



Leinsdorf's Ring

2. Die Walküre, Met Opera, 1961



After the two and a half uninterrupted hours of the Ring's prologue, *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre* returns to Wagner's standard three act format. The number of principals shrinks to just six (plus eight Valkyries) and the opera demands typical Wagnerian stamina from Brünnhilde and Wotan in particular. *Die Walküre* is by far the most approachable of the four Ring operas, and is the only one to be regularly performed as a standalone opera. The story is self-contained and the music is some of the most memorable and stirring of the entire cycle. In Act 1 Siegmund and Sieglinde, twins fathered by Wotan, meet and fall in love, despite being menaced by Sieglinde's husband, Hunding. Fricka, goddess of marriage, reminds Wotan in Act 2 that Siegmund must pay for violating the sanctity of marriage and Wotan reluctantly instructs Brünnhilde to prevent Siegmund winning a duel with Hunding. After meeting Siegmund however, Brünnhilde rebels and tries to help him. In the midst of the duel, Wotan appears, breaks Siegmund's sword (which he himself left for Siegmund in Hunding's home) and allows him to be killed. Brünnhilde flees Wotan's wrath but the god catches up with her in Act 3. Brünnhilde's punishment is to sleep on a rock surrounded by magic fire, where she will wait for a hero to rescue her.

The superstar of this performance is clearly Birgit Nilsson. She had sung the role of Brünnhilde a couple of times at the Met in 1960, as well as at Bayreuth, but this is the first time the broadcast audience would hear her in the complete cycle. For those familiar with her *Isolde* and *Turandot*, her Brünnhilde is everything a Wagnerian would want. Her entrance in Act 2 is one of the most famous in all opera, and also perhaps the most daunting, with her battle cries demanding top Bs and Cs, both short and sustained. The audience can gauge how good their Brünnhilde is going to be within seconds of her first notes. There have been many great Brünnhildes but none quite like Nilsson. Her high notes can only be described as 'laser-like', easily soaring above the orchestra to the very back of the auditorium. The sheer freedom of her voice as she unleashes it is magnificent. Her Brünnhilde is clearly a warrior maiden to be reckoned with.

Otto Edelmann is an experienced Wotan. The Austrian bass was particularly well known for his portrayal of Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, a role he had sung at the first post-war Bayreuth festival, and brought to the Met in 1954. His artistry is widely preserved in broadcast recordings, as well as a famous Act 3 of *Die Walküre* recorded for Decca in 1957 with Kirsten Flagstad as Brünnhilde and Georg Solti conducting, often seen as a test-run for the complete Decca ring.

[Continues in second CD case]

N.B. Your free MP3 download includes full score, vocal score and libretto as PDF documents.



der ring des nibelungen

wagner

part 2: die walküre

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WAGNER DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN: 2. DIE WALKÜRE (CDs 1 & 2)
LEINSDORF, METROPOLITAN OPERA ORCHESTRA & CHORUS

PACO 153

PRISTINE
AUDIO

cd one

- 1 RADIO Introduction (1:50)
- 2 **Act I:** Prelude (2:41)
- 3 **Scene 1:** Wes Herd dies auch sei, hier muss ich rasten (3:26)
- 4 Kühlende Labung Gab Mir Der Quell! (4:31)
- 5 Einen Unseligen labtest du (4:27)
- 6 **Scene 2:** Müd am Herd fand ich den Mann (4:22)
- 7 Friedman darf ich nicht heissen (5:27)
- 8 Die so leidig Los dir beschied (4:01)
- 9 Ich weiss ein wildes Geschlecht (5:21)
- 10 **Scene 3:** Ein Schwert verhiess mir der Vater (4:42)
- 11 Schläfst du, Gast? (6:05)
- 12 Winterstürme wichen dem Wonnemond (2:46)
- 13 Du bist der Lenz, nach dem ich verlangte (1:49)
- 14 O süsseste Wonne! Seligstes Weib! (5:38)
- 15 Siegmund heiss ich und Siegmund bin ich! (3:27)

cd two

- 1 **Act II:** Prelude - Nun zäume dein Ross, reisige Maid! (2:22)
- 2 **Scene 1:** Ho-jo-to-ho! Ho-jo-to-ho! (2:16)
- 3 Der alte Sturm, die alte Muh'! (3:19)
- 4 Heut hast du's erlebt (1:02)
- 5 So ist es denn aus mit den ewigen Göttern (2:48)
- 6 Nichts lerntest du (6:48)
- 7 Heiaha! Heiaha! Hojotoho! (2:46)
- 8 **Scene 2:** Schlimm, fürcht ich, schloss der Streit (5:32)
- 9 Als junger Liebe Lust mir verblich (4:25)
- 10 Ein andres ist's; achte es wohl! (8:53)
- 11 So nimm meinen Segen, Niblungen-Sohn! (4:22)
- 12 So sah ich Siegvater nie (3:02)
- 13 **Scene 3:** Raste nun hier; gönne dir Ruh! (3:09)
- 14 Hinweg! Hinweg! Flieh die Entweihte! (6:29)
- 15 **Scene 4:** Siegmund! Sieh auf mich! (7:53)
- 16 Erdenluft muss sie noch atmen (3:38)
- 17 Weh! Weh! Süssestes Weib (3:45)
- 18 Zwei Leben lachen dir hier (1:59)

