonore in *Fidelio*, also conducted by Janowski.

The renowned Vienna-born mezzo-soprano **Helga Dernesch** sings three roles in the 1985 *Ring* cycles: Fricka in *Die Walküre*, and the Second Norn and Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung*. The latter is her first Waltraute and fifteenth *Ring* role. She appeared here last fall as Marfa in *Khovanshchina* and in the 1984 Summer Season added two new roles to her repertoire: Erda in *Siegfried* and Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*. In the fall of 1982 she sang the role of Herodias in *Salome*. Miss Dernesch made her debut at the Bayreuth Festival in 1965 as a soprano, singing such roles as Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Freia in *Das Rheingold*, and Guttrune in *Götterdämmerung* for five seasons. Turning to the heavier dramatic Wagner roles, in 1969 she first sang at the Salzburg Easter Festival as Brünnhilde in *Siegfried*, conducted by Herbert von Karajan with whom she subsequently performed and recorded the *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhildes, Leonore in *Fidelio*, and Isolde. Under the baton of Sir Georg Solti she appeared at Covent Garden as Chrysothemis in *Elektra* and the Dyer's Wife in



*Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and recorded Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*. Since 1979 Miss Dernesch has been singing mezzo-soprano roles with great success, beginning with the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, which she has performed in Vienna, Hamburg, Munich, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Tokyo and the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow. She has also been heard as Klytemnestra in *Elektra* in Vienna, Hamburg, Berlin, Cologne, Munich and Zurich; Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* in Trieste and Frankfurt; and Herodias in Hamburg, Bonn and Rio de Janeiro. At the 1982 Salzburg Festival she performed and later recorded Othmar Schoeck's *Penthesilea*; also Aribert Reimann's new Requiem. This season in Cologne she portrayed Kabanikha in a new production of *Katya Kabanova*. In Vienna, she has just appeared as the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and will sing Prince Orlofsky and Herodias in 1986/87 at the State Opera there. Her next debut will be as Hecuba in Reimann's *The Trojan Women*, a new opera composed for the opening of the Munich Opera Festival in 1986, with Jean-Pierre Ponnelle directing and Gerd Albrecht conducting. In the 1981 American premiere of Reimann's *Lear*, Miss Dernesch made her San Francisco Opera debut as Goneril, and will re-enact the same role here this fall.



SUSAN NEVES

New York-born soprano Susan Neves makes her San Francisco Opera debut this summer in the role of Gerhilde in *Die Walküre*, which was also her debut role with Baltimore Opera in 1984. A participant in the 1984 Merola Opera Program, she won the Kent Family Award at the San Francisco Opera Auditions Grand Finals. Miss Neves received a master's degree in music from the Manhattan School of Music in 1979 and was a member of the Santa Fe Opera apprentice program in 1981 and 1982. She was a winner in both the 1983 Washington International Competition and the 1984 Liederkrantz Foundation Competition. At the Berkshire Choral Festival in 1983 she performed selections from *Aida* and *Die Meistersinger* under the baton of John Mauceri. Miss Neves recently made her Sarasota Opera debut as Lucia di Lammermoor.



NANCY GUSTAFSON

Soprano Nancy Gustafson sings her first Freia in *Das Rheingold* in the Ring cycles, as well as the role of Helmwig in *Die Walküre* which she performed for her Company debut in the summer of 1983 along with that of Woglinde in *Das Rheingold*. During the 1984 Fall Season, she sang performances of Emma in *Khovanshchina* and also appeared in *Elektra* and *Madama Butterfly*. As a 1984 Adler Fellow of the San Francisco Opera Center, she created the role of the Mother in the world premiere of Conrad Susa's *The Love of Don Perlimplin*. Miss Gustafson made her San Francisco Symphony debut last year with performances of Mahler's Eighth Symphony, conducted by Edo de Waart. In December of 1984, she made her European debut at the Théâtre Musical de Paris/Châtelet as Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus* in a production which was also seen at the Grand Théâtre de Nancy, in March, 1985. During the summer of 1983, the young artist sang her first performances of Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* for the Carmel Bach Festival and also appeared as soprano soloist in Bach's *St. John Passion*. She participated in the 1982 Merola Opera Program during which she appeared in *The Magic Flute* and *Rigoletto* and was heard as Sicle in the 1983 San Francisco Opera Center Showcase production of *L'Ormino*. A native of Illinois, Miss Gustafson was educated at Mount Holyoke College and has completed extensive graduate work at Northwestern University. While in the Chicago area, she



DONNA BRUNO

appeared in productions of *La Bohème* (Musetta), *The Rape of Lucretia* (Female Chorus) and *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Diana). This fall, she returns to the San Francisco Opera as Madame Jouvénot in *Adriana Lecouvreur*.

Mezzo-soprano **Donna Bruno** recreates the role of Siegrune in *Die Walküre* in which she made her Company debut in Summer 1983. A 1984-85 Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center, she portrayed Edvige in its production of Handel's *Rodelinda* this year and toured with the SFOC Singers as Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*. She also portrayed Mirinda in the 1983 Showcase production of *L'Ormino*. A Chicago native, Miss Bruno appeared as Mercédès in *Carmen* in the 1984 Fall Season, and as Suzuki in the Family performances of *Madama Butterfly*. In Fall 1983 she was seen in *Katya Kabanova*, *La Traviata*, *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein* and *Manon Lescaut*. She was a member of the Merola Opera Program in 1982, when she sang Maddalena in *Rigoletto* and toured in that role with Western Opera Theater, and again in 1983 when she appeared as Nicklausse in the Stern Grove *Tales of Hoffmann*. Her recent Bay Area engagements include Alcina in Haydn's *Orlando Paladino* at the Carmel Bach Festival and Beethoven's Ninth with the San Francisco Symphony with whom she will perform again next September.



JEAN HERZBERG

Other recent performances include Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* for Marin Opera, Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* for California Coast Opera, and the Mozart Requiem for the Marin Symphony. Miss Bruno is also a participant in the Wagner Chamber Music Concerts, presented as part of San Francisco Opera's 1985 Ring Festival.

Soprano **Jean Herzberg**, featured in three roles of the Ring cycle, adds the role of Wellgunde in *Götterdämmerung* to those of Ortlinde in *Die Walküre* and Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold*, parts she also sang at her debut with the Company in the summer of 1983. She has performed extensively on the concert stage, making her Kennedy Center debut in 1983 in Beethoven's Ninth with the National Symphony under Robert Shaw, who also conducted the Atlanta, Knoxville and Pittsburgh Symphonies for her solo appearances with them. Miss Herzberg was recently soprano soloist in Verdi's Requiem during the San Francisco Festival of Masses, also conducted by Robert Shaw. She participated in the 1982 Merola Opera Program, appearing as Pamina in *The Magic Flute* and winning the Leonardo da Vinci Award at the Grand Finals, and again in 1983, receiving the Cenacolo Award and touring with Western Opera Theater in the title role of *Madama Butterfly*. Last November she was a winner of the Great



SUSAN QUITTMAYER

Lakes District Metropolitan Opera Auditions. Miss Herzberg's repertoire includes Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Musetta and Mimì in *La Bohème*, Alice Ford in *Falstaff* and Nedda in *I Pagliacci*. She appeared on PBS in the title role of Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* and as soprano soloist in Britten's *War Requiem*.

**Susan Quittmeyer** began her association with San Francisco Opera in 1979 in the Affiliate Artists Program and made her Company debut that fall as La Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi* and Dorabella in the Family matinees of *Così fan tutte*. The mezzo-soprano, a native of New York, returns this summer as Waltraute in *Die Walküre*, a role she sang with the Company in the fall of 1981 and summer of 1983. San Francisco audiences will remember her portrayals of two leading roles in world premieres presented by the American Opera Project—John Harbison's *Winter's Tale* and Kirke Mechem's *Tartuffe*—and with Spring Opera Theater in Conrad Susa's *Transformations* and as Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*. She also sang the leading role in Harbison's *Full Moon in March* in its 1982 Opera Center Showcase production. Her roles in Fall Seasons have included a highly praised Composer in the 1983 *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Mercédès in *Carmen*, the Page in *Salome*, and Paulina in *The Queen of Spades*. Miss Quittmeyer bowed with Baltimore



LAURA BROOKS RICE

Opera as Siebel in *Faust*; with Mobile Opera Company as Carmen, and with Hawaiian Opera Theater as Cherubino and as Olga in *Eugene Onegin*. With Los Angeles Opera Theater she has appeared as the Composer, as Dorabella, and this season as Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*. She has performed with the Montreal Opera as Cherubino, the Denver Opera as Nicklausse in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and the San Diego Opera as Smeton in *Anna Bolena*. This fall she returns to San Francisco Opera as Meg in *Falstaff*.

Mezzo-soprano **Laura Brooks Rice** returns to sing Grimgerde in *Die Walküre*, the role of her San Francisco Opera debut in 1981. Since then she has sung with the Company as Flosshilde in *Das Rheingold*, Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Dorothee in *Cendrillon*. In the last two Fall Seasons she has been heard as Dryade in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Barbara in *Katya Kabanova*, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, and as Teresa in *La Sonnambula*. Last summer she stepped in as Dorabella to replace an ailing colleague in the midst of a performance of *Così fan tutte*. A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Miss Rice was a 1981 Merola Opera Program participant and then became one of the first Opera Center Adler Fellows. In the Center's 1982 Showcase series, she was Rosina in Scarlatti's *The Triumph of Honor* and Gertrude Stein in Vivian Fine's *The Women in the Garden*.



CARLA COOK

She sang the title role in the 1983 Showcase production of *The Rape of Lucretia*. Also a busy concert artist, Miss Rice has appeared as soloist with the San Francisco and Atlanta Symphonies, and as Cerinto in Boito's *Nerone* with the Opera Orchestra of New York.

**Carla Cook**, Rossweisse in *Die Walküre*, first appeared with San Francisco Opera in the 1983 Fall Season in the roles of Glasha in *Katya Kabanova*, Charlotte in *La Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein*, and Flora in the Family performances of *La Traviata*. The young mezzo-soprano, born in Salt Lake City, had been heard here earlier in the Opera Center Showcase productions of *L'Ormindo* and *The Rape of Lucretia*. She joined the Merola Opera Program in 1982 and performed in *The Magic Flute* and *Rigoletto*. She received the Jean Donnell Memorial Award at the 1982 San Francisco Opera Auditions Grand Finals, and in 1983 she won third prize in the Munich International Vocal Competition and was a winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions. She made her Metropolitan Opera debut in 1984 as a Girl of Mahagonny in *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* and as Waltraute in *Die Walküre*. She also recently made her Seattle Opera debut as Waltraute, and as Venus in *Tannhäuser*. She has sung such roles as Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*, the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Charlotte



DOLORA ZAJIC

in *Werther* and Tisbe in *La Cenerentola* with the opera companies of Mississippi, Des Moines, Utah and the Lake George Opera Festival. She will appear in the 1985 San Francisco Opera Fall Season as Annina in *Der Rosenkavalier*.

Mezzo-soprano **Dolora Zajic**, who sings Schwertleite in *Die Walküre*, made her Company debut last summer as a Priestess in *Aida*. In the 1984 Fall Season she appeared as Giovanna in *Ernani*, a Maid in *Elektra*, and Giovanna in *Rigoletto*. Currently an Adler Fellow, she performed in the San Francisco Opera Center productions of *The Love of Don Perlimplin* as Marcolfa, a role she created at the opera's world premiere, and as Bertarido in Handel's *Rodelinda*. A Nevada native, Miss Zajic was a participant in the 1983 Merola Opera Program, appearing in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, at Stern Grove and winning the Leona Gordon Lowin Memorial Award at the Grand Finals. She also portrayed Suzuki at Villa Montalvo and in Western Opera Theater's touring production of *Madame Butterfly*. In 1982 she was awarded the bronze medal at the VII International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, the first American to place in that event in twelve years. Her fall assignments with San Francisco Opera include Dame Quickly in the student and family matinee performances of *Falstaff*.



PETER HOFMANN

The young German tenor **Peter Hofmann** sings the role of Siegmund in *Die Walküre* as he did in the 1983 San Francisco Opera Summer Festival, after making his Company debut as Lohengrin in the fall of 1982. Last summer, in a departure from Wagnerian leads, he appeared here as Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*. Born in Marienbad, Hofmann made his operatic debut in 1972 as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* in Lübeck. After two seasons there, he scored a major success at Wuppertal as Siegmund, his first Wagnerian role. His American debut was a concert performance of Siegmund in Act I of *Die Walküre* with the San Francisco Symphony in 1977. Hofmann made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1980 as Lohengrin, a role he has also sung in Hamburg, London, Berlin, Munich, Salzburg, Vienna, at the Paris Opera, at Moscow's Bolshoi and Milan's La Scala. He has appeared regularly at the Bayreuth Festival where he made his debut in the 1976 centenary *Ring*, later recorded and telecast in the U.S. in 1983. Last season he returned to Covent Garden in the *Ring* and at the Met sang the roles of Walther in *Die Meistersinger* and *Parsifal*. Among his many recordings are the Grammy Award-winning *Parsifal* with Karajan, *Die Zauberflöte* and *Fidelio* with Solti, and *Tristan und Isolde* with Bernstein. Hofmann is also a popular rock star. He performs frequently with his own rock band and on TV in Germany where his albums are million-copy best sellers. He plays a feature role in *Wagner:*



JAMES MORRIS

*The Film* to be shown at the Opera House as part of the 1985 San Francisco Summer Ring Festival.

Bass **James Morris** portrays Wotan in both *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* for the first time during the current *Ring* cycles. In the 1981 Fall Season he made his Company debut as Assur in *Semiramide*. He has recently sung Wotan in *Die Walküre* for his debut with the Vienna State Opera, following his first performance of the role with the Opera Company of Baltimore, his birthplace, in 1983. Morris became the youngest male singer on the Metropolitan Opera roster when he was 23. Four years later, a last-minute cancellation put him on the Met stage as Don Giovanni, a role he has sung to critical and public applause in many subsequent Met seasons, as well as those of the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Claggart in *Billy Budd*, and leading roles in *Macbeth*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Don Carlo*, *Otello*, *Carmen*, *Peter Grimes* and *The Barber of Seville*, among others. In recent seasons Morris sang his first Dutchman in *Der Fliegende Holländer* at Houston Grand Opera and appeared as Silva in *Ernani* with Miami Opera. He has also performed with Chicago Lyric Opera, as Henry VIII in *Anna Bolena* with the Canadian Opera and Michigan Opera Theatre, and was heard as Méphistophélès in Berlioz's *The Damnation of Faust* with the Philadelphia



JOHN TOMLINSON

Opera. Morris has appeared at the Salzburg and Edinburgh Festivals and has sung the role of Banquo in *Macbeth* at the Glyndebourne Festival. Elsewhere in Europe, Morris has been heard at Strasbourg's Opéra du Rhin in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, at Florence's Teatro Comunale in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, in Madrid in *Norma* and in Barcelona in *La Traviata*. In great demand also as a concert singer, he was soloist last March in the Verdi Requiem with Edo de Waart and the San Francisco Symphony. His numerous recordings include Haydn's *Creation* and operas of Mozart, Massenet, Donizetti and Verdi. Next fall Morris returns to San Francisco Opera as Claggart in *Billy Budd* and will sing his first Scarpia in *Tosca*.

English bass **John Tomlinson** returns to San Francisco Opera this summer as Hunding in *Die Walküre* and Hagen in *Götterdämmerung*. His debut here was in the 1983 Fall Season as Pimen in *Boris Godunov*, and in the summer of 1984 he sang the role of Ramfis in *Aida*. One of the most highly praised basses in Europe today, Tomlinson has been singing with the English National Opera since 1974 in a wide variety of roles including Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Ramfis, Figaro, Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino*, *Boris Godunov*, Hunding, Hagen, and most recently King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde*. Next season he adds Méphistophélès in

Gounod's *Faust* and Moses in Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto* to his ENO repertoire. Tomlinson made his Covent Garden debut in 1978 and has sung there with the Royal Opera in such roles as Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Colline in *La Bohème*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, and Figaro in *The Marriage of Figaro*. This year he appears at Covent Garden as Harapha in a new production of Handel's *Samson* and as Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*. His American opera debut was in San Diego in 1983 as King Henry in *Lohengrin*. Last year he made his Paris Opera debut as Banquo in *Macbeth*. Tomlinson also appears frequently in concert and has recently sung the *St. Matthew Passion* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and *L'Enfance du Christ* with the San Diego Symphony. His recordings include *La Sonnambula*, *Guglielmo Tell*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Rigoletto* and the title role in Handel's *Hercules*.



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Helga Dernesch as Fricka in *Die Walküre*.

## *Die Walküre:* Deeds of Music

By WILLIAM MANN

The first opera in the cycle of the *Ring*, *Das Rheingold*, is about big business and the rat race for power. If you consider the *Ring* as a vast symphonic musical structure, the power element-Wotan's spear theme-dominates *Das Rheingold*. *Die Walküre* changes tack and concentrates on the "second subject" (to use sonata-form terminology) of love, which we may particularize as compassion for other people. None of the characters in *Das Rheingold* was much moved to compassion. They were all consumed by greed for gain, except

Loge, who acted without concern for loss and who, disgusted by the gods, left them at the gate of Valhalla and turned back into the spirit of fire. It is as such that he returns at the end of *Die Walküre* in the *Feuerzauber*, or Magic Fire music, which is part of Wotan's concluding solo.

The love of one person for another is the theme of *Die Walküre*, and it will go on influencing the events of the *Ring* until it ultimately resolves the crisis at the end of *Götterdämmerung* (rather as the second subject triumphantly ends Grieg's Piano Concerto). Love, for Wagner, was evidently a human faculty: there is none in *Das Rheingold*, which has to do entirely with gods, giants and subterranean dwarfs, none of them human, as we understand the term, indeed, historically pre-human.

