



WAGNER  
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CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF RICHARD WAGNER

# WAGNER QUARTERLY

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the fourth and last Quarterly for 2014.

It has been a big year for your Society. Not quite as big as last year, the bicentenary, when there was a giant surge of Wagner events and performances. But we have definitely maintained the momentum. The last events of the year at the Goethe Institute and the Mosman Art Gallery were well attended, and— if the feedback I personally received is any indication—they were very much enjoyed.

One of our most unusual and entertaining functions this year was given by Dr James Wierzbicki on the topic of the Ride of the Valkyries. We are privileged that he has agreed for his talk (in a version slightly edited by our Editor) to be reproduced in this issue of the Quarterly, along with a small selection of the many and varied Valkyrie images he showed.

Our final function of the year was a recital by Anke Höppner, accompanied by pianist David Miller, at the Mosman Art Gallery of Wagner-influenced songs by Alexander Zeminsky and Arnold Schönberg. However, the guests sprang a welcome surprise on the audience by finishing their demanding recital with the Liebestod or Verklärung from *Tristan und Isolde*. This recital was a wonderful link between the final part of Antony Ernst's seminar earlier in the year in which he focussed on the influence of Wagner on later composers and the 2015 performance by the Sydney Symphony of that opera.

In my September report I referred to the fact that there were many fewer English speaking people attending the third Ring Cycle in Bayreuth than in previous years. This is largely because the Wagner Societies around the world are no longer receiving the bulk allocation of tickets which we used previously to receive. In this regard there might be a small spark of light at the end of the tunnel, but at least in the short term the situation is unlikely to change.



Anke Höppner (soprano) with her husband baritone Barry Ryan (on her left) with Members Pauline Holgerson and William Brooks at Anke's recital at Mosman Art Gallery

Your Society continues its membership of the Friends of Bayreuth, and this provides us with two tickets each year, generally taking in all the operas which are performed that year. But this is only a small proportion of the tickets which were previously made available under the old regime. As a result, I have been asked to inform members how they can obtain tickets to Bayreuth without waiting up to ten years.

I should say at the outset that the queue has considerably decreased over recent years, which I suspect is at least partially

PRESIDENT'S REPORT *Continued page 3*

**Patron:** Ms Simone Young AM  
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Tjängvide image stone.



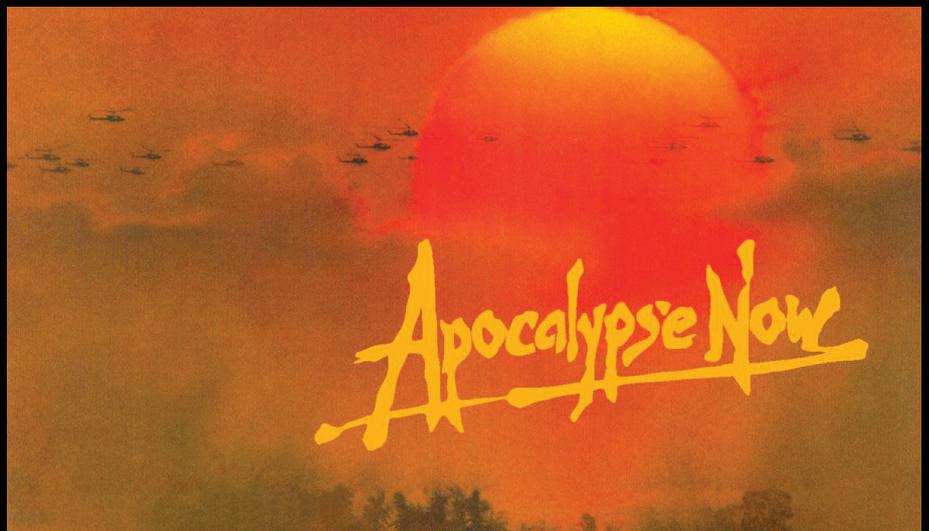
Bronze statue from 1835, by the Danish sculptor Herman Wilhelm Bissen.



One of Émile Doepler's sketches for the 1876 Bayreuth production, drawn from the portfolio published in 1889, edited by Clara Steinitz.



1899 Valkyries.



And who could forget the helicopters blaring out the "Ride" in Coppola's 1979 film

a reaction to the newer productions, some of which have not been met with great enthusiasm. I should add here that the musical standards remain very high. But even with the reduced delay, people who book through the box office are likely to have to wait a number of years before obtaining tickets.

One way of reducing this delay is through joining the Friends of Bayreuth. The joining fee is 260 euros, with an annual fee of 205 euros. If you apply for tickets through the Friends, you will be likely to receive them about every second year. You can join the Friends by going to the website at [www.freunde-bayreuth.org](http://www.freunde-bayreuth.org).

In the June Quarterly of this year I mentioned the International Association of Wagner Societies, known as the Verband. In accordance with what I said then, we subsequently declined to renew our membership for this year. Since then there have been a number of changes. Amongst other things, the organisation appears to be much less German-centric than previously. Accordingly, we have reversed our decision and determined to renew our membership from the beginning of next year. The Verband will be holding its annual congress in Dessau, Germany, in May next year and at present I am planning to attend. I will keep you informed of any further news from this organisation.

On 16 October 2014, I wrote to Members advising that, for many years, Renate and Herman Junker, long term members of our Society, have generously undertaken to coordinate the serving of refreshments at our events. We are now turning to our members to seek volunteers to assist us to provide a similar service for our events in 2015. Please see my letter later in the Quarterly.

In the meantime, I wish you all a very happy and fulfilling festive season, and look forward to seeing many of you at the wonderful series of events we have organised for next year. In this regard, I must specially remind you that the Sydney Symphony will be mounting two concert performances of Tristan and Isolde on 20 and 22 June 2015, with Stewart Skelton and Christine Brewer

in the title roles. We are planning to hold a "Tristan" seminar before these performances, probably on Sunday 14th June. Keep watching for further details.

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## DONATIONS

**Donations: Received since September 2014:**

Camron Dyer

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## NEW MEMBERS

Derek Strahan (1147), Elizabeth Hayllar (1148),  
Margaret Whealy (1149)

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## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS:

**From the Sublime to the Ridiculous: - P.5**  
**The Long, Strange Ride of Wagner's**  
**Valkyries - James Wierzbicki**

**Afterthoughts from the Armfield Ring, - P.8**  
**Melbourne 2013 - Roger Cruickshank**

**Elizabeth Connell Prize for - P.10**  
**Dramatic Sopranos - Leona Geeves**

**The Eve of the Leipzig Richard-Wagner - P.12**  
**Festival 2015 - Richard Wagner Birthday Concert**

**Call for Volunteers to Assist Wagner - P.13**  
**Society with Catering for Events in 2015**

**For Sale: Rare Arthur Rackham - P.16**  
**Wagner Volumes**

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## COMMITTEE 2013 - 2014

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## FOR YOUR DIARY

2015

February 14, 17, 19	<b>GREAT NEWS</b> - <i>The Flying Dutchman</i> : Victorian Opera with the Australian Youth Orchestra conducted by Richard Mills, and designer Roger Hodgman - <b>NB Major cast changes</b> - <b>more details below</b> .	Palais Theatre, St Kilda @ 7:30pm
February 21, 22 & 26	<i>Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg</i> : New York Met Opera with James Levine: Johan Reuter, Johan Botha, and Annette Dasch; Production: Otto Schenk; Set Designer: Günther Schneider-Siemssen	Major cinema chains and regional cinemas
March 20, 21, 22 & 25	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> : Conductor Andris Nelsons; Royal Opera House; Cast Bryn Terfel, Adrianna Pieczonka, Peter Rose, Director Tim Albery, Set Design Michael Levine	Palace Norton St & Verona
May 13, 15 & 16	Sydney Symphony with Matthias Pintscher: <i>Siegfried Idyll</i> .	Sydney Opera House @ 8pm
June 20 & 22	<b>WONDERFUL NEWS</b> - Sydney Symphony is banking on the success of its previous operas in concert to perform <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> . David Robertson will conduct <b>Christine Brewer</b> as Isolde, <b>Stuart Skelton</b> as Tristan, <b>Katarina Karnéus</b> as Brangäne, <b>Derek Welton</b> as Kurwenal, and <b>Stephen Milling</b> as King Marke, with Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and S Katy Tucker's visual enhancement. Echoes of Bayreuth with two intervals including an hour-long dinner break!	Sydney Opera House @ 8pm
November 25, 27 & 29	Sydney Symphony with Edo de Waart: Prelude to Act 1 <i>Lohengrin</i> .	Sydney Opera House @ 8pm

