

Richard Wagner

Der Ring des Nibelungen

CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

PRODUCTION
Robert Lepage

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
Neilson Vignola

SET DESIGNER
Carl Fillion

COSTUME DESIGNER
François St-Aubin

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Etienne Boucher

VIDEO IMAGE ARTIST
Boris Firquet

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

Die Walküre

First day, in three acts
Libretto by the composer

Friday, April 26, 2013, 6:30–11:35 pm

The production of *Die Walküre* was made possible by a generous gift from **Ann Ziff and the Ziff Family**, in memory of William Ziff

In collaboration with Ex Machina

The Metropolitan Opera
2012–13 Season

The 535th Metropolitan Opera performance of

Richard Wagner's

Die Walküre

CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Siegmund
Simon O'Neill

Helmwige
Molly Fillmore

Sieglinde
Martina Serafin

Waltraute
Jennifer Johnson Cano*

Hunding
Hans-Peter König

Schwertleite
Mary Phillips

Wotan
Mark Delavan

Ortlinde
Wendy Bryn Harmer*

Brünnhilde
Katarina Dalayman

Sieg rune
Eve Gigliotti

Fricka
Stephanie Blythe*

Grimgerde
Mary Ann McCormick

Gerhilde
Deborah Mayer

Rosswesse
Rebecca Ringle

Friday, April 26, 2013, 6:30–11:35 pm



Musical Preparation **Dennis Giauque, Derrick Inouye, Jonathan Khuner, and John Fisher**

Assistant Stage Directors **Gina Lapinski, Stephen Pickover, and J. Knighten Smit**

Stage Band Conductor **Gregory Buchalter**

German Coach **Marianne Barrett**

Prompter **Jonathan Khuner**

Scenery, properties, and electrical props constructed and painted by **Scène Éthique (Varenes, Québec)** and **Metropolitan Opera Shops**

Costumes executed by **Metropolitan Opera Costume Department**

Wigs and Makeup executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig and Makeup Department**

EX MACHINA PRODUCTION STAFF

Artistic Consultant **Rebecca Blankenship**

Interactive Content Designers **Réalisations.net**

Additional Video Artist **Lionel Arnould**

Production Manager **Bernard Gilbert**, Assistant **Viviane Paradis**

Technical Director **Michel Gosselin**, Assistant **Eric Gautron**

Automation Designer **Tobie Horswill**

Video Project Manager **Catherine Guay**

Special Effects Integrator **Philippe Jean**

Initial Interactive Video Designer **Holger Förterer**

Properties Project Manager **Stéphane Longpré**

Rig & Safety Adviser **Guy St-Amour**

Costume Project Manager **Charline Boulerice**

Rehearsal Stage Manager **Félix Dagenais**

Production Coordinators **Vanessa Landry-Claverie, Nadia Bellefeuille**

Producer **Michel Bernatchez**

This production uses flash effects.

Projectors provided by **Panasonic**

Projection technology consultants **Scharff Weisberg**

Additional projection equipment **Christie Digital**

This performance is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

Before the performance begins, please switch off cell phones and other electronic devices. Latecomers will not be admitted during the performance.

* Graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program

Synopsis

Act I

Hunding's house

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 7:35 PM)

Act II

In the mountains

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:50 PM)

Act III

A mountain top

Act I

Pursued by enemies during a snowstorm, Siegmund stumbles exhausted into an unfamiliar house. Sieglinde finds him lying by the hearth, and the two feel an immediate attraction. They are interrupted by Sieglinde's husband, Hunding, who asks the stranger who he is. Calling himself "Woeful," Siegmund tells of a disaster-filled life, only to learn that Hunding is a kinsman of his enemies. Hunding tells his guest they will fight to the death in the morning.

Alone, Siegmund calls on his father, Wälse—who is in fact Wotan, leader of the gods, in human disguise—for the sword he once promised him. Sieglinde reappears, having given Hunding a sleeping potion. She tells of her wedding, at which a one-eyed stranger thrust into a tree a sword that has since resisted every effort to pull it out. Sieglinde confesses her unhappiness to Siegmund and he embraces her and promises to free her from her forced marriage to Hunding. As moonlight floods the room, Siegmund compares their feelings to the marriage of love and spring. Sieglinde addresses him as "Spring" but asks if his father was really "Wolf," as he said earlier. When Siegmund gives his father's name as Wälse instead, Sieglinde recognizes him as her twin brother. Siegmund pulls the sword from the tree and claims Sieglinde as his bride, rejoicing in the union of the Wälsungs.