Love, Wagner suggests, is what sets humanity apart (I am sure he would have included dogs in this). In the first act of *Die Walküre*, we witness the blossoming love of Siegmund and Sieglinde, twin offspring of Wotan's union with an unnamed

Peter Hofmann as Siegmund in *Die Walküre*.



SCHERL



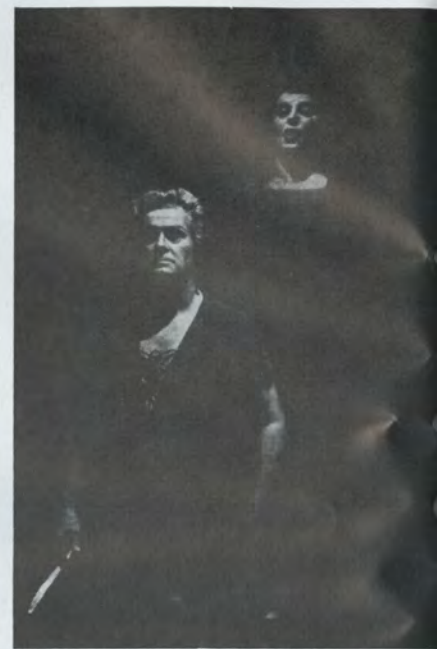


The "Todesverkündigung" scene (Annunciation of Death) in Act 2 of *Die Walküre*. The photo, taken in 1983, shows Peter Hofmann as Siegmund and Jeannine Altmeyer as Brünnhilde.

human woman. At the same time, or perhaps later, Alberich, Wotan's archrival for world power, lovelessly begat a son, Hagen, whom we will meet in *Götterdämmerung*. The sons were both conceived in order to get back the all-powerful Ring, not for any loving purpose at all. But now we see and hear Siegmund and Sieglinde, who meet as unknowns to one another, and fall in love. Their gradually unfolding love is the subject of the first act, and Wagner's music surges away from the conventions of German operatic music, as he had inherited and developed it, into something altogether new and unique, perfectly magical. Wagner imitated it when he came, a little later, to *Tristan und Isolde*, but the love music there is much more sophisticated. Siegmund and Sieglinde are to be understood as primitive beings and their courting is quite direct, non-intellectual, therefore diatonic, still Wagner's language at that time. He had a marvelous instinct for the sort of music to fit any particular situation, and by the time he came to compose *Die Walküre*, his creative imagination was ready with harmonies and colors and dramatic touches that far surpass what he had managed in *Lohengrin*, where the love of Elsa and Lohengrin was not human or

real, since he was a sort of E.T., a being from another place altogether, and not really of this world. Wagner had never before been able to compose real love music, and had not needed to, given the plots of his earlier operas. Here, in *Die Walküre*, Siegmund meets Sieglinde, both starved for love and instantly attracted. It was a new dramatic situation for Wagner, and his musical response was happily enhanced by his love affair at the time with Mathilde von Wesendonk, often connected with *Tristan und Isolde*, but properly to be regarded as the inspiration of the love music in *Walküre* (that of *Tristan* was Cosima Liszt-von Bülow, who became Wagner's second wife). The love music of *Die Walküre* is some of the most wonderful and inexhaustible that anybody has ever composed.

It is not all in the first act, which is virtually a long duet for Siegmund and Sieglinde, with a brief intervention by Hunding. Act two, which sets humans against the gods, and specifically Siegmund against his own father, Wotan, has its central point in the long scene called *Todesverkündigung*, or Proclamation of Death. Brünnhilde comes to tell Siegmund that, in the forthcoming fight with the husband of the lady he has just

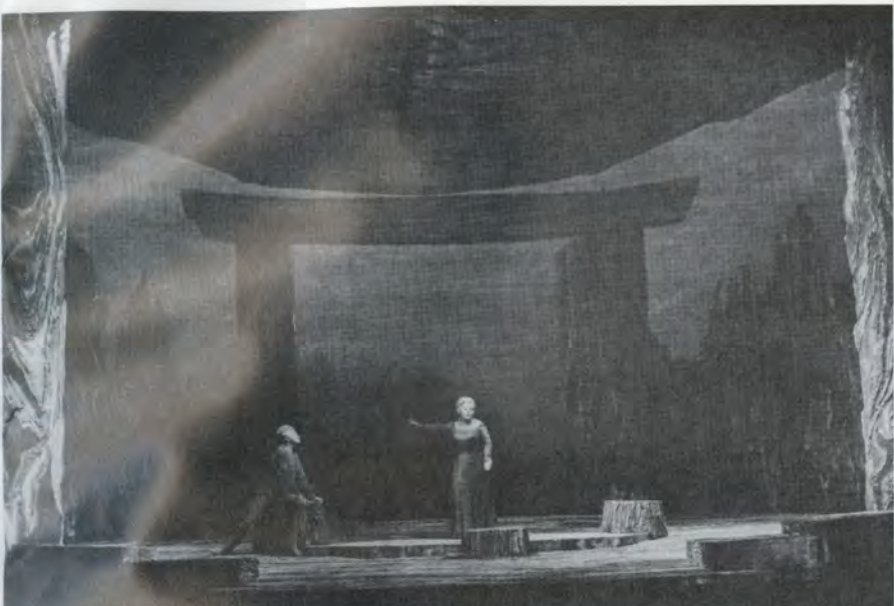


Annunciation of Death in San Francisco Opera's 1981 *Walküre*, with Birgit Nilsson as Brünnhilde and James King as Siegmund.



In 1936, one year after San Francisco Opera's first complete Ring cycle, an "almost" Ring (*Rheingold*, *Die Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung*) returned to our stage with a new conductor: Fritz Reiner. This photo was taken backstage during an intermission of a *Walküre* performance that featured Lauritz Melchior as Siegmund and Kirsten Flagstad as Brünnhilde. Maestro Reiner is on the right.

NORTON



Jess Thomas as Siegmund and Régine Crespin as Sieglinde in San Francisco Opera's 1968 staging of Die Walküre.

abducted, he will be killed and taken to the warriors' paradise called Valhalla (Battle Hall). Siegmund is the son of a god, and has been condemned to death by that god's wife. He is expected to comply with the dictates of the gods, but he refuses. He loves Sieglinde too much, and would rather kill her, and send them both to hell, than be sent by himself to Wotan's celestial club for brave warriors. Siegmund's determination forces Brünnhilde to change sides. She arrived on the scene to announce the decision of her father, the lord of the gods. His human son persuaded her that his survival was a better cause. The moment when she is persuaded to espouse the cause of mankind is celebrated by Wagner with a musical explosion that nobody will ignore: people have won, the gods have lost. That round, nevertheless, is eventually won by the gods, and Brünnhilde's loyalty swap is countermanded by the god whose aspirations she was actually fulfilling. Wotan had told her, his daughter, that Siegmund must be killed by Hunding, to propitiate Wotan's wife, Fricka, who was the goddess of marital contracts, as Wotan was the god of material bargains. Brünnhilde changed tactics because Wotan himself was forced to change tactics, and Brün-

nhilde was Wotan's "will," an idea borrowed by Wagner from the German philosopher Schopenhauer, who conceived will as something imposed from without, and non-reversible. I would call it fate, though I don't believe in that either.

Siegmund persuaded Brünnhilde that he must kill Hunding in the forthcoming duel and take possession of Hunding's wife Sieglinde. Mankind was beginning to defy the gods (which mankind had created in its own image), and this will be a central feature of *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*.

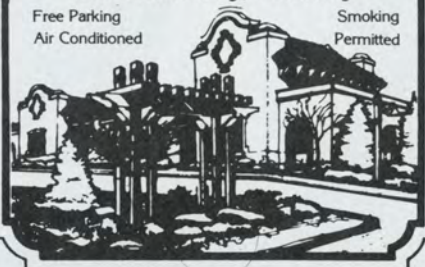
The power complex is subordinated in *Die Walküre* to the lovebug, eros. Not just sexual infatuation, it is what I have called compassion, fellow-feeling, willingness to put yourself out for somebody else's sake, because you like them. Wagner realized that this human instinct was the only way to save the world from collapse and annihilation. How it happens is shown in *Götterdämmerung*, and why it occurs may be experienced in *Die Walküre*, in the course of a series of duet scenes, or duologues. In the first act they bring about the loving union of Siegmund and Sieglinde, two complete strangers who fall in love and subsequently discover, without much embarrassment, that they are brother and sister. In the last act, the

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There were two performances of *Die Walküre* at the San Francisco Opera in 1939. In the first, Kirsten Flagstad (left) sang Sieglinde, Marjorie Lawrence (right), Brünnhilde. At the next performance, they reversed the roles. The photo at right, taken backstage during the intermission, shows Lauritz Melchior as Siegmund, Marjorie Lawrence as Sieglinde, and stage director Herbert Graf between them.

final scene shows Wotan persuaded by his *alter ego*, Brünnhilde, that her crime, for which he proposes to punish her by demotion from divinity to humanity, was not hers but his: as his instrument, she defied convention and Wotan's wife Fricka, goddess of sanctified domesticity. Brünnhilde could not protect Wotan's son in battle, but she could and did rescue Sieglinde, sending her to safety for the delivery of her baby son, Siegfried.

The love music in the first act of *Die Walküre* is instantly compelling. So is the opening of the third act, the *Ride of the Valkyries*, and the closing scene of Wotan's Farewell and the Magic Fire music. The intervening second act has been known to bore first-time spectators who are not fluent in German and have not carefully read the text beforehand. Act two consists chiefly of three extended duet scenes. They are musically as rich as anything in

the *Ring*, and dramatically of crucial importance. First comes the scene in which Wotan is persuaded by Fricka that his plan to recover the Ring, through the agency of his human son, is fated to miscarry, since Siegmund is not a "free" agent at all, but entirely Wotan's tool: even the sword he wields was left by Wotan for him in the trunk of Hunding's house-tree—how brilliantly the sword theme flashes through the orchestra here. Fricka's music grows more confident as the scene develops, while Wotan's becomes dominated by his anxiety theme (beginning with a turn or *gruppetto*). He is persuaded that Siegmund must die, to preserve the good name of matrimony. Fricka celebrates her triumph with a short solo, "Deiner ew'gen Göttin," sung in character, and rather in the young Wagner's conventional language.

Wotan now has to reverse his orders to

Brünnhilde. He does so in the second of these long duologues, which is effectively a long soliloquy, occasionally punctuated by brief comments from Brünnhilde—Wotan remarks that, when he talks to her, he is talking to himself (similarly we may believe that Fricka, in the previous scene, was the voice of Wotan's conscience). In this monologue, "Als junger Liebe Lust mir verblich," he narrates the action of *Das Rheingold* and the period leading to *Die Walküre*, interpreting and commenting as Wagner does, even more potently in the orchestra at the same time. Musical themes from *Das Rheingold* mingle with Wotan's new anxiety theme and the Valkyrie theme, introduced at the beginning of this act. This is not mere repetitiousness but urgent symphonic development, and it ends dynamically with Wotan's angry insistence on Brünnhilde's obedience.

PETERS



In 1963, San Francisco Opera's *Die Walküre* featured Regina Resnik as Fricka and Amy Shuard as Brünnhilde.

POWERS



Leonie Rysanek was San Francisco Opera's Sieglinde in 1956, 1976, 1981 and 1983. In 1981, her Siegmund was James King, shown here in a moment from Act II.

There is a short scene for Siegmund and Sieglinde, she almost demented with a newly-sensed guilty conscience. As soon as Sieglinde has fallen asleep, Brünnhilde appears to prepare Siegmund for his imminent death, the solemn hieratical *Todesverkündigung*, which has two themes of its own: a pair of chords bridged by a turn, and a longer, sad melodic phrase. The Valhalla theme is much involved too, inevitably. In this duet scene the drama achieves dynamism as Brünnhilde is gradually persuaded by Siegmund to change her plan and defy Wotan. It is paralleled, in the third act, by the long duologue in which Brünnhilde persuades Wotan to make her punishment less harsh, to protect her sleeping form with a ring of fire, accessible only to one "freer than I, the god"—which means the unborn Siegfried, whose heroic and melodious theme thunders forth as Wotan stretches out his spear in final conjuration.

The last duologue of Wotan and Brünnhilde began (English horn solo), and was much concerned, with a new theme that sinks four steps, then rises a seventh and sinks again. If the seventh leap were not there, it would be Wotan's spear theme: the derivative is connected with the new-found love in Brünnhilde's heart, more specifically for the ill-favored Volsung family with whom her own destiny is now to be linked so closely. Wagner here shows Wotan's power transformed into the Valkyrie's love, a characteristic feature of his musical language in the *Ring*, that he described as a "Deed of Music" (*Musikthat*). Wagner did not, at the time, believe that the *Ring* could be described as opera: it was not, for him, a play set to music, but music put on the stage or, as he put it, "musical deeds made visible." The materialization of Brünnhilde's love theme is such a deed. A larger one goes back to the closing scene of *Das Rheingold* when Wotan, during his solo, "Abendlich strahlt," was suddenly seized by a great idea. The theme played on the trumpet was the one known as the sword theme, the same one that will play such an

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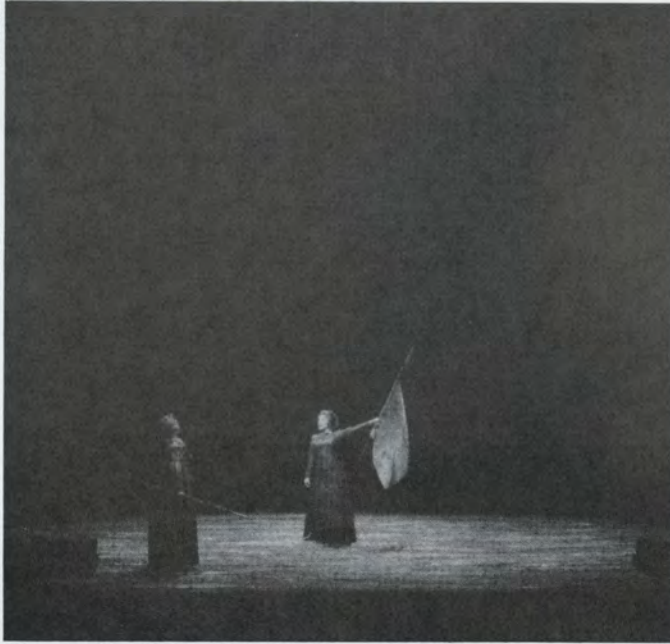
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Hans Sotin as Wotan and Roberta Knie as Brünnhilde in San Francisco Opera's 1976 staging of *Die Walküre*.



Birgit Nilsson as Brünnhilde and Hans Hotter as Wotan in *Die Walküre*. The 1956 staging represented Miss Nilsson's American opera debut.

important part in the first act of *Die Walküre*.

Siegmund is unarmed in the house of a deadly enemy who has, nevertheless, promised him shelter for the night: in the morning they will fight to the death. As Sieglinde goes to Hunding's bedroom, she gazes repeatedly at the tree trunk around which the house is constructed, and the sword theme is softly heard. Left alone for the night, Siegmund wonders how to find a weapon in time for the fight: his father, Wälse (or Volsa, actually Wotan in disguise) had promised him a sword when he needed one: suddenly the flickering fire on the hearth lights up the silvery hilt of a sword buried deep in the trunk of the tree. Now the sword theme flashes more boldly, but Siegmund does not examine the tree more closely.

Sieglinde, having drugged Hunding's nightcap, comes out to tell the handsome stranger about the sword which an old man thrust into the tree at her wedding. The Valhalla theme tells us that the old man was Wotan, and her description



Beverly Sills as Gerhilde in *Die Walküre*, sung during her 1953 debut season with the San Francisco Opera.

suggests that he dressed as the Wanderer or Traveller, as we shall see him in *Siegfried*, though the music doesn't yet give him the Wanderer's theme: his appearances in *Die Walküre* are in his role as Warfather, or Lord of Battles.

Sieglinde urges Siegmund to try and pull the sword from the tree trunk, even though none of Hunding's menfolk could manage it. The heroic elan of the sword theme, and the woeful yet doughty melody of the Volsung heroes, give way for a while to the music of young love and springtime on a moonlit night. When she knows him for her brother, and calls him by his true name of Siegmund, he starts to the tree trunk and withdraws the weapon whose theme, the grand plan apparently, blazes out on trumpets with full orchestra. Here is the "musical deed made visible," and when act two begins, it is with a florid, jubilant elaboration of the sword theme: heroism fulfilled in love's ecstasy. ■

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hours and fifty minutes.*



## Siegfried/Synopsis

ACT I takes place in the forge of the Nibelung dwarf, Mime, Alberich's brother. (Sieglinde earlier fled to this workshop, gave birth to a child and died. In accordance with his mother's last will, this child was named "Siegfried." In order for Mime to possess the Ring he has reared Siegfried to kill its present owner, Fafner.) The young man, Siegfried, asks about the broken sword that his father bore in his last fight. Mime, who has been unable to repair it, evades the subject. Shortly afterward, Siegfried leaves to run exuberantly into the forest and a Wanderer enters. It is Wotan, who no longer rules the world, but rather observes and reflects upon it. Against Mime's will he sits down and offers to play a game in which each will exchange three riddles. If either player is unable to answer any riddle, he will lose his head. The Wanderer answers all three questions Mime asks. In the return match Mime is unable to answer the god's last question, "Who can forge the fragments of the sword Nothung?" Mime cannot do it. The Wanderer departs from the workshop; Mime's head will be taken by the fearless slayer of the dragon. Siegfried returns, and Mime now gives him the fragments of Nothung, which Siegfried, chanting while he works, files down, melts and forges into a new sword. At the same time, Mime brews a poisonous potion. According to his plan, Siegfried, after slaying Fafner, will drink it and die. Then the treasure will belong to Mime, the dwarf, and make him master of the entire world. Siegfried tests the newly forged sword by striking it on the anvil. The anvil splits.

