

Badische Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe

Digitale Sammlung der Badischen Landesbibliothek Karlsruhe

Der Ring des Nibelungen

Hendrich, Hermann

Leipzig, [1924]

[Transparentpapier]

[urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-142551](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-142551)



Rheingold.



manner as the sad melody in Tristan, the dramatic action. The landscape stands forth prominently everywhere.

"Auf dem Grunde des Rheins (At the Bottom of the Rhine). The green light of dawn, upwards bright, downwards dark. The top of a reef rises in the middle of the rolling waters, brightening with the dawn. A bright shimmer penetrates the flood from above, bursting forth at a high spot on the middle reef into a luminous golden lustre. A magic golden light pierces through the waters. The Daughters of the Rhine are encircling the reef in a graceful swimming movement." The words of the poem are an exact description of the first picture, in which the nymphs are playing in the green, sunny, surging waves. The painter has adhered minutely to the poet, but the dramatic action — Alberich's greed — is purposely omitted.

Freias Garten (Freia's Garden), where the golden apples of life grow, stretches before us like a meadow full of flowers and edged with woods, at the foot of the Mount of the Gods. It is a peaceful, sunny lea along the Elbe, with young maids entwined in dance.

Nibelheim (Nibelungen Home) is illumined with a golden splendour, like the palace of Mammon in the Walpurgis Hall. Before Wotan and Loge glisten the treasures of the cavern, from the dark depths rise the coils of the huge, green reptile — the master and guardian of the treasures.

Walhall (Walhalla) is a mighty structure framed of rocks, towering above the summit of the mount. A bridge leads to the edifice bathed in the red rays of the setting sun: golden drops trickle down into the green Rhine. Down in the valley are the evening shadows, night is approaching, but "the brough lifts its head in the heavenly glow" and offers shelter against night and greed.

"Far from here follow me then, out to the smiling home of the Spring" — Siegmund has fled with Sieglinde to the forest, which lies shrouded in the moonlight and the charm of spring. Driven from here by the storm, the Walsung had sought refuge in Hunding's house. Now the ties are torn, the home of the enemy is behind them.

Der Walkürenritt (The Ride of the Valkyrs) grows out of the picture of the thunderstorm: "Flights of clouds sweep by the edge of the rocks, as if driven by the storm. In the flash of the lightning, the Valkyrs are to be seen mounted on steeds". Birds announcing the storm precede them, the trees bend their proud tops, a fallow light lies on the land over which the gust of the wind takes its way.

Wotans Abschied (Wotan's Departure): On a low mound of moss lies Brunnhilde, covered with the long shield of the Valkyrs. Her features stand forth sharply

against the background of the glowing fire. Wotan stands before her, his look lingering once more upon her in pain, ere the god departs to leave his dearest child in the flames of the holy glow.

Waldweben (Whispers of the Woods), the sultry glow of midday on the rocks, on which lies the dragon basking in the sun at the entrance to the cavern. Beneath the linden is shadow and the cool breath of the murmuring spring.

Fearlessly the hero advances to meet the serpent in bloody combat at the deserted spot where Fafner creeps forth to quench his thirst.

Brunnhilde slumbers under the broad-boughed fir, still wrapt in night. In the background, the red of the dawn blends with the dull glow of the flames, he who should wake her is approaching, and soon the Valkyr is kissed back to light and life, and greets the sunlit day in an outburst of holy joy.

On a hill encompassed by a wide circle of fire rises the "ash of the world". The Norns are weaving the golden rope of Fate, at their feet bubbles a spring, whispering of wisdom. The world-tree of the Edda and the fir at the Brunnhilde Stone are moulded into one idea.

"On lofty seat, silent and dark, the shivered spear firm in his fist" — this the giant-image, the lord of the mountain, Wotan, spying from the summit into the heights and deeps, awaiting the end that the mournful song of the Norns has foreboded.

Siegfrieds Tod (Siegfried's Death) suggests the description in the song of the Nibelungen: The hero stoops down to the spring when Hagen's spear strikes him. Pale and bleeding, he falls among the flowers. The yellow evening light of the sun sinking to rest shines through the branches of the trees: the deep blue shadows of death fall upon this place of murder. All Nature mourned when the valiant Balder fell.

"The men raise Siegfried's body on the shield, and carry it away slowly over the rocky heights, in a solemn procession. The moon breaks through the clouds and illumines the funeral cortege on the heights." Wotan's last proud heroic thought, the last Walsung, is borne to the funeral pyre, to be consumed in the flames. The awful reveals itself to our eyes in the march of the mighty shadows cast by the light of the moon on the rocky wall above the Rhine and beneath the Hall of the Gibichungen. Siegfried in the realm of shades, "the race of the gods gone out like a breath" — this the tragic end of the hero shown to us in powerful lines by a masterly hand, this Wotan's dream of man's honour, eternal power and endless fame realized in Walhalla and the Walsungen.

