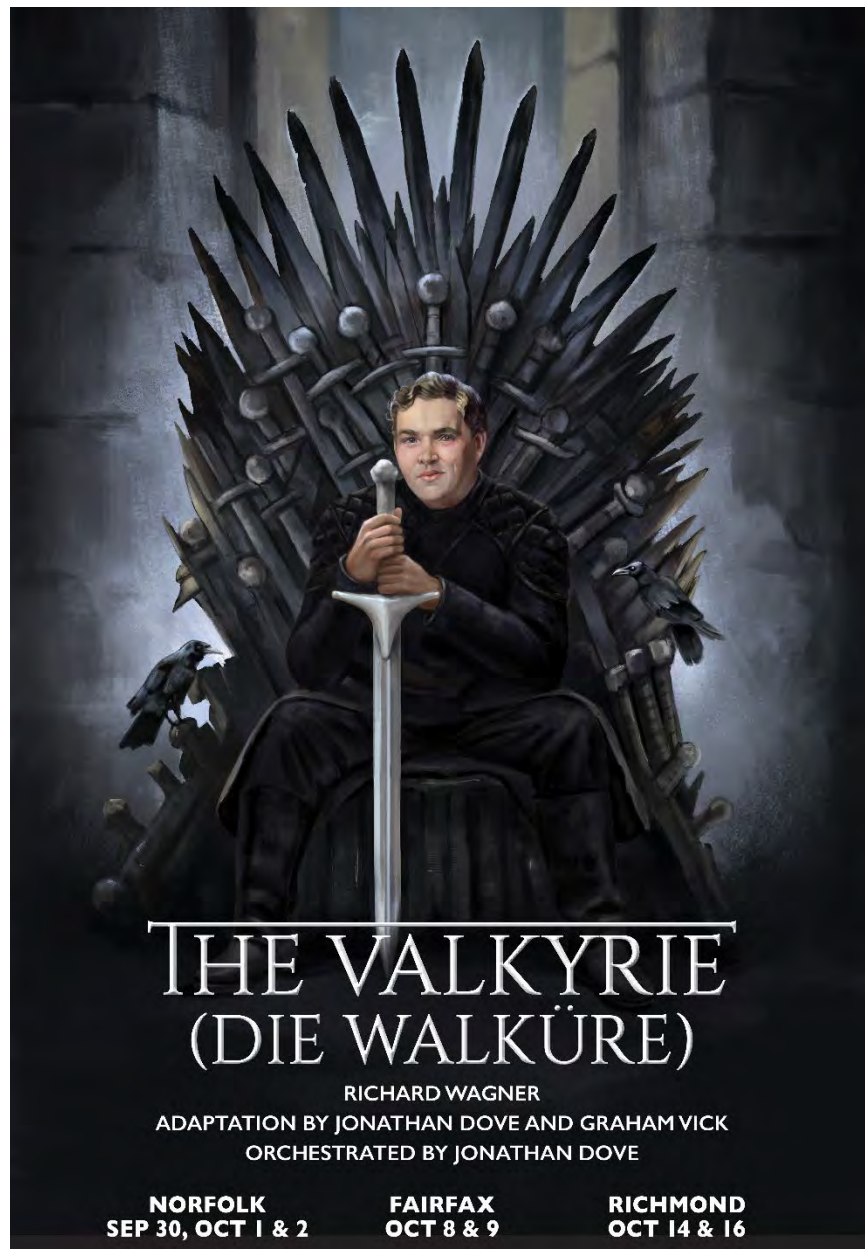




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Wagner's Monumental *The Valkyrie (Die Walküre)* Opens Thrilling Season at Virginia Opera 2022-2023 season commences with a continuation of *The Ring Cycle*



Norfolk, Richmond, Fairfax VA (September 6, 2022)—

For the first time, Virginia Opera premieres a new production of Richard Wagner's *The Valkyrie* (*Die Walküre*) as part of Wagner's epic *Ring*. Comprised of four operas, the *Ring* cycle (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) draws from Norse mythology to weave a tale of gods, heroes, and a magical ring of power. It is the most monumental operatic experience ever conceived, and producing these operas is an ambitious undertaking for even the largest opera companies.