ACT II — Wearing the sword Nothung, Siegfried goes into the forest, guided and goaded by Mime, to the cave where the dragon, Fafner, dwells and guards his hoard. Their arrival is preceded by a scene in which Alberich waits at Fafner's cave expressing his hope that his curse upon the Ring will take effect so that he can regain possession of it and its powers. The Wanderer joins him; they wake Fafner to warn him that Mime will shortly bring Siegfried to slay him. Alberich offers to protect Fafner if he will peacefully relinquish the Ring to him. But Fafner is uncooperative: "I lie and possess: let me sleep." The Wanderer departs laughing and Alberich disappears too as soon as Mime arrives with Siegfried. Mime tries once more to instill fear into Siegfried's heart. He fails and leaves angrily with the comment, "Siegfried and Fafner oh, that they would slay one another." Siegfried lies down in the grass near the cave. He hears the song of a forest bird and the gentle rustling of the leaves—the passage that Wagner called "Forest Murmurs." Siegfried's thoughts turn back to the father and mother he never knew, his heart longing especially for his mother. He tries to imitate the song of the forest bird, first with a reed-flute, then with a horn. This noise awakens Fafner, and after a short struggle, Siegfried drives Nothung into his heart. In his dying moments, Fafner is filled with admiration for the "heroic youth" who has slain him. He foretells Siegfried's future, warning him that Mime is plotting Siegfried's death in order to gain the hoard. A drop of the dragon's blood falls onto Siegfried's hand; the instant he puts his hand to his mouth to lick away the drop, he understands the words and meaning of the forest bird's song. The bird tells him to be

sure to take the Ring and the Magic Helmet, which Siegfried does. Mime returns. And just as the dragon's blood has given Siegfried the ability to understand the forest bird, it also enables him to recognize the malicious intent behind Mime's friendly words; as Mime hands him the poisoned drink, Siegfried kills him. The forest bird tells Siegfried of Brünnhilde, the most beautiful of all women, who lies on her rock surrounded by fire and awaits the one who has not learned to fear. The bird flies ahead showing the way, and Siegfried follows.

ACT III — The Wanderer entices Erda from the earth. She refuses to answer his question regarding the fate of the world; only after he declares that he no longer fears its downfall does she reveal the impending doom. Siegfried enters, led by the forest bird. The Wanderer bars his way with his spear, feared by all except one man. Siegfried breaks Wotan's spear with Nothung, proving thereby that he is the one man who does not fear it. The Wanderer steps aside, and Siegfried rushes up the rocks until he stands before the sleeping Brünnhilde. He realizes that she is not a man, and he, who feared neither Fafner, fire nor Wotan's spear, learns fear with his first glimpse of a woman. He awakens her with a kiss; she greets the sun and light; then she sees Siegfried, and they gaze into each other's eyes. But their growing passion is interrupted by her fearful recognition that she has been divested of her godhood, and is now no more than a defenseless mortal woman. However, this emotional obstacle is crossed, and Siegfried and Brünnhilde sink into each other's arms in glowing, and ever increasing love.



# Siegfried

Photos taken in rehearsal by William Acheson

*René Kollo*



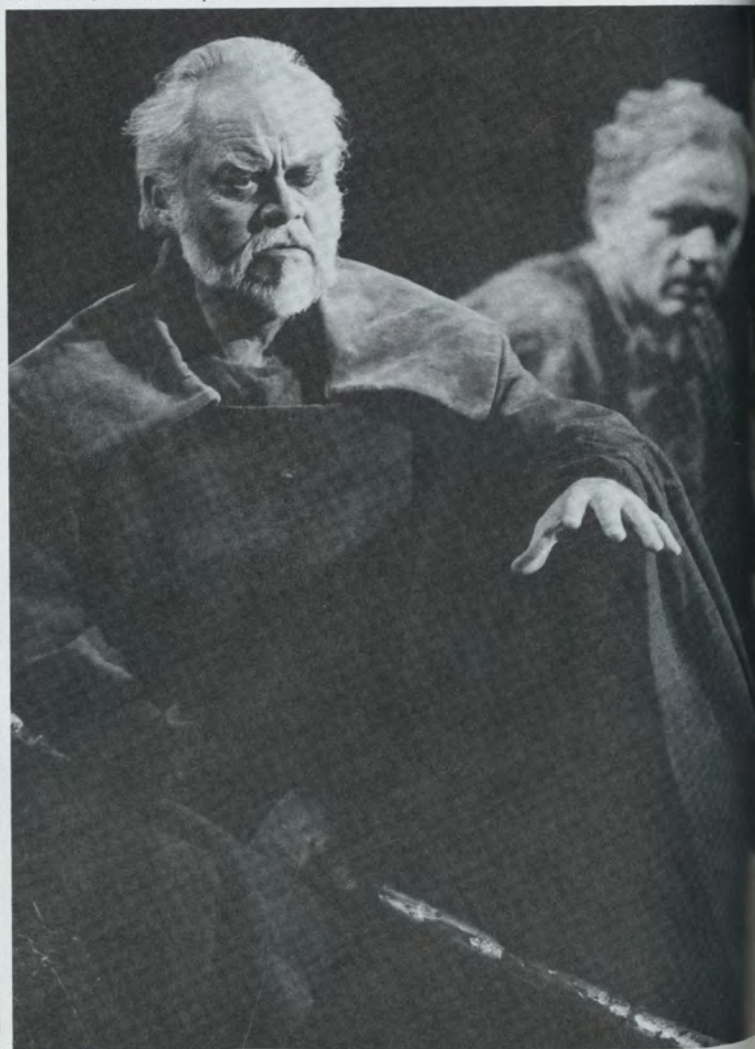
*René Kollo*



*René Kollo, Helmut Pampuch*



*Helmut Pampuch*



*Thomas Stewart, Helmut Pampuch*



Walter Berry, Helmut Pampuch



Helmut Pampuch, René Kollo



René Kollo, Helmut Pampuch



René Kollo



*Hanna Schwarz*



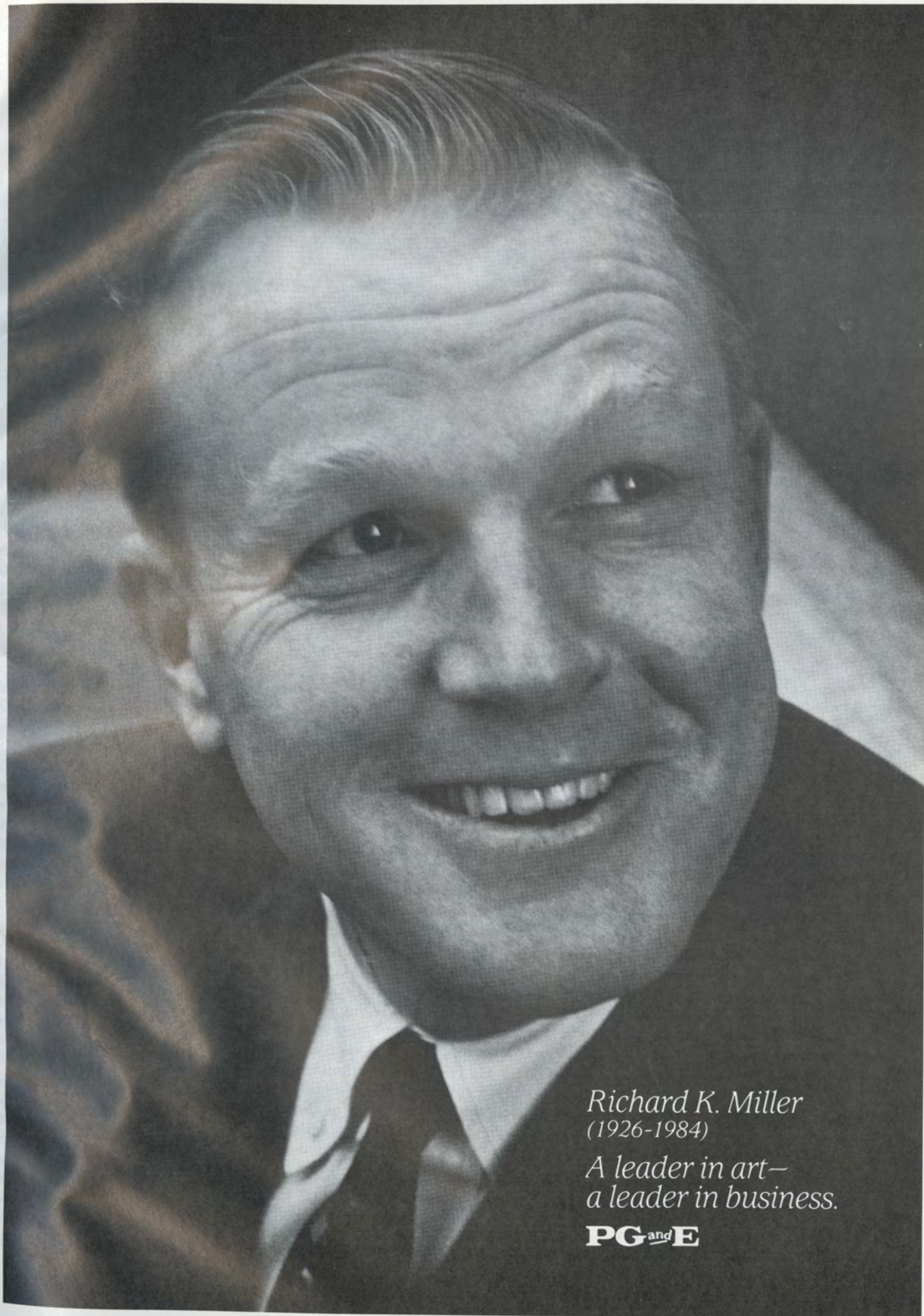
*René Kollo, Thomas Stewart*



*René Kollo, Eva Marton*



*Eva Marton*



*Richard K. Miller  
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**PG<sup>and</sup>E**



EVA MARTON

During the 1985 *Ring* cycles, **Eva Marton** sings the first Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung* of her career. She also recreates the role of Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* which she sang for the first time anywhere during the 1984 San Francisco Opera Summer Season. The world-acclaimed soprano considers her 1977 San Francisco Opera debut as *Aida* as a turning point in her career. She returned to sing *Tosca* on the Company's 1979 tour to the Philippines and in the 1980 Fall Season appeared as the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Born in Hungary, Eva Marton studied at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest and was engaged by the Hungarian State Opera. Her debut at the Frankfurt Opera as the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* soon followed and she was a member of the Frankfurt company from 1972 to 1977. Since that time she has lived in Hamburg where she has sung the title roles in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Tosca* and *Turandot*, among others, with the Hamburg Opera. In recent years she has won high acclaim in those roles and others such as Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, *Aida*, and Elsa in *Lohengrin* in the opera houses of Buenos Aires, Chicago, Milan, Munich, New York and Vienna. At the Metropolitan Opera, Eva Marton has also won enthusiastic plaudits in the title role of *La Gioconda*, as Leonore in *Fidelio*, and as Ortrud in *Lohengrin* with which she opened the 1984-85 season. She has been an esteemed artist at the world's great festivals, including Bayreuth (*Venus and*



HANNA SCHWARZ

*Elisabeth* in *Tannhäuser*), Munich (the title role in Strauss' *Die Aegyptische Helena*), and Salzburg (*Fidelio*). She has won exceptional praise for her interpretation of *Turandot*, which she has recorded for CBS Records. San Francisco audiences will have their first opportunity to see her in that role during the 1985 Fall Season.

German mezzo-soprano **Hanna Schwarz** made her American debut as Fricka in *Das Rheingold* at San Francisco Opera in 1977. She returned to the War Memorial stage in the same role in Summer 1983 and sings Fricka in the current *Ring* cycles during which she also portrays Erda in *Siegfried*. With the Company she has sung the roles of Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* in 1978 and *Carmen* in the 1981 Fall Season. She made her Bayreuth debut in 1975 and sang each year in the Chéreau *Ring* production, telecast in the U.S. in 1983. She also recently appeared in a film version of *Tristan und Isolde* as Brangäne, which was directed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle and conducted by Daniel Barenboim, and is this year's Fricka and Waltraute in the Bayreuth *Ring* directed by Peter Hall. Miss Schwarz appears in Munich as the Principessa in *Adriana Lecouvreur* with Margaret Price and Neil Shicoff, a production which will soon be recorded. She can be heard on a recent recording of Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* with Margaret Price, conducted by Colin Davis. She has also filmed Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and



CHERYL PARRISH

*Missa Solemnis* with Leonard Bernstein conducting, and recently sang as mezzo-soprano soloist in Verdi's Requiem along with Mirella Freni, José Carreras and Martti Talvela. Next season she will be seen as Marina in *Boris Godunov*, Penelope in Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno D'Ulisse in Patria*, Judith in Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, Giulietta in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and Eboli in *Don Carlo*.

**Cheryl Parrish** is the Forest Bird in *Siegfried*, as she was in the 1984 Summer Season. The Texas-born soprano made her Company debut in the fall of 1983 as Naiade in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. She also appeared as Iza in *La Grande Duchesse de Gêrolstein*, featuring Régine Crespin with whom she has been studying in France on a San Francisco Opera Guild scholarship. A 1984 Adler Fellow, Miss Parrish was heard as Blonde in the Opera Center Showcase *Abduction from the Seraglio*. She was a participant in the 1981 and 1982 Merola Opera Programs and was featured in productions of *The Magic Flute*, *Die Fledermaus*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and as Gilda in *Rigoletto*, a role she performed on Western Opera Theater's 1982 national tour. She was a winner in the 1982 Metropolitan Opera Auditions and first place winner in the San Francisco Opera Regional Auditions in 1981 and 1982. Her recent engagements elsewhere have included Fiametta in *The Gondoliers* with the Fort Worth Opera Association,

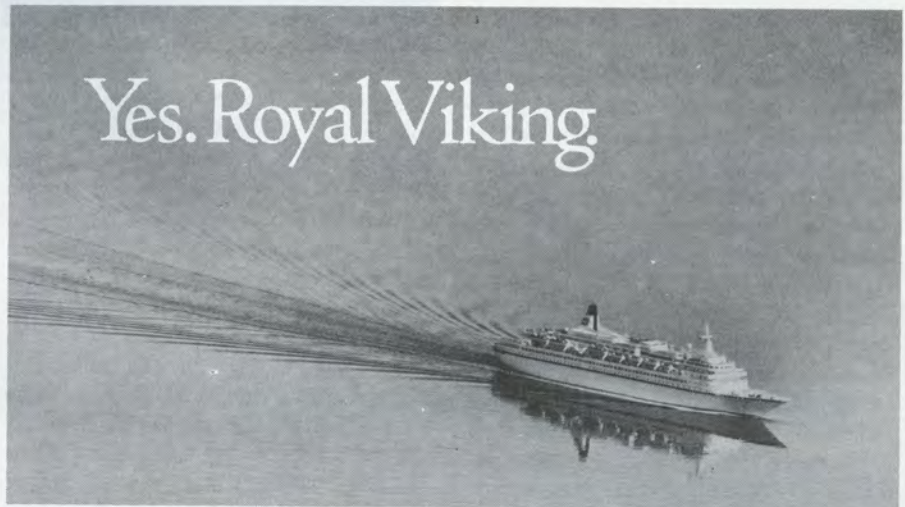


RENÉ KOLLO


the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute* with the Modesto Symphony and Adele in *Die Fledermaus* with the Cleveland Opera Theater. She will sing two major roles with San Francisco Opera next fall: Sophie in *Werther* and Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*.

Tenor René Kollo sings the title role of *Siegfried* in which he made his San Francisco Opera debut last summer. In the current *Ring* cycles Kollo also sings Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung*, a role he has recorded but never before performed onstage. He is considered one of the leading Wagnerian tenors of today. Kollo made his Bayreuth debut in 1969 as the Steersman in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and in 1970 sang the role of Erik. He first performed the title role in *Lohengrin* at Bayreuth in 1971 and 1972, and in the following years appeared there as Walther in *Die Meistersinger* and also sang his first Parsifal. He repeated Parsifal and sang Siegfried in 1976, becoming the youngest singer in the Bayreuth Festival's history to undertake those roles. Kollo's repertoire embraces many styles and composers. Born in Berlin, he is an award-winning interpreter of German folk songs who financed his early music studies with his earnings as a pop singer. His first opera engagement was at the Braunschweiger Staatstheater in a Stravinsky triple bill of *Mavra*, *Renard* and *Oedipus Rex* and he became a regular member of that company. For six years, starting in 1967, he

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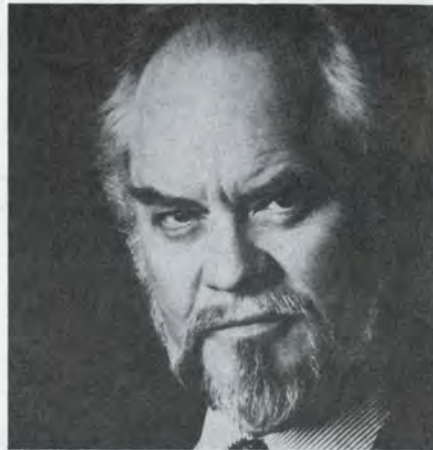
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was a member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, singing a variety of roles including Laca in *Jenůfa* and making many guest appearances in Munich, Frankfurt, Milan and Lisbon. His recordings include operetta as well as such works as *Parsifal* and *Tannhäuser* under Solti, and *Missa Solemnis* and *Fidelio* under Bernstein with whom he also performed Florestan in a 1978 Vienna State Opera production of *Fidelio* that was televised worldwide. Among Kollo's major successes in recent years have been the opening of the 1981 Bayreuth Festival as Tristan; the opening of La Scala's 1981-82 season as Lohengrin, and a 1982 concert tour of 25 cities. In 1984 he appeared with the San Francisco Symphony as Parsifal in a concert performance of the opera's Third Act, and last April he made his American recital debut in San Francisco at the Herbst Theatre. Kollo will undertake his first directing assignment with *Parsifal* at Darmstadt in the spring of 1986.

