



WAGNER
SOCIETY
nsw

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MARCH 2013

CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF RICHARD WAGNER

WAGNER QUARTERLY

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2013.

This is to be a very big year for Wagner lovers the world over. On 22 May 1813, in Leipzig, Johanna Wagner gave birth to her ninth child, a boy initially baptised as Wilhelm Richard. Who was to know that this boy was to become one of the great musical geniuses of all time, and that by the time he died nearly 70 years later, he would have changed the face of opera in particular, and music in general?

It is barely possible to count the number of Wagner festivals and/or Ring Cycles to be performed at various places in the world this year. It would certainly not be possible to attend all of them, no matter how dedicated a Wagnerian one was. And we in Australia are doing our bit, with the three Melbourne Ring Cycles at the end of the year, and the concert performance of *The Flying Dutchman* in Sydney in July.

As most of you will know, the Society conducted a Ring workshop on 9 and 10 February at the conference centre attached to the Willoughby Uniting Church. 180 people attended, most of them being members of the Society. It turned out to be an excellent venue, with plenty of space for the participants, both in the lecture room itself and in the adjoining foyers where we repaired during

the breaks. The full title of the workshop was: "Forging Meaning out of Music: Heritage, Complexity and Vision of the Ring." It was presented by Dr Antony Ernst and introduced by Lyndon Terracini Artistic Director of Opera Australia. To describe it as a spectacular success would be an understatement. Antony was on his feet – literally – for well over ten hours over the two days. He provided

PRESIDENT'S REPORT *Continued page 4*

THIS ISSUE:

ANTONY ERNST SEMINAR - P. 5

Report and Responses

SYDNEY SYMPHONY - P. 7

Wagner Lectures 2013

TEATRO COLÓN RING REVIEW - P. 10

Dr Lourdes St George

WAGNER BOOK REVIEWS - P. 12

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP - P. 26 RENEWAL FORM



Dr Antony Ernst and Committee Member Colleen Chesterman



Opera Australia Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini – the opening session

STOP PRESS

- 1: Wagner and Marschner Recital – Fairies and Vampires – 17 March – See back page.
- 2: Sydney Symphony Wagner Lectures 2013 – SPECIAL OFFER – See page 6
- 3: EXTENDED: Offer from Inbooks of books on Wagner at Special Price – details inside.
- 4: Special Offer on Wagner-related CDs, DVDs & Blu-Rays from Universal Music – details inside.

FOR YOUR DIARY

2013

Sat. 13 & Sun. 14 April (and 18 April at Dendys)	<i>Parsifal</i> – Metropolitan Opera production	Cremorne Orpheum, Chauvel & Dendy Newtown & Opera Quays
15, 17, 19, 20 April	Sydney Chamber Opera: <i>Climbing Toward Midnight</i> . Sponsored by Wagner Society in NSW: Jack Sydmonds will conduct from the piano. The director is Netta Yashchin, who directed SCO's <i>Notes from Underground</i> . The cast is: Mitchell Riley (<i>Parsifal</i>) and Lucinda Deacon (<i>Kundry</i>)	Parade Theatre Kensington 8PM
May	<i>Wagner Licht</i> Exhibition opening	
20 and 22 July	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> – starring Eric Owens – SSO concert performances	Sydney Opera House
31 July and 1, 2 August	Extracts from <i>Meistersinger</i> and <i>Die Walküre</i> and the Sydney premiere of James Ledger's remarkable <i>The Madness and Death of King Ludwig</i> (31 July and 1 August only)	Sydney Opera House
7, 9, 10 August	<i>Wesendonck Lieder</i> – orchestrated by Felix Mottl	Sydney Opera House
25 August	<i>Swords and Storms. Concert by David Corcoran; accompanist Bradley Gilchrist</i>	Mosman Art Gallery 2PM
18, 19, 20, 21 September	The Ring – An Orchestral Adventure – arranged de Vlieger	Sydney Opera House 8PM
14, 19, 21 September - 7.30pm, 17 September - 6.00pm	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> – Concert performance in Wellington, New Zealand	St James Theatre
September	<i>Sydney Eisteddfod: awards for Wagnerian and German repertoire. Sponsored by Wagner Society in NSW</i>	
5, 10, 12 October - 7.30pm, 8 October - 6.30pm	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> – Concert performance in Wellington, New Zealand, Auckland, New Zealand	ASB Theatre, Aotea Centre
Nov-December 2013	THE RING CYCLE – Melbourne: Cycle 1: November 18 to 25. Cycle 2: November 27 to December 4. Cycle 3: December 6 to 13.	Melbourne Opera Theatre
5–8 December 2013	RING CYCLE SYMPOSIUM – program still being developed	University of Melbourne

Opera Australia has created a new website for its Melbourne Ring Cycle, including a process for registering your application for tickets, if you haven't qualified for other ticketing arrangements: http://melbourneringcycle.com.au/visit_melbourne.

MEETINGS DATES & COMING EVENTS

DATE	COMING EVENTS 2013 Event starting times may vary. Please check the schedule for details Some events may be subject to change and further detail in the next newsletter	TIME & LOCATION
10 MARCH	<i>Climbing Towards Midnight</i> - Jack Symonds' composition referencing <i>Parsifal Act 2</i> - Louis Garrick & Jack Symonds, Sydney Chamber Opera – an introduction to the new work sponsored by the Wagner Society in NSW.	Goethe Institut 2PM
17 MARCH	Faeries and Vampyres: Concert by Bradley Cooper and Sarah-Ann Walker; accompanist Bradley Gilchrist	Mosman Art Gallery 2PM
14 APRIL	Dr David Schwartz (composer, countertenor & specialist on Yiddish theatre) - <i>Psychological Motivation in The Ring</i> .	Goethe Institut 2PM
22 MAY	2013 SPECIAL EVENT: Wagner 200th Birthday dinner	TBC
26 MAY	Wagner Society AGM with Special Musical Event - concert by singer Luke Stoker with accompanist Bradley Gilchrist	Goethe Institut 2PM
30 JUNE	Tony Legge, OA, Opera Australia's Assistant Music Director – on <i>Bayreuth Career</i>	Goethe Institut 2PM
14 JULY	2013 SPECIAL EVENT: Riding the Storm: Seminar on <i>The Flying Dutchman</i>	Goethe Institut: 0930-1700
11 AUGUST	Lisa Gasteen – Professor of Opera at Queensland Conservatorium: Preparing for Major Wagnerian Roles	Goethe Institut 2PM
8 SEPTEMBER	Neil Armfield's Ring Adventure - Director of Opera Australia's 2013 Ring Cycle in Melbourne	Goethe Institut 2PM
6 OCTOBER	Susan Bullock – Melbourne's Brünnhilde – and Richard Berkeley-Steele – Melbourne's Loge: <i>Singing Wagner</i>	Goethe Institut 2PM

Advice about changes to the Program will be emailed to people who have given their email addresses to the Society's Webmaster; the latest updates will also be available on the Society's webpage: www.wagner.org.au. Admission to each event will be \$20 a Member, and \$25 per non-Member, unless otherwise indicated.

Goethe-Institut address 90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)

COMMITTEE 2012 - 2013

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amazing insights into the Ring Cycle and its background, which were entirely new to many of us, but which, the moment he pointed them out, seemed so obvious. Similarly, he made connections within the various Ring operas of which many of us had never thought. Moreover, he did all of this without recourse to any notes. The whole workshop was delivered on an apparently completely impromptu basis. His delivery was always clear, and was laced with some wonderful anecdotes and a great deal of humour. At the end he received a lengthy standing ovation - something I had never previously seen at a seminar or workshop of this nature. Our only regret is that it was not recorded. And given that Antony spoke without recourse to notes, there is now no complete record of the event. I took a number of notes, and my summary of Antony's presentation is set out later in this newsletter.

Having started on such a high note, we have a great deal to live up to during the course of this year. I am confident that we will maintain the extremely high standard that has now been set. A full list of our forthcoming events and concerts is set out later in this newsletter. As you can see, a major centrepiece will be our birthday dinner on the evening of 22nd May. It would be very helpful if we could get an idea as to the number of people who would like to attend this dinner. If you would like to come, I would be most grateful if you would email the Society through the website email address, indicating your interest, and saying how many people will probably be attending with you.

At our next meeting, on 10 March, Louis Garrick and Jack Symonds of Sydney Chamber Opera will be telling us about their forthcoming opera "Climbing towards Midnight", based on the relationship between Parsifal and Kundry. The Society has been offered 20 free seats for the first night of the opera on 15 April, and we are proposing to allocate them to members who attend the next meeting and win them in a "draw". So if you are interested in going to the opera (which I think sounds fascinating), I strongly suggest you come to the meeting on 10 March.

I do not like to end this letter on a downward note, but I am afraid that the news from Bayreuth is not good. It now turns out that the German government, which is the major sponsor of the festival, has insisted that ticket allocations to Wagner Societies should cease. Why it has taken the authorities so long to pass on this news, and why we were originally given grounds for optimism, remains a mystery. But unless something unexpected happens in the future, it would seem that we will no longer be receiving tickets from the Bayreuth box office. The Friends of Bayreuth have allocated us two tickets to all seven operas this year, and there is every reason to expect that this pattern will continue indefinitely.

I wish you all a very happy, healthy and contented Wagner bicentenary.

NEW IMAGE FOR SOCIETY

by Michael Day

In the last newsletter, our President Jane Mathews credited me with initiating the project for the new image for the Wagner Society in NSW. The project was run by UTS Shopfront, which encourages community access to the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). The staff "link community organisations to UTS's knowledges, skills, resources and professional expertise to do community-initiated projects and community-engaged research with real social benefit."

Our application for this free expertise was initiated by committee member Colleen Chesterman, who knew about the programs; she and Peter Murray wrote a proposal for students to update the Wagner Society image across all our communications: letterhead, membership cards, flyers, newsletter, web-page and so on. The Committee wanted a clear, modern image, one that would appeal to young audiences. The project was one accepted by the School of Design, which enables groups of final year students to experience working with clients from community groups. I joined the liaison group after my election to the Committee.

During the semester during which the students worked on the designs we also involved Jane Mathews, Terence Watson and John Studdert. We were presented with 4 possible logos and unanimously selected the one you now see. For their commitment and professionalism we would like to thank Pauline O'Loughlin, Director of Shopfront, Ivana Gabrielle Gattegno, the tutor and the four students: Reece Grogan, Holly Mooney, Povi Pullinen and Kael Xu, who contributed so much skill and enthusiasm to the project.

PATRON:

SIMONE YOUNG AM

HONORARY LIFE

Mr RICHARD KING

MEMBERS:

Prof MICHAEL EWANS

Mr HORST HOFFMAN

Mr JOSEPH FERFOGLIA

ANTONY ERNST SEMINAR – 9-10 FEBRUARY 2013

BRIEF SUMMARY OF ANTONY ERNST PRESENTATION ON THE RING

by Jane Mathews

This is a brief summary, taken from notes I made of Antony Ernst's fascinating workshop: "Forging meaning out of music: heritage, complexity and vision of the Ring." Antony started his presentation by pointing out that, at 40, he was precisely the same age as Wagner was when he started composing the music for *Rheingold*, (having already written the libretti for all four operas). Antony then set out some of the massive changes which have taken place over the last 40 years, in parallel with those which occurred in the first 40 years of Wagner's life, between 1813 and 1853. During those years, Wagner's home towns of Leipzig and Dresden were transformed by the industrial revolution from semi-rural havens to ugly and polluted factory centres. As Antony put it, nature was no longer being used as a resource, but as a tool in man's quest for power.

This was the background in which Wagner created these epic works. At the time he was also heavily influenced by Ludwig Feuerbach. The latter believed that, far from God creating man, man had created god, and attributed to him our own most desired qualities (immortality, eternal love etc). Antony also pointed out that Wagner was the first protestant opera composer, and he illustrated how this had significantly influenced his three earlier operas.

This was, in the briefest of summaries, the background set by Antony when he started to discuss the individual operas, commencing of course with *Rheingold*.

As Antony said, the gap between the end of *Lohengrin* and the first bars of *Rheingold* is the gap of an age. No one had ever previously written an opera about the world. Wagner went back to basics in this music, in order to make the beginning of *Rheingold* the beginning of his world. This beginning, with its swelling E flat major chord, served to epitomise primeval nature, also indicated by Erda's motif. If you invert Erda's motif you have the motif of the downfall of the gods, most prominent at the end of *Götterdämmerung*, which indicates the world going back to nature.

Also on motifs, Antony emphasised how the motif of Alberich taking the ring is a darker (minor key) version of the Valhalla motif, so that they are both on the same continuum. This ring motif, turned upside down, later became the motif attached to Alberich's curse on the ring. Through his curse, Alberich bound himself to the ring just as much as he bound the others who were to possess or covet it later in the drama. Antony described Wotan as a projection of the human need for order. In his descent to Nibelheim at the beginning of Scene 3, we see, for the first time, the hellish scene of over-industrialisation that was behind the whole work in the first place.

Finally in relation to *Rheingold*, Antony described Wagner as asking where power and legitimacy come from. Wotan's

power derived from his spear, but as we later learn in *Götterdämmerung*, through gaining the spear he had caused the destruction of the natural world.

