

The NAXOS logo is a blue square with the word "NAXOS" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. Above the text are several horizontal lines of varying lengths, resembling a musical staff or a barcode.The SEATTLE SYMPHONY COLLECTION logo is in white, sans-serif capital letters. "SEATTLE SYMPHONY" is on the top line, and "COLLECTION" is on the line below it.The title "WAGNER" is in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. Below it, "Orchestral Excerpts • 1" is in a slightly smaller, bold, white, sans-serif font. The background is a blurred photograph of a stream with several large, dark and light-colored rocks.

Der fliegende Holländer • Das Rheingold  
Die Walküre • Siegfried • Götterdämmerung

Seattle Symphony • Gerard Schwarz

## Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

### Orchestral Excerpts · 1

Richard Wagner inspired in his contemporaries extremes of reaction. His career was in many ways thoroughly discreditable. He betrayed friends and patrons, accumulated debts with abandon, and seemed, in pursuit of his aims, an unprincipled opportunist. Nevertheless, whatever his defects of character, he exercised a hypnotic influence over his immediate followers, while his creation of a new form of music-drama and the magnitude of his ambitious conception continue to fascinate.

As a boy in Leipzig Wagner was inspired by the example of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, while his literary ambitions drew strength from reading Shakespeare. Study of music in Leipzig was followed in 1833 by appointment as chorus-master at the opera in Würzburg, through the agency of an elder brother, a principal tenor there. The next year he became music director to Heinrich Bethmann's theatre company and moved with it to Magdeburg, largely at the insistence of the actress Minna Planer. In 1836 he followed her to Königsberg, marrying her there in November of that year. The following spring saw him as music director to the Königsberg theatre and in the summer he took up an appointment as music director in Riga, where he was joined again by Minna, who had earlier deserted him for other lovers. Wagner's employment in Riga ended in March 1839 and debts now forced him to take flight, sailing to London, but finally finding refuge and a possible realisation of ambitions in Paris.

While the French capital offered experience that proved fruitful, there were practical difficulties in earning a living. In 1842, however, Wagner succeeded, with the help of Meyerbeer, in securing a staging of his opera *Rienzi* in Dresden, followed by *Der fliegende Holländer* and appointment as music director at the court opera. He held this position until involvement with revolutionaries in 1849 forced him to seek refuge in Switzerland. Years spent there, interrupted by periods in Paris, Venice, and Vienna, brought growing achievement as a composer and the patronage of King Ludwig II of Bavaria in Munich,

where the great music dramas of his maturity were staged. Rivalries forced his departure, again to Switzerland, where, on news of the death of his wife, who had remained in Dresden, he was joined by Liszt's illegitimate daughter Cosima, the wife of the pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow. A year before her divorce from von Bülow, she bore Wagner a son, Siegfried, and brought with her two daughters that Wagner had fathered. The couple married in 1870 and the following year Wagner turned his attention to the building of his own opera house in Bayreuth, with further support from King Ludwig, from whom Wagner had been estranged for some years. It was in the new theatre that the first complete performance of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* was performed in 1876, to be followed in 1882 by the first staging of *Parsifal*. Over the years Wagner had generally spent the winter in the warmer climate of Italy. He died in Venice in February 1883.

The *Overture to Der fliegende Holländer* (The Flying Dutchman), with its story of the legendary haunted Dutchman, condemned for his blasphemy to sail the seas in his ghostly ship until redeemed by true love, sets the scene of what the composer described as a storm-swept ballad. Leitmotifs, themes or fragments of themes, appear and re-appear, dominated by the horn-call associated with the Dutchman and the rushing strings of the sea and wind. Another theme that appears in the *Overture* is associated with Senta, the girl who loves the Dutchman and dies for him, as he sails away in apparent disappointment at what he believes to be her betrayal. Her ultimate sacrifice, when she leaps into the sea to her death, brings him final redemption.

Wagner's tetralogy, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (The Ring of the Nibelung) consists of a Prologue, *Das Rheingold* (The Rhinegold), followed the next day by *Die Walküre* (The Valkyrie), and then by *Siegfried*, leading up to the final *Götterdämmerung* (The Twilight of the Gods). The texts had been completed by Wagner by 1853, and the completion of the music and performance of the whole

cycle in a specially created opera-house of novel design in Bayreuth represented a summit of creative achievement, the apotheosis of German art. Leading motifs associated with characters, events and ideas in the drama, recur, interwoven to unify the whole conception.

