



Furtwängler

Wagner Die Walküre



Furtwängler surpasses himself and almost everyone else in sheer incandescence. It is hard to find a weakness, even an Achilles' heel, in his reading. Everything, in small and large things, seems so inevitably accomplished ... The Furtwängler Rome performance on EMI, which [John] Ardoin prefers [*The Furtwängler Record*, Amadeus Press, 1994], is marginally better cast all-round, benefiting particularly from Neidlinger's *Alberich*, Suthaus's *Siegfried* and Patzak's *Mime*, and doesn't suffer from the two disfiguring cuts forced on Furtwängler at La Scala (in Wotan's narration and, more heinous, in the Wanderer/Siegfried scene - we need to have their relationship established). Frantz's *Wotan*, like Konetzni's *Sieglinde*, is better heard at La Scala. In the context of the theatre he is the more involved and involving artist. La Scala has the better orchestra, Rome the better recording. The deciding factor for me, between the two, is the thrill of hearing Furtwängler caught on the wing. Now, in tolerable sound, it is an experience no Wagnerian should deny him- or herself. This is, in historic terms, a version to set beside Krauss's of the same year at Bayreuth as a recommendation.

A.B., *Gramophone*, December 1996 *excerpt*

Now, this is a miracle. I never thought to live to hear this. Yes, I bought back in the day—and still have—the Murray Hill LPs of these performances from circa 1977, which, when played, sounded as if they were coming from a phone left off the hook in La Scala's lobby. I did recently invest in the Music & Arts Programs Of America CD set, and it was a big improvement over the LPs, but your *Rheingold* leaps way far ahead of it into a vivid realism that I'd never guessed was hiding in its former iterations. I'm counting the days until *Die Walküre* and beyond.

G.T., *e-mailed response to hearing Furtwängler's Das Rheingold on Pristine PACO089*

Transfer notes

My major tasks here have included digging out not just some credible bass, but a fullness and richness of tone that comes as close as possible to reality whilst battling high levels of hiss and rumble, and thousands of bumps and thumps that I can only assume emanated from feet on the stage. Meanwhile, and with Rossini's witticism "*Wagner has great moments but dull quarter hours*" in mind, I came to the conclusion that perceived excitement levels in this performance were in inverse proportion to audience coughs. I've done what I can to reduce their appearance in the slower, quieter sections that some in the Italian audience may have found less than gripping. However, attempting complete eradication of audience noise would cause major musical damage, so some unwanted noises must inevitably remain. Although in places evidence remains of tape disintegration, as in *Das Rheingold*, but overall I hope and believe we have another "miracle" of "vivid realism" here in *Die Walküre*. AR

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Furtwängler

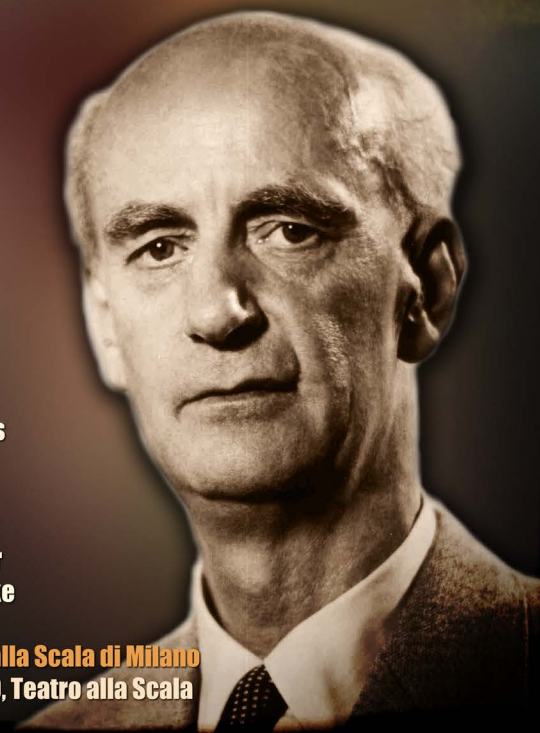


WAGNER

Die Walküre

Siegmond Günther Treptow
Sieglinde Hilde Konetzni
Wotan Ferdinand Frantz
Brünnhilde Kirsten Flagstad
Hunding Ludwig Weber
Fricka Elisabeth Höngen
Gerhilde Walburga Wegner
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Helmwige Ilona Steingruber
Siegfrune Margherita Kenney
Grimgerde Sieglinde Wagner
Roßweiße Margret Weth-Falke

