

*Richard Wagner*

# Siegfried

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  
**Pedro Pires**

GENERAL MANAGER  
**Peter Gelb**

MUSIC DIRECTOR  
**James Levine**

PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR  
**Fabio Luisi**

Libretto by the composer

Saturday, November 5, 2011, 12:00–5:30 pm

**New Production**

The production of *Siegfried* 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 258th Metropolitan Opera performance of

*Richard Wagner's*

# Siegfried

CONDUCTOR

**Fabio Luisi**

IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Mime

**Gerhard Siegel**

Siegfried

**Jay Hunter Morris**

The Wanderer

**Bryn Terfel**

Alberich

**Eric Owens**

Fafner

**Hans-Peter König**

The Forest Bird

**Mojca Erdmann**

Erda

**Patricia Bardon**

Brünnhilde

**Deborah Voigt**

STAGE HORN SOLO

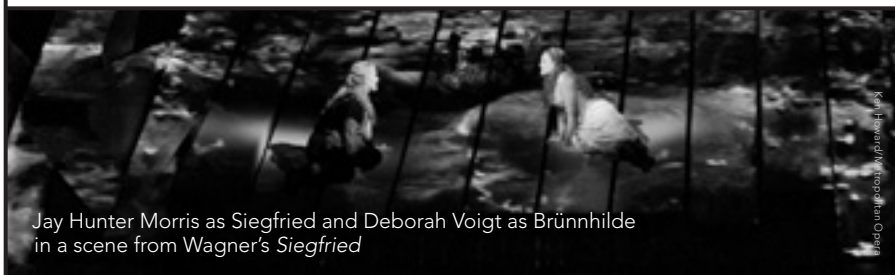
**Erik Ralske**

Saturday, November 5, 2011, 12:00–5:30 pm

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Jay Hunter Morris as Siegfried and Deborah Voigt as Brünnhilde in a scene from Wagner's *Siegfried*

Musical Preparation **Linda Hall, Derrick Inouye, Howard Watkins, Bradley Moore, Carol Isaac, and John Fisher**

Assistant Stage Directors **Stephen Pickover, J. Knighten Smit, and Paula Williams**

German Coach **Irene Spiegelman**

Prompter **Carol Isaac**

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**

Interactive Content Designers **Réalisations.net**

Video 3D Technology **Maginaire**

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**

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**

Puppeteering Consultant **Martin Vaillancourt**

Musical Consultant **Georges Nicholson**

Rehearsal Stage Manager **Félix Dagenais**

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**

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

## Act I

A cave in the forest

*Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 1:30 PM)

## Act II

The depths of the forest

*Intermission* (AT APPROXIMATELY 3:30 PM)

## Act III

SCENE 1 High on a mountain pass

SCENE 2 On the summit of a mountain

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## Act I

In his cave in the forest, the dwarf Mime forges a sword for his foster son Siegfried. He hates Siegfried but hopes that the boy will kill the dragon Fafner, who guards the Nibelungs' treasure, so that Mime can take the all-powerful ring from it. Siegfried arrives and smashes the new sword, raging at Mime's incompetence. Having realized that he can't be the dwarf's son, as there is no physical resemblance between them, he demands to know who his parents were. For the first time, Mime tells Siegfried how he found his mother, Sieglinde, in the woods, who died giving birth to him. When he shows Siegfried the fragments of his father's sword, Nothung, Siegfried orders Mime to repair it for him and rushes out.

As Mime sinks down in despair, a stranger enters. It is Wotan, lord of the gods, in human disguise as the Wanderer. He challenges the fearful Mime to a riddle competition, in which the loser forfeits his head. The Wanderer easily answers Mime's three questions about the Nibelungs, the giants, and the gods. Mime in turn knows the answers to the traveler's first two questions but gives up in terror when asked who will repair the sword Nothung. The Wanderer admonishes Mime for enquiring about faraway matters when he knows nothing about what closely concerns him. Then he departs, leaving the dwarf's head to "him who knows no fear" and who will re-forged the magic blade.