Act II

Wotan tells his warrior daughter, the Valkyrie Brünnhilde, that she must defend his mortal son Siegmund in his upcoming battle with Hunding. She leaves joyfully to do what he has asked, as Fricka, Wotan's wife and the goddess of marriage, appears. Fricka insists that Wotan must defend Hunding's marriage rights against Siegmund. She ignores his argument that Siegmund could save the gods by winning back the Nibelung Alberich's all-powerful ring from the dragon Fafner. When Wotan realizes he is caught in his own trap—he will lose

his power if he does not enforce the law—he submits to his wife’s demands. Fricka leaves, and Wotan, devastated, tells the returning Brünnhilde about the theft of the Rhinegold and Alberich’s curse on it. Brünnhilde is shocked to hear her father, his plans in ruins, order her to fight for Hunding.

Siegmond comforts his fearful bride and watches over her when she falls asleep. Brünnhilde appears to him as if in a vision, telling him he will soon die and go to Valhalla. He replies that he will not leave Sieglinde and threatens to kill himself and his bride if his sword has no power against Hunding. Moved by his steadfastness and devotion, Brünnhilde decides to defy Wotan and help Siegmund. Siegmund bids farewell to Sieglinde when he hears the approaching Hunding’s challenge. The two men fight and Siegmund is about to be victorious, when Wotan appears and shatters Siegmund’s sword, leaving him to be killed by Hunding. Brünnhilde escapes with Sieglinde and the broken weapon. Wotan contemptuously kills Hunding with a wave of his hand and leaves to punish Brünnhilde for her disobedience.

Act III

Brünnhilde’s eight warrior sisters have gathered on the Valkyries’ Rock, bearing slain heroes to Valhalla. They are surprised to see Brünnhilde arrive with a woman, Sieglinde. When they realize she is fleeing Wotan’s wrath, they are afraid to hide her. Sieglinde is numb with despair until Brünnhilde tells her she bears Siegmund’s child. Now eager to be saved, she takes the pieces of the sword from Brünnhilde, thanks her, and rushes off into the forest to hide from Wotan. When the god appears, he sentences Brünnhilde to become a mortal woman, silencing her sisters’ objections by threatening to do the same to them. Left alone with her father, Brünnhilde pleads that in disobeying his orders she was really doing what he wished. Wotan will not give in: she must lie in sleep, a prize for any man who finds her. She asks to be surrounded in sleep by a wall of fire that only the bravest hero can pierce. Both sense this hero must be the child that Sieglinde will bear. Sadly renouncing his daughter, Wotan kisses Brünnhilde’s eyes with sleep and mortality before summoning Loge, the demigod of fire, to encircle the rock. As flames spring up, the departing Wotan invokes a spell defying anyone who fears his spear to brave the flames.

Met Titles

To activate, press the red button to the right of the screen in front of your seat and follow the instructions provided. To turn off the display, press the red button once again. If you have questions please ask an usher at intermission.

Richard Wagner

Der Ring des Nibelungen

Premiere: Bayreuth Festival House, 1876

The *Ring* is a four-day saga depicting the passing of the Old Age of gods, giants, dwarves, dragons, and nature spirits, and the dawning of the Age of Man. Wagner, who wrote his own librettos, developed a new musical-dramatic vocabulary to tell this story: characters, things, and ideas are represented by leitmotifs, or “leading motives,” musical themes that continually evolve and transform over the course of the cycle. The *Ring’s* artistic scope is vast and the musical and aesthetic implications are endless and varied. At its core, however, it is a drama driven by the actions of a handful of memorable characters. Chief among these are Wotan, lord of the gods, whose ideals are loftier than his methods; the magnificently evil dwarf Alberich, the Nibelung of the title; the loving twins Siegmund and Sieglinde; their savage child Siegfried; and, perhaps above all, the Valkyrie Brünnhilde, who encompasses both humanity and divinity.

The Creator

Richard Wagner (1813–1883) was the complex, controversial creator of music–drama masterpieces that stand at the center of today’s operatic repertory. Born in Leipzig, Germany, he was an artistic revolutionary who reimagined every supposition about music and theater. Wagner insisted that words and music were equals in his works. This approach led to the idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk, or “total work of art,” combining music, poetry, architecture, painting, and other disciplines, a notion that has had an impact on creative fields far beyond opera.

