



Flagello conducts Flagello

8.112065

STEREO



Nicolas
FLAGELLO

**Passion of
Martin Luther King**

(Original version)

L'Infinito

The Land

Ezio Flagello, Bass-baritone
Ambrosian Singers
London Philharmonic Orchestra
I Musici di Firenze
Nicolas Flagello
(1962 and 1969 recordings)

Nicolas Flagello

(1928-1994)

Passion of Martin Luther King (1968) (original version) (Texts by Martin Luther King, Jr., 1929-1968 / Latin Liturgy)

1	Hosanna Filio David	4:15
2	At the Center of Non-Violence	5:24
3	Cor Jesu	6:04
4	In the Struggle for the Freedom	6:47
5	Et Flagellis Subditum	2:12
6	We've Got Some Difficult Days Ahead	4:33
7	Death Is Inevitable	4:28
8	Stabat Mater	6:48
9	Jubilate Deo	3:02
10	I Have a Dream	4:59

Ezio Flagello, Bass-baritone

Leslie Pearson, Organ • Ambrosian Singers • London Philharmonic Orchestra • Nicolas Flagello

World première of original version

Recorded in Barking Assembly Hall, London, England, 1 and 3 May 1969

Producer and Engineer: John Boyden • Executive reissue producer: Walter Simmons

Remastering by Bill Siegmund, Digital Island Studios • Publisher: European American Music Distributors
(www.eamdllc.com)

11	L'Infinito (1956) (Text by Giacomo Leopardi, 1798-1837)	3:01
----	--	------

The Land (1954) (Texts by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 1809-1892)

12	No 1: The Eagle	5:13
13	No 2: The Owl	3:40
14	No 3: The Throstle	2:34
15	No 4: The Oak	5:22
16	No 5: The Snowdrop	2:25
17	No 6: Flower in the Cranny	6:52

Ezio Flagello, Bass-baritone

I Musici di Firenze • Nicolas Flagello

Recorded in Rome, September 1962

Producer and Engineer: Kurt H. Stenzel • Executive reissue producer: Walter Simmons

Remastering by Bill Siegmund, Digital Island Studios • Publisher: Maelos Music Inc. (www.Flagello.com)
Previously issued on Internos 0002 in 1963

Nicolas Flagello (1928-1994)

Passion of Martin Luther King • L'Infinito • The Land

The brothers Nicolas Flagello (1928-1994) and Ezio Flagello (1931-2009) were born in New York City to a family that had been musically active for generations. Their father, a successful dress designer, was an amateur oboist, and their mother had been a singer whose father (conductor and composer Domenico Casiello) was said to have studied with Verdi. Both boys became immersed in music at an early age, although their parents did not encourage them to pursue it professionally. Nicolas began playing the piano at three, and started to compose before the age of ten. After high school he resisted his parents' wish that he pursue a career in engineering. Ezio was more amenable to their plan for him to become a dentist. Nicolas, who had already begun studying composition with Vittorio Giannini, entered the Manhattan School of Music in 1945, earning both his Bachelor's (1949) and Master's (1950) degrees there. Upon graduation he joined the Manhattan School faculty, where he remained for 25 years. Meanwhile, as Ezio's voice began to mature, its rich quality began to attract attention, and he entered the Manhattan School as well, studying with Friedrich Schorr. Upon graduating in 1953, he joined the Army, where his extraordinary talent was recognized when he won first prize in an Army talent search. This led to auspicious appearances on the TV shows of Arlene Francis and Ed Sullivan. Both brothers won Fulbright Fellowships in 1955, enabling them to study for a year at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome.

