SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

19 & 22 NOVEMBER 2026

Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Emirates
Principal Partner

SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PATRON Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres, reflecting the Orchestra's versatility and diverse appeal. Its award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, and the Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

The Orchestra's first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013, followed by David Robertson as Chief Conductor from 2014 to 2019. Australian-born Simone Young commenced her role as Chief Conductor in 2022, a year in which the Orchestra made its return to a renewed Sydney Opera House Concert Hall.

WHAT TO EXPECT IN THIS CONCERT

Expect to enjoy yourself! Maybe your heart will beat a little faster. Maybe your hair will stand on end. It's hard to predict or describe how the vast sound of a symphony orchestra will affect each of us. Just bring an open mind and engage with the music – close your eyes, watch the conductor and the musicians, or just sit back and let the music take you away.



When do I clap?

Good question. *Götterdämmerung* is 'through-composed', which means it was written in one continuous, unbroken stream of music, rather than the traditional, discrete arias that feature in most operas. So you won't really have an opportunity to clap until the end of each Act! But the simplest thing is to wait until the conductor turns around – or when everyone else starts applauding.

At the very end of the concert, the conductor may leave the stage and come back on a few times, and acknowledge the different sections of the orchestra, as well as the singers. You can keep clapping as long as you want to – and feel free to cheer and stomp your feet if you really enjoyed the concert!



Can I take photos or videos?

You can take photos and videos on your phone during the applause at the end of the concert. **Please switch your phone to silent, make sure the flash is off and dim the brightness of your screen so you don't distract other audience members**. And if you share it to your socials, tag us in your posts! We love seeing what people have captured.

Please leave professional and semi-professional camera gear at home and limit yourself to a phone camera inside the venue.



What happens at interval?

This concert includes two intervals – one of 60 minutes, and one of 30 minutes – which will begin when the conductor leaves the stage and the lights go to their full brightness. You can choose to stay in your seat and wait, go to the bathroom, walk around or purchase food or drink from one of the foyer bars.

An announcement will play through the speaker system 10 minutes, 5 minutes and 1 minute before the concert resumes.

2026 CONCERT SEASON

SIMONE YOUNG CONDUCTS GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

THE RING CYCLE IN CONCERT

RICHARD WAGNER (1813–1883)
Götterdämmerung (1876)

Prologue
Act I

INTERVAL

Act II

INTERVAL

Act III

SIMONE YOUNG conductor

KLAUS FLORIAN VOGT Siegfried
ANJA KAMPE Brünnhilde
FALK STRUCKMANN Hagen
SAMUEL DUNDAS Gunther
ELEANOR LYONS Gutrune & Third Norn
WARWICK FYFE Alberich
DEBORAH HUMBLE Waltraute
CATHERINE CARBY First Norn & Wellgunde
MARGARET PLUMMER Second Norn & Flosshilde
SAMANTHA CLARKE Woglinde

SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS
ELIZABETH SCOTT chorus master

Thursday 19 November, 4pm
Sunday 22 November, 2pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

Pre-concert talk

By David Larkin on the Lounge Level of the Northern Foyer, at 3.15pm (Thursday) and 1.15pm (Sunday).

Estimated durations

Act I – 2 hours
Interval – 60 minutes
Act II – 1 hour and 5 minutes
Interval – 30 minutes
Act III – 1 hour and 25 minutes

The concert is expected to run for approx. 6 hours.

Assistant Conductor
Daniel Linton-France

Director
Caroline Staunton

Repetiteur
Thomas Johnson

German Language Coach
Tanja Binggeli

English Surtitles
Fiona Elizabeth Mizani / Librettitoli.com

Surtitle Operator
Roman Benedict

Cover Artwork
By Rebecca Shaw

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of the land and water on which we work and perform. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Emirates
Principal Partner



1871 photo of Wagner by Franz Hanfstaengl (1804–1877).

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

RICHARD WAGNER (1813-1883)

In 1842 Wagner saw the Rhine for the first time and, 'with tears in my eyes I, a poor artist, swore eternal faith to my German fatherland'. The Rhine would soon embody 'the world's beginning and its end' in Wagner's great cycle of operas, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*; but now, it symbolized the end of several precarious and impecunious years.

After his father's death, when Richard was six months old, the family moved with his new stepfather Ludwig Geyer, an actor and playwright, from Leipzig to Dresden. The young Wagner wrote a tragedy 'like *Hamlet* and *King Lear* rolled into one', with 47 deaths on stage before interval. Only when he heard Beethoven's music for Goethe's *Egmont* did Wagner understand that his vision could only be realised in music as powerful as Beethoven's – and that only he could compose it.

In 1837 Wagner accepted a music-directorship in Riga. Hopelessly in debt (not for the last time), he and Minna had to smuggle themselves and a Newfoundland dog into Prussian territory and onto a cargo vessel to London. A violent storm obliged the ship to take refuge in a Norwegian fjord; Wagner claims to have heard the story of the Flying Dutchman from the sailors at that time. From London they travelled to Boulogne where the popular German-Jewish composer Giacomo Meyerbeer provided Wagner with letters of introduction to influential Parisians. In 1842 he returned to Germany, and saw the Rhine.

Wagner lived in Dresden until early 1849, but his support of the republican cause in the 1848 revolution meant that he and Minna had to flee the country. Binary themes of sacred and erotic, power and renunciation, tradition and innovation emerge in the works of the 1840s works and remain crucial to Wagner's output in librettos and treatises. The philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer led Wagner to approve Buddhism's teaching about the ultimately illusory nature of reality and Christianity's teaching on renunciation.

In 1864, 18-year old Ludwig became King of Bavaria, paid Wagner's debts and gave him a ministerial salary. The king's generosity and Wagner's cohabitation with Liszt's married daughter, Cosima, caused scandal, so they withdrew to the luxury of the villa 'Tribschen' on Lake Lucerne.

Wagner chose the Franconian town of Bayreuth for his dreamed-of festival, presenting the first full 'Ring' in 1876. *Parsifal*, in which Wagner revisits the Arthurian world of *Lohengrin* and *Tristan* as a vehicle for his own take on Schopenhauer and the Christian notion of grace appeared in 1882. His health was failing, and having settled for a time in Venice, he died there in 1883.

Wagner's 'eternal faith to my German fatherland' led to a toxic, though sadly not atypical, anti-Semitism, partly directed, in resentful ingratitude, against Mendelssohn or Meyerbeer, who had helped advance his career. Discussing *Parsifal*, however, director Stefan Herheim insists that Wagner 'actually did not serve as propaganda for Hitler and Nazi racial theory, simply because the work's core deals with a concept that in no way correlates with Fascism: pity!'



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SYNOPSIS

PROLOGUE

The three Norns, weaving the rope of destiny, tell that Wotan's spear has been shattered by a human hero and that Wotan has piled logs from the world ash tree around Valhalla for its destruction. The rope breaks, and the Norns sink into the earth.

As the sun rises, Siegfried and Brünnhilde emerge and proclaim their love before Siegfried sets out to do more heroic deeds, having given Brünnhilde the Ring.

ACT I

The lord of the Gibichungs, Gunther, is concerned about his reputation; his half-brother Hagen (son of the dwarf Alberich) recommends that he marry Brünnhilde, living high on a rock surrounded by fire, and his sister Gutrune should marry Siegfried, the only man brave enough to win Brünnhilde. Hagen suggests drugging Siegfried when he arrives so that the hero loses his memory, then disguises Siegfried as Gunther using the magical Tarnhelm.

Siegfried arrives, is drugged, falls in love with Gutrune, and swears blood-brotherhood with Gunther. Siegfried and Gunther set off to win Brünnhilde, leaving Hagen in charge.

Meanwhile, Brünnhilde is visited by her sister Waltraute, who tells her of the imminent destruction of Valhalla: she pleads with Brünnhilde to avert catastrophe by giving the Ring back to the Rhinemaidens. Brünnhilde refuses to part with the token of her love, and Waltraute leaves in distress.

Brünhilde hears Siegfried's horn but is shocked seeing a man – apparently Gunther – who takes the Ring from her and forces her into her cave.

ACT II

As Hagen is sleeping his father Alberich appears to urge him to take control of the Ring.