The Setting

The drama of the *Ring* unfolds in a mythical world, at the center of which is the Rhine river as the embodiment of nature. In the first part of the cycle, *Das Rheingold*, the settings are remote and otherworldly: ethereal mountaintops and caves deep under the earth. Throughout the subsequent operas, the locations gradually become more familiar as parts of the human world, with only nature (the Rhine) continuing seamlessly over time.

Die Walküre: The Music

Throughout the *Ring* cycle, Wagner uses a system of musical themes, or leitmotifs, associated with characters, events, emotions, and things. This fascinating approach has been the subject of intense musicological and philosophical investigation. A good example of how it works is found at the very beginning of *Die Walküre*, when the “thunder theme” is heard. It was first introduced in the final scene of

Das Rheingold, before the gods enter Valhalla. In *Die Walküre*, it is apparent that this theme (like most of the *Ring's* leitmotifs) has a direct, literal meaning—the character Siegmund is running through a storm—and also a less direct, oblique significance—we subconsciously connect Siegmund with the divinities in Valhalla, even before the character himself discovers his true identity. The entire first act of *Die Walküre* depicts the experience of falling in love in one great arc, from initial attraction to consummation. It is one of the theater's most convincing portrayals of the power of love—even if the lovers in question are in fact twin brother and sister. At the beginning of Act II, the iconic character of Brünnhilde bursts onto the stage with the war cry of “Hojotoho!” The role demands both power and subtlety at the singer's very first appearance. Later in the act, there is a sense of ritual as Brünnhilde tells Siegmund he will die in battle: the formality of the music turns into less structured dialogue as emotions overtake rules, a symbol of humanity taking power from the gods. The beginning of Act III features the famous Ride of the Valkyries. In a dramatic masterstroke, Wagner uses the sound of eight powerful female voices, punctuated by shrieking laughter, to depict the terrible thrill of combat. The opera ends with some of the most moving music ever composed, as Wotan intones his farewell to Brünnhilde.

The Ring at the Met

Die Walküre was the first segment of the *Ring* to be heard at the Met, in 1885, during the company's second season. Leopold Damrosch conducted a cast that included two veterans of the Bayreuth Festival, Amalie Materna and Marianne Brandt. After Damrosch's death, the remaining *Ring* operas received their American premieres at the Met between 1887 and 1889, conducted by Wagner's former assistant at Bayreuth, Anton Seidl. The complete cycle was presented eight times in the spring of 1889, including four performances in Philadelphia, Boston, Milwaukee, Chicago, and St. Louis. The uncut cycles conducted by Franz Schalk in 1898–99 began a sequence of 19 consecutive seasons with *Ring* cycles. Performances resumed after World War I in 1924–25, conducted by Artur Bodanzky, and continued without interruption until 1945. A production designed by Lee Simonson, first seen in 1947–48, had a short life and was succeeded, beginning in 1967, by a new staging directed and conducted by Herbert von Karajan, with sets by Günther Schneider-Siemssen, that originated at the Salzburg Easter Festival. It was not completed until 1974–75, without Karajan, and then had only three cycle performances. Otto Schenk's production, with new designs by Schneider-Siemssen, was introduced over three seasons beginning with *Die Walküre* on Opening Night 1986. The complete cycle was first seen in the spring of 1989 and made its final appearance in the 2008–09 season. All 21 cycles of the Schenk production were conducted by James Levine. The current staging by Robert Lepage, the eighth in the history of the Met, was unveiled with the premiere of *Das Rheingold*, again conducted by Maestro Levine, on Opening Night of the 2010–11 season.

Program Note

“My *Walküre* turns out terribly beautiful,” Richard Wagner wrote to his friend, the composer Franz Liszt, on June 16, 1852. “I hope to submit to you the whole poem of the tetralogy before the end of the summer. The music will be easily and quickly done, for it is only the execution of something practically ready.”

For neither the first nor the last time in Wagner’s life, things did not work out quite as he had planned. By the end of that year he had, indeed, finished the libretto (or “poem,” as he called it) for his four-part cycle *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (“The Ring of the Nibelung”), based on stories from ancient Germanic and Norse myths. But the music for *Walküre* was not finished until December 1854, and it was another year and a half before he completed the orchestration.