In 1957 Ezio was persuaded to enter the Metropolitan Opera Auditions of the Air and won First Prize. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut in *Tosca* that year, and two weeks later with little notice was asked to substitute for an ailing colleague as Leporello in *Don Giovanni*. Thus began an illustrious career that included 528 performances with the Metropolitan, as well as appearances with the San Francisco Opera, Philadelphia Lyric Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Connecticut Opera, Milwaukee's Florentine Opera, and other companies throughout the country. His European tours included performances at La Scala, the Vienna Staatsoper and

Berlin Deutsche Opera, as well as London's Covent Garden. He was widely acclaimed in the title roles of *Falstaff* and *Gianni Schicchi*, in addition to Dr Dulcamara in *L'elisir d'amore*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, Klingsor in *Parsifal*, Pogner in *Die Meistersinger*, and many others. In 1966 he created the rôle of *Enobarbus* in the world première of Samuel Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra*. In addition he appeared on the concert stage with many of the world's leading orchestras. Later in his career, Ezio won a Grammy Award and a Grand Prix du Disque for his recordings of *Così fan tutte* and *Don Giovanni* respectively. In addition he played a cameo rôle in the film *The Godfather II*, and appeared several times on *The Tonight Show*.

During his years on the faculty of the Manhattan School, Nicolas continued to compose, eventually producing a large and distinguished body of work. His music embodied traditional romantic musical values, although his later works were intensified by modernist innovations in harmony and rhythm, but without the irony or detachment of postmodernism. For him music remained a personal medium for spiritual and emotional expression. His works include six operas, two symphonies, eight concertos, and numerous orchestral, choral, chamber, and vocal works.

In the *American Record Guide* Mark Lehman wrote, "What [Nicolas] Flagello brings to his art is ... an absolute conviction in the primacy of emotion: the music throbs with vitality. It can be exciting or turbulent, sweetly melancholy or tragic — but it is always openly and fiercely passionate." And in *Classical Music* (Backbeat Books, 2002), Bret Johnson stated, "[Nicolas] Flagello was perhaps the most effective exponent of the American lyrical post-romantic ideal in the generation that followed Barber. His profound belief in the expressive power of music is manifest in every piece."

In addition to composing, Nicolas was active as a pianist and conductor, and made dozens of recordings of a wide range of repertoire, from the Baroque period to the twentieth century. In 1985 a degenerative illness

brought his musical career to an end prematurely.

Although much of Nicolas's music remained unheard at the time of his death, in recent years his work has been performed and recorded at an increasing rate, attracting the attention of a new generation of listeners. Violinists Elmar Oliveira and Midori, and conductors Semyon Bychkov and James DePreist are just a few of today's leading performers who have found in Nicolas Flagello's work deeply felt musical content, presented in a clear, comprehensible manner.

Nicolas Flagello had long admired Martin Luther King's dedication to the ideals of human justice and brotherhood and was deeply moved by the influential black leader's assassination in April 1968. The comment made by Pope Paul VI, upon learning of King's sudden martyrdom, "I liken the life of this man to the life of our Lord," immediately galvanized Nicolas's creative energy. Seeking a suitable form of musical tribute, he recalled a work he had composed in 1953 for chorus and orchestra, called *Pentaptych*. This piece, which had never been performed, comprised settings of five sacred texts from the Latin liturgy: 1. *Hosanna Filio David*; 2. *Cor Jesu*; 3. *Et Flagellis Subditum*; 4. *Stabat Mater*; and 5. *Jubilare Deo*. Nicolas realized that restructuring the work around Martin Luther King would provide a human focus missing from the earlier composition. He decided to combine excerpts from the speeches of the slain civil rights leader in alternation with the Latin liturgical texts, so as to suggest King as a latter-day embodiment of Jesus Christ. Indeed, the selections he chose from King's speeches concern the fundamental Christian values of brotherly love, faith in God's omniscient goodness, and enduring hardship without succumbing to fear or vengeance, rather than more worldly social concerns. He set King's words for bass-baritone, in an expressive *arioso* consistent stylistically with the choral portions, in such a way that the vernacular solo element continually reverberates against the timeless spirituality of the Latin choral sections in a deeply moving synergy. Nicolas ended the work with a heartfelt setting of a portion of the 'I Have a Dream' speech, preceded by the vigorous choral fugue 'Jubilare Deo.'