Siegfried, returned to his usual form, arrives and announces that Gunther and Brünnhilde will soon be there.

Hagen summons Gunther's vassals as Gunther and Brünnhilde – much against her will – arrive. She is appalled that Siegfried doesn't know her, is about to marry Gutrune, and is not only wearing the Ring, but lying about where he got it.

Siegfried swears that he didn't violate Brünnhilde; she swears that he did. As Siegfried, Gutrune and the vassals leave to prepare the wedding, Gunther, Hagen and Brünnhilde conspire to take the Ring and to avenge Siegfried's treachery. Brünnhilde tells Hagen of Siegfried's one vulnerability. As their trio reaches, its climax the wedding party returns.

ACT III

Separated from the hunt, Siegfried meets the Rhinemaidens who try to get him to give them the Ring.

The other hunters rejoin him, and Siegfried tells them of his exploits – the dwarf, the dragon, the wood bird and so on – but his recollection becomes hazy until Hagen gives him another draught. Siegfried remembers kissing Brünnhilde to wake her from her magic sleep. Hagen spears him in the back to avenge his treachery, and with a final farewell to the absent Brünnhilde, Siegfried dies and is borne away.

Gutrune is wandering the Gibichung hall, imagining that she can hear Siegfried's horn. The vassals arrive with Siegfried's body.

Hagen tries to take the Ring from Siegfried's finger, and kills Gunther when the latter intervenes; he tries again and Siegfried's own arm is miraculously raised to ward him off.

Gutrune dies of a broken heart, as Brünnhilde takes charge. She has the vassals pile logs for a funeral pyre, takes the Ring and places it on her finger, and once the pyre is alight rides her horse into the flames.

The fire blazes and the river floods. The Rhinemaidens take the Ring from Brünnhilde's body and drag Hagen into the depths when he tries to stop them. Above, Valhalla and the gods are engulfed in flames.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The characters

First Norn, Second Norn, Third Norn – three female spirits who weave the golden rope of Destiny.

Brünnhilde – the Valkyrie recently awoken from her magic sleep on a peak surrounded by flames

Siegfried – the hero who knows no fear, now Brünnhilde's beloved

Gunther – lord of the Gibichungs

Hagen – Gunther's half-brother, fathered by Alberich on a mortal woman

Gutrune – Gunther's sister

Waltraute – a junior Valkyrie

Alberich – the Nibelung whose theft of the Rhine gold and fashioning of the Ring started the whole story

Woglinde, Wellgunde, Flosshilde – The three Rhinemaidens, from whom Alberich stole the gold

Vassals and Women at the court of the Gibichungs

The background

With *Götterdämmerung* we return to the origin of Wagner's enterprise in the *Ring* Cycle: the tale of the death of Siegfried, hero of much German and Norse legend. Having written the first version of the 'poem' on the subject in 1848, Wagner realised that the story needed to be extended backwards to explain certain events. So he drafted *Young Siegfried* in which the hero, utterly without fear, kills the dragon Fafner and wins the love of the Valkyrie Brünnhilde. Then, of course, Wagner needed to explain why Brünnhilde had disobeyed her father Wotan, the king of the gods, by saving Siegfried's pregnant mother, and why her punishment was to be cast into a magic sleep on a high mountain surrounded by flames. He also had to explain why the whole complicated business had arisen in the first place: a dwarf stole some gold from the Rhinemaidens and forged a ring, which was promptly stolen by the gods and reluctantly handed over to some giants. The complete work contains, as Wagner wrote to Liszt, 'the world's beginning and its end'.

With the librettos complete, Wagner wrote the music in order of performance, but only in 1876 was the resulting *Ring* Cycle performed at the purpose-built theatre in Bayreuth.

There was also a hiatus of several years in the composition between Acts II and III of *Siegfried*, during which Wagner wrote *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger*.

In those works he moved away from his idea of the equal partnership of text, music and scenography. Music became much more important, and Wagner deployed the so-called leitmotifs (musical themes that presage or remember) less as symbols for the action or characters and more as independent musical material for development.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The sources

Götterdämmerung is the only opera of the four substantively based on the medieval *Nibelungenlied*. This epic, in Middle High German, is believed to have been written around 1200 in Austria, but based on an earlier account now lost.

In this original tale, Siegfried has left his non-consanguineous but still-living parents at their castle in the Netherlands and arrived at Worms, seat of the Burgundian court, to woo Kriemhild, sister of King Gunther. (Gunther appears based on Guntherharius, a fifth-century Burgundian king.) Before Siegfried arrives, their kinsman Hagen tells the court the story of Siegfried: how he killed a dragon (the one 'supernatural' element, and therefore possibly a later insertion) and bathed in its blood to make himself invulnerable; how he came to own the valuable 'Nibelung hoard' (and the Nibelungs were not the dwarf-miners of Wagner's imagining, but two princes who were the sons of one Nibelung).

Siegfried agrees to 'woo' – a euphemism for violently abduct – the Icelandic queen Brynhilde, whom he has never met, on Gunther's behalf, while determined to marry Kriemhild. After a bruising contest of strength, Siegfried takes a ring (but not The Ring) from the defeated Brynhilde and leaves her to be violated by Gunther. In the only other strictly German version of the myth (*Þiðreks saga*), Brynhilde is a woman who lives in a castle and in a strictly businesslike way gives Siegfried a horse, Grane.

Kriemhild is every bit as powerful and impressive as Brynhilde, whose importance to the story is far less than in Wagner; in fact when Siegfried is betrayed and killed by Hagen (whose motive is greed for Siegfried's treasure), Kriemhild marries Etzel, (aka Attila the Hun), whose armies wreak terrible vengeance on the Burgundians in her behalf. (Hagen can't say he wasn't warned: coming to the Danube he meets some mermaids who warn him of disaster; this prefigures the scene with Siegfried and the Rhinemaidens in *Götterdämmerung* Act III.) Wagner, of course, leaves the story with the death of Siegfried, and transforms Kriemhild into the much more vulnerable Gutrune.

The German sources thus deal with the story as it takes place almost exclusively in the world of humans, and *Götterdämmerung* is the only opera of the four substantively set in that world: divinity hardly figures in the action (where it does it is largely impotent) and there is only a brief appearance by the dwarf, Alberich. But the work is called *Götterdämmerung* for a reason, and is framed by supernatural episodes. For the mythical underpinning of the story we have to go to the Prose and Poetic Eddas. These Scandinavian sources, compiled in Old Norse around the same time as the *Nibelungenlied*, give us the cosmology of the *Ring*, with the world divided into separate realms for different creatures. These include the Norns, who sit at the Well of Wisdom and weave the rope of destiny, knowing all that has gone, is now and is to come, as well as the warrior-maiden Valkyries, though it was Wagner's idea to make them and the Norns daughters of the earth goddess.

The Eddas also tell the story of Brynhilde's defiance of Odin/Wotan and subsequent punishment; Sigurd/Siegfried's braving the magic fire to save her; his being drugged by Gunnar/Gunther so as to forget Brynhilde and fall in love with Gudrun/Gutrune; his shapeshifting to deceive and carry off Brynhilde. And the Eddas describe *Ragnarök*, the cataclysmic end of the world in fire and flood, and the downfall of the gods (a variant word, *Ragnarökkr* translates loosely as 'twilight of the gods'). For Wagner this provided an ending that would be apocalyptic in the popular sense of the word – a global catastrophe – and in the literal sense of something that reveals profound truth.



THANK YOU TO OUR RING LEADERS!

We gratefully acknowledge the incredible support of all the Ring Leaders, including those who wish to remain anonymous.

Your extraordinary generosity and shared passion for Wagner's music have made it possible for the Orchestra to bring the epic *Ring* Cycle to life in Sydney. We are deeply grateful for the vital part you have played in making this remarkable musical journey a reality.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

Some context

Wagner drafted the 'poem' of the *Ring* in the late 1840s, a revolutionary period of political action and reaction all over Europe: Marx wrote *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848 and would soon be banished from the German lands for it; Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin took part in revolutions in Prague and Dresden; Wagner's part in the latter resulted in his own exile.

