

Richard Wagner

Götterdämmerung

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
Lionel Arnould
DEBUT

GENERAL MANAGER
Peter Gelb

MUSIC DIRECTOR
James Levine

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR
Fabio Luisi

Libretto by the composer

Friday, January 27, 2012, 6:00–11:55 pm

Premiere
New Production

The production of *Götterdämmerung* 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

2011–12 Season

The 225th Metropolitan Opera performance of

Richard Wagner's

Götterdämmerung

CONDUCTOR

Fabio Luisi

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

First Norn

Maria Radner

DEBUT

Second Norn

Elizabeth Bishop

Third Norn

Heidi Melton

Brünnhilde

Deborah Voigt

Siegfried

Jay Hunter Morris

Gunther

Iain Paterson

Hagen

Hans-Peter König

Gutrune

Wendy Bryn Harmer *

Waltraute

Waltraud Meier

Alberich

Eric Owens

Woglinde

Erin Morley *

Wellgunde

Jennifer Johnson Cano *

Flosshilde

Tamara Mumford *

STAGE HORN SOLO

Erik Ralske

This performance is being broadcast live on Metropolitan Opera Radio on SiriusXM channel 74 and streamed at metopera.org.

Friday, January 27, 2012, 6:00–11:55 pm



Deborah Voigt and Jay Hunter Morris in Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*

Ken Howard/Metropolitan Opera

Chorus Master **Donald Palumbo**
Stage Band Conductor **Gregory Buchalter**
Musical Preparation **Linda Hall, John Keenan, Howard Watkins, Carrie-Ann Matheson, Jonathan Kelly, and John Fisher**
Assistant Stage Directors **Gina Lapinski, Stephen Pickover, J. Knighten Smit, and Paula Williams**
German Coach **Irene Spiegelman**
Prompter **Carrie-Ann Matheson**
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 executed by **Metropolitan Opera Wig Department**

EX MACHINA PRODUCTION STAFF

Artistic Consultant **Rebecca Blankenship**
Production Manager **Bernard Gilbert**, Assistant **Viviane Paradis**
Technical Director **Michel Gosselin**, Assistant **Éric Gautron**
Automation Designer **Tobie Horswill**, Assistant **Stanislas Élie**
Video Project Manager **Catherine Guay**
Initial Interactive Video Designer **Holger Förterer**
Properties Project Manager **Stéphane Longpré**
Rig & Safety Adviser **Guy St-Amour**
Costume Project Manager **Charline Boulerice**
Puppeteering Consultant **Martin Vaillancourt**
Musical Consultant **Georges Nicholson**
Rehearsal Stage Manager **Félix Dagenais**
Interactive Content Designers **Réalisations.net**
Production Coordinators **Vanessa Landry-Claverie** and **Nadia Bellefeuille**
Producer **Michel Bernatchez**

Projectors provided by **Panasonic**
Projection technology consultants **Scharff Weisberg**
Additional projection equipment **Christie Digital**

* Graduate of the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program

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.

Synopsis

Prologue

SCENE 1 A high mountain plateau

SCENE 2 Brünnhilde's mountaintop

Act I

SCENE 1 The hall of the Gibichungs on the Rhine

SCENE 2 Brünnhilde's mountaintop

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 8:00 PM)

Act II

The hall of the Gibichungs

Intermission (AT APPROXIMATELY 9:50 PM)

Act III

SCENE 1 A forest clearing by the Rhine

SCENE 2 The hall of the Gibichungs

Prologue

At night in the mountains, the three Norns, daughters of Erda, weave the rope of destiny. They tell how Wotan ordered the world ash tree, from which his spear was once cut, to be felled and its wood piled around Valhalla. The burning of the pyre will mark the end of the old order. Suddenly the rope breaks. Their wisdom ended, the Norns descend into the earth.

Dawn breaks on the Valkyries' rock, and Siegfried and Brünnhilde emerge. Having cast protective spells on Siegfried, Brünnhilde sends him into the world to do heroic deeds. As a pledge of his love, Siegfried gives her the ring he took from the dragon Fafner, and she offers her horse, Grane, in return. Siegfried sets off on his travels.