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a photograph of Birgit Nilsson as Brünnhilde against a detail from Josef Hoffman's 1876 set designs

Live broadcast from New York
Metropolitan Opera House
23 December, 1961

Total duration: 3hr 31:04

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Leinsdorf's Ring

2. Die Walküre, Met Opera, 1961



[Continued from first CD case]

Canadian Jon Vickers, singing Siegmund, had a lengthy international career encompassing some of the most demanding tenor roles. His manly, forthright, tone was ideally suited to Otello, Peter Grimes, Aeneas, Don José, and Parsifal. Later in his career he successfully added the role of Tristan. As a heroic tenor who kept one foot firmly in the Italian/French repertoire, Vickers gives us a Siegmund who can sing with both a touching tenderness and ringing declamation.

Sieglinde is sung by American Gladys Kuchta. The bulk of Kuchta's career was in Europe, particularly in Germany, and she features in only three Met broadcasts (two of which formed part of this Ring Cycle). Although a versatile soprano, her large voice inevitably led her into the heavier roles of Wagner and Strauss such as Brünnhilde, Isolde, Elektra and the Dyer's Wife. Kuchta captures the femininity of Sieglinde very nicely, while being well able to match Vickers in the more dramatic moments.

Like Kuchta, Ernst Wiemann spent most of his career in his native Germany, mainly in Hamburg, but at the Met he sang many of the major Wagnerian bass roles such as Daland, Pogner, and King Henry. He sings Hunding with appropriate malevolence and he is also the Fafner in *Das Rheingold* in this broadcast cycle (PACO152). Irene Dalis is the only other principal to remain from the first opera in the cycle, reprising her role as Fricka. The reviewer in Musical America commented 'Miss Dalis was so beautiful a Fricka that it was hard to understand Wotan's notorious infidelities.' Her short scene with Wotan confirms her as one of the leading mezzo-sopranos of her generation.

Conductor Erich Leinsdorf insisted that the traditional Met cuts made in Acts 2 and 3 of *Die Walküre* be restored. Parts of Wotan's Act 2 monologue and the Brünnhilde/Wotan scene in Act 3 were the usual sacrifices, though they varied slightly in length according to the preference of the conductor. This broadcast is the first time the radio audience had heard the complete score since Leinsdorf's first broadcast in 1940 (PACO125).

N.B. Your free MP3 download includes full score, vocal score and libretto as PDF documents.



der ring des nibelungen wagner part 2: die walküre

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WAGNER DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN: 2. DIE WALKÜRE (CD3)
LEINSDORF, METROPOLITAN OPERA ORCHESTRA & CHORUS

PACO 153

PRISTINE
AUDIO

cd three

- 1 **Act II, Scene 5:** Zauberfest bezähmt ein Schlaf (4:25)
- 2 Wehwalt! Wehwalt! (4:45)
- 3 **Act III:** Wulkurenritt - The Ride of the Valkyries (7:34)
- 4 Scene 1: Schütz mich und helft in höchster Not! (3:05)
- 5 Nicht sehre dich Sorge um mich (5:09)
- 6 Steh, Brünnhild! (0:38)
- 7 **Scene 2:** Wo ist Brünnhild', wo die Verbrecherin! (3:20)
- 8 Hier bin ich, Vater: gebiete die Strafe! (8:41)
- 9 **Scene 3:** War es so schmäählich, was ich verbrach (4:25)
- 10 Nicht weise bin ich, doch wusst' ich das Eine (4:30)
- 11 So tatest du, was so gern zu tun ich begehrt (2:25)
- 12 Deinen leichten Sinn lass dich denn leiten (3:19)
- 13 Du zeugtest ein edles Geschlecht (4:52)
- 14 Leb wohl, du kühnes, herrliches Kind! (4:54)
- 15 Der Augen leuchtendes Paar (6:41)
- 16 Loge, hör! Lausche hieher! (4:50)
- 17 RADIO Outro (2:28)

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CAST

Brünnhilde.....Birgit Nilsson
Siegmund.....Jon Vickers
Sieglinde.....Gladys Kuchta
Wotan.....Otto Edelmann
Fricka.....Irene Dalis
Hunding.....Ernst Wiemann
Gerhilde.....Carlotta Ordassy
Grimgerde.....Mary MacKenzie
Helmwige.....Heidi Krall
Ortlinde.....Martina Arroyo
Rossweisse.....Margaret Roggero
Schwertleite.....Gladys Kriesie
Siegfrune.....Helen Vanni
Waltraute.....Mignon Dunn

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra & Chorus
conducted by Erich Leinsdorf

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