## COMING EVENTS 2015 - STARTING TIMES MAY VARY

PLEASE CHECK THE SCHEDULE FOR DETAILS.

DATE	Some events may be subject to change and further detail in the next newsletter	TIME & LOCATION
15 February	Oxford academic and writer and translator, Dr Rosamund Bartlett, author of <i>Wagner and Russia</i> , a study of Wagner's influence on Russian thought, will talk on <b>Russia and Wagner 1841-1941: A Century of Reaction and Revolution</b> . 12:30 DVD - BBC Great Composers - Wagner narrated by Kenneth Branagh; interviews with artists and scholars-Daniel Barenboim, Siegfried Jerusalem and John Deathridge.	Goethe Institut 2PM
Tuesday March 10 NB WEEKDAY	The engaging Dr Heath Lees will endeavour to place his film " <b>Wagner's Ring; A Tale Told in Music</b> " against the whole 100-year existing gallery of Wagner film, and draw out the various ups and downs, highs and lows, successes and failures of a selection of these. <b>NB: Tuesday night</b>	Goethe Institut <b>NB Time: 6PM</b>
Sunday March 29	International mezzo soprano, <b>Deborah Humble</b> , the commanding Erda at the Melbourne Ring, in recital. <b>NO DVD PRESENTATION</b>	Paddington Uniting Church 2pm
Sunday May 24	AGM, followed by <b>Recital</b> with young artists, who have been the recipients of various Wagner Society Awards - German, Eisteddfod and Lisa Gasteen National Opera School. <b>NO DVD PRESENTATION</b>	Goethe Institut 2PM
Sunday June 14	<b>Dr David Larkin: Exploring Tristan and Isolde</b> . A focus on this great work which is being performed in concert form at the Sydney Opera House. <b>NO DVD PRESENTATION</b>	<b>Venue &amp; time to be notified</b>
Sunday June 21	<b>A social occasion to celebrate the Sydney Symphony performances of Tristan and Isolde</b> . Visiting members from other Wagner Societies and some of the production team will be invited. 12:30 DVD - TBA	Goethe Institut Time TBC
July TBC	David McVicar: <b>Directing Wagner</b> - Q & A session. 12:30 DVD - TBA	Goethe Institut Time TBC
August TBC	A concert featuring singers who have been sponsored by the Society to study or work overseas. 12:30 DVD - TBA	<b>Venue and Time TBC</b>
Sunday 13 September	<b>Andrew Ford... Composing After Wagner</b> , composer, writer and broadcaster: <b>Composers today - Wagner's legacy</b> 12:30 DVD - TBA	Goethe Institut 2PM
Sunday 15 November	Christmas concert and party. <b>NO DVD PRESENTATION</b>	Venue to be confirmed 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](http://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)**

## FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE RIDICULOUS: THE LONG, STRANGE RIDE OF WAGNER'S VALKYRIES by James Wierzbicki

*Dr Wierzbicki is Higher Degree Research Coordinator and senior lecturer in musicology, among other positions at Sydney University. Previously on the musicology staffs of the University of Michigan and the University of California-Irvine and for more than twenty years the chief classical music critic for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and other large American newspapers, James Wierzbicki currently focuses on twentieth-century music in general and film music in particular. His books include Film Music: A History (Routledge, 2009), monographs on the American composer Elliott Carter (University of Illinois Press, 2011) and the electronic score for the 1956 film Forbidden Planet (Scarecrow Press, 2005). A very small selection of the images Dr Wierzbicki used is reproduced on the inside front cover page.*

Thank you for inviting me to deliver a presentation titled 'From the Sublime to the Ridiculous: The Long, Strange Ride of Wagner's Valkyries'. As I hope to demonstrate this afternoon, it has indeed been 'a long, strange ride,' not just for Wagner's valkyries but for valkyries in general.

This is one of the earliest known depictions of a valkyrie. It's the "Tjängvide image stone," [see inside covers for some of the images] found near the town of Tjängvide in Sweden, and dating from the so-called 'Viking Era,' which is to say sometime between around 700 and 1000 A.D. Note that she indeed rides a horse and wears a helmet. Note, too, that she carries no weapons; in her left hand she bears a cup, which contains the 'mead' with which she 'revives' the 'fallen hero' whom she escorts to his deserved place in the Viking equivalent of heaven. This valkyrie is not, to put it simply, a warrior woman; rather, she is a caring, nurturing servant.

The old Norse word 'valkyrie' means 'chooser from amongst the slain.' Traditionally it was the valkyrie's primary job to visit a battlefield and then select, from amongst the many corpses, the body of a fallen 'hero' which she would then transport to Valhalla. An important part of that job was the 'resurrection' of the hero by means of the nourishing cup of mead. Thus we see the cup in many other images from the Viking Era. We even see the cup—but no weapons—in as late an image as this bronze statue from 1835, by the Danish sculptor Herman Wilhelm Bissen.

Wagner's valkyries made their first appearance thirty-five years after the completion of this statue. They dispense with the cup, and they bear arms. Propelled as they are by Wagner's music, they also take on a somewhat bellicose attitude. And thus begins, in terms of public image, the transformation of the ancient Viking-era valkyrie into the modern 'romantic' valkyrie.

Surprisingly, photographic documentation of the first production of Wagner's *Die Walküre*, in Munich in 1870, seems not to exist. But we do have drawings by that production's designer, Theodor Pixis. For example, we have a drawing for the fourth scene of Act II, during which Brünnhilde—the platoon leader of the valkyries—shows up in advance of the others. There she is, with her horse, of course. In close-up you can see that in her left hand she carries a sword.

In contrast to the paucity of graphic documentation from that 1870 first production of *Die Walküre* in Munich, from the 1876 production at Bayreuth—the premiere, actually, of the entire 'Ring Cycle'—there is a bounty of visual evidence. For example, we have—very impressively—the full-color drawings by Carl Emil Doepler of the costumes for various members of the valkyrie troop. We also have this full-color painting on glass, painted on glass because it was one of the 'slides' for the 'magic lantern show' that depicted the 'flying in'—the actual 'ride'—of the valkyries at the start of the opera's third act. Imagine the familiar music.

And we also have, from the 1876 Bayreuth production, plenty of photographs. For example, here is a photo of that production's Brünnhilde, with her horse, of course. And after this, the archives yield a veritable gush of photographs that depict various sopranos who sang this important role. Not all of these women were 'overweight.' But enough of them were to give rise to that most worn of clichés, you know, the one about the 'opera not being over until ...'