Act I

In the hall of the Gibichungs on the banks of the Rhine, Hagen advises his half-siblings, Gunther and Gutrune, to strengthen their rule through marriage. He suggests Brünnhilde as Gunther's bride and Siegfried as Gutrune's husband. Since only the strongest hero can pass through the fire on Brünnhilde's rock, Hagen proposes a plan: a potion will make Siegfried forget Brünnhilde and fall in love with Gutrune. To win her, he will claim Brünnhilde for Gunther. When Siegfried's horn is heard from the river, Hagen calls him ashore. Gutrune offers him the potion. Siegfried drinks and immediately confesses his love for her. When Gunther describes the perils of winning his chosen bride, Siegfried offers to use the Tarnhelm to transform himself into Gunther. The two men take an oath of blood brotherhood and set out on their quest.

Waltraute, horrified by the impending destruction of Valhalla, comes to Brünnhilde's rock, pleading with her sister to return the ring to the Rhinemaidens, its rightful owners, to save the gods. Brünnhilde refuses, declaring she could never part with Siegfried's gift. Waltraute leaves in despair. Hearing Siegfried's horn in the distance, Brünnhilde is overjoyed but becomes terrified when a stranger appears before her, claiming her as Gunther's bride and tearing the ring from her hand.

Act II

Outside the Gibichungs' hall at night, Hagen's father, Alberich, appears to his son as if in a dream and reminds him to win back the ring. Dawn breaks and Siegfried arrives. Hagen summons the Gibichungs to welcome Gunther, who enters with the humiliated Brünnhilde. When she sees Siegfried, she furiously denounces him, but he, still under the spell of the potion, doesn't understand her anger. Noticing the ring on Siegfried's finger, Brünnhilde demands to know who gave it to him, since it was taken from her, supposedly by Gunther, just the night before. She accuses Siegfried of having stolen the ring and declares that he is her husband. Siegfried protests, swearing on Hagen's spear that he has done no wrong. Brünnhilde now only wants vengeance. Hagen offers to kill Siegfried, but she explains that she has protected his body with magic—except for his back, which she knows he would never turn to an enemy. Gunther hesitatingly joins the conspiracy of murder.

Act III

Siegfried, separated from his hunting party, meets the three Rhinemaidens by the banks of the river. They ask him to return the ring to them, but he refuses in order to prove he doesn't fear its curse. The Rhinemaidens predict his imminent death and disappear as Hagen, Gunther, and the other hunters arrive. Encouraged by Hagen, Siegfried tells of his youth and his life with Mime, the forging of the sword Nothung, and his fight with the dragon. While he is talking, Hagen makes him drink an antidote to the potion. His memory restored, Siegfried describes how he walked through the fire and woke Brünnhilde. At this, Hagen stabs him in the back with the spear on which Siegfried had sworn. When Gunther expresses his shock, Hagen claims that he avenged a false oath. Siegfried remembers Brünnhilde with his last words and dies.

Back at the hall, Guttrune wonders what has happened to Siegfried. When his body is brought in, she accuses Gunther of murder, who replies that Hagen is to blame. The two men fight about the ring and Gunther is killed. As Hagen reaches for the ring, the dead Siegfried threateningly raises his arm. Brünnhilde enters and calmly orders a funeral pyre to be built on the banks of the Rhine. She denounces the gods for their guilt in Siegfried's death, takes the ring from his hand, and promises it to the Rhinemaidens. Then she lights the pyre and leaps into the flames. The river overflows its banks and destroys the hall. Hagen, trying to get to the ring, is dragged into the water by the Rhinemaidens, who joyfully reclaim their gold. In the distance, Valhalla and the gods are seen engulfed in flames.

Richard Wagner

Götterdämmerung

Premiere: Bayreuth Festival House, 1876

A culmination of the dramatic and musical ideas set forth in the previous three works of the *Ring*, the final opera of Wagner's cycle is also a complete and monumental theatrical journey of its own. The central conflict of the *Ring* remains the same over the course of four operas, but the protagonists change. In *Götterdämmerung* ("Twilight of the Gods") the ring that the Nibelung dwarf Alberich made out of the stolen Rhinegold continues to rule the destinies of humans, including Alberich's own son Hagen. Wotan, the lord of the gods and a major figure in the first three operas, has withdrawn from ruling the world and directing its fate and does not appear, while his mortal grandson Siegfried is both the owner and the victim of the ring forged years before his birth. Only Brünnhilde, once a warrior goddess and now Siegfried's mortal wife, has the perspective and wisdom to grasp the full significance of the situation—her journey toward the ultimate sacrifice that will absolve heaven and earth from its primal corruption is the great drama of this opera.