To oversimplify dramatically, the incompatibility of power and love is the prime mover for the whole *Ring* Cycle, and remains so in the face of the various aesthetic and stylistic changes that inevitably happened over the decades of its creation. From the moment Alberich renounces love in *Das Rheingold,* the lust for power – symbolised by the treasure but specifically, of course, by the Ring – leads to betrayal, violence and death. In 1853 Wagner made this explicit in an emendation, later discarded, of Brünnhilde's 'immolation' scene:

> My holiest wisdom's hoard, now I may
> make known to the world.
> I believe not in property, nor money,
> nor godliness,
> nor hearth and high place, nor pomp
> and peerage,
> nor contract and custom but in Love.
> Let that only prevail, and ye shall be
> blest in weal or woe.

Brünnhilde's rejection of power, hierarchy and wealth was entirely in keeping with the sentiments of 1848 (the earliest draft spoke more frankly of 'freedom' than 'love'). And the Siegfried imagined by Wagner at that time was an embodiment of those sentiments: being without fear was, in a sense, being without original sin, leaving the hero free of the bonds of law and treaty that had bound Wotan into impotence. The saviour of the world would be, in George Bernard Shaw's only slightly ironic phrase, 'the volition of the full-grown spirit of Man, the Freewiller of Necessity, sword in hand'.

The world looked very different by the time Wagner came to complete the cycle. To quote Shaw again, 'the Siegfrieds of 1848 were hopeless political failures, whereas the Wotans and Alberics and Lokis were conspicuous political successes.' The revolutionary spirit had dissipated, leaving in its place the familiar interpenetration of a political class with the forces of capital, all enabled by the media.

There was also the matter of Wagner's idiosyncratic assimilation of the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, whose synthesis of elements from Hindu and Buddhist traditions led Wagner to create a new kind of hero in *Parsifal,* where heroism is based on self-knowledge and renunciation. The archetype of which Siegfried (the Freewiller of Necessity, sword in hand) is an avatar was long gone. Schopenhauer's fatalistic view was that 'man does at all times only what he wills, and yet he does this necessarily. But this is because he already is what he wills.'

Shaw saw this as capitulation to those forces of political and economic reaction, and it gave him the reason why, in his view, *Götterdämmerung* is 'opera. And nothing but opera.' He goes on:

> In it you shall see what you have so far missed, the opera chorus in full parade on the stage, not presuming to interfere with the prima donna as she sings her death song over the footlights... along with it, theatrical grandiosities that recall Meyerbeer and Verdi: *pezzi d'insieme* for all the principals in a row, vengeful conjurations for trios of them, romantic death song for the tenor: in short all manner of operatic conventions.

There may be some truth in this, but it is worth remembering that of the four operas in the cycle it is *Götterdämmerung* that takes place mostly in the human world, its action almost exclusively involving human characters in what Shaw admits is 'the extraordinary storm of emotion and excitement which the music keeps up.'

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ACT I

Götterdämmerung begins and ends in mythical space, starting with the Well of Wisdom where the Norns weave the rope of destiny. They are introduced by music that we recognise as that with which Brünnhilde greeted the dawn when awoken by Siegfried in Act III of the third opera: two sharply contrasting chords release an upwelling of arpeggios. The tonality and scoring make the gesture seem much darker than in *Siegfried,* and the rising melodic figure and undulating arpeggios that conjure the Rhine in *Das Rheingold* soon become more chromatic, representing the Norns' rope. Essentially the scene acts as a recap of the Cycle so far, but it also makes clear the destruction of divine power: the Norns (with much help from the various associated leitmotifs) tell of how Siegfried has smashed Wotan's spear, and of how Wotan has had the ash-tree that sustains the cosmos cut down and banked up as logs around Valhalla. When their own rope breaks, all is lost and the Norns return to their mother, Erda.

The curtain falls and the sun rises. Amid this graphic music, a theme that Robert Donington rightly calls 'Brünnhilde as loving woman' is prominent, featuring two elements – a swirling four-note 'turn' at the start of the phrase, and the interval of the falling seventh at its end – which can be found in 'love music' by Mendelssohn, Schumann and other contemporaries. Brünnhilde exhorts Siegfried to go off and be heroic – taking Grane, the horse – as the music fills with the galloping motifs, a richly scored statement of the 'loving woman' motif, Siegfried's horn call and finally an awesome vision of the Rhine itself.

When the curtain rises again it shows the world of humanity in the form of the Gibichung court on the river, and the music introduces the Gibichungs' motifs. Gunther's is pompous, with an introductory swirl and full of dotted rhythms suggesting the vanity that makes him ask Hagen about his reputation. Hagen takes longer to reveal himself musically, but already the interval of the diminished fifth (say, D down to G sharp), the most ambiguous and unstable in tonal music, starts to assert itself. Hagen fills in more backstory – namely the existence of Brünnhilde on her rock, and the parentage and exploits of Siegfried. Gutrune's motif is sweet and disingenuous, even if she is about to collude in Hagen's plan to drug and exploit Siegfried.

This happens soon after Siegfried arrives, heralded by horn calls and greeting, by Hagen, with 'Curse' motif. Gutrune offers Siegfried the drugged draft, and we hear it take effect in the music in the simple change of a trill from semitone to tone before the score unleashes the passion of Siegfried 's sudden love for Gutrune.

There is much noisy swearing of blood-brotherhood between Gunther and Siegfried; Hagen begs off, his blood being slow and cold, but in fact Hagen's monologue (known as Hagen's watch) is the quiet but immensely sinister nub of this part of the opera. The first instance of sustained solo singing in the work, it dispenses with the relatively rapid speech rhythms that Wagner developed for *Die Meistersinger,* which have dominated the word-setting to this point. But the gently pulsing chords and Hagen's initially calm diction barely conceal the depth and complexity of his malevolence. There is great yearning in the music, and not just a lust for power. And the confluence of Siegfried's horn calls, the baleful diminished fifths in the lower brass, and the 'Spear' motif tells us all we need to know.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Back on her rock, Brünnhilde is musing, singing almost monotone in her lowest register until her young sister Waltraute appears, having stolen away from Valhalla in defiance of Wotan's will. Waltraute tells her what we've heard already from the Norns, about Valhalla being piled with logs for imminent destruction, leading to the first full statement of the majestic Valhalla music so far (it will return but only when Valhalla is in fact ablaze). Brünnhilde's monotone has given way to excitable figurations, but when Waltraute suggests giving the Ring back to the Rhinemaidens to avoid disaster, Brünnhilde's music glows with the 'renunciation of love' motif: the bitter irony is that, owing to what will shortly transpire, she will unwittingly renounce love for long enough to be complicit in Siegfried's murder.

Throughout this scene, Siegfried, Gunther and terrible consequences are approaching. Waltraute leaves in terror and abjection, and Siegfried's motif sounds as the magic fires blazes and Brünnhilde's joy builds. The appearance of Siegfried, transformed into Gunther's shape thanks to the magic Tarnhelm, and the musical collapse that accompanies Brünnhilde's cry of 'betrayed' is a gut punch. What follows is a bitter parody of the love duet that closed *Siegfried*: the Ring is taken by force (and we know what that usually causes) and the 'consummation' is Siegfried's assurance that the sword Nothung will lie between the pair for the night as a symbol of their chastity; ironically the act closes with a statement of the 'loving woman' motif.

ACT II

The insistent, muted pulsing of 'Hagen's watch' opens the second act, as Hagen, between sleep and waking, is visited by his father Alberich, who urges him to vanquish Siegfried and take the Ring. This hardly advances the drama, but is a potent reminder that it was Alberich's renunciation of love and theft of the Rhine gold that set the whole sorry story in motion, and his curse of and lust for the Ring that has powered it.

Hagen awakes just as Siegfried, magically transported by the Tarnhelm, appears, relating his adventure and announcing to Hagen and Gutrune the imminent arrival of Gunther and Brünnhilde.

The text has been mainly dialogic so far, and the music has referred entirely to motifs with which we are familiar (though not always used with strictest relevance to the action). But now, as a practical joke, Hagen calls the vassals to arms (accompanied by the boisterous 'Gibichung' motif); to the confused alarms of approaching steerhorns, the men rush on from all directions and in fragmentary polyphony ask what the danger is. The tumult and the shouting is of course one of Shaw's 'theatrical grandiosities that recall Meyerbeer and Verdi', but after the intense interiority of the work thus far, it provides a welcome release of energy. It also makes Brünnhilde's abjection and baffled anger when she sees Siegfried – who doesn't recognise her – all the more devastating.