When Siegfried returns demanding his father's sword, Mime tells him that he can't repair it. He vainly tries to explain the concept of fear to the boy and, in order to teach him, proposes a visit to Fafner's cave. Siegfried agrees and enthusiastically begins to forge the sword himself. While he works, Mime prepares a sleeping potion to give to Siegfried once he has killed Fafner. Flashing the finished sword, Siegfried smashes the anvil in half and runs off into the forest.

## Act II

The same night, Mime's brother Alberich is hiding by the entrance to Fafner's cave, obsessed with winning back the ring for himself. The Wanderer enters and tells the Nibelung to watch out for Mime. He then wakes Fafner and warns him that a young hero is on his way to kill him. Unimpressed, the dragon goes back to sleep.

As dawn breaks, Mime and Siegfried arrive. Caught up in the peaceful beauty of the woods, Siegfried thinks about his parents. He tries to imitate the song of a bird on a reed pipe but fails and blows his horn instead. This awakens Fafner, and in the ensuing fight Siegfried kills the dragon. With his dying words, Fafner warns the boy of the destructive power of the treasure. When Siegfried accidentally touches a drop of Fafner's blood to his lips, he suddenly understands the singing of the bird, which directs him to the gold in the cave. Alberich and Mime appear, quarreling, but withdraw as Siegfried returns with the ring and the Tarnhelm. The bird warns Siegfried not to trust Mime, and when the dwarf offers him the potion, Siegfried kills him. The bird then tells Siegfried of a beautiful woman named Brünnhilde, asleep on a mountain surrounded by fire. He sets out to find her.

## Act III

High on a mountain pass, the Wanderer summons Erda, goddess of the Earth, to learn the gods' fate. She evades his questions, and he resigns himself to the impending end of the gods' reign. His hope now rests with Brünnhilde and Siegfried. When Siegfried approaches, making fun of the god whom he takes for a simple old man, the Wanderer attempts to block his path. With a stroke of his sword, Siegfried shatters the Wanderer's spear—the same spear that smashed Nothing to pieces years before. Defeated, the Wanderer retreats.

Siegfried reaches the mountaintop where Brünnhilde sleeps. Never having seen a woman before, he thinks he has discovered a man. When he removes Brünnhilde's armor, he is overwhelmed by the sight of her beauty and finally realizes the meaning of fear. Mastering his emotions, he awakens her with a kiss. Hailing the daylight, Brünnhilde is overjoyed to learn that it is Siegfried who has brought her back to life. She tries to resist his declarations of passion, realizing that earthly love will end her immortal life, but finally gives in and joins Siegfried in praise of love.

### Met Titles

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## In Focus

*Richard Wagner*

# Siegfried

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*Premiere: Bayreuth Festival House, 1876*

The third opera in Wagner's four-part *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, *Siegfried* is the coming-of-age story of the ultimate hero and his role in the struggle for supreme power, which is embodied by the magic ring introduced in *Das Rheingold*. Siegfried is an unusual hero by any standard: he is portrayed as an impetuous teenager who knows no fear, and Wagner made little attempt to make him likable in a conventional sense. While characters from earlier parts of the saga return in *Siegfried*, the emphasis is clearly on the human title hero and, eventually, on Brünnhilde in her mortal incarnation. Wotan, leader of the gods, appears as well, but in the distinctly human shape of the Wanderer. The opera's earthly ambience is also represented in its focus on nature: there are references to animals and their behavior in the libretto, and the sublimely lyrical depiction of the forest landscape in Act II is among Wagner's most striking achievements.

### *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 wrote his own librettos and insisted that words and music were equal 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 traditional operatic territory.

### *The Setting*

*Siegfried* is set in mythological times, when gods and other creatures contend for dominion over the earth while humans are emerging as a new power. No location is specified in the libretto, but the Teutonic mythology Wagner based his story on and the significance of the Rhine River in the epic suggest a Germanic setting.