Shortly after its completion, Nicolas and Ezio decided to record the work in England, with the London

Philharmonic and the Ambrosian Singers. A suitable company, however, was not found to release the recording, and it lay dormant for a while. Several years later the distinguished conductor James DePreist became interested in the work, and agreed to lead the première with the National Symphony Orchestra and the Cathedral Choral Society at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, in 1974, with Ezio as soloist. While preparing the work several months earlier, however, DePreist requested that Nicolas omit the 'I Have a Dream'/'Jubilare Deo' sequence. In DePreist's own words: "The music that accompanied the 'I Have a Dream' segment was so incredibly beautiful that it captured the spirit of the words, but in a crucial sense it did not capture the contrast of the context of those words—that it was necessary to have a march to the Capitol to make those words, that dream, a reality. I told Nicolas it needed to be more bittersweet to evoke the experience more fully.... So we talked about how I felt the spirit of the work would be better encapsulated in a new finale based upon a return to the theme of the third movement."

Nicolas agreed to the change, and that was the version presented at the Washington, DC, première, and at the many performances the work has had since then, as well as on the recording conducted by DePreist, released in 1995. The 1969 recording of the original version of the work was never released—until now. In 2008, the American people elected Barack Obama, an African-American, to the Presidency of the United States. The Flagello Estate felt that this triumph was a significant milestone toward the realization of Dr King's "Dream," and, perhaps, justified a revival of the original conception of the work. It was decided that a return to the original version of the *Passion* would be initiated by the first release of the 1969 recording, featuring Ezio Flagello's towering performance as bass-baritone soloist.

During his period of study at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Nicolas enjoyed the tutelage of the distinguished Italian composer Ildebrando Pizzetti (1880-1968). Although Pizzetti's influence left little impact on Flagello's compositional style, which had already begun to reveal an individual voice of its own,

the *maestro*, then 76, reinforced his student's proud awareness of his place in the continuity of Italian musical tradition. One of the pieces that Nicolas composed during this sojourn was *L'Infinito*, a setting of a poem of precocious philosophical cast by the nineteen-year-old Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837). Pizzetti had asserted that the well-known poem was almost impossible to set, presenting an irresistible challenge to the young composer. A gloomy expression of humility and awe in the face of the Infinite, Leopardi's poem reveals a lofty yet pessimistic perspective that Nicolas was coming increasingly to share, and his setting aptly captures its spirit. He set *L'Infinito* for bass-baritone and piano, with his brother in mind, although he later arranged the accompaniment for chamber orchestra.

Some years earlier, in 1954, also with his brother in mind, Nicolas had composed *The Land*, a song cycle comprising settings of six poems by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, for bass-baritone and chamber orchestra. Ezio introduced the cycle in New York City the following year, under the composer's direction. The cycle was recorded, together with *L'Infinito*, in Rome in 1962. Nicolas's warm, luxuriant settings present a variety of contrasting moods, expanding Tennyson's simple verses in praise of birds, flowers, and seasons

into a grand pantheistic statement, innocent in its fervor, which becomes explicit in the final song, *Flower in the Cranny*. The entire cycle is unified by a single motif, first presented during an extended introduction, against an undulating instrumental backdrop suggesting waves of the sea. This motif, first heard in D minor, recurs in each song, often in altered form. At the end of *Flower in the Cranny*, which has something of the character of a chaconne, this motif achieves a rapturous resolution in E major during an extended epilogue. The other poems in the cycle are *The Eagle*, *The Owl*, *The Thistle*, *The Oak*, and *The Snowdrop*. *The Land* displays Nicolas Flagello's mastery of orchestration in conveying, with only a small group of instruments, the effect of a full orchestra. The accompaniment of this song cycle achieves a remarkable richness and variety of instrumental color, although it calls for an ensemble consisting of only four winds and a group of strings, augmented by piano and celeste.

Walter Simmons

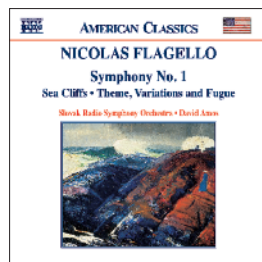
Author of *Voices in the Wilderness: Six American Neo-Romantic Composers* (Scarecrow Press, 2006)

For further information, see www.Flagello.com

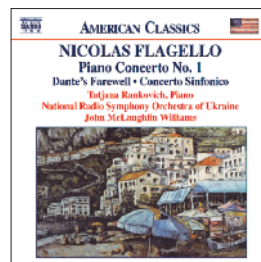


Ezio Flagello
(Photo 1970s)

