

Lecture #6 - NORSE GODS in OPERA

Monday 1st December at 4 pm



Interest in the pantheon of Scandinavian and Icelandic gods has recently been given new currency with Neil Gaiman's popular book on **NORSE MYTHOLOGY** (2017) and a series of popular TV shows and video games featuring the **VIKINGS**.

For many, these were an extension of the works of J R R Tolkien (*The Lord of the Rings* : 1937) or even earlier of William Morris' equally influential (*Sigurd the Volsung* : 1876). But for most opera lovers, the Norse Pantheon is best exemplified in Richard Wagner's four-part series of music dramas, **The Ring of the Nibelung** : 1876 which blends a retelling of Icelandic Sagas, Lays and Eddas, with an adaptation of middle high German Burgundian epic poetry, and homage to the 5th century BC Greek dramatist Aeschylus.

The father-god **ODIN** (or Wotan) appears in Verdi's tale of **ATTILA** the Hun.

He is also the (impetuous, young) protagonist of **DAS RHEINGOLD**, the (middle-aged crisis) protagonist of **DIE WALKURE** and the (saddened, world-weary) force in **SIEGFRIED**.