



LOHENGRIN

Richard Wagner

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Logos for this production: **Rising Alternative + Semperoper Dresden + Unitel Classica + CMajor**

Libretto by Richard Wagner

Opera in three acts

Sung in German

From Semperoper Dresden

Recorded in February 2015

Running Time: 3h 35min

CREATIVE TEAM

Conductor	Christian Thielemann
Director	Angela Brandt, after the original production by Christine Mielitz (1983)
Chorus Master	Jörn Hinnerk Andresen
Orchestra	Staatskapelle Dresden
Chorus	Sächsischer Staatsopernchor Dresden

ARTISTIC TEAM

Heinrich der Vogler	Georg Zeppenfeld
Lohengrin	Piotr Beczała
Elsa von Brabant	Anna Netrebko
Friedrich von Telramund	Tomasz Konieczny
Ortrud	Evelyn Herlitzius
The King's Herald	Derek Welton
Four Noblemen of Brabant	Tom Martinsen, Simeon Esper, Matthias Henneberg, Tilmann Rönnebeck
Four Pages	Jana Hohlfeld, Monika Harnisch, Annett Eckert, Masako Furuta

PRESENTATION

Starring in their premiere Wagnerian roles, Anna Netrebko and Piotr Beczała, alongside the outstanding Staatskapelle Dresden and led by the baton of Christian Thielemann, were met with standing ovations from audiences, and an equally warm acclaim from critics: "Pure bliss! Never ending applause!" (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*)

Anna Netrebko's role debut as Elsa was one of the most wildly anticipated musical events: "The soprano sang a lush, mature-sounding Elsa with undeniable *bel canto* shadings, utterly at home in Wagner's Romantic universe. Netrebko's finely calibrated interpretation captured the full range of Elsa's emotional development...Her plush voice seemed to glow from within", (*Opera News*). The "Primadonna assoluta" (*Die Welt*) stars across fellow Wagnerian debutant Piotr Beczala whose role debut as the eponymous Grail Knight has garnered the acclaimed tenor further plaudits from fans and critics alike: "The revelation was Piotr Beczala, who was just about perfect in the title role" says *WQXR* "Netrebko and Beczala are Wagner Stars" summarized the *New York Times* "and were frenetically celebrated by the audience." (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*)

Georg Zeppenfeld as a convincing and majestic Heinrich der Vogler and outstanding Wagnerians Evelyn Herlitzius and Tomasz Konieczny as the opponents Ortrud and Friedrich von Telramund complete the cast in King Ludwig II's favorite opera at the Semperoper Dresden, where operatic history has been written with the theatre playing host to three important Wagner premieres. In the pit is Wagner's "Wunderharfe", the Staatskapelle Dresden, conducted by Christian Thielemann, doubtlessly today's foremost conductor of this repertoire. "Some enthuse about their best ever *Lohengrin*, but for sure this was one of the ten best opera performances in their lives" (*Die Welt*).

The staging, a revival of the timeless production by Christine Mielitz, tells the story of the evil couple Ortrud and Telramund wanting to seize power in Brabant and attempting to destroy Elsa, the heir to the throne after the disappearance of her brother Gottfried, first with psychologic depth, timeless setting and stunning costumes: "The star of the acclaimed stage production continues to shine bright" (*New York Times*).

SYNOPSIS

ACT I

Count Telramund brings charges before King Heinrich I against Elsa of Brabant. He accuses her of having murdered her younger brother Gottfried in order to win the throne of Brabant for herself.

The King orders trial by ordeal: a duel between Telramund and a champion who will fight on Elsa's behalf shall decide her innocence or guilt, but no-one will take up Elsa's cause. Then a miracle occurs. A stranger whom Elsa had seen in a dream takes up the challenge and vanquishes Telramund. The unknown man offers Elsa his hand in marriage under the condition that she never asks his name or provenance. Elsa is thus made solely responsible for whether the new ruler, celebrated as a hero by the Brabantines, stays or not.

ACT II

Ortrud, who had pressed her husband Telramund to the false accusations against Elsa, concocts new plans for revenge in the wake of the defeat. Feigning friendship and sympathy, she sows doubt about the nameless knight in Elsa's heart. In front of the cathedral at the wedding the next day, matters come to a head. Ortrud and Telramund accuse the foreign hero of sorcery and fraud. Once more he puts to Elsa the question of confidence which she answers with an unequivocal declaration to her husband.

ACT III

Once alone with her protector Elsa cannot resist the forbidden question any longer. At that very moment Telramund bursts into the bridal chamber with his co-conspirators to kill the foreign hero. Elsa herself hands him the weapon with which Telramund is fatally struck. The stranger now wishes to reveal his secret publicly.

Before the King and assembled deputies Lohengrin proclaims his name and background. Ortrud rejoices over failure of his mission, but her triumph does not last. Through prayer Lohengrin brings about the return of the boy Gottfried, the legitimate heir who had been believed dead.