
CAST

GURNEMANZ **RENÉ PAPE**

FIRST KNIGHT OF THE GRAIL **DAVID BUTT PHILIP**
SECOND KNIGHT OF THE GRAIL **CHARBEL MATTAR**

FIRST ESQUIRE **DUŠICA BIJELIĆ**
SECOND ESQUIRE **RACHEL KELLY**
THIRD ESQUIRE **SIPHO FUBESI**
FOURTH ESQUIRE **LUIS GOMES**

KUNDRY/VOICE FROM ABOVE **ANGELA DENOKE**

AMFORTAS **GERALD FINLEY**

PARSIFAL **SIMON O'NEILL**

TITUREL **ROBERT LLOYD**

KLINGSOR **WILLARD W. WHITE**

FIRST FLOWERMAIDEN **CELINE BYRNE**
SECOND FLOWERMAIDEN **KIANDRA HOWARTH**
THIRD FLOWERMAIDEN **ANNA PATALONG**
FOURTH FLOWERMAIDEN **ANNA DEVIN**
FIFTH FLOWERMAIDEN **ANA JAMES**
SIXTH FLOWERMAIDEN **JUSTINA GRINGYTE**

KNIGHTS OF THE GRAIL, YOUTHS AND BOYS, FLOWERMAIDENS



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

THE ROYAL OPERA

MUSIC DIRECTOR SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO
DIRECTOR OF OPERA KASPER HOLTEN

PARSIFAL

BÜHNENWEIHFESTSPIEL
(STAGE CONSECRATION FESTIVAL PLAY)
IN THREE ACTS

MUSIC AND LIBRETTO **RICHARD WAGNER**

CONDUCTOR **ANTONIO PAPPANO**

DIRECTOR **STEPHEN LANGRIDGE**

DESIGNS **ALISON CHITTY**

LIGHTING DESIGN **PAUL PYANT**

MOVEMENT **DAN O'NEILL**

VIDEO DESIGNS **THOMAS BERGMANN AND WILLEM BRAMSCHÉ**

ROYAL OPERA CHORUS

CHORUS DIRECTOR **RENATO BALSADONNA**

ORCHESTRA OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

CONCERT MASTER **PETER MANNING**

DIRECTED FOR THE SCREEN BY
JONATHAN HASWELL

LIVE FROM THE
ROYAL OPERA HOUSE
WEDNESDAY 18 DECEMBER 2013
AT 4.45PM

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during the interval or afterwards with **#ROHparsifal**

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APPROXIMATE TIMINGS

Acts I	115 minutes
Interval	40 minutes
Act II	70 minutes
Interval	30 minutes
Acts III	85 minutes

Please note there is brief partial nudity in Act III

The performance will end at approximately 10.40pm

THE STORY

ACT I

The realm of the Grail

Gurnemanz, a senior member of the all-male Grail community, orders junior members to prepare a bath for their suffering ruler Amfortas. Kundry hurtles into the Grail realm with balsam to soothe Amfortas's pain. Amfortas stops to rest on the way to his bath. He has suffered a terrible night, but believes in the prophecy that he will be saved by a 'pure fool made wise by compassion'.

Gurnemanz tells the community how Amfortas came to be wounded and how he lost the sacred spear to his enemy Klingsor. Klingsor longed to be accepted into the brotherhood of the Grail, but was forbidden due to his uncontrollable lust. In frustration he castrated himself, but was still refused. To avenge himself he created a garden of delights where beautiful women lie in wait to seduce the chaste Knights of the Grail. Amfortas tried to destroy Klingsor's world, but was himself seduced by a beautiful woman (Kundry), and lost the holy relic, the spear.

A young man caught shooting a swan is dragged in. Gurnemanz questions him: he appears to know almost nothing, not even his name, though he remembers the name of his mother, Herzeleide (heart's sorrow). Kundry tells the young man that his mother has died. The young man is restrained from attacking her.

Thinking the young man may be the 'wise fool' of the prophecy, Gurnemanz takes him to witness the ceremony of the Grail. Amfortas's father, Titurel, orders his son to conduct the ceremony, which restores his strength and that of the community. Parsifal is stunned by what he sees, but unable to tell Gurnemanz what it means. Gurnemanz gruffly orders him to leave - he is, after all, just a fool.

Interval

ACT II

Klingsor's realm

Klingsor prepares to confront Parsifal. He summons Kundry and orders her to seduce the young man. At first Kundry refuses, and taunts Klingsor for his self-imposed chastity, but he forces her to comply, reminding her that she will attain release from her suffering if a man can resist her sexual advances. Klingsor watches the young man defeat his guards.

Flowermaidens rush in; when the young man appears they dress up, and tease and caress him, competing for his affections. As things begin to become chaotic, a woman calls his forgotten name - Parsifal. It is Kundry in a new guise - as the woman who seduced Amfortas. The Flowermaidens leave Kundry and Parsifal alone. Kundry describes the death of Parsifal's father Gamuret, and how his mother raised him alone. Parsifal is moved, and wracked with guilt for abandoning his mother. Kundry consoles Parsifal, and kisses him. Parsifal suddenly experiences the suffering of Amfortas. Kundry begs him to save her through his love: she mocked the Saviour and has wandered the world ever since. Parsifal recoils: he knows both of them will only find salvation if he resists her. Kundry calls to Klingsor who attacks Parsifal with the spear. Parsifal disarms him, and Klingsor's powers evaporate.

Interval

ACT III

The realm of the Grail

Years have passed. Gurnemanz discovers Kundry lying in the forest. She wants only to serve, but Gurnemanz tells her that the Grail community is in complete disarray: there is nothing she can do. A stranger approaches - Gurnemanz recognizes him as Parsifal. Parsifal tells Gurnemanz of his troubled wanderings, through which he guarded the sacred spear, which he now returns to the Grail realm. Gurnemanz celebrates the return of the spear, then describes the misery of the Grail kingdom: Amfortas refuses to perform his sacred duty, Titurel has died, and the community is in despair. Parsifal is overcome with remorse - he feels he is to blame through his stupidity.

Kundry bathes Parsifal's feet, while Gurnemanz anoints his head. Parsifal blesses Kundry. Gurnemanz reminds Parsifal that it is Good Friday, a day of rejoicing.

The knights bear in the body of Titurel and urge Amfortas to perform the ceremony of the Grail. In agony, Amfortas urges the community to kill him and end his pain. Parsifal, Gurnemanz and Kundry enter. Parsifal returns the spear, and through compassion brings healing and comfort to Amfortas. Parsifal declares that the mysteries will no longer be hidden, but be open to all.

Stephen Langridge