### *The Music*

Much of the drama of *Siegfried* is expressed in the orchestra: Wagner's system of leitmotifs (characteristic themes associated with a character, object, or emotion) that was begun in *Das Rheingold* and elaborated in *Die Walküre* is taken to a

new level here, as events and ideas overlap and evolve. The orchestra creates one of the most delicate and enchanting soundscapes in opera, the evocative Forest Murmurs in Act II. The preponderance of male voices throughout most of the work, including three bass roles, creates a dark and murky atmosphere appropriate to the setting of forest caves throughout the first half of the work. This gloom is scattered by the bright soprano voice of the Forest Bird, which emerges from the Forest Murmurs. Her melody recalls the music of the Rhinemaidens in *Das Rheingold* and evokes a sense of unsullied nature. The vocal demands of this opera are extreme even by Wagner's monumental standards. The title role is especially notorious, both for its sheer length and for encompassing an astonishing range of dynamics—from the heroic to the reflective to the tender and romantic. Wagner makes ingenious (if spare, in terms of time) use of female voices in *Siegfried*: the extremes are covered by the deep-voiced Erda, the Earth Mother, in Act III, and the graceful lyricism of the Forest Bird. But the complete feminine principle remains unexplored until the final half hour of the opera, when Siegfried awakes the sleeping Brünnhilde. The two then share one of the most exciting love duets in opera, a carefully constructed surge of sound and emotion that leads to a tremendous musical and dramatic climax.

### *Siegfried at the Met*

The Met gave the U.S. premiere of *Siegfried* in 1887, conducted by Anton Seidl (who had worked with Wagner at the first Bayreuth Festival in 1876). The cast included tenor Max Alvary, soprano Lilli Lehmann (another Bayreuth veteran), mezzo-soprano Marianne Brandt, and bass Emil Fischer—a quartet that did much to popularize Wagner's music in America. A new production in 1896 featured Jean de Reszke as Siegfried and his brother Edouard as the Wanderer. Two more productions followed in 1904 (with Gustav Mahler conducting five performances in 1908) and 1913. Famous Brünnhildes during those early decades included Lilian Nordica, Milka Ternina, Johanna Gadski, and Olive Fremstad. Lauritz Melchior was the dominating interpreter of the title role from 1926 until 1948, while the legendary Kirstin Flagstad sang 19 performances of Brünnhilde from 1937 to 1941, and an additional one after her return to the Met in 1951. Friedrich Schorr, a great German bass who, along with many other singers, fled Europe in the time of the Third Reich, gave 46 performances as the Wanderer in this era. Fritz Stiedry conducted a new production in 1948 featuring Set Svanholm and Helen Traubel. Herbert von Karajan's staging, based on his Salzburg production, premiered in 1972, with Eric Leinsdorf conducting Jess Thomas, Birgit Nilsson, and Thomas Stewart. James Levine led the premiere of Otto Schenk's 1988 production with Wolfgang Neumann, Hildegard Behrens, and Donald McIntyre and went on to conduct every subsequent performance of *Siegfried* at the Met through 2009. James Morris appeared as the Wanderer 16 times from 1989 through 2009. Robert Lepage's new production, opening on October 27, 2011 and conducted by Fabio Luisi, is part of the Met's first new staging of the *Ring* cycle in more than 20 years.

## Program Note

In May of 1857, Richard Wagner wrote to his friend Julie Ritter:

Although I completed only the first act of *Siegfried* this winter, it has turned out better than I could ever have expected. It was completely new ground for me. Now that this act has turned out as it has, I am convinced that young *Siegfried* will be my most popular work, spreading quickly and successfully, and drawing all the other dramas after it.... But it seems increasingly probable that the first performance of the whole thing will not take place before 1860.

As things turned out, the first performance of the “whole thing”—Wagner’s four-part cycle, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*—did not take place until 1876. The orchestration of *Siegfried* was not completed until February of 1871, after one of the most troubling gestations in the history of music.

It all started in the autumn of 1848, when Wagner wrote “The Nibelung Myth: As Sketch for a Drama,” a short plot outline based on his own reweaving of ancient Germanic and Norse myths. His tale of the rise and fall of the gods, the creation of the hero Siegfried (“the most perfect human being”), and Siegfried’s union with Brünnhilde eventually grew from one opera to four. By 1857 Wagner had completed the libretto to the entire work and composed the music to the first two operas, *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*.

But only a month after his letter to Julie Ritter, Wagner informed another friend, the composer Franz Liszt:

I have finally decided to abandon my obstinate attempts to complete my Nibelungs. I have led my young Siegfried into the beautiful forest of solitude; there I have left him beneath a linden tree and have said farewell to him with tears of heartfelt sorrow—he is better there than anywhere else.

