

Das Rheingold: The Beginning of the End

Friday, April 10, 2026 · 18:00 · Philharmonie Berlin

Kirill Petrenko, conductor

approximately 150 minutes

Richard Wagner

1813–1883

150 minutes

Das Rheingold (The Rhinegold)

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Wagner's *Ring* is woven from dozens of musical motifs that identify characters, objects, and ideas. Here are some of the most important in *Das Rheingold*:

The Rhine/Nature Motif: The rising arpeggios of the opening: pure, elemental, innocent. This motif represents nature before corruption.

The Rhinegold Motif: A brilliant, fanfare-like figure in the brass when the gold catches the sunlight. It returns whenever the treasure is mentioned.

The Ring Motif: A dark, descending phrase that will haunt the entire cycle. Listen for how it transforms into...

The Valhalla Motif: A majestic, noble brass theme representing the gods' fortress. The theme grows out of the Ring motif, as if the gods' glory were built on stolen power.

The Renunciation of Love: A bleak, falling phrase heard when Alberich curses love. It recurs whenever characters sacrifice love for power.

The Curse Motif: A savage, angular figure that sounds whenever the ring's curse manifests, most dramatically when Fafner murders Fasolt.

Loge's Motif: Flickering, chromatic music representing the fire god's dancing flames and slippery nature.

Erda's Motif: A solemn, rising phrase in the low brass when the Earth Mother appears with her warning.

The Rainbow Bridge: Shimmering harps and strings as the gods cross to Valhalla. Then listen for the Rhinemaidens' lament rising from below, a reminder that this triumph is hollow.



CONCERT PROGRAMS

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