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 *Ring* is set in a mythological world, beginning, in *Das Rheingold*, beneath the earth (the depths of the Rhine river, the caves of the dwarfs) and above it (the gods' sky-bound realm of Valhalla). Throughout the action, the setting moves inexorably toward the human dimension. By the time we reach *Götterdämmerung*, the focus has clearly shifted: the gods do not appear as characters and they no longer interact directly with humans but are referred to in reminiscences and represented by altars and symbols. The libretto doesn't mention specific places, with the notable exception of the Rhine, indicating that

this symbol of nature is an important aspect of both the beginning and the end of the entire cycle.

The Music

The musical ideas set forth in the first three parts of the *Ring* find their full expression in this opera. *Götterdämmerung* contains several of the one-on-one confrontations typical of the *Ring*, but a considerable amount of the vocal writing departs from the forms established in the previous operas. The first appearance of true ensemble singing in the trio at the end of Act II and the use of a chorus signify a shift from the rarified world of the gods to an entirely human perspective. Wagner famously interrupted work on the *Ring* for more than a decade, while in the midst of writing *Siegfried*, to compose *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. When he returned to complete the cycle, his creative abilities had evolved. Perhaps the most striking orchestral passage of the entire *Ring* is Siegfried's Funeral Music in Act III, which is built around a succession of leitmotifs from all parts of the cycle that represent the hero's life story, interspersed with the repetition of two thunderous chords that encapsulate the finality of death. *Götterdämmerung* presents unique challenges for the lead tenor and soprano, culminating in a cathartic 15-minute narrative by Brünnhilde that is among the longest and most powerful unbroken vocal solos in the operatic repertory.

Götterdämmerung at the Met

The Met presented the U.S. premiere of *Götterdämmerung* in 1888, with Anton Seidl (one of Wagner's assistants at the first Bayreuth Festival) conducting fellow Bayreuth alumni Lilli Lehmann and Albert Niemann as Brünnhilde and Siegfried. The Norn and Waltraute scenes were cut in this performance. The following year, the production was part of the first American *Ring* cycle (with the Hagen–Alberich scene in Act II omitted as well). The first uncut *Götterdämmerung* was seen in 1899, starring Lillian Nordica as Brünnhilde and brothers Jean and Edouard de Reszke as Siegfried and Hagen, respectively. New productions followed in 1904 and 1914; in 1908, *Götterdämmerung* was the first German opera Arturo Toscanini conducted at the Met, in his first season with the company. Lauritz Melchior sang the role of Siegfried in this opera 51 times at the Met between 1929 and 1948. Among the most notable Brünnhildes in this era were Kirsten Flagstad (17 performances from 1935 to 1941 and an additional one in 1951) and the Australian Marjorie Lawrence, who capped off the Immolation Scene by mounting a live horse and leaping into the stage "flames." Herbert Graf directed a new production in 1948, with Fritz Stiedry conducting Melchior and St. Louis native Helen Traubel. Herbert von Karajan's production was seen in 1974 with Rafael Kubelik on the podium and a cast led by Birgit Nilsson and Jess Thomas. In 1988 James Levine conducted the premiere of Otto Schenk's production, starring Hildegard Behrens, Toni Krämer, and Matti Salminen as Hagen. Robert Lepage's new staging, which completes the eighth *Ring* cycle in Met history, opens January 27, 2012.



The Metropolitan
Opera

2011-12 SEASON

Anna Netrebko as Anna Bolena
Photographed by Brigitte Lacombe

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Program Note

“The most astounding fact in all Wagner’s career was probably the writing of the text of *Siegfried’s Death* in 1848,” says Ernest Newman in *Wagner as Man and Artist*. “We can only stand amazed at the audacity of the conception, the imaginative power the work displays, the artistic growth it reveals since *Lohengrin* was written, and the total breach it indicates with the whole of the operatic art of his time. But *Siegfried’s Death* was impossible in the musical idiom of *Lohengrin*; and Wagner must have known this intuitively.”

