

# Opera Australia

## The Ring Cycle Brisbane, Queensland 2023

### Media Backgrounder



#### The Ring Cycle

- Wagner's Ring Cycle, or ***Der Ring des Nibelungen***, is widely recognised as the pinnacle of the operatic repertoire: an epic tale of gods, dwarves, dragons, heroes and a magic ring, all set to incredibly powerful music.
- It combines all of the art forms into an all-embracing 16-hour long work, spread across a series of four operas; *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*.
- It has been hugely influential on much of the art that has followed, including music and movies.
- The Ring Cycle inspires fanatical devotion, with fans travelling the world to see it. It is so difficult and expensive to stage, that performances have become rare and sought after.

#### Wagner's Masterpiece

- Wagner took approximately 26 years from 1848 to 1874 to compose over 2,000 pages of music
- Wagner created a specific venue, the Festival Theatre in Bayreuth, specifically for Ring performances
- The first performance as a cycle opened the first [Bayreuth Festival](#) in 1876
- Wagner created a new French horn for this opera (being played by a member of QSO)
- Opera stage director from the Chicago Opera, Anthony Freud stated that *Der Ring des Nibelungen* "marks the high-water mark of our art form, the most massive challenge any opera company can undertake."

#### World's First Fully Digital Ring Cycle

- For Brisbane 2023, OA is creating a cutting-edge, fully digital new Ring Cycle production.
- Instead of building enormous sets, the stage will comprise a unique combination of impressive technology, including massive 7m high, suspended LED screens, gliding on the automation system and choreographed to create dramatic spaces, as well as projections to create special effects, and a digital automated lighting system.
- This production will use the latest in video content creation techniques, audio-visual and lighting equipment to create an immersive awe-inspiring world, closer to The Lord of the Rings films than a traditional theatre production.
- At the helm will be Chinese director Chen Shi-Zheng, who created Opera Australia's critically and commercially successful Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour production of *Turandot*.
- Opera Australia staged its first fully digital production with *Aida* at the Sydney Opera House in 2018 to great acclaim, and in 2019 staged the world's first rep season of three brand new fully digital productions; *Madama Butterfly*, *Anna Bolena* and *Whiteley*.

#### First Chinese Director

- Chen Shi-Zheng is the first Chinese director of a large scale, national opera company's production of the Ring.
- As well as an internationally acclaimed opera director, Chen Shi-Zheng, who divides his time between Shanghai and New York City, is a successful movie, theatre and musical director and an expert in using technology in theatre.
- The Ring Cycle was originally based on Norse mythology. Now, for the first time, Chinese mythology, design and technology will be woven into the production.

**Location & Venue**

- Brisbane is the capital of Queensland and ideally located just an hour’s drive to the tourist meccas of the Gold and Sunshine Coasts and a 1-2 hour flight to the Great Barrier Reef, Whitsunday Islands and Tropical Far North Queensland.
- This is the first large-scale production of The Ring to be staged at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC) in Brisbane.
- The Lyric Theatre at QPAC has a capacity of 2,000.

**World Renowned Cast**

- The 33 principal roles will be performed by some of the world’s finest singers and the best in their fields at interpreting the vagaries of Wagner and the eccentric characters of The Ring.
- Opera Australia Chorus
- Queensland Symphony Orchestra, supplemented by a handful of international Ring Cycle specialists.
- Dance North Dancers
- TOTAL 350 singers, dancers, designers, technicians, costume-makers and backstage staff

**The Operas**

1. *Das Rheingold*: <https://opera.org.au/productions/das-rheingold-brisbane/> - 2.5hrs, no interval
2. *Die Walküre*: <https://opera.org.au/productions/die-walkure-brisbane/> - 5hrs 45mins, 2 intervals – 75 +40 mins
3. *Siegfried*: <https://opera.org.au/productions/siegfried-brisbane/> - 6hrs, 2 intervals – 75 + 30mins
4. *Götterdämmerung*: <https://opera.org.au/productions/gotterdammerung-brisbane/> - 6hrs 40mins – 2 intervals, 90 + 35mins

**Key Dates**

- Season opening night: Friday 1 Dec 2023
- Season closing night: Thursday 21 Dec 2023

**Cycle 1**

<i>Das Rheingold</i>	1 Dec
<i>Die Walküre</i>	3 Dec
<i>Siegfried</i>	5 Dec
<i>Götterdämmerung</i>	7 Dec

**Cycle 2**

<i>Das Rheingold</i>	08 Dec
<i>Die Walküre</i>	10 Dec
<i>Siegfried</i>	12 Dec
<i>Götterdämmerung</i>	14 Dec

**Cycle 3**

<i>Das Rheingold</i>	15 Dec
<i>Die Walküre</i>	17 Dec
<i>Siegfried</i>	19 Dec
<i>Götterdämmerung</i>	21 Dec

**Prices:** from \$520 + booking fee for a four-opera series package.

**Language:** sung in German with English surtitles

**Hear from the Ring Cycle’s key creatives:**

**World-first fully digital production**

- Director Chen Shi-Zheng <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICji1aTp0jo>
- Digital Content Designer Leigh Sachwitz <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CUJ7D7JJB14>
- Costume Designer Anita Yavich <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ml6OltuhNi4>

**Imagery and video content:**

<https://opera.org.au/about/media-centre/the-ring-cycle/>

[opera.org.au/ring](https://opera.org.au/ring)

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