Renowned baritone **Thomas Stewart** returns to San Francisco Opera as the Wanderer in *Siegfried*, a role he first performed with the Company in 1970 and recreated last summer. His acclaimed Wagner roles at the War Memorial have also included Wotan in *Die Walküre*, most recently in the summer of 1983, Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde*, Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*, and Amfortas in *Parsifal*. Stewart made his debut here in 1962 with five leading roles: Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Valentin in *Faust*, Ford in *Falstaff*, and Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*. Since then he has been applauded in such varied roles as Don Giovanni, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, the Count in *Capriccio*, Germont in *La Traviata*, Orest in *Elektra*, and the title role in *Eugene Onegin*. The only American to sing major roles at Bayreuth for more than a decade, Stewart has also sung in Ring productions at Salzburg, Vienna and the Metropolitan Opera. Since his 1966 Met debut as Ford in *Falstaff*, he has returned there for Don Giovanni, Iago in *Otello*, the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*,



THOMAS STEWART

Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger*, the title role in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, and as Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, a role he has also performed here and at La Scala and Covent Garden. He was seen recently at Netherlands Opera as Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* and as Captain Balstrode in *Peter Grimes* at the Metropolitan Opera and in August, 1984 when the Royal Opera/Covent Garden visited Los Angeles during the Olympic Games. Also a sought-after concert artist, Stewart appeared recently at Carnegie Hall in Beethoven's Ninth and in a number of recitals with his wife, soprano Evelyn Lear. In San Francisco in 1981 Stewart achieved one of the most important successes of his career, performing the title role in the American premiere of Aribert Reimann's *Lear*. He will again undertake that role in the 1985 Fall Season.

German tenor **Helmut Pampuch**, who was highly acclaimed in his American debut with San Francisco Opera last summer as Mime in *Siegfried*, now recreates that role and sings his first Mime in *Das Rheingold* in this country. Born in Oberschlesien (now part of Poland), he graduated from the Conservatory of Nürnberg and studied with Willy Domgraf-Fassbänder before his professional debut in Regensburg. Engagements in other German houses followed and since 1973 he has been a member of the



HELMUT PAMPUCH

Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf. He has also appeared in Berlin in *The Flying Dutchman*, as Beppe in *I Pagliacci* and Wenzel in *The Bartered Bride*; in Geneva as Mime in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*, also as David in *Die Meistersinger*, and at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich as Monostatos in *The Magic Flute*, as Beppe, and as Pedrillo in *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. Last year he sang Pedrillo in the new Giorgio Strehler production in Venice and Naples. Pampuch took part in the world premiere of the three-act version of *Lulu* in Paris, where he also appeared as Monostatos and as Mime in *Das Rheingold* conducted by Solti. He traveled with the Paris Opera to Milan for a repeat of *Lulu* and has since fulfilled numerous guest engagements in the opera houses of Amsterdam, Bordeaux, Rouen, Genoa, Stuttgart, Hamburg and Lisbon. At Bayreuth he has performed in *Tristan und Isolde*, *Parsifal*, *Die Meistersinger* and *Das Rheingold* in which he sang Mime in 1978, '79 and '80 and in the film televised in 1983. Other TV and film credits include *The Bartered Bride* for German TV, *Lulu* with the Paris Opera, as well as the Wagner operas from Bayreuth. Early in 1984 he scored a major success as Mime in a new production of *Siegfried* at the Teatro Verdi in Trieste and this year he appears at La Scala as Monostatos in a production of *The Magic Flute* conducted by Wolfgang Sawallisch. Pampuch will be at the Frankfurt Opera in December 1985 as Mime in *Das Rheingold*.



WALTER BERRY

Versatile Viennese bass-baritone **Walter Berry** portrayed Alberich in *Das Rheingold* for the first time in his distinguished career during the 1983 San Francisco Opera Summer Festival. In the 1985 *Ring* cycles he returns for that role and also to portray Alberich in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. In the fall of 1983 Berry appeared as the Music Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. San Francisco audiences were treated to two of his renowned comic roles in 1978: Leporello in *Don Giovanni* and Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*. His 1976 Company debut was as Barak in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, a role he interpreted at the opera's Metropolitan premiere in 1967 and re-enacted at the Met in 1971 and 1978. It was his debut role at Covent Garden in the 1975-76 season, and he has also sung it at the Salzburg Festival where he made his debut in 1952 under Wilhelm Furtwängler, and at the Hamburg, Paris and Vienna Operas. Under his mentor, Karl Böhm, Berry sang the title role in *Wozzeck* at the reopening of the Vienna Staatsoper in 1955 and has performed there regularly ever since. Renowned as a Mozart interpreter, he has frequently sung the roles of Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Figaro, and both Guglielmo and Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*. In addition to appearing in leading roles in all of the world's great opera houses, he is an illustrious lieder and oratorio singer. His film credits include *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte* and *Tosca*. His extensive discography includes three versions of Bach's *St.*



JAMES PATTERSON

*Matthew Passion* and of *Die Zauberflöte*, two each of *Don Giovanni* and *Die Fledermaus*, and many other works ranging from Haydn's *The Seasons* to Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*.

Bass **James Patterson** is Fafner in both *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*. In San Francisco Opera's 1984 Fall Season he sang four roles: Zuniga in *Carmen*, Alessio in *La Sonnambula*, Orest's Guardian in *Elektra*, and Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*. The young Canadian was an Adler Fellow with the San Francisco Opera Center in 1983 and 1984, after participating in the 1982 Merola Opera Program, during which he sang in *The Magic Flute* and *Rigoletto*. He made his Company debut in the 1983 Summer Festival *La Bohème* and appeared that Fall Season in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *La Traviata*, *La Gioconda* and *Boris Godunov*. In summer 1984 he portrayed Fafner in *Siegfried* and the King of Egypt in *Aida*. For the 1984 Opera Center Showcase he sang the role of Osmin in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and in 1983 appeared in *L'Ormino* and *The Rape of Lucretia*. Last summer he sang at the Pacific Northwest Wagner Festival in Seattle as Fafner in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*. Next Fall he rejoins San Francisco Opera for roles in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Werther*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Lear*.

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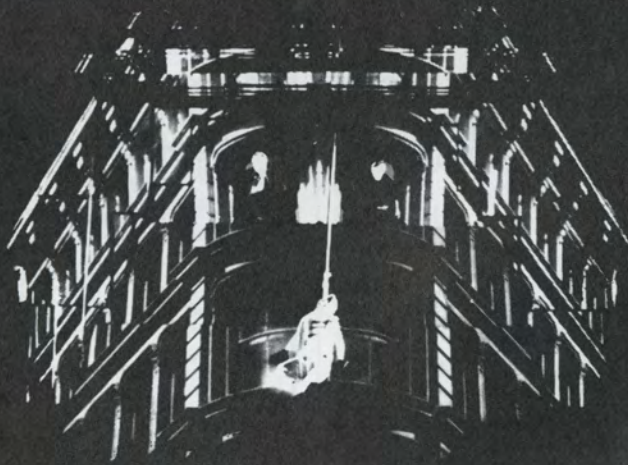


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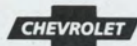
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# *Siegfried: The Journey To Enlightenment*

SCHERL





By WILLIAM MANN

Musical form-mongers used to describe Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in terms of a four-movement symphony. *Das Rheingold* is clearly the Introduction, if not a complete exposition of material. *Götterdämmerung* (exceptionally among titles, it has no definite article in front of it) is, just as obviously, the Finale. In between came *Die Walküre*, which can be regarded, I suppose, as a lyrical intermezzo, but also much besides that.

*Siegfried* was firmly labeled "the Scherzo of *The Ring*." It is certainly enlivened with much jovial activity in the forging scenes of the first act; the shrill arguments of Mime and Alberich outside Fafner's cave, which follow Siegfried's fight with the Dragon; the preceding comic turn in which Siegfried vainly tries to construct a woodland pipe, not to mention the macabre joke which leads to the slaughter of Mime, much to his surprise, by the boy he had raised single-handed from babyhood. The third act begins very seriously indeed, but the scherzo spirit surfaces a little in Siegfried's irreverent encounter with his grandfather Wotan, a crucial moment in the drama that keeps amusement to a minimum. The winner's triumphant ascent of the fire-girt mountain peak is jovial enough for the best scherzo, and the opera ends optimistically with what is generally accepted as a love duet.

Again, it is more than that, even something else. The closing dialogue of Siegfried and Brünnhilde is her initiation, rather against her will, into human love which has to be at the root of all human co-existence (the assumption, as a matter of principle, that the person you are dealing with is not necessarily inferior to you, let alone a rotter, as Jesus taught in

---

*Siegfried (René Kollo) is about to discover the sleeping Brünnhilde (Eva Marton) in the last scene of the third act of Siegfried.*



Lodovico Oliviero as Mime in San Francisco Opera's 1936 presentation of *Das Rheingold*.

his Golden Rule "Love your neighbor as if he were yourself," the neighbor being exemplified in the parable of the Good Samaritan). It is a duet of courtship, leading to contented seduction, though the concluding duet, so ebullient and passionate in the energy which throughout is at the forefront of Siegfried's boyish personality, has built-in clouds with Brünnhilde's final passage of doom for the "eternal gods"—not eternal at all! The clouds are hardly felt unless you have read the words, and these you are unlikely to distinguish when both characters are singing at the same time. At any rate, Siegfried's sentiments are entirely optimistic, just as the music seems to be.

If you consider the contents of *Siegfried* rather more deeply, it may stand out more firmly as a drama about enlightenment. The lighting director will tell you that

*Siegfried* begins in comparative obscurity, inside a woodland cave far from the eyes of men, then moving into a forest clearing, pierced occasionally by sunlight through dense foliage, towards the final scene in brightest sunlight upon a high mountaintop. Conductors will tell you of the dark orchestral colors in the first act (clarinets, violas, heavy brass), relieved by the energetic radiance of Siegfried, and the sparkling strength of the Forging Scene. Then darkness again, in the second and third acts, relieved by an orchestral gleam, like sunlight, growing gradually brighter toward the last duet scene. *Siegfried* might be an illustration of that rather obscure line by Rellstab in Schubert's song *Frühlingssehnsucht* which says "Everything pushes towards the bridal light": the poet

SCHERL



Helmut Pampuch as Mime in the new San Francisco Opera production of *Siegfried*.

was thinking of plants under the soil, growing towards the sun in which they will breed. *Siegfried* points in that direction too, visibly and audibly, though the outcome is not breeding, but the bride Brünnhilde who will fulfill her new role at the end of *Götterdämmerung*.

The quest for light out of darkness is the motive of the scenario and text of *Siegfried*, as well as its music. It is not only about emergence from a deep forest cave into mountaintop sunlight, but about its intellectual equivalent. This is an opera about the growing up of Siegfried, forest-bred, fearless and adventurous, but also

untutored and emotionally insecure. He is without awareness of the parents whose upbringing he instinctively misses all the time. He will ask plenty of questions, and be gradually informed, though never enough to fulfill his heroic potential. He gets little help from Mime, who is self-motivated, and out of timidity a compulsive liar.

Mime opens the opera alone, wondering how to forge a tough sword for a charge who breaks all the filigree blades that the old man makes. Wagner's music for him, before and after this introductory scene, dwells on his job as a miner and forger, in the strongly rhythmical, low-lying orchestral theme which dominates much of this introduction: it also refers clearly to his monomania about acquiring a treasure which is jealously guarded in a cave by its owner, Fafner, the giant who has turned himself into a dragon. The treasure includes a magic ring that confers



Ragnar Ulfung as Mime in San Francisco Opera's 1970 staging of *Siegfried*.

world mastery on whoever wears it. Mime would like to be its wearer.

Wagner's orchestral introduction uses his thematic vocabulary, the famous *Leitmotifs*, most articulately: they announce "I think constantly about the treasure, forged by smiths, slaves like myself. I need a sword to capture the greatest treasure there, the Ring with which I can master everyone, even Wotan, lord of the gods." The music has declared all this before Mime opens his mouth. Wagner's thematic technique, adapted from Beethoven's symphonies for his own operatic purposes, becomes more masterly, and more completely communicative, the longer you study it. When it was new, Debussy compared these name-tags to visiting cards; but they help a non-linguist, non-German, to understand precisely what is being thought, discussed, or done, at any given moment. And we can experience ourselves the growth of each theme's significance through the span of four operas, once we are familiar with the tunes and their particular references. I think, in *Siegfried* particularly, of the mournful Volsung themes from *Walküre*, and of the heroic Siegfried, grand and tragic on horns, as well as the woodland rover of the solo Horn-theme, outside the cave, and the impatient, vigorous lad who berates Mime in the first act's second scene, a theme which proves adaptable to more thoughtful moments. Wagner planned *Siegfried*, and all the *Ring* operas, as simply as possible, because each strut on the plan has so much weight to carry. The first act is really four scenes, though the libretto runs the first two together. We have already begun with Mime, Alberich's brother-Nibelung, the forger of the magic Tarnhelm, which is currently in the possession of the dragon Fafner, together with the all-powerful ring and the rest of the treasure that was stolen from the Nibelungs by Wotan to pay Fafner and his brother-giant for the building of Valhalla. Mime's Brooding theme, which looms at us out of the darkness in the orchestral introduction, is audibly related to the Ring theme, because that is what he broods about. It would be a pleasure, he supposes,

to recover the treasure, which really belongs to the Nibelungs, who mined and forged it themselves; but what Mime really desires is to wear the ring himself, not any dragon-giant nor god, and especially not brother Alberich. Mime is too little and cowardly to defeat Fafner, but he has been rearing the orphan Siegfried to fulfill the task for him, and he is also in possession of the magic sword Nothung, in two broken pieces. (Wagner's Sword theme is heard in fragments.) Mime has had many a go at welding them together, since he is a professional goldsmith fallen on hard times; but even he is not up to reforging Nothung, and that is why he is brooding. The only alternative, he supposes, is to forge another sword that Siegfried, a strong and dauntless lad, can use to slaughter Fafner. Then Mime can murder Siegfried, by poison probably, and be ruler of the world. So we find him busy in the cave which is his smithy, the only home Siegfried has ever known, putting the finishing touches to his latest sword, and pessimistically in no doubt that the muscular lad will break it at once, as he did all its predecessors. The only indestructible plaything that Mime has made for Siegfried is a hunting horn, and the boy can play it very expertly, as we now hear.

Siegfried is on his way back to the cave, blowing his own signature-tune to announce his presence, also perhaps to encourage his new playmate, a large but docile bear which growls happily on the contrabass tuba, terrifies Mime by ambling round the cave, and shambles off (Siegfried's horn-call theme played backwards on strings) at the boy's command. The bear is a sign that Siegfried is quite up to conquering dragons, though he is still only a boy, probably 16 or less (hard as it is to find a Heldentenor who can look the part without seeming absurdly undignified). He already has another theme, very heroic on the horns too, and it is heard when he duly smashes his new sword. But in this scene we chiefly hear the bustling, blustering theme associated with his physical energy and impatience with the doddering old dwarf from whom he longs to get away as soon as possible. He is still too young to suspect how evil his



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Ernestine Schumann-Heink in a Bayreuth production of *Siegfried* around the turn of the century. Mme. Schumann-Heink sang Erda there between 1896 and 1914.



Kathryn Meisle as Erda in San Francisco Opera's 1935 *Siegfried*.

guardian really is, or why he keeps on recounting tales of dragons, giants and the treasure: he simply finds the dwarf repulsive, absurd but not amusing (though able tenor comedians find Mime a stimulating role), and unworthy of a youngster's respect.

Mime constantly reproaches Siegfried for impudent, ungrateful behavior: this scene, which centers on reprises of Mime's absurd slogan-song, "Als zulesendes Kind," is a convenient conflation of talks that must have been going on regularly for some years, ever since the strippling began to observe the behavior of other animal families in the forest, even before he entered the natural adolescent phase of parent-rejection, which will have happened uncommonly early, given such a repulsive father-substitute. Wagner brings out a new theme, warmly glowing

and darkly lyrical on lower strings, when Siegfried speaks of the family bonds which unite other beasts, and which he longs to experience himself—a comforting mother especially, but also a credible father-figure. This is manifestly a duologue between a pupil and (unwilling) teacher, part of the quest for enlightenment about which I wrote earlier. Eventually Mime reveals a hint or two of Siegfried's parentage and birth, still concealing the father's name, and produces the shards of Nothung. Siegfried assumes that the smith who is his loathed guardian can easily repair this sword, and so enable him to leave the premises, which he has no reason to cherish as a home. Before leaving for a short stroll, he sings a song in grateful anticipation of his future freedom, and this is partly thematic for him, particularly in its rhythm, which has a

joyful stamping sound.

Mime is left alone, wondering how to coax Siegfried to the hate-cave of his dreams, where Fafner dwells. His meditation is broken by noble, sonorous, rather chromatic chords (reminiscent of Magic Sleep in *Walküre*) that stride along mysteriously. They belong to his visitor, Wotan disguised as a traveler, in broad-brimmed hat, cloak and walking-stick (his famous spear, with its descending scale in the bass): he now calls himself Wanderer. He has given up government, and merely journeys hither and thither, watching events and giving advice. At present he is concerned with his grandson, Siegfried, who has certain tasks to do for Wotan, though they have to be done independently—Wotan's traditional authority no longer counts, since he broke the contract on his spear by stealing the treasure from

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Alberich in *Das Rheingold*. His task is quite delicate. He planned to rescue the world from disaster by creating an independent hero, Siegmund, but soon found out that the hero in question was not nearly independent enough to save the situation. Wotan unwillingly let his son die, but not before his favorite daughter, Brünnhilde, had fulfilled his wish for him, and made provision for Siegmund's unborn son, who has meanwhile grown up entirely free of Wotan's influence. If Wotan can refrain from interfering, Siegfried may accomplish Wotan's will for a world that he is no longer able to command.