In any case, these vintage photographs give us a pretty good idea of what the traditional operatic Valkyrie looked like. We get a rather different idea of how 'the Valkyrie' looks not from photographs but from drawings and paintings. I've already shown you the drawings that Carl Emil Doepler made for the 1876 Bayreuth performance. Here's some more artwork, starting with a painting by the Norwegian artist Peter Nikolai Arbo. Note that this painting pre-dates the first *Walküre* performance by one year, but nevertheless it depicts an armed Valkyrie who does not carry a cup. In other words, it reminds us that the armed Valkyrie was not an invention of Wagner.

I'm pausing here at the year 1910, for the sake of introducing the English book illustrator Arthur Rackham. Rackham illustrated a great many books, including editions of *Alice in Wonderland*, the Grimm brothers' fairy tales, *Peter Pan*, and various plays by Shakespeare. But perhaps his best-known work involves Wagner's 'Ring Cycle': these would be the 1910 edition of *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, with 34 colored plates, and the 1911 edition of *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, with 32 plates. **[An autographed set of the 1910 edition (No. 96) of these books is for sale from the Wagner Society in NSW – see advert at the end of this Quarterly-Editor.]**

You've probably seen some of Rackham's wonderful *Walküre* drawings, which were made first with pencil and then filled in with colored ink. Probably the most familiar illustration is this one, which was not reproduced but simply imitated for the cover of the relatively inexpensive *Walküre* score that doubtless many of us own.

The original version of this presentation was delivered last November, at the University of Melbourne, during conference titled "Wagner and Us." Designed especially for that conference, the paper focused on the role of Wagner's valkyries in contemporary culture. That is still my focus, and so I will now jump ahead, to 1979. This film clip is from

Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. It contains what is probably the most famous—or infamous—cinematic use of the 'Ride of the Valkyries'.

And now what is probably the second-most famous use of the 'Ride of the Valkyries' in film, in D.W. Griffith's 1915 'silent' film *Birth of a Nation*. When this film had its New York premiere in June of that year, in the pit was Modest Altschuler's 'Russian Symphony Orchestra,' an ensemble that just a few weeks later would give the American premiere of Alexander Scriabin's famously colossal *Prometheus: Poem of Fire*. So it probably sounded quite sensational when, at the film's dramatic climax, the hooded horsemen of the Ku Klux Klan ride in to a town in the American south to squelch an uprising by recently freed slaves. First you'll hear a bit of the overture to Wagner's *Rienzi*, and then—after a clever modulatory passage—the 'Ride of the Valkyries'—the arrangement by Joseph Briel skips the trill-filled introduction and gets right to the good part.

Some obvious questions: How familiar was this music to an American audience in 1915? Was it familiar enough to be recognized as a sort of music 'symbol'? If so, what did this 'symbol' represent?

The first two questions are quite easy to answer. The 'Ride of the Valkyries', to members of the 'general' American public in 1915, was very familiar. In his 1994 book *Wagner Nights: An American History*, Joseph Horowitz notes that "the first 'Wagner night' [concert] at [New York's] Central Park Garden took place September 19, 1871. The first all-Wagner program, on September 17, 1872, featured the American premiere of the 'Ride of the Valkyries'. The public responded by leaping onto chairs and shouting."

Despite the fact that Wagner explicitly did not want music from this opera to be in any way excerpted, the 'Ride of the Valkyries'—four years before the Bayreuth premiere—was well on its way to being a Pops Concert favorite. Persons who could afford to go to the opera heard the music presumably as 'Wagner intended it to be heard.' But many others heard it as a self-standing piece, at concerts both indoors and outdoors. As early as 1871, they might have heard it in arrangements for one or more pianos. They might have heard it in 'recordings' on piano rolls. They might have heard it in 'audio' recordings. Here's an example from 1906, by the Edison Concert Band.

Along with audio recordings of instrumental piece familiarly known as the 'Ride of the Valkyries', there were also audio recordings of—what shall we call it? ... a 'song'?—titled "Ho-Jo-To-Ho!" Here's an example from 1903, a studio recording on a Victor disc, featuring soprano Johanna Gadske and an unidentified pianist who probably is Frank La Forge. There were other recordings of 'Ho-Jo-To-Ho', which was also known as 'The Battle Cry of Brünnhilde'.

So by 1915, when it was used in the silent film *Birth of a Nation*, the 'Ride of the Valkyries' was definitely popular. But was it also 'meaningful'? That's hard to say, but it is clear that the music's role in *Birth of a Nation* made it meaningful, and in ways that are still relevant today.

In a 1920 handbook by Edith Lang and George West, for example, silent-film accompanists are reminded that

the 'Ride of the Valkyries'—along with von Suppé's *Light Cavalry Overture* and Liszt's *Mazeppa*—is good for illustrating 'galloping horses'. In a similar handbook from 1924, Erno Rapee notes the cinematic usefulness of such Wagnerian items as the overture to *The Flying Dutchman*, the 'Bridal Chorus' from *Lohengrin*, and the Prelude to *Parsifal*. The 'Ride of the Valkyries', Rapee says, is good for 'battle scenes'.

The idea that the 'Ride of the Valkyries' is suitable for both 'battle scenes' and 'galloping horses' easily carried over into the era of the so-called 'sound film'. An early example of its use for a 'battle scene' can be found in a 1935 cartoon by Walt Disney, part of Disney's series of 'Silly Symphonies', something titled *Music Land*. The 'plot' is simple: the 'Land of Symphony' and the 'Isle of Jazz' are separated by the 'Sea of Discord.' The two nations go to war, and at one moment the queen of the 'Land of Symphony' pulls out all the stops.

Disney wanted to explore the other standard trope—that of 'galloping horses,' or perhaps 'flying' horses—in his 1940 feature-length animated film *Fantasia*. Indeed, as early as 1938 his artists were working on a 'Ride of the Valkyries' sequence that would have been, actually, quite faithful to stage directions for the opera. But events in Europe prompted Disney to abandon this idea.

It was no secret that Adolf Hitler was a fan of Wagner's music, or that members of the Wagner family were fans of Hitler. (This is the Festspielhaus at Bayreuth, specially decorated in honor of Hitler's birthday in 1939.) That Hitler was a great lover of the music of Beethoven, and of Bruckner, seems to have made no impression at all on popular culture. What made quite an impression was Hitler's affiliation with Wagner. Perhaps this was because of Wagner's infamous anti-Semitism, a feeling that Hitler certainly shared but one of which he apparently was quite unaware. Perhaps—and more likely—it was because of the clever ways in which Hitler's propaganda officers used the music of Wagner in, for example, the weekly newsreels that played in German cinemas throughout most of World War Two. Here's a very effective clip from 1942 that indeed features a 'battle scene'; there are no 'galloping horses,' or 'flying' horses, but there *are* flying airplanes. This footage documents the aerial attack on Stalingrad.

As I mentioned, the connection between Nazism and the 'Ride of the Valkyries' made an impression on popular culture. Thus in 1943 we get this, another animated film from Walt Disney, one that explains how children in the Third Reich are 'educated'. In this clip, it's explained that German children are taught 'warped' versions of fairy tales.

This third element in the semiotic equation—the Nazi element—seems to have come in and out of fashion. It's the only semiotic element in Ken Russell's 1974 film biography of Gustav Mahler. Almost all of the music in this biopic is, as you might suspect, by Mahler; in the highly stylized scene that depicts Mahler's conversion to Christianity—aided by Cosima Wagner—we hear something else.

