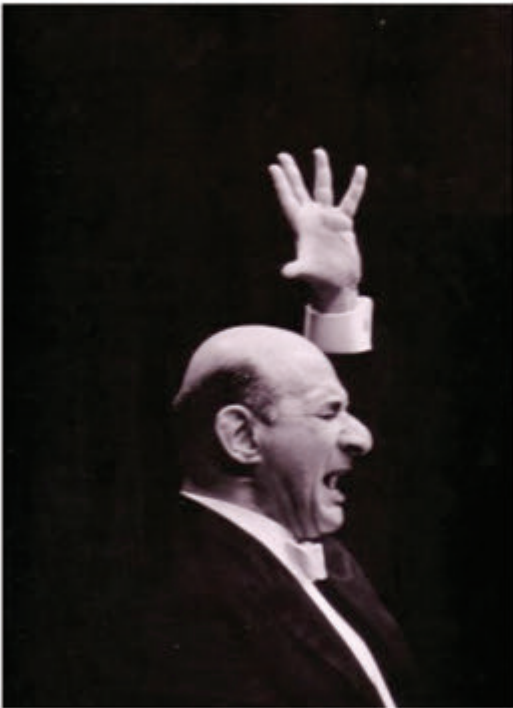


WAGNER ... *Magic Fire Music... The*

*Ride Of The Valkyries ... Entry Of The Gods Into Valhalla
Siegfried's Rhine Journey ... Siegfried's Funeral March*

WILLIAM STEINBERG and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

William Steinberg (originally Hans Wilhelm Steinberg) (August 1, 1899 – May 16, 1978) was a German conductor. He was born in Cologne, but left Germany for (what is now) Israel in 1936. He decided to leave Germany because the Nazis had removed him from the Frankfurt Opera in 1933 and had limited him to conducting all-Jewish orchestras. Eventually, together with Bronislaw Huberman he founded and conducted the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. Steinberg left for the United States in 1938. He conducted the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra from 1945 to 1952. From 1958 to 1960 he conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra. From 1969 to 1972 he conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra. He was also principal guest conductor of the New York Philharmonic from 1966 to 1968. He is best known for directing the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra from 1952 to 1976. William Steinberg was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. He died in New York City.



Wagner had long been interested in early Norse and German heroic poetry, including the medieval German epic *Nibelungenlied* (“Song of the Nibelung”), when he sketched out a prose version of the Nibelung myth in 1848. His first libretto to use that version was called *Siegfrieds Tod* (“The Death of Siegfried”), which became the basis of *Götterdämmerung*. He began composing the music in 1850, but he soon realized that he could not tell of Siegfried’s death without first telling of his life. In 1851 he wrote the libretto for *Der junge Siegfried* (“The Young Siegfried”; later shortened to *Siegfried*). Continuing back toward the beginning of the story, he finished the librettos for *Die Walküre* and *Das Rheingold*, respectively, in 1852. After completing the massive text, he composed the operas in the order of the story. The first two were composed by 1856, and then Wagner took a long break to complete *Tristan und Isolde* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* before completing *Siegfried* in 1871 and *Götterdämmerung* in 1874—26 years after he started work on the project.

Der Ring des Nibelungen, or the Ring cycle, is an unsurpassed exaltation of German heritage and mythology. In places, Wagner tells the story with the orchestra, using leitmotifs—fragments of melody that convey emotions and themes as they recur in varying contexts. It is even possible for the orchestra to convey ideas that are hidden from the characters themselves—an idea that later found its way into film scores.

Wagner was perpetually in need of funds, and the Ring would be extremely expensive to stage. Faced with a double motivation, Wagner conducted a series of concerts that featured orchestral excerpts from his forthcoming epic. Most famous of those is the Ride of the Valkyries, which opens the last act of *Die Walküre*, second of the four operas; other frequently encountered excerpts are the Entry of the Gods into Valhalla from *Das Rheingold*; Magic Fire Music from *Die Walküre*; Forest Murmurs from *Siegfried*; and Siegfried’s Rhine Journey, Siegfried’s Funeral March, and Brünnhilde’s Immolation Scene from *Götterdämmerung*. The concerts provided him with a steady income, and they whetted the public appetite for the operas that would follow.

The original and ongoing home of the cycle, the Festspielhaus in Bayreuth, was built to the composer’s specifications at the command of Bavaria’s King Louis II (often referred to by his German name, Ludwig). The first festival, which consisted of three multiday performances of the cycle, drew some of the best-known musical figures of the age, including Franz Liszt, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Anton Bruckner. The festival lost money, and the staging of the operas was problematic because of the complexity of the set design. The music was another story. Whatever others thought of Wagner’s vocal writing and ponderousness, none could deny his control of harmony, dramatic structure, and orchestration. Wagner had reimaged opera.

WAGNER ... *Magic Fire Music... The*

Ride Of The Valkyries ... Entry Of The Gods Into Valhalla

Siegfried's Rhine Jouney ... Siegfried's Funeral March

WILLIAM STEINBERG and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

1 The Ride Of The Valkyries - From Die Walkure 8:22

2 Magic Fire Music - From Die Walkure 4:26

3 Entry Of The Gods Into Valhalla - From Das Rheingold 6:17

4 Dawn And Siegfried's Rhine Journey - From Gotterdammerung 10:42

5 Siegfried's Funeral March - From Gotterdammerung 8:14

Total Time: 38:01

Recorded by Command Classics 1962 on 35mm film

Engineer Mastering: George Piros Engineer

Recording Chief: Robert Fine Producer: Enoch Light



For more info e-mail us:
admin@highdefaptape.com
or visit our website:
www.highdefaptape.com