



ROYAL  
OPERA  
HOUSE

## THE ROYAL OPERA

Music Director ..... SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO  
Director of Opera ..... OLIVER MEARS

Exceptional philanthropic commitments for the *Ring* cycle from

Ring Season Principals Julia and Hans Rausing

Ring Chairman's Circle Elena and Alex Greko

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Ring Benefactors Ingemo and Karl Otto Bonnier, The Goldhammer Foundation, Christopher and Sarah Smith, John G. Turner & Jerry G. Fischer, Malcolm Herring and an anonymous donor

Generous philanthropic support for *Das Rheingold* from Mrs Philip Kan, Fondation Socindec, Peter and Fiona Espenhahn, Philipp Freise, Maureen Wheeler, Simon and Virginia Robertson, The Das Rheingold Production Syndicate and an anonymous donor

Position of Music Director Maestro Antonio Pappano generously supported by Mrs Susan A. Olde OBE

The role of Flosshilde is supported by The Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation

The role of Wotan is supported by David And Clare Kershaw

The role of Voice of Erda is supported by Lorna and Christopher Bown

The role of Loge is supported by Hamish Parker

The following, and many others who wish to remain anonymous, have made generous donations towards tonight's Gala performance

William Ainsworth, Dirk Bister, Karl-Otto and Ingemo Bonnier, The Bennett Foundation, Christine Spoerri Buehler and Peter Buehler, The Hon Camilla Cameron, The Earl and Countess of Chichester, Peggy Dannenbaum, Sir Lloyd and Lady Dorfman, Clore Duffield Foundation, John Eatwell, Peter and Fiona Espenhahn, Philipp Freise, Alex and Elena Gerko, Christian Hodell, Christopher Holder, Charles Holloway, Mr and Mrs Christopher W. T. Johnston, Joyce Kan, Athena Ko, David Maclean, Jane McClenahan and Crevan O'Grady, Rt Hon George Osborne, Ulf Pagenkopf, Cressida Pollock, Daniel Luhde-Thompson, Melinda and Donald Quintin, Sir Simon and Lady Robey, Mrs Bonnie Robinson, Christopher Rossbach, Janine Roxborough Bunce, Roland Rudd and Sophie Hale, Eric Tomsett, John G. Turner and Jerry G. Fischer, Katrin and Rick Van Aerssen, The Garfield Weston Foundation, Danny and Lillan Wylter, Amre Youness and Deepti Velury

# DAS RHEINGOLD

## MUSIC DRAMA IN FOUR SCENES

11.09.2023 7:30 PM

The 155th performance by The Royal Opera at the Royal Opera House.

## APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

This performance will last for approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes with no interval.

## GUIDANCE

Suitable for ages 12+

This production contains scenes of nudity and depictions of blood and violence

## CREDITS

Music ..... RICHARD WAGNER  
Libretto ..... RICHARD WAGNER  
Director ..... BARRIE KOSKY  
Set Designer ..... RUFUS DIDWISZUS  
Costume Designer ..... VICTORIA BEHR  
Lighting Designer ..... ALESSANDRO CARLETTI

## CAST

Conducted by ..... ANTONIO PAPPANO  
Wotan ..... CHRISTOPHER MALTMAN  
Alberich ..... CHRISTOPHER PURVES  
Loge ..... SEAN PANIKKAR  
Fricka ..... MARINA PRUDENSKAYA  
Freia ..... KIANDRA HOWARTH  
Voice of Erda ..... WIEBKE LEHMKUHL  
Donner ..... KOSTAS SMORIGINAS  
Froh ..... RODRICK DIXON  
Mime ..... BRENTON RYAN  
Fasolt ..... INSUNG SIM  
Fafner ..... SOLOMAN HOWARD  
Woglinde ..... KATHARINA KONRADI  
Wellgunde ..... NIAMH O'SULLIVAN  
Flosshilde ..... MARVIC MONREAL  
Erda ..... ROSE KNOX-PEEBLES  
Orchestra ..... ORCHESTRA OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE  
Concert Master ..... SERGEY LEVITIN