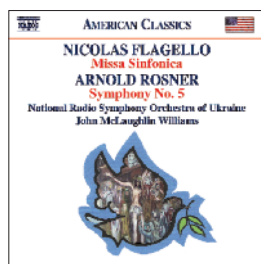
Also Available



8.559148



8.559296



8.559347

8.112065

STEREO ADD

Nicolas
Flagello
(1928-1994)

Playing
Time
77:39

Ezio Flagello, Bass-baritone
Ambrosian Singers • London Philharmonic Orchestra
I Musici di Firenze • Nicolas Flagello

	<i>Passion of Martin Luther King</i> (1968) (original version)	48:32
1	Hosanna Filio David	4:15
2	At the Center of Non-Violence	5:24
3	Cor Jesu	6:04
4	In the Struggle for the Freedom	6:47
5	Et Flagellis Subditum	2:12
6	We've Got Some Difficult Days Ahead	4:33
7	Death Is Inevitable	4:28
8	Stabat Mater	6:48
9	Jubilate Deo	3:02
10	I Have a Dream	4:59
	Ezio Flagello, Bass-baritone • Leslie Pearson, Organ Ambrosian Singers • London Philharmonic Orchestra • Nicolas Flagello World première of original version Recorded in Barking Assembly Hall, London, England, 1 and 3 May 1969	
11	<i>L'Infinito</i> (1956)	3:01
	<i>The Land</i> (1954)	26:06
12	No. 1: The Eagle	5:13
13	No. 2: The Owl	3:40
14	No. 3: The Throstle	2:34
15	No. 4: The Oak	5:22
16	No. 5: The Snowdrop	2:25
17	No. 6: Flower in the Cranny	6:52
	Ezio Flagello, Bass-baritone I Musici di Firenze • Nicolas Flagello Recorded in Rome, September 1962	

The Flagello brothers combined their remarkable musical talents to create the unique artistic synergy of these recordings. Ezio's career flourished at the Metropolitan Opera and abroad, and composer Nicolas made good use of his rich bass-baritone voice in luxuriant settings of Tennyson's verses in *The Land*, here partnered with Leopardi's *L'Infinito*, a gloomy expression of humility and awe in the face of the Infinite. The texts used in the *Passion of Martin Luther King* emphasize faith, endurance and brotherly love, and this previously unissued première recording restores the moving original version of the work, with Dr King's "Dream" re-asserted through Ezio Flagello's towering performance as soloist.

Executive reissue producer: Walter Simmon
Remastering by Bill Siegmund, Digital Island Studios • Booklet notes: Walter Simmons
A detailed track list may be found on page 2 of the booklet • Thanks to Philip Stuart
Cover image: Nicolas Flagello, 1970s (Private Collection)

www.naxos.com

Synopsis

CD1

Prologue. [1] The motifs associated with the Rhine and with Nature, first heard at the start of *Das Rheingold* are now heard again in the instrumental introduction to *Götterdämmerung*. The Fate motif returns, a hint, as we know from *Die Walküre*, of Siegfried's impending death. [2] It is night, as the curtain rises to reveal the three Norns, weavers of Fate, sitting on Brünnhilde's rock, near the entrance to a cave, resolved to spin and sing. They tell how, once, a brave god came to the sacred ash-tree and paid with one of his eyes to drink there from the well of wisdom. From the tree he cut a branch, from which he made a spear. The motifs here recall Wotan's dreams of Valhalla and his promise to pay for the building of Valhalla. The tree died, the third Norn ends her tale, throwing the rope she holds to the second Norn, who continues the story. She tells how Wotan engraved the words of his agreement on the spear, how a young hero broke the spear in battle and how Wotan sent heroes from Valhalla to cut the sacred tree up into logs. [3] The first Norn continues, telling how these logs are piled around the fortress of Valhalla, to be set ablaze and bring about its end. They see Loge, transformed again into fire, guarding Brünnhilde's rock, but later to set fire to the fragments of the spear and set ablaze the logs round Valhalla, at Wotan's command. What then of the Rhinegold, the Ring? The rope has become entangled and now breaks. The Norns know their time has come and they must return to Erda, goddess of Fate. [4] It grows lighter with the start of dawn, and now day breaks. Siegfried and Brünnhilde come from the cave, the latter leading her horse, Grane. Each is identified by a motif, the horse by a reminiscence of the Ride of the Valkyries. [5] Brünnhilde has given Siegfried her knowledge and strength and sends him forward to new deeds of glory. From her Siegfried has learned love, above all, and they sing of their love, with motifs associated with it. [6] Siegfried gives Brünnhilde, as a token of faith, the ring, the symbol of all he has achieved, and she gives him her horse. [7] Through her power, now,