Even so, it is unlikely that in November of 1848 Wagner understood that his new opera would not be completed for decades, or that it would—under the title *Götterdämmerung*—be the culmination of one of the greatest masterpieces in all of Western civilization, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Earlier that year Wagner had finished orchestrating *Lohengrin*. He was becoming increasingly active in the political turmoil sweeping Dresden (as well as much of Europe). He also made sketches for operas based on the lives of Friedrich Barbarossa and Jesus of Nazareth. That summer he had written the essay “The Wibelungen: World-history from the Saga,” and later he would write “The Nibelung Myth: As Sketch for a Drama.” But there is no indication that at this time Wagner was actively planning on mining the Nibelung saga for more than *Siegfried’s Death*.

In May of 1849 the uprisings in Dresden were put down. Wanted by the police for his political activity, Wagner fled, eventually settling in Switzerland. He produced a number of prose works over the next few years, including the important *Opera and Drama*, written during the winter of 1850–51, and planned an opera called *Wieland the Smith*. In 1850 he also revisited his libretto for *Siegfried’s Death*, making some musical sketches.

The more Wagner thought about it, the more he realized that for the story of the hero’s end to be truly understood by the audience, they needed to know more about what had gone before. So in 1851 he wrote the libretto to *Young Siegfried*, which was then followed (in reverse order) by *Die Walküre* and *Das Rheingold*, spelling out in greater detail why the events of *Siegfried’s Death* occurred. It was not until October of 1869—after composing the music for the first three works in the *Ring*, through Act II of what had become *Siegfried*, as well as *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*—that Wagner again took up the task of creating the music of the drama now known as *Götterdämmerung*. The name change reflected a significant shift in the opera itself, from the death of its hero to the downfall of the gods themselves.

In the earliest version of the story, Brünnhilde took the body of Siegfried to Valhalla, where his death redeemed the gods. Before igniting Siegfried’s funeral pyre, she announced, “Hear then, ye mighty Gods; your wrong-doing is annulled; thank him, the hero who took your guilt upon him.... One only shall rule, All-Father, Glorious One, Thou [Wotan]. This man [Siegfried] I bring you as pledge of thy eternal might: good welcome give him, as is his desert!”

There has been much speculation about why Wagner changed the ending of the *Ring* from this optimistic one, in which Wotan and the gods continued

to rule, to the ending we know today, in which the gods perish. Sometimes this shift is attributed to Wagner's discovery of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*, but that did not occur until the end of 1854, at which point Wagner had completed the text for the *Ring*. Wagner's optimism about a new social order for Europe began crumbling as the revolts of 1848 and 1849 were crushed, and by the time he began making a prose sketch for *Young Siegfried* in May of 1851, he noted: "Guilt of the Gods, and their necessary downfall. Siegfried's mission. Self-annihilation of the Gods."

Wagner's Dresden friend August Röckel, who had only read the libretto of the *Ring*, asked the composer a question that has puzzled audiences at *Götterdämmerung* from the beginning: "Why, seeing that the gold is returned to the Rhine, is it necessary for the gods to perish?"

"I believe that, at a good performance, even the most naïve spectator will be left in no doubt on this point," Wagner replied. "It must be said, however, that the gods' downfall is not the result of points in a contract.... No, the necessity of this downfall arises from our innermost feelings. Thus it was important to justify this sense of necessity *emotionally*.... I have once again realized how much of the work's meaning (given the nature of my poetic intent) is only made clear by the music. I can now no longer bear to look at the poem [the libretto] without music." Or, as he put it in a letter to Franz Liszt, "The thing shall *sound* [the italics are Wagner's] in such a fashion that people shall hear what they cannot see."

Thomas Mann brilliantly summed up the relationship between Wagner's words and music in the speech he gave on the 50th anniversary of the composer's death: "The texts around which it [the music] is woven, which it thereby makes into drama, are not literature—but the music is. It seems to shoot up like a geyser from the pre-civilized bedrock depths of myth (and not only 'seems'; it really does); but in fact—and at the same time—it is carefully considered, calculated, supremely intelligent, full of shrewdness and cunning, and as literary in its conception as the texts are musical in theirs."

Which is why Wagner knew he could not compose the music of *Götterdämmerung* until he had achieved absolute mastery of his compositional technique, which, he explained to Röckel, had "become a close-knit unity: there is scarcely a bar in the orchestra that does not develop out of the preceding unit." As he composed the *Ring*, Wagner greatly expanded his use of leitmotifs—bits of melody, harmony, rhythm, even tonality—far beyond merely representing a character or an object. They became infinitely malleable, and Wagner put them together in ways that became not only increasingly subtle, but also superbly expressive, adding layers of drama and emotion to the events taking place on stage. Even if listeners have no knowledge of the leitmotifs, Wagner's music is still enormously potent and can be a life-changing experience.