Actors Álvaro Clemente, Rohan Jenkin, Rosy Sanders

Children Gennaro Cimafonte, Cecily Cleeve, Willow Daniels, Samuel Edwards, Ivo Goldman, Francesca Higgins, Jaidèn-David Hinds, Adelaide Kebar, Jessica Linton, Jonah Elijah McGovern, Phoebe McGovern, Tabitha McGovern, Eva Nivorozhkin, Emily Plant, Izabella Rooney, Charlie Sadler, Yuna Monreal Sayo, Jasmina Sermuka, Lara Simon, Aurora Teixeira, Avira Venkatesh

## SYNOPSIS

*The branches of the World Ash Tree held together the universe: the upper realms of the gods; Riesenheim, home of the giants; the earth, with the Rhine and his daughters; and Nibelheim, a subterranean realm inhabited by the Nibelungs. The god Wotan drank from the spring of eternal knowledge beneath the World Ash Tree, sacrificing an eye in return for wisdom. He tore a branch from the tree and with it ruled the world, marrying Fricka, guardian of marriage.*

### SCENE I

The three Rhinedaughters – Woglinde, Wellgunde and Flosshilde – are playing. Flosshilde warns her sisters to pay more attention to the duty laid upon them by the Rhinefather of guarding the Rhinegold. Alberich, a Nibelung, watches them, utterly enchanted. Each in turn encourages his advances then cruelly rejects him. Sunlight falls on the

gold. Alberich is mesmerized by the sight of the Rhinedaughters revelling in the treasure and asks about it. They tell him that it is the Rhinegold, which if made into a ring would give its owner infinite power over the world; it can be forged, however, only by someone who renounces love. Vehemently cursing love, Alberich seizes the gold.

## SCENE II

Wotan sees the fortress built for the gods by the giants Fafner and Fasolt. Wotan is overjoyed at the sight of it. Fricka reminds him that as payment he promised to give the giants her sister, Freia. Wotan dismisses her fears, reminding her that she too wanted the fortress. She reproaches Wotan for his willingness to trade love for power, but he replies that he never had any intention of giving Freia away: he is depending on Loge’s ingenuity to solve the problem.

Freia arrives, terrified, followed by Fafner and Fasolt. Wotan tells the giants to choose another form of payment. Fasolt points to the laws carved on Wotan’s spear and reminds him that they are binding. While Fasolt is eager to have a woman in their home, Fafner is also aware that Freia alone knows how to tend the golden apples that give the gods eternal youth, and without her they will die. The giants prepare to take Freia away and her brothers, Froh and Donner, attempt to intervene. Wotan stops Donner using force.

At last Loge appears. Wotan complains that he would never have agreed to the contract if Loge had not promised to find a way of saving Freia. Loge says he has travelled the world looking for an acceptable substitute for Freia, but has learnt that nothing is of greater value than a woman’s love. He found only one person who would sacrifice love: Alberich, who stole the Rhinegold. Loge tells Wotan that the Rhinedaughters want his help to get it back. Fasolt and Fafner ask about the gold and Loge explains that a ring forged from it gives absolute power. Gods and giants alike are greedy for it. The giants say they will exchange Freia for Alberich’s treasure.

As the giants leave with Freia, the gods rapidly age: without her apples they are helpless. Wotan resolves to get the gold and descends with Loge to Nibelheim.

## SCENE III

Alberich torments his brother Mime, who has made a magic helmet, the Tarnhelm, which can transform its wearer into any shape he wishes. Alberich demonstrates its powers. He leaves as Wotan and Loge arrive.

Mime tells Loge his tale of woe and recounts how the Nibelungs, once contented craftsmen, are enslaved by Alberich. Alberich returns, brandishing his ring and driving his terrified slaves back. Loge reminds him of their former friendship, but Alberich scornfully dismisses him and boasts of the fabulous power of the ring: he gained it by renouncing love and will use it to overthrow the gods. Loge challenges Alberich to demonstrate the Tarnhelm’s magic. Alberich turns himself into a giant figure, whereupon Loge and Wotan pretend to be frightened. When Loge asks if he can become very small, Alberich transforms himself into a toad. Wotan and Loge pounce on him, grab the Tarnhelm and drag him out of Nibelheim.

## SCENE IV

Loge and Wotan mock Alberich and tell him that the cost of his freedom is his gold. Alberich plans to keep the ring, knowing it will enable him to create more treasure. He orders the Nibelungs to bring his ransom and demands his freedom and the Tarnhelm, but Loge claims the helmet. Wotan now insists Alberich give him the ring too. Alberich protests that the ring is more important than his life. When Wotan reminds him that he acquired the ring through theft, Alberich accuses him of hypocrisy. Alberich’s sin was against himself alone; Wotan’s will be against all existence if he takes the ring. Wotan tears it away from Alberich, who puts a curse on it: it will bring anguish and death to those who possess it while everyone else will be consumed by envy.