Wagner—as usual—was in desperate need of money, and the publisher who had agreed to buy the score to *Siegfried* and the last opera of the cycle, *Götterdämmerung*, had withdrawn the offer. Wagner explained to Liszt:

And so, I am now resolved upon a course of self-help. I have conceived a plan to complete *Tristan und Isolde* without further delay; its modest dimensions will facilitate a performance of it, and I shall produce it in Strasbourg a year from today.... I am thinking of having this work translated into Italian and offering it to the theater in Rio de Janeiro.... I shall dedicate it to the emperor of Brazil...and I think there should be enough pickings from all this to enable me to be left in peace for a while.



It was a mad plan and, like many of Wagner's attempts to make money, came to nothing. Wagner had not yet finished the prose sketch for *Tristan*, to say nothing of the actual libretto, or the music. His original idea "of leaving Siegfried alone in the forest for a year, in order to give myself some relief in writing a *Tristan und Isolde*" (as he told Ritter in July of 1857) eventually stretched to 12 years. During that time he not only finished *Tristan*, but revised his opera *Tannhäuser* for Paris and wrote *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* as well. Bavaria's new king, Ludwig II, took the throne in 1864 and became Wagner's patron. Wagner also began an affair with Liszt's daughter Cosima while she was still married to the conductor Hans von Bülow. Wagner and Cosima eventually married, but not before setting off a major scandal in Munich that threatened his standing with the king.

More than once during this chaotic 12-year hiatus, Wagner turned back to *Siegfried*, but it was not until February of 1869 that he "put the finishing strokes to the second act," as he informed King Ludwig. By September he had completed the music to Act III, but to avoid having a performance of the work given in Munich (as had happened very much against his will to the first two operas in the *Ring*) he delayed finishing the orchestration until February of 1871, making excuse after excuse to the king.

There are numerous logical "outer" reasons that kept Wagner from doing any significant work on *Siegfried* for 12 years, but more than likely the true reason for the postponement lay within Wagner himself. Deep in his psyche he undoubtedly realized that he needed to gain a more complete mastery of his compositional style before writing the music for the great confrontation between Siegfried and Wotan or Siegfried's awakening of Brünnhilde.

*Siegfried* is the comic opera of the *Ring*, but it is also the great turning point of the entire cycle, where Wotan, whose concerns dominated the first two operas, gives way to Siegfried and Brünnhilde. As Wagner wrote to his good friend August Röckel:

Following his farewell to Brünnhilde [at the end of *Die Walküre*], Wotan is in truth no more than a departed spirit: true to his supreme resolve, he must now allow events to *take their own course* [the italics are Wagner's], leave things as they are, and nowhere interfere in any decisive way; that is why he has now become the "Wanderer": observe him closely! He resembles us to a tee; he is the sum total of present-day intelligence, whereas Siegfried is the man of the future whom we desire and long for but who cannot be made by us, since he must create himself on the basis of *our own annihilation*.

Of all the major characters in the *Ring*, Siegfried is probably the one who has been most misunderstood. Comedienne Anna Russell's description ("He's very

young, and he's very handsome, and he's very strong, and he's very brave, and he's very stupid—he's a regular Li'l Abner type") is the one many operagoers have heard, but it is not accurate. Siegfried is not a badly socialized adult; he is a teenager—boisterous one minute, brooding and introspective the next. Emotionally he's more on par with Cherubino in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* or Octavian in Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* than with Wagner's Tristan or Siegmund. His only influence, other than nature itself (which he reveres) has been Mime, an evil, manipulative dwarf who plans to use Siegfried to kill Fafner and regain the Nibelung treasure. "Even speech I'd scarcely have mastered, had I not wrung it out of [you]," Siegfried tells him, which tells us just how caring Mime has been.