Following Virginia Opera's 2021 production of *Das Rheingold*, *The Valkyrie* continues the myth as Brünnhilde—a Valkyrie and the favorite daughter of the god Wotan—attempts to renew a broken world. The next two installments are currently slated for future seasons. Featuring world-class singers and brand-new staging, this thrilling production honors the mythic setting of the iconic opera, and Virginia Opera is excited to welcome audiences to the 2022-2023 season with an opera on the grandest scale.

"When the pandemic forced us to think differently, we dreamed up our production of the first opera in the cycle, and we performed *Das Rheingold* at Topgolf," said **Peggy Kriha Dye, General Director and CEO of Virginia Opera**. "Audiences really connected with the world of the *Ring*. People were hungry to look at classic operas in new ways, and everyone wanted to know what happens next." With statewide support for the project, Virginia Opera's multi-year *Ring* project was born. "It is an exciting—thrilling even—moment for Virginia Opera," said **Adam Turner, Artistic Director of Virginia Opera**. "As we commission new work, expand the stories we tell onstage, and diversify our audiences and productions, we are confronting the very idea of opera itself—which for many is encapsulated by *The Valkyrie*. The soprano in the Viking helmet? That image is from this opera. And yet, the story, music, and humanity of this work is so much more."

Like *Das Rheingold*, ***The Valkyrie*** will be performed in German with English surtitles and feature the Virginia Symphony Orchestra in an adaptation by British composer Jonathan Dove. Turner said Dove's versatile orchestrations retain the essence of the piece, while making the most of all three venues across the Commonwealth; Harrison Opera House in Norfolk, Center for the Arts at George Mason University in Fairfax, and Dominion Energy Center in Richmond.

The Valkyrie will be conducted by **Turner** and directed by **Joachim Schamberger**, who makes his Virginia Opera debut with this production. "Joachim was the perfect choice for us," said **Dye**. "As both an internationally renowned director and projection/video designer, we are excited to present a magical production that incorporates video elements not yet seen on the Virginia Opera stage."

The cast is filled with singers who specialize in Wagner's work. **Kyle Albertson** returns to the role of Wotan after impressing audiences last fall in *Das Rheingold*. **Alexandra Loutsion** makes her triumphant debut as Wotan's favorite daughter and leader of the Valkyries, Brünnhilde. **Richard Trey Smagur** and **Meghan Kasanders** debut as the ill-fated siblings Siegmund and Sieglinde who set the story into action, and **Ricardo Lugo** returns in the role of Hunding, Sieglinde's oppressive husband. **Claudia Chapa** makes her mainstage debut doubling as Wotan's formidable wife, Fricka and the Valkyrie Waltraute, while **Lesley Anne Friend**, **Courtney Johnson**, and **Adriane Kerr** round out the ensemble of warrior goddesses.

While ***The Valkyrie*** is the second installment in the *Ring*, it tells a complete, self-contained story. "It is perfect for audiences who want to explore opera on a grand scale for the first time or for those interested in a multi-part epic," says **Turner**, "*The Valkyrie* doesn't come around very often and is not to be missed."

Tickets for ***The Valkyrie*** start at **\$20 for select performances** and can be purchased at <https://vaopera.org/the-valkyrie/> or by calling 866.673.7282.

All performances will feature a pre-opera lecture with Virginia Opera Resident Scholar, Joshua Borths.

Harrison Opera House, Norfolk, Virginia

Wednesday, September 28, 2022, Student Night at the Opera

Friday, September 30, 2022, at 8:00 pm

Saturday, October 1, 2022, at 7:30 pm

Sunday, October 2, 2022, at 2:30 pm

<https://ticketing.vaopera.org/overview/the-valkyrie>

Center for the Arts at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

Saturday, October 8, 2022, at 8:00 pm

Sunday, October 9, 2022, at 2:00 pm

<https://cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/virginia-opera-the-valkyrie>

Carpenter Theatre at the Dominion Energy Center, Richmond, Virginia

Friday, October 14, 2022, at 8:00 pm

Sunday, October 16, 2022, at 2:30 pm

https://event.etix.com/ticket/v/8084/virginia-opera-dominion-energy-center-carpenter-theatre??performance_id=7734478&country=US&language=en