By the beginning of *Walküre*, as Antony described it, the power of creativity has been wrested from nature (together with the ring) so that we are left with a rigid world structure. There is also Wotan's "grand plan" for rectifying the problem. In Act I we see a typically romantic device, where the moods of the characters are reflected in the natural world (thunder with Siegmund's running away, and spring for the new lovers). Also in this Act, life force, creativity and libido are starting to exist where they should not. Wotan needs a "transgressional person" for his plan, and Siegmund transgresses some of the most fundamental rules (hospitality, incest). Hunding and Fricka, on the other hand, are rigid characters who are bound by the rules. The powerful music is extremely sympathetic to Siegmund and Sieglinde, indicating that it is a good thing to act outside the rules in this rigid system.

In Act II Wotan realises that his plan to regain the ring (and thereby to return creativity and flexibility to nature in this rigid, polluted world) is bound to fail. It was never a cunning plan: his power always depended on his abiding by his own rules. The Brünnhilde we first meet in Act II is not a nice person. She is a death goddess, picking up dead bodies after battles, and taking them to Valhalla. She changes completely when Siegmund confronts her with the "frigid joys" of Valhalla, and says that he would rather kill himself and Sieglinde than accompany her there. For the first time she encounters selfless love, and it changes her completely. Wotan's subsequent rage in Act III is the rage of someone who knows that he is in the wrong, but is initially determined to continue his line until the end. But even he eventually realises that this cannot be maintained. He knows that the system is broken and needs to change. He determines that Siegfried will be the person to waken Brünnhilde. The Wotan of his farewell, at the end of the Act, is again a completely different person from the person we saw earlier in the opera. For the first time he has had to think of someone else.

By the beginning of *Siegfried*, Wotan has accepted that whatever will happen, through Brünnhilde and Siegfried, is out of his hands. A world order has been established on a rigid, power-based structure, which is causing everything to crumble. It is ensuring its own destruction. As Antony said, this was a very powerful insight in the 1850s: that any society based on domination, particularly the domination of nature, cannot last. So Wotan is leaving it in Siegfried's hands, he being a child of nature. But in the process Siegfried is doomed. As Antony pointed out, there is a very close relationship between his motif and that of the

curse. Mime was a powerful figure in *Rheingold*: it was he who made the *Tarnhelm*. But by the time of *Siegfried* he could not even make a strong spear. People were losing their powers.

Antony described Siegfried as a difficult character for directors in Acts I and II [a similar point made by Professor Jameson – see report later in the Quarterly - Ed.], partially because he is not a big picture person; he is a “bumptious kid” who just does, and what he needs he gets. He is full of energy, but without purpose. When he forges the sword at the end of Act I, he is channelling his energy for the first time.

Antony described the “forest murmurs” scene in Act II as the centre of the opera. It is the only time that we see Siegfried alone with nature. The subsequent killing of Fafner had been foretold, but not the fact that Siegfried would gain the ring. To do so, he gets his advice from nature.

As we know, Wagner stopped composing for the Ring at the end of Act II of *Siegfried*, only returning to finish the cycle 12 years later. As Antony said, at that point the deterministic, rigid world was disappearing. So the new story starts with Act III. The hero whom Wotan had first thought of at the end of *Rheingold* is finally with us. Act III starts with Wotan calling up Erda to ask her how it will all end. She cannot tell him. Then we have the scene between Wotan (the old order) and Siegfried (the new). When Siegfried shatters Wotan’s spear, he does so with the accusation that he had killed his (Siegfried’s) father. So Wotan’s moral turpitude comes home to roost: that he would kill his own son in order to retain his power. We have reached a stage in the drama where what is morally right is finally prevailing. When Siegfried wakes Brünnhilde her music has changed. She is now a human, and she has to confront her own mortality...something she initially finds very difficult. But Siegfried’s energy makes life worth living, and the opera ends on a very high note.

Götterdämmerung, being the first of the Ring operas for which Wagner wrote the libretto, is in many ways a much more traditional opera than the others, with trios and choruses. But the music is anything but traditional. The complexity and richness of the orchestration and the weaving together of motifs signifies a new maturity. By this time, the world has changed: the gods, led by Wotan, have sidelined themselves. They are not going to stop anything.

Out there in the world, Alberich has followed Wotan’s example, and has begotten a son Hagen who is to obtain the ring for him. Hagen’s sole purpose in life is to get the ring back. So now he and Siegfried have to slog it out. Siegfried is still very naive in the ways of the world, and he is completely taken in by the Gibichungs. He continues to act in the manner that he thinks is correct (although the audience knows it is appalling), displaying emotional and ethical rectitude which Wotan did not have because of his need for power. Nevertheless, by the end of Act I, after he

has posed as Gunther in order to woo Brünnhilde, things really start going off the rails.

The scene between Alberich and Hagen at the beginning of Act II makes it clear, not only that Alberich is Hagen’s father, but that there has been an abusive relationship between them. Alberich has been so obsessed by regaining the ring that he has made his son into a monster. Hagen hates his father for having done this to him, but nevertheless that is the way he is. Then the vassals are called up, and Brünnhilde and Gunther come in. Brünnhilde realises that it was Siegfried who had come to her rock the previous night. But she does not know that it had all been set up by Hagen. She and Siegfried swear the opposite of each other, each with a clear conscience, but one of them is wrong without knowing it. By the end of Act II, Siegfried’s fate is sealed.

During Siegfried’s death scene in Act III he passes the baton to Brünnhilde. She accepts it, and when she re-enters she is a different person. She is no longer a death goddess, nor is she a normal human. She has learnt compassion...

compassion for everyone. And the answer to the question as to what can fix the world’s mess is compassion, namely to put the best interests of the world first and foremost. So she makes the ultimate act of compassion, sacrificing herself so that people can start all over again without the gods standing over them. Ultimately, fire, a force of nature, is used to destroy both her and the gods.

Antony finished his exposition by returning to the overall theme of the works. Wagner needed to tell his audience that we have to change our values: we have to look to the greater good, rather than to our own personal interests. It is a very contemporary message. Indeed there has been a huge resurgence of Ring performances over the last 20 years. This is because, Antony suggests, the things that disturbed Wagner and led to the Ring, have not only continued but have become more burning issues. It is one of the few major works of art which engages with these questions and presents possible solutions.

APPRECIATION - To Committee, Wagner Society of NSW from:

Katie and Vic French: Congratulations to all participating committee members for a truly remarkable weekend. Clearly, those involved in the planning, the preparation and the co-ordination had put everything into it. The venue worked superbly, the registration went like clockwork. All those bits that need to look professional looked professional - right down to the rapid replacement of those confounded batteries in the mike.

Antony was as Antony is: a superb communicator with a gargantuan musical knowledge and understanding. And such a natural technique. True, his ideas were sometimes challenging, however, there was something for everyone over those two days. His introductory ‘What have been our

significant events during the last 40 years - and what was their impact on us?' - was just a knockout. Not one person I spoke to wasn't bowled over by it. Subtle ideas, formerly unseen by many of us, were remarkable revelations. What was unique, and noteworthy, about his Workshop was its consistency, and his ability to give us a rounded, extended and coherent view of the 'Ring'. So many seminars present a delightful selection of topics - their presenters' favourite things - but leave the audience with no clear, overall sense of the work. However, after almost twelve hours, Antony was giving Wagner himself a run for his money. A standing ovation; extended applause a number of times; and one call for an Encore. What more signs of success could there be?

Margaret Suthers: While the glow of the weekend spent in the company of Anthony Ernst is still with me, I just want to send you congratulations on the fantastic workshop that we have just enjoyed at Willoughby. As Jane [Mathews] said in her final address, we expected it to be good but this has

been something special. As the years go by this will be an occasion that will be remembered and all such workshops will be judged in comparison. Those of us there today will realise how lucky we are to have been present at a very special presentation. 10 February 2013.

SEMINAR EVALUATION

Your Committee is keen to assess the response to this significant event in the Society's history. Approximately 70% of the 180 Seminar participants took the time to complete an evaluation form prepared by the Events Subcommittee that organised the Seminar. Preliminary results indicate a very high level of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the Seminar. However, some participants nominated some aspects where improvements could be made. The Committee will shortly discuss the full analysis of the responses and build the results into the organisation of the Society's Dutchman Seminar on 14 July and future events.

SYDNEY SYMPHONY WAGNER LECTURES 2013

Caroline Sharpen, Director of Development with the Orchestra, has forwarded the following invitation to Members of the Wagner Society to attend these Lectures that the Orchestra is putting on in honour of the anniversary year and for all the patrons who will be attending Ring Cycles around the world. For members of the Wagner Society, the Orchestra is offering each lecture for \$30. This includes wine and canapés.

LECTURE 1: WAGNER AND SCHOPENHAUER - Tuesday 25 June: 6-8pm at The Studio, Sydney Opera House.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) was a pessimistic representative of German Romanticism, which is the name given to a style of literature, art, philosophy and music of the late 18th and early 19th centuries characterised by freedom from form and structure, an emphasis on will, imagination and individuality. Schopenhauer believed that the world is a personal fantasy: reality is Will, a distorting and covert force which undermines rationality and personal happiness. We can, however, escape from the tyranny of the Will through aesthetic contemplation. Schopenhauer was Richard Wagner's favourite philosopher: they both embraced and promoted the idea that art generally, and music especially, has the power to transcend the tedium and pain of everyday life.

LECTURE 2: WAGNER AND NIETZSCHE - Tuesday 2 July: 6-8pm at the Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House.

When Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) met Wagner in 1868 he discovered their love of the philosophy of Schopenhauer. Nietzsche agreed with Schopenhauer and Wagner that the world of the ancient Greeks had achieved

a remarkable synthesis of Dionysian and Apollonian values which sublimated the former's barbaric impulses into the latter's classical form and structure. But the delicate balance between man's ferocious drives and classical harmony has been destroyed by Plato, Christianity and socialism. Wagner's music dramas, he argued, offer the possibility of a rebirth of Greek art and thus a solution of the problem of the suffering and absurdity of life. When he believed that Wagner had embraced Christianity, he turned against him as he had turned against Schopenhauer's pessimism.

ROBERT SPILLANE

Professor Robert Spillane teaches and writes on philosophy and psychology at the Graduate School of Management, Macquarie University, Sydney. He has written 14 books, numerous journal articles and a play - 'Entertaining Executives' - which was first performed at the Mermaid Theatre, London in 2006. From 2003 to 2011 he delivered more than 130 lectures on philosophy and psychology for the Art Gallery Society of NSW. In 2006 he received the international Thomas Szasz Award from the Center for Independent Thought in New York for his contributions to the cause of human liberty.

We are most grateful for the opportunity to have these included in the Wagner Society's Quarterly. **Bookings can be made through the SSO box office on 8215 4600.**

ALLEGORY AND DRAMATURGY IN WAGNER'S RING: LECTURE BY FREDRIC JAMESON

by Liz Jacka & Colleen Chesterman

In a wide-ranging and stimulating public lecture at the University of New South Wales on Tuesday 4 December, Professor Frederic Jameson provided new insights into Wagner's intentions in *The Ring*. Jameson, who is currently William A. Lane Professor in the Program in Literature and Romance Studies at Duke University (Durham, North Carolina), is the author of fundamental works in the cultural analysis of western society, notably *Postmodernism: The Logic of Late Capitalism*. In recent years Professor Jameson has turned his formidable intellect to the study of Wagner's dramaturgy. Not only has he published stimulating essays in European and US journals, he has also completed his own translation of the libretto of the four operas. Published by Schott, these use antique forms in an attempt to represent Wagner's verse form *Stabreim*.

Jameson began by pointing out that aside from its musical genius, Wagner's Ring cycle remains one of the most staggering achievements of the 19th century stage and has continued to stimulate innovative dramaturgy during the present Wagner revival. He aimed to focus the lecture on two interrelated topics: the relationship between the figure of Wotan and political fields of force; and the role of Siegfried as a way into Wagnerian theatrical psychology — the composer/dramatist's specific 'system' of thinking psychological motivation. In fact he ranged much further afield.

His ruminations were provoked by Kaspar Bech Holten's 2010 postmodern 'Copenhagen Ring', which he contrasted with what he saw as the 'modernist' politically driven Pierre Boulez/Patrice Chéreau Bayreuth production of 1976.

He showed a startling moment in Holten's *Das Rheingold* where Wotan cuts off Alberich's arm to obtain the 'Ring,' represented in this production as a coiled arm bracelet. This provoked a visceral reaction in Jameson's audience, expressed in collective gasps and squeaks, which provided a convenient segue into one of Jameson's key ideas, namely, the distinction between emotion and affect.

Jameson's argument is that emotions belong in the realm of the mental, but affect is bodily; emotions are reified or alienated by being named as separate things, affects are not named. He cited other postmodern scholars who have theorised affect, including Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Gilles Deleuze. He also drew on Immanuel Kant's description of feelings as bodily states. He suggested a change in the nineteenth century between Honoré de Balzac, whose descriptions convey meanings, to Gustave Flaubert and Charles Baudelaire where affect becomes more generalised and non-temporal. Jameson described Italian opera as emotions expressed one after the other; the aria is the expression of one emotion and then it

stops, to be replaced by recitative or another aria which expresses a different emotion. In contrast, Wagner's later operas engage affect — 'the Tristan chord is the beginning of affect on the stage;' the 'endless melody' of the Ring registers shifts in affect; affect is shimmer and change (compare this with Wagner's assertion that opera is the art of transition); affect has no temporality, it destroys narrative. These observations seem to go some way towards accounting for the very particular bodily experience one undergoes during a Wagner opera: Jameson talked about the 'body' of the music — the physicality of its timbre.