Like most mythic heroes, Siegfried does not know his true parents, has never experienced their nurturing love, and has been forced to trust his own, inner instinct for survival. This instinct has made him hungry for knowledge, distrustful of Mime, and it is this instinct that leads him to file down the fragments of his father's sword to re-forged it into his own, rather than trying to patch them together with solder as Mime has tried to do. "I've grown as old as cave and wood but never saw the like!" Mime mutters as he watches Siegfried at work. Psychologically it's a masterstroke on Wagner's part to show Siegfried forging his own manhood (of which the sword is a symbol) rather than simply accepting someone else's sword (identity) and using it as his own, as his father, Siegmund, did in *Die Walküre*. Siegmund simply accepted Wotan's sword, so when he tried to use it in opposition to Wotan's wishes, it broke. But when Siegfried uses it against the Wanderer in Act III, he is successful because the sword is no longer borrowed from Wotan—Siegfried has made it his own. He has become his own man, a hero. And that is why he can easily pass through the magical fire surrounding the sleeping Brünnhilde, awaken her, and claim her as his mate.

It is through Wagner's astonishing music that we can truly intuit the complex truth of his characters. While working on *Siegfried* Wagner wrote to Liszt:

Only in the course of composing the music does the essential meaning of my poem [the libretto] dawn on me: secrets are continually being revealed to me that had previously been hidden from me. In this way everything becomes much more passionate and more urgent.

For Siegfried's exuberant Act I entrance and laughter Wagner wrote scampering eighth notes that eventually climb to a high C. But only a few minutes later Siegfried's music is tender as he speaks of the birds in the forest, and it becomes filled with longing when he thinks of his mother's death. At the moment Mime finally shows Siegfried the pieces of his father's sword, Wagner tells us unmistakably what a significant moment this is: the very sound of the orchestra instantly becomes brighter. A listener does not need to intellectually

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know that the trumpet plays the musical motif associated with the sword and the strings counter with the motif representing Siegfried's youthful strength in order to emotionally experience the great burst of energy and enthusiasm that explodes from the orchestra at that moment. It's the perfect depiction of Siegfried suddenly understanding, deep inside, that *this* is what he needs to take the next step in life.

The music of the first two acts is dominated by the dark sound of the lower instruments in the orchestra. Act I takes place in Mime's cave deep in the woods. Act II is set next to Fafner's cave in another part of the forest. Until we meet the Forest Bird toward the end of Act II, all the singers are male. This means that Wagner's musical palate has been largely the equivalent of a late Rembrandt self-portrait—predominantly dark, but filled with subtle hues. So when Siegfried defeats the Wanderer and climbs the mountain to find Brünnhilde, the change in Wagner's music is nothing less than astonishing. It's the equivalent of stepping outside and taking a deep breath of fresh, clean air after being in a cramped room. The sound of the orchestra changes as the woodwinds, violins, and harps (Wagner asked for six of them) become more prominent. The higher Siegfried climbs, the higher and more transparent the music becomes, until he finally reaches the summit and only the first violins are playing, their music going still higher up the scale. "He looks around for a long time in astonishment," the stage directions say, and just as the violins approach a sustained C above high C, four trombones—very softly—sound the three chords that make up the fate motif, the same three chords that accompanied Wotan's standing in the very spot where his grandson now stands. At the end of *Walküre*, Wotan stopped to look back with infinite regret at the sleeping Brünnhilde. Now Siegfried stands in wonder, filled with awe and eagerness to continue his heroic journey.

—Paul Thomason

# The Cast and Creative Team



## Fabio Luisi

CONDUCTOR (GENOA, ITALY)

**THIS SEASON** *Don Giovanni*, *Siegfried*, *Manon*, and *La Traviata* 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 *KÀ* (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 numerous 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) and *Die Walküre*.

**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) and *Die Walküre*.

**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.



## Pedro Pires

VIDEO IMAGE ARTIST (QUEBEC CITY, CANADA)

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

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** He is a film director, visual effects artist, and projection designer, and won Emmy and Gemini awards in 1998 for visual effects for François Girard's *The Sound of the Carceri*. He later created visual effects for Girard's *The Red Violin*. His first collaboration with Robert Lepage was in 2001 for the film *Possible Worlds*. In 2008 his company, *Pedro Pires Inc.*, produced *Danse Macabre*, for which he was scriptwriter, director, photographer, and editor. Screened at 140 festivals, this short film has won 40 international prizes. He designed images for Cirque du Soleil's *Totem* (2010), directed by Lepage. His latest short film, *Hope*, was presented at the 2011 Telluride Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, and Festival International du Film Francophone in Namur, Belgium. He shares direction with Lepage on his current project, *Michelle Marie Thomas* (working title), a feature based on Lepage's *Lipsynch*. *Siegfried* is his first foray into the world of opera.



