

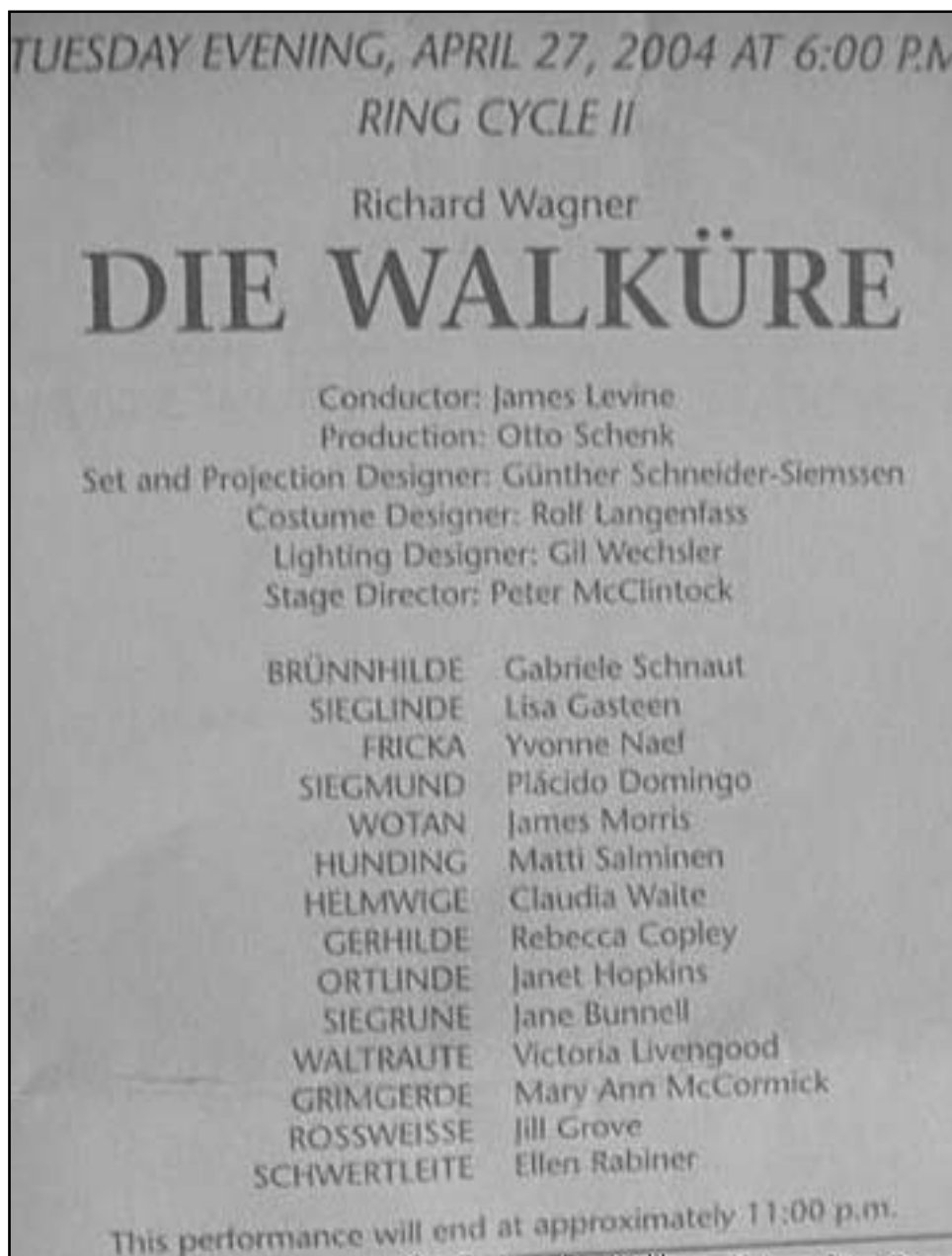
Ms Lisa Gasteen's Metropolitan Opera debut as Sieglinde

If the rapturous applause and standing ovation that greeted Lisa Gasteen's debut in the Metropolitan Opera's production of *Die Walküre* on Tuesday, 27 April 2004 is any guide, Ms Gasteen has quite a career ahead in the Met as well as world-wide signing Wagnerian heroines.

Being chosen to partner Plácido Domingo, still in wonderful voice himself, was itself a signal honour. However, the Met audience was more than happy to endorse this choice of a (to them) unknown quantity, although I'm sure many of the Wagner aficionados were aware of her highly commended appearances in recent Wagner performances in London, Stuttgart and Sydney. Ms Gasteen seemed completely at home in the role and on the vast Met stage and interacted with Mr Domingo in a way that made the dawning love between the characters tangible and credible. Following on so successfully from such notable predecessors in this production of the Ring as Jessye Norman and Deborah Voight is surely a good omen.

My personal high point for experiencing this opera must, so far, be the electrifying performance between Mr Domingo and Waltraute Meier in the 2000 Ring Cycle at Bayreuth. While Ms Meier's voice was showing some strain, the intensity of the acting between these two was burned into my memory.

I have to admit, however, to more than just a chauvinistic thrill at the sight of a Met standing ovation for Miss Gasteen. I had spoken briefly to Ms Gasteen after the dress rehearsal for Opera Australia's New Year's Eve 2003 concert to thank for her wonderful singing of extracts from Richard Strauss's *Elektra* and the Liebestod from *Tristan und Isolde* and to say how much I was looking forward to hearing her at the Met as



As a small memento, below is a photo of the advertising poster for this performance.

Sieglinde. I am delighted to put on record my excitement at both the quality of her singing and acting and her reception and to wish Ms Gasteen all the best for greater successes in her career singing Wagner.