The *Ring* begins with *Das Rheingold*, a one-act work Wagner called a “Preliminary Evening.” *Die Walküre* (“First Day of the Festival Play”) is next, followed by *Siegfried*, then *Götterdämmerung*. It all started in 1848 when Wagner wrote 11 pages he published as *The Nibelung Myth: as Sketch for a Drama*. But it was almost 30 years before the first performance of the completed work was given in a theater Wagner had constructed specifically for that purpose in Bayreuth, Germany. His intention was for the *Ring* to be performed as a whole, rather than broken up into its individual operas. It’s a monumental work in both scope and impact, and it is not going too far to say many people who attend a cycle feel their lives have been changed forever by the experience.

Most modern performances of the *Ring* are spread over a week, as Wagner wished, but since the composer’s own time, theaters have also been presenting the separate parts on their own. *Walküre* quickly became the most enduringly popular, for a number of reasons. For one thing, after the gods, goddesses, dwarves, and giants of *Rheingold*, *Walküre* introduces human beings into the story of the *Ring*. It begins with two very sympathetic people, Siegmund and Sieglinde, and the first act is devoted to them falling in love. “The score of the first act of *Walküre* will soon be ready; it is wonderfully beautiful. I have done nothing like it or approaching it before,” Wagner told Liszt. He was right. The music of *Die Walküre* builds significantly on *Das Rheingold*, where he had begun using leitmotifs to construct the music. These short segments of melody, rhythm, or harmony could be associated with a character or a dramatic event, even an emotion or an object. In *Walküre*, Wagner used them to help suspend time itself while the drama took place, wordlessly, *inside* the characters. Thanks to Wagner’s brilliant writing for orchestra—something he had to develop even above what he had done in *Rheingold*—the audience actually experiences for themselves the inner lives of the characters on stage.

Just moments into Act I of *Die Walküre*, Sieglinde offers Siegmund some water. The stage directions say: “Siegmund drinks and hands her back the horn. As he signals his thanks with his head, his glance fastens on her features with

growing interest.” To underline these stage directions, Wagner silences the orchestra entirely, except for a single cello. For nine measures this lone cello plays some of the sweetest, most yearning music imaginable, before being joined by the rest of the cellos and two basses for another eight measures. Listeners need not know what labels commentators have attached to the music to experience for themselves the longing in Siegmund’s soul, the love that is even then starting to blossom.

The plot of *Die Walküre* can be summarized in a few dozen words; the outer events are relatively simple. But the inner journey of the characters is uncommonly rich and complex. It’s the difference between flying from New York to California and driving there: You fly because you want to get to your destination as quickly as possible. But if you drive, the journey itself becomes the point.

In *Walküre*, Wagner’s music has a new power that compels us to let him be our guide on the quest he is undertaking. That’s how he allows us to experience for ourselves the growing love between Siegmund and Sieglinde, to feel the rightness, the naturalness of it. The powerful nature of their love is well established long before they (and we) discover they are brother and sister, so our emotions accept their love, even if our mind—assuming we can wrench it away from Wagner’s music—might have a few questions.

In addition to Siegmund and Sieglinde, we meet Brünnhilde, one of the central characters in the *Ring*. She enters the story in Act II, singing one of the most famous (and one of the shortest) “numbers” in the entire cycle, the battle cry “Hojotoho!” Wagner was extraordinarily careful in noting exactly how this should be sung. The first two syllables (“Ho-jo”) are a single phrase, followed by a sixteenth note (“to”), then the last syllable (“ho”) to be held for five beats, followed by a single beat rest. This gives the music a quick, bouncy quality that is emphasized later when Wagner asks the soprano to sing the final “ho” on two notes, separated by an octave leap but connected smoothly, ending on high Bs and then high Cs. He also asks her to trill—nonstop—for almost two measures before launching up to a high B and holding it for two measures. If a soprano can sing this incredibly difficult “Hojotoho!” as Wagner intended, the audience cannot help but be charmed by the impetuous, cheeky, rambunctious teenage girl sassing her father, Wotan—to his delight and ours. Her character, and her relationship with Wotan, are firmly established within a couple of minutes.

It is also one of the few genuinely joyful moments in *Walküre*, an opera rather short on happiness. While in the thick of composing, Wagner lamented to his friend, the Princess Sayn-Wittgenstein, “I find the subject of *Die Walküre* too painful by far: there’s really not one of the world’s sorrows that the work does not express, and in the most painful form; playing artistic games with that pain is taking its revenge on me: it has made me really ill several times already, so that I have had to stop completely.”