He also noted that Wagner's orchestra 'flows'; the musical fabric is endless melody with dramatic mood shifts or swings. He compared the succession of motifs to Tolstoy. In focusing on leitmotifs, Jameson rejected Theodor Adorno who described them as 'vulgar, commodified kitsch.' Jameson on the other hand sees leitmotifs as 'the gristle that the music has to spit out;' he pointed out that they both mark past events and things to come.

Jameson's then discussed Friedrich Nietzsche's criticisms of Wagner. As is well-known, Nietzsche was an early admirer of Wagner's work but turned against him in later life. The charge was that, in the struggle between the Dionysian and the Apollonian [impulses in the human psyche], Wagner had chosen the latter. Or, to put it another way, Wagner had chosen Arthur Schopenhauer over Ludwig Feuerbach — in other words, Wagner had forsaken his early attachment to revolution and freedom for a later decadence, resignation and 'sick spirituality'.

Jameson had criticisms himself, chiefly of Wagner's static retellings of the story (which he called 'Gurnemanz moments'). He also emphasised how Wagner had used the conventions of the 19th century family novel; *The Ring* is the struggle between two families — Wotan's and Alberich's. Indeed he quoted Nietzsche's aphorism that Wagner's heroines 'all turn into Madame Bovary.'

He raised the question of interpreting endings. Is the end of the Ring the end of the world or just of the gods? There are telling differences between directors' interpretations. In Chéreau's, the surviving protagonists turn to the audience to signify the beginning of the human era. In Holten's, Brünnhilde survives and has a baby.

Jameson spent much time on the character of Siegfried, making the perhaps surprising observation that Siegfried is hopeless as a character, 'little more than a casting error,' one that Jameson reported as being a common opinion among directors of *The Ring*. Indeed he quoted Chéreau as saying that the role was 'mal écrit.' Siegfried has three

features that distinguish him from other characters: one, he is the boy who knows no fear; second, he is ignorant about both himself (his origins) and the world (especially sexual difference) and third, he has freedom. Siegfried combines naïve stupidity with an elusive sense that something is expected of him. His role in the drama is of course defined by Wotan's project, which itself is elusive. In *Das Rheingold*, it seems to be the project of constructing a home for the gods, but as soon as Valhalla is completed (at what terrible cost) it becomes an empty achievement and a second project is devised – 'Wotan's Mighty Thought' - that of finding a hero who knows no fear and who will redeem the world. But really the project, according to Jameson, is freedom and that of course is paradoxical and self-contradictory, as the whole dilemma of The Ring makes clear – because you can't have a free

hero who also knows what his task (set from outside himself) is.

Jameson's paper rambled discursively between ideas, some of which were very stimulating, but which required a more considered reading. It is interesting to explore on the web his earlier writing on Wagner, such as an article entitled *Regieoper, or Eurotrash?* in *New Left Review* 64, July-Aug 2010. We were hoping to get a copy of the paper from which he was reading for detailed consideration of concepts he briefly introduced, such as 'eternal return' or the difference between *Wissen* (knowledge/ Erda) and *Zinnen* (new temporality/ money/ gold vs nature). Professor Jameson has indicated that it will appear in *Modernist Cultures*, published by Edinburgh Press, in September/ November 2013.

MELBOURNE RING CYCLE – UPDATE – HOUSTON GRAND OPERA TO STAGE ITS FIRST RING CYCLE STARTING 2013-2014 SEASON – but not the Melbourne Ring Cycle, it appears!

[Written By The Wagnerian on Saturday, 19 January 2013]
 "Houston Grand Opera [HGO] has announced that they will be presenting the Valencia Ring over four consecutive seasons starting with Rheingold during 2013-2014. This will be HGO's first ring cycle and also the first time the La Fura dels Baus ring cycle will have been performed in the USA."

In a brief note "buried" in Opera Australia's Melbourne Ring Cycle webpages, is "**A Note from Lyndon Terracini on The Melbourne Ring Cycle:**" "I'd like to reassure opera lovers that the recent withdrawal of Houston Grand Opera from Opera Australia's upcoming production of The Ring Cycle, will not effect [sic] the production or the experience in any way. The withdrawal occurred several months ago, and Opera Australia has since re-worked its 2013 budgets to absorb the shortfall represented by this change. The Ring Cycle preparations are well underway, and we are looking forward to a harmonious and spectacular staging that brings together the finest international and Australian artists."

The Wagnerian also reports an interview with Mr Terracini: "Well, the good news is that HGO's dropping of the Melbourne Ring, and the accompanying loss of \$1 Million funding, should not cause any major difficulties, as Opera Australia's artistic director Lyndon Terracini told the Australian today: "*It's disappointing, but in the scheme of things they were a minor partner. The level of financial commitment from Houston was \$1 million*" which he says OA can cover.

But why did HGO drop the project? "*Fundamentally, they were keen to do something different, rather than something that*

we'd done here." However, this seems odd considering HGO are re-staging the Valencia ring - hardly new either in an opera house or even on TV. "Another possible explanation given by *Limelight* revolves around a shift in the relationship between OA and HGO since HGO's Anthony Freud left and was replaced by new CEO Patrick Summers. Artistic differences between both companies have also been rumored. Perhaps HGO did not want an Australian Ring? Who knows...." More worrying, perhaps, is this report in *Limelight* (*Houston Grand Opera drops the Melbourne Ring*, by Clive Paget on Jan 24, 2013): "Rumours have also circulated of artistic difficulties between Armfield and Terracini concerning the conceptual staging of the *Melbourne Ring*."

Material from The Wagnerian:

<http://www.the-wagnerian.com/2013/01/opera-australias-lyndon-terracini-talks.html> and

http://www.melbourneringcycle.com.au/about/behind_the_scenes/news and *Limelight*:

<http://www.limelightmagazine.com.au/Article/329944,houston-grand-opera-drops-the-melbourne-ring.aspx>

TEATRO COLÓN RING REVIEW

by Dr Lourdes St George

I had the great privilege of attending the 7-hour Teatro Colón Ring on 30/11/2012 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The world premiere was held on 27/11/2012. It was a unique and wonderful occasion despite all the dramas on & offstage,

The Teatro Colón (Columbus theatre) boasts a Wagner tradition stretching back nearly 100 years. Opened in 1908, it is now Latin America's biggest opera theatre. The first performance of Wagner was in 1910 and a legendary Ring cycle was directed by Felix Weingartner in 1922. The Teatro has regular German Opera seasons. The Teatro's interior design features a rich scarlet and gold decor. The cupola contains frescoes painted in 1966 by artist Raúl Soldi. The auditorium is horseshoe-shaped, has 2,487 seats (slightly more than the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, London) with standing room for 500 and an orchestral pit for 120 musicians. The stage has an inclination of 3 cm per meter, 35.25 m wide, 34.50 m deep and 48 m high. It includes a spinning disk with a diameter of 20.30 m, which can be electrically activated to spin in any direction and change the scenes quickly. It was closed from 2006 till 2010 for an extensive restoration costing \$100-million, completed by 1,500 workers including 130 professional architects and engineers..

The Colón ring is an adaptation of Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen by the German pianist, conductor and recording executive Cord Garben lasting 7 hours in a single performance. Two of the four planned performances were cancelled, apparently due to a City government budget cuts.

The compacted Ring was done with the support of Katharina Wagner, great granddaughter of the composer and co-director of the Bayreuth Festival, who was due to direct it. That was until her sudden withdrawal in mid-October 2012 claiming (and vigorously denied) that the Colón was not sufficiently advanced with the scenery (the locals also said she had made other commitments). In her place Argentinean Valentina Carrasco (from La Fura dels Baus based in Barcelona) did an amazing job. La Fura dels Baus has an avant-garde approach and the scenographer Carles Berga was also from that group, although the sets were based on the designs of Frank Schlössmann from Katharina Wagner's team. Valentina is currently involved with Sydney Opera House 2013 production of Verdi's a Masked Ball. It should be an exciting production.

Cord Garbens intention, was to eliminate the long discussions, repetitions and other fragments which he felt had little impact on the narrative. He stated: "The current world is another world, in which the value of time is completely different. I always think about the ideas of the young Wagner, I think about his confrontational

and revolutionary spirit. Of course, nothing can be done without courage. But it also takes preparation, knowledge and experience to embrace such a project. However, when one is convinced of something and has the necessary means to do it, then one must do it. And I truly believe in this Ring. But there is something essential to it: interpretations complement with a play, they do not replace it. Therefore, our Colón- Ring will be a complement and not a replacement for the original Ring."

We were presented with the four parts of the Ring, each reduced by more than half, with free champagne and sumptuous hors d'oeuvres during each of the 3 intervals in the beautiful balcony settings of the theatre. To achieve the adaptation, extensive cuts were required, not only to the "narrative" but also to Wagner's glorious music. For example much of the prelude of Siegfried was cut as was that of Gotterdammerung, Donner and Froh were written out of Rheingold, as was Erda, and the Norns from Gotterdammerung. I personally missed the continuity but the edited version was successful in its aims.

The performance started at 2.30 pm with a water projection, the curtain opened to a modern two storey building, which with a tiered platform and a mini obelisk on a revolving stage served each successive scene. The Rhine-maidens were depicted as washerwomen, Alberich was dressed as a normal person, Fafner was wheelchair bound, Sieglinde was enslaved with a rope around her neck, and Hagen dispatched Siegfried with a golf club. There were projections of a boat during Siegfried's Rhine journey and the succession of images of people such as Mother Theresa and Che Guevara during his funeral march.

The Austrian conductor Roberto Paternostro, who had been musical director of the Israel Chamber Orchestra since 2010 and previously assistant to Herbert von Karajan in Berlin (1978-1984), was also a late replacement for Julien Salemkour. The orchestral musicians changed over halfway as it would have been too strenuous. Roberto had a well measured pace and stamina to amazingly last the length of the production. The acoustics and sound produced was so poetic that I could hear the different leitmotifs clearly but I am a Ring cycle novice with the Adelaide Ring 2004 being my first cycle attendance.

The cast appeared mostly in their clothes of the day, with the exception of Wotan (Jukka Rasilainen) in a military costume, possibly representing Juan Domingo Perón (1895 – 1974) an Argentinean military officer and politician president whose 2nd wife was the popular Eva Duarte Perón. A world record was made by soprano Linda Watson as Brünnhilde who sang brilliantly with consistently strong voice in the longest opera part. Watson is known as the first

Bayreuth-Brünnhilde of the 21st century. She is on more official recordings of the Ring than any other singer.

The other principals were of high standard, with Leonid Zakhoshaev as an arrogant and boorish Siegfried. Stig Andersen was musical in his much reduced Siegmund and Marion Ammann as Sieglinde. Other notable performances were the raincoat and bespectacled Loge of Stefan Heibach, the athletic Mime of Kevin Connors, and the beautiful dark bass of Australian Daniel Sumegi singing successively as Fasolt, Hunding and Hagen. The Teatro Colón chorus was well directed by Peter Burian. There were multiple standing ovations at the finale.

Argentina's history has been tortuous with independence and civil wars and military coups. It is the eighth-largest country in the world by land area and the largest among Spanish-speaking nations. Military intervention in the political sphere was common in Argentina since the 1930s. Torture and violence were used as mechanisms to control political conflicts or to deter the actions of opposition. The 1976 coup, led by General Jorge Videla, with the "Dirty War" resulted in up to 30,000 desaparecidos (people kidnapped and killed by the military during the years of the junta). Some 500 babies born in jail were also taken by

the military, which was emphasized in the performance. The silent marches of their mothers (Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo) are a well-known image of Argentines suffering. Thankfully those harsh times are fading and Buenos Aires is trying to return to its glory days. It is one of the world's most beautiful cities. I appreciated and was moved by the director Valentina 's portrayal of her city's history in this Wagner Ring adaptation.

The German TV station Deutsche Welle (DW) is celebrating the upcoming 200th anniversary of Richard Wagner's birth on May 22, 2013 with the TV and DVD production of The Colón Ring with a special multimedia project. The DW production consists of a multi-camera recording and a documentary film on the unusual making of the production. DW Director General Erik Bettermann stated "The 200th anniversary of the artist's birth is one of the defining cultural events of 2013 - and therefore it is also at the center of the German international broadcaster's cultural reporting."

If a recording is produced, don't miss it. THANK YOU Buenos Aires

For more information, see the Teatro Colón website: http://www.teatrocolon.org.ar/en/index.php?id=colon_ring

FRANK CASTORF'S BAYREUTH RING CYCLE 2013

Castorf: "Bayreuth ist für mich Grenzüberschreitung" – Bayreuth is for me a Transgression!

"There will be a revolving stage. There will be film. But there won't be any cuts or rewrites. Renowned deconstructionist Frank Castorf hesitated to accept a job where he wouldn't be allowed to tinker with the script, as is his usual practice. But conductor Kirill Petrenko and the two Wagner sisters stood firm. So a clause has been included in Castorf's contract for directing Bayreuth's 2013 Ring cycle - Wagner's words and music remain intact.

"Interviewed in Die Welt, the self-styled "Teutonic taskmaster" explains his early ideas (full report in German at http://www.welt.de/print/die_welt/kultur/article13873163/Bayreuth-ist-fuer-mich-Grenzüberschreitung.html). He describes the story as "a journey towards the gold of our times - oil" which will start "some time after the Second World War". East and West will be brought together on a revolving stage, which has already been designed by [designer] Aleksandar Denic. One set will be Berlin Alexanderplatz, representing postmodern socialism. As the stage turns, Wall Street will appear. Castorf isn't aiming for clear conclusions, and admits he doesn't know yet exactly where he's going, but he says he's having fun finding out. Castorf is also quoted as saying that he would "... no longer have the opportunity to cut the Wagner material with

something else." [One wonders what he might have brought in to contrast or oppose the narrative and/or imagery of the Ring Cycle! – Ed.]