There is explicit Nazi imagery, as well, in the 1980 film *The Blues Brothers*. This is a music-filled comedy, mind you, But it does feature a car chase accompanied by 'The Ride of the Valkyries'. Here we get a triple dose of symbolism. It's a wild

smash-'em-up car chase, so it counts as a 'battle scene'; instead of 'galloping horses' we have the modern equivalent, that is, speeding automobiles; and for comic effect, one of the pursuing police officers gleefully wears a brown shirt and a swastika armband.

Minus the Nazi imagery that clearly is played for a laugh, the 'Ride of the Valkyries' scene in *The Blues Brothers* is—in terms of semiotics—quite similar to the well-known scene from the previous year's *Apocalypse Now*. It is quite in keeping with the suggestions in the film-accompaniment handbooks from the 1920s. In other words, in the hilariously comic *The Blues Brothers* as much as in the ultra-serious *Apocalypse Now*, Wagner's familiar music underscores a scene that features both some sort of 'battle' and some sort of fast movement comparable to 'galloping.'

According to the fanatics who collect such information, before *Apocalypse Now* there were only a handful of 'sound films' that made use of 'The Ride of the Valkyries,' and in none of them do we find this doubly meaningful trope.

On the other hand, after *Apocalypse Now* there are a great many films that contain scenes featuring 'The Ride of the Valkyries,' and in almost all of them we indeed find the 'double' trope of 'battle' and 'fast movement'. Some of these are 'action' films, and some of them have specifically to do with realistic military combat. But some of them are unashamedly low-brow comedies, and some of them are children's films. That the 'Ride of the Valkyries' has become an easily recognized cliché in films aimed at children perhaps proves the point that, for Wagner's valkyries, it has indeed been a long, strange ride.

You're probably familiar with this animated film from 1957, an offering from Warner Bros., part of that studio's 'Merrie Melodies' series, starring Elmer Fudd and, of course, Bugs Bunny. It's called *What's Opera, Doc?* and it features Elmer Fudd quite famously applying somewhat 'violent' lyrics to the main tune of the 'Ride of the Valkyries.' Of course, as a cartoon presented in movie theaters in the 1950s, *What's Opera, Doc?* played not just to children but, rather, to 'general' audiences.

According to Norse legend, if you see a valkyrie you'll know that you're already dead. Yet in our modern-day culture we do see valkyries all around us. We can see them, obviously, if we go to the opera house. In 1899, the whole flock of valkyries looked like this. Nowadays, it's hard to know what operatic valkyries will look like. They could look something this.

But we don't have to go to the opera house to see valkyries. We can go to the toy store, where we can find, if we like, valkyrie action figures. We can read valkyrie comic books. If we prefer that our reading material not have pictures, we can read novels that are actually about valkyries or at the very least have titles that allude to valkyries. The females amongst us, for special dress-up occasions, can easily find valkyrie costumes. If any of us are really 'into' this sort of thing, we can get valkyrie tattoos.

This last lovely image is a reminder that in recent decades the Honda motorcycle company has marketed an especially

'fast' machine called the Valkyrie. For that matter, a bicycle manufacturer called Airborne has a titanium-framed 'road bike' called Valkyrie. But even early in the twentieth century the image of the valkyrie was used in advertisements for bicycles. And in advertisements for perfume. And for beer. And for cubes of beef extract. ...

Getting back to modern-day culture, if you like computer games, you can indeed find some that deal at least in a vague way with the 'character' of the valkyrie. You can also find quite a few computer games that feature not the 'character' of the valkyrie but simply the music that Wagner composed for the entry of his valkyries and which was subsequently exploited for the 1979 film *Apocalypse Now*. All of these 'shoot-'em-up' games use the 'Ride of The Valkyries' in their episodes of violent aerial bombardment.

But not all computer games that make use of the 'Ride of the Valkyries' are ultra-violent. As participants in the burgeoning field of ludomusicology [a musicological approach to videogame music] will surely know, for quite a few years the world at large has had free access to a game called *Flight of the Hamsters*.

As I said earlier, nowadays valkyries are simply all around us. And often they are depicted as being quite cute.

For the valkyries in general, and for Wagner's valkyries in particular, it has indeed been a long, strange ride, and I place the emphasis here on 'strange.' So let me conclude by sharing with you what, amongst all the appropriations of the 'Ride of the Valkyries' that I've been able to find, is perhaps the strangest. You'll recall that, after the quite sensational sounding of the 'Ride of the Valkyries' in D.W. Griffith's 1915 'silent' film *Birth of a Nation*, for a long time the standard cinematic use of this music had to do with 'battle scenes' or with 'galloping horses,' and sometimes with both. You'll also recall that since Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 film *Apocalypse Now* the semiotic cliché of the 'Ride of the Valkyries'—especially evident in modern 'war' films and computer games—has involved both violent combat and the very fast movement—often through the air—of deliverers of violence.

Yes, there are cinematic examples in which Wagner's iconic 'Ride of the Valkyries' is associated not just with combat and rapid movement but also with Nazi ideals. But these examples are few and far between. Most recent cinematic appropriations of this music sidestep politics and have simply to do with aerial combat.

Yes, from this ... to this, for the valkyries it has been a long, strange ride.

[Fortuitously, but interestingly, in his article, Roger Cruickshank draws our attention to the use of Valkyries in the parade that preceded the opening of the Melbourne Ring Cycle—Editor.]

For more images you can use your favourite search engine or just click on the following link: [www.google.com.au/search?hl=en&site=imghp&tbn=isch&source=hp&biw=1024&bih=662&q=valkyries+images&oeq=valkyries&gs\\_l=img.1.3.0110.2527.11056.0.14467.22.19.2.1.2.2.470.3306.3-8j1.9.0....0...1ac.1.56.img..13.9.2152.B6Xnm-\\_sysI](http://www.google.com.au/search?hl=en&site=imghp&tbn=isch&source=hp&biw=1024&bih=662&q=valkyries+images&oeq=valkyries&gs_l=img.1.3.0110.2527.11056.0.14467.22.19.2.1.2.2.470.3306.3-8j1.9.0....0...1ac.1.56.img..13.9.2152.B6Xnm-_sysI)

# AFTERTHOUGHTS FROM THE ARMFIELD RING, MELBOURNE 2013

by Roger Cruickshank

It's nearly a year since Opera Australia's first *Ring* cycle was staged in Melbourne, and I've been reflecting on some of the peripheral matters that still drift in and out of my memory of that event. Those of you who attended will have your own experiences and memories, and I don't want to disturb these, dear reader. I will therefore virtually ignore the production. My random thoughts, in no relevant order, follow.

## A pre-season parade

The scariest pre-*Ring* event for me was a parade which Jill Stark, writing in the Sunday Age of 17 November 2013, described as "like an acid trip for opera buffs. As the brass band played, eight Xena Princess Warrior lookalikes in metallic bodices arrived on horseback, gossamer wings billowing behind." [I hadn't associated "gossamer" with "*Walküren*" before. (RC)] "What followed was a procession so bizarre it bordered on psychotropic. First, a family of wild-haired cannibals, blood-smeared and snarling, leapt at the crowd, wheeling past a cage of severed heads."

"Opera Australia billed it as a "New Orleans street parade with themes of funeral, fire, apocalypse and renewal", led by the Valkyries – warrior women characters from Wagner's acclaimed work. Several hundred people enjoyed the procession, which ended in a 60-strong brass band performance of Ride of the Valkyries, made famous as incidental music in the Vietnam War movie *Apocalypse Now*."