will Siegfried act, as part of her. [8] He takes his leave and sets out on his Rhine Journey, his own bold motif mingling with those of Fire, the Rhinemaidens, the Rhine and the ring itself.

Act I

Scene 1

[9] The scene is the hall of the Gibichungs, by the Rhine. Gunther and Gutrune are seated to one side, with Hagen at the table. Gunther asks his half-brother if he has the true fame due a Gibich. Hagen respects him but tells him that he could possess greater things and should marry, as should Gutrune. [10] For Gunther there is Brünnhilde, on her rock surrounded by fire, but she is to be Siegfried's bride, for he has killed the dragon and taken the Nibelung's treasure and magic power. Siegfried, however, might win Brünnhilde for Gunther, in return for the hand of Gutrune. She thinks this improbable, but Hagen reminds her of the drug they have that brings forgetfulness and will make Siegfried forget any other women. [11] The sound of Siegfried's approach is heard. Hagen, who has gone down to the bank of the river, hails Siegfried, with the ominous motif of the curse placed on the ring by Hagen's father, Alberich, from whom it had been taken.

Scene 2

[12] Hagen greets Siegfried, who dismounts.

CD 2

[1] Siegfried seeks to know whether Gunther is his friend or enemy. [2] He is welcomed by Gunther, while Hagen sees to his horse. They swear friendship, Gunther pledging all he has, his land, body and sword. Hagen returns. He mentions the treasure, by which Siegfried claims to set little store, but he has the Tarn-cap that, as Hagen tells him, gives the power to take on any form. Siegfried adds that he has given the ring to a noble woman, identified at once by Hagen, to himself, as Brünnhilde. Gutrune now returns with a drinking-horn, welcoming their guest, [3] and Siegfried drinks to Brünnhilde. The potion does its work and as he looks again at Gutrune he feels desire. As she leaves, he asks Gunther her name. He tells him that her name is

Gutrune and goes on to explain his own desire to marry a woman who is now set on a rock, surrounded by fire, Brünnhilde, who will be the wife of the one who rescues her. Siegfried at once offers to break through the fire and bring Brünnhilde to be Gunther's bride, disguising himself as Gunther through the Tarn-cap, in return for the hand of Gutrune. [4] They swear to be blood-brothers and allow their blood to mingle in a drinking-horn of wine that Hagen holds for them, pledging faith or death and drinking. Hagen takes his sword and cuts the drinking-horn in two. [5] Siegfried asks him why he has not taken the oath, but Hagen tells him that his blood is mixed and not so noble. Siegfried now moves towards his boat, ready to leave with Gunther. As they make ready to leave, Hagen tells Gutrune that the two are going to seek Brünnhilde. [6] He sits motionless, to watch over the hall, thinking that now Gunther will bring Brünnhilde home with him and Hagen himself will have the ring. The music suggests both Hagen's thoughts and Brünnhilde, as well as the two who are now travelling to seek her out.

