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# WAGNER *Götterdämmerung*

Orchestra Sinfonica di Roma della RAI Wilhelm Furtwängler

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Though he dearly loved the art treasures of the city, Furtwängler had no time to visit any museums or churches. He asked me to go for him, and to tell him at mealtime what I had seen. "Eternal Rome" for him was the recording studio at Radio Italiana, where the final rehearsals and public performances were taped. The studio, which was shaped like an amphitheatre, was always full at these performances. The audience of music-lovers was invited by Radio Italiana—on two conditions, that guests be prompt and have no colds. Hence no-one made a sound. On the following morning, Furtwängler and Signor Tuttino, the Technical Director, chose the tapes to be heard. The broadcasts themselves were the event of the month in Rome. As we returned home from the last performance—the Third Act of *Götterdämmerung*—after a long pause Furtwängler said to me quietly, "I think he would have been satisfied with me."

(Elisabeth Furtwängler, 1972)

I have just conducted the entire *Ring* on the radio, and I have again realized that this work is one of the very greatest feats a man has ever accomplished. Even as oratorio, this work has no equal.  
(Wilhelm Furtwängler, 1953)

#### Restoration notes

The final instalment in Furtwängler's superb Italian Radio *Ring*, *Götterdämmerung* offers for much of its duration perhaps the finest sound of the entire cycle. With each act being recorded on a different day, one notices slight changes in quality, and for me the best of the lot technically, from *Das Rheingold* onwards, is to be found in the second act here. From a musical point of view it is also interesting to assess how Furtwängler and the Italian orchestra increasingly gel through the performances, and listening to *Götterdämmerung* leaves little doubt that by this point all the musicians, soloists and conductor were performing with a single, unified vision and purpose.

However, this does not mean to say that *Götterdämmerung* didn't through up a whole heap of technical difficulties to be addressed. As with all the *Ring* operas I found hundreds upon hundreds of thumps, like someone stamping on a wooden stage. *Götterdämmerung* was no exception, though inexplicably not all of the acts in all of the operas suffered this, and here Act Two escaped.

Tape hiss too was barely noticed during Act 2, though a major issue throughout Act 3 and here quite variable. Act 2 suffered other short noise problems which, although simple enough to deal with singly, involved again hundreds of individual, manual interventions and many hours of work. The greatest difficulty, though, was reserved for the final act of the entire *Ring* - extensive sections of repeated treble dropout at approximately quarter-second intervals, repairable only by hand-selecting each section and boosting it sufficiently to smooth it out - a hugely tedious and time-consuming task. Curiously I noticed the same problem afflicting the first 45 minutes or so of the EMI CD transfer of Act 1, yet it was happily absent from EMI's original 1972 LPs used here.

Overall, the end result I hope more than justifies the time and effort in restoring it - the transformation here with XR remastering has been quite amazing. To paraphrase Furtwängler's words and echo them back: "I hope he would have been satisfied with me". **AR**

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# FURTWÄNGLER

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CONDUCTS  
WAGNER *Der Ring des Nibelungen*  
4. *Götterdämmerung*



## THE ROME SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF RAI

RECORDED IN ROME, NOVEMBER, 1953

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GUNTHER ALFRED POELL  
HAGEN JOSEF GREINDL  
BRÜNNHILDE MARTHA MÖDL  
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WAGNER SENA JURINAC  
WELLGUNDE MAGDA GABORY  
FLOSSHILDE HILDE RÖSSL-MAJDAN

**WAGNER Götterdämmerung**

## Disc One

- 1 Prologue - Welch Licht leuchtet dort? (6:41)
- 2 Treu beratner Verträge Runen (2:02)
- 3 Es ragt die Burg, von Riesen gebaut (7:44)
- 4 Zu neuen Taten, teurer Helde (6:30)
- 5 Willst du mir Minne schenken (6:20)
- 6 O heilige Götter! (2:42)
- 7 Siegfrieds Rheinfahrt (5:34)
- 8 Act I, Scene I - Nun hör', Hagen (2:19)
- 9 Wen rätst du nun zu frein (7:42)
- 10 Jagt er auf Taten wonnig umher (3:39)
- 11 Act I, Scene II - Wer ist Gibichs Sohn? (2:10)
- 12 Begrüße froh, o Held (3:47)
- 13 Willkommen, Gast, in Gibichs Haus! (3:46)