"Castorf is either an interesting choice or a desperate one. A radical deconstructionist, some regard him as an iconoclastic genius, others as a spent force. Having spent his whole life in the theatre, he only turned to opera five years ago. Typically, his *Meistersinger* was cut down, chopped up, and performed - in a theatre - by actors and locals rather than trained opera singers. At least Castorf's past suggests that whatever he creates can't be as deadly dull as the Tankred Dorst production it replaces."

Material is derived from http://intermezzo.typepad.com/intermezzo/ring_cycle/page/2/ and

http://www.welt.de/print/die_welt/kultur/article13873163/Bayreuth-ist-fuer-mich-Grenzüberschreitung.html.

INVESTIGATING WAGNER AND WOMEN: TWO SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS

by Colleen Chesterman

Eva Rieger: *Richard Wagner's Women*, Boydell & Brewer, 2011 and Nila Parly: *Vocal Victories: Wagner's Female Characters from Senta to Kundry*, Museum Tusulanum Press, 2011

In the newsletter of March 2012, the Editor highlighted publication of a new book *Wagner and Women* by Eva Rieger. He asked any interested member to review the book and I put up my hand. Interestingly, a review is timely now as it has been announced that Professor Rieger is one of the international speakers at the seminar *Wagner & Us* to be held at Melbourne University from 6 to 8 December 2013 in conjunction with the Melbourne Ring Cycle.

Professor Rieger is an Emeritus Professor of Historical Musicology at the University of Bremen (and from the evidence of the photo on the back cover a 'cellist'). The book was originally published in German in 2009, and has been beautifully translated into English by Chris Walton. Rieger situates herself from the first page as a 'feminist', but emphasises her distance from early feminist writings of the 1970s, which both sought 'lost' women composers and criticised 'misogynistic' works of art. She recalls that Wagner was seen as 'the worst of them all' particularly in the light of his subjugation of Cosima Wagner, described in her then recently-published diaries. Nonetheless she acknowledges that his music remained compelling. So over 30 years later, Professor Rieger has produced a book that attempts to analyse Wagner's engagement with women. In doing so she argues for the importance of investigating not only Wagner's works, both theoretical writings and music, but also the tremendous changes taking place in the society in which he lived and from which his ideas were formed. Antony Ernst focused on the impact of such changes in his recent workshop [see report in this Quarterly – Ed.].

Central to Rieger's thesis in this book, however, is Wagner's 'eventful' life and the significant role played by his three central relationships, with Minna Wagner, Mathilde Wesendonck and Cosima Wagner, all of them related to his need to have devoted attention. She also describes numerous affairs reflecting his powerful sexual drive. She presents sympathetically the development of his marriage to Minna, his initial passion for her, the atmosphere of the theatrical communities leading to his flirtation with 'free love' and Minna's growing desperation at Richard's extravagance and inability to establish a settled life. She describes the depth of his love for Mathilde and how it was sublimated because of their decision not to consummate the relationship. She suggests this had a critical impact on his depiction of Brünnhilde and particularly Isolde, who express desire that Rieger says was 'openly revolutionary' (p. 83).

Rieger analyses the representation of gender differences in characters and the way Wagner's music reflects these – from quite simple examples in instrumentation (aggressive brass for males, melodic woodwinds and harps for women) to more sophisticated treatment of the conflicts experienced by his

female characters in attempting to reconcile the clashing societal constructions in which they operate.

Wagner was driven by a wish to find his 'ideal woman,' to give him care, inspiration and redemption, a role fulfilled by Cosima. Rieger suggests that Brünnhilde is little more than the will of Wotan on one hand and as a loving woman little more than a redeemer (p. 164-7), as 'idealisation brings with it degradation'. Yet she implicitly contradicts this description by talking about the power in Brünnhilde's arias, 'large leaps, great intensity, compelling declamation' – power which I believe we feel in our bodies during the great final arias of both Isolde and Brünnhilde. Indeed it could be said that Brünnhilde, by throwing the ring away and flinging herself into the fire, creates the conditions for a new society, one not dominated by power and is therefore the active element in the denouement.

I have another problem in Rieger's analysis, which is her use of essentialist notions of masculinity and femininity, particularly when she discusses the 'feminisation' of male figures. She suggests Siegmund abandons his role as a 'hero' because of his love for Sieglinde and his resulting 'feminisation.' She also suggests that Wagner, suffering the loss of Mathilde Wesendonck, approvingly presents Hans Sachs renouncing his relationship with Eva, though this leads to him becoming 'feminised.' Surely, however, the later scenes of *Die Meistersinger* demonstrate that Sachs' renunciation is based on strength; the *Wahn* monologue is a powerful denunciation of society's delusions and the praise of Sachs by the townsfolk construct him as a powerful and influential figure, encouraging new models of culture. Rieger could abandon such rigid interpretation of gender roles, which make some of her interpretations overly mechanistic, and develop a more nuanced understanding of the fluidity and ambiguity of the categories of 'masculine' and 'feminine,' a feature of recent feminist scholarship.

In an interesting coincidence, 2011 also saw the publication of another book on Wagner and women, *Vocal Victories* by Nila Parly. This differs in significant ways from Rieger's book as it does not look at any biographical details, instead focusing on an analysis of Wagner's major female characters, in terms of the plots and libretti, but most particularly in an analysis of the music. This is detailed and full of information in that Parly was a trained opera singer before entering academe.

I found two things problematic with this book. First, it is Parly's Ph.D. thesis and shows this background by a lengthy analysis of the 'literature.' As the thesis was presented in 2006, it does not deal with Rieger's book; but as the latter was published in German in 2009, it is a shame that some consideration of it could not have been included in the book, as it would have been an important source. Second, the tradition of theses means that discussion and rebuttal of other theoretical positions is very thorough, making the book rather longer than it needs to be.

Importantly, however, Parly's training as a singer gives her great traction in analysing the effect of the music on listeners. She argues that Wagner's leading female characters create and shape the most significant music. This goes beyond what she analyses as the 'conjuring' skill of Senta and Elsa in dreaming (creating, singing) their ideal heroes. The major female characters shape the stories because of the strength of Wagner's vocal writing for them. Parly is excellent in identifying a musical motif that creates or strengthens an overall development in the opera, in particular the powerful catharses of Isolde and Brünnhilde. For example, in discussing the *Liebestod* and what Wagner called its 'endless melody,' Parly quotes Wagner's fascination with Bach's use of polyphony in creating this effect. Parly passionately argues that Isolde is not suffering, but controlling the music, the leitmotifs and the resolution.

The overall structure of the book is odd, in that within each chapter, chronologically dealing with the ten major operas, Parly presents her own interpretation first, then summarises other theorists, criticizing their views, then provides a closer-knit analysis. Often the analysis of the music is separate, quite detailed and not integrated. Unfortunately, I do not read music and therefore found it rather difficult to appreciate long sections analysing Wagner's leitmotifs and musical patterns. But despite the repetition I would recommend this book to those who have these strengths.

These two books make important steps in Wagner research and enable us to see how his theoretical works, libretti and music combine to present an important step forward in seeing how his female characters contribute to his overall creation of musical masterworks that still speak so powerfully to us.

GREAT, GRAND & FAMOUS OPERA HOUSES ...WHERE ART AND DRAMA MEET by Mike Day

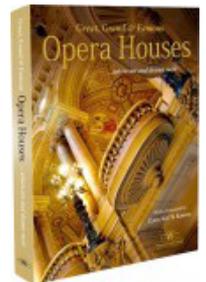
Presented by Fritz Gubler with a Forward by Dame Kiri Te Kanawa; An imprint of Arbon Publishing Pty Ltd, Crows Nest, Australia 2012

This is a very impressive enterprise. Written and published in Sydney by a team of 11 very experienced writers, musicians, theatre practitioners and designers, with chief consultant Mofatt Oxenbould AM, it provides a substantial amount of information about the early history and recent personalities and productions of 70 of the world's most important opera houses. It also includes many pages on the development of the art form in various countries plus it details all the elements, skills and understanding needed to bring an artistic vision to an audience in a dedicated purpose built space – impresarios, writers, composers, singers, conductors, musicians, directors, voice coaches, set and costume designers, make-up artists, architects, stage mechanics, acousticians, etc, etc. Newcomers to opera will find this very useful to further their understanding of the enormous resources and dedication needed.

Experienced and well-travelled opera goers will be gratified and fascinated to read detailed information and anecdotes about familiar stars and performances, plus facts about the buildings, their architects, dates of construction and reconstruction, and much more, for their favourite theatres. Some may be disappointed that a particular theatre wasn't included but the book is already bursting with treasures. There are several I was unfamiliar with that are now on my "bucket list" and I was very pleased that the Grande Theatre in Bordeaux is documented – its restrained limestone neoclassic style exterior and foyer are superb. Perhaps Latvia's Riga Opera House should have been included and I would have liked a mention of the magnificent Valetta Royal Opera House in Malta, destroyed in WW2, but the editors obviously had to draw a line somewhere to keep the size manageable – it's already too bulky to read in bed. As an architect I would have found useful the inclusion of basic plans and sections of the most important houses, particularly Palais Garnier and the Bayreuth Festspielhouse, to give a sense of the scale and

spatial complexity of these extraordinary constructions.

The book is handsomely bound and beautifully printed in full colour with many wonderful photos and artworks but as a designer (and older reader) I found the page layouts rather busy and cramped, with too many decorative flourishes, and would have preferred much more white space to give the eye a rest. However these are small criticisms for a book that I found so delightful. I thoroughly recommend it as both an impressive coffee table book and also a useful reference, as it is thoroughly indexed and referenced, with a comprehensive glossary and bibliography.



I think I can speak for all lovers of opera (and lovers of great architecture) when I say that it is the passion on display that attracts us to go to the opera house and the best thing about this book is the obvious passion and love as well as deep practical knowledge that all 12 contributors have shown in putting the work together. If I had never been to an opera before I would certainly want to go after reading this book.

Mike Day is a committee member of the Wagner Society in NSW, a qualified Architect and Lighting Designer and Lecturer in Stagecraft and Lighting in the School of Design, University of Technology Sydney. He has designed operas for the Aldeburgh Festival and Kent Opera and was one of the instigators of the Vivid Sydney Smart Light Festival in 2009.

This profusely illustrated coffee table book has entries by members Leona Geeves, Paulo Montoya, Victoria Watson, amongst others - ED. SPECIAL OFFER for Wagner Society members. Order and receive \$20 off the RRP (\$79.99) + FREE SHIPPING Simply visit www.arbonpublishing.com or call 02 9437 0438 and use the code: WAGNERSOCIETY

WAGNER AND THE EROTIC IMPULSE: LAURENCE DREYFUS, AND THE CENTRALITY OF LOVE: BARRY EMSLIE

by Terence Watson

Both books are packed with interesting observations about and insights into Wagner's attitude to that very large subject: Love. Dreyfus, perhaps wisely, limits to the "erotic" his analysis of Wagner's ideas, the reception of Wagner's ideas and his artistic portrayals of love, and the actual embodiment of those ideas and attitudes in his artistic works. However, your review came to realise that "erotics," too, has its definitional problems, of which more shortly. Emslie, in contrast, specifically eschews any attempt at or need for a definition, because, from his loosely post-modern perspective, definitions already presuppose a knowledge or understanding of that which is to be defined. Instead, Emslie opts to evolve an understanding of what love meant to Wagner, in all its glories and inadequacies, by teasing apart his inconsistencies – in his life and his art. Emslie explicitly denies that he seeks to "explode" the subject into its multifarious and inconsistent, even incoherent, bits and pieces.

However, from your reviewer's perspective, both authors' analyses suffer from a lack of clarity about what it is they are analysing. The lack is less problematic in Dreyfus's book, because "erotics" is a somewhat more limited subject than the "love" that Emslie aspires to analyse. However, even Dreyfus is prompted at times to conflate categories, as when he observes that "most writers have steered clear of tackling what has long been blatantly obvious—that Wagner was the first to develop a detailed musical language that succeeded in extended representations of erotic stimulation, passionate ecstasy, and the torment of love." Here we are already offered three descriptions of "love" that may or may not be mutually exclusive: Dreyfus does not sufficiently differentiate, although one quickly picks up the drift through his account of the reaction of people to the incest, the implied sexual acts, the seductions, indeed the sheer physicality of many of Wagner's "love" scenes, accompanied by music specifically constructed not just to underpin the emotions entangled in such scenes, but to enhance even stimulate those emotions in the auditor-viewer.

As is shown by his extended accounts of the reception history of Wagner's operas – among contemporaries and for decades after – the meaning of "erotic" in this discussion has been to a large extent determined by people antagonistic to Wagner's life and works. "Erotic" is defined by *The American College Dictionary* as "of or pertaining to sexual love; amatory;" however, this is not what Dreyfus has in mind. The list of synonyms from the *Doubleday Roget's Thesaurus* further point to the complexity of definitions and the need to be clear about which might apply to Wagner's operas: "amatory, erogenous, aphrodisiac, carnal, fleshly, prurient, sensual, sexy, raunchy (*slang*); "amorous, voluptuous, lustful, libidinous, lewd, lecherous, lascivious, wanton, concupiscent, horny (*slang*)."