Wagner is supposed to have loathed band music, especially adaptations of his works. Thanks Lyndon. And I always thought that the *Walkürenritter* was famous before F. F. Coppola introduced it to a new audience through his film, and sealed the fate of the tiny Caribbean island of Grenada which the US invaded in 1983 in Operation Urgent Fury, with the Ride as their death-delivering theme music.

The photos from the parade were not from any *Ring* I had imagined, and mercifully unconnected with the Armfield production. Men, women, and children with garlands of flowers in their hair, and flowing down their costumes, more like mixed-sex *Blumenmädchen* from *Parsifal*; men dressed in black armour looking more like Orcs than anything in Wagner. And that was my lasting impression, that Opera Australia's parade was more like Sir Peter Jackson's *Ring* than Wagner's. Some in the parade were celebrating the wrong *Ring*! So Melbourne.

## Richard Mills

In October 2011, Opera Australia staged "*The Love of the Nightingale*," an opera conducted by its composer, Richard Mills. This isn't the kind of music I usually enjoy, but in those days wherever possible I went to every new OA production, regardless of the content. For this performance, I sat directly behind Mr Mills in the front row of the stalls. Mills had already been named as the conductor of the Armfield *Ring*, and as the Perth premiere of *Nightingale* in 2007 had picked up four Helpmann Awards, including Best Music Direction for Richard Mills, and Best Female Performer in an Opera for Emma Mathews in the role of Philomele, I was unusually keen to hear this work. I came away convinced that Mills was a brilliant choice to conduct the *Ring*, allowing me to make sense of the long sweeping phrases in his opera, and I was more than a little dismayed when he left the project. I will now go to Melbourne next February to hear his *Hollander*, to see if my enthusiasm for his Wagner reading was justified.

## Venue

There are opera houses in Europe which were built over 200 years ago which have almost perfect acoustics, but here in Australia we pride ourselves in building venues with the acoustics of a good public toilet, and then performing Opera in them. Sydney's so-called Opera House, often associated with the word "Icon", with its tiled exterior, does remind one of a public toilet which has been turned inside out. During its construction, it was interfered with so disgracefully by NSW public servants that all we have is a little theatre under a little Spanish helmet, in which Opera struggles to be heard. So Sydney.

And so it was with Melbourne. The State Theatre, allegedly with one of the world's largest stages, had a \$4 million upgrade to the orchestra pit in readiness for the Armfield *Ring*, so that it could accommodate 110 musicians. But it was clear from early reviews that there were dead spots on the stage which singers had to avoid if they had any hope of reaching their audience.

I had an A reserve seat in the stalls almost at the end of a row, just under the overhang of the Circle. The sound was abysmal. A friend who sat next to me offered me his seat, and I was grateful to swap and hear the vastly improved sound for such a small move in the venue. "A Reserve" that seat certainly was not!

## Expectations

Back in Sydney after the *Ring*, I came across this in the December 2013 issue of *Opera Now*. Robert Turnbull, in an article titled "Cycle paths" which lambasted Frank Castorf's controversial *Ring* in Bayreuth that year, wrote "As you read this, the first critical glimmers should be emerging from Opera Australia's much heralded new *Ring* cycle in Melbourne, establishing a trend perhaps of culturally specific *Rings* with its references to Australia's Aboriginal history."

I spent a while thinking about that. Where was there any reference to Aboriginal history? Was the end of *Götterdämmerung*, with the dead Siegfried standing with his face covered in white powder, next to Brünnhilde with the flaming lily, meant to be an Aboriginal reference? I wasn't convinced. None of the reviews I'd read then, or have read since, mentioned anything about an indigenous perspective, and looking at the photo from the Immolation on the cover of *The Wagner Journal* (Vol 8 No 1) didn't help me make that connection. Were overseas commentators expecting a "culturally specific" *Ring*? If they were, I don't think that they got it. If we did get it, I missed it.

## The "Aussie-est" Ring of them all

One unnecessary piece of Melbourne *Ring*-up-man-ship was the suggestion that the Armfield *Ring* was "more Australian" than any other *Ring* (and particularly the Neidhardt *Ring*) because it used more Australian artists. This puzzled me, because apart from the Wotan and two Siegfrieds, and the odd New Zealander cunningly elevated to the status of Honorary Australian in the style of Russell Crowe, I think that, with Lisa Gasteen firmly in the Australian camp, the Neidhardt *Ring* just might have surpassed its Melbourne successor for Dinkie Dinkness. But who's counting?

### Last performances

The December 2013 issue of *Opera Now* had another revelation. The Deutsche Oper in Berlin would be staging one complete cycle of the late Gotz Friedrich's *Ring*, with Terje Stensvold (our Wotan) and Susan Bullock (our Brünnhilde), from January 8 to 12, 2014. But I heard from a number of people at the Armfield *Ring* that one or both of these singers would be retiring after the Melbourne performances, as if we were attending a historical moment. And clearly we weren't, and they weren't retiring just yet.

### Sacred tea-towel

Tea-towels don't get much of showing in history. Most famously, perhaps, Blessed Veronica is commemorated in Station Six of the (catholic) Stations of the Cross, wiping the face of Jesus as He carries His cross to His death on Calvary with her tea-towel (often mis-translated as "veil"), which thereafter acquired a miraculous image of the face of the thorn-crowned Christ. Today she would have just taken a selfie.

The Ravens Tea-Towel in Armfield's *Götterdämmerung* is a close second to Veronica's. At some point, The Ravens Tea-Towel (a rectangle of fabric bearing a picture of Ravens) descends from the heavens between two stout wires, and hovers and flaps away a few feet above the ground. I imagine that when the immolating Brünnhilde sang "Fliegt heim, ihr Raben" ("Fly home, you ravens," according to Rudolph Sabor's translation). The Ravens Tea-Towel rose back up to the heavens, but I confess that I was more interested in Susan Bullock's unexpectedly good singing at that moment, and didn't notice.

### Don't stone the crows yet

Some years ago, a friend decided that I needed to be educated in Popular Culture. First he took me to the movie *Too Fast Too Furious*, which I didn't quite get, and then he took me to see a *Charlie's Angels* movie. After that, I was overflowing with enthusiasm – "Wasn't *Too Fast Too Furious* a fantastic film", I exploded. Which in context, it was.

And so it was in the Melbourne -Adelaide *Ring* bake-off. I had reservations about the 2004 Neidhardt *Ring*. The hero of that production for me was Nick Schlieper (lighting designer and associate set designer) and the moments of that production that I cherish are of the vast empty spaces he lit with such subtlety. I wasn't convinced by the Wunderbar; and Elke Neidhardt's refusal, presumably on political grounds, to handle the magical or divine realistically had always been a stumbling point for me. Turning Don Giovanni into a coked-up freak to avoid having a singing statue actually come to dinner never worked for me. And so the Neidhardt *Ring* was my local Wagnerian *Too Fast Too Furious*.

And then I saw the Armfield *Ring*, and I realized just how fantastic the Neidhardt *Ring* had been. But by then it was too late, with the sets having long ago decayed and been sold off to defray storage costs, and Neidhardt herself now dead, the Adelaide experience would never be repeated. The custodian of the video recording of the final cycle, which was broadcast live and free to an audience in the adjacent Space Theatre, may one day release it, after everyone with a claim to royalties has died or the required span of years passed, but I fear that I may have passed by then too, or become too ga-ga to appreciate the genius of that production.

I also wondered at the sincerity of Opera Australia's embrace of Neidhardt after her death, dedicating Melbourne cycles to her memory, given the rumours that their relationship had been rocky at best.