***The Valkyrie (Die Walküre)* Production Notes**

Richard Wagner

Adaptation by Jonathan Dove

Sung in German with English Surtitles

Orchestra provided by the Virginia Symphony Orchestra

***The Valkyrie (Die Walküre)* Cast and Creative**

Conductor

Adam Turner

Stage Director & Projection Designer

Joachim Schamberger

Scenic & Costume Designer

Court Watson

Lighting Designer

Driscoll Otto

Wig and Makeup Designer

James P. McGough

Associate Conductor

Brandon Eldredge

Principal Coach
Michael Baitzer

CAST

Alexandra Loutsion*

Soprano: Brünnhilde

Virginia Opera Debut

Recent Highlights: Leonore, *Fidelio*, Austin Opera; Lady Macbeth (cover), *Macbeth*, Lyric Opera of Chicago; Mother Abbess, *The Sound of Music*, The Glimmerglass Festival

Upcoming: Elektra (cover), *Elektra*, Washington National Opera; Abigail, *Nabucco*, Washington Concert Opera; Leonora, *Il Trovatore*, Pittsburgh Opera

Kyle Albertson

Bass-Baritone: Wotan

Last Virginia Opera Performance: Wotan, *Das Rheingold*, 2021

Highlights: Holländer, *Der fliegende Holländer*, Oper Graz; Bluebeard, *Bluebeard's Castle*, Opera Roanoke; Wotan, *Das Rheingold*, Opera Santa Barbara

Upcoming: Orest's Tudor, *Elektra*, Dallas Opera; Donner, *Das Rheingold*, Dallas Symphony

Richard Trey Smagur*

Tenor: Siegmund

Virginia Opera Debut

Recent Highlights: Don José, *Carmen*, Houston Grand Opera; First Armored Man, *The Magic Flute*, Metropolitan Opera; Števa Buryja, *Jenůfa*, Santa Fe Opera

Upcoming: Der Steuermann, *Der fliegende Holländer*, Metropolitan Opera; Erik, *Der fliegende Holländer*, Santa Fe Opera

Meghan Kasanders*

Soprano: Sieglinde

Virginia Opera Debut

Recent Highlights: First Lady, *The Magic Flute*, Opera Theatre of St. Louis; Mary Johnson, *Fellow Travelers*, Opera Columbus; Gertrud, *Hänsel und Gretel*, Staatsoper Hannover

Claudia Chapa*

Mezzo-soprano: Fricka & Waltraute

Virginia Opera Debut

Recent Highlights: Fillipyevna, *Eugene Onegin*, Dallas Symphony Orchestra; Marcellina, *The Marriage of Figaro*, Opera Delaware; Mother Abbess, *The Sound of Music*, Charlottesville Opera

Upcoming: Berta, *The Barber of Seville*, Austin Opera; Josefina, *El Milagro del Recuerdo*

Ricardo L. Lugo

Bass: Hunding

Last Virginia Opera Appearance: Alcindoro, *La bohème*, 2022

Recent Highlights: Sacristan, *Tosca*, Metropolitan Opera; Colline, *La bohème*, CulturArte de Puerto Rico; Fasolt, *Das Rheingold*, Nashville Opera

Upcoming: Bartolo, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Pittsburgh Opera; Simone, *Gianni Schicchi*, Hawaii Opera Theater; Dulcamara, *The Elixir of love*, Opera de Puerto Rico

*Denotes VA Opera Debut

ABOUT VIRGINIA OPERA

Virginia Opera, the official opera company of the Commonwealth of Virginia, is one of the finest regional opera companies in the nation and is the only company to perform regularly in three separate main stage venues: the Harrison Opera House in Norfolk, the Carpenter Theatre at the Dominion Energy Center in Richmond, and Center for the Arts at George Mason University in Fairfax. Organized in 1974, Virginia Opera is respected nationwide for the identification and presentation of the finest young artists, for the musical and dramatic integrity of its productions, and for the ingenuity and variety of its education and outreach programs.