



Leinsdorf's Ring

3. Siegfried, Met Opera, 1962



Siegfried is perhaps the least respected of all the Ring operas. Some say it lacks the taut drama of *Das Rheingold*, the intensely personal emotions of *Die Walküre* or the spectacle of *Götterdämmerung*. In some respects, it could be classified as a chamber opera – the whole of Act 1 takes place in Mime's cave, the whole of Act 2 outside Fafner's cave, and only in Act 3 is there a (small) scene change from near Brünnhilde's rock to its summit. It's also a peculiarly male-dominated opera. It's hard to think of any other opera where all the singers in Act 1 are male, and indeed for large parts of it, only tenors are singing. Female voices are not heard until the latter stages of Act 2, and only given real prominence for the final half an hour of Act 3. Yet for all these reservations, *Siegfried* is a masterful opera.

The story introduces us to Siegfried, love-child of the ill-fated Siegmund and Sieglinde from *Die Walküre*. He has been raised, after the death of his parents, by Mime the Nibelung dwarf, brother of Alberich, and last seen in *Das Rheingold*. In Act 1, Siegfried learns of his parentage and successfully re-forges Nothung, the sword shattered by Wotan in *Die Walküre*. In Act 2 Siegfried kills Fafner, who has turned himself into a dragon to protect the gold. This is done at Mime's urging, as he wants the magical treasure for himself. Tasting a drop of Fafner's blood enables Siegfried to understand the voice of a Woodbird, who warns him to beware Mime's duplicity and Siegfried quickly slays him. The Woodbird then tells Siegfried of a heroine fit for a hero, sleeping on a rock, surrounded by magic fire, and Siegfried sets off to claim his bride. In Act 3, Wotan, disguised as the Wanderer, tries to block Siegfried's path, but the newly forged Nothung shatters Wotan's spear and Siegfried passes through the fire. At the top of the rock he awakens Brünnhilde and they sing a rapturous love duet. At its heart *Siegfried* shows us the transformation of a boy into a man, but it also marks the liberation of mankind from divine meddling.

The title role in *Siegfried* is incredibly difficult to cast. The part is perhaps the longest tenor role in all opera, and the character is on stage for most of each act. The number of tenors who have been able to sing the part successfully is vanishingly small. The voice has to be large and heroic – easily distinguished from Mime – yet light and versatile at the same time as there is a lot of quiet, reflective singing in Act 2. Above all, the tenor must have stamina. It is a cruel trick to put a vocally demanding love duet at the end of a four-hour opera with a soprano who has only just woken up. There are plenty of Siegfrieds who have little voice left by the end of Act 3 and are dominated by a Wagnerian soprano who is really just getting warmed up. Hans Hopf offers us a Siegfried that ticks many of the right boxes. His voice is large and carries a certain heft that the role demands. He also possesses that rare stamina that enables him to sing this role successfully. He sounds just as fresh in Act 3 as he did in Act 1. It would be unfair to compare him to the matchless Lauritz Melchior, heard in the role on the 1937 broadcast from the Met (PACO139), and instead we should measure Hopf against Wolfgang Windgassen, his great contemporary. Hopf has more stamina and vocal weight while Windgassen is the more thoughtful singer. Only Hopf disrupted Windgassen's reign as the Siegfried at Bayreuth between 1953-67, assuming the role between 1960 and 1964. He also sang Walther, Tannhauser and Parsifal at both Bayreuth and the Met, but sang Lohengrin only at the latter.

[Continues in second CD case]

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der ring des nibelungen wagner part 3: siegfried

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WAGNER DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN: 3. SIEGFRIED (CDs 1 & 2)
LEINSDORF, METROPOLITAN OPERA

PACO 155

PRISTINE
AUDIO

cd one

- 1 RADIO Introduction (0:57)
- 2 Act I, Vorspiel (3:12)
- 3 Scene 1 - Zwangvolle Plage! Müh ohne Zweck! (3:40)
- 4 Hoiho! Hoiho! Hau ein! Hau ein! (1:43)
- 5 Da hast du die Stücken, schändlicher Stümper (2:22)
- 6 Als zullendes Kind zog ich dich auf (1:26)
- 7 Vieles lehrtest du, Mime (8:06)
- 8 Einst lag wimmernd ein Weib (4:58)
- 9 Und diese Stücken sollst du mir schmieden (3:12)
- 10 Scene 2 - Heil dir, weiser Schmied! (3:28)
- 11 Hier sitz' ich am Herd und setze mein Haupt (9:41)
- 12 Was zu wissen dir frommt, solltest du fragen (7:01)
- 13 Die Stücken! Das Schwert! O weh! Mir schwindelt! (2:45)
- 14 Scene 3 - Verfluchtes Licht! (1:23)
- 15 Bist du es, Kind! (2:42)
- 16 Fühltest du nie im finstren Wald (5:04)
- 17 Her mit den Stücken, fort mit dem Stümper! (3:31)
- 18 Notung! Notung! Neidliches Schwert! (7:50)
- 19 Hoho! Hoho! Hahei! (3:15)
- 20 Den der Bruder schuf (3:15)