Wotan now enters Mime's cave, disguised as the Wanderer, and offers Mime, who does not fancy any visitor, a wager of his own life against any three questions Mime asks. He is offering Mime information, and Mime needs all the help he can get. But being mistrustful, he asks the Wanderer questions to which he already knows the answers. Wotan obliges with them, and we have an extended reprise of Wagner's earlier music about dwarfs, giants and gods, in effect a splendid tripartite solo aria for a grand bass-baritone voice.

Wotan now insists on a return match, and Mime is obliged to cudgel his wits, which he does with a slithery downward scale themed as pendant to his forging motif, often on violas, but sometimes also sung. He has no difficulty in answering the first two questions, and he becomes quite cheerful, until the Wanderer asks who will reconstitute the sword Nothung. That should have been Mime's first question, and it is his undoing. Wanderer does not bother claiming his prerogative as winner: Mime's life is forfeit to the forger of the sword, someone who is ignorant of fear. That person, Mime knows, is the boy Siegfried—unless Mime can teach him, out of extensive personal experience, what fear means. The flashing sparks from Wotan's departure on his magic horse delude Mime into imagining the ravaging approach of the Dragon (a tremendous orchestral passage, this), and Siegfried, returning to the smithy, finds him hiding under the anvil, terror-struck. Mime attempts, in a fine solo with obbli-

gato orchestra, to convey the fearfulness inspired by watching a forest fire. Siegfried has always found such things enjoyable—Wagner here alludes to the sleeping Brünnhilde, whom the boy will soon reach after walking through just such a blaze—and wonders what this fear can be. Meanwhile he has decided to reforge the sword himself, if Mime cannot.

The last scene of this act is about the reconstruction of the sword, a grand solo in two sections, both punctuated by asides for Mime, who gleefully takes the opportunity to brew a poisonous eggnog which Siegfried is to drink after slaying the monster. Siegfried's forging song has, as its refrain, the words "Nothung, Nothung, neidliches Schwert," a near-echo of the words sung by his father before pulling the same sword out of Hunding's house-tree, and with the same characteristic drop of an octave on the two syllables of the sword's name. The song is in D minor, with a marvelous turn into D major at the end of the act, when Siegfried holds up the finished weapon. Mime's comments increasingly encroach on Siegfried's singing, but Wagner never quite allows a simultaneous duet. The physical energy of the music in this last scene is immensely striking in the context of what had preceded it. We have come some way towards the light.

Act two, in the forest outside the dragon's lair, begins with a return to utter darkness, as Wagner shows us the monster in sinuous expanse, both giant and worm, with a rhythmic pattern for drums with doublebasses, and an unhurried melody for contrabass tuba. There are distant flashes of lightning: Wotan is on his way here, to the horse-riding music which will reach its apogee in the introduction to the third act. He will find another spectator already installed; the music specifies the Curse, Hatred, the Ring, and Nibelung Despair: in fact, Alberich. The old adversaries are to confront one another again, and Alberich's malevolence is not at all appeased by the news that Wotan is a non-participant in the events shortly to be witnessed, merely another bystander: What new

trick is his opponent up to now?

I call this first scene *Alberich*, who will be back again shortly. Fafner, who makes a brief vocal contribution to Alberich's scene and who dominated the orchestral introduction, has a scene of his own later, and the last part of the act is dominated by the offstage voice of the Woodbird. Between *Alberich* and *Fafner*, Wagner interposed a lovely lyrical scene for Siegfried alone in the clearing, listening to the music of nature, the scene known as "Forest Murmurs," sometimes excerpted orchestrally at concerts. Siegfried is again wondering what his parents were like: thoughts of his mother, "a human woman" (Siegfried has never seen one), incline Wagner to the theme of Freia, the spirit of youthfulness and lovability from *Das Rheingold*, as the orchestral strings subdivide many times in a passage of magical radiance. Birds are heard twittering above: Wagner collected their songs on country walks, identifying a blackbird and a nightingale, but not naming all the relevant motifs—the vocal Woodbird, later in the act, seems to be a blackbird, though it mimics other birdcalls as well, and its chief theme is akin to the Rhine-Maidens' "Weia waga" song in *Das Rheingold*. The (orchestral) birdsong spurs Siegfried to musical experiments in instrument-making, with comically hideous results for which he atones with a full-scale performance of his repertory on his hunting-horn. The noise rouses Fafner, the dragon. In their confrontation, themes of Dragon giant and sinuous worm are pitted against those of the Sword and the Horncall with likeable creative zest, but the real symphonic development only gets moving in Fafner's dying interrogation of Siegfried, a scene of some musical substance, full of musical and verbal information. Fafner dies, hearing the name of Siegfried (it cannot have meant anything to him, can it?), and the taste of hot dragon's blood miraculously enables the boy to understand the language of birds.

The scene of the Woodbird begins. First we have the comic dispute of Alberich and Mime, then the clever illusion where Mime utters lies, but we and Siegfried

hear his true thoughts, thanks to the Bird's prompting. Alberich remains long enough in the neighborhood to witness the slaughter of his brother, which makes him laugh and withdraw quickly from the scene. Siegfried is left alone with the Bird and its plentiful information. Wagner at first wanted a boy treble for the Bird's voice, but eventually decided that the Bird represents Sieglinde's posthumous maternal influence, therefore requiring a woman's voice. There is a marvelous volatility to this final scene, of color, rhythm and thematic manipulation.

There has been plenty of fine and noble music in the first two acts, but the Introduction to the third act, which Wagner called "Wotan's Last Ride," touches a deeper note of tragic magniloquence. His instinct to call a halt to the composition of *The Ring* at the end of the second act of *Siegfried* was wise: his creativity needed to mature still further to encompass what was to come, in *Siegfried* as well as *Götterdämmerung*. *Tristan* and *Meistersinger*, composed in the intervening years, gave him that deeper creative response, and he returned to *Siegfried* like a giant refreshed.

This act falls easily into three scenes: *Erda*, then the *Overthrow of the Gods*, and finally *Brünnhilde*. "Wotan's Last Ride" is a gorgeous tapestry of familiar themes, woven to stirring as well as majestic purpose: Wotan, his Wanderer role, his spear and horse, and his dilemma, involving Brünnhilde asleep and the forthcoming End of the Gods, primeval nature and Erda as Mother Earth—they pass before us, grander than ever, out of the darkness to which the scene has returned, along with other themes, not so easily named. It is in this exchange with Erda that Wotan becomes convinced that he must now retire and bequeath the world to Siegfried and Brünnhilde. He will do so joyfully, he admits, and a new, solemn theme of fulfillment breaks forth in full orchestra—it should sound, said Wagner, "like the proclamation of a new religion." Erda is sent back to her everlasting sleep. Wotan, beginning the next scene, *Overthrow of the Gods*, turns to meet, for the first time, his grandson and heir Siegfried who, led by

the fluttering Woodbird, has arrived at the foot of the mountain on whose summit Brünnhilde lies asleep. Wotan cannot bring himself to abdicate without at least exchanging a few words with his successor. In this scene he is at his most mellifluously benign, even when Siegfried answers him rudely. At the last moment Wotan is tempted to pull rank in order to impress the boy, but he is altogether unsuccessful. The spear of Wotan's authority is smashed by the sword: Mankind has overthrown the gods. The magic fire still blazes around Brünnhilde on her rock, and the hero strides joyfully through it, during a high-spirited orchestral passage of symphonic argument. At last he steps out of the blaze onto the mountain peak now bathed in the gentle light of a cloudless, blue sky: orchestral first violins in unison rise from their bottom G to describe an arch of melody apparently as high as the dome of heaven, and closely linked with the sleeping Brünnhilde.

Siegfried's immediate response to this first sight of a panoramic view is linked by Wagner to themes of domestic felicity (Fricka's designs on Valhalla), or perhaps ultimate wish fulfillment, and that enchanting, haunting melody of Wotan's separation from Brünnhilde, which Wagner brings back at moments of intense poignancy.

Siegfried finds Brünnhilde's horse, Grane, then its erstwhile rider. He relieves the sleeper of the weighty armor, and is flabbergasted to behold at last a female human form. He "falls in love" (so we would say) immediately, and mistakes his mental and physical confusion for new-found fear, though we should not take his babbling seriously: Siegfried goes altogether fearlessly to his early grave, like all great heroes. There is a new theme of two high-pitched wind chords for Brünnhilde's Awakening (they recur at the very opening of *Götterdämmerung*, even more momentously), and another jubilant tune ("Heil der Mutter") of gratitude for one another's existence—it is a variant of Wotan's downward-scale Spear theme, because he is the person responsible (Brünnhilde originally being the divine personification of Wotan's

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The three San Francisco Opera Ring Siegfrieds: (left) Lauritz Melchior, 1935; (center) Jess Thomas, (1972); and René Kollo, (1985).


wishes).

Their long scene of duologue is one of mutual introduction and then, as I indicated earlier, about Siegfried learning how to woo a woman, and Brünnhilde discovering how, no longer being a divine being, she may respond like a woman to the pleasure of being wooed. At first, mastered by an unknown and all-compelling emotion, he tries to rape her, but is sensitive enough to desist while she explains what is wrong with his behavior in the glorious solo "Ewig war ich," which will be familiar to many from Wagner's "Siegfried Idyll" (the latter was composed as a birthday present to his wife, Cosima,

after the birth of their son, whom they named Siegfried). This, and two other themes used subsequently in this scene, also occurring in "Siegfried Idyll," are thought to originate in a string quartet which Wagner sketched by Lake Starnberg when he and Cosima, then Mrs. von Bülow but subsequently his second wife, first declared their love for each other in 1864. This duet scene in *Siegfried* is related intimately to Wagner's life, more obviously so than in most great music, though there are precedents, in *Die Walküre* and *Tristan und Isolde*, for such erotic autobiography in Wagner's music. The love of Brünnhilde and Siegfried will have

a tragic, cataclysmic outcome in *Götterdämmerung*: it will happen because Siegfried's education in enlightenment did not extend to recognizing a bunch of crooks when he met them. For the moment, the enlightenment appears to be complete, under these radiant blue skies, and for the first time in *The Ring*, a simultaneous vocal duet sounds not only appropriate, but completely inevitable, as if this were the first union of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Nature and Innocence are heroically united in blameless C major, the first moment of real optimism that *The Ring* has been able to express. ■

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# Götterdämmerung

(in German)

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*Lighting Designer and  
Special Effects*  
Thomas J. Munn  
*Projections*  
Ron Scherl  
*Sound Designer*  
Roger Gans  
*Chorus Director*  
Richard Bradshaw  
*Musical Preparation*  
Kathryn Cathcart  
Philip Eisenberg  
John Fiore  
Jeffrey Goldberg  
James Johnson  
Jonathan Khuner  
Ernest Knell  
*Prompter*  
Philip Eisenberg  
*Assistant to Edo de Waart*  
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### CAST

(in order of appearance)

<i>First Norn</i>	Mariana Paunova
<i>Second Norn</i>	Helga Dernesch
<i>Third Norn</i>	Kathryn Bouleyn*
<i>Brünnhilde</i>	Eva Marton
<i>Siegfried</i>	René Kollo
<i>Gunther</i>	Michael Devlin
<i>Hagen</i>	John Tomlinson
<i>Gutrune</i>	Kathryn Bouleyn
<i>Waltraute</i>	Helga Dernesch
<i>Alberich</i>	Walter Berry
<i>Woglinde</i>	Deborah Sasson
<i>Wellgunde</i>	Jean Herzberg
<i>Flosshilde</i>	Alexandra Hughes

*Vassals, workers, officers, courtiers,  
guards, huntsmen, servants*

\*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME: Late Civilization

<i>PROLOGUE</i>	Terrace of the gods Valkyrie island
<i>Act I Scene 1</i>	The hall of the Gibichungs
<i>Scene 2</i>	Valkyrie island

INTERMISSION

<i>ACT II</i>	Outside the hall of the Gibichungs
---------------	---------------------------------------

INTERMISSION

<i>ACT III Scene 1</i>	A rocky slope on the banks of the Rhine
<i>Scene 2</i>	Outside the hall of the Gibichungs

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## Götterdämmerung/Synopsis

**PROLOGUE:** The terrace of the gods is now occupied by the three Norns, daughters of the earth goddess Erda, who are busy spinning the rope of fate. Begotten before the earth was created, they recall Wotan's days of power and predict Valhalla's imminent fall. The second Norn then notices that the rope of destiny is starting to fray and beginning to unravel. As the sisters try to make it taut, it snaps. Crying that eternal wisdom is ending and that they can speak to the world no more, their power of prophesy at an end, they descend in terror to Erda and vanish.

At dawn, Siegfried and Brünnhilde awaken after their bridal night. Though fearful that she may lose him, Brünnhilde encourages Siegfried to travel in search of heroic deeds. To remind her of his love, he gives her the Ring and, taking her horse Grane in exchange, joins her in a joyous farewell.

**ACT I** — In their castle on the Rhine, Gunther, king of the Gibichungs, and his sister Gutrune, both unwed, ask counsel from their half-brother Hagen. Plotting to secure the Ring, Hagen advises Gunther to consolidate his power by marrying Brünnhilde. By means of a magic potion, Siegfried could be induced to forget his bride and win her for Gunther in return for Gutrune's hand. At that moment, Siegfried's horn call announces his approach. Gunther welcomes him, and Gutrune seals his fate by offering him the potion. Hailing Brünnhilde, he drinks and instantly forgets all about her. Quickly succumbing to Gutrune's beauty, Siegfried agrees to bring Brünnhilde to Gunther. After firming their agreement

with an oath to blood-brotherhood, the two men depart. Hagen, keeping watch for their return, gloats over the success of his scheme.

On Valkyrie island, Waltraute pays a surprise visit to her sister Brünnhilde, telling her that Wotan has warned the gods that their doom is sealed unless Brünnhilde yields the Ring to the Rhinemaidens. When she refuses, Waltraute departs in despair. Dusk falls as Siegfried appears, disguised as Gunther by means of the magic Tarnhelm. He wrests the Ring from the terrified Brünnhilde and claims her as Gunther's bride.

**ACT II** — At night, outside the Gibichung hall, Alberich forces his sleeping son Hagen to swear that he will regain the Ring. As dawn breaks, Siegfried returns with cheerful news for Hagen and Gutrune: he has won Brünnhilde for Gunther, who follows shortly. Hagen summons the vassals to welcome the returning king and his bride. When Gunther leads in Brünnhilde, she sees Siegfried and recoils. Noticing her Ring on his finger, she deplores the trickery through which she was won, proclaiming Siegfried to be her true husband. The hero, still under the potion's spell, vows upon Hagen's spear that he has never wronged the woman. Taking the spear point from him, Brünnhilde angrily swears that he is lying. Siegfried dismisses her charge and then leaves with Gutrune to prepare for their marriage. The dazed Brünnhilde, bent on revenge, reveals to Hagen the hero's one vulnerable spot: a blade in his back will kill him. Taunted by Brünnhilde and lured by Hagen's descrip-

tion of the Ring's power, Gunther joins in the murder plot.

**ACT III** — Near a rocky slope on the banks of the Rhine, the three Rhinemaidens bewail their lost treasure. Soon Siegfried approaches, having wandered away from his hunting party. The maidens plead for the Ring, but he ignores their entreaties and warnings. When the hunting party arrives, Siegfried, at Hagen's urging, describes his boyhood with Mime, the killing of Fafner and finally—after Hagen gives him a potion to restore his memory—his wooing of Brünnhilde. Pretending indignation, Hagen plunges a spear into Siegfried's back and stalks off. Hailing Brünnhilde with his last breath, the hero dies. The vassals bear him away.

At the Gibichung hall, Gutrune nervously awaits her bridegroom's return. Hagen, the first to arrive, tells her that Siegfried has been slain by a wild boar. When his body is carried in, however, the woman accuses Gunther of murder. Hagen admits the crime. Quarreling over possession of the Ring, Gunther is killed by Hagen, who falls back in fear from the prize when the dead hero raises his hand. Brünnhilde appears and orders a funeral pyre built for Siegfried. Musing on the gods' responsibility for his death, she takes the Ring and promises it to the Rhinemaidens. Placing it on her own finger, she throws a torch onto the pyre and, greeting her horse Grane, walks into the flames. As the river Rhine overflows its banks and the hall is consumed, the Rhinemaidens, dragging Hagen to a watery grave, regain their treasure. The flames that engulf Valhalla free the Ring of its curse.