It is one of the most interesting (for your reviewer) parts of Dreyfus that the negative synonyms are the sorts of terms used by those who found Wagner's theoretical works, art presentations and life to be offensive, decadent, immoral, insane and dangerous (to list only a few of the many derogatory epithets thrown at Wagner during his life and after). However, in Dreyfus's account, the positive synonyms

constitute in part his definition of "erotic," but fail to adequately fulfil the potential explanatory power of the term.

Fortunately for his account, he clearly but briefly explicates the views of Feuerbach and Schopenhauer on "love" and "sex," who both have distinctive understandings of the subjects and both of whom were important influences on Wagner. There isn't space to detail these influences, but one of Feuerbach's effects is evident in Wagner's celebration of the body in all its "natural" activities and its unity with the spirit (or *Geist* in the German Idealist conception). Schopenhauer's very frank (for his times) account of sexuality in many of its forms also reinforced Feuerbach's influence. However, Dreyfus, as does Emslie, neglects to investigate the influence of Schiller, Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, among others of the *Frühromantik* school. Emslie, for his part, either ignores the significant influence of German Idealists, such as Fichte and Schelling, or dismisses the influence of Hegel, for instance, with throw-away comments, when, in fact all three are crucial in shaping many of Wagner's views, well in advance of Feuerbach or Schopenhauer.

However, Dreyfus's account would have been strengthened by a clearer appreciation of Wagner's idiosyncratic view of love and sexuality. On 25-26 January 1854, Wagner had written to his Dresden friend August Röckel about the true nature of love, as part of a disquisition on the nature of eternal truth and reality:

...the full reality of love is possible only between the sexes; only as man and woman can we human beings really love, whereas all other forms of love are mere derivatives of it, originating in it, related to it or an unnatural imitation of it.... The highest satisfaction of individual egotism is to be found in its total abandonment, and this is something which human beings can achieve only through love [sex]; but the true human being is both man and woman, and only in the union of man and woman does the true human being exist, and only through love, therefore, do man and woman become human.... Thus only reality is eternal, the most perfect reality, however, comes to us only in the enjoyment of love; it is thus the most eternal of all sentiments. – Egoism, in truth, ceases only when the "I" is subsumed by the "you".... [Spencer and Millington, *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, pp. 303-04].

In view of Wagner's explicit views on sex, "erotics" may be an inadequate term to use. Indeed, had the book been entitled "Wagner and Sex," the argument might have been clearer and truer to Wagner's personal beliefs that heterosexual, procreative sex is the benchmark for judging all human inter-subjective relations.

Dreyfus, though, does give the reader a very valuable introduction (for non-musically trained people like your reviewer) of how Wagner uses a range of musical techniques to convey sexual and erotic states. For example, Dreyfus discusses Wagner's program note for the Paris performances of music from *Tristan und Isolde*, among other works, which is itself very explicit about the sexual nature of the music-drama:

"[The musician] therefore caused insatiable yearning...to swell upwards in a long articulated breath..., through anxious sighs, hopes and fears, moans and wishes, joys and torments, until the mightiest blast..., the most violent effort...to find the rupture which unlocks for the boundlessly craving heart the path into the sea of unending sexual bliss" [p. 103]. In discussing this passage in relation to the music [pages 104-110], Dreyfus points out aspects of the music to listen for and references a set of musical examples at the back of the book. Dreyfus observes, that reading the program note "alongside the music, it is difficult to avoid that impression that Wagner has devised a musical depiction of a male sexual fantasy moving in waves of arousal toward an explosive climax. Whether the great moment is meant to have occurred through self-stimulation or purely as an erotic fantasy in the mind is naturally left unsaid" [p. 105]. As further illustration of the link between "erotic" content and the musical language, Dreyfus gives us a nuanced bar by bar analysis of the construction of the Prelude and the status of the leitmotifs within its structure. These analyses for most of the mature works, is worth the price of the book.

Emslie, in contrast, is attempting to deconstruct the "mess" of Wagner's thinking and art practice and its products, he focusses on what he sees are the cracks and lacunae in Wagner's thinking in general (of which there are many), and his ideas about "love" and the ways he embodies this amorphous and endlessly shape-shifting concept in his art-works. There is no doubt that Wagner was not a systematic thinker, and so it is easy to point to inconsistencies in his philosophising about the nature and purpose of "love." Ironically, though, Wagner's conception of "love" is based firmly, if perhaps mistakenly and narrowly, in its manifestation as heterosexual, procreative sex. Taking that as Ariadne's thread through the labyrinth of Wagner's philosophising, as well as into his unconscious desires and fears, would have given Emslie's book a clear focus and benchmark against which to assess Wagner's ideas and the characters in his art-works, as they grapple with the difficulties of loving and being loved, rather than berating Wagner for his changing usages and inconsistent terminology. That is not to say that Emslie does not discuss Wagner's views on sexuality; rather, that he does not seem them as an underlying principle in his theorising and his art-works.

If Emslie's strategy was to enable the reader to re-construct an understanding of what "love" meant to Wagner and how he portrayed it, the strategy did not work for this reviewer, who was left contemplating the deconstructed Wagnerian landscape and wondering about the point of the exercise. It may be timely and relevant for a critic to dismantle common assumptions or beliefs about Wagner and his status as a systematic thinker and a creator of self-coherent music-dramas, but Emslie rarely tells us why he bothers. What is it about Wagner that keeps his interest long enough to deconstruct his heritage? Part of the answer may be that it is the work of a professional teacher of deconstruction theory and techniques, as Emslie appears to be, to undertake such work. This situation might also account for the dry tone and density of argumentation.

While Dreyfus does not explore the philosophical and literary influences on Wagner's conception of "love" in the detail that Emslie deploys, they both focus on Schopenhauer's shaping influence on Wagner's music-dramas. However, it is precisely

on the point of love, as a philosophical question, that Wagner rejects Schopenhauer. Instead of the Frankfurt pessimist's belief in a blind, irrational, purposeless Will to Exist, which affronted Wagner's Romantic sensibilities, Wagner evolved a conception of what can be called a Will to Love, in which that emotion is reified to the driving force of the universe and most evident in the *Verklärungen* of *Tristan und Isolde* and the experiences of Siegfried and Brünnhilde, and to a lesser extent Walther von Stolzing.

Because Wagner was influenced from a very early age by the views of the *Frühromantik* movement (1790s-1820s) about sexuality and the status of women, including the need to reunite sex and love, that is the body and the spirit or *Geist*, and he was clearly a highly sexed man, Wagner's understanding of human love also demanded that sex (again heterosexual, procreative sex) be considered as intrinsic to "true love." This is why it is very clear that Tristan and Isolde have been regularly having sex in the garden until the night that King Marke's unexpected return precipitates *coitus interruptus*. From Wagner's theoretical perspective, this is a rupture in the fabric of the Will to Love that sustains the universe, and it is not healed until Isolde experiences her dying *Verklärung*. For such views, Wagner was indebted to Schiller, Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis.

Emslie's book is roughly two and half times longer than Dreyfus's and more densely written (and in smaller print), so it is by far the more challenging read. However, there is much in Emslie's book that sheds light on Wagner's mode of thinking – a very spontaneous and evolutionary one – and the inconsistencies that such a mode invites.

Dreyfus book is very easy to read and highly amusing as we read, disbelievingly at times, some of the clap-trap that was written about Wagner's medical and psychological "conditions" by medical doctors, psychiatrists, self-appointed protectors of public morals etc, and congratulate ourselves on our more enlightened views. The reception history makes the book almost worthwhile, although the explication of the "sexiness" of the music is also valuable.

In both cases, the books would have been improved in your reviewer's estimation, if they had taken Wagner's lead and made sex unambiguously their guiding thread and linked his varying ideas about love, pity, compassion, passion and friendship to our sexual urges. Wagner's rather pragmatic attitude to sex – that it was a "natural" urge – led to his fairly relaxed attitude to the many homosexual men (and some women) among his circle and their physical relations, although he hounded them all to marry and procreate so that they could, like him, be what he termed "purely human." Dreyfus, indeed, devotes a whole chapter to this interesting aspect of Wagner's complex character.

Your reviewer can recommend both books, but, given what has been written above, the books are likely to appeal to different readers. Both books are available from InBooks, which is also offering a special deal on the Dreyfus book (see their flyer below).

Wagner and the Erotic Impulse: Laurence Dreyfus, 2012 paperback reprint of 2010 book; Harvard University Press
The Centrality of Love: Barry Emslie, 2010, The Boydell Press, Woodbridge.

WAGNER AND VENICE FICTIONALIZED: JOHN W. BARKER

by Terence Watson

Eastman Studies in Music, University of Rochester Press & Boydell & Brewer Ltd, Woodbridge 2012

John Barker's book is quite different from those of Dreyfus and Emslie. As his subtitle suggests, *Variations on a Theme*, it is a set of variations on a theme that itself is bi-partite. The first element of the theme is his own previous book *Wagner and Venice* (2008, Eastman Studies in Music, University of Rochester Press – "Not only did that study draw me into a biographical account of Wagner's visits to Venice and his death there, but it also allowed me to discover the meaning that Wagner and his death there came to have for Venice itself" [p. xi]); the second is composed by a set of authors who have taken Wagner's death in Venice on 13 February 1888 as their own theme for literary meditations on aspects of the man, his times, his significance, and the special factors surrounding his death in the romantic sea-city. Readers of this review will know that, as Barker says, "Both the subject matter he addressed and the creative techniques in which he pioneered had a tremendous impact upon writers in a range of literary forms for decades" [p. xi]. What readers probably will not have come across before is a well-considered selection of some of those writers.

The earliest writer is Vernon Lee, a pen name for Violet Page (1856-1935), who was one of those English and American (and sometimes Australian) people who spent most of their lives on the Continent. According to Barker, Lee developed into a highly regarded "scholar of art history and culture," which "made her a pioneer in reawakening English interest in the Renaissance" [p. 15]. She was also a novelist influenced by ETA Hoffmann whose work she studied. Barker's sketch of Lee's life and career should be an encouragement to those with similar interests to hunt her other work out. In particular, her 1911 essay "The Religious and Moral Status of Richard Wagner," in which "she condemned the evocation of frank sexuality in the composer's style and expression" [p. 28], sounds like worthwhile reading, especially in the light of Dreyfus's book also reviewed in this Quarterly.

From among her literary works, Barker focusses on *A Wicked Voice* in its final 1890 version. The novella is a strange ghost story in which the hero Magnus is confronted by a ghostly singer, whom it seems is a castrato. Lee composed two earlier versions as she tried to focus her ideas and the literary techniques appropriate to her developing story. Barker points out that, although Wagner is mentioned once explicitly as the composer, along with Schumann, of the music of "starry nights," it is Lee's account of the world of Venice in the 1890s that is of most relevance to history's views of Wagner: "... an atmosphere of mostly hot, feverish air (*mal aria*, moral or otherwise), and a feeling of decay and even degeneracy. It is an atmosphere captured in the writings of many of her contemporaries, such as her friend Henry James. It is the atmosphere within which Wagner himself spent the last months of his life" [p. 27].

The other writers, whom Barker introduces chronologically, range from Lee (1890), through Thomas Mann, Egon Günther, Herbert Rosendorfer, Joachim Köhler (the most recent biographer of Wagner) and finishes with Ray Furness's work of 2008. Most of the names are not familiar to your reviewer, though Barker's accounts whet one's curiosity to find

out more. However, fortunately, Barker's technique gives the reader a detailed chronology of Wagner's visits to Venice, an overview of the writers and their place in history, as well as a detailed treatment of the writers' work(s) about Wagner, with a chapter devoted to each writer.

Many Wagnerians will, though, be familiar with Thomas Mann and his interest in Wagner, but perhaps not as manifested in his 1902 novella *Tristan*, or his 1906 *Walsungenblut* (*Blood of the Volsungs*), featuring twins named Siegfried and Sieglinde. Readers may have read his 1912 *Tod in Venedig* without appreciating that, though often taken as a picture of Mahler, the hero is closer to Wagner, who did die in Venice. Mann also wrote critical articles about Wagner during his career, as he attempted to come to terms with the man and artist, especially after the Nazi appropriation of his music and his anti-Semitism.

In this bicentenary of the births of Verdi and Wagner, it is doubly interesting to read the account of Franz Werfel's 1924 work *Verdi: Roman der Opera* (translated in 1925 as *Verdi: A Novel of the Opera*). Werfel was a German poet, playwright and novelist (1890-1945). According to Barker, this novel has "been seen as the first landmark in the 'Verdi renaissance' that was to work through the international musical world over the rest of the century" [p. 42]. That is, a revival in competition with the generally prevailing Wagnerism of musical culture at the beginning of the 20th century. Werfel, apparently, continued to be a major figure in the Verdi revival.

Barker tells us:

Werfel's novel narrates a completely fictitious story of two consecutive visits he imagines Verdi to have made to Venice in 1882-83). Since his success in *Aida* in 1871, Werfel has it, Verdi has been unable to create a new opera...finding himself surrounded by new directions in music that seem to be leaving him behind – directions of which Wagner is the symbol" [p. 43]. On the first occasion, Verdi finds himself at the Teatro La Fenice during a concert in which Wagner is conducting his symphony (only recently re-discovered by him - this is fact) for his wife and children. Werfel imagines that, as Wagner leaves the theatre with his family and Liszt, "Wagner beheld the face of a man who he did not know, the face of a stranger over whom he had no power, a face firmly closed upon itself and seeking nothing of other. He saw pride and a solitary reserve in the glowing eyes, an effortless energy, which sought to borrow none from him, which stood apart and expressed itself without any secret desire to influence or master other men" [pp. 43-44].