"Music drama should be about the insides of the characters," Wagner said. "The object of music drama is the presentation of archetypal situations as

experienced by the participants [Wagner's italics], and to this dramatic end music is a means, albeit a uniquely expressive one."

At first glance, after the uninterrupted flow of drama in the three preceding parts of the *Ring*, the libretto of *Götterdämmerung* might seem a throwback. It has recognizable, easily excerptable arias, a marvelous love duet, a thrilling swearing-of-blood-brotherhood duet, a chilling vengeance trio, and rousing choruses. But when Wagner finally began to compose the music for *Götterdämmerung* he did not rewrite the libretto, other than to make some changes in the wording of the final scene. He knew the libretto worked exactly as it should, providing him with precisely the words and dramatic situations he needed to write some of the greatest orchestral music ever conceived. And it is through the music that Wagner can make dramatic points much more vividly than could be made through words.

One of the most shattering parts of *Götterdämmerung* is Siegfried's Funeral Music. Even played in the concert hall, shorn of the rest of the opera, it makes a tremendous effect. In its proper place during a performance of the full drama, it is overwhelming. A bit of insight into why this is so comes from the diary of Wagner's second wife, Cosima. The entry for September 29, 1871 reads:

'I have composed a Greek chorus,' R[ichard] exclaims to me in the morning, 'but a chorus which will be sung, so to speak, by the orchestra; after Siegfried's death, while the scene is being changed, the Siegmund theme will be played, as if the chorus were saying: 'This was his father'; then the sword motive; and finally his own theme; then the curtain goes up and Gutrune enters, thinking she had heard his horn. How could words ever make the impression that these solemn themes, in their new form, will evoke?'

Cosima does not mention the concept of a Greek chorus in connection with the Immolation Scene or the great orchestral outpouring that follows Brünnhilde's words. But it is impossible not to think of these moments as a magnificent musical threnody for everything that has gone before. Such a profound summing up of complex lives, situations, and emotions must be expressed by the orchestra, because mere words could not do them justice or provide the catharsis that allows for a true transformation and a new beginning—all of which Wagner's music does, perfectly, at the end of *Götterdämmerung*.

Several years after the *Ring* had been given at Bayreuth in 1876, Cosima noted in her diary: "In the evening, before supper, [Richard]...glances through the conclusion of *Götterdämmerung*, and says that never again will he write anything as complicated as that." For many Wagnerians, he never wrote anything better. —*Paul Thomason*

Met Titles

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What's on Stage

This February, rising soprano Angela Meade returns to the role of her Met debut, Elvira in *Ernani*, opposite Marcello Giordani, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, and Ferruccio Furlanetto. Bartlett Sher's production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* returns with Diana Damrau, Colin Lee, and Rodion Pogossov in the principal roles. Stephanie Blythe sings Amneris in *Aida* for the first time at the Met alongside Violeta Urmana in the title role and Marcelo Álvarez as Radamès.

Verdi

ERNANI

FEB 2, 6, 10, 14, 18 eve, 25 mat

Rossini

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

FEB 4 eve, 8, 11 eve, 15, 18 mat

Verdi

AIDA

FEB 9, 13, 16, 20, 23, 28 MAR 3 mat

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The Cast and Creative Team



Fabio Luisi

CONDUCTOR (GENOA, ITALY)

THIS SEASON *Don Giovanni*, *Siegfried*, *Manon*, *La Traviata*, and *Götterdämmerung* at the Met, a concert with the MET Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, *Manon* for his debut at La Scala, and concert engagements with the Cleveland Orchestra, Filarmonica della Scala, Vienna Symphony, and Oslo Philharmonic.

MET APPEARANCES *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Elektra*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Tosca*, *Lulu*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Die Ägyptische Helena*, *Turandot*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Rigoletto*, *Das Rheingold*, and *Don Carlo* (debut, 2005).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is Principal Conductor of the Met and a frequent guest of the Vienna State Opera, Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and Berlin's Deutsche Oper and Staatsoper. He made 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 Orchestre de Paris, Bavarian Radio Symphony, Munich Philharmonic, and Rome's Santa Cecilia Orchestra. He was music director of the Dresden Staatskapelle and Semperoper from 2007 to 2010 and is chief conductor of the Vienna Symphony and music director of Japan's Pacific Music Festival.