# Götterdämmerung

Photos taken in rehearsal by Marty Sohl

*Eva Marlon*







(above) Eva Marton



(above) John Tomlinson, members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus

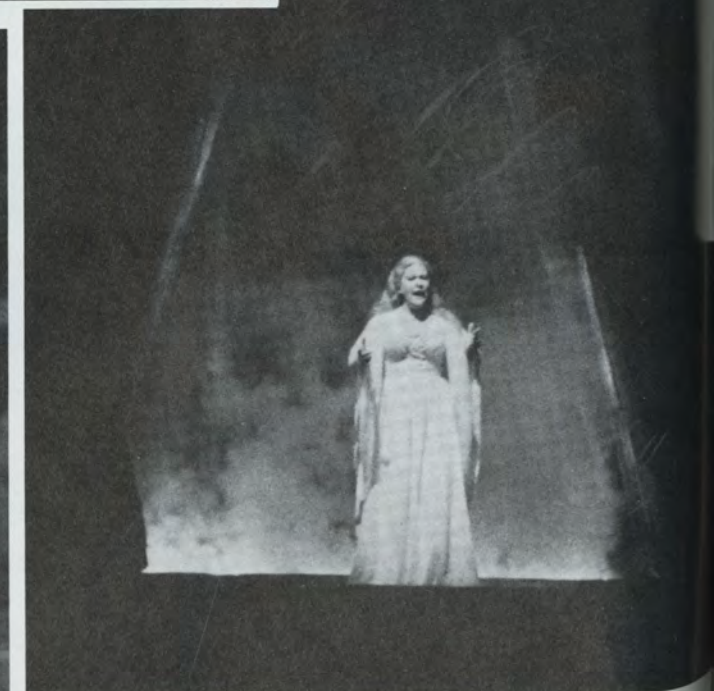


(left) Kathryn Bouleyn, Mariana Paunova, Helga Dernesch



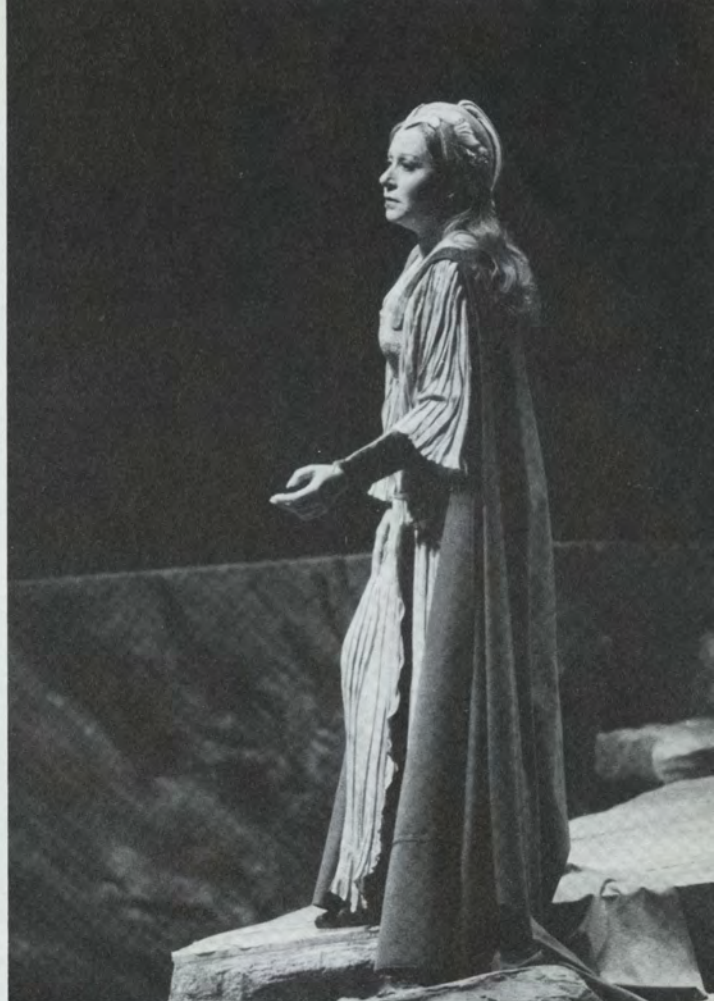
(below) John Tomlinson, René Kollo

(below) Eva Marton





*Eva Marton, John Tomlinson*



*Helga Dernesch*



*Kathryn Bouleyn, John Tomlinson*

*(below) René Kollo*



*Kathryn Bouleyn, René Kollo*

*(below) Deborah Sasson, Jean Herzberg, Alexandra Hughes*





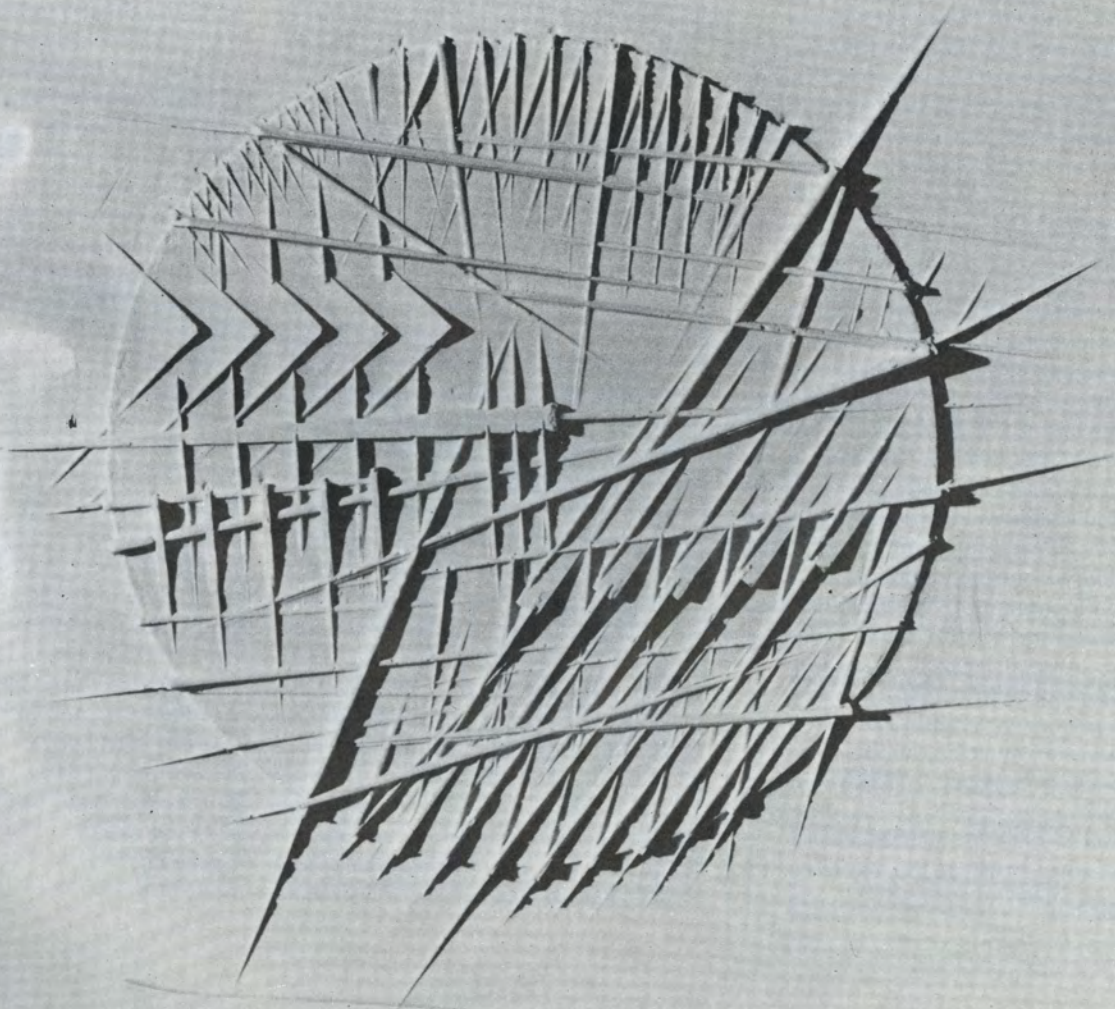
*(above) Chorus Scene, Act 2*

*(below) Alexandra Hughes, Deborah Sasson, Jean Herzberg, René Kollo*



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# MODESTO LANZONE'S





EVA MARTON

During the 1985 *Ring* cycles, **Eva Marton** sings the first Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung* of her career. She also recreates the role of Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* which she sang for the first time anywhere during the 1984 San Francisco Opera Summer Season. The world-acclaimed soprano considers her 1977 San Francisco Opera debut as *Aida* as a turning point in her career. She returned to sing *Tosca* on the Company's 1979 tour to the Philippines and in the 1980 Fall Season appeared as the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Born in Hungary, Eva Marton studied at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest and was engaged by the Hungarian State Opera. Her debut at the Frankfurt Opera as the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* soon followed and she was a member of the Frankfurt company from 1972 to 1977. Since that time she has lived in Hamburg where she has sung the title roles in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Tosca* and *Turandot*, among others, with the Hamburg Opera. In recent years she has won high acclaim in those roles and others such as Leonora in *Il Trovatore*, *Aida*, and Elsa in *Lohengrin* in the opera houses of Buenos Aires, Chicago, Milan, Munich, New York and Vienna. At the Metropolitan Opera, Eva Marton has also won enthusiastic plaudits in the title role of *La Gioconda*, as Leonore in *Fidelio*, and as Ortrud in *Lohengrin* with which she opened the 1984-85 season. She has been an esteemed artist at the world's great festivals, including Bayreuth (*Venus* and



KATHRYN BOULEYN

Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*), Munich (the title role in Strauss' *Die Aegyptische Helena*), and Salzburg (*Fidelio*). She has won exceptional praise for her interpretation of *Turandot*, which she has recorded for CBS Records. San Francisco audiences will have their first opportunity to see her in that role during the 1985 Fall Season.

Soprano **Kathryn Bouleyn** makes her San Francisco Opera debut in *Götterdämmerung* this summer as Guttrune and the Third Norn. These are her first Wagnerian roles though she is not a newcomer to Bay Area audiences, having performed with Spring Opera Theater in the American premiere of *The Emperor of Atlantis*; with Edo de Waart and the San Francisco Symphony in Mahler's Second Symphony; and with the San Jose Opera as Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* in 1984. In recent seasons Miss Bouleyn has appeared with New York City Opera as the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, in the title role of *Manon Lescaut* with the Boston Concert Opera, as Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin* at the National Arts Centre, Ottawa, and in the title role of Dvořák's *Rusalka* at the San Diego Opera. With the Opera Theatre of St. Louis she portrayed Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* and sang the role of Fenimore in the American premiere of Delius's *Fenimore and Gerda*, as well as in the company's Edinburgh Festival performances of the work. Highlights of her recent concert appearances have been Debussy's



HELGA DERNESCH

*L'Enfant Prodigue* and Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* with the Cleveland Orchestra, Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* with the Toronto Symphony, and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos and the National Symphony. A regular guest at major summer festivals, she has been heard in *La Clemenza di Tito* at the New York Mostly Mozart Festival, in *The Rape of Lucretia* at the Spoleto Festival in Italy, and in the American premiere of Haydn's *La Vera Costanza* at Caramoor in New York. She made her Canadian Opera Company debut in 1984 as Mimì in *La Bohème*. Future engagements include appearances as Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin* with the San Diego Opera, Nedda in *I Pagliacci* with the Fort Worth Opera, the Countess in *Capriccio* at Carnegie Hall and Elisabetta in *Don Carlo* with Long Beach Opera.

The renowned Vienna-born mezzo-soprano **Helga Dernesch** sings three roles in the 1985 *Ring* cycles: Fricka in *Die Walküre*, and the Second Norn and Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung*. The latter is her first Waltraute and fifteenth *Ring* role. She appeared here last fall as Marfa in *Khovanshchina* and in the 1984 Summer Season added two new roles to her repertoire: Erda in *Siegfried* and Prince Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*. In the fall of 1982 she sang the role of Herodias in *Salome*. Miss Dernesch made her debut at the Bayreuth Festival in 1965 as a soprano, singing such



MARIANA PAUNOVA

roles as Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Freia in *Das Rheingold*, and Gutrune in *Götterdämmerung* for five seasons. Turning to the heavier dramatic Wagner roles, in 1969 she first sang at the Salzburg Easter Festival as Brünnhilde in *Siegfried*, conducted by Herbert von Karajan with whom she subsequently performed and recorded the *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhildes, Leonore in *Fidelio*, and Isolde. Under the baton of Sir Georg Solti she appeared at Covent Garden as Chrysothemis in *Elektra* and the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and recorded Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*. Since 1979 Miss Dernesch has been singing mezzo-soprano roles with great success, beginning with the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, which she has performed in Vienna, Hamburg, Munich, Cologne, Düsseldorf, Tokyo and the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow. She has also been heard as Klytemnestra in *Elektra* in Vienna, Hamburg, Berlin, Cologne, Munich and Zurich; Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* in Trieste and Frankfurt; and Herodias in Hamburg, Bonn and Rio de Janeiro. At the 1982 Salzburg Festival she performed and later recorded Othmar Schoeck's *Penthesilea*; also Aribert Reimann's new Requiem. This season in Cologne she portrayed Kabanikha in a new production of *Katya Kabanova*. In Vienna, she has just appeared as the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and will sing Prince Orlofsky and Herodias in 1986/87 at the State Opera there. Her

next debut will be as Hecuba in Reimann's *The Trojan Women*, a new opera composed for the opening of the Munich Opera Festival in 1986, with Jean-Pierre Ponnelle directing and Gerd Albrecht conducting. In the 1981 American premiere of Reimann's *Lear*, Miss Dernesch made her San Francisco Opera debut as Goneril, and will re-enact the same role here this fall.

Bulgarian contralto **Mariana Paunova** made her San Francisco Opera debut as Laura in *La Gioconda* in the fall of 1983. This summer's *Ring* will mark her initial appearance in the Wagnerian repertoire when she portrays Erda in *Das Rheingold* and the First Norn in *Götterdämmerung*. During the 1983/84 season she made her Vienna State Opera debut as Azucena in *Il Trovatore* and Marina in *Boris Godunov*. After making her Metropolitan Opera debut in *Eugene Onegin* and her Carnegie Hall debut in Rossini's *Tancredi*, she was invited to the Rome Opera for Amneris in *Aida*, Dalila in *Samson et Dalila* in Lisbon, Amneris and Azucena in Frankfurt, as well as the Principessa in *Adriana Lecouvreur* with the Houston Grand Opera. She then appeared as Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Washington, Azucena in Philadelphia, Adalgisa in *Norma* in South Africa, *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Sofia, Bulgaria, and also in Mexico and South America. She recently toured Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the title role of *Carmen*, as Dalila, and as Orfeo in Gluck's

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DEBORAH SASSON

*Orfeo ed Euridice*. Miss Paunova is also a concert soloist and has performed with the orchestras of Cleveland, Dallas, Cincinnati, Montreal, the National Symphony of Washington, D.C. and L'Orchestre National de Radio France in Paris. She has recorded the role of Ariadne in the world premiere pressing of *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* by Paul Dukas, and will record Prokofiev's *War and Peace*, both on the Erato label.

Soprano **Deborah Sasson** returns to San Francisco Opera as Woglinde in both *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*. She first appeared with the Company last summer as Adele in *Die Fledermaus*. A Metropolitan Opera Auditions finalist, Miss Sasson made her European debut in the 1979 Hamburg Staatsoper production of *West Side Story*. She then undertook a two-year engagement at the Aachen Opera House and since 1981 has appeared at the Bayreuth Festival and with the opera companies of Hamburg, Berlin and Venice. Her repertoire includes such roles as Musetta and Mimì in *La Bohème*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. Miss Sasson has appeared as soloist with a number of major American orchestras including the Boston Symphony with whom she recorded Mahler's Eighth Symphony under Seiji Ozawa. For CBS she has also recorded a recital of Italian arias and the recently released Bernstein on



JEAN HERZBERG

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Soprano **Jean Herzberg**, featured in three roles of the *Ring* cycle, adds the role of Wellgunde in *Götterdämmerung* to those of Ortlinde in *Die Walküre* and Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold*, parts she also sang at her debut with the Company in the summer of 1983. She has performed extensively on the concert stage, making her Kennedy Center debut in 1983 in Beethoven's Ninth with the National Symphony under Robert Shaw, who also conducted the Atlanta, Knoxville and Pittsburgh Symphonies for her solo appearances with them. Miss Herzberg was recently soprano soloist in Verdi's Requiem during the San Francisco Festival of Masses, also conducted by Robert Shaw. She participated in the 1982 Merola Opera Program, appearing as Pamina in *The Magic Flute* and winning the Leonardo da Vinci Award at the Grand Finals, and again in 1983, receiving the Cenacolo Award and touring with Western Opera Theater in the title role of *Madame Butterfly*. Last November she was a winner of the Great Lakes District Metropolitan Opera Auditions. Miss Herzberg's repertoire includes Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Musetta and Mimì in *La Bohème*, Alice Ford in *Falstaff* and Nedda in *I Pagliacci*. She appeared on PBS in the title role of Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* and as soprano soloist in Britten's *War Requiem*.



ALEXANDRA HUGHES

Mezzo-soprano **Alexandra Hughes** makes her San Francisco Opera debut in the *Ring* cycles as Flosshilde in both *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*. She performed both roles, as well as that of Grimgerde in *Die Walküre*, in her first appearances with Seattle Opera in the Pacific Northwest Wagner Festival last summer and will return there to re-enact them later this year. She returns to Seattle in 1986 as Olga in *Eugene Onegin*. Miss Hughes is a native New Yorker and holds a master's degree from the Juilliard School. In addition to being an apprentice artist with the Santa Fe Opera for two seasons, she was recently artist-in-residence with Opera/Omaha where she portrayed Nicklausse in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel*. With Michigan Opera Theatre she has sung the role of Maddalena in *Rigoletto*, with the Opera Ensemble of New York, the Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, and with the Pennsylvania Opera Festival the role of Erika in *Vanessa*. She also portrayed Berthe in the recent New York premiere of Robert Ward's *Abelard and Heloise*.



RENÉ KOLLO

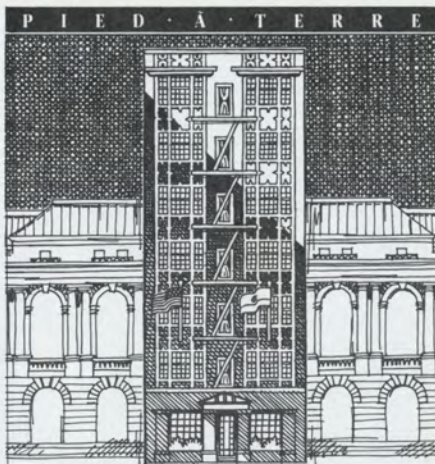
Tenor **René Kollo** sings the title role of *Siegfried* in which he made his San Francisco Opera debut last summer. In the current *Ring* cycles Kollo also sings Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung*, a role he has recorded but never before performed onstage. He is considered one of the leading Wagnerian tenors of today. Kollo made his Bayreuth debut in 1969 as the Steersman in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and in 1970 sang the role of Erik. He first performed the title role in *Lohengrin* at Bayreuth in 1971 and 1972, and in the following years appeared there as Walther in *Die Meistersinger* and also sang his first Parsifal. He repeated Parsifal and sang Siegfried in 1976, becoming the youngest singer in the Bayreuth Festival's history to undertake those roles. Kollo's repertoire embraces many styles and composers. Born in Berlin, he is an award-winning interpreter of German folk songs who financed his early music studies with his earnings as a pop singer. His first opera engagement was at the Braunschweiger Staatstheater in a Stravinsky triple bill of *Mavra*, *Renard* and *Oedipus Rex* and he became a regular member of that company. For six years, starting in 1967, he was a member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, singing a variety of roles including Laca in *Jenůfa* and making many guest appearances in Munich, Frankfurt, Milan and Lisbon. His recordings include operetta as well as such works as *Parsifal* and *Tannhäuser* under Solti, and *Missa Solemnis* and *Fidelio* under Bernstein



MICHAEL DEVLIN

with whom he also performed Florestan in a 1978 Vienna State Opera production of *Fidelio* that was televised worldwide. Among Kollo's major successes in recent years have been the opening of the 1981 Bayreuth Festival as Tristan; the opening of La Scala's 1981-82 season as Lohengrin, and a 1982 concert tour of 25 cities. In 1984 he appeared with the San Francisco Symphony as Parsifal in a concert performance of the opera's Third Act, and last April he made his American recital debut in San Francisco at the Herbst Theatre. Kollo will undertake his first directing assignment with *Parsifal* at Darmstadt in the spring of 1986.

