



Leinsdorf's Ring

4. Götterdämmerung, Met Opera, 1962



Over a period of six weeks, in December 1961 and January 1962, the Met broadcast its first completely uncut presentation of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, culminating with this performance of *Götterdämmerung*.

This massive work, the longest of the four opera that comprise the Ring Cycle, continues to introduce new characters to the story, as well as the chorus, the only time they are heard in the cycle. Among the new characters is Hagen, son of Alberich and half-brother to Gunther, King of the Gibichungs, and his sister Gutrune. It is Hagen that drives the plot of the opera, by scheming and treachery, in order to win the ring for himself. *Siegfried* may have ended with the jubilant union of Brünnhilde and Siegfried, but *Götterdämmerung* quickly unravels all that happiness. After another rapturous duet, gloriously sung by Birgit Nilsson and Hans Hopf, Brünnhilde sends Siegfried off on new adventures, unwittingly setting up the final demise of the Gods and Valhalla. Siegfried encounters Hagen and the Gibichung siblings, only to be tricked by Hagen into drinking a potion that makes him forget Brünnhilde and fall in love with Gutrune. Siegfried asks for Gutrune's hand in marriage and offers to win the former warrior-maiden Brünnhilde as a wife for Gunther.

By Act 2, after being forced by Siegfried to follow him to the Hall of the Gibichungs, Hagen facilitates Brünnhilde's discovery of the betrayal and joins in a plot for vengeance with a hesitant Gunther. Brünnhilde reveals Siegfried's only vulnerability to them: his back, which he would never turn on an enemy. In Act 3, Hagen takes advantage of this knowledge (after restoring Siegfried's memory of Brünnhilde) by killing Siegfried using his supposed betrayal of Gunther as the reason for the murder. Brünnhilde finally becomes aware of Hagen's treachery and taking the ring from the dead Siegfried's hand, rides into his funeral pyre on her horse, Grane. After dragging Hagen to his death in the depths of the Rhine, the Rhinemaidens retrieve the ring, which restores peace to the world. Of course, the plot is rather more complicated and intricate than this short summary allows for, but the score, being a masterpiece of leitmotifs, reminds the careful listener of plot lines stretching back to the very beginning of the entire cycle.

[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 4: götterdämmerung

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WAGNER DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN: 4. GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG (CDs 1 & 2)
LEINSDORF, METROPOLITAN OPERA

PACO 156

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disc one

- 1 Prologue - Welch Licht leuchtet dort? (7:32)
- 2 Treu beratner Verträge Runen (2:09)
- 3 Es ragt die Burg, von Riesen gebaut (7:51)
- 4 Zu neuen Taten, teurer Helde (6:29)
- 5 Willst du mir Minne schenken (5:30)
- 6 O heilige Götter! (2:34)
- 7 Siegfrieds Rheinfahrt (5:26)
- 8 Act I, Scene I - Nun hör', Hagen (2:12)
- 9 Wen rätst du nun zu frein (7:06)
- 10 Jagt er auf Taten wonnig umher (3:29)
- 11 Scene II - Wer ist Gibichs Sohn? (1:56)
- 12 Begrüße froh, o Held (3:23)
- 13 Willkommen, Gast, in Gibichs Haus! (3:21)

disc two

- 1 Scene II (cont'd) - Deinem Bruder bot ich mich zum Mann (4:20)
- 2 Blühenden Lebens labendes Blut (3:53)
- 3 Frisch auf die Fahrt! (2:32)
- 4 Hier sitz' ich zur Wacht (9:54)
- 5 Scene III - Altgewohntes Geräusch (7:08)
- 6 Höre mit Sinn, was ich dir sage! (9:13)
- 7 Welch' banger Träume Mären (6:47)
- 8 Was leckt so wütend (1:41)
- 9 Brünnhild! Ein Freier kam (8:08)

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra & Chorus

conducted by *Erich Leinsdorf*

XR remastering by Andrew Rose

Cover artwork based on a
photograph of Birgit Nilsson & Hans
Hopf against a detail from Josef
Hoffman's 1876 set designs