The chorus of vassals and women is an antagonist in the ensuing accusations, recriminations and swearing of oaths that reaches a fever pitch as Hagen makes the case against Siegfried for treachery against Gunther and Brünnhilde, and Brünnhilde, with many a top A flat, calls down vengeance from heaven. She is even allowed her Valkyrie music as she swears her oath.

Under the influence of the drugged drink, Siegfried's will is completely subject to that of Hagen and by extension Alberich; so too here, Brünnhilde is manipulated by Hagen to effectively renounce her love for Siegfried and seek his death. As Siegfried, Gutrune and chorus leave to prepare for the wedding, Hagen persuades Gunther that blood-brotherhood has been broken by Siegfried's betrayal.

Full of minor-key tonality with powerful strong-beat dissonances and falling semitones, their trio has, as Donington says, a blood-and-thunder quality worthy of Verdi…and just as ghoulishly enjoyable'. The melodrama, he argues, is justified by the situation, and it allows Wagner to create one of his most effective *coups de théâtre*. As the conspirators reach their climactic chord, the music is flooded with C major light as the wedding procession bursts joyously onto the stage, engulfing Gunther, Hagen and Brünnhilde.

WAGNER SOCIETY
nsw

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Patron Simone Young AM



The Wagner Society in NSW is proud to support Assistant Conductor Daniel Linton-France for the performances of *Götterdämmerung*.

The Society's objectives include promoting the music of Richard Wagner and his contemporaries while supporting Wagnerian productions in Australia and helping young and emerging artists develop their careers. We are proud that three artists performing in *Götterdämmerung*, Deborah Humble, Margaret Plummer and Warwick Fyfe, are past recipients of WSNSW funding.

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ABOUT THE MUSIC

ACT III

As in the scores for *Tristan und Isolde* and, later, *Parsifal*, much of the action of Act III is carried by instrumental music alone. We hear before seeing that the hunt is up, as horn calls ring out across what seem like vast spaces. The curtain rises on a view of the Rhine, in which the Rhinemaidens are swimming about, singing a hymn to the sun and to the lost star of the depths, the Rhine gold. As Siegfried appears, separated from the hunting party, they flirt and cajole and finally ask for the Ring to be given back so he might escape his imminent death. In refusing, Siegfried, in Schopenhauer's phrase does 'only what he wills, and yet he does this necessarily', which might another way of saying accepts his fate. The Rhinemaidens find it incomprehensible, and dive.

There is little new musical material in this scene, but formally it consists of concerted set-pieces that the Wagner of *Das Rheingold* rejected, but which were reintroduced into his style in *Die Meistersinger* and which, as Jack Stein has noted, also underpin the vassals' chorus and conspirators' trio in Act II.

But fate, in the form of Hagen (and the curse motif), Gunther and the vassals soon appear. Over refreshments, Siegfried is persuaded to tell the story of his life, aided by the now familiar motifs of Mime and the dragon, and then, after Hagen has pressed another (drugged) drink on him, the wood-bird's advice to seek rocky fastness where a magic fire guards a glorious woman. As the 'magic sleep' music sounds sweetly and soft, Siegfried remembers awakening the armour-clad figure, and – with a tell-tale trill – being enfolded 'in Brünnhilde's arms'. Two ravens, sacred to Wotan, have been listening and at this point fly off to Valhalla, as Hagen plunges his spear into Siegfried's vulnerable back, exacting, as he puts it in an angular declamation, 'Falsehood's payment!'

Siegfried's dying words, to the refulgent music of the dawn that greeted the awakened Brünnhilde, are a paean to her, a remembrance of their first meeting and a declaration that she is now free again. In concert performances this section is the first part of 'Siegfried's funeral march', which now unfolds at some length.

In the Gibichung hall Gutrune thinks she hears Siegfried's horn, and discovers that Brünnhilde has vanished. The vassals bearing the body arrive; Hagen calls the people together and takes credit for the killing. The Ring works its curse as Hagen tried to take it from the corpse, killing Gunther when he tries to stop him, and falling back when, to the sound of the 'Nothung (sword)' motif from a solo trumpet, the dead Siegfried raises his arm in defiance. Brünnhilde appears and tells Gutrune the truth; the latter seems to die of a broken heart. Brünnhilde has the men build a pyre which the women decorate with flowers.

Brünnhilde has 'become wise' and knows that only annihilation will bring peace. (The draft quoted above is sometime known as the Feuerbach ending; by now Wagner had shifted philosophical allegiance to Schopenhauer with his doctrine of renunciation.) She has some words of wisdom for Wotan and the gods, and for the Rhinemaidens who will shortly reclaim the Ring.

She rides into the pyre, and Hagen makes one final effort to take the Ring, but in the end it is the music that has the last word. In it we hear the Valkyrie motif, the magic sleep, the fire and flood of Ragnarök, the destruction of Valhalla, the simple joy of the Rhinemaidens regaining their treasure. And we hear one simple motif high in the strings, mainly stepwise but with a final falling seventh, not heard since *Die Walküre*. There, Siegfried's mother Sieglinde sang 'O holiest miracle' on learning that she was pregnant with the hero. The last word is 'love'.

Gordon Kerry © 2026



Photo by Peter Brew-Bevan

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SIMONE YOUNG AM conductor

Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Chief Conductor, Simone Young has previously held the posts of General Manager and Music Director of the Hamburg State Opera and Music Director of the Philharmonic State Orchestra Hamburg, Music Director of Opera Australia, Chief Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and Principal Guest Conductor of both the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Lisbon and the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra. Her appointment as Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has recently been extended through until the end of 2029.

An acknowledged interpreter of the operas of Wagner and Strauss, she has conducted complete cycles of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the Bayreuth Festival, Vienna Staatsoper, Berlin Staatsoper, Hamburg Staatsoper and La Scala Milan.

Simone Young has an extensive and celebrated recording catalogue. Her first performance as Chief Conductor in Sydney, featuring Mahler's Symphony No.2 *Resurrection* and the world premiere of William Barton's *Of the Earth* was released worldwide on Deutsche Grammophon, and performances of Elgar & Vaughan Williams, *Das Rheingold* and *Gurrelieder* have been filmed for Sydney Symphony On Demand. Her Hamburg recordings include the *Ring* Cycle, *Mathis der Maler* (Hindemith), *Das Buch mit sieben Siegeln* (Schmidt) and symphonies of Bruckner, Brahms and Mahler. She has also recorded Benjamin Britten Folksongs and songs of Richard Strauss with Steve Davislim, and songs by Wagner and Strauss with Lisa Gasteen.

Simone Young's return invitations to the great orchestras of the world in 2026 include the Suisse Romande, the Orchestre nationale de Lyon, West German Radio Orchestra Cologne, Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France Paris, National Symphony Orchestra Washington, Los Angeles Philharmonic, the San Francisco and Montreal Symphony Orchestras, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, London, National Symphony Orchestra RAI (Britten *War Requiem*), and the BBC Philharmonic, Manchester. She also returns to ANAM, Melbourne to lead their orchestra in a 30th birthday celebration Gala performance.

Firmly established as one of the world's leading opera conductors, this season Simone Young returns to the Berlin Staatsoper (*Lohengrin* and *Nabucco*), La Scala Milan (the *Ring* cycle), Opera Nationale de Paris (*Katya Kabanova*), and conducts *Götterdämmerung* in concert, completing Sydney Symphony's *Ring* Cycle.

The presentation of Sydney Symphony Orchestra's *Ring* Cycle in concert, commencing in 2023, has played to sold out audiences, standing ovations and 5-star reviews. A second, feature-length documentary film, *Knowing the Score*, showcasing Simone Young and her career was also internationally released in 2023.

