



London **Philharmonic** Orchestra

ORCHESTRAL EXCERPTS FROM
WAGNER OPERAS

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg,
Rienzi, Götterdämmerung,
Die Walküre, Tannhäuser

KLAUS TENNSTEDT conductor
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

ORCHESTRAL EXCERPTS FROM WAGNER OPERAS

Prelude: *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*

Die Meistersinger is Wagner's first and last attempt at comedy. Its prelude depicts life in Germany's richest and most historic town. The Mastersingers are represented by two themes in the style of marches. The other main theme in the opera portrays the lovers' ideals of love and art. But in its essence, *Die Meistersinger* contains not one but two love stories: the first is the love of the nobleman Walther von Stolzing for Eva Pagner, the daughter of the richest man in town, and the second of David, Hans Sachs's apprentice, for Magdalena, Eva's servant and companion. When heard in the opera house the prelude leads straight into the first scene in the church of St Katherine, where Walther and Eva speak to each other for the first time.

Overture: *Rienzi*

This overture to Wagner's early opera, *Rienzi*, has long been a concert hall favourite although the opera is seldom revived for the stage. Rienzi is a man who is corrupted by power and meets his death at the hands of his followers. The overture includes various motifs from the opera such as Rienzi's prayer and the trumpet call - the sound which heralds the uprising taking Rienzi to power.

Dawn and Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine; Siegfried's Funeral March: *Götterdämmerung*

After passing through the magic fire that the god Wotan has commanded to protect his daughter Brünnhilde asleep on a high rock, the hero Siegfried finds her and for the first time falls in love. But his passion for Brünnhilde soon gives way to his longing for new adventure. As a token of his love, he leaves his ring with her and sets off down the Rhine. He plays his horn in a defiant and exuberant mood, but what he does not yet know is that he is about to reach the kingdom of the Gibichungs, where envy and greed will eventually bring about his death.

Hagen, the Nibelung Alberich's son, has been conceived for one purpose only: to bring about the downfall of the Gods and in so doing regain his father's ring. Brünnhilde has inadvertently revealed to him that Siegfried's weak point is his back. This is where, during a hunt, Hagen plunges his spear and kills him. There follows the most grandiose funeral music ever written, turning Siegfried's death into a celebration of his life.

The Ride of the Valkyries: *Die Walküre*

The nine Valkyries are the daughters of the god Wotan and Erda, the Earth Goddess. They are sent to look for heroes who have died in battle and bring them back to life to protect Valhalla, Wotan's palace. Their appearance at the beginning of the third act of *Die Walküre* is as raucous as their task is grim. These eight tough women (Brünnhilde is the ninth but is occupied with other matters at this stage) are gathering at the summit of a rocky mountain before riding off to select heroes from the piles of the dead.

Overture and Venusberg Music: *Tannhäuser*

116 years before this recording, *Tannhäuser* received its London première at Covent Garden in an Italian version. Its overture has the rare honour of being the first Wagner music heard in London to the almost unanimous disapproval of the critics of the time. Wagner himself conducted it in 1855 at a concert attended by Queen Victoria during his three month stay in London at the invitation of the Philharmonic Society. The overture takes us through the extremes of the life of the knight, *Tannhäuser*, who enjoys the sinful pagan court of the goddess Venus but

aspires to marry the saintly Elisabeth. Love is inevitably doomed, the end result being Elisabeth's death and his own tragic downfall.

The *Venusberg Music*, composed (but not performed) to follow the overture to the Paris production of 1861, follows. In a rocky grotto assorted nymphs, satyrs and fauns take part in a wild dance which grows into a frenzied orgy. Eventually the Three Graces arrive to calm things down and the music gradually dies away.

Eduardo Benarroch

KLAUS TENNSTEDT *conductor*

Born in East Germany, Klaus Tennstedt studied at the Leipzig Conservatory and conducted throughout his native land but it was not until he moved to the West in 1971 that he started to achieve world recognition. He made his American debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1974 and his debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1977. He had an instant rapport with the London Philharmonic Orchestra which resulted in return invitations and his appointment as the Orchestra's Principal Conductor and Music Director in 1983. This developed into a unique and remarkable relationship until illness finally brought it to a premature end some ten years later. Klaus Tennstedt died in 1998.

Tennstedt was particularly renowned for his performances of the German repertoire, particularly Mahler whose symphonies he conducted regularly at the Royal Festival Hall and on disc for EMI to huge public acclaim. His energy, musicianship and emotional involvement combined with a rare humility endeared him to audiences and musicians alike. Latterly every concert appearance

was a major event, none more so than this concert of Wagner's music given at the BBC Proms in the Royal Albert Hall on 20 August 1992. In reviewing this concert in the Sunday Times, Hugh Canning recalls 'Music-making on an altogether more exalted level filled an Albert Hall to the rafters on Thursday night. Tennstedt is one of the few interpreters working today who even begins to convey the majesty of Wagner's orchestral writing. The Prommers gave Tennstedt a hero's welcome and he rewarded them with an encore, one of the most thrilling accounts I can recall of *The Ride of the Valkyries*.'



LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The London Philharmonic Orchestra has long established a high reputation for its versatility and artistic excellence. These are evident from its performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, its trail-blazing international tours and its pioneering education work. Kurt Masur has been the Orchestra's Principal Conductor since September 2000, extending the line of distinguished conductors who have held positions with the Orchestra since its foundation in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham. These have included Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt and Franz Welser-Möst.

Vladimir Jurowski was appointed the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor in March 2003. The London Philharmonic Orchestra has been resident symphony orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall since 1992 and there it presents its main series of concerts between September and May each year. In summer, the Orchestra moves to Sussex where it has been the resident symphony orchestra at Glyndebourne Festival Opera for over 40 years. The Orchestra also performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous tours to America, Europe and Japan, and visited India, Hong Kong, China, South Korea, Australia and South Africa.



The London Philharmonic Orchestra with Klaus Tennstedt

ORCHESTRAL EXCERPTS FROM WAGNER OPERAS

- 01 10:51 from *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1868)
Prelude
- 02 13:07 from *Rienzi* (1842)
Overture
- 03 11:59 from *Der Ring des Nibelungen*
Götterdämmerung (1876)
Dawn and Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine
- 04 10:09 Siegfried's Funeral Music
- 05 5:08 *Die Walküre* (1870)
The Ride of the Valkyries (concert version)
- 25:38 from *Tannhäuser* (1845)
- 06 11:41 Overture
- 07 13:57 Venusberg Music

KLAUS TENNSTEDT *conductor*
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
HEINRICH HOCHSCHILD *guest leader*