Orchestra e Coro del Teatro alla Scala di Milano
Live recording, March 9, 1950, Teatro alla Scala



Wagner Die Walküre

DISC ONE

- 1 Act I: Prelude (3:10)
- 2 Scene 1: Wes Herd dies auch sei, hier muss ich rasten (3:30)
- 3 Kühnlede Labung Gab Mir Der Quell! (4:36)
- 4 Einen Unseligen labtest du (4:31)
- 5 Scene 2: Müd am Herd fand ich den Mann (5:20)
- 6 Friedman darf ich nicht heissen (5:31)
- 7 Die so leidig Los dir beschied (4:12)
- 8 Ich weiss ein wildes Geschlecht (6:19)
- 9 Scene 3: Ein Schwert verhies mir der Vater (5:05)
- 10 Schläfst du, Gast? (6:46)
- 11 Winterstürme wichen dem Wonnemond (2:43)
- 12 Du bist der Lenz, nach dem ich verlangte (2:02)
- 13 O süsseste Wonne! Seligstes Weib! (5:53)
- 14 Siegmund heiss ich und Siegmund bin ich! (3:53)

DISC TWO

- 1 Act II: Prelude - Nun zäume dein Ross, reisige Maid! (2:23)
- 2 Scene 1: Ho-jo-to-ho! Ho-jo-to-ho! (2:10)
- 3 Der alte Sturm, die alte Muh'! (3:30)
- 4 Heut hast du's erlebt (0:59)
- 5 So ist es denn aus mit den ewigen Göttern (3:01)
- 6 Nichts lerntest du (7:28)
- 7 Heiaha! Heiaha! Hojotoho! (2:57)
- 8 Scene 2: Schlimm, fürcht ich, schloss der Streit (5:44)
- 9 Als junger Liebe Lust mir verblich (4:24)
- 10 Ein andres ist's: achte es wohl (3:37)
- 11 So nimm meinen Segen, Niblungen-Sohn! (4:30)
- 12 So sah ich Siegvater nie (3:13)
- 13 Scene 3: Raste nun hier; gönne dir Ruh! (3:22)
- 14 Hinweg! Hinweg! Flieh die Entweihte! (7:11)
- 15 Scene 4: Siegmund! Sieh auf mich! (9:03)
- 16 Erdenluft muss sie noch atmen (3:40)
- 17 Weh! Weh! Süssestes Weib (4:00)
- 18 Zwei Leben lachen dir hier (2:10)

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO
PACO 091

XR remastering by
Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photo
of **Wilhelm Furtwängler**

Live recording, 9 March, 1950,
Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Italy

Total duration: **3hr 32:13**

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Wagner Die Walküre



After the Mannheim years, his most significant performances of the cycle were in Bayreuth in 1936 and 1937, Berlin in 1937, and London in 1937 and 1938. After the war, there were only three cycles at La Scala in 1950 and the concert *Ring* for RAI in Rome in 1953. The London cycles were recorded but remain in private hands; only extracts have surfaced from the *Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung* of 1937 and 1938 (including the complete third act of the 1937 *Walküre*). Fortunately, one of the cycles at La Scala was broadcast, and after a legal struggle of over a decade, EMI was able to clear the rights to the RAI *Ring* and issued it commercially in 1973. These Italian performances, along with a recording of *Walküre* taped for EMI in Vienna shortly before Furtwängler's death in 1954 (the first installment of a projected studio cycle), are the foundation of his *Ring* legacy.

