
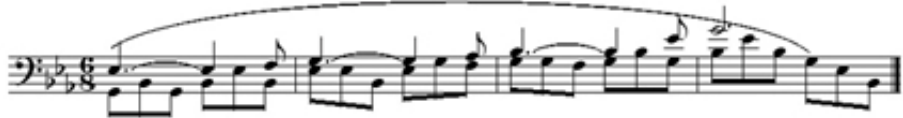







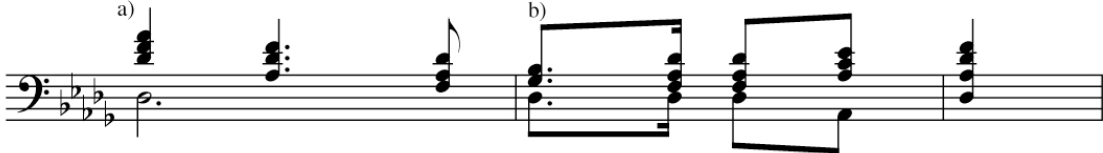



DAS RHEINGOLD LISTENING GUIDE
 IN ORDER OF PROGRESSION – LEITMOTIFS (MUSICAL THEMES)
 Written by Olga Bezrukova for L.A. Opera

<p>Note to Teacher: Please use the referenced website for audio examples. http://www.utexas.edu/courses/wagner/home.html</p> <p>Once you are on the website, click Ring Motives. Go to the bottom of the page and select Motive Indexes. On the following screen, select <i>Das Rheingold</i>. Find and click on the link that matches the title to hear the audio. (It may take several seconds to upload and start the audio)</p> <p>Note to teacher: Even though you may want to present all of the themes to your class, choose the themes that you would like them to concentrate on, depending on the musical level of your students and your comfort level. There has to be at least nine leitmotifs. Have the students write down a list of the leitmotifs on Worksheet D.</p>	<p>The Prelude to <i>Das Rheingold</i> is unlike any other opera prelude. The Nature motif is repeated many times (for approximately four minutes). Then the notes and the patterns evolve and give birth to (or introduce) several main themes. The Nature theme turns into the rolling waters of Rhine, in turn introducing us to the theme of Waves.</p>
<p>Nature -</p> 	<p>Nature theme – is elemental in every way. It is really just one chord: the root, third and 5th. The melody goes up.</p> <p>See website link: Nature Motive</p>
<p>The Rhine</p> 	<p>Nature theme begins to evolve into something more complex, the Rhine theme when to give emergence to the Rhine theme. The simple beginnings repeat and swell as the color palette of the orchestration shows us the Rhine river in its full glory...</p> <p>See website link: Nature Motive (Definitive)</p>
<p>The Waves</p> 	<p>After approximately thirty measures, suddenly cellos speed up to play the theme twice as fast. This becomes the Waves theme.</p> <p>See website link: Rhine</p>

<p>Rhinemaidens Opening Theme</p> 	<p>Rhinemaidens Opening Theme is heard as they appear in the shimmering Waves theme. Sounding joyful it is the first theme in this opera that is sung. Rhinemaidens are guarding the Rhine gold, and suddenly notice Alberich. Alberich is trying to flirt with the maidens, but they reject and avoid him.</p> <p>See website link: The Rhinemaidens</p>
<p>Woe – (Alberich)</p>  <p>Woe's me! Ah, woe's me!</p>	<p>Alberich, who has been pursuing the Maidens is rejected and shares his misfortune and woe. Notice the music has a falling quality as Alberich sings, “Woe’s me!”</p> <p>See website link: Alberich Lament</p>
<p>Actual theme of Rhinegold, or Gold, sounded with the horn</p>  <p>“Rhinegold!” Praise sang by Rhinemaidens pg. 40</p> 	<p>The theme of Rhinegold is quietly sounded with the horn. The harp gives the image of the gold glistening beneath the water and the image is becoming clearer every time the theme repeats, culminating in fourth repeat of the theme by the trumpet. The Rhinemaidens start singing and gold seems to be glistening in its full glory as the Rhinemaidens proclaim in a harmony, “Rhinegold!” Notice them singing together. The theme repeats a total of four times, sounding nearer and nearer to the listener. Alberich notices something sparkling in the waters.</p> <p>See website link: for Rhinegold, see The Gold For Rhinegold praise sang by Rhinemaidens, see Rhinemaidens' Joy in the Gold.</p>
<p>The Ring</p>	<p>The theme of the Ring is introduced as one or</p>