## Disc Two

- 1 Deinem Bruder bot ich mich zum Mann (3:54)
- 2 Blühenden Lebens labendes Blut (4:11)
- 3 Frisch auf die Fahrt! (2:27)
- 4 Hier sitz' ich zur Wacht (8:50)
- 5 Act I, Scene III - Altgewohntes Geräusch (8:08)
- 6 Höre mit Sinn, was ich dir sage! (9:56)
- 7 Welch' banger Träume Mären (7:41)
- 8 Was leckt so wütend (1:47)
- 9 Brünnhild! Ein Freier kam (9:14)

**Orchestra Sinfonica di Roma della RAI Wilhelm Furtwängler**

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XR remastering by **Andrew Rose**Transfers from EMI box set  
RLS 702, discs BOX 70214-18  
Matrix Nos. 2XBA.9164-73Cover artwork based on a  
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Furtwängler** with the Rome  
Symphony Orchestra,  
taken 26 October, 1953Recorded by Radio Audizioni  
Italiane (RAI) 20, 24 & 27  
November 1953 (plus possible  
material edited in from earlier  
rehearsals during this period)  
Auditorio del Foro Italoico, RomeTotal duration: **4 hr 27:40**For a full catalogue visit  
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"For the last part of *The Ring* Wagner takes us back to the beginning - but a beginning earlier than the one we encountered at the start of *Das Rheingold*, and which we may wonder at his delaying for so long. *Götterdämmerung* was originally, we remember, the only opera Wagner envisaged, and was called *Siegfried's Tod* (*Siegfried's Death*), though he naturally altered it in some respects when it was preceded by three earlier operas. But not by all that much, and not because there was too much narration in *Siegfried's Tod*, whatever Wagner may have said or believed. It is clear, in any case, from the second scene of *Das Rheingold* that there is a lot we haven't seen - Wotan has made a bargain with the giants to build Valhalla, and so on; and in his huge monologue in Act II of *Die Walküre* he tells Brinnhilde about how youthful love evaporated and he began to crave for power, and how she and her sisters were begotten.

In *Götterdämmerung*, however, we learn much more, in the opening scene, from the Norns, daughters of Erda and weavers of the rope of Fate, about Wotan's still earlier adventures. And here we enter, more than we have done anywhere before, into the realm of the primal: the World-Ash Tree, where the Norns weave, with a spring, the source of wisdom near by, was what they guarded. Wotan came and drank from the spring, paying with the loss of an eye - now at last we know why he has only one. And he broke off a branch of the World-Ash and made it into his spear, on which he engraved the runes by which he governs the world. His acquisition of wisdom and of the branch caused the spring to dry up and the tree to wither. With the fragments of the tree Wotan has surrounded Valhalla, where he and the other gods wait for the world to end. As the Norns recite what has been, is, and will be, their sight weakens, and the rope snaps: their wisdom is at an end. They have prophesied the end of the gods, so that what they say frames everything we have heard so far, and everything we shall see and hear in this climactic drama. Their words suggest that *The Ring* really is a cycle, that it depicts the beginning and end of the world, once that is invaded by consciousness: Nature remains, however, and perhaps the whole thing will begin again. With this opening scene, the whole of what we have witnessed gains a new dimension - it reveals Wagner's breathtaking originality as a narrator.

Michael Tanner, *The Faber Pocket Guide to Wagner*

Impatient to complete his epic cycle, Wagner began work on the preliminary draft of *Götterdämmerung* on 2 October 1869, while he was still at work on the third act of *Siegfried*. The composition of *Götterdämmerung* proceeded without much difficulty, as Wagner was now thoroughly familiar with his musical material and his enlarged orchestra. There was a brief interruption over Christmas, but the work was resumed early in the new year (on 9 January 1870). The second complete draft - the orchestral draft - was begun just two days later and Wagner worked on both drafts together. It was not until 5 February 1871 that the completion of *Siegfried* allowed him the time to concentrate on *Götterdämmerung*. By the summer of 1871 both drafts of the Prologue and Act I were finished and Wagner had begun the preliminary draft of Act II. The orchestral draft was not begun, however, until 18 November of the same year. Act II was completed by the end of the year.