Robert Lepage

DIRECTOR (QUEBEC CITY, CANADA)

THIS SEASON Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Met.

MET PRODUCTION *La Damnation de Faust* (debut, 2008).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He is a director, scenic artist, playwright, actor, and film director. In 1984 his play *Circulations* toured Canada, which was followed by *The Dragon's Trilogy*, *Vinci*, *Polygraph*, and *Tectonic Plates*. He founded his production company, Ex Machina, in 1994 and has produced plays including *The Seven Streams of the River Ota* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He wrote and directed his first feature film, *Le Confessionnel*, in 1994 and went on to direct the films *The Polygraph*, *Nô*, *Possible Worlds*, and an adaptation of his play *The Far Side of the Moon*. In 1997 he opened The Caserne, a multidisciplinary production center in Quebec City where he and his team have since created and produced opera productions, film projects, and theatrical and visual works including *The Andersen Project* (2005), *Lipsynch* (2007), *The Blue Dragon* (2008), *Eonnagata* (2009), and *The Image Mill™* (the largest architectural projection ever achieved). He is the creator and director of Cirque du Soleil's *KÅ* (a permanent show in residence in Las Vegas) and *Totem*, and directed Peter Gabriel's *Secret World Tour* (1993) and his *Growing Up Tour* (2002). Operatic directorial projects include *The Rake's Progress* at La Monnaie (2007), Lorin Maazel's *1984* for Covent Garden (2005), *Bluebeard's Castle* and *Erwartung* for the Canadian Opera Company (1992), *La Damnation de Faust* (which was seen in Japan in 1999 and in Paris in 2001, 2004, and 2006), and *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*, which has been seen in Toronto, Aix-en-Provence, Lyon, New York, and Quebec.

The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



Neilson Vignola

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR (MONTREAL, CANADA)

THIS SEASON Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Met.

MET PRODUCTION *La Damnation de Faust* (debut, 2008).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has been the director of productions for several festivals in Quebec, including the International Festival of New Dance and the Festival de Théâtre des Amériques. Since 1981 he has worked on numerous productions with the Quebec Opera, and he was the director of productions for the Montreal Opera from 1990 to 1993. He has collaborated with Robert Lepage and Ex Machina on *La Damnation de Faust* (Japan's Saito Kinen Festival and Paris's Bastille Opera), Maazel's *1984* (Covent Garden), and *The Rake's Progress* (La Monnaie in Brussels). He has also been the technical director and tour manager for Cirque du Soleil's *Saltimbanco*, worked with Lepage on Cirque du Soleil's permanent show *KÀ*, now in residence in Las Vegas, and was the director of creation for the company's permanent show *Zaia* in Macao. He worked again with Lepage on Cirque du Soleil's latest touring show, *Totem*, which opened last May in Montreal.



Carl Fillion

SET DESIGNER (QUEBEC CITY, CANADA)

THIS SEASON Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Met.

MET PRODUCTION *La Damnation de Faust* (debut, 2008).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Since creating the set designs for Robert Lepage's play *The Seven Streams of the River Ota* in 1993, he has worked with the director and Ex Machina on 15 productions, including *Elsinore*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Geometry of Miracles*, *La Celestina*, *Jean-Sans-Nom*, and the operas *La Damnation de Faust*, *1984*, *The Rake's Progress*, and *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*. In addition to working with Lepage, he has worked on various productions in Quebec and Europe, including *Simon Boccanegra* for Barcelona's Liceu, *The Burial at Thebes* for Dublin's Abbey Theatre, and *Totem* (directed by Lepage) for Cirque du Soleil.



François St-Aubin

COSTUME DESIGNER (MONTREAL, CANADA)

THIS SEASON Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Met.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Das Rheingold* (debut, 2010).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has worked with Robert Lepage since 20007, when he designed costumes for *The Blue Dragon*. Since graduating from Canada's National Theatre School he has designed costumes for more than 80 theater productions, a dozen operas, and several contemporary dance companies. Work with Canada's Stratford Festival includes

costumes for *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *An Ideal Husband*, and *Don Juan*. He has also designed costumes for *Carmen* for Montreal Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, and San Diego Opera, and *Macbeth* in Sydney, Melbourne, and Montreal.



Etienne Boucher

LIGHTING DESIGNER (MONTREAL, CANADA)

THIS SEASON Wagner's *Ring* cycle at the Met.

