

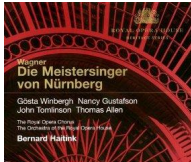
## Wagner - Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg (Haitink) [1997]

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 16 March 2011 19:37 - Last Updated Friday, 26 June 2015 20:12

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CD1 01. Applause [0:00:21.85] 02. Vorspiel [0:09:46.72] 03. Da zu der Heiland kam [0:03:29.25] 04. Verweilt! Ein Wort [0:04:37.05] 05. Da bin ich: wer ruft? [0:04:00.30] 06. David! Was stehst? [0:01:57.66] 07. Mein Herr! Der Singer Meisterschlag [0:02:42.04] 08. Der Meister Ton und Weisen [0:06:52.68] 09. Aller End ist doch David [0:03:02.57] 10. Seide meiner Treue wohl versehen [0:03:52.36] 11. Gott gruss Euch, Meister! [0:02:59.10] 12. Das schone Fest, Johannistag [0:04:05.94] 13. Eva, mein einzig Kind, zur Eh [0:08:13.84] 14. Dacht ich mir's doch! [0:02:56.68] 15. Am stillen Herd [0:04:03.06] 16. Merwurd'ger Fall! [0:05:36.98] CD2 01. Fanget an! [0:02:55.76] 02. Seid ihr nun fertig? [0:02:19.58] 03. Halt, Meister! Nicht so geeilt! [0:03:35.28] 04. Ihr mahnt mich da gar recht [0:03:40.74] 05. Applaus [0:00:46.44] 06. Applaus [0:00:32.42] 07. Johannistag! Johannistag! [0:03:55.98] 08. Lass sehn, ob Meister Sachs zu Haus? [0:05:30.68] 09. Zeig her! 's ist gut [0:00:54.05] 10. Was duftet doch der Flieder [0:05:44.94] 11. Gut'n Abend, Meister! [0:08:18.22] 12. Das dacht' ich wohl [0:01:58.97] 13. Da ist er! [0:03:56.96] 14. Geliebter, spare den Zorn [0:02:08.16] 15. Uble Dinge, die ich da merk' [0:01:59.45] 16. Tu's nicht! Doch horch! [0:01:01.96] 17. Jerum! Jerum! [0:04:40.77] 18. Das Fenster geht auf! [0:07:27.36] 19. Den Tag seh ich erscheinen [0:05:13.77] 20. Seid ihr nun fertig? [0:01:24.60] 21. Ach, Himmel! David! [0:04:56.53] CD3 01. Applaus [0:00:41.88] 02. Vorspiel [0:07:45.89] 03. Gleich, Meister! Hier! [0:04:03.34] 04. Am Jordan Sankt Johannes stand [0:03:38.09] 05. Wahn! Wahn! Überall Wahn! [0:06:54.04] 06. Grüß Gott, mein Junker! [0:04:42.64] 07. Mein Freund, in holder Jugendzeit [0:04:28.77] 08. Morgenlich leuchtend in rosigem Schein [0:05:10.84] 09. Abendlich gluhend in himmlischer Pracht [0:04:48.57] 10. Zwischenspiel - Interlude [0:02:29.66] 11. Ein Werbelied! Von Sachs! [0:04:34.90] 12. Das Gedicht? Hier liess ich's [0:07:38.36] 13. Sieh, Evchen! [0:04:13.65] 14. Weilten die Sterne [0:02:05.16] 15. Hat man mit dem Schuhwerk nicht seine Not! [0:01:31.49] 16. O Sachs! Mein Freund! [0:03:44.80] 17. Ein Kind ward hier geboren [0:04:16.12] CD4 01. Selig, wie die Sonne [0:04:30.05] 02. Nun, Junker, kommt! [0:02:02.80] 03. Sankt Krispin, lobet ihn! [0:03:47.17] 04. Ihr tanzt? [0:05:49.40] 05. Silentium! Silentium! [0:00:43.56] 06. Wacht auf, es nahet gen den Tag [0:03:05.76] 07. Euch macht ihr's leicht [0:05:21.80] 08. Zum Teufel! Wie wackelig! [0:02:07.50] 09. Morgendlich leuchtend in rosigem Schein [0:03:38.34] 10. Das Lied, furwahr, ist nicht von mir [0:04:32.14] 11. Morgenlich leuchtend in rosigem Schein [0:05:14.94] 12. Den Zeugen, denk es [0:01:45.04] 13. Verachtet mir die Meister nicht [0:07:35.45]

Hans Sachs - Sir John Tomlinson (baritone) Veit Pogner - Gwynne Howell (bass) Kunz