Bass-baritone **Michael Devlin**, who portrays Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*, sang the first Wotan of his career with San Francisco Opera in the 1983 *Das Rheingold*. Since his 1979 debut as Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, he has performed frequently with the Company: that same season in the title role of Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*, as Jokanaan in *Salome*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, and last summer as Falke in *Die Fledermaus*. Born in Chicago and raised in New Orleans, Devlin made his professional debut with New Orleans Opera while still a voice student. Following his 1966 New York City Opera debut in Ginastera's *Don Rodrigo*, he sang there for thirteen seasons in a variety of leading roles, among them Escamillo in which he made his Metropolitan Opera debut in



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JOHN TOMLINSON

1978. He returned to the Met to sing the title role in *Eugene Onegin*, the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, and as Peter in *Hansel and Gretel*. Devlin has appeared with nearly all of America's major opera companies and orchestras. His portrayal of Don Giovanni earned him great praise in Houston, San Diego, Santa Fe and Toronto, as well as in Hamburg, Prague, Mannheim, Munich, Aix-en-Provence, at Covent Garden and in Frankfurt where he also appeared as Amonasro in *Aida*, Orest in *Elektra* and Siegfried in Schumann's *Genoveva*. His Glyndebourne debut was as Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* in 1977 and his Paris Opera debut in 1980 as King Antenor in Rameau's *Dardanus*. This season Devlin has sung with Chicago Lyric Opera in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and as Escamillo, with Seattle Opera as Horace Tabor in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, and with the opera companies of Edmonton and Winnipeg as Méphistophélès in Gounod's *Faust*. His recent concert appearances have included the Mahler Eighth with both Levine and Solti.

English bass **John Tomlinson** returns to San Francisco Opera this summer as Hunding in *Die Walküre* and Hagen in *Götterdämmerung*. His debut here was in the 1983 Fall Season as Pimen in *Boris Godunov*, and in the summer of 1984 he sang the role of Ramfis in *Aida*. One of the most highly praised basses in Europe today, Tomlinson has been singing with

the English National Opera since 1974 in a wide variety of roles including Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Ramfis, Figaro, Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino*, *Boris Godunov*, Hunding, Hagen, and most recently King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde*. Next season he adds Méphistophélès in Gounod's *Faust* and Moses in Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto* to his ENO repertoire. Tomlinson made his Covent Garden debut in 1978 and has sung there with the Royal Opera in such roles as Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Colline in *La Bohème*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, and Figaro in *The Marriage of Figaro*. This year he appears at Covent Garden as Harapha in a new production of Handel's *Samson* and as Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*. His American opera debut was in San Diego in 1983 as King Henry in *Lohengrin*. Last year he made his Paris Opera debut as Banquo in *Macbeth*. Tomlinson also appears frequently in concert and has recently sung the *St. Matthew Passion* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and *L'Enfance du Christ* with the San Diego Symphony. His recordings include *La Sonnambula*, *Guglielmo Tell*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Rigoletto* and the title role in Handel's *Hercules*.

Versatile Viennese bass-baritone **Walter Berry** portrayed Alberich in *Das Rheingold* for the first time in his distinguished career during the 1983 San Francisco Opera Summer Festival. In the 1985 *Ring* cycles he returns for that role and also to



WALTER BERRY

portray Alberich in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. In the fall of 1983 Berry appeared as the Music Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos*. San Francisco audiences were treated to two of his renowned comic roles in 1978: Leporello in *Don Giovanni* and Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*. His 1976 Company debut was as Barak in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, a role he interpreted at the opera's Metropolitan premiere in 1967 and re-enacted at the Met in 1971 and 1978. It was his debut role at Covent Garden in the 1975-76 season, and he has also sung it at the Salzburg Festival where he made his debut in 1952 under Wilhelm Furtwängler, and at the Hamburg, Paris and Vienna Operas. Under his mentor, Karl Böhm, Berry sang the title role in *Wozzeck* at the reopening of the Vienna Staatsoper in 1955 and has performed there regularly ever since. Renowned as a Mozart interpreter, he has frequently sung the roles of Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Figaro, and both Guglielmo and Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*. In addition to appearing in leading roles in all of the world's great opera houses, he is an illustrious lieder and oratorio singer. His film credits include *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte* and *Tosca*. His extensive discography includes three versions of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and of *Die Zauberflöte*, two each of *Don Giovanni* and *Die Fledermaus*, and many other works ranging from Haydn's *The Seasons* to Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*.



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# Götterdämmerung: Brünnhilde to the Rescue

By WILLIAM MANN

The previous opera, *Siegfried*, ended with shouts of ecstasy in cloudless C major, as the hero and heroine faced a brilliant future together. That was not the end of the story. *The Ring* will end in solemn, heroic D flat major, the key of the gods' fortress-home, Valhalla. But before that, the hero and heroine, together with everybody on earth, and even the gods in Valhalla, will have been destroyed by fire ignited to purify the world from evil. *Götterdämmerung* shows how that came to pass through the understanding and selfless bravery of that same heroine, Brünnhilde, whom we last saw accepting human love as the highest of life's achievements. The love of Brünnhilde and Siegfried, at that moment, was entirely personal, cut off from the rest of the world. She, formerly a demi-goddess, had spared a thought, it is true, for her father, Wotan, who cast her out from Valhalla, but only to consign the gods to their doom, caring nothing for them or anybody else, for as long as she had Siegfried's love.

Yet she is the daughter of Wotan, ruler of the gods, and she is the incarnation of his will for the world, even though he disowned her. Since the curtain fell on *Siegfried*, Brünnhilde and he have consummated their union in a cave on the top of that mountain, and they have talked as well. She has passed on to him some of her wisdom, and anointed him with magic against harm in battle. He has told her about the Ring on his finger, which he won in combat with the dragon Fafner (Wotan spoke of the Ring to her as well). She knows its magic power, and how everybody has coveted its ownership. Siegfried was told by the Forest Bird that the Ring would give him mastery of the world. He was not interested, and thought no more of what its possession meant to others. He was happy to give it to Brünnhilde as a pledge of love, and she received it as such: she perhaps remembered that the Ring only conveys world power on those who forswear love, an emotion incompatible with the desire for power, and an emotion which now governs her existence. So long as she holds on to her love pledge, the Ring will be harmless; but it remains covetable for others.

With their union, and the Ring retrieved, control of the world has finally passed from the hands of the gods: "The old order changeth." The first task of *Götterdämmerung* is to show this dramatic moment. "Only connect," E.M. Forster adjured us all, reflecting Wagner's dictum, "Composition is the art of transition." So *Götterdämmerung* begins by recalling the momentous woodwind chords to which Brünnhilde awoke on the rock, in the last scene of *Siegfried*. There they were, followed by harps and strings, evoking clear air and brilliant sunlight with C major broken diatonic chords and scales. Now, however, it is gloomy night, shortly before dawn. On the mountaintop, three shadowy figures, the Norns (Erda's other daughters), are threading the rope of world history through their fingers, recounting past and present to one another as they feel it in the rope. The "Awakening" chords are set half a tone down, and they seem to sound more mysterious, not the least because their follow-up is the shadowy plangent motif of the Norns' mother, the Earth goddess, whose dreams are recorded in the texture of the rope. It becomes a new theme for

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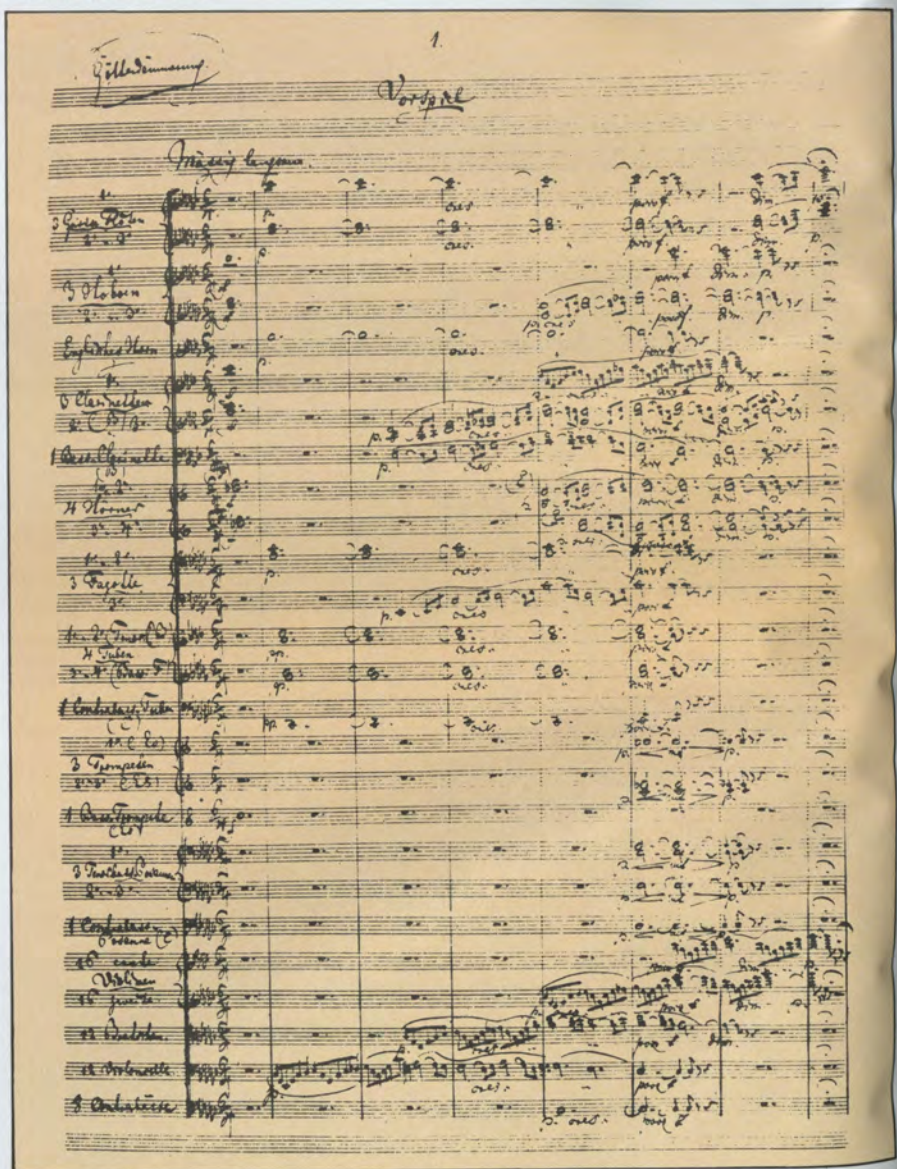
*The paintings of Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840) provided a major visual inspiration for several scenes and moods of the new production of San Francisco Opera's Ring of the Nibelung. The Arctic Shipwreck, painted c. 1823-24, will be readily recognized in Act III of Götterdämmerung. (Oil on canvas; 96.7 x 126.9 cm; Hamburg Kunsthalle)*

the rope itself, and the Norns' unraveling, in combination with a version of the Ring theme: the Second Norn will tell us that Alberich's curse on the Ring is gnawing through the rope, and at the end of this opening scene the rope splits under tension. The Norns' wisdom, as well as Erda's domination, is over. Their vocal trio, still one voice at a time so that the words are audible, recalls earlier events: the destruction of the World ash tree, its logs now piled by Wotan's order outside Valhalla, the splitting of Wotan's authoritative spear by Siegfried's sword, memories of Loge as spirit of all-consuming Fire, with which Wotan will one day demolish Valhalla, and then Alberich's curse, as above. Some of this scene is in symphonic reprise, but a lot of it is new, if not thematically innovative. Wagnerites are agreed that the scene is a great sing for three fine singers able to sound as commanding as Brünnhilde, Fricka and Erda, say. Wagner, I believe, had the Three Ladies of Mozart's *Zauberflöte* in his mind as models, just as the three Rhinemaidens, who return in Act 3 of *Götterdämmerung*, suggest the Three Boys in that Mozart opera.

The Norns, suddenly deprived of their news agency, disappear into surrounding mists and return to their similarly forlorn mother. Day dawns on the rock, in a famous orchestral excerpt; the sun rises, and here is a new, spacious theme for grown-up, fulfilled Siegfried, a dignified treatment of his once speedy horn tune. Here, too, is a brand new theme of Brünnhilde, first heard on clarinet: music for a grand heroine not quite melted by her love, and aware that her role is more passive than before. She will grant that a hero has to follow a quest, and is willing to release him, and give him her horse, Grane (alas, no longer airborne) as mount, while he gives her the Ring: this way both will be together in spirit, whether in the cave or adventuring. Now Grane (the Valkyrie's ride theme) and Siegfried descend the mountain to begin the quest for adventure, while Brünnhilde waves them farewell; she has the magic circle of fire to protect her, also the Ring (in lieu of Siegfried) to keep her company. From the valley below, she hears Siegfried greet her with his cheery horn call, the quicker version. The curtain hides her from our sight as the orchestra continues his adventures in the Interlude called "Siegfried's Rhine Journey." Evidently, he reaches the banks of the Rhine,



Part of the *Götterdämmerung* set grows in the San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios. The photo was taken in March of 1985.



First page of the *Götterdämmerung* score in Wagner's handwriting. The original is in the Haus Wahnfried, Bayreuth.



Group of Götterdämmerung men at Bayreuth in 1876.

FRANKLIN & ROGNON



Group of Götterdämmerung men at the San Francisco Opera in 1935.

finds a boat there, and rows off upstream toward civilization, intending to declare his strength, blowing his horn as he goes. We hear the song of the Rhinemaidens, and of the gold which they once guarded beneath these waters, and the sorrow that followed the theft of that gold. Siegfried knows nothing of that sorrow. Wagner's music has moved away from him to make the transition to the next scene, one of sinister machinations, deeply associated with the Ring. So we pass through gloomy shadows, until the music stirs to pompous rhythmic life, fit for a stately procession, and we find the Gibichung royal family at home in their palace beside the Rhine: they are Gunther, the king, his sister Gutrune, and their half-brother Hagen. All their themes begin by dropping a fifth, Gunther's jovially, Gutrune's tenderly, Hagen's balefully and not quite right, for his dropping fifth is diminished, this because he is a bastard, begotten on Queen Grimhilde by Alberich—he had forsworn love to master the world, but he could still father a child by paying a woman to prostitute herself, and he persuaded Grimhilde to do so. Hagen is the black sheep of the family, what the Irish call a "quare fellow": he enjoys nothing and admits to being cold-blooded. He devotes his life to redeeming his father's Ring and, being loveless, plans to keep it to himself to wield as master of the world.