Freia returns with the giants, restoring the gods’ strength. Fasolt does not want to give Freia back, and orders that the gold be piled up to hide her from his sight. Loge and Froh heap it up but Fafner claims he can still see Freia’s hair. The Tarnhelm has to be added to the pile. Fasolt cries that he can still see her eye so Fafner demands that the ring on Wotan’s finger be used to stop the gap. Loge says Wotan intends to return it to the Rhinedaughters. Wotan insists on keeping it. The giants are about to leave with Freia when Erda, the earth goddess, appears. She reminds Wotan of the curse on the ring and says a dark day is dawning for the gods: he must surrender the ring.

Erda disappears and Wotan agrees to hand over the ring. Freia is freed. Fafner and Fasolt argue about the division of the treasure. When Fasolt seizes the ring, Fafner kills him. Wotan is horrified at the power of the ring’s curse.

Donner summons a storm to clear the air. A rainbow bridge leads the gods to their new fortress, which Wotan names Valhalla (hall of the slain). As the gods make their way towards it, Loge reflects that they are moving towards their destruction. Wotan dismisses the Rhinedaughters’ lament for their lost gold.

## PRODUCTION CREDITS

Music preparation .....	CHRISTOPHER WILLIS, SUSANNA STRANDERS, EDWARD REEVE, ANDRÉ CALLEGARO
Assistant Directors .....	DAN DOONER, JOHANNES STEPANEK, HARRIET TAYLOR
Language Coach .....	FRANZISKA ROTH
Set Design Assistant .....	HSUAN HUANG

Edward Reeve, André Callegaro and Harriet Taylor are Jette Parker Artists

## THE ROYAL OPERA

Patron .....	THE FORMER PRINCE OF WALES
Music Director .....	SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO
Director of Opera .....	OLIVER MEARS
Director of Casting .....	PETER MARIO KATONA
Administrative Director .....	CORMAC SIMMS

## PLEASE NOTE

The Crush Room and Dorfman Conservatory will be closed pre-performance and during the intervals this evening. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

## DIGITAL CAST SHEETS

We are working to make the Royal Opera House more sustainable. To do this, some of the ways in which we share information have changed, including cast sheets.

You can view the digital cast sheets on a computer, tablet or smartphone. You can also download and print the digital cast sheet. Check the digital cast sheet for the most up-to-date information before the performance starts, during the interval, or after the performance day.

Scan the QR codes displayed around the building with a smartphone to view the latest digital cast sheets. The cast sheets are also displayed on screens outside the auditoria.

Cast sheets generously supported by the Royal Opera House Endowment Fund.

## GUIDELINES

Photography and filming are prohibited during performances in any of our auditoriums. You are welcome to take pictures throughout the rest of the building and before performances and share them with us through social media. Commercial photography and filming must be agreed in advance with our [press team](#).

Larger bags and backpacks need to be check into our complimentary cloakrooms. Unattended bags may be removed.

Please do not place any personal belongings on the ledges in front of you.

Only bottled water and ice cream purchased from the premises can be taken into the auditorium.

If you arrive late to the auditorium or leave during a performance, you will not be allowed back to your seat until the interval or a suitable break.

Smoking and vaping are not permitted anywhere on the premises.

The safety of our visitors, staff and artists is still our priority. There are hand sanitiser stations throughout the building. To help us provide a comfortable experience for everyone, please be mindful of others and their personal space.

Our staff are committed to treating everyone with dignity and respect and we ask that you show them and your fellow audience members respect too. We adopt a zero-tolerance approach in response to anyone who interacts with our staff or with fellow audience members in an intimidating, aggressive or threatening manner.

## SUPPORT OUR ONGOING RECOVERY

We are so glad to welcome our artists back to our theatres to perform for you the opera and ballet you love. During the pandemic we lost £3 in every £5 of our income and we continue to feel the impact as we recover. Sustaining the future of ballet and opera has never been so important. Please consider making a donation to the Royal Opera House community today and help support the future of ballet and opera.

[roh.org.uk/donate](https://roh.org.uk/donate)