In 2025 Simone Young was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Sydney. Her many accolades also include the 2024 Conductor of the year (British *Opera* magazine), Honorary Member (Ehrenmitglied) of the Vienna State Opera, the 2019 European Cultural Prize Vienna, a Professorship at the Musikhochschule in Hamburg, Honorary Doctorates from the Universities of Western Australia and New South Wales, Griffith University and Monash University, the Sir Bernard Heinze Award, the Goethe Institute Medal, the 2013 Helpmann Award for Best Individual Classical Music Performance and the Officère de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from France.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

KLAUS FLORIAN VOGT Siegfried
Supported by Ian Dickson AM & Reg Holloway

Klaus Florian Vogt is one of today's leading Wagnerian tenors. His repertoire includes, above all, roles such as Lohengrin, Tannhäuser, Parsifal, Stolzing, Siegmund, Siegfried (*Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*) and Tristan, as well as roles such as Florestan (*Fidelio*) and Paul (*Die tote Stadt*). In 2027, he will make his role debut in the title role of Richard Wagner's early opera *Rienzi, der letzte der Tribunen* at the Semperoper Dresden.

He is a sought-after guest at all major opera houses. Engagements regularly take him to theaters in Munich, Berlin, Hamburg, Paris, London, Barcelona, Vienna, Madrid, Milan, Toulouse, New York and Tokyo. He also performs at international festivals such as the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival and the Salzburg Festival. Since 2007, Klaus Florian Vogt has sung every year at the Bayreuth Festival; in 2026, he appeared there in all four operas of the *Ring* Cycle as Loge, Siegmund and Siegfried.

Klaus Florian Vogt has also made a name for himself as a concert and Lieder singer. In 2019, he achieved great success with Schubert's Lied cycle *Die schöne Müllerin* in a chamber music version at the Elbphilharmonie concert hall in Hamburg. In October 2026 he performed Schubert's *Winterreise* for the first time.

The tenor collaborates worldwide with renowned orchestras such as the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic and the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, and works with conductors including Daniel Barenboim, Kent Nagano, Andris Nelsons, Christian Thielemann, Nathalie Stutzmann and Simone Young.

The artist, who hails from northern Germany, began his musical career as a horn player with the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra. While performing with the orchestra, he began studying voice at the Lübeck University of Music. In 1997–1998, he was engaged at the Landestheater Flensburg, and from 1998 to 2003, he was a member of the permanent ensemble at the Semperoper Dresden. He has been working as a freelance artist since 2003.

Klaus Florian Vogt has released numerous recordings and solo albums, including his three solo CDs *Helden, Wagner* and *Favorites*. In 2019, the Senate of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg awarded him the honorary title of 'Hamburger Kammersänger', and in 2025, he was named Best Singer at the *Oper!* Awards.



Photo by Wolfgang Wilde

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ANJA KAMPE Brünnhilde
Supported by Professor Ina Bornkessel-Schlesewsky & Professor Matthias Schlesewsky

German soprano Anja Kampe is one of the most important singers of our time. She has set standards with many of her role portrayals, including Brünnhilde in Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen* (Tcherniakov/Thielemann) at the Berlin State Opera and Vienna State Opera, Kundry at the Vienna State Opera and Opéra National de Paris, Sieglinde at the Bayreuth Festival, Isolde at the Berlin and Munich State Operas, Katerina Ismailova and Minnie (*La fanciulla del West*), also in Berlin and Munich, and Marie in *Wozzeck* at the Vienna State Opera and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in London, as well as Giorgetta in Puccini's *Il tabarro* at the Vienna State Opera.

The 2026/27 season takes her to Florence as Marie (*Wozzeck*), where she will also present her acclaimed Isolde (*Tristan und Isolde*). At the Bavarian State Opera, she will sing the title role in *Ariadne auf Naxos,* at the Berlin State Opera she will make her role debut as Herodias in *Salome,* and at the Zurich Opera House she will appear as Minnie in *La fanciulla del West*. Concert engagements will take Anja Kampe to Lyon with Alban Berg's *Seven Early Songs* under the baton of Eun Sun Kim, and to Vienna with Richard Strauss's *Hölderlin Hymns* under Philippe Jordan.

Among her most important engagements of recent seasons are Brünnhilde in performances of Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen,* as well as Marie in *Wozzeck* and Ortrud in *Lohengrin* at the Berlin State Opera, the title role in *Ariadne auf Naxos* at Hamburg State Opera and Vienna State Opera, Kundry in *Parsifal* at the Budapest Wagner Days, Isolde at San Francisco Opera under Eun Sun Kim, her role debut as Ariadne at Hamburg State Opera, and Ortrud at the Semperoper Dresden and at the Munich Opera Festival, Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* in Sydney under Simone Young, her Brünnhilde debut in the new *Ring* Cycle at the Berlin State Opera, her first Ortrud at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, her debut as Marie in a new production of *Wozzeck* at the Vienna State Opera under the baton of Philippe Jordan, Giorgetta in a new production of *Il trittico* also in Vienna, her debut at the Metropolitan Opera in New York as Senta in *The Flying Dutchman* , the new productions of *La fanciulla del West* under Antonio Pappano and *Tristan und Isolde* under Daniel Barenboim at the Berlin State Opera, the new production of *Parsifal* conducted by Philippe Jordan at the Opéra National de Paris, as well as Sieglinde at the Bayreuth Festival and at the Munich Opera Festival under Kirill Petrenko.

Anja Kampe achieved her international breakthrough as Sieglinde opposite Plácido Domingo at the Washington National Opera. She has since performed this role with great success in cities including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Munich, Berlin, Barcelona, Paris, London, and Bayreuth. In addition to Sieglinde, Senta and Leonore (*Fidelio*) have become central roles in Anja Kampe's repertoire. Under the baton of Daniel Barenboim, she made her role debuts as Tosca and Kundry at the Berlin State Opera, and subsequently repeated her success as Kundry at the Teatro Real Madrid, in Paris and Vienna.

Her repertoire also includes Lisa (*The Queen of Spades*), Jenůfa, Ariadne (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Carlotta (*Die Gezeichneten*) and Tosca. Kampe's concert repertoire includes Richard Strauss's *Hölderlin Hymns,* Berg's *Altenberg Lieder,* Verdi's *Messa da Requiem,* Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder,* Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and the role of Tove in Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder*.



Photo by Sasha Vasiljev

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

FALK STRUCKMANN Hagen
Supported by Ingrid Kaiser

Falk Struckmann is regarded as one of the leading bass-baritones of our time; he has recently expanded his repertoire to include major bass roles with great success.

Highlights of the 2026/27 season include Fafner (*Siegfried*) under Daniel Harding in Rome, Hagen (*Götterdämmerung*) in Sydney with Simone Young, and Alberich (*Rheingold*) at the San Francisco Opera under the musical direction of Eun Sun Kim.

Key roles of Richard Wagner form a central part of his artistic profile, including the Dutchman, King Henry (*Lohengrin*), King Marke (*Tristan und Isolde*), and numerous roles in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. The versatile artist's repertoire also includes roles such as Jochanaan (*Salome*), Orest (*Elektra*), Barak (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*), and the Doctor (Wozzeck), as well as roles from the Italian repertoire such as Scarpia (*Tosca*) and Iago (*Otello*).

From Kiel and Basel, where the foundation was laid for his remarkable career, he conquered the international opera stages, including the Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, the Royal Opera House, and the Vienna State Opera, which honoured him for his artistic achievements with the title of Kammersänger. He regularly works with conductors such as Daniel Barenboim, Christian Thielemann, and Riccardo Muti. Falk Struckmann made his Bayreuth Festival debut in 1993 as Kurwenal, followed by roles in *Der Ring* and *Parsifal*.

Many of his performances have been recorded on CD and DVD, documenting his successful career.



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SAMUEL DUNDAS Gunther
Supported by The Hon. Ashley Dawson-Damer AM

Samuel Dundas has sung in concert throughout Australia and New Zealand, including with the Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne, Tasmanian, Queensland and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, the Australian Youth Orchestra and the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. His opera engagements have seen him perform with Opera Australia, New Zealand Opera, Opera Queensland, West Australian Opera, Victorian Opera and State Opera South Australia.

Major role debuts again featured prominently this year: the title role in *Eugen Onegin* for West Australian Opera, Nerone (*The Coronation of Poppea,* Kats-Chernin) for Victorian Opera and Zurga (*The Pearlfishers*) for New Zealand Opera. He also returned to Opera Australia as Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*), to the Sydney Symphony as Gunther (*Die Götterdämmerung*) and in the title role of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with Brisbane Chamber Choir.