MET PRODUCTIONS *Das Rheingold* (debut, 2010).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He has worked on over 100 productions for theater, dance, musical comedy, and opera since 1999. He has worked with Ex Machina and Robert Lepage since 2004, developing their work together on shows including *Totem* (currently touring with Cirque du Soleil), *La Celestina*, *Lipsynch*, *The Rake's Progress*, and *The Nightingale and Other Short Fables*. In 2011 he was awarded the Redden Award for Excellence in Lighting Design.



Lionel Arnould

VIDEO IMAGE ARTIST (QUEBEC CITY, CANADA)

THIS SEASON *Götterdämmerung* for his debut at the Met.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS He studied at the École des Beaux Arts in Épinal, France, and was introduced to the world of computer graphics in 1991. After moving to Canada in 1995, he discovered the artistic aspects of multimedia while working on several projects for Ex Machina (*The Dragon's Trilogy*, *Busker's Opera*, and *1984*). Since that time he has specialized in video projection design and has worked on numerous contemporary music projects (including Gryphon Trio's *Constantinople* and John Oswald's *Radiant*), contemporary theatre (Théâtre Péril and Théâtre Blanc), and museum installations (Quebec's Museum of Civilization).



Wendy Bryn Harmer

SOPRANO (ROSEVILLE, CALIFORNIA)

THIS SEASON Freia in *Das Rheingold*, Ortlinde in *Die Walküre*, Gutrune in *Götterdämmerung*, and Emma in *Khovanshchina* at the Met and a concert with the Boston Conservatory.

MET APPEARANCES The First Lady in *The Magic Flute*, Chloë in *The Queen of Spades*, the Third Norn in *Götterdämmerung*, First Bridesmaid in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (debut, 2005), a Flower Maiden in *Parsifal*, Barena in *Jenůfa*, a Servant in *Die Ägyptische Helena*, and Dunyasha in *War and Peace*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Glauce in Cherubini's *Medea* for her debut at the Glimmerglass Opera, Wanda in Offenbach's *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein* and Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito* with Opera Boston, Adalgisa in *Norma* at the Palm

The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED

Beach Opera, Mimi in *La Bohème* at the Utah Opera Festival, and Gerhilde in *Die Walküre* for her debut with the San Francisco Opera. She is a graduate of the Met's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program.



Waltraud Meier

MEZZO-SOPRANO (WÜRZBURG, GERMANY)

THIS SEASON Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung* at the Met, Kundry in *Parsifal* and Marie in *Wozzeck* with Munich's Bavarian State Opera, and Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde* with the Berlin State Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Marie in *Wozzeck*, Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Carmen, Leonore in *Fidelio*, Kundry, Fricka in *Das Rheingold* (debut, 1987) and *Die Walküre*, Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, and Venus in *Tannhäuser*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS She sang Kundry every season at the Bayreuth Festival from 1983 through 1993 before moving into dramatic soprano repertoire as well. Notable engagements include Isolde at La Scala, Paris's Bastille Opera, and the Salzburg Festival; Sieglinde in the "Millennium" *Ring* at the 2000 Bayreuth Festival; Kundry at Paris's Châtelet and the Vienna State Opera; Carmen in Dresden; Dido in *Les Troyens* at the Munich Opera Festival; and Leonore at the Lyric Opera of Chicago and Bavarian State Opera.



Deborah Voigt

SOPRANO (CHICAGO, ILLINOIS)

THIS SEASON Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung* at the Met; a Broadway concert at Washington National Opera; and concerts with the New York Philharmonic, Montreal Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

MET APPEARANCES Title roles of *La Gioconda*, *Die Ägyptische Helena*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Tosca*, and *Aida*, Minnie in *La Fanciulla del West*, Chrysothemis in *Elektra*, Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde*, Amelia in *Un Ballo in Maschera* (debut, 1991), Cassandra in *Les Troyens*, Elsa in *Lohengrin*, Leonora in *Il Trovatore* and *La Forza del Destino*, Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, and the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Minnie with the San Francisco Opera and Lyric Opera of Chicago, the title role of *Annie Get Your Gun* at the Glimmerglass Festival, Salome at Lyric Opera of Chicago, her first Isolde in Vienna followed by a 23-minute standing ovation, President Clinton's visit to her Met performances as *Aida*, and a breakthrough *Ariadne* in Boston.



