

RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES



We've felt the adrenalin with every crescendo, tensed with anticipation during the softer measures when just a breath of the score was apparent. The "helicopter attack" scene from *Apocalypse Now* was the perfect stage for Richard Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*, reminding us once again that life does imitate art, and that art may be communicating far more than we allow ourselves to consider much less realize.

Richard Wagner was much more than a composer: his poetry and essays, while less popular, provide far greater insight into the mind and message of the man and evidence the consumptive intangibility of darkness. The Valkyries of Nordic lore are the unseen host of spirit maidens charged with the pleasurable transit of fallen warriors to Vahalla, the "Hall of the Slain" in Agatha, Nordic heaven, and the mythical center of the world.

Distanced and protected from realism by the use of Nordic myth and legends, the audience is free to indulge in the pungent exploits of war, and to Wagner, the Valkyries afford absolution from conscience. But to what extent do the Valkyries actually influence war? Irish playwright

Oscar Wilde has noted, “All that listening to Wagner makes me want to invade Poland.” Thirty nine years after Wilde’s death, another Wagner enthusiast did invade Poland, and played the darkest of Wagner’s music in death camps.

Of Richard Wagner, wrote Adolf Hitler:

For myself, I have the most intimate familiarity with Wagner’s mental processes. At every stage of my life I come back to him . . .

Following a performance at the Vatican by the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra which included works by Richard Wagner, Pope Benedict XVI acknowledged music’s profound potential,

Even if Wagner, Pfitzner and Verdi transport us to new dimensions for experiencing reality, the shared foundation of a European spirit formed by Christianity still remains present and effective.

Education in twentieth century Germany included strong training in the classics of music and literature, and Richard Wagner’s works were deservedly, a representation of nationalistic accomplishment. Many of Wagner’s operas have become centerpieces of European classical literature enjoying permanent and international acclaim, but sadly, the effects of the magnetism of his darker compositions has often superseded their beauty.

There are countless and well documented examples of a continuing allegiance to a sinister reality behind and within events that are far too removed and remote to have been the design of man. The long castings of organized shadow communiqués, use numbers, patterns, language, cultures and images to dispatch cryptic ciphers.

Does the increase of knowledge of which Daniel spoke include our ability, at long last, to begin to understand these dark sentences?

WARS AND RUMORS OF WAR

The cosmic battle presses, and in multiple theaters. The Valkyries are riding, preparing to pick up slain warriors – refreshing and preparing them for the cosmic onslaught: *Ragnarök*, the “destruction of the powers,” where “powers” means “gods,” the final battle between ecstatic gods: strengthened and infused with the perverse nectar of decay. The battle will be preceded by conflict on a personal level as families and morality disintegrate and the forces of darkness are loosed.

Paraphrased for brevity, Micha Lindemans of *Encyclopedia Mythica* describes the sequence and the details of the graphic horror to be unleashed with the onset of ***Ragnarök***:

The sun and the moon will be darkened, the stars will vanish and there will be the sound of three rooster crows.

The first to summon the giants, the second to awake the gods, and the third to raise the dead.

THE EARTH WILL SHUDDER WITH EARTHQUAKES, AND EVERY BOND AND FETTER WILL BURST.



THE SEA WILL REAR AS THE MUGARD SERPENT TWISTS AND WRITES IN FURY AS HE MAKES HIS WAY TOWARD THE LAND

With every breath, this serpent will stain the soil and the sky with his poison, and the waves caused by the serpent's emerging will set free the ship of giant: the giant who will sail towards the battlefield.

From the realm of the dead a second ship will set sail, and this ship carries the inhabitants of hell.

The fire giants from the south will set sail to join in battle led by another powerful giant, who carries a blazing sword which will scorch the earth itself.

The watchman will sound his horn BECKONING ANCIENT battlefield heroes, gods, giants, dwarves, demons and elves to an enormous plain to fight.

An enormous four-eyed wolf with a chest soaked in blood will engage in the battle of ancient enemies culminating in the destruction of the planet by fire and subsequent submersion into the sea.

The Norse legends ominously echo the Biblical prophets as well as narratives and other ancient text, but the descriptions of graphic horror depicted in the Nordic sagas ‘flesh out’ the increasingly realistic panorama. Science has brought us to the shores of Nordic myth: places at once thought past, now circling to the future.