Another reason for the popularity of *Walküre* is that we are likely to find ourselves mirrored in it—if not in the new love enjoyed by Sieglinde and Siegmund in Act I, then by the dilemma facing Wotan in Act II, as he realizes that all of his careful planning is for naught and that, despite his best efforts, his life has taken a terrible turn, leaving him no way out. The scene in which Wotan wrestles with this crisis caused Wagner no end of trouble, and he agonized over whether or not people would grasp what Wotan is going through. “For the development of the great tetralogy, this is the most important scene of all,” he insisted.

Wotan’s anguish continues, with a new focus, in the final act. Its ending is one of the most extraordinary in all of opera, with a sense of loss, grief, abandonment, and yet overwhelming love as Wotan is forced to let go of the most precious thing in the world to him, Brünnhilde. It seems like a bitter defeat: his cherished son Siegmund is dead. His favorite child, Brünnhilde, is banished forever. His plans—to create a hero who would be able to win back the ring and return it to the Rhinemaidens and thus save the gods—have crumbled to nothingness. He has nowhere to turn.

And yet it is *because* of these apparent failures that Siegfried (in the next opera) turns out to be the very hero the gods need. This glimmer of hope, in the middle of such overwhelming sorrow, is surely another reason why *Die Walküre* is such a beloved opera.

Bavaria’s King Ludwig II was not willing to wait until Wagner had completed the entire *Ring* before experiencing *Die Walküre* in the theater. Against Wagner’s wishes, the opera was given for the first time on June 26, 1870, in Munich, nine months after the premiere of *Das Rheingold*. Wagner refused to be involved in any way, and he asked his friends not to attend. The famous violinist Joseph Joachim was there. So were Brahms and Saint-Saëns. Despite his friendship with Wagner, Liszt went and sobbed through part of the opera. Even newspapers usually critical of Wagner pronounced *Die Walküre* an extraordinary work of art.

The fact that opera houses continue to devote considerable time and resources to presenting *Die Walküre* in new ways proves that Liszt did not exaggerate in his assessment when he wrote to Wagner, “Your *Walküre* [score] has arrived, and I should like to reply to you by your *Lohengrin* chorus, sung by 1,000 voices, and repeated a thousandfold: ‘A wonder! A wonder!’”

—Paul Thomason

The Cast



Fabio Luisi

CONDUCTOR (GENOA, ITALY)

THIS SEASON *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Les Troyens*, *Aida*, and Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Met; *Don Carlo* at La Scala; *Jenůfa*, *Tosca*, *La Bohème*, *Rigoletto*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, and Bellini's *La Straniera* at the Zurich Opera; and concerts with the MET Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, the Vienna Symphony, and Philharmonia Zürich.

MET APPEARANCES *Don Giovanni*, *Manon*, *La Traviata*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Elektra*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Tosca*, *Lulu*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Die Ägyptische Helena*, *Turandot*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Rigoletto*, *Don Carlo* (debut, 2005), and the *Ring* cycle.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is principal conductor of the Met, chief conductor of the Vienna Symphony, and general music director of the Zurich Opera. He made his La Scala debut last season with *Manon*, his Salzburg Festival debut in 2003 leading Strauss's *Die Liebe der Danae* (returning the following season for *Die Ägyptische Helena*), and his American debut with the Lyric Opera of Chicago leading *Rigoletto*. He also appears regularly with the Vienna State Opera, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and Berlin's Deutsche Oper and Staatsoper.



Stephanie Blythe

MEZZO-SOPRANO (MONGAUP VALLEY, NEW YORK)

THIS SEASON Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, and Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* at the Met, and a U.S. tour culminating in a recital at Carnegie Hall.