In *Das Rheingold* the Nibelung Alberich steals the Rhinegold from the Rhinemaidens and has a ring forged that will give its possessor mastery of the world. By trickery Wotan, ruler of heaven and earth, takes the ring and uses it to pay for the release of Freia, goddess of youth, who has been pledged to the giants Fafner and Fasolt in return for their work in building a new home for the gods. The giants quarrel over the gold and Fafner kills Fasolt. Donner (Thunder), through the mist, uses his hammer to summon thunder and lightning, to clear the air. Suddenly the air clears and a rainbow is seen, a bridge across the valley to the fortress, resplendent in the evening sun. Wotan greets the sight, calling the fortress Valhalla, the home of heroes, and leads the gods towards it. Loge, god of fire, hesitates, knowing the outcome and able to destroy the gods with his fire, but eventually follows them. As the gods go forward, the complaint of the Rhinemaidens is heard, lamenting their lost gold.

*Die Walküre* (The Valkyrie) continues the story. Wotan's son Siegmund is reunited with his sister Sieglinde, wife of Hunding. Wotan had hoped to protect Siegmund, in combat with Hunding, but is compelled to sacrifice his son, ordering his favourite daughter, the Valkyrie Brünnhilde, to ensure that Siegmund is killed by Hunding. Brünnhilde disobeys Wotan, and it is only by Wotan's intervention that Hunding kills Siegmund, while Wotan also sees to Hunding's death. He condemns his favourite daughter to a rock, where she must lie senseless until roused by a mortal, who will be her husband. She begs that her husband may be the son of Sieglinde, who will be called Siegfried. Wotan leaves Brünnhilde, surrounded by protective fire to guard her as she sleeps her magic sleep. Wotan bids his child farewell, but through Loge she will be protected by the magic fire that will surround her.

*Siegfried*, the third music-drama of the tetralogy, weaves together the leitmotifs associated with the characters and ideas in the work. Much of the work deals with the conflict between the Nibelung Mime and Siegfried. Mime has planned to help Siegfried by mending his father's sword, broken by Wotan in the combat with Hunding, and having armed Siegfried to use him to attack Fafner and seize the ring. Outside Fafner's cave, Alberich and Wotan seek to warn Fafner of impending danger, in return for the treasure. They are unsuccessful. Siegfried is led by Mime to the cave and, left alone, hears the murmur of the forest and the singing of a bird, which he cannot imitate. With his horn he rouses and kills Fafner, whose blood enables him to understand the song of the bird, telling him to beware of Mime and to take the treasure from the cave. Siegfried kills Mime and the forest bird tells him of love and of Brünnhilde, whom he is to rescue. The orchestral version of the so-called *Forest Murmurs* depicts Siegfried resting under a linden near Fafner's cave.

The last opera of *The Ring cycle*, *Götterdämmerung* (The Twilight of the Gods) is a work of sufficient substance to provide a conclusion. The Norns foretell the destruction of Valhalla. Siegfried is tricked into marrying Gutrune, and by magic impersonation to bring Brünnhilde, to whom he had given the ring which he now snatches back, as the wife of Gutrune's brother, the Nibelung Gunther. Brünnhilde, seeing Siegfried's apparent faithlessness, curses him, betraying him to Gunther's half-brother Hagen, who is enabled to kill him. However, the ring cannot be taken from Siegfried's body. Brünnhilde orders a pyre to be raised. This is lit, and she rides into it on her horse while wearing the ring, which will return, on her death, to the Rhinemaidens, who drag Hagen down to the depths of the river. Now flames are seen as Valhalla, the home of the gods, finally burns. Orchestral elements from the score include the music for *Dawn*, *Siegfried's Rhine Journey*, as he goes to meet Hagen, and his *Death* and *Funeral March*.