Upcoming engagements include reprising his role of Cave (*Eucalyptus*) for both Adelaide Festival and Opera Australia, his return to Victorian Opera as Stanley (*A Streetcar Named Desire*), Prince Ottokar (*Der Freischütz*) and the Theatre Manager (*Lola Montez,* Chindamo) and to Melbourne Symphony for *Messiah*.

Samuel Dundas' recent engagements include the role of Cave for Perth and Brisbane Festivals and for Victorian Opera; Figaro (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), Horatio (*Hamlet:* Dean) and his role debut as Wolfram (*Tannhäuser*) for Opera Australia; Dandini (*La Cenerentola*) and Enrico (*Lucia di Lammermoor*) for Opera Queensland; the Count (*Capriccio*) and the title role in Galileo (*Richard Mills*) for Victorian Opera; Marcello (*La boheme*) and Sharpless for West Australian Opera, Opera Queensland and New Zealand Opera. On the concert platform: Dr Falke (*Die Fledermaus*) for West Australian Symphony, Beethoven's Symphony No.9 (Sydney and West Australian Symphony Orchestras), Donner (*Das Rheingold*) for Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Faure's *Requiem,* Haydn's *Harmony Mass* and the Christmas Gala concert for Tasmanian Symphony and in the opening concert of Perth Festival, *Music of the Spheres*.

He's also been heard in the role of Aphron in *The Golden Cockerel* for Adelaide Festival, the title role in *Voss* and Marcello for State Opera South Australia, (Marcello also for Opera Australia), *Carmina Burana* for Festival of Voices, Hobart and Adelaide Symphony, and in recital (*The Wanderer's Life* for Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra) for the *Ten Days on the Island Festival* and in the Chamber Landscapes series at Ukaria for Adelaide Festival.

Samuel Dundas is a graduate of the Melba Conservatorium of Music, winner of the Lady Fairfax New York Scholarship and was the proud recipient of the inaugural Dame Heather Begg Award. He is formerly a member of Victorian Opera's Artist Development Program and Opera Australia's Moffatt Oxenbould Young Artist Program.



Photo by David Noles

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ELEANOR LYONS Gutrune & Third Norn
Supported by I Kallinikos

Australian soprano Eleanor Lyons has established an international reputation for her interpretations of the German Romantic repertoire, with the works of Beethoven and Mahler central to her artistic profile. Admired for her luminous voice, expressive clarity and breadth of musicianship, she is equally at home on the concert platform and operatic stage, with a repertoire spanning Mozart to Wagner.

Eleanor's close association with the symphonic repertoire has brought her invitations from many of the world's leading orchestras, including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Munich Philharmonic, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin and ORF Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien. She has collaborated with distinguished conductors including Iván Fischer, Andris Nelsons, Philippe Herreweghe, Jérémie Rhorer, Laurence Equilbey, Marin Alsop, Thomas Hengelbrock, Kazuki Yamada, Lahav Shani, Dennis Russell Davies and Michael Schønwandt.

Recent highlights include Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra under Iván Fischer, Mendelssohn's *Psalm 42* with the Munich Philharmonic under Thomas Hengelbrock and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Her extensive concert repertoire includes Mahler's Second and Fourth Symphonies, Beethoven's Missa solemnis, Britten's *War Requiem,* Verdi's *Messa da Requiem,* Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* and Bruckner's Te Deum.

On the operatic stage, Eleanor made her acclaimed Semperoper Dresden debut as Leonore in Beethoven's *Fidelio,* a role she is scheduled to reprise in three opera productions in 2027. Other recent appearances include the title role in Dvořák's *Rusalka* for Opera Queensland and Tatyana in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* for West Australian Opera. Her operatic repertoire also encompasses Donna Anna in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* for Opera Australia, Anne Trulove in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* and Mimì in Puccini's *La bohème* at the Hungarian State Opera. She has also performed both Mimì and Gretchen in a staged adaptation of Schumann's *Szenen aus Goethes Faust* with Flemish Opera.

In Australia, Eleanor has performed with the country's major symphony orchestras, including the Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Canberra, Tasmanian, Queensland and West Australian symphony orchestras. Her performances have attracted international critical acclaim, with the *Hamburger Abendblatt* describing her as an 'almost unbelievable vocal marvel' at the Elbphilharmonie, *Bachtrack* praising her portrayal of Tatyana as 'outstanding in the role, singing with gleaming power and radiant grace', and *The Boston Globe* admiring her 'gleaming lyric voice'.

Eleanor studied at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music before continuing her training in Russia and the United Kingdom. She is based in Vienna.



Photo by Stef King

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

WARWICK FYFE Alberich
Supported by Tom & Ruth O'Dea

Helpmann Award-winning Australian baritone Warwick Fyfe has established himself as a Wagnerian specialist, singing the title role in *Der fliegende Holländer,* Alberich in *Der Ring des Nibelungen,* Klingsor in *Parsifal,* Wolfram in *Tannhäuser* and Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* for Opera Australia; Wotan in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and Hans Sachs in *Meistersinger* for Melbourne Opera; and Wotan in *Die Walküre* in Singapore. He has appeared as Alberich in *Das Rheingold* with the Japan Philharmonic and Tianjin Symphony Orchestras, and in *Siegfried* with the Sydney Symphony.

A long-standing principal artist with Opera Australia, Warwick's repertoire spans both lyric and dramatic baritone roles. His performances include the title roles in *Rigoletto* and *Falstaff,* as well as Scarpia in *Tosca,* Vodnik in *Rusalka,* Amonasro in *Aida,* Mandryka in *Arabella,* the Four Villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann,* Dr Schön in *Lulu* and Faninal in *Der Rosenkavalier*. He has also sung Papageno in *The Magic Flute,* Leporello in *Don Giovanni,* Sancho Panza in *Don Quichotte,* Geronio in *Il turco in Italia,* Barone di Trombonok in *Il viaggio a Reims,* Germont in *La traviata* and Pizarro in *Fidelio*. In 2026, he returned to the company as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*.

Other notable performances have seen Warwick as Athanaël in *Thaïs* and Amonasro for Finnish National Opera, Bartolo in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for Victorian Opera and Peter in *Hansel and Gretel* in Singapore. Further roles include Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Adelaide Festival, Ferrando in *Il trovatore* for West Australian Opera, Frank in *Die Fledermaus* with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and Vodnik for both West Australian Opera and Opera Queensland. With New Zealand Opera, he has sung *Rigoletto,* Leporello, Taddeo in *L'italiana in Algeri* and Tonio in *Pagliacci*.

Warwick is a distinguished concert soloist, performing with all the major Australian symphony orchestras, in addition to the Warsaw Symphony, Singapore Symphony, Orchestra of the Music Makers (Singapore), Orchestra Wellington and Auckland Philharmonia. His repertoire ranges from Baroque choral masterworks — Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and *Mass in B Minor* and Handel's *Messiah* — to Classical and Romantic choral works such as Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem,* Mozart's *Requiem* and Verdi's *Requiem*. He has also appeared in Beethoven's Symphony No.9 and Mahler's Symphony No.8, and in 20th century pieces, notably Orff's *Carmina Burana,* Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* and Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*. He joins the Sydney Symphony in 2026 to sing Alberich in *Götterdämmerung* in the conclusion of the Orchestra's *Ring* Cycle.

Warwick was recognised with a Helpmann Award for his portrayal of Alberich in the Melbourne *Ring* Cycle, and was granted a Churchill Fellowship to study Wagnerian technique in Germany, the UK, and the USA.



Photo by Andrew Keshan

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DEBORAH HUMBLE Waltraute
Supported by Justice Francois Kunc & Felicity Rourke

British-Australian mezzo-soprano Deborah Humble is known internationally for her commanding performances of the dramatic and Wagnerian repertoire. In 2026, she sings Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung,* bringing the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's multi-year *Ring* Cycle to its conclusion. Her 2027 season includes Beethoven's Symphony No.9 with the Sydney Symphony under Simone Young and Mahler's Symphony No.2 with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

Her extensive appearances in Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* include Erda and Waltraute in three full cycles with Melbourne Opera – roles also performed in multiple productions for Opera Australia, alongside her recent role debut as Fricka. She sang Erda in *Siegfried* (Boston Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Halle Opera), Erda in *Das Rheingold* (Hong Kong Philharmonic, Saffron Opera Group) and Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung* (Saffron Opera Group), with further complete cycles in Bari and Ludwigshafen. For Staatsoper Hamburg, she sang Erda, Waltraute and Schwertleite. She also performed Waltraute in *Die Walküre* with Sydney Symphony.

