

ESOTERIC

The re-mastered SACD/CD hybridization of “Der Ring des Nibelungen”

In 1959 when Decca released “Das Rheingold”, the first part of its complete recording of “Der Ring des Nibelungen”, I was merely a college student. At this time there were virtually no opportunities to experience the works of Wagner.

This 3-record set was a dramatic and far reaching purchase for a student, but I was so fascinated by the music and the sound that were revelations to me. In particular, the impact I felt during the finale, from the attack of Donner to entering Valhalla, vividly remains in my mind as if I had just listened to it yesterday.

I became lost within the epic spectacle of Wagner that unfolded before me, despite the poor performance of my record player at that time.

Years later, I myself went into the audio industry. The impact I felt when I first heard the attack of Donner was the light that illuminated my path. A half-century later, times have changed, and the shift has been made from vinyl records to CDs. However, my affinity for the “Der Ring des Nibelungen,” as released by Decca has never faded, but - has only deepened with the passage of time.

Decca’s “Der Ring des Nibelungen” was produced by the renowned recording genius, John Culshaw. During the height of analog recording, Culshaw spent an incredible eight years working on this collection. “We wanted Der Ring des Nibelungen to be dramatic, both in performance and sound,” Culshaw said, “because we felt that if Wagner were alive today, both he and we would want to make this work dramatic in every respect.” To bring this grand idea to fruition, Culshaw spent a massive amount of time, effort, and funds to produce this recording. Today one would consider this to be practically insane, for it is nearly impossible to conceive spending so much time recording a single collection. The production of “Der Ring des Nibelungen” by ESOTERIC was driven by my admiration for all the musicians and producers that created this great performance. I regard this work as the new flower that will sow the seed of “reverence to music and acoustics,” which I inherited from Decca’s records, for the next generation. This SACD perfectly matches this intent, as it faithfully reproduces the sound quality of the master tape better than ever.

Fortunately, each SACD/CD hybrid title in ESOTERIC’s “Master Sound Works” series, has been highly regarded both in Japan and abroad. This release of “Der Ring des Nibelungen” is sure to be considered as the best title in the series, both in deed as well as in name. For all the people that love Wagner and audio equipment, it is my profound hope that this SACD/CD hybrid can evoke the same impact and excitement that this title generated upon its initial release. In closing, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all at Universal Music LLC and Decca for their wonderful cooperation, as well as the JVC Mastering Center for their great work during the remastering process.



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