

JAKE HEGGIE / LIBRETTO BY TERENCE McNALLY

DEAD MAN WALKING

TRANSMITTED LIVE ON SAT, OCT 21, 2023

The Met
ropolitan
Opera **HD**
LIVE

CONDUCTOR

Yannick Nézet-Séguin

PRODUCTION

Ivo van Hove

SET AND LIGHTING DESIGNER

Jan Versweyveld

COSTUME DESIGNER

An D'Huys

PROJECTION DESIGNER

Christopher Ash

SOUND DESIGNER

Tom Gibbons

LIVE IN HD DIRECTOR

Gary Halvorson

LIVE IN HD HOST

Rhiannon Giddens

SISTER ROSE

Latonia Moore

SISTER HELEN PREJEAN

Joyce DiDonato

MRS. PATRICK DE ROCHER

Susan Graham

JOSEPH DE ROCHER

Ryan McKinny

CONTENT ADVISORY:

Dead Man Walking contains a depiction of a rape and murder, as well as other adult themes and strong language.

PROLOGUE Joseph and Anthony De Rocher brutally murder two teenagers.

ACT I Sister Helen teaches a hymn to a group of children. She travels to Angola State Penitentiary to meet death-row inmate Joseph De Rocher. Joseph and Helen have an awkward first meeting, but he asks her to accompany his mother to the Pardon Board hearing. Mrs. De Rocher pleads for her son's life. Joseph's family and the murder victims' families wait for a verdict, and news arrives that the appeal has been denied. Helen urges Joseph to acknowledge his guilt. She becomes faint as a jumble of voices clutters her mind.

INTERMISSION

ACT II Joseph voices feelings about his impending death, Sister Helen, and his victims. Sister Rose comforts Helen and helps her admit that she still has to forgive Joseph herself. Helen urges Joseph to take responsibility for his actions. He has a tearful farewell with his mother and brothers. The parents of the victims arrive and upbraid Helen for siding with the murderer. Alone with Helen, Joseph finally admits his guilt. She tells him that she will be the face of love for him when he dies. They exchange an emotional goodbye. Joseph asks the parents' forgiveness, and the lethal injection is administered. Once the witnesses leave, Helen repeats the hymn: "He will gather us around."

Music by Jake Heggie, Libretto by Terrence McNally, Based on the Book by Sister Helen Prejean

Children's Chorus: Young People's Chorus of New York City (Francisco J. Núñez, Artistic Director and Founder; Emma H. Sway, Assistant Conductor)

Production a gift of C. Graham Berwind, III; the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation; Ted Snowdon and Duffy Violante, in memory of Terrence McNally; and Mrs. Diane B. Wilsey

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