Shortly after, Verdi's gondola comes abreast of Wagner's and Verdi for a moment contemplates murdering his competitor, but he is "horror-stricken and ashamed" as his impulse: "No, there was no hate in him" [p.45].

According to Werfel, Verdi leaves Venice, only to return a short while later, more determined than before to meet Wagner. However, he is torn between wanting to assert himself as an artist to another, and dreading that his gesture would be taken as "the supplication of an inferior to a superior" [p. 45]. Werfel then gives a detailed description of Wagner crossing

a plaza from the viewpoint of a friend of Verdi's symbolically named Italo. This portrait struck your reviewer as substantially accurate, as Italo describes Wagner's overbearing manner to his companion (probably meant to be Hermann Levi, the conductor), his impatience at being interrupted or ignored, and talking endlessly. However, Italo also witnesses Wagner having one of his heart spasms that were becoming increasingly common at this time and feels compassion for him.

Werfel then returns to Verdi, who has finally made up his mind to speak to Wagner, but, they encounter each other unexpectedly at the finale of *Carnivale*: "And once more into those eyes [of Wagner] came the same pleading, demanding, feminine look: 'Why do you hate me so, why will you not bow down before the truth, the sole truth, that I am, and join in the universal chorus of praise?' [p. 48]. It seems clear that this is Werfel's suggestion about Verdi's reaction to Wagner: but it suggests that Verdi has something of an inferiority complex, which seems inconsistent with Werfel's intention to rehabilitate Verdi's reputation. This encounter, though, ends comically with Wagner accidentally treading on Verdi's foot and apologising "haughtily." Both men tip their hats and move quickly away.

Finally Verdi determines to do the deed and goes to the Palazzo Vendramin where Wagner was staying, only to be met by the porter shrieking "Wagner is dead!" Werfel records Verdi thinking unworthy thoughts about now being free of the competitor, but then "immediately hates himself for such selfish thoughts" [p. 50].

Barker then points out that this is a biased picture of Verdi, whom Werfel admired: Verdi never needed validation from Wagner, and certainly was not uncreative during the period Werfel fictionalises: "Werfel's novel must, however, be understood as primarily a period piece, and a virtually propagandistic one" [p. 50].

Your reviewer has given Barker's account of Werfel's novel more detailed attention because it seems to your reviewer that it gives a fine flavour of the perceptive, sympathetic intelligence that Barker brings to bear on this fascinating by-way in Wagner's history.

One, though, should not end without mentioning Joachim Köhler's 2006 *Ich, Cosima* in which Köhler has Cosima half-dreaming, half-remembering experiences with all

the important people in her life during which a complex "autobiography" emerges of this intelligent but deeply flawed woman. This chapter is the longest in the book. The scene is Wahnfried in September 1923 and Cosima has for companions only her maid Dora and her parrot Coco. The figures in Cosima's "dreams" do not say anything directly; it is all inferred from Cosima's responses to them, which, according to Barker build a picture of a "genuinely human personality, of a really tough lady. With all her ideals, wounds, vendettas, and scheming.[Köhler] artfully weave together facts and fictions, drawing directly on actual statements and documented information, though regularly interpreting all that to serve his interpretations" [p. 248].

In a very revealing and provocative comment, that is relevant to the other two books reviewed in this Quarterly about Wagner's views on sex, Barker asserts that "...Köhler concentrates on his portrayal of the Wagner's marriage. Since the stern Cosima, not one disposed to be a love-giver, had withdrawn from conjugal relations, Wagner became physically starved for the sex and sensuality that was interwoven with his creativity. Craving an alternative source to fulfil his needs, he fixated on the highly sensual Judith [Gautier-Mendes], in a way that made his relationship an unending war. In the process, as Köhler would have it, Wagner became a pitifully spineless old man, readily a victim to temptations but simultaneously dependent on Cosima-ever ready to make outward capitulations, even to show melodramatic submissiveness to her demands.... That, Köhler has it, from the composer who was creating the music for the *Ring* and *Parsifal*" [p. 274]. From Köhler's interest in Wagner over a number of works, Barker concludes that Köhler "...wishes us to understand that Wagner the dramatist is made intelligible only when we see the contribution made by Wagner's lifelong and complex emotional turmoil and sensual dependencies" [p. 274].

Your reviewer has no hesitation in recommending this book as well. It is written in a highly readable style and Barker's sensible assessments of each writer's foibles and prejudices help guide the reader to an understanding of the works themselves. There are some illustrations of the writers to help familiarise the reader with the lesser known among them. This hard back book is also part of the special offer from Inbooks, as detailed in the flyer in this Quarterly.

THE CAMBRIDGE WAGNER ENCYCLOPEDIA

Edited by: Nicholas Vazsonyi, University of South Carolina - c. £120.00 - available from August 2013. From the Publisher's website: "Richard Wagner is one of the most controversial figures in Western cultural history. He revolutionized not only opera but the very concept of art, and his works and ideas have had an immeasurable impact on both the cultural and political landscapes of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From 'absolute music' to 'Zurich' and from 'Theodor Adorno' to 'Hermann Zumpe', the vividly-written entries of The Cambridge Wagner Encyclopedia have been written by recognized authorities and cover a comprehensive range of topics. More than eighty scholars from around the world, representing disciplines from history and philosophy to film studies and medicine, provide fascinating insights into Wagner's life, career and influence. Multiple appendices

include listings of Wagner's works, historic productions, recordings and addresses where he lived, to round out a volume that will be an essential and reliable resource for enthusiasts and academics alike."

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THE YOUNG WAGNER – SOME GLIMPSES

by Terence Watson

We are familiar with the adult Wagner, the great artist and the complex and contradictory man, the husband and the father, but most of us probably have a hazy picture of the child. A few of Wagner's biographers have given us sketches of him, even fewer from first hand. The following selections are not intended to be comprehensive.

Much has been written about Wagner's psychology and the effects on the highly sensitive and intelligent child of growing up in a family environment that was far from typical for his time and unconventional on a number of levels. His father Carl Friedrich Wagner died when he was just six months old; Ludwig Geyer was officially his



Wagner's birthplace in the Brühl or Jewish quarter of Leipzig

step-father, but could have been his biological father; nine brothers and sisters, seven of whom who lived, with some entering a theatrical life. Five of his siblings were between five and fourteen years older; the oldest brothers Albert (in his fourteenth year when Wagner was born) and Julius (in his ninth year) (according to Joachim Köhler in *Richard Wagner Last of the Titans*, both were "self-opinionated and unimaginative types"). Also older were sisters Luise (eighth year) and Klara (sixth year) effectively outside his cohort for childhood games. The next older sister Theresia died when she was in her fifth year and his brother Gustav died when he was in his second year. Rosalie was three years older; Gustav died eleven years before Wagner was born; Otilie was two years older; and Cäcilie, Wagner's half-sister (or sister, depending on one's view on who Wagner's real father was) was two years younger. Rosalie and Cäcilie were Wagner's favourites in the family.

Unfortunately, we have neither a portrait of Wagner's father nor, apparently, any physical descriptions, but we are told that "By all accounts, Friedrich Wagner sounds to have been a lively and entertaining character, an educated man with an over-riding passion for the theatre.... He had a great gift for mimicking contemporary actors..." and he seems to have had a talent for entertaining various actresses during his lunch breaks from his position as registrar or actuary in the Leipzig law courts or secretary to the commissioner of police (the descriptions of his position vary according to the biography). The police officer father "spent his leisure time dabbling

in amateur theatricals" and regaling his boon companions in a tavern after performances "with amusing parodies of well-known actors."



Ludwig Geyer (self-portrait) and Johanna Wagner

We do, though, have portraits of his mother Johanna Wagner and his step-father Ludwig Geyer, both painted by Geyer, who was a professional portrait painter, as well as sometime actor and playwright.

His relations with his mother were complex, oscillating between intense affection and annoyance at her lack of attention amidst the competing calls from Wagner's siblings. For much of his earliest years and again after Geyer died, she was the prime source of authority in the family. We have a fascinating description of Johanna Wagner emphasising her small stature on which many people, Wagner included, commented. Ronald Taylor in *Richard Wagner His Life, Art and Thought* (1979) says of her: "Indeed she appears to have been quite remarkably small—a tiny, eccentric woman so diminutive, an eyewitness has told me," says Mrs Burrell, 'that when she visited her daughter-in-law [Minna, Wagner's first wife] in 1845 at Dresden, the maid took her arm like a baby and ran up the stairs with her.'" We may see as much an influence on Wagner's character from this diminutive source as any from his father or stepfather.

One of the few to have some personal acquaintance with the young Wagner was Ferdinand Christian Wilhelm Praeger (1815-1891), who was born in Leipzig two years after Wagner. Praeger's life in Leipzig put him in a good position to describe what the young Wagner was like, physically as well as in his character, although one needs to discount the phrenological nonsense that was popular during the 19th century, as well as, probably, the proposition that snuff taking caused Wagner's enlarged nose: he frequently reported that his Erysipelas had caused his nose to swell and cause him embarrassment in social occasions. In addition, Praeger's biography *Wagner as I Knew Him* became the subject of an intense battle when it was published, with other biographers, such as Wagner's official translator William Ashton Ellis and Francis Hueffer [born Franz Hüffer (1845-1889), a German-English writer on music, music critic, and librettist, and Wagner biographer], who attacked Praeger for a host of errors. However, Praeger's portrait of the young Wagner is corroborated in other accounts, including the sketch by Kietz:

In stature Wagner was below the middle size, and like most undersized men always held himself strictly erect. He had an unusually wiry, muscular frame, small feet,

an aristocratic feature which did not extend to his hands. It was his head, however, that could not fail to strike even the least inquiring that there he had to do with no ordinary mortal. The development of the frontal part, which a phrenologist would class at a glance amongst those belonging only to the master-



Sketch of Wagner in Paris in 1842 by Ernst Benedikt Kietz, 1840-1842 (ie when he was about 29 years of age)

minds, impressed every one. His eyes had a piercing power, but were kindly withal, and were ready to smile at a witty remark. Richard Wagner lacked eyebrows, but nature, as if to make up for this deficiency, bestowed on him a most abundant crop of bushy hair, which he carefully kept brushed back, thereby exposing the whole of his really Jupiter-like brow. His mouth was very small. He had thin lips and small teeth, signs of a determined character. The nose was large and in after-life somewhat disfigured by the early-acquired habit of snuff-taking. The back of his head was fully developed. These were according to phrenological principles power and energy. Its shape was very similar to that of Luther, with whom, indeed, he had more than one point of character in common.

In answer to my inquiries about his school period at Dresden, he told me that he was remarkably small, a circumstance not unattended with good fortune, since it served to increase the favour of his school professors, who looked upon his unusual mental energy in comparison with his pigmy frame as nothing short of wonderful.

As a boy he was passionate and strong-headed. His violent temper and obstinate determination were not to be thwarted in anything he had set his mind to. Among boys such wilfulness of character was the cause of frequent dissensions. He rarely, however, came to blows, for he had a shrewd wit and was winningly entreating in speech, and with much adroitness would bend them to his whims.

Erysipelas sorely tried the boy during his school life. Every change in the weather was a trouble to him. As regards the loss of his eyebrows, an affliction which ever caused him some regret, Wagner attributed it to a violent attack of St. Anthony's fire, as this painful malady is also called. An attack would be preceded by depression of spirits and irritability of temper. Conscious of his growing peevishness, he sought refuge in solitude. As soon as the attack was subdued, his bright animal spirits returned and none would recognize in the daring little fellow the previous taciturn misanthrope.

Practical joking was a favourite sport with him, but only indulged in when harm could befall no one, and incident offered some funny situation. To hurt one willingly was, I think, impossible in Wagner. He was ever kind and would never have attempted anything that might result in real pain.

Glaserapp, the writer of a *Life of Wagner* published and translated into English in 1900 by Ashton Ellis, says:

As to Richard's own progress, we have many a hint in Geyer's household reports to Albert (the eldest son)... Richard is growing big, and a good scholar." The boy has scarcely learnt a note of music yet, but in everything else shews such remarkable quickness of apprehension that Geyer finds the greatest pleasure in watching over his education; he would have liked to make him a painter, "but I was never any good at drawing," as Wagner once told us himself. Geyer was also fond of taking him as companion on his daily walks, and not seldom would smuggle him into the theatre at rehearsal-time, thus laying the foundation of the stage's magic power over Richard too, though it was against his father's wish for him to adopt that walk of life. For what concerns the boy's body, he had already acquired great agility in climbing, as in all kinds of acrobatic feats: before he was seven years old, he terrified his mother by riding down the winding staircase-rail as quick as thought. However, as he never made a slip, his people soon lost their alarm; in fact his brothers and sisters would frequently get him to shew visitors his skill in somersaults, standing on the head, and other small gymnastic tricks.

We have another portrait of the young Wagner, second hand, from his nephew Ferdinand Avenarius (1856-1923), who was the son of Cäcilie, the undoubted child of Johanna Wagner and Ludwig Geyer, and Wagner's special friend as she was only a little younger than him, unlike the rest of his siblings. His mother, he claims, told him many stories of her by then famous brother, including a description of Wagner the child:

But let us take a closer look at little Richard: in his short-sleeved jerkin, he strikes us as a delicate, pale and slightly built fellow by no means lacking boisterousness – 'not a day passes when he doesn't leave the seat of his trousers on a fence,' his father complains in a letter [to Albert].... Not even the most assiduous observer will detect anything specifically 'Wagnerian' in the fact that, satisfying his craving for 'something good,' the young lad once stuffed his pockets full of hot cutlets and handed them over only when they began to burn him...' (in *Wagner Remembered*, Stewart Spencer, Faber and Faber Ltd, London 2000, p.11).