In surveying this legacy, it is abundantly clear that Furtwängler understood that here, more than in any other creation of Wagner, is a tapestry woven of countless expressive threads, and that the only way to tie them together is through a consistent, or a seemingly consistent, tempo. Furtwängler's ever-pliable sense of rhythm and his innate feeling for theater and for dramatic and harmonic movement provided him with myriad means with which to implement subtle fluctuations of speed while appearing to maintain a broad, overall stride. There are few sudden or unexpected alterations in the course he sets during the nearly sixteen hours required to traverse the *Ring*, and these are invariably tied to a shift in the ongoing power struggle onstage or to other developments in the drama. With Furtwängler we are not aware of four separate operas but of an entity. There are far fewer shifts in tempo and agogic accenting than is the case in the broader, more humane tonal canvas of *Meistersinger* or in the more poetic, symphonic *Tristan*.

One would have to be deaf to pretend that other men steeped in the same tradition did not possess the same understanding of the nature of the *Ring*. Yet having lived with Furtwängler's Italian *Rings* and what has been published of the London *Rings*, and having had repeated exposure to the Bayreuth *Rings* of Joseph Keilberth, Hans Knappertsbusch, and Rudolf Kempe, or for that matter, the English *Ring* of Reginald Goodall, it is hardly partisan to insist that no other conductor has made as convincing an application of the primal principle at the base of the *Ring*.

John Ardoin, *The Furtwängler Record* (Amadeus Press, 1994, p.212)

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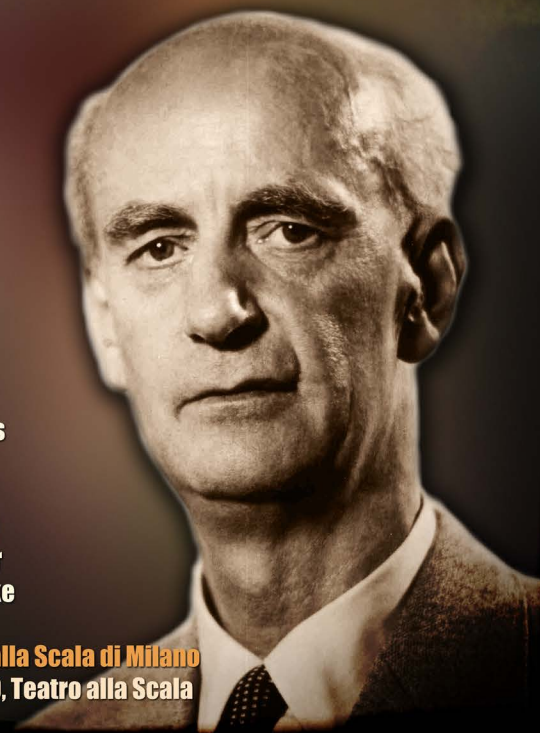
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DISC THREE

- 1 Act II, Scene 5: Zauberfest bezähmt ein Schlaf (4:16)
- 2 Wehwalt! Wehwalt! (4:35)
- 3 Act III: Wulkurenritt - The Ride of the Valkyries (7:44)
- 4 Scene 1: Schütz mich und helft in höchster Not! (3:11)
- 5 Nicht sehre dich Sorge um mich (5:29)
- 6 Steh, Brünnhild! (0:42)
- 7 Scene 2: Wo ist Brünnhild', wo die Verbrecherin! (3:36)
- 8 Hier bin ich, Vater: gebiete die Strafe! (8:51)
- 9 Scene 3: War es so schmähhlich, was ich verbrach (4:37)
- 10 Nicht weise bin ich, doch wusst' ich das Eine (4:57)
- 11 So tatest du, was so gern zu tun ich begehrt (2:42)
- 12 Deinen leichten Sinn lass dich denn leiten (3:42)
- 13 Du zeugtest ein edles Geschlecht (5:05)
- 14 Leb wohl, du kühnes, herrliches Kind! (4:37)
- 15 Der Augen leuchtendes Paar (6:42)
- 16 Loge, hör! Lausche hieher! (4:35)

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