Hans-Peter König

BASS (DÜSSELDORF, GERMANY)

THIS SEASON Fafner in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*, Hunding in *Die Walküre*, and Hagen in *Götterdämmerung* at the Met, Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Duisburg, Hunding in Düsseldorf, and Hagen in Munich.

MET APPEARANCES Fafner, Hunding, 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, which 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, the 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.



Jay Hunter Morris

TENOR (PARIS, TEXAS)

THIS SEASON The title role of *Siegfried* and Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung* at the Met, Captain Ahab in Jake Heggie's *Moby Dick* at the Adelaide Festival, and Tristan in *Tristan und Isolde* with the Welsh National Opera.

MET APPEARANCES Števa in *Jenůfa* (debut, 2007).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Recent performances include Siegfried with the San Francisco Opera, Samson in *Samson et Dalila* with the Nashville Opera, Canio in *Pagliacci* with Florida Grand Opera, Cavaradossi in *Tosca* with Alabama Opera, Števa in Monte Carlo, Florestan in *Fidelio* with Portland Opera, and Erik in *Der Fliegende Holländer* with Atlanta Opera, Seattle Opera, Arizona Opera, and Opera Australia. He has also sung the Drum Major in *Wozzeck* at the San Diego Opera, Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* at Opera Australia, and Walter in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the San Francisco Opera and Frankfurt Opera. He has created many roles in world premieres, including Captain James Nolan in Adams's *Doctor Atomic*, Father Grenville in Heggie's *Dead Man Walking*, and Mitch in Previn's *A Streetcar Named Desire* with San Francisco Opera; Unferth in Elliott Goldenthal's *Grendel* with the Los Angeles Opera; and Marky in Howard Shore's *The Fly* at Paris's Théâtre du Châtelet.



Eric Owens

BASS-BARITONE (PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA)

THIS SEASON Alberich in *Das Rheingold*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung* at the Met; the Storyteller in John Adams's *A Flowering Tree* with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra; and three appearances at Carnegie Hall: Jochanaan in concert performances of *Salome* with the Cleveland Orchestra, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Boston Symphony, and in recital at Zankel Hall.

MET APPEARANCES General Leslie Groves in *Doctor Atomic* (debut, 2008) and Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS General Leslie Groves with the San Francisco Opera (world premiere) and Lyric Opera of Chicago, Oroveso in *Norma* at Covent Garden and in Philadelphia, and Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra*, Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and Porgy in *Porgy and Bess* with Washington National Opera. He has also sung Ramfis in *Aida* in Houston, the Speaker in *Die Zauberflöte* with Paris's Bastille Opera, Rodolfo in *La Sonnambula* in Bordeaux, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore* and Colline in *La Bohème* in Los Angeles, the title role of Handel's *Hercules* with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and Ramfis in San Francisco.



Iain Paterson

BASS-BARITONE (GLASGOW, SCOTLAND)

THIS SEASON Gunther in *Götterdämmerung* at the Met and Munich's Bavarian State Opera, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* with English National Opera, and Fasolt in *Das Rheingold* with the Detusche Staatsoper Berlin. He also appears in concert with the Cleveland Orchestra and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic.

MET APPEARANCES Gunther (debut, 2009).

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS Jochanaan in *Salome* and Fasolt for the Salzburg Easter Festival, Gunther with the Paris Opera, Amfortas in *Parsifal*, Méphistophélès in *Faust* and Mozart's Figaro with English National Opera, the title role of *Don Giovanni* with English National Opera and Chicago Opera Theater, and Mr. Redburn in *Billy Budd* at the Glyndebourne Festival. He has also appeared in concert with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, Hallé Orchestra, and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

ADDITIONAL EX MACHINA PRODUCTION STAFF

Costume assistant Valérie Deschênes; Costume prototypes Atelier de couture Sonya B.; Properties production Atelier Sylvain Racine, Christian Hamel, Décors 3D, Général Flight, Productions Yves Nico; Lighting assistants Vally Tremblay, Julien Blais-Savoie; Set designer assistants Anna Tusell Sanchez, Santiago Martos Gonzalez

WORKSHOP PERFORMERS Geneviève Bérubé, Jacinthe Pauzé Boisvert, Daniel Desparois, François Isabelle, Éric Robidoux, Martin Vaillancourt

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Milka Ternina as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, 1899
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Deborah Voigt as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*, 2011
PHOTO: KEN HOWARD/METROPOLITAN OPERA



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