Avenarius also remembered one story told by his mother about Wagner's early forays into theatrical direction, in this incident, after Wagner had seen Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz*. The incident draws attention to the very early manifestation of Wagner' directorial and theatrical inclinations that were later to underpin his dramatic writing and his approach to staging his own music-dramas – among other things, his tendency to

exploit others as well a compelling urge to express himself in dramatic form: “The tricks that Wagner played to inveigle his way into the theatre were particularly frequent in the case of *Der Freischütz*. Richard liked to mount amateur theatricals in his room and as soon as he saw *Der Freischütz*, he absolutely had to stage it....His school friends had to help....The performance was to be given at a friend’s house” (p.18)

After the death of father and step-father, the only remaining male authority figure was his Uncle Adolf Wagner who came to feature large in Wagner’s early life as he boarded with him on a number of occasions during which he was exposed to more high culture than he was encountering at home and in the Dresden theatres in which his step-father and some siblings were performing. Wagner’s serious engagement with his Uncle Adolf began in 1822 at the age of nine when he spent some time with his newly-married uncle and his wife in Leipzig. Later, in 1827 when Wagner returned to board with Uncle Adolf, he was impressed by Wagner’s knowledge of the Greek classics, “encouraging Uncle Adolf to think that he was once again in the presence of his late brother Friedrich.”

Uncle Adolf then took Wagner back to the Thomä House and showed him “an old bookcase.... These, Adolf explained, had been his brother’s books and were now to belong to Wagner. Whereas Geyer had left him only with a puppet

theatre, Friedrich Wagner had bequeathed him a veritable treasure in the form of books by classical writers in valuable complete editions.” Apart from Uncle Adolf’s idiosyncratic life as an independent-minded writer, Wagner was attracted to him because he had “a fine tenor voice,” and was “imbued as well with interest in the theater” and was “welcome as a literary figure in Leipzig.”



Uncle Adolph Wagner in Classical attire

When Wagner returned from Dresden to Leipzig for Christmas 1827, he also returned to conversations with Uncle Adolf whose “manifest knowledge [of] not only philology, but also philosophy” stimulated his own thinking. On his regular visits to Adolf’s house and walks around Leipzig, the now fifteen year-old Wagner and Adolf engaged in “profound and frequently heated discussions. The subject was essentially everything serious and exalted in the realm of knowledge. His huge library had excited me to feverish reading in all directions so that I jumped avidly from one area of literature to another, without achieving a basic grounding in any of them.”

FINE MUSIC 102.4FM – WAGNER PROGRAMS

Countdown to the Ring

Countdown to the Ring is a new series airing on the Fine Music Network in 2013. In a new content collaborating venture on the network, the series will unravel the practical intricacies and cultural fascination related to Wagner’s epic production “The Ring Cycle”. Comprising of 10 episodes, this monthly program will air on Fine Music FM, 3MBS Fine Music Melbourne, 4MBS Classic FM Brisbane, 5MBS Adelaide and ArtSound in Canberra. Countdown to the Ring airs during the **third full week of each month** across the Fine Music Network, via FM, Digital Radio & Online platforms. The programs have been supported by the Community Broadcasting Foundation,

Hans Henkell, the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia & each Fine Music Network member station, all under the Executive Producer: Joel Carnegie. For more information, check the website: <http://countdowntothering.com>. The next episode is in March.

Wagner and Friends – Barbara Brady’s Program on Fine Music FM in 2013

In 2013 Fine Music is presenting Barbara Brady’s 12 episode *Wagner and Friends*, first broadcast in 2008. The series began on 13 January and will run on the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 9-10:30 for six months.

BROADCASTS OF WAGNER OPERAS

by Colleen Chesterman

The full listing is available in Newsletter 127 (December 2012). The first major opera, *Der fliegende Holländer* will be played on January 16. On 27 February, Brendan Walsh presents *Tannhäuser*. On 27 March, *Lohengrin* is presented by Angela Cockburn. On April 24, Andrew Bukonya presents *Das Rheingold*. There will be more Australian performances on 22 May when Derek Parker presents *Die Walküre* of the 2004 Adelaide Ring. With we move to the first opera that will be broadcast in two consecutive weeks, *Siegfried*. It will be

presented by Angela Cockburn, with Acts I and II on 26 June and Act III on 3 July. July is a big month, as on 24 and 31, *Götterdämmerung* is presented by Brendan Walsh.

Tristan and Isolde is next on August 28 and September 4, presented by Derek Parker. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* is presented by Angela Cockburn on September 25 and October 2. And finally on October 23 and 30, we hear *Parsifal*.

WAGNER'S VISION BAYREUTH HERITAGE

by Colin Baskerville

Quote: And when somebody complained to Wieland about the darkness on stage, Wieland countered "What, you want to see things in Wagner as well as hear them?"

Original recordings 1904-1960, 50 CDs plus 88 page booklet, label Documents. This 50 CD set is a treat for audio buffs. Its release is part of a wave of 2013 Wagner offerings. Those who want to see are catered for in another lavish box set of 25 DVDs. The Wagner Edition (Wagner's Mature Operas) (Various Artists) (Opus Arte: OA1095BD).

Those who wish to, can hear "things" start in 1904 in the "Hotel Sonne" in Bayreuth. Excerpts supplement complete recordings from Bayreuth. Amazing titles include conductors Wilhelm Furtwangler in 1931 (Tristan und Isolde, Vorspiel I Aufzug), Victor de Sabata, 1939 (Wohin Nun Tristan Scheidet, sung by Max Lorenz), Richard Strauss in 1933 (Parsifal: Vorspiel Zum I, Aufzug, plus the Choir and Max Lorenz in Nur Eine Waffe Tausgt) and Siegfried Wagner.

The 88 page booklet is in both German and English with valuable photographs. The text progresses from the

composer himself writing about the theatre and the 1876 festival, past Bernard Shaw in 1898 to Cosima, Winifred, Wieland, Martha Modl, Hans Hotter and Rene Kollo.

Collectors need to know the specific year of the complete recordings. The selection is cleverly designed to appeal to the most dedicated collectors.

Der Ring Des Nibelungen; Das Rheingold, Clemens Krauss, 1953; *Die Walküre*, Hans Knappertsbusch, 1958; *Siegfried*, Joseph Keilberth, 1953; *Götterdämmerung*, Rudolf Kempe, 1960; *Der fliegende Holländer*, Wolfgang Sawallisch, 1959; *Tannhäuser*, Andre Cluytens, 1955 plus Karl Elmendorff, 1930; *Lohengrin*, Lotto von Maticic, 1959; *Tristan und Isolde*, Herbert von Karajan, 1952; *Die Meistersinger Von Nürnberg*, Hermann Abendroth, 1943 plus Herbert von Karajan, 1951; *Parsifal*, Hans Knappertsbusch, 1951.

Amazon.co.uk publishes customer reviews that detail more information. In short: an audio "must" for lovers of Wagner and Bayreuth.

METROPOLITAN OPERA HD BROADCASTS IN CINEMAS IN NSW – PARSIFAL

by Terence Watson

Long-standing Member Heinz Ebert has been gently reminding your Editor of an undertaking I gave him to report on cinemas in NSW that show the Metropolitan Opera's broadcasts - *Parsifal* in April 2013. For people living in Sydney, it might be something of a surprise to realise how many cinemas across the state broadcast the operas: Dendy Opera Quays – Sydney; Dendy Newtown; Hayden Orpheum – Cremorne; Chauvel Cinemas – Paddington; Event Cinemas - Bondi Junction; Event Cinemas – Castle Hill; Riverside Theatres – Parramatta; Greater Union – Newcastle; Scotty's Cinema Centre – Raymond Terrace; Belgrave Cinemas – Armidale; Empire Cinemas – Bowral; Cinemax – Kingscliff; Avoca Beach Theatre; Narooma Theatre; Odeon Cinemas – Orange; Forum Cinemas – Tamworth; and Forum Cinemas – Wagga Wagga.

Your Editor has had good reports of both the Armidale and Raymond Terrace cinemas from Member Robert Thurling; he travels to them from Diamond Beach especially for the Wagner broadcasts. Heinz can highly recommend the Avoca Beach cinema – as much for its décor as for its opera broadcasts. He has drawn your Editor's attention to the fact that in 2102, the cinema was named "best regional picture theatre in Australia for the third year in a row" (Central Coast Express Advocate

August 29, 2012, p. 18) under the stewardship of owners Beth and Norman Hunter. The report also notes that "... the accolade is like an Oscar in the Australian cinema world. Heinz particularly likes the Art Deco style of the theatre. So, if you are travelling in country NSW during the Easter holiday period, you should be able to see *Parsifal* in all its HD beauty at a cinema near you. You can check all the broadcasts and cinemas at the Sharmill Films website, among others: http://www.sharmillfilms.com.au/?page_id=2195#cinemas.

WINNER 2013 WAGNER BICENTENARY COMPETITION FOR COMPOSERS

The winner of the 2013 Wagner Bicentenary Competition for Composers, \$10,000 offered by the Wagner Society in Queensland, is John Rotar. 'A Song from Wagner's Murmuring Tomb' is designed for an 18 instrument chamber orchestra.

BLUE TULIPS BY ELIZABETH GORDON-WERNER

Members who have attended Sunday functions may have noticed a person quietly sketching the speakers or performers while listening to them. For another example of her watercolour sketches, please have a look at her illustration for the 17 March *Fairies and Vampires* concert on the back page. Elizabeth has written a book that might be of interest to you and she describes it thus:

Blue Tulips is a love story, a story about love, about music, about art ... and it is autobiographical. It is illustrated (well, I mentioned art didn't I?) which explains the fiddling with software and formatting. And did I mention Wagner? Not yet? Well, he had to be in there of course and what better way to celebrate his 200th birthday this year than by telling a musical tale?

Blue Tulips is not *Shades of Blue* sorry but still it may appeal to women more than men, though you never can be sure. In September on the flight back from the Maribor Music Festival (wonderful as usual) I sat next to a Singaporean businessman who was reading *Shades of Grey*. I asked him if he was enjoying it and he said yes, you just had to realise it is fantasy and then you can really enjoy it. He had bought all three volumes!

In 2004, struggling to recover from the loss of her marriage and the death of her father, Elizabeth buys a last-minute ticket to Wagner's Ring Cycle and flies to Adelaide in South Australia to sooth her wounds with music.

Wagner's music captivates but also disarms its audience and when Elizabeth sees that stranger across a crowded room she discovers that all her protective layers have disappeared. As she flies back home she asks herself what you do when you fall in lust with someone who lives twelve thousand miles away?

Elizabeth takes pen to paper and through her amusing and whimsical emails, letters, blog posts, stories and paintings we share in the passionate adventure of these strangers in the night and learn a lot about the music that inspires them. This love story will charm and entertain you while giving you an intimate insight into the world of this 21st century artist and her musically obsessed lover as they struggle with their changed orbits. So folks ... here is *Blue Tulips*. I hope you enjoy reading it and that if you do enjoy it, you give it lots of amazon stars so it gets on the amazon book-star (as in movie star!) list! The link to the Amazon copy of the book is at <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00BIT64E0>.

BLUE TULIPS A Love Story



Elizabeth Gordon

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN WAGNER PERFORMANCES

by John Meyer, President, Richard Wagner Society of WA, INC.

The West Australian Symphony Orchestra will be including Wagner in several of their subscription concerts in the Perth Concert Hall:

- 22,23 March *Tannhäuser* Overture & Venusberg Music conducted by Paul Daniel
- 5,6,7 September *Tristan und Isolde* Prelude & Liebestod conducted by Asher Fisch
- There are also two WASO recitals in Government House Ballroom of interest:
- 18 March *Wesendonck Lieder* sung by Orla Boyland, with Paul Daniel at the piano
- 17 June Liszt's arrangement of *Tannhäuser* Overture, Denis Kozhukin (piano)

As a matter of interest, the Ring arrangement by de Vlieger is being performed here next week by WASO, and at our evening tonight Paul Daniel will be speaking to us about it.

There is also the possibility that in 2013 there will be a production in the State Theatre Centre of a play by John Senczuk which is based on an imagined meeting between Wagner and Verdi in Venice, but this is still to be confirmed.

The Society will also host a combined concert and party on Sunday 19 May from 4.00pm, in the St George's College Hall at the University of Western Australia. Because the College has sweeping views over the Swan River, we are probably going to call it "Wagner by the Swan" (naturally we'll endeavour to work in some connection with *Lohengrin*), and there will be some aspects of the event which will resonate with those who have been to Bayreuth – such as the 4.00pm start, the balcony with trumpet fanfares, etc. - but not the length of the evening or the discomfort of the seating!

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Sir Georg SOLTI – WAGNER: Der Ring des Nibelungen THE RING OF RINGS!