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

Total duration: 4hr 05:15

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[Continued from first CD case]

Reprising their roles from the previous operas are, in addition to Nilsson and Hopf, Ralph Herbert as Alberich and Martina Arroyo, Rosalind Elias and Mignon Dunn as the Rhinemaidens (Arroyo also sings the Third Norn in this performance). Other soloists return in new roles. Irene Dalis, Fricka in both *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, appears as the Second Norn and as Waltraute, who comes to seek her sister's help trying to convince her to return the ring to the Rhinemaidens. Gladys Kuchta, previously heard as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, now assumes the other demurely feminine role in the Ring, Guttrune. Norman Mittlemann, Donner in *Das Rheingold* is now our Gunther and Jean Madeira, our Erda in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* is heard as the First Norn. Most significantly, Gottlob Frick, briefly heard off-stage in *Siegfried* as Fafner, now assumes the role of Hagen, with his cavernous, black-hued sound. His is a powerfully malevolent characterization, in total command of everyone he comes into contact with. All told this is a cast of the highest international calibre, such as could be heard in Bayreuth and other leading opera houses in the early 1960s. Hopf gives us some lovely wistful singing as he recalls his love for Brünnhilde in Act 3 and lastly, Nilsson continues to amaze with her gleaming voice and laser-like high notes. She is frighteningly vengeful in Act 2, yet recaptures Brünnhilde's nobility in a stirring account of the Immolation Scene at the end of the opera.

Erich Leinsdorf once again elicits lustrous playing from the orchestra, particularly in the extended orchestral interludes of Siegfried's Rhine Journey and Funeral March. At the end of the opera, fittingly, it is the orchestra that informs us that Valhalla has fallen and the Rhine has risen to reclaim the gold, ending Wagner's epic saga.

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der ring des nibelungen wagner part 4: götterdämmerung

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disc three

- 1 Act II - Vorspiel (2:14)
- 2 Scene I - Schäfst du, Hagen, mein Sohn! (7:45)
- 3 Scene II - Hoiho, Hagen! Müder Mann! (2:06)
- 4 Heiß' mich willkommen, Gibichkind! (3:25)
- 5 Scene III - Hoiho! Hoihohoho! (7:49)
- 6 Scene IV - Heil dir, Gunther! (2:38)
- 7 Gegrüßt sei, teurer Held (3:31)
- 8 Einen Ring sah ich an deiner Hand (2:59)
- 9 Heil'ge Götter, himmlische Lenker! (5:11)
- 10 Helle Wehr! Heilige Waffe! (2:45)
- 11 Gunther, Wehr' deinem Weibe (3:07)
- 12 Scene V - Welches Unholds List liegt hier werhohlen! (3:27)
- 13 Vertraue mir, betrog'ne Frau! (2:58)
- 14 Auf, Gunther, edler Gibichung! (7:35)

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Total duration: 4hr 05:15

disc four

- 1 Act III - Vorspiel (2:01)
- 2 Scene I - Frau Sonne sendet lichte Strahlen (4:05)
- 3 Ein Albe führte mich irr (3:26)
- 4 Was leid' ich doch das karge Lob! (1:15)
- 5 Siegfried! Siegfried! Siegfried! (7:32)
- 6 Scene II - Hoiho! (3:49)
- 7 Trink', Gunther, trink'! (2:11)
- 8 Mime hiess ein mürrischer Zwerg (4:21)
- 9 In Leid zu dem Wipfel lauscht' ich hinauf (4:39)
- 10 Brünnhilde! Heilige Braut! (4:45)
- 11 Trauermusik beim Tode Siegfrieds (5:57)
- 12 Scene III - War das sein Horn! (1:55)
- 13 Hoiho! Hoiho! (2:07)
- 14 Nicht klage wider mich! (1:35)
- 15 Schweigt eures Jammers (3:14)
- 16 Starke Scheite schichtet mir dort (7:51)
- 17 Mein Erbe nun nehm' ich zu eigen (2:19)
- 18 Fliegt heim, ihr Raben! (7:23)
- 19 RADIO Ending (4:47)

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