In Australia, Deborah has sung Amneris (*Aida*) and Brigitta (*Die tote Stadt*) for Opera Australia, and Dalila (*Samson et Dalila*) and Magdalena (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) for Melbourne Opera. She has appeared in concert as Clairon (*Capriccio*) and Clytemnestra (*Elektra*) with Victorian Opera, and the Princess (*Suor Angelica*) with Melbourne Opera. Internationally, she has performed Mary (*Der fliegende Holländer*) for Opéra de Lille and Staatsoper Hamburg; Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*), Hänsel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) and *Olga* (*Eugene Onegin*) for Staatsoper Hamburg; and Brangäne (*Tristan und Isolde*) with the Mexico City Symphony.

A frequent concert soloist, Deborah has sung Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder* (Sydney Symphony), Verdi's Requiem (Queensland Symphony, Canberra Symphony and Sage Concert Hall, UK), Handel's *Messiah* (New Zealand Symphony Orchestra), Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder* (Orchestra Wellington), and Rossini's *Petite messe solennelle* (Melbourne Symphony Orchestra). She performed Mahler's Symphony No.2 with the New Zealand Symphony and with the Sydney Symphony under Simone Young, celebrating the reopening of the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall (broadcast live on ABC TV and recorded for Deutsche Grammophon). Further Mahler credits include Symphony No.3 (Queensland Symphony) and Symphony No.8 (West Australian Symphony and Singapore's Esplanade Theatre).

Deborah received critical acclaim and a Green Room Award nomination for her performances as Clytemnestra (*Elektra,* Victorian Opera) and as Erda and Waltraute (*Der Ring des Nibelungen,* Melbourne Opera). Her recordings include *Der Ring des Nibelungen* with Staatsoper Hamburg (Oehms, cond. Simone Young) and Hong Kong Philharmonic (Naxos, cond. Jaap van Zweden), and *The Love for Three Oranges* with Opera Australia (Chandos, cond. Richard Hickox).



Photo by Andrew Keshan

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

CATHERINE CARBY First Norn & Wellgunde
Supported by Susie Dickson

Mezzo soprano Catherine Carby regularly performs with major opera companies including the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, English National Opera, Scottish Opera, Opera Australia, Victoria State Opera, State Opera South Australia and Opera Queensland. On the concert platform she has been heard with the BBC Concert Orchestra , the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Ulster Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Gardner Chamber Orchestra Boston, the Polski Chór Kameralny Gdańsk and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

In Australia this year Catherine sings the dual roles of the mother and the witch (*Hansel and Gretel*) for State Opera South Australia, Juno for Pinchgut Opera's *Semele*, Wellgunde and 2nd Norn in Sydney Symphony's *Die Götterdämmerung* and alto soloist in Sydney Philharmonia Choirs' *Messiah*. In the UK she was heard as Jade Boucher (*Dead Man Walking*) for ENO, Siegrune (*Die Walküre*) for ROH Covent Garden, Brangäne (*Tristan und Isolde*) for Longborough Festival and in *A Grand Opera Gala* for the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Multiple concert re-invitations in the UK, Siegrune at Covent Garden and Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) with West Australian Opera feature prominently in Catherine's 2027 diary.

A regular guest artist at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Catherine's engagements include Gertrude (*Hansel and Gretel*), Emilia (*Otello*), Antonia's mother (*Tales of Hoffmann*), Second Maid (*Elektra*), Minerva/Fortune (*The Return of Ulysses*), Sister Mathilde (*Dialogue des Carmélites*), Voice from Above (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*) and for the Royal Ballet, Katharina Schratt (*Mayerling*).

Further roles internationally include Waltraute (*Die Walküre*) at La Scala Milan; Brangäne at the Teatro São Carlos, Lisbon; Waltraute (*Die Götterdämmerung*) and Genevieve (*Pelleas et Melisande*) for Longborough; Marcellina (*The Marriage of Figaro*) for Opera North; Malcolm (*La Donna del Lago*) for Buxton International Festival; Gluck's *Iphigenie en Tauride* (title role), Aurelio (Donizetti's *L'Assedio di Calais*), Cornelia (*Giulio Cesare*), Idamante, Diana (*La Calisto*) for English Touring Opera; Ramiro (*La finta giardiniera*) and Prue in *The Dancing Master* for Buxton International Festival, and the title role in *L'Orfeo* for Opus 48, Oxford.

In Australia Catherine has recently been heard with Victorian Opera, National Opera Company Canberra, Pinchgut Opera, W the Sydney and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras and in a national tour of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

Her recordings include *The Mountebanks* (Celler/Gilbert), Lampe's *The Dragon of Wantley* Balfe's *Satanella, The Love for Three Oranges, Les contes d'Hoffmann, Der Rosenkavalier* and The Royal Opera's *Die Walküre*.

Catherine Carby studied at the Canberra School of Music and the Royal College of Music, London, and was a Young Artist for both Victoria State Opera and Opera Australia.



Photo by David Shoukry

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

MARGARET PLUMMER
Second Norn & Flosshilde
Supported by Helen Meddings & the late Phil Meddings

Australian mezzo soprano Margaret Plummer was engaged as a principal artist at the Vienna State Opera for eight seasons. During this time Margaret performed a vast range of repertoire for the company including Hänsel (*Hänsel and Gretel*), Mercedes (*Carmen*), Waltraute (*Die Walküre*), Flosshilde (*Das Rheingold* and *Die Gőtterdämmerung*), Second Norn (*Die Gőtterdämmerung*), Blumenmädchen (*Parsifal*), Siebel (*Faust*), Varvara (*Katya Kabanova*), Tebaldo (*Don Carlos*), Page (*Salome*), Fenena (*Nabucco*), Meg Page (*Falstaff,* also for Hamburg State Opera), Tisbe (*La Cenerentola*), Hermia (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Wood Sprite (*Rusalka*) and Fjodor (*Boris Godunov*).

On her return to Opera Australia this year Margaret starred in the New Year's Eve Gala and as Hansel in *Hansel and Gretel* in the Sydney Summer Season. She then travelled to Adelaide to appear in John Adams' *El Nino: Nativity Reconsidered* for Adelaide Festival, before returning to Vienna where she will be heard as Waltraute and Second Norn in *Die Walküre* and *Die Götterdämmerung,* and Clover in *Animal Farm* at the Vienna State Opera. Later in the year she returns to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra to perform the roles of First Norn and Flosshilde in *Götterdämmerung,* Simone Young conducting.

Next year, Margaret will return to Opera Australia in the title role of *L'Enfant et les Sortileges* and to the Sydney Symphony as the Page in *Salome*. In Vienna she will be heard in productions of *Lulu, LÓrfeo* and *The Bartered Bride*.

Margaret's most recent engagements include Prince Charming in Opera Australia's *Cinderella* (*Cendrillon*). Her continuing association with the Vienna State Opera has also seen her undertake the roles of Adelaide (*Arabella*), Martha (*Iolanta*), Second Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*), Emilia (*Otello*), Annina (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Charlotte (*Werther*), Genevieve (*Pelleas et Melisande*) and Kitchen Boy (*Rusalka*).

Other significant engagements for Margaret have included her debuts at La Scala Milan as Auntie in *Peter Grimes,* and at the Bayreuth Festival as Blumenmädchen and Second Knappe (Esquire) in *Parsifal*. She has also been engaged as *Carmen* (title role) by Longborough Festival, Charlotte (*Werther*) and Marguerite (*La damnation du Faust*) for the Tiroler Landestheater, Innsbruck, in Beethoven's Symphony No.9 with the Vienna Philharmonic and Haydn's *Theresienmesse* with the Savaria Symphony Orchestra.