Sometime in 1871 or 1872 Wagner made a verse draft of the so-called Schopenhauer Ending for Act III of *Götterdämmerung*, though it was not destined to be used. This was not the only change he made to the text of Act III. While setting this act to music, he decided that Gutrune should die (in earlier drafts she merely fainted). During rehearsals for the world premiere at Bayreuth in 1876 Wagner even pointed out to his assistant Heinrich Porges the exact measure in which she expires.

Work on the preliminary draft of Act III began on 4 January 1872, followed shortly thereafter by the orchestral draft. The former was finished on 9 April and the latter on 22 July. In April of that year, the Wagners left Tribschen and settled in Bayreuth, the small town in Bavaria where a festival theatre was to be constructed for the premiere of the Ring. A year later, on 28 April 1873, they moved into Wahnfried, Wagner's new mansion in Bayreuth.

On 3 May 1873, just five days after taking up residence in Wahnfried, Wagner began the full score of *Götterdämmerung*. On Christmas Eve he had reached the end of Act I. On 26 June 1874 the second act was fully scored, and less than five months later, on 21 November 1874, the full score of the entire opera was ready. On the very last page Wagner wrote: "Vollendet in Wahnfried am 21. November 1874. Ich sage nichts weiter! RW" ("Completed in Wahnfried on 21 November 1874. I will say no more! RW")

After more than a quarter of a century, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* was finally completed.

Notes from Wikipedia

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**WAGNER Götterdämmerung**

## Disc Three

- 01 Act II - Vorspiel (2:42)
- 02 Act II, Scene I - Schäfst du, Hagen, mein Sohn! (9:19)
- 03 Act II, Scene II - Hoiho, Hagen! Müder Mann! (2:29)
- 04 Heiß' mich willkommen, Gibichskind! (4:06)
- 05 Act II, Scene III - Hoiho! Hoihohoho! (9:33)
- 06 Act II, Scene IV - Heil dir, Gunther! (3:11)
- 07 Gegrüßt sei, teurer Held (4:24)
- 08 Einen Ring sah ich an deiner Hand (3:36)
- 09 Heil'ge Götter, himmlische Lenker! (5:57)
- 10 Helle Wehr! Heilige Waffe! (2:54)
- 11 Gunther, Wehr' deinem Weibe (3:30)
- 12 Act II, Scene V - Welches Unholds List liegt hier werhohlen! (4:08)
- 13 Vertraue mir, betrog'ne Frau! (3:50)
- 14 Auf, Gunther, edler Gibichung! (8:59)
- 15 Act III - Vorspiel (1:49)
- 16 Act III, Scene I - Frau Sonne sendet lichte Strahlen (5:38)

## Disc Four

- 01 Ein Albe führte mich irr (4:13)
- 02 Was leid' ich doch das karge Lob! (1:44)
- 03 Siegfried! Siegfried! Siegfried! (9:37)
- 04 Act III, Scene II - Hoiho! (4:02)
- 05 Trink', Gunther, trink'! (2:35)
- 06 Mime hiess ein mürrischer Zwerg (4:51)
- 07 In Leid zu dem Wipfel lauscht' ich hinauf (5:41)
- 08 Brünnhilde! Heilige Braut! (4:44)
- 09 Trauermusik beim Tode Siegfrieds (5:43)
- 10 Act III, Scene III - War das sein Horn! (2:39)
- 11 Hoiho! Hoiho! (2:59)
- 12 Nicht klage wider mich! (2:20)
- 13 Schweigt eures Jammers (4:11)
- 14 Starke Scheite schichtet mir dort (8:41)
- 15 Mein Erbe nun nehm' ich zu eigen (2:42)
- 16 Fliegt heim, ihr Raben! (7:47)

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