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Hans Hopf as
Siegfried against a detail from Josef
Hoffman's 1876 set designs

Live broadcast from New York
Metropolitan Opera House
13 January, 1962

Total duration: 3hr 49:17

cd two

- 1 Act 2, Vorspiel (4:36)
- 2 Scene 1 - In Wald und Nacht (2:05)
- 3 Zur Neidhöhle fuhr ich bei Nacht (5:47)
- 4 Mit mir nicht, hadre mit Mime (2:21)
- 5 Fafner! Fafner! Erwache, Wurm! (2:40)
- 6 Nun, Alberich, das schlug fehl (3:21)
- 7 Scene 2 - Wir sind zur Stelle! (5:47)
- 8 Daß der mein Vater nicht ist (1:44)
- 9 Aber Wie Sah Meine Mutter Wohl Aus! (2:10)
- 10 Meine Mutter, Ein Menschenweib! (6:16)
- 11 Haha! Da Hätte Mein Lied (5:36)
- 12 Wer Bist Du, Kühner Knabe, Der Das Herz Mir Traß! (4:04)
- 13 Zur Kunde Taugt Kein Toter (1:54)
- 14 Scene 3 - Wohin Schleichst Du Eilig Und Schlau (2:31)
- 15 Was Ihr Mir Nützt, Weiß Ich Nicht (2:31)
- 16 Willkommen, Siegfried! (7:40)
- 17 Da Lieg Auch Du, Dunkler Wurm! (8:57)

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra *Erich Leinsdorf*

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Leinsdorf's Ring

3. Siegfried, Met Opera, 1962



[Continued from first CD case]

Paul Kuen and George London return as Mime and Wotan/Wanderer from *Das Rheingold*. Kuen was a master of the role, performing it at Bayreuth and elsewhere, and he gives us a truly sung characterisation rather than the caricature that others sometimes offer. London is here singing his first Wanderer but he has the role well under control, offering both gravitas and wit. Birgit Nilsson resumes her role as Brünnhilde, and compared to *Die Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung*, this is almost a day of rest for her. Her brief appearance is thrilling and her trademark high notes, including a magnificent final high C, don't disappoint. As in *Das Rheingold*, Jean Madeira gives us a powerful and authoritative Erda while Fafner is sung by Gottlob Frick, one of best Wagnerian basses of the 1950s and 1960s. Most of Frick's career was in Europe, indeed he sang only twelve performances at the Met, but he was the Hunding and Hagen at Bayreuth between 1960 and 1964 and sang both roles in Decca's Ring Cycle under Solti.

Erich Leinsdorf continues his policy of performing the Ring uncut, and this is the first ever Met broadcast of *Siegfried* without the customary cuts in Act 3.

CAST

Siegfried	Hans Hopf
Brünnhilde	Birgit Nilsson
Wanderer	George London
Erda	Jean Madeira
Mime	Paul Kuen
Alberich	Ralph Herbert
Fafner	Gottlob Frick
Forest Bird	Martina Arroyo

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LEINSDORF, METROPOLITAN OPERA

der ring des nibelungen wagner part 3: siegfried

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WAGNER DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN: 3. SIEGFRIED (CD3)
LEINSDORF, METROPOLITAN OPERA

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cd three

- 1 Act 3, Vorspiel (2:07)
- 2 Scene 1 - Wache, Wala! Wala! Erwach! (2:01)
- 3 Stark Ruft Das Lied (11:05)
- 4 Dir Unweisen ruf ich ins Ohr (4:56)
- 5 Scene 2 - Wohin, Knabe, heißt dich dein Weg! (9:31)
- 6 Mit zerfochtner Waffe wich mir der Feige! (3:46)
- 7 Scene 3 - Selige Öde auf sonniger Höh! (5:59)
- 8 Das ist kein Mann! (6:22)
- 9 Heil dir, Sonne! Heil dir, Licht! (5:32)
- 10 O Siegfried! Siegfried! Seliger Held! (6:20)
- 11 Dort seh' ich Grane (7:22)
- 12 Ewig war ich, ewig bin ich (11:34)
- 13 RADIO Ending (3:13)

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