Scene 3

[7] The scene is again the entrance to the cave of the *Prologue*. Brünnhilde sits contemplating the ring and remembering her beloved Siegfried. She hears the approach through the air of the Valkyrie Waltraute and asks her whether her presence is in defiance of Wotan or if Wotan has forgiven her, as he may have done, since he has allowed her to be found by Siegfried, or whether Waltraute has been condemned to share her fate. Waltraute, however, brings anxious news. [8] Wotan, she tells her, since Brünnhilde's departure, no longer sends the Valkyries to battle, but wanders aimlessly and alone. Recently he had returned with his spear broken by a hero and he then ordered the World Ash-Tree to be cut down and its logs piled around the sacred hall. Now Wotan sits in Valhalla, Waltraute continues, not speaking or moving, surrounded by the gods, grasping the shattered spear in his hand and not listening to the appeals of the Valkyries. Once, though, he spoke of Brünnhilde, sighing, as in a dream, and saying that if she gave the ring back to the Rhinemaidens then the curse would be ended. At this Waltraute had taken

her horse and ridden to Brünnhilde. [9] In reply to Brünnhilde's question, she tells her that she seeks her help in returning the ring. Brünnhilde will never surrender the token of Siegfried's love for her, although Waltraute pleads with her to save Valhalla. She clings to this symbol of her own happiness and tells her sister to leave her. [10] Left alone again, as thunderclouds gather, she bids Waltraute never return. It grows darker and the fire from around the rock now grows fiercer. She hears the sound of Siegfried's horn and a figure appears through the flames, Siegfried, in the Tarn-cap, having the form of Gunther. [11] He declares that he has come to set her free and take her as his wife, announcing himself as the Gibichung, Gunther. Brünnhilde calls down curses on Wotan for this cruel punishment. Siegfried bids her go into the cave, but she threatens him with the ring, which he tears from her finger, once he has overpowered her. [12] As they go into the cave, he swears to be true to his oath to Gunther, and will sleep in the cave with his sword Nothing between him and Brünnhilde.

CD 3

Act II

Scene 1

[1] An orchestral *Prelude* suggests the opening of the following scene, set in front of the Gibichungs' hall. [2] Here Alberich crouches at his son Hagen's feet, while the latter seems to sleep. He reminds Hagen, who seems to hear in his sleep, of the power that will be theirs, how Siegfried defeated Wotan and how Hagen must defeat Siegfried, protected as he is by his innocence from the curse of the ring. Hagen must swear to take the ring from Siegfried, for if Brünnhilde returns it to the Rhinemaidens then they will lose it for ever. He swears and Alberich disappears into the darkness.

Scene 2

[3] There is a sudden sound, as Siegfried appears behind a bush and hails Hagen, brought quickly by the magic of the Tarn-cap, followed by Gunther and Brünnhilde. He calls out to Gutrune and tells her how he has rescued Brünnhilde for Gunther, while remaining true to her.

Gutrune asks Hagen to call together the men in celebration of her wedding with Siegfried, while she will call the women. Hagen mounts a rock and there sounds his horn.

Scene 3

[4] Hagen calls on the Gibichung men, who gather, seeking the reason for the summons and the nature of the enemy. [5] He tells them they have been called to celebrate a wedding feast, to eat and drink. [6] They drink to Hagen.

Scene 4

[7] As Gunther and Brünnhilde arrive, they are greeted by the men. [8] Gunther introduces his bride, Brünnhilde, leading her towards the hall [9] and greeting Siegfried and his sister Gutrune. [10] When Brünnhilde sees the couple she is near to fainting and seeing the ring on Siegfried's finger she understands that she has been betrayed and the ring torn from her own finger. Siegfried, however, remembers how he won the ring from the dragon that he slew. Hagen intervenes, accusing Siegfried of treachery and Brünnhilde joins the accusation. [11] She calls on the gods, in her suffering, claiming to be the wife of Siegfried. He, however, declares his faithfulness to the oath that he has sworn to Gunther, as his blood-brother, separated from her by his sword, that was between them as they lay together in the cave. Brünnhilde reproaches him as a liar, joined by Gunther. [12] In the turmoil aroused, Siegfried swears by Hagen's spear, the Spear Oath, calling for his own destruction from it, if he is forsworn. Brünnhilde calls on the same spear for vengeance and the death of Siegfried. [13] He, however, tells Gunther that Brünnhilde is lying, regretting the apparent failure of their deception with the Tarn-cap. Turning to the company, he bids them to the wedding feast, accompanying Gutrune into the hall, followed by the Gibichung men and women.