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Vogelgesang - Alasdair Elliott (tenor) Konrad Nachtigall - Edward Lloyd-Morgan (baritone) Sixtus Beckmesser - Sir Thomas Allen (baritone) Fritz Kothner - Anthony Michaels-Moore (bass) Balthasar Zorn - Robin Leggate (tenor) Ulrich Eißlinger - Paul Crook (tenor) Augustin Moser - John Dobson (tenor) Hermann Ortel - Grant Dickson (bass) Hans Schwarz - Geoffrey Moses (bass) Hans Foltz - Simon Wilding (bass) Walther von Stolzing - Gösta Winbergh (tenor) David - Herbert Lippert (tenor) Eva - Nancy Gustafson (soprano) Magdalene - Catherine Wyn-Rogers (mezzo) Nightwatchman - Michael Druett (bass) Chorus and Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden Bernard Haitink - conductor Recorded live, Royal Opera House, 12 July 1997

Just a month or two ago I reviewed a reissue of Wolfgang Sawallisch's Bavarian State Opera recording of Wagner's comic masterpiece. The virtues of that set lay in Sawallisch's seasoned pacing of the drama and the sense of an experienced ensemble working together, notwithstanding some outstanding individual performances from the likes of Ben Heppner.

Now in this new set from the Royal Opera House archives the selfsame advantages of a true ensemble performance are thrown into sharper relief by a cast that is probably even better overall than its Munich counterparts.

Recorded live in July 1997 just prior to the Royal Opera House's closure for refurbishment, this performance marked a high point in Haitink's tenure as Music Director. The appearance of this CD set is doubly valuable, both preserving a superb performance and Haitink's interpretation of a work he has not otherwise recorded.

Haitink's cast is an international one, but with a pleasing and appropriate emphasis on home-grown talent. John Tomlinson's Sachs is fully equal to the role's extrovert and introvert moments. There is a slight edge to his tone here which becomes less obvious as the performance progresses. His singing has tremendous variety of dynamic and nuance without losing any of its elemental power, and his response to the words shows fine poetic insight: his Fliedermonolog is profoundly moving. He also enters into his exchanges with Beckmesser with aplomb. It's good to hear the audience laughter preserved here too! Thomas Allen as Beckmesser gives an extremely fine performance, all the better for being well sung rather than resorting to the kind of sprechgesang that some performers have used. It's a performance that suggests, quite rightly, that there is more to the town clerk than the customary pettifogging caricature we often hear. We realise that Beckmesser is also a victim of the Wahn, or madness, of which Sachs sings in his Act 3 monologue.

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The veteran Gwynne Howell is a rich-toned Pogner, giving a warm, lyrical account of his solo in Act 1, and effectively characterising Pogner's concerns and doubts in his exchanges with Sachs in Act 2.

The late Gösta Winbergh performs a memorable Walther von Stolzing, if not quite the equal of Ben Heppner on Sawallisch's set, he paces the role admirably and – no mean feat – has plenty of power in reserve at the end for the Prize Song. His voice production is slightly veiled at the start but he is able to open out more attractively as the opera progresses. He delineates well Walther's progression from the impulsive youth of the first two acts to the wiser figure of the third.

Nancy Gustafson sings a girlish, lyrical Eva, who can also be spirited and impulsive, as in her exchanges with Sachs in Act 2, and rises well to the challenges of Act 3. Her outburst of "Oh Sachs! Mein Freund!" is thrillingly sung and she and her colleagues give a beautiful account of the Quintet. Herbert Lippert's David is boyish and likeable, giving a fine performance of the singing modes in Act 1. Catherine Wyn-Rogers is a good Magdalena.

The various roles of the Mastersingers themselves are ably sung by members of the Covent Garden company. Special mention should go to the fine Kothner of Anthony Michaels-Moore. The chorus also acquits itself with distinction, whether as the apprentices, the agitated neighbours of Act 2 or in the great celebratory crowd scenes of the Third Act.

Haitink brings a welcome lightness of touch to the score, emphasising the warmth and humour of Wagner's comedy. As with many performances of Die Meistersinger, the work in Haitink's performance grows in stature as it progresses. Act 2 is performed with a scherzo-like delicacy after the expository, slightly understated First Act. It's in the long span of Act 3 that Haitink and his cast are at their most inspired. Haitink relishes Wagner's greater breadth and humanity of purpose with long-breathed phrasing by the ROH orchestra, with hushed strings and burnished brass in the prelude, and suitably celebratory playing in the final scenes.

Taken from BBC broadcast tapes, the sound is warm, rich and full, if not ideally clear. Applause is included before and after each Act - at the end it is deservedly extensive. There is a natural opera house balance, with voices rather backwardly placed; occasionally this means that some of the words are lost as the characters move around the stage.

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There are a couple of tiny production niggles; Beckmesser's cry of "Fanget an!" at the end of CD 1 is repeated – needlessly – at the start of CD2; and something has gone awry with the booklet which omits page 59 and repeats page 60. A high-quality booklet includes full texts, translation and production photos.

Overall a superb performance. ---Ewan McCormick, musicweb-international.com

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