## Patricia Bardon

MEZZO-SOPRANO (DUBLIN, IRELAND)

**THIS SEASON** Erda in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* at the Met, Calbo in Rossini's *Maometto II* for Santa Fe Opera, Marina in Vicente Martín y Soler's *Il Burbero di Buon Cuore* in Barcelona, and Irene in Handel's *Theodora* at Paris's Théâtre des Champs-Élysées,

## The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED

Brussels's La Monnaie, and Vienna's Theater an der Wien.

**MET APPEARANCES** Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare* (debut, 2007).

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Saariaho's *Adriana Mater* and the title role of *Orlando* for the Paris Opera; the Nurse in *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* and *Giulio Cesare* in Barcelona; Andronico in *Tamerlano* in Madrid, Los Angeles, and with the Washington National Opera; Maria in *Mosè in Egitto*, Edwige in *Guillaume Tell* and Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress* (Olivier Award nomination) for Covent Garden; and Azucena in *Il Trovatore* and *Carmen* for Welsh National Opera. She has also sung *Rosmira* in *Partenope* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, English National Opera, and Theater an der Wien; the title role of *Rinaldo* in Cologne; Penelope in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* in Florence, Amsterdam, and with the Berlin State Opera; Angelina in *La Cenerentola* in Brussels and Lausanne; and *Arsace* in *Semiramide* and *Tancredi* in Venice.



### Mojca Erdmann

SOPRANO (HAMBURG, GERMANY)

**THIS SEASON** Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* for her debut and the Woodbird in *Siegfried* at the Met, the title role of *Lulu* and *Ariadne* in the German premiere of Wolfgang Rihm's *Dionysos* at the Berlin State Opera, and concert engagements at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Salzburg's Mozart Week, and with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra and Cologne Philharmonie.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** The title role of Mozart's *Zaide* and *Zelmira* in Haydn's *Armida* at the Salzburg Festival, *Blondchen* in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in Amsterdam, the Woodbird at the Aix-en-Provence Festival and Salzburg Easter Festival, *Sophie* in *Der Rosenkavalier* in Stuttgart, *Despina* in *Così fan tutte* and *Zerlina* in Baden-Baden, *Pamina* in *Die Zauberflöte* in Cologne, and *Marzelline* in *Fidelio* in Nice. She has also sung in the world premiere of Tōru Takemitsu's *My Way of Life* at the Berlin State Opera; the title role in Rihm's *Proserpina* in 2009 with the Stuttgart Radio Symphony in Schwetzingen, Germany; and the world premiere of *Dionysos* at the 2010 Salzburg Festival.



### Deborah Voigt

SOPRANO (CHICAGO, ILLINOIS)

**THIS SEASON** Brunnhilde 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.

## The Cast and Creative Team CONTINUED



### 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.



### Gerhard Siegel

TENOR (TROSTBERG, GERMANY)

**THIS SEASON** Mime in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* at the Met and Herod in *Salome* in Brussels.

**MET APPEARANCES** Mime (debut, 2004) and the Captain in *Wozzeck*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Max in *Der Freischütz* at Berlin's Komische Oper, Florestan in *Fidelio* at the Granada Festival, the title role of *Tannhäuser* in Augsburg, Max in *Jonny Spielt Auf* in Cologne, the Captain at Paris's Bastille Opera and Madrid's Teatro Real, Herod at the Vienna State Opera and in Montpellier, the title role of *Siegfried* and Stolzing in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at the Nürnberg State Theatre, Sellem in *The Rake's Progress* at the Theater an der Wien, Alwa in *Lulu* in Geneva and Madrid, Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* on tour with the SWR Symphony Orchestra, and Mime at the Bayreuth Festival, Covent Garden, and in Cologne.



## Bryn Terfel

BASS-BARITONE (PWLLHELI, WALES)

**THIS SEASON** Wotan in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* and the Wanderer in *Siegfried* at the Met and Leporello in *Don Giovanni* at La Scala.