Keith Anderson

## Seattle Symphony

The Seattle Symphony, founded in 1903, has gained international prominence with more than 140 recordings, twelve GRAMMY® nominations, two Emmys and numerous other awards. Gerard Schwarz led the orchestra from 1985 to 2011, and is now Conductor Laureate. The Seattle Symphony is internationally recognized for its innovative programming and extensive recording history. The Seattle Symphony performs in one of the world's finest concert venues – the acoustically superb Benaroya Hall – in downtown Seattle. Under the leadership of Music Director Ludovic Morlot since September 2011, the Symphony is heard live from September through July by more than 315,000 people. For more information on the Seattle Symphony, visit [www.seattlesymphony.org](http://www.seattlesymphony.org).

## Gerard Schwarz



Photo: Ben VanHouten

Gerard Schwarz serves as Music Director of the Eastern Music Festival and Conductor Laureate of the Seattle Symphony. A renowned interpreter of nineteenth-century German, Austrian and Russian repertoire in addition to contemporary American composers, Schwarz recently completed his final season as music director of the Seattle Symphony after an acclaimed 26 years. His previous positions as Music Director include New York's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and the New York Chamber Symphony. As a guest conductor he has worked with many of the world's finest orchestras and opera companies. His discography of over 350 releases

showcases his collaborations with the Seattle Symphony, the Berlin Radio Symphony, The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Czech Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra and L'Orchestre National de France, among others. His pioneering recordings of American symphonists Diamond, Hanson, Hovhaness, Piston and William Schuman have received high critical praise, as have his cycles of works by Brahms, Mahler, Rimsky-Korsakov, Robert Schumann, Shostakovich, Richard Strauss, Stravinsky and Wagner. Schwarz has received hundreds of honours and accolades including two Emmy Awards, 13 GRAMMY® nominations, six ASCAP Awards and numerous *Stereo Review* and *Ovation Awards*. He holds the Ditson Conductor's Award from Columbia University, was the first American named Conductor of the Year by *Musical America* and has received numerous honorary doctorates. The National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences gave Schwarz its first "IMPACT" lifetime achievement award.

This selection of some of Wagner's finest orchestral excerpts opens with the 'storm-swept ballad' of *Der fliegende Holländer*, the opera which launched his epoch-defining later masterpieces. The entire span of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* is represented in this programme, from the luminous rainbow bridge which leads the gods to Valhalla in *Das Rheingold*, the urgent drama of *Die Walküre*, and the atmospheric repose of the *Forest Murmurs* in *Siegfried*, to the tragic depths of *Siegfried's Funeral March*. This recording has been praised for its 'radiant sensuousness'. (*Gramophone*) Volumes 2 and 3 in this series are available on 8.572768 and 8.572769.

  
SEATTLE SYMPHONY

Richard  
**WAGNER**  
(1813-1883)

## Orchestral Excerpts • 1

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|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | <b>Der fliegende Holländer: Overture</b>                                                                     | <b>11:35</b> |
| 2 | <b>Das Rheingold, Scene 4: Entrance of the Gods into Valhalla (arr. H. Zumppe)</b>                           | <b>7:48</b>  |
| 3 | <b>Die Walküre, Act III: Wotan's Farewell and Magic Fire Music</b>                                           | <b>15:29</b> |
| 4 | <b>Siegfried, Act II: Forest Murmurs (arr. W. Hutschenruyter)</b>                                            | <b>7:57</b>  |
| 5 | <b>Götterdämmerung, Act I: Dawn – Siegfried's Rhine Journey – Act III: Siegfried's Death – Funeral March</b> | <b>26:32</b> |

## Seattle Symphony • Gerard Schwarz

### Previously released on Delos International

Recorded at Seattle Opera House, Seattle, WA, on 21st October, 1987 (track 1), in March 1986 (tracks 2 and 5), and on 19th and 20th February, 1992 (tracks 3 and 4)  
Executive Producer: Amelia S. Haygood • Producers: Bejun Mehta (track 1); Joanna Nickrenz (tracks 2 and 5); Adam Stern (tracks 3 and 4) • Engineer: John M. Eargle • Associate Engineers: Al Swanson (tracks 1, 2 and 5); Jerome Stine (tracks 2 and 5); Laura Wirthlin (track 1)  
Assistant Engineers: Al Swanson and Matthew Lutthans (tracks 3 and 4)  
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Booklet notes: Keith Anderson • Cover photograph by Tomasz Pietrysek (iStockphoto.com)