Prior to winning the 2014 Vienna State Opera Award, Margaret performed extensively with Opera Australia including performances in Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour as well as in regional touring productions. She was also heard as Hexe (*Hansel and Gretel*) with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, as Phoebe (*Castor et Pollux*) and Diane (*Iphigenie en Tauride*) for Pinchgut Opera, as Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*) for Pacific Opera and in Mozart's Requiem with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

Margaret holds a Bachelor of Music from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.



Photo © Golden Hour Pictures

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SAMANTHA CLARKE Woglinde
Supported by Dominic Taranto & Anthony Cassidy

Australian/British soprano Samantha Clarke is the winner of the 2019 Guildhall Gold Medal and prize winner in the 2019 Grange International Festival Singing Competition. Samantha studied at the Royal Northern College of Music, as a Sir John Fisher Foundation and Independent Opera Scholar, under the tutelage of Mary Plazas. She is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama Opera School as a Baroness de Turckheim Scholar, Help Musicians, Tait Memorial and Countess of Munster Trust Scholar and studied with Yvonne Kenny. In addition to the 2019 Guildhall Gold Medal, Samantha is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Leverhulme Royal Northern College of Music Award, the Dame Eva Turner Award and the Michael and Joyce Kennedy Award for the singing of Strauss.

In the 2026/27 season, Samantha returns to West Australian Opera as Artist in Residence for her role debut as Juliette (*Roméo et Juliette*). She also returns to Opera Australia as Mimì (*La bohème*) and Liù (*Turandot*), both also role debuts. In concert, she joins the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Simone Young for Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* as Woglinde, as well as Mozart's Requiem conducted by Stephen Layton. Samantha also performs with the London Philharmonic Orchestra for *Das Paradies und die Peri* and with West Australian Symphony Orchestra and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra for Handel's *Messiah*.

Her operatic roles include: Violetta (*La traviata*), Fiordiligi (*Cosi fan tutte*), Helena (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*), Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Countess (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Anne Trulove (*The Rake's Progress*), The Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*) and Theodora.

Recent engagements include Euridice (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) with Opera Australia; Fiordiligi (*Cosi fan tutte*) for the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy in Japan, Grange Festival and Opera Queensland; Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*) at Garsington; Cleopatra (*Giulio Cesare*) and Theodora for Pinchgut Opera; Woglinde (*Das Rheingold*), Marzelline (*Fidelio*), Waldvogel (*Siegfried*) and Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Simone Young; Violetta (*La traviata*) with The Grange Festival, Opera Australia and West Australian Opera; a US tour with the Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra; *Messiah* and *War Requiem* with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra; Beethoven's Symphony No.9 in Tasmania and Britten's *Les Illuminations* with Western Australia Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Edward Gardner.

Samantha features on the Resonus' *Samuel Barber: The Complete Songs* recording with accompanist Dylan Perez.



Photo by Benjamin Ealovega

SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

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Sydney Philharmonia Choirs is Australia's premier choral organisation. Since it was founded in 1920, SPC has brought people together through music, and for over five decades, it has been the heartbeat of choral performance at the Sydney Opera House.

Led by Artistic and Music Director Brett Weymark OAM and Associate Music Director Dr Elizabeth Scott, and with more than 2,000 singers across six ensembles, SPC brings the full power of the human voice to dynamic music making. From blockbuster choral classics like Verdi's Requiem and Orff's *Carmina Burana,* to the soaring soundtracks of films such as *Gladiator,* heartwarming musical theatre, and world premieres by leading Australian composers.

Each year, SPC performs approximately 50 performances across Sydney and beyond, collaborating with top-tier orchestras, soloists and conductors, performing regularly with many of Australia's most prominent arts companies and festivals. SPC has performed in the Sydney Opera House, Hamer Hall Melbourne, the Singapore National Football Stadium, Westminster Abbey, the Tokyo Dome and the Royal Albert Hall. Nagano Olympic Games and being the first (and most recent in 2026) Australian choir to perform at the BBC Proms. SPC is also proud to have been the choir of choice for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra since 1936.

Sydney Philharmonia Choirs concerts celebrate diversity – of voices, of stories, and of sound – with programs that allow singers and audiences to connect with an exhilarating range of music in languages from English to Gadigal, keeping things fresh with premieres, commissions and new interpretations of beloved classics.



Photo by Keith Saunders

SYDNEY PHILHARMONIA CHOIRS

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ELIZABETH SCOTT chorus master
Associate Music Director
Sydney Philharmonia Choirs

Dr Elizabeth Scott is a highly skilful choral conductor who has led Sydney Philharmonia Choirs' young adult choir VOX since 2008. Formerly SPC's Assistant Chorus Master (2006 – 2008) and Acting Music Director (2013), she was appointed Acting Music Director in 2022. She is a Lecturer in Conducting and Director of Choirs at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music (University of Sydney) and was the Choral Director of the NSW Schools Spectacular since 2009 to 2023.

After graduating from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 1995, she completed postgraduate studies in choral conducting, vocal performance and aural training in Hungary and Germany. She holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting. Through Symphony Australia's Conductor Development Program she has worked with the Queensland, Adelaide and Melbourne symphony orchestras and Orchestra Victoria, among others, and was awarded the 2008 Sydney Choral Symposium Foundation Choral Conducting Scholarship.

Elizabeth is a regular chorus master for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and has prepared choirs for Simone Young, David Robertson, Masaaki Suzuki and Sir Simon Rattle. She also regularly works with Gondwana Choirs and Cantillation.

In 2017, Elizabeth became the first Australian woman to conduct SPC's *Messiah* concerts at the Sydney Opera House. Recent performance highlights include 2025's *St Matthew Passion* (Mendelssohn Version) and Bach's Christmas Oratorio, 2023's *The Little Match Girl Passion* and *Carols at the House, Mozart: Requiem & Revelations* and *Bach Mass in B Minor (2022), Berliner Messe* and *St John's Passion Reimagined* (2021) and *Considering Matthew Shepard* (2020) and *Music at the Movies* (2019).

Elizabeth is a passionate champion of contemporary composers such as Arvo Pärt, Eric Whitacre, Ola Gjeilo and Ēriks Ešenvalds, as well as Australian composers such as Paul Stanhope, Joseph Twist, Brooke Shelley, Matthew Orlovich and Sally Whitwell.



Photo by Keith Saunders

ARTISTIC TEAM – MUSIC STAFF

DANIEL LINTON-FRANCE
Assistant Conductor
Supported by Wagner Society in NSW



Originally from Sydney, conductor and pianist Daniel Linton-France completed his studies at the University Mozarteum in Salzburg, As a conductor and repetiteur he held positions in opera houses in Germany and Austria conducting over 45 music-theatre productions. At the Bayreuth Festival he has assisted Simone Young and Kirill Petrenko working on the *Ring des Nibelungen* by Richard Wagner.

An active chamber musician and Gramola recording artist, he currently teaches at Vienna's University of Music and Performing Arts.

CAROLINE STAUNTON
Director



Originally from Ireland, Caroline is based in Berlin but in demand worldwide. From 2014-2026 she was engaged as a director at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, and has directed productions for Hamburg State Opera, Irish National Opera and Wexford National Opera House. She recently completed a three-year collaboration with the Regents Opera in London, where she staged two complete cycles of Wagner's *Ring* Cycle.

THOMAS JOHNSON
Repetiteur



Winner of the Richard Bonynge Accompanists Award at the 2018 Sydney International Song Prize, Thomas Victor Johnson is a vocal coach and pianist living on the unceded lands of the Gadigal people. Thomas currently works as a repetiteur with Opera Australia, is a staff vocal coach at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and is a regular guest teacher at Te Pae Kōkako, The Aotearoa New Zealand Opera Studio (TANZOS) at the University of Waikato.

TANJA BINGELLI
Language Coach



Tanja Binggeli is a German opera language coach based in Zurich, where she is Artistic Administrator and Coach of the International Opera Studio at Opernhaus Zürich. Tanja spent fifteen years as German Language Coach at Opera Australia, working across the country's major opera companies and coaching a wide range of German-language repertoire.

Following her time in Australia, Tanja moved to Berlin, where she worked in administration at the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, but continues to be regularly invited back to Australia to work as a specialist in German lyric diction with Opera Australia and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

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