**MET APPEARANCES** Scarpia in *Tosca*, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (debut, 1994), Leporello and Don Giovanni in *Don Giovanni*, Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, the Four Villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, the title role of *Falstaff*, and Jochanaan in *Salome*.

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS** Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* with Welsh National Opera, Scarpia and Wotan at Covent Garden, the title role of *Der Fliegende Holländer* at Covent Garden and with Welsh National Opera, Don Giovanni and Falstaff in Vienna, and the title role of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd* at London's Royal Festival Hall. He has also sung Méphistophélès in *Faust* and the title role of *Gianni Schicchi* at Covent Garden; the Four Villains at Paris's Bastille Opera; Sweeney Todd at the Lyric Opera of Chicago; Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress* with the San Francisco Opera; Figaro at La Scala; Falstaff in Houston, Los Angeles, London, and at the Salzburg Festival; and Jochanaan at the Salzburg Festival and in London, Vienna, and Munich.

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### ADDITIONAL EX MACHINA PRODUCTION STAFF

Costume assistant Valérie Deschênes; Costume prototypes Atelier de couture Sonya B.; Properties production Airbulle, Atelier Sylvain Racine, Boscus, Inventions Guité, Tridim; Lighting assistants Vally Tremblay, Julien Blais-Savoie; Set designer assistants Anna Tusell Sanchez, Santiago Martos Gonzalez; Video artist assistants Emmanuel Gatera, Antoine Rouleau, Benoit Robert; Video artist advisor Robin Tremblay

**WORKSHOP PERFORMERS** Geneviève Bérubé, François Isabelle, Jacinthe Pausé Boisvert, Éric Robidoux, Martin Vaillancourt

lacaserna.net

Yamaha is the official piano of the Metropolitan Opera.

# A Conversation with Fabio Luisi

On the eve of the 2011–12 season, the maestro spoke with Met radio announcer Margaret Juntwait about becoming Principal Conductor—and stepping in on short notice to conduct two of opera’s greatest masterpieces, back to back.

*Just before the start of the season, you were elevated from Principal Guest Conductor to Principal Conductor. Congratulations!*

Thank you. It was very sudden and quite surprising for me, because the news that James Levine had to withdraw from his performances [because of a fall] was somewhat of a shock. I’m very sorry for Jimmy, and my thoughts are with him. But working in this house is a joy. The musical and theatrical level is so high—higher than I’ve experienced in other houses. And in my new position, the musicians and I will work together even more closely and be even more connected than before.

*You are conducting the new production of Don Giovanni on short notice. Does it help that this is such a well-known piece?*

Absolutely. I have known *Don Giovanni* since my childhood—but I am always trying to explore new aspects of it. To keep it fresh, you have to convince the singers and the orchestra to think that we are performing it for the first time. Forget about everything you have learned before, and try to have a fresh look—like a child who is hearing it for the first time.

*Don Giovanni is such a rich piece musically. Is there any part of it that is especially challenging for you as the conductor?*

Well, *Don Giovanni* is one of the most perfect operas ever composed, which doesn’t make it any less challenging, because in Mozart every note has meaning. It’s like Wagner or Strauss in that way. So it’s important to make sure that all of the performers are very, very closely connected to the score.

*Shortly after Don Giovanni opens, you will step into Maestro Levine’s shoes to conduct the new production of Siegfried. Do these operas complement each other at all, or will it be a complete switch?*

Well, music is always complementary. If you play Monteverdi, you find connections with Puccini, for example. And if you play Mozart, you find connections with Wagner. Wagner was educated with the Classical music of Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn. So there are very, very strong links, and we shouldn’t ignore them. Nevertheless, *Siegfried* comes from another era. It is in another language and it is quite different.



*Of course, you’re very familiar with the Ring operas. When you’re leading Siegfried, do you have the other three in mind?*

Of course. Mainly I have the proportions of the other operas in mind, which is very important for the *Ring*. These are not four different individual operas—it’s one big opera stretched over four nights. And, actually, you can understand the dimension of *Siegfried* or *Götterdämmerung* only if you understand the dimension of *Rheingold*, only if you understand the construction of *Walküre*. So jumping in, as I am, right in the middle with *Siegfried*—it’s quite challenging and exciting! **M**