MET APPEARANCES More than 150 performances of 25 roles including Orfeo in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Eduige in *Rodelinda*, Amneris in *Aida*, Ježibaba in *Rusalka*, Ulrica, Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare*, Jocasta in *Oedipus Rex*, Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff*, Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress*, and the Alto Solo in *Parsifal* (debut, 1995).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Azucena for her debut at the San Francisco Opera and in concert for her debut with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Baba the Turk at Covent Garden, Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus* at the Arizona Opera, Dalila in *Samson et Dalila* at the Pittsburgh Opera, Isabella in *L'Italiana in Algeri* and Carmen in Seattle, Azucena and Mistress Quickly at Covent Garden, Isabella in Philadelphia and Santa Fe, and Cornelia and Mistress Quickly at the Paris Opera. She is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



Katarina Dalayman

SOPRANO (STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN)

THIS SEASON Kundry in *Parsifal* and Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung* at the Met and Brünnhilde at Munich's Bavarian State Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Isolde and Brangäne (debut, 1999) in *Tristan und Isolde*, the Duchess of Parma in Busoni's *Doktor Faust*, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, Lisa in *The Queen of Spades*, and Marie in *Wozzeck*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She has sung the title roles of *Elektra* and *Carmen*, Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier*, and Brünnhilde in *Ring* performances in Stockholm; Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival; Desdemona in *Otello*, Eva in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Mimi in *La Bohème*, and Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* in Stuttgart; Brünnhilde in *Ring* performances at the Vienna State Opera; Marie at Covent Garden and in Paris; Ariadne in *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Paris, Brussels, Dresden, and Munich; Tosca in Copenhagen and Berlin; Lisa with Lyric Opera of Chicago and in Munich; the Duchess of Parma at the Salzburg Festival; Judith in *Bluebeard's Castle* at Covent Garden; and Kundry at Paris's Bastille Opera.



Martina Serafin

SOPRANO (VIENNA, AUSTRIA)

THIS SEASON Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* with the Paris Opera and for her debut at the Met, Maddalena in *Andrea Chénier* at the Vienna State Opera, and the title role of Tosca with the Paris Opera, Vienna State Opera, and at Covent Garden.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She made her debut at the Vienna State Opera in 2005 as Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* and has returned to that company as the Marchallin in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Lisa in *The Queen of Spades*, and Sieglinde. She has also sung Tosca and Donna Elvira at the Arena di Verona, Tosca at La Scala and in Florence, the title role of *Turandot* in Zurich, the Marschallin at Munich's Bavarian State Opera, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at the Los Angeles Opera, Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* in Stuttgart, Lisa in Bologna and Barcelona, and Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser* in Rome.



Mark Delavan

BARITONE (PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY)

THIS SEASON Giacinto in *Francesca da Rimini* and Wotan in Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Met, the title role of *Rigoletto* with Pittsburgh Opera, and Scarpia in *Tosca* with the San Francisco Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Tomsky in *The Queen of Spades*, Amonasro in *Aida* (debut, 2001), Gérard in *Andrea Chénier*, Don Carlo in *La Forza del Destino*, the Messenger in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, Nabucco, Rigoletto, and Simon Boccanegra.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Wotan and the Wanderer in *Ring* performances with the San Francisco Opera and Deutsche Oper Berlin, Scarpia with the Canadian Opera Company and Pittsburgh Opera, and Mandryka in *Arabella* with the Santa Fe Opera. He has also sung Jupiter in Strauss's *Die Liebe der Danae* with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera* for Lyric Opera of Chicago, Iago in *Otello* with the Deutsche Oper Berlin and Opera Company of Philadelphia, and Jochanaan in *Salome* at Barcelona's Liceu.



Hans-Peter König

BASS (DÜSSELDORF, GERMANY)

THIS SEASON Fafner, Hunding, and Hagen in Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Met and with Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Orest in *Elektra* and the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* in Düsseldorf, Heinrich in *Lohengrin* in Munich, King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde* and Heinrich with the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and Hagen with Paris's Bastille Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* (debut, 2010) and Daland in *Der Fliegende Holländer*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS A member of Düsseldorf's Deutsche Oper am Rhein, he was awarded the title of Kammersänger there for his outstanding contributions to music. His wide-ranging repertoire encompasses leading bass roles of Wagner, Verdi, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, and Strauss, among others, that he has sung with many of the world's leading opera companies. He has appeared as a guest artist at opera houses and festivals including Covent Garden, the Bayreuth Festival, Baden-Baden Festival, La Scala, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Barcelona's Liceu, Florence's Maggio Musicale, and Munich's Bavarian State Opera, as well as in Dresden, Tokyo, Hamburg, and São Paulo.



Simon O'Neill

TENOR (TIMARU, NEW ZEALAND)

THIS SEASON Siegmund in *Die Walküre* at La Scala, Covent Garden, Vienna State Opera, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and the Met, Cavaradossi in *Tosca* in Tokyo, and the title role of *Parsifal* in concert with the Balthasar-Neumann-Ensemble.