Uniformity of regulation is impossible to mandate in a climate where upstart labs compete with the established and conscientious. Unexplored knowledge in a world devoid of constraint can beget a terror once only animated in fiction has now come farther than possibility, matured beyond the realm of probability and emerged into actualization.

Our present day seems to be “Mystery Babylon” without the merciful destruction of the ziggurat. The ivory towers of academia have been and are actively engaging in specific Biblical prohibitions and the God of Abraham will allow mankind to obtain what was once sought at Babel, removing Himself as restrainer and permitting all which has been imagined.

It is of note to realize that there is little reference to the human race in the mythic forecasts of a future battle. Scripture asserts that the days will have need of shortening for the preservation of flesh. Will those prepared for battle at har Megiddo, representing the forces of earth, be a gathering of otherworldly creatures, the spawn and products of laboratories, the “imaginings of men?”

Historically, art and entertainment have been remarkably ‘imaginative’ in the presentation of incredible technologies, characters and scenarios. They have also been uncannily successful in the ability to ‘sense’ and prefigure future events.

“AN UNEXPECTED MONUMENT”

Located “sotto due torette” “*under the two towers,*” beneath *World Trade Center 5* at the northern end of the site, the Chambers Street subway station offers an unusually enigmatic level of esoteric inspiration. Described by the *Wall Street Journal* on September 11, 2002 as “*An Unexpected Monument,*” *OCULUS* is the elaborate creation of 300 mosaic eyes inlaid along the tile walls of the station.



The images of *Oculus* at the website of artists Kristin Jones and Andrew Ginzel do little to assuage the heaviness that the initial discomfort elicits. Photographs reminiscent of the movie, “Ghost” display the tiled images of the eyes of 300 New Yorkers, encouraged by the artists to show their “divinity” during the initial photographic stages of the design.

The one million, eight-hundred thousand tesserae that comprise the global “heart” of the mandala are intended to create a sense of “interaction,” contemplation and “dialogue,” but the far greater impression of somber influence is difficult to evade.

Designed in Rome, the 20 x 40 ft. centerpiece of the 1998 MTA commissioned project is a strikingly detailed elliptical glass and stone map of the continents of the earth surrounding a micro mosaic eye “at the center of an ultramarine vortex.”



The description as an “ultramarine vortex” is intriguing given the subsequent events at the World Trade Center site. *Dictionary.com* defines “vortex,” as:

* *a whirling mass of water, esp. one in which a force of suction operates, as a whirlpool.*

* *a whirling mass of air, esp. on in the form of a visible column or spiral, as a tornado.*

* *whirling mass of fire, flame, etc.*

* *state of affairs likened to a whirlpool for violent activity, irresistible force, etc. something regarded as drawing into its powerful current everything that surrounds it: the vortex of war.*

The description which accompanies ***Oculus*** would have remained innocuous in a pre-911 world. But “monuments” such as these, celebrated in retrospect, do cause one to wonder if the seeds might have been planted in advance, into human consciousness before actually taking place, sending a ripple into time, both past and future. Does art, in visual, literary and auditory expression unconsciously see events before they happen?

On April 20, 2009, the 119th anniversary of the birth of Adolf Hitler, the first German Pope in 500 years and a past which included service within the Nazi Regime, Benedict XVI visited Ground Zero.



Praying on a yellow brick tarp, the former Reich auxiliary anti-aircraft corps enrollee, Joseph Ratzinger may well have been aware of the unusual artwork in the subway station below.



It is unlikely however, that the theme of the mass celebrated later in the day at Yankee Stadium could have escaped notice.



The *Oculus*, never blinking, continues to watch from below the vanished traces of two towering columns collapsed in an hour of violent activity which drew the world into an increasingly consuming vortex of war.

Have the Valkyries been dispatched from *Vahalla*, the center of the earth, to begin another ride to satisfy their dark gods of war? Will these spirits of death rest once more in the halls of Agatha before continuing for their final ride: this time for *Ragnarök*, the final battle of the gods?

Sue Bradley, September, 2010

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The Unseen Host

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