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(*BBC Music Magazine*, January 2012). Check out the offer (\$295.95) at: <http://www.getmusic.com.au/sirgeorgsolti/store/detail?id=156372>

Bryn Terfel – WAGNER: The Ring (complete)

The most famous, the most performed, the most thrilling, and the most recorded opera cycle in music history! A unique and exclusive package, on multi-set DVD and Blu-Ray, of the most successful Ring Cycle production of the 21st century. Check out the offer on the Metropolitan Opera's production of \$144.95 at website: <http://www.getmusic.com.au/brynterfel/store/detail?id=167293>



Jonas Kaufmann – WAGNER ARIAS

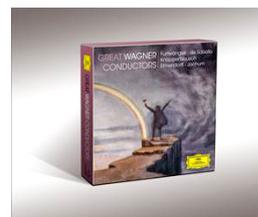
Kaufmann and Wagner is a classic combination: "For any Wagnerians who've been slumbering, Fafner-like, in their caves during the last few years, here's your wake-up call: Jonas Kaufmann is the tenor we've been waiting for" (*Washington Post*). A selection of the great Heldenentor scenes and arias coupled with the complete (and rarely recorded by the tenor voice) Wesendonck Lieder. Also includes scenes from *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* (extended Grail Scene – Gralserzählung - with its original second verse). Price \$24.95 at website: <http://www.getmusic.com.au/jonaskaufmann/store/detail?id=175951>.



We have also the opportunity to give to your members two very special pre-order which I am sure will be much appreciated by your members:

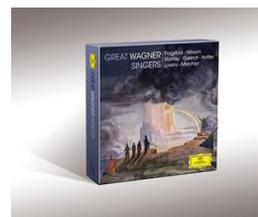
GREAT WAGNER CONDUCTORS

Early recordings of favourite Wagner orchestral selections still possess a special mystique. Five conducting giants, all born within 20 years of Wagner's death and all of whom made notable appearances at the Bayreuth Festival, are represented in this collection. Pre-order price: \$31.95 at website: <http://www.getmusic.com.au/variousartists/store/detail?id=176482>.



GREAT WAGNER VOICES

"They don't make Wagner singers like that anymore" - "There has never since been a Heldenentor to match Lauritz Melchior". Here's the perfect opportunity for listeners to find out for themselves: A stunning array of majestic sopranos (Flagstad, Nilsson...), resplendent tenors (Melchior, Lorenz...), and dark-toned baritones and basses (Hotter, Schorr, Greindl...) guarantee true Wagnerian excitement. Pre-order price \$39.95 at website: <http://www.getmusic.com.au/variousartists/store/detail?id=176483>.



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Fish Fine Music exists purely because our team has a passion for music. Our policy is to carry the largest classical range of CDs and DVDs in Australia and we remain committed in the long term to the unsurpassed audio quality of the CD format.

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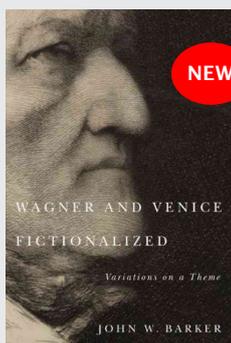
www.fishfinemusic.com.au

INBOOKS OFFER OF BOOKS ON WAGNER AT SPECIAL PRICE

Inbooks has made available to your Editor a number of books on Wagner for review in this and the next issue of your Newsletter. As part of this arrangement, Inbooks has also made a special offer to Wagner Society in NSW Members on those books (see Order Form below). Wagner and the Erotic Impulse by Laurence Dreyfus is a re-issue of this fine book in paperback. The other two books are first issues. But please note the extended closing date for this special offer – 31 May 2012.

Inbooks

NEW & RECENT BOOKS ON WAGNER *Order before 31st May for 25% discount!*



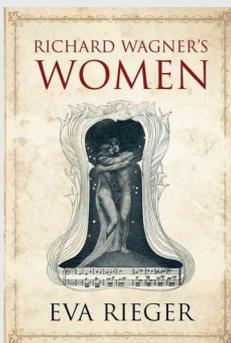
WAGNER AND VENICE FICTIONALIZED

Variations on a Theme

John W. Barker

The vast literature about Richard Wagner and his works includes a surprising number of fictional works, including novels, plays, satires, and an opera. Many of these deal with his last years and his death in Venice in 1883. These fictional treatments—many presented here in English for the first time—reveal a striking evolution in the way that Wagner's character and reputation have been viewed over more than a century. They offer insights into changing contexts in Western intellectual and cultural history. And they make clear how much Wagner's associations with Venice have become part of the accumulated mythology of 'the floating city'.

University of Rochester Press ⌘ August 2012 ⌘ Hardcover ⌘ 370pp
RRP\$120.00 **SPECIAL PRICE: \$90.00**

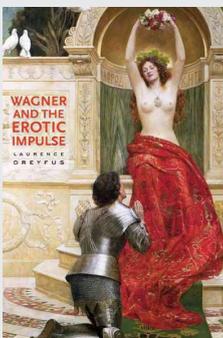


RICHARD WAGNER'S WOMEN

Eva Rieger

Richard Wagner's music contains some of the most powerful portrayals of emotions in all opera, particularly love. Eva Rieger presents a new picture of the composer, showing how the women at his side inspired him and how closely his life and art intertwined. We follow Wagner's restless hunt for the 'ideal woman', her appointed task being to give him shelter, warmth, inspiration, adventure and redemption, all in one. He could hardly have desired anything more contradictory, and this is reflected in the female characters of his operas. They are all in some way torn, faltering between their own desire for self-realization and the societal constraints that impel them to sacrifice themselves for their men. Rieger bids farewell to essentialist, naturalized notions of femininity and masculinity. Her investigations are both comprehensive and convincing, for she avoids the pitfalls of imposing extraneous interpretation, instead focusing keenly on the music itself.

Boydell & Brewer ⌘ 2011 ⌘ Hardcover ⌘ 248pp
RRP\$65.00 **SPECIAL PRICE: \$50.00**



WAGNER AND THE EROTIC IMPULSE

Laurence Dreyfus

In this illuminating study of Wagner and his works, Laurence Dreyfus shows how Wagner's obsession with sexuality prefigured the composition of operas such as *Tannhäuser*, *Die Walküre*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and *Parsifal*. Daring to represent erotic stimulation, passionate ecstasy, and the torment of sexual desire, Wagner sparked intense reactions from figures like Baudelaire, Clara Schumann, Nietzsche, and Nordau, whose verbal tributes and censures disclose what was transmitted when music represented sex. Wagner himself saw the cultivation of an erotic high style as central to his art. In the end, Wagner's achievement was to have fashioned an oeuvre which explored his sexual yearnings as much as it conveyed—as never before—how music could act on erotic impulse.

Harvard University Press ⌘ May 2012 ⌘ Paperback ⌘ 288pp
RRP\$26.95 **SPECIAL PRICE: \$20.00**



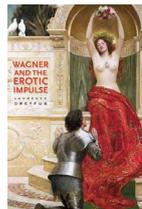
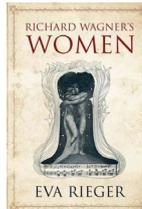
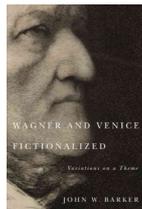
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Wagner and the Erotic Impulse	9780674064294	\$26.95	\$20.00	
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2. Please renew my/our membership from 1 January to 31 December 2013 on the following basis *(please tick one)*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Single member \$60 (single pensioner member \$35)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shared members \$90 (shared pensioner members \$55)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Students \$25 <i>(include a copy of your current ID Card)</i>	\$

3. I/We wish to donate the following amount to the Society.
(Donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible, and receipts will be issued. All donations are acknowledged in our Newsletter.)*

	\$
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4. Total

Please complete this form and post it to:

The Treasurer
The Wagner Society in NSW Inc
GPO Box 4574
Sydney NSW 2001

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4(a). Renewing by cheque or money order - *Please include your cheque or money order, made payable to **The Wagner Society**, when you post this form.*

4(b). Renewing by bank account transfer - *Please use your bank's internet banking facilities to send your payment electronically to:*

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Account Number: 911323
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6. Signatures

 Signature Signature
...../...../2012 Date renewed Name in BLOCK LETTERS Name in BLOCK LETTERS

WAGNER 2013 BICENTENARY DONATION APPEAL

As you know, in celebration of the Master's 200th birthday, we at the NSW Wagner Society are putting on a number of special events, and supporting some major initiatives. Many are described in this newsletter. You will be hearing about others during the course of the year. In order to enable us to mount these activities, we have set up a "Wagner 2013" fund. We need your support in order to make all of this possible, and to ensure that our contributions to next year's celebrations will be world class. Donations are fully tax-deductible and can be made by cheque or money order by direct debit; details of the Society's bank account and postal address are given below.

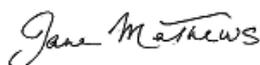
THE DONATION FORM IS PRINTED BELOW or can be downloaded at the Society's Website: www.wagner.org.au/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=84&Itemid=68

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Account Number: 911323

Our postal address is
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Thank you for considering this request for support - any donation to the Wagner Society's 'Wagner 2013 Fund' will make a difference.



The Hon Jane Mathews AO
President, Wagner Society in New South Wales

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Donations are tax-deductible, and receipts will be issued.

All donations are acknowledged in our Newsletter \$

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Sydney NSW 2001

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Signature

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Name in BLOCK LETTERS

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Please note our permanent address for all correspondence:

The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc
GPO Box 4574 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Telephone: 9360 9822 (Jane Matthews, President)

Website: www.wagner.org.au | Website enquiries: wagner_nsw@optusnet.com.au

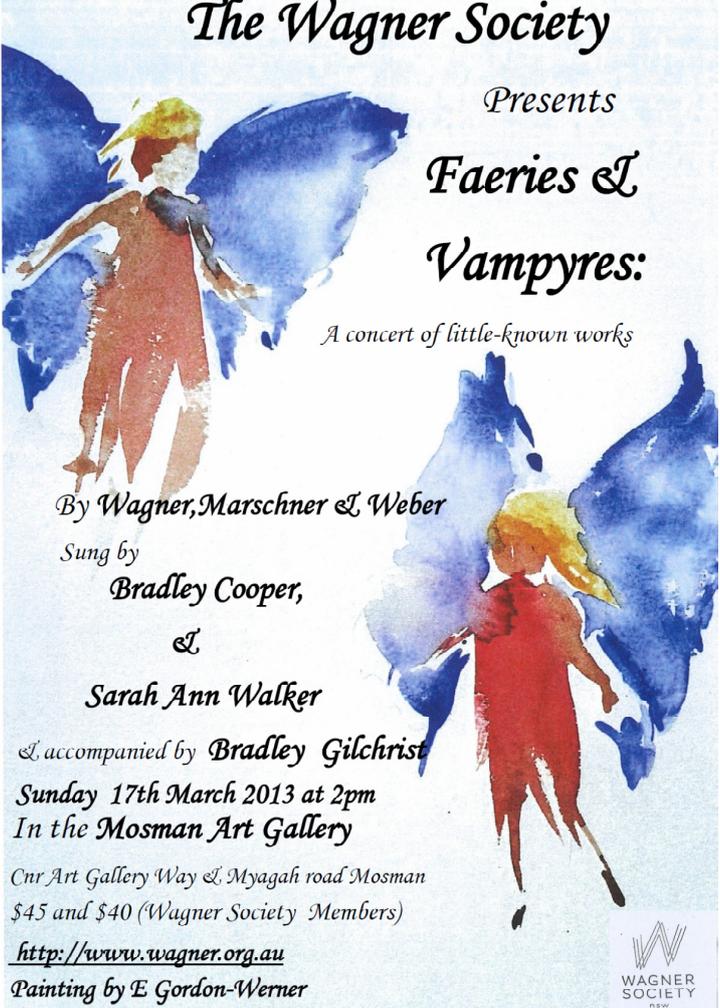
(All website addresses used in this Newsletter are reproduced in the PDF version of the newsletter on the Wagner Society's website in the relevant article - Members Area)

Faeries & Vampyres:

A Concert of Little-known Works

The Wagner Society's first concert for the year will feature the Australian premieres of arias and ensembles from two operas - *The Fairies (Die Feen)*, Wagner's first opera and one which he never saw produced. Some of it he heard, strangely, on the same night he was hearing bits of Parsifal. It has never been performed in Australia, nor has *The Vampire (Der Vampyr)* by his colleague, *Heinrich Marschner*. Wagner rewrote one of the Vampire arias for his brother, Albert, who was performing in it at Würzburg in a production where Richard Wagner was the chorusmaster. There will also be some arias from *Oberon*, an opera by Wagner's hero, *Carl Maria von Weber*.

Both the singers are from Opera Australia; tenor, Bradley Cooper, and soprano, Sarah Ann Walker (a recipient of Wagner Society funding). They will be accompanied by rising young Sydney pianist, Bradley Gilchrist. It will be followed by afternoon tea. This is an event which you can't miss!



The Wagner Society
Presents
Faeries & Vampyres:
A concert of little-known works

By *Wagner, Marschner & Weber*
Sung by
Bradley Cooper,
&
Sarah Ann Walker

& accompanied by **Bradley Gilchrist**
Sunday 17th March 2013 at 2pm
In the Mosman Art Gallery

Cnr Art Gallery Way & Myagah road Mosman
\$45 and \$40 (Wagner Society Members)
<http://www.wagner.org.au>
Painting by E Gordon-Werner

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The cafe attached to Sappho serves great coffee and wine and snacks.

BRANGAYNE OF ORANGE VINEYARD

Brangayne of Orange has kindly agreed to offer Members a 10% discount if they purchase any of their wines. Please call and order by phone (02 6365 3229) and mention your membership of the Wagner Society.

ADDRESS FOR SUNDAY FUNCTIONS

Goethe Institut, 90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)