

## Placido Domingo - Wagner: Scenes from the Ring (2002)

Written by bluesever

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Siegfried, opera, WWV 86c 01. *Nothung! Nothung! Neidliches Schwert!* 02. *Was am besten er kann...Hoho! Hohei! Schmiede, mein Hammer, ein hartes Schwert!* 03. *Daß der mein Vater nicht ist (Forest murmurs)* 04. *In der Höhle hier lieg' auf dem Hort!* 05. *Nun sing! Ich lausche dem Gesang*  
Die Götterdämmerung (Twilight of the Gods),  
opera, WWV 86d 06. *Tagesgrauen (Daybreak)* 07. *Zu neuen Taten, teurer Heide* 08. *Siegfrieds Rheinfahrt* 09. *Brünnhilde, heilige Braut!* 10. *Trauermarsch (Funeral March)*

Placido Domingo - Tenor Alan Garner - English Horn Simon Rayner - French Horn David Cangelosi - Tenor Natalie Dessay - Soprano Violeta Urmana - Mezzo Soprano Nigel Bates - Percussion Royal Opera House Covent Garden Orchestra Antonio Pappano - Conductor

Once again, Domingo surprises us. As Pavarotti pleads to fade into the memory bank, the Spanish tenor keeps working--learning, attempting to get into new idioms, keeping the voice amazingly fresh. As Siegfried, the voice is big and rich, and since the role never rises above an A-natural (at least not in the excerpts presented here) it's almost ideal for Domingo, sitting in the most potent part of his voice. Of course, you can hear the amount of energy that's being expended, but that's true of all Siegfrieds, and Domingo entirely avoids any marring of the vocal line with the infamous "Bayreuth bark"--a type of self-defense against Wagner's ferociously big orchestration. The "Forging Song" is splendidly energetic and thrilling and the "Forest Murmurs" section is quite lovely and moving.

The Götterdämmerung excerpts are even better: the "Dawn Duet" is spectacular with Violetta Urmana's warm, text-involved Brünnhilde turning it into the real event it should be, and "Siegfried's Death" is beautifully shaded and inward. Throughout, Antonio Pappano leads the Covent Garden Orchestra with great zeal (the Rhine Journey and Funeral March are included) and it plays handsomely, although it's impossible to avoid noticing that at times the orchestra is recorded at a peculiarly low level (i.e., the recording favors Domingo), and that at truly pianissimo sections in the solo moments, the orchestra practically disappears. But this is a

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remarkable release of chunks of the Ring (including David Cangelosi's very colorful Mime, straight from the Gerhard Stolze-school of yelping, and Natalie Dessay's articulately chirpy Forest Bird)--and another huge feather in Domingo's cap. And if anyone's listening, a complete Brünnhilde from Urmana would be a joy. ---Robert Levine, ClassicsToday.com, arkivmusic.com

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