MET APPEARANCES High Priest in *Idomeneo* (debut, 2006).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has sung the title roles of *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal* at the Bayreuth Festival, *Lohengrin* with the Houston Grand Opera, Cavaradossi in Berlin, Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung* at the La Coruña Festival, and Max in *Der Freischütz* at Vienna's Theater an der Wien. He has also sung Florestan in *Fidelio* and Jenik in *The Bartered Bride* at Covent Garden, Mitch in Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* at Vienna's Theater an der Wien, and Rodolfo in *La Bohème* with New Orleans Opera. He was Grand Finalist in the 2002 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.



PHOTO: ANNEMARIE HEINRICH/MET OPERA ARCHIVES

Remembering Risë Stevens

JUNE 11, 1913 – MARCH 20, 2013

Shortly after this issue of *Playbill* had gone to press, the Met family was saddened by the news of the death of mezzo-soprano Risë Stevens, just shy of her 100th birthday (an event we were looking forward to celebrating in the front of this program).

A consummate artist, treasured colleague, and devoted supporter of the company for 75 years, Stevens sang 337 performances with the Met, most frequently in the title role of

Carmen and as Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* (pictured). After her retirement from the stage in 1961, she continued her work as a tireless advocate for both the company and for opera as an art form, serving as director of the Metropolitan Opera National Company and of the National Council Auditions, advisor to the Young Artist Development Program, and a managing director on the Met's board. We extend our sincerest condolences to her family and her many friends and admirers.

ON STAGE NOW

*Two new productions and
the complete Ring cycle!*

HANDEL

Giulio Cesare

APR 4, 9, 12, 19, 22, 27 mat, 30 **MAY** 3, 7, 10

David Daniels and Natalie Dessay star as Caesar and Cleopatra in David McVicar's witty and effervescent new production, which won extraordinary acclaim at Glyndebourne.

VERDI

Rigoletto

APR 13, 16, 20, 24, 27 **MAY** 1

In Michael Mayer's bold new production, set in Las Vegas, George Gagnidze sings the title role and Lisette Oropesa is his beautiful daughter, Gilda, who falls under the spell of Vittorio Grigolo's womanizing Duke.

WAGNER

Der Ring des Nibelungen

Robert Lepage's landmark production of Wagner's epic returns for three complete cycles this spring, celebrating the 200th anniversary of the composer's birth. Met Principal Conductor Fabio Luisi leads a cast of some of the world's greatest Wagner singers, headed by Deborah Voigt as Brünnhilde and Jay Hunter Morris as Siegfried.

Das Rheingold **APR** 6 mat, 25 **MAY** 4

Die Walküre **APR** 13 mat, 26 **MAY** 6

Siegfried **APR** 20 mat, 29 **MAY** 8

Götterdämmerung **APR** 23 **MAY** 2, 11 mat

Visit metopera.org for full casting information and ticket availability.

ACT I SHADOW VIDEO

Combat choreographer and performer **Olivier Lunardi-Dussault**

Performers **Ella and Lily-Anne Barry-Brisson (twins), Geneviève Bérubé, Sébastien Fortin,**

Katrine Patry, Jacinthe Pauzé Boisvert, Francis Roberge, Jean-François Savard, Pascal Tremblay

Produced by **Ciné Scène**

ADDITIONAL EX MACHINA PRODUCTION STAFF

Costume prototypes **Atelier de Couture Sonya B., Jessica Poirier-Chang, Richard Provost, Valérie**

Deschênes; Wig and make up research Florence Cornet; Properties production

Atelier Sylvain Racine, Paul Duval, Boscus, Tridim, Inventions Guité; Acrobatic harnesses Climbing

Sutra; Lighting assistants Vally Tremblay, David Lavallée; Set designer assistants Anna Tusell Sanchez,

Santiago Martos Gonzalez

WORKSHOP PERFORMERS Anne Barry, Geneviève Bérubé, Guillaume Chouinard, Michael Duffy,

Andrea Legg, Guy Lessard, Jacinthe Pauzé Boisvert, Jenny Ritchie, Francis Roberge, Éric Robidoux,

Martin Vaillancourt

lacaserne.net

Yamaha is the official piano of the Metropolitan Opera.