Gunther, ever uncertain of himself and his authority, asks about his standing among his subjects. Hagen comes straight

to the point: neither Gunther nor Gutrune has yet made a successful marriage, which is so important to public esteem. Ideal marriage partners, he assures them, would be Brünnhilde and Siegfried; their prestige is described, but not their plighted union; indeed, Hagen suggests that Siegfried should be persuaded to win Brünnhilde for Gunther, in exchange for Gutrune as his bride—this because Siegfried is an expert at walking

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Emanuel List as Hagen in San Francisco Opera's 1935 presentation of Götterdämmerung.

through magic fire, which would deter Gunther. A drugged drink, of which Hagen has the prescription, will cause Siegfried to forget every woman he ever met and fall instantly in love with Gutrune. This scene is almost a monologue for Hagen, with interpolated questions by the others, so the music newly draws together familiar thematic threads. The strategy for all this has not even been discussed when Siegfried's horn call is heard from mid-stream. Hagen hails him, and invites him to visit; Siegfried had been told to call on the Gibichungs (we are not told of the informant, but it might have been Alberich disguised as a peasant on the riverbank). As he steps ashore with Grane, Hagen welcomes him to the tune of the Curse on the Ring—a chilling moment, for Siegfried is the Ring's owner, and he must die. Hagen stables the horse; Gunther, courteously refusing the offer of a fight, promises his services to Siegfried—he is too cowardly to challenge the master of the Ring (Gunther's theme is heard here). As for the exchange, Siegfried admits he has no property to offer Gunther but himself and his sword. What about the treasure? asks Hagen. The hero shows no surprise at the mention of it, and admits that he left it where he found it: all but the Tarnhelm, whose effectiveness Hagen can explain, and the Ring, now in a woman's safekeeping. Gutrune enters, offering Siegfried the cup of hospitality, and we hear her own theme now. He raises the cup and, before draining it, toasts his unforgettable love, Brünn-

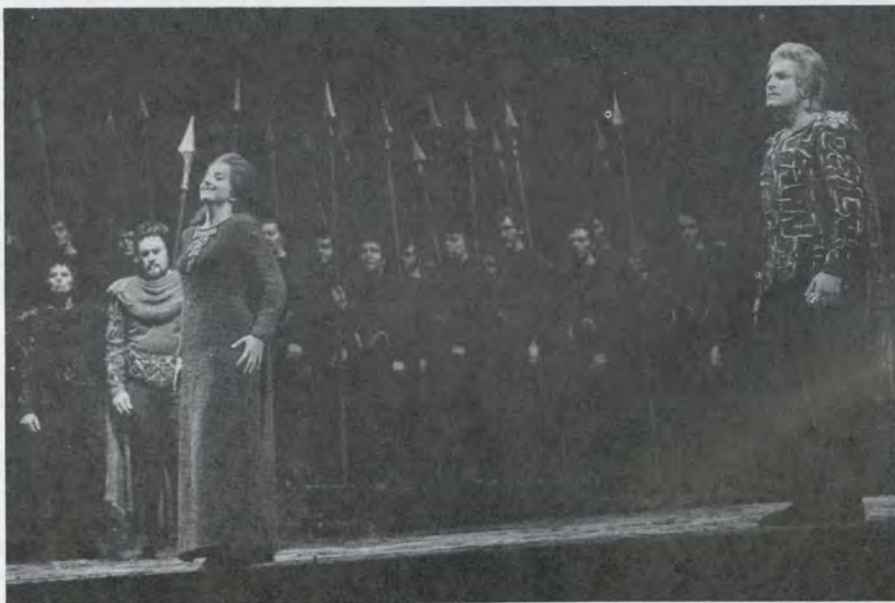


Hagen and the Gibichung Vassals as seen at the San Francisco Opera in 1972.

hilde. As he drinks, the violins are softly trilling on a semitone, over a sustained note that creates the crooked interval of Hagen's theme, as well as the open fifths of everybody else. The trill widens to a whole tone, and the change is as great as the effect of the drink, whose motive follows on four horns. It removes all memory of Brünnhilde from Siegfried's mind. When he returns the goblet to Gutrune, he is entirely possessed by her

beauty, and at once begins to woo her ardently, though she modestly retires from the room. Gunther tests the effect of the potion, telling Siegfried that his own love is for a woman unattainable, her home on a fire-girt rock (he repeats Hagen's description of a little while ago). Siegfried echoes the words, as if they sounded familiar, but the meaning has gone, even when he speaks the name of Brünnhilde. At once he offers to brave the

HOWARD



(L. to r.) Clifford Grant (Hagen), Thomas Stewart (Gunther), Berit Lindholm (Brünnhilde) and Jess Thomas (Siegfried) with members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus in the 1972 *Götterdämmerung*.

fire and bring the woman to Gunther in exchange for Gutrune's hand in marriage. For those readers who worry about magical incidents in a drama that we are expected to take seriously, I can only counter that in epic drama such devices are convenient time savers, since they drastically abbreviate the period required for a *volte-face* of personal attitude: out of sight is out of mind.

Siegfried's offer is accepted, and he and Gunther exchange vows of blood brotherhood to seal their pact, pricking their arms with their swords, and letting some drops of blood fall into a drinking-horn filled with wine from which each drinks a half. They call for hideous revenge on the brother who breaks the pact, and a new theme for this seems related to the Ring's own theme, because the pact will be broken through the agency of the Ring. This is a good example of Wagner's method in *The Ring*, using music to interpret a childish story as food for adult consideration.

Siegfried expected Hagen to take part in the pact: he excuses himself on account of his impure blood, which the music relates to Nibelungs and the oath to abjure love. Quickly, Siegfried and Gunther take to the hero's boat. While they are away, Hagen must guard the palace. The scene ends with his great monologue, called "Hagen's Watch," in three distinct verses, turned by the composer into a single musical paragraph of wondrous balefulness. The themes on which it is built are all familiar, the music quite new and fearfully cogent. After *The Ring* was completed, and musical analysts were dredging the score for thematic name tags, Wagner commented that they would do better to trace the evolution of the Rhine-maidens' cry, "Rhinegold," from the opening scene of the work to this solo of Hagen's Watch which it pervades in its wailing diminished version, poignantly harmonized. Hagen's melodic line is repeated, after the curtain falls, by solo trumpet in an orchestral interlude which masterfully links this scene with the utterly different next one: unadulterated love following unadulterated hatred. The transition is made with the themes of the Ring and the Amnesia Drink.

Brünnhilde is alone on the mountain-top, doting over her Ring, the symbol of world power, now a simple pledge of consummate love. Her reverie is disturbed by sounds of skyriding; her Valkyrie sister

Waltraute has braved Wotan's ban to bring Brünnhilde news of Valhalla, and to convey Wotan's whispered wish that she would return the Ring to the daughters of the Rhine. Waltraute's Narration is the next solo scene, a section of eventful thematic development, fine music for singing, including an eloquent reprise of one big tune from Wotan's Farewell in *Die Walküre*. Brünnhilde has no intention of giving up the Ring, since it means love to her (here Wagner recalls the melody of Alberich's rejection of love). Waltraute returns to Valhalla, weeping and empty-handed. Almost at once, because she acquired the Ring unauthentically, by its maker's standards, Brünnhilde becomes a victim of the Curse. The fire rises and falls to admit an apparent stranger, really Siegfried, disguised by the Tarnhelm to look like Gunther (and ideally to sound like him), who wrests the Ring from her finger (it does not protect her against Siegfried, the real owner), and declares that she is Gunther's bride, and must follow him, after a night together in her cave. Before joining her there, he draws his sword and affirms that Nothing shall lie between them as witness of Siegfried's pact with the real Gunther.

By the beginning of Act Two, affairs are moving strongly against Wotan and in favor of his opposite number, Alberich, who now reappears as a dream to his son Hagen, asleep on guard outside the palace by the river Rhine. This is, in effect, a grand scena for Alberich, though built around the refrain: "Schläfst du, Hagen mein Sohn?" (Are you asleep, Hagen my son?), a question requiring an answer, so that it seems like a duet. The dark, intricate texture of the music, with a particular atmosphere instantly evoked in the orchestral music before curtain-rise, uses relatively few themes, and only one new one, representing the plan to murder Siegfried, when Alberich announces: "You and I will inherit world power." Alberich disappears from Hagen's dream. Day dawns again on the Rhine, grandly, with eight horns in counterpoint. (In some operatic orchestras there is a tradition that any horn-player who blows a false note in this passage must buy a drink for the entire horn section. It keeps performing standards high in periods of monetary recession.) The end of this passage clings to the memory, and will return in the Vassals' Chorus: it derives from the magic potion theme, and thus from that of the

Tarnhelm, which Siegfried, running in, removes from his head, then blows his horn to waken sleepy Hagen and tell him the news of his exploit. Guttrune is eager to hear all, especially how her lover kept his hands off this desirable woman (neither she nor her brother knows that he has ever seen her before). Wagner described their concerted trio scene as operetta, perhaps meaning that it goes fast and sounds light-hearted. It includes the important theme of the forthcoming double wedding, closely derived from the themes of Gunther and Guttrune. The bridal pair on stage go to make preparations, and Hagen calls all the local peasantry, subjects of Gunther, to attend the wedding, assist with the catering, enjoy the result, and make sacrifices to the gods for a fruitful outcome. This is the first chorus we have heard in all four evenings: the Valkyries sang one to a part; the Nibelungs only screamed. Choral music was not required for them, but it is now, as a vestige of the chorus in classical Greek drama, whose techniques Wagner understood and used appropriately.

This scene brings the drama down to a fully human level, with animation, enthusiasm, and a sort of military precision that Wagner inherited from Spohr and Hummel, as well as from Beethoven and the Viennese Classics. The Gibichung



Lauritz Melchior in his Siegfried costume waits backstage during a performance of *Götterdämmerung* with San Francisco Opera's first Ring conductor, Artur Bodanzky (1935).

peasants have just such a theme, and it comes from Siegfried's forging scene, in the previous opera, perhaps indicative of devoted service. The off-stage cowhorns



San Francisco Opera's 1969 *Götterdämmerung* featured Franz Mazura as Gunther, Jess Thomas as Siegfried and Janis Martin as Guttrune.

PETERS



HOWARD



Margarita Lilova as Waltraute in San Francisco Opera's 1972 *Götterdämmerung*

lend special fizz to the music, as does the chorus itself, which culminates in the solemn procession-hymn that accompanies the entrance of Gunther, dragging the unwilling Brünnhilde behind him. The contrast should be pitiful, indeed. Brünnhilde remains quite apathetic until she hears the name of Siegfried, looks up, and sees him with quite another woman, who is said to be his bride. Brünnhilde explodes with rage, but does not yet understand the strataegem. Why does he not recognize her? Who took the Ring from her? She knows that something is wrong. This is perhaps Brünnhilde's greatest scene yet, her cry of anguish to the gods, then the solemn oath and counter-oath on the Spear, melding quickly into the Trio of Conspiracy to murder Siegfried, a scene of terrifying bale, in which Gunther is persuaded to forego his recent blood pact, and Brünnhilde to connive at her husband's death. When they are agreed, they invoke the gods on their unholy alliance: Brünnhilde calls on her father, Wotan, Hagen on his father, Alberich, rivals themselves: think of that, as you listen.

During the wedding ceremonies, the good cheer and the doom are expressed by the music, which gives a startling effect of insincerity and emptiness.

Continuing their murderous plot, Gunther and Hagen take Siegfried on a

hunting expedition. Act three begins with hunting calls, heard from a quiet spot on the banks of the Rhine, whose three daughters have come here to play, and to wait for Siegfried, on whose Ring they have particular claims. The music, gently lyrical and playful, brings welcome placidity after the heavy artillery of the second act, and the reprise of the soft multiple horn calls, which represented nature at rest in the introduction to *Das Rheingold*, serves as a symphonic milestone, the beginning of the epic's final unraveling. Siegfried has left the others, on the trail of an elusive bear; the water nymphs offer to find it for him if he will give them his Ring, but when he does offer it to them, they turn serious and warn him solemnly of the curse on it which will bring him death this very day unless he returns it to the river. The pastoral idyll is clouded over with a web of thematic cross-reference and development, like the darker trio section of a scherzo. Siegfried might have bartered the Ring for some love-play, but he will not be frightened into giving it up: he is the boy who never understood the meaning of fear. And so their playful music is resumed, and they leave him to his fate, confident that Brünnhilde will be more sensible. A soft trombone call reminds us of Alberich's curse, which will now descend upon Siegfried. For here, close at hand, are Gunther and Hagen and the rest of the Gibichung men. They sit down for a picnic, and Siegfried is easily persuaded to tell them about his earlier adventures, in a concise recapitulation of the preceding opera. He cannot proceed further than the death of Mime because of the potion he has drunk. Hagen gives him the antidote in another drink, and he continues with the discovery of Brünnhilde on the mountaintop. This comes as news to Gunther, who is deeply shocked. Again the curse theme thunders forth on the brass, mingling with Hagen's motif, as he stabs Siegfried in the back. A pounding theme shows the shock of the other huntsmen: Hagen justifies the deed as revenge for Siegfried's perjury, and strides into the dusk. Siegfried is not quite dead, though the music is full of destiny. He finishes his reprise of Brünnhilde's awakening, the opening chords of *Götterdämmerung* are heard once more, and his last solo is a paraphrase of hers in the final scene of *Siegfried*. Then he sinks back, and in his Funeral March, beginning with that pounding theme, his corpse is carried back

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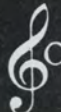
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to the palace while the orchestra reviews his ancestry, life and glorious deeds, the most thrilling stretch of music so far heard in *The Ring*.

Again Wagner moves away from the procession in order to set the next scene, Gunther's palace by night, and Guttrune's anxious loneliness (for Brünnhilde has walked down to the river to talk to the Rhinemaidens), another passage of dramatic contrast, preceding Hagen's arrival, just ahead of the funeral procession. At once Hagen and Gunther begin to fight over the Ring, and Gunther falls. Hagen turns to pull it from the hero's hand. But Wotan's purpose, represented by the Sword theme, is more powerful than death, and the corpse raises an arm to protect the Ring. As Hagen recoils, the solemn figure of Brünnhilde enters the hall. The Rhinemaidens have shown her what she must do to carry out Wotan's will for the world. The others move aside, recognizing that she is in control now. She begins her last and grandest solo, the final scene of the tetralogy, and the culmination of Wagner's monumental masterpiece. First a funeral pyre must be built: while her orders are being carried out, she sings her funeral oration to a lover and hero, whose betrayal she has understood, for now she understands everything that was, and is, and will be. She calls on Wotan and other gods to witness her deeds on their behalf, and prays for his repose. Authority returns to the music: Brünnhilde orders Siegfried's body to be laid on the pyre, after she has placed the Ring on her own hand. She seizes a torch and hurls it onto the pyre, which blazes high, then turns to greet Grane, who is led forward. As she sings of their last journey, the woodwinds introduce a noble, hovering melody, not heard in the music since Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* learned of the baby Siegfried in her womb. It represents the sacrifice that love makes to complete the pattern of life's achievement, and it dominates the music now, as Brünnhilde rides Grane into the blaze which mounts to Valhalla, destroying and purifying heaven as well as earth. The river bursts its banks to quench the flames on earth. The Rhinemaidens claim their Ring, drawing Hagen down to them in the waters. The hovering theme is left alone, symbol of a world made clean from evil by Brünnhilde's act of self-sacrifice. ■

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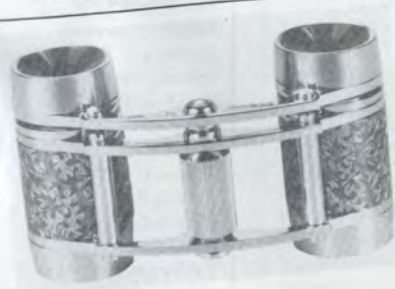
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**Bus Service** Many operagoers who live in the northern section of San Francisco are regular patrons of the Municipal Railway special "Opera Bus."

This bus is added to Muni's north-bound 47 line following all evening performances of the Opera, Symphony, Ballet and other major events. The service is also provided for all Saturday and Sunday matinees.

Look for this bus, marked "47 Special," after each performance in the bus zone at Van Ness Avenue and Grove Street—across Van Ness from the Opera House. Its route is: North on Van Ness to Chestnut, then left to Divisadero where it turns left to Union. It continues on Union over Russian Hill to Columbus, then left to Powell—then right to the end of the line at North Point.

**Food Service** The lower lounge in the Opera House is now open one and one-half hours prior to curtain time for hot buffet service. Patrons arriving before the front doors open will be admitted at the Carriage Entrance.

Refreshments are served in the box tier on the mezzanine floor, the grand tier and dress circle levels during all performances.

**Emergency Telephone** The telephone number 431-4370 may be used by patrons for emergencies only during performances. Before the performance, patrons anticipating possible emergencies should leave their seat number at the Nurse's station in the lower lounge, where the emergency telephone is located.

**Watch That Watch** Patrons are reminded to please check that their digital watch alarms are switched OFF before the performance begins.

**Ticket Information** San Francisco Opera Box Office, Lobby, War Memorial Opera House: Van Ness at Grove, (415) 864-3330. 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday through Saturday. 10 A.M. through first intermission on all performance days.

**Important Notice:** The box office in the outer lobby of the Opera House will remain open through the first intermission of every performance. Tickets for remaining performances in the season may be purchased at this time.

**Unused Tickets** Patrons who are unable to attend a performance may make a worthwhile contribution to the San Francisco Opera Association by returning their tickets to the Box Office or telephoning (415) 864-3330. Donors will receive a receipt for the full value, but the amount is not considered a contribution to the fund drive or fulfillment of a fund drive pledge.

Opera glasses are available for rent in the lobby. Please note that no cameras or tape recorders are permitted in the Opera House.

Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

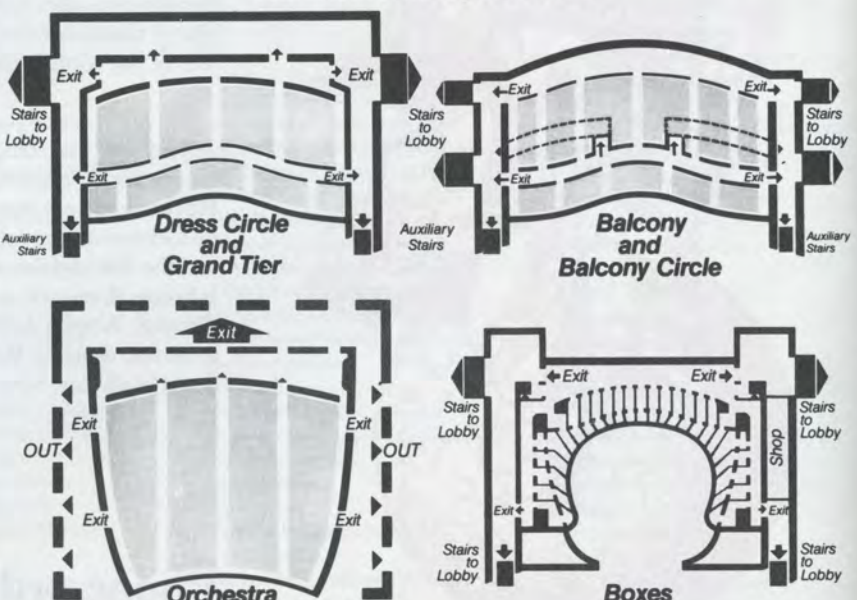
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**Taxi Service** Patrons needing a cab at the end of the performance should reserve one with the doorman at the Taxi Entrance before the end of the final intermission.

**Performing Arts Center Tours** Tours of the San Francisco Performing Arts Center, which include the War Memorial Opera House, the Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall and the Herbst Theatre take place as follows: Mondays, 10:00-2:30 on the hour and half hour. Davies Hall only Wednesday 1:30/2:30—Saturday 12:30/1:30. All tours leave from Davies Symphony Hall, Grove Street entrance. General \$3.00—Seniors/Students \$2.00. For further information, please call (415) 552-8338.

**San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center**  
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