Scene 5

[14] Hagen, Gunther and Brünnhilde remain behind. She wonders what magician has brought about this change and regrets how she has bestowed on Siegfried all her

wisdom. [15] Hagen promises vengeance, but she tells him that Siegfried is invincible, protected by her power, although his back is vulnerable, since she knew he would never turn his back on an enemy, in flight. Hagen, then, will use his spear to find its mark there, urging Gunther on, betrayer and betrayed. [16] Gunther must help Hagen to secure Siegfried's death. Gunther, however, is reluctant to break his bond, but Brünnhilde joins her voice to Hagen's, urging him to act, since Siegfried has betrayed them both. Hagen assures him that this is the only way to regain the Ring of the Nibelung. They agree to arrange a hunting-party and spare Gutrune by telling her that Siegfried has been killed by a boar. [17] They swear vengeance. As Gunther and Brünnhilde approach the hall, the wedding procession emerges, with Siegfried and Gutrune carried high on the men's shoulders, as they proceed to the hill for the ceremony.

CD 4

Act III

Scene 1

[1] An orchestral prelude depicts the hunting-party, as horns resound and echo, while the Rhine flows on. [2] The curtain rises on a rocky valley and forest by the Rhine, from which the three Rhinemaidens, Woglinde, Wellgunde and Flosshilde, rise, lamenting the loss of the Rhinegold, as they wait for Siegfried, whose horn-call they hear. [3] He appears, having lost his way, led astray by some spirit, [4] and the Rhinemaidens laugh at him, seeking to have the ring from his finger, [5] which he is about to give them, holding it up to tempt them to him. [6] They warn him, however, of its dangers. He remembers now the warning of the dragon, but this did not teach him to fear. The Rhinemaidens leave him, in his folly, blind to danger, since a woman will inherit the ring and listen to them. [7] They swim away.

Scene 2

[8] Siegfried pulls himself together, as he hears the Gibichung horn-call, an inversion of his own, with which he answers, as the men call to him. He is joined now by them, with Gunther and Hagen, ready to rest

from the hunt and take refreshment. He tells Hagen that he has taken no prey, but has met three wild waterbirds, who sang to him. Hagen fills a drinking-horn for Siegfried and asks if it is true that he can understand the language of birds. [9] As the latter hands the drinking-horn to Gunther, he tells him he has not heard their language for a long time. [10] He goes on to recount his earlier deeds, recalled by the earlier motifs, of the dwarf Mime, who taught him the art of the smith, so that, of

his own art, he restored his father's weapon, the sword Nothung, and killed the dragon, Fafner. When he dipped his finger in the dragon's blood and touched his mouth, he could understand a bird that told him of the Tarn-cap and the ring, and then, when he had them both, warned him of the treachery of Mime, who tried to poison him and whom he then killed. Hagen refills the drinking-horn, now adding a drug and urging Siegfried to drink. [11] The latter continues his story,

Producer's Note

By 1956 Decca already had three unissued live recordings of *Götterdämmerung* in the can, all from Bayreuth, the latter two in stereo. Yet, owing to a combination of legal issues and Decca producer John Culshaw's desire to record the complete *Ring* operas under studio conditions, these remained unreleased until the CD era. Instead, the present performance became the first to enter Decca's catalogue, where it remained until the Solti recording displaced it in 1964.

The circumstances of the recording were recounted by Culshaw in his book, *Ring Resounding*. Briefly, Norwegian Radio had broadcast the opera, live from a studio, in three parts – the Prologue and Act 1 on January 5th, 1956; Act 2 on the 8th; and Act 3 on the 10th. Certain scenes were not included in the original broadcasts (among them, the Norns' appearance in the *Prologue* and the scene between Alberich and Hagen which opens Act 2). When Flagstad was approached by Decca to sign with the label following her departure from EMI, it was her desire that this performance be released, both as a memento of her final performance as the *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhilde and as a way of bringing international attention to opera in Norway.

A make-up session was held on 14th March to record the missing parts and make several small "fixes" to what had already been set down. Culshaw relates that time ran out before the brief orchestral bridge between Scenes 2 and 3 of Act 1 – between Hagen's Watch and the Brünnhilde/Waltraute scene – could be recorded. The original recording has a good deal of warmth, impact and detail, and has been transferred here from British LP pressings.

Mark Obert-Thorn