### Next in 2016?

If OA is staging this *Ring* again in 2016, as the publicity in 2013 stated, I would have expected that there'd be an appeal for donations in 2014 to start the process of building the excitement. Not everyone who sang in the 2013 *Ring* will be able to reprise their roles in 2016, so there's a new cast to recruit, and rumours to start. But so far, there has been a deathly silence on the subject of another series of cycles in 2016, let alone 2019. Will Melbourne become the southern hemisphere's *Ring* capital, as was expected, or will the Armfield *Ring* be a one-off? Someone should ask Mr Terracini.

[It seems that Roger has not heard the rumour that has reached your Editor's ears that the 2016 Melbourne *Ring* Cycle has been postponed to 2017, making Roger's final comment even more pressing Editor.]

## CHRISTMAS WITH THE WAGNER FAMILY AT TRIBSCHEN AND BAYREUTH by Terence Watson

Richard Wagner generally ensured that his family always had a memorable Christmas. All Wagner aficionados know the story of the 1870 creation of The Siegfried Idyll (original name Tribschener Idyll, symphonic poem for chamber orchestra) as a Christmas-birthday present for Cosima. In the very first entry in Cosima Wagner's Diary, for 1 January 1868, Cosima wrote of "the Friend" coming to wish her happy New Year, and then in the early evening calling Eva and Isolde (Loldi), who were the only children living with her at this stage, to receive their late Christmas presents: "Richard played for them, they danced.... Then Richard started up jumping Jack, to Loldi's great joy."



1881-garden steps of Bayreuth-the Wagner family with friends

On Christmas Day 1870, after the playing of the "Symphonic Birthday Greeting," as Cosima calls the Siegfried Idyll, "... Richard came into me with the five children [Daniella, Blandine from Cosima's first marriage, and of course now Siegfried] and put into my hands either score of the [composition]. I was in tears, but so, too, was the whole household."

For Christmas Day 1871, Cosima records: "children's games, family lunch, all happy and merry. I contemplative, as always on my birthday." Christmas Day 1872 morning begins, as it has for many years, "birthday greetings from the children, with wreaths and singing." In the evening, "A children's party, at which I show our magic lantern."

On 25 December 1873 in Bayreuth, "Richard gives me the first act of *Götterdämmerung*, orchestrated!!!!... early in the morning I hear the children in the adjoining room, singing the 'Kose- und Rosenlied'[the newly composed Kinder-Katechismus zu Kosel's (Cosima's) Geburtstag for solo, children's choir and orchestra "Cuddles and Roses Song"] so touching, so affecting! Then they come to my bedside, and Siegfried recites the poem to me!"



## ELIZABETH CONNELL PRIZE FOR DRAMATIC SOPRANOS

by Leona Geeves

The Wagner Society, which sponsored the 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize in the **Elizabeth Connell Prize**, was thrilled to be introduced to the singers at a morning reception hosted by Credit Suisse in their offices overlooking the harbour. The singers, **Tracy Cox**, from the USA, British-born but Australian resident, **Lucinda-Mirikata Deacon**, American, **Diane Kalinowski**, from Poland, **Anna Patrys** and Australian-born but living in Britain, **Justine Viani**, as well as Australian, **Kathryn Radcliffe**, a finalist in the **Bel Canto Award**. Also present were the sponsors, Maestro **Richard Bonyng**e and the generous people who were billeting the singers, as well as Elizabeth Connell's family.

Two days later the preliminary round of singing was held at Shore School's Smith Theatre. This involved the singer with her first choice of aria and the judges asking for the second aria. It was a treat to hear such big voices, which by then had settled down after such long flights.

And after another two days, in the Verbrugghen Hall, at the Sydney Conservatorium the finals of both competitions took place, in a long session. The Bel Canto Award, was held in first half of the program. Both were hosted by SBS personality and former opera singer, **Silvio Rivier**.

### BEL CANTO AWARD

This award was first given in 2011. From thirty-eight entrants, six finalists had been selected. They were multi-award winners and included two NSW singers, who had been supported by the **Wagner Society**, soprano, **Rachel Bate**, and tenor, **Matthew Reardon**.

Also singing were **Marlena Devoe**, a New Zealand born Samoan and another New Zealander, bass-baritone **James Ioelu**. To complete the session, sopranos, **Kathryn Radcliffe**, from Victoria, and Queensland's **Morgan Balfour**. All sang two arias each.

The Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyng (JSRB) Award totaling \$42,000 was won by **Marlena Devoe**, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize, the Richard Bonyng Award, of \$8,000, was won by **James Ioelu**. There was a range of other prizes including money, CDs, Italian shoes, sunglasses and performance opportunities.

### ELIZABETH CONNELL PRIZE

After a world-wide search and auditions in various cities, 49 singers were heard in 2 rounds with such judges as Jane Eaglen, James Morris, and Dame Anne Evans.

In Sydney at the finals for the Elizabeth Connell Prize, each of the five finalists sang two arias, one before interval and one afterwards. **Lucinda-Mirikata Deacon's** two arias were Divinités du Styx, from *Alceste* by Gluck, and Morrò, ma prima in grazie from Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*. **Justine**

**Viani** sang Verdi's D'Amor sull'ali rosee from *Il Trovatore* and Casta Diva from Bellini's *Norma*. **Tracy Cox** thrilled us with Wagner's Dich teure Halle, from *Tannhäuser* and Pace, Pace Mio Dio from Verdi's *La Forza del Destino*. **Diane Kalinowski** gave us Měsíčku na nebi hlubokém from *Rusalka* by Dvořák as well as Wagner's Dich teure Halle, from *Tannhäuser*. Brunette **Anna Patrys** sang L'altra Notte from *Mefistole* by Boito and ended the show with another Wagner aria, the Liebestod, Mild und leise from *Tristan und Isolde*.

The Judges on the night included Maestro, **Richard Bonyng**e, **AC CBE**, iconic Wagner singer, **Marilyn Richardson**, **Moffatt Oxenbould AM**, and Australian mezzos, **Bernadette Cullen** and **Fiona Janes**.

London-based accompanist, the wonderful and tireless David Harper, played for all of the singers for both awards. After the judges conferred in the interval, the prizes were announced. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize, **The Wagner Society in NSW Prize (\$5,000)**, was won by **Justine Viani**, and the winner of the Elizabeth Connell Prize was Poland's **Anna Patrys**, who was unbelievably excited. She told the audience she had moved from singing as a mezzo and hadn't had an accompanist or teacher for some 5 years. It is a voice of wonderful range with very powerful low notes. At first, there were problems with a travel visa, but a request to the Sydney Polish consulate from the JSRB Foundation, resulted in the visa and her hometown paid for her fare. She also won the Universal Music CD Prize. Each remaining finalist received a cash prize and all finalists from both events received a copy of the coffee table book, **Great Grand and Famous Opera Houses**, to which this writer was proud to contribute.

As a final event, the Foundation held a master class conducted by Richard Bonyng. The participants were **Justine Viani**, singing D'Amor sull'ali rosee from *Il Trovatore* by Verdi; **Morgan Balfour** sang from Mozart's *Idomeneo*, Se il padre perdei and **Matthew Reardon** (still coping with a bad cold) sang Pourquoi me réveiller, from Massenet's *Werther*, for which Maestro Bonyng enlisted the help of Opera Australia French coach Marie-Claire, who assisted with meaning, pronunciation and emphasis.



Justine Viani

## SYLVIA GREENBERG AND DAVID ARONSON BIG VOICE MASTER CLASS FOR HARBOUR CITY OPERA by Leona Geeves

The Wagner Society was asked by Harbour City Opera to help sponsor this class and we were happy to do so. In the absence of a report back from HCO, here are my thoughts.