	<p>the Rhine-Maidens, Wellgunde, tells the gnome, “He who makes the ring out of the gold, will possess the world’s wealth!” Hear the trumpets accompany the Rhinemaiden as she sings of the ring.</p> <p>See website link: The Ring (Embryonic)</p>
<p>Renunciation of Love</p>  <p>Nur wer der Min - ne Macht ver - sagt</p>	<p>The “Renunciation of love” theme is sung by one of the Rhinemaidens as they spurn Alberich. The theme also contains the idea that one cannot have gold power and love at the same time.</p> <p>See website link: Renunciation of Love</p>
<p>Valhalla</p> 	<p>The leitmotif of Valhalla is heard in the second scene. It conjures a feeling of grandeur.</p> <p>See website link: Valhalla (First Segment)</p>
<p>Contract or Spear theme</p> 	<p>The motif of the “Treaty” is first heard underneath Fricka’s line as she tells Wotan, “The castle is finished...” no doubt reminding him that it is time to pay. She is upset at Wotan for bartering her sister, Freia, as a repayment to the Giants for building Valhalla. The motif—a descending line of notes, is actually heard in the orchestra while Fricka sings.</p> <p>See website link: see Spear</p>
<p>Freia theme</p>	<p>The theme of Freia is sung first by Alberich.</p>



However, her full leitmotif comes in violins, before Freia begins to sing. She is about to be given away to the giants. The violins give the sadness and the fear in Freia.

See website link: Freia for the segment when Alberich sings. Go down the same page and click on **Freia (Violins)** to hear the violins play the Freia theme.

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The echoes of the **Giants** leitmotif is heard before, but the final culmination of theme can be heard as they are coming closer to collect Freia. The theme is unforgettable. The combination includes timpani, strings in the low register. It is further accented with trombones and tubas.

See website link: The Giants

Youth or Golden Apples











The **Giants**, Fafner and Fasolt have come to collect their payment. Fafner tells us why Freia is a valuable asset to gods, she possesses the apples of youth. Without these apples of “**Youth**” gods will become weak and old. Listen to bassoon and horns in the phrase.





See website link: Golden Apples

Loge

If aurally, we knew the coming of the giants, we know **Loge** is close by the distinct motive that precedes his entrance. Full of runs and chromaticism, we can distinctly recognize the

	<p>god of fire (and deceit). The music is whipping and it spirals up.</p> <p>He comes with news about Alberich, telling everyone of the gold and the ring that is now in his possession.</p> <p>See website link: Loge</p>
<p>Nibelungs</p>  <p>Slow half notes and quarter notes underneath the Nibelungs theme, represents the enslaved Nibelungs</p> 	<p>“...Dwarfs forge to shine, toiling in the power of the ring...” tells Loge to Fricka while the Nibelungs motif is heard in the background.</p> <p>When we again encounter the same motif, it will have the harmonic support in slow half notes and quarter notes, representing the enslaved Nibelungs. Listen to the repetitive hammer sounds.</p> <p>Alberich has enslaved the Nibelungs and is making them do his bidding. The descending minor seconds are heard in the background of the Nibelungs theme. Listen to the ominous, slowly building music underneath the Nibelungs theme.</p> <p>See website link: The Nibelungs</p>
<p>Tarnhelm Helmet</p>	<p>Mime, Alberich’s brother who has been enslaved by his brother, has made a helmet with magic powers, “Tarnhelm.” The music is slow as the transformation and magic is taking place.</p> <p>See website link: Tarnhelm</p>

	
<p>Dragon - Serpent</p> 	<p>Loge and Wotan ask Alberich to show them the powers of the magic helmet. Alberich transforms into a Serpent with the help of the magic helmet, “Tarnhelm.” The sound is slithering of ominous brass with a choir of tubas and a tuben playing.</p> <p>See website link: Dragon</p>
<p>Power of Gold or Ring</p> 	<p>The theme of “Gold Power” is heard as Alberich beckons Nibelungs to bring the gold forward to Wotan. Listen to the brass.</p> <p>See website link: The Power of the Ring</p>
<p>Frustration or also known as Resentment</p> 	<p>Alberich is frustrated, he already cursed the ring, this theme repeats to show his frustration and irritation. Listen to the quiet and stabbing quality.</p> <p>See website link: Resentment</p>
<p>Erda- Goddess of Earth</p> 	<p>Erda appears to warn Wotan, her accompanying theme has many similarities to the original Nature and Rhine themes, but in a minor key. Erda is from the Earth, so her theme is like slow version of nature theme, only in minor.</p> <p>See website link: Erda</p>
<p>Twilight of the gods</p>	<p>Twilight of the gods theme is sounded.</p>

	<p>See website link: Erda/ Twilight of gods</p>
<p>Thunder</p>  <p>He - da! He - da! He-do!</p>	<p>Donner, the god of thunder calls out, as we hear his theme. Listen to the shimmering, heroic brass repeats in the music.</p> <p>See website link: Donner</p>
<p>Rainbow</p> 	<p>The clouds disappear and we see the castle Valhalla, and the rainbow bridge. Again, the theme resembles the Nature and Rhine theme in the beginning. Listen to the music lifting up.</p> <p>See website link: Rainbow Bridge</p>
<p>Sword</p> 	<p>Wotan picks up a sword that has been left by giants and hails Valhalla as his home. The sword motif, an important theme in the three operas to come, is sounded with a trumpet.</p> <p>See website link: The Sword</p>