Two coaches from Vienna State Opera, who visit Australia from time to time gave an afternoon master class at the Paddington Uniting Church in front of a small audience. The coaches, singer **Sylvia Greenberg** and her partner and accompanist and vocal coach, **David Aronson** worked with dramatic soprano, **Myllinda Joyce**, bass **Adrian Tamburini**, baritone, **Sitiveni Talei** and baritone, **Robert Beasley**, who have all sung with Opera Australia recently, either in the chorus or with covers and small roles. It was fascinating to watch how the singers blossomed under such specialised tutelage and the end results sounded amazing.

### About the Artists:

New York born conductor and pianist **David Aronson** holds degrees in Music from New York and Germany. His career commenced in Zurich, where he rose from coach to assistant chorus-master, then opera conductor. He progressed to guest conducting in Darmstadt and Stuttgart, and assisted Herbert von Karajan at the Salzburg Festival *Carmen*. He then joined the music staff of the Vienna State Opera and also guest conducted other orchestras. A renowned opera coach, he has coached many singers, including Domingo, Pavarotti, Terfel, Fleming, Garanca and Netrebko. He teaches opera coaching and conducting in Vienna and has held recitals and master classes world-wide.

**Sylvia Greenberg** debuted with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra under Zubin Mehta. She sang at the Zurich and the Deutsche Oper, Berlin. Engagements followed at festivals in Salzburg, Bayreuth and Aix en Provence, and she debuted as Lucia at La Scala. She can be heard on numerous recordings including Mozart's *Abduction*, Haydn's *Creation* and *L'anima del filosofo*, Gluck's *Paride ed Elena*, sacred music by Poulenc and Bizet as well as Orff's *Carmina burana* and Berio's *Un re in ascolto*, Mahler's *8th Symphony* as well as the newly rediscovered Handel cantata "*Crudel tiranno amor*". She is a highly respected coach and teacher in Munich and Vienna.

**Myllinda Joyce**, although from NSW, studied in Melbourne, where she was a Victorian Opera Developing Artist.

Her roles include Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* and Mrs Grose in Britten's *Turn of the Screw*. With Opera Australia, Myllinda appeared in *Aida*, *Otello*, *Turandot*, *The Merry Widow*, and *Carmen*. Her oratorios include Verdi's *Requiem*, Rachmaninov's *The Bells* and Beethoven's *9th Symphony*. Myllinda was the first Australian to be offered a position with the New York Wagner Theatre Program in 2012, where she sang Gerhilde in *Die Walküre*. She was a finalist in the Australian Singing Competition where she performed with the SSO under the baton of Richard Bonyng. Myllinda sang *Es gibt ein Reich*, from Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

**Robert Beasley** graduated from The Victorian College of the Arts, and has since performed with Opera Australia, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Oz Opera, The Victorian State Opera and Victorian Opera. His principal operatic repertoire includes roles in *Madama Butterfly*; *La Bohème*, *Werther*, *Giulio Cesare*, *La Traviata*, *Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. *Iphigénie en Tauride*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La Cenerentola*, *Faust*, *Samson et Dalilah*, *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Jenufa*, *Macbeth*, *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Aida*; *Falstaff*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, and *Tristan und Isolde*. His oratorios include *Elijah*, *B minor Mass*, *Messiah*, and *Ein Deutsches Requiem*. Robert sang Silvio's aria "*Decidi il mio destin, Nedda...*" from *I Pagliacci*.

**Adrian Tamburini** is a bass with an extensive range of roles in musicals and opera for the opera companies in Victoria – Melbourne Opera, Lyric Opera of Melbourne, Melbourne Opera and OZOpera Schools Touring.

From 2009 his roles and an extensive series of covers in OA include from *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*, *Rigoletto*, *Bliss*, *Macbeth*, *La Bohème*, *La Traviata*, *Capriccio*, *Turandot*, *Werther*, *Peter Grimes*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and *Salome*. His oratorios include *The Messiah*, *St John's Passion*, *Ich habe Genug*, *Magnificat* and *L'Enfance du Christ*.

Adrian sang King Philip's aria from Verdi's *Don Carlo*

In 2009 Myllinda, Robert and Adrian were finalists in the **Melbourne German Opera Award** for the prize of one year's experience at Wiesbaden Opera.

Australian-born, **Sitiveni Talei** spent his childhood in Fiji. He studied at the Australian National University and in 2008 won the Marianne Mathy Scholarship, and other awards at the Australian Singing Competition. He has performed roles in among others, *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, *Falstaff*, *Carmen*, *La Sonnambula*, *L'Elisir D'Amore*, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *La Fanciulla del West*, *Madama Butterfly*, *The Love of the Nightingale*, *La Traviata*, *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, and *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. He has understudied the title role in *Rigoletto*, Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*, Dottore Bartolo in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and Amonasro in *Aida*. His oratorios include *The Messiah*, *St John's Passion*, *St Matthew's Passion*, Faure's *Requiem*, Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*. Sitiveni sang *Questo Amor* from Puccini's *Edgar*.

**Bradley Gilchrist**: For the whole of the afternoon, the singers were accompanied skillfully by this young Sydney repetiteur. Bradley has played for several Wagner Society concerts and is much sought after as an accompanist. From Western Australia originally, he continued his education in Spain and has worked as a ballet repetiteur in Korea. He is also a choral singer and conductor of an inner city choir. David was very impressed with his playing and they hope to work together again before too long.

## THE EVE OF THE LEIPZIG RICHARD-WAGNER-FESTIVAL 2015 - RICHARD WAGNER BIRTHDAY CONCERT

For anyone in the vicinity of Leipzig next year, there is an extra incentive to visit that lovely, lively city and consolidate one's Wagner connections—or to make a Wagner *Wallfahrt*—for the first time. The city's annual WagnerFest will feature two rarely performed works by the Maestro.

Symphonie in C-Dur WWV 29; *Das Liebesmahl der Apostel* - Oratorium WWV 69 with the Leipziger Symphonie Orchester; Choirs in cooperation with the Leipziger Chorverband; Director: Andreas Mitschke; Date: 21. May 2015 Philippuskirche Leipzig, 19.30 at Aurelienstraße 54 Leipzig

"The Symphony in C major, WWV 29, is the only complete symphony by Richard Wagner, composed in only six weeks by the then 19-year old in 1832. The musical highlight of the evening in the acoustic splendor of Leipzig's Philippus Church will be "The Love Feast of the Apostles" WWV 69, Wagner's only sacred choral work. Composed in 1843, this musically impressive work dramatises the Whitsun story of the Apostles. The monumental composition for a large orchestra and men's choir was enthusiastically received at its Dresden premiere by the audience."

Tickets are now available and can be ordered from the Leipzig Richard Wagner Society, Tel. +49 341 30 86 89

33, by e-mail at [gs@wagner-verband-leipzig.de](mailto:gs@wagner-verband-leipzig.de) or online from 20:09.14 at [www.ticketgalerie.de](http://www.ticketgalerie.de). More information at [www.wagner-verband-leipzig.de](http://www.wagner-verband-leipzig.de)



### Prices

**VIP I 110,00 €** (includes a canal boat tour)

**VIP II 65,00 €** (includes a service in Philippuskirche)

**V 18,00 €**

**E 13,00 €** (special reduction)

Highway Bayreuth - Berlin (A9), if you happen to visit the capital coming from the South, you should make a full stop exactly halfway the 240-miles Bayreuth - Berlin track (nearly 400 km) in Wagner Mecca Leipzig. This brand-new touristic highway sign attends you to visit the town of his birth and childhood years.

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### 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.

## VICTORIAN OPERA PRODUCTION OF *DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER* FEBRUARY 2015 - MAJOR CAST CHANGES

From the Victorian Opera's website: "In St Kilda's iconic Palais Theatre witness the famous tale of the legendary ghost ship come to life with the use of ground-breaking 3D technology. Richard Wagner's first masterpiece is transformed by Victorian Opera and two of the greatest living Wagner singers. Vitalij Kowaljow has withdrawn from the role and the Dutchman will be sung by Kammersänger **Oskar Hillebrandt**. Petra Lang has also withdrawn and now Senta will be sung by **LORI PHILLIPS**.

**CREATIVE TEAM:** Conductor Richard Mills; with the Victorian Opera Chorus with the Australian Youth Orchestra;

Director Roger Hodgman; Set and Visual Design Matt Scott and Christina Smith; Lighting Design Matt Scott; Costume Design Teresa Negroponte; Digital scenography is by Deakin Motion.Lab.

**CAST:** The Dutchman Vitalij Kowaljow HAS WITHDRAWN; THE ROLE WILL NOW BE SUNG BY **OSKAR HILLEBRANDT**; Senta Petra Lang HAS ALSO WITHDRAWN; THE ROLE WILL NOW BE SUNG BY **LORI PHILLIPS**; Erik Bradley Daley; Daland Warwick Fyfe; Mary Liane Keegan; Steersman Carlos E Barcenas.

**VENUE:** Palais Theatre, St Kilda

**DATES:** Saturday 14 February 2015, 7.30pm; Tuesday 17 February 2015, 7.30pm; Thursday 19 February 2015, 7.30pm

**TICKETS:** available via Victorian Opera's 2015 Season Packages, or call 1300 822 849; Single tickets will be on sale Monday, 13 October 2014. [www.victorianopera.com.au/what-s-on/the-flying-dutchman/#TabOverview](http://www.victorianopera.com.au/what-s-on/the-flying-dutchman/#TabOverview).

Among other roles, Herr Hillebrandt has sung in a number of Europe's leading opera houses. At the Hamburg State Opera his roles have included Hans Sachs in *The Meistersinger von Nuernberg* (Ingo Metzmacher) Listen, the title role of *The flying Dutchman*, Pizarro in *Fidelio*, (Christoph von Dohnany) and Telramund in *Lohengrin*. He has also sung Telramund at La Scala in Milan, (with Claudio Abbado). Since 1991 he did sing with the Vienna State Oper (*Wotan-Walküre Listen*, *Wanderer-Siegfried*, *Dutchman*, *Telramund*, *Amfortas*, *Klingsor*, *Kurwenal*, *Alberich Listen*, *Mandryka Listen*, *Don Pizarro a.o.*). He has sung Telramund at the Festival in Bayreuth (Antonio Pappano).

In 2010, Ms Phillip made her Metropolitan Opera debut as Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* and as Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* with Hawaii Opera Theater. Opera News praised, "Soprano Lori Phillips was a terrific Brünnhilde: her voice started out in excellent form and kept getting better; her clarion upper register sending chills down one's spine." In 2013 she performs Senta in *Der fliegender Holländer* with Michigan Opera Theater and Arizona Opera and covers Brünnhilde in *The Ring Cycle* at both the Metropolitan Opera and Seattle Opera.

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## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS TO ASSIST WAGNER SOCIETY WITH CATERING FOR EVENTS IN 2015

Dear Member

For many years, Renate and Herman Junker, long term members of our Society, have generously undertaken to coordinate the serving of refreshments at our events. Their contribution to the conviviality of our meetings has been enormous and we have enjoyed Renate's spectacular baking skills as well as Hermann and Renate's efficient management of tea and coffee service, the layout of the food and the tidying up after the event. The time has come for them to take a rest and they have indicated they would like to finish up at our Christmas party on 9<sup>th</sup> November.

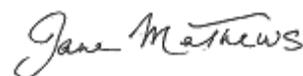
We are now turning to our members to seek volunteers to assist us to provide a similar service for our events in 2015. There may be another couple, like Renate and Hermann, who would be interested in taking this on, or it could be shared between a larger number of people. You may be available to coordinate the tea and coffee supplies, shop for supplies such as cheese and biscuits and lay the food out on the day. You may be willing to be part of a roster of people so that you share the coordination role with others and

don't have to attend every time, but can commit to attending by prior arrangement. You may be a good cook and interested in baking or becoming part of a baking roster.

Several members have already expressed interest but we would like to see more broadly who is interested in contributing.

Please contact Barbara de Rome to indicate interest or ask any questions [Barbaraderome2@optusnet.com.au](mailto:Barbaraderome2@optusnet.com.au) or 0411 018 830

Kind regards,



Jane Mathews  
President



# HAYLLAR MUSIC TOURS

## BOUTIQUE LUXURY CULTURAL TOURS

### OPERA, MUSIC & THEATRE IN LONDON

23 - 31 MAY 2015

Attend outstanding music and theatre performances at the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Barbican Centre, Wigmore Hall and Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. Hear mezzo soprano Justina Gringyte, who is performing the lead role in *Carmen* at the English National Opera, perform a private recital exclusively for guests on the tour.



Shakespeare's Globe Theatre © Pawel Libera

### OPERA, MUSIC & THEATRE IN THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

13 - 22 JUNE 2015

Attend performances by Grange Park Opera, Garsington Opera, the Choir of King's College, Cambridge and the Royal Shakespeare Company. Hear a private recital with mezzo soprano Kathryn Rudge, who we will also hear perform at Garsington Opera, and visit King's College, Cambridge for an exclusive tour with the Director of Music, Stephen Cleobury.



Choir of King's College, Cambridge © Ben Ealovega

### AUSTRIA'S SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVALS

22 - 30 AUGUST 2015

Attend five exceptional music performances at the Salzburg Festival, Grafenegg Festival and Innsbruck Festival of Early Music. Hear talks by musicologists, visit the Mozart Museum, Hellbrunn Palace Gardens, Hohensalzburg Fortress, Melk Abbey and Grafenegg Castle, and spend eight nights in luxurious hotels.



Grafenegg Festival © Alexander Haiden



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Joyce DiDonato



Photo © Josef Fischmaller

## ADDRESS

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](http://www.wagner.org.au) | Website enquiries: [wagner\\_nsw@optusnet.com.au](mailto: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)

Members celebrating the conclusion of an impressive recital by Anke Höppner and David Miller at the Mosman Art Gallery and the end of another very successful year of functions conducted by the Wagner Society in NSW



### FOR SALE: RARE ARTHUR RACKHAM WAGNER VOLUMES AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE BY WAGNER SOCIETY IN NSW MEMBER

A member of the Society has very generously donated two volumes of Arthur Rackham's illustrated libretti of the four Ring operas: *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* in Volume 1, and *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* in Volume 2. These are limited editions. They are dated 1910, numbered 96 and signed by Rackham himself. The illustrations are extraordinarily vivid. Patricia Baillie, a highly experienced antiquarian book expert and a member of the Society, has examined the books and written the following comments:

"Two handsome vellum bound volumes, Arthur Rackham: Illustrations of The Ring Libretti. *Der Ring des Nibelungen – Ein Bühnenfestspiel für drei Tage und einen Vorabend, von Richard Wagner*. Two volumes. Contains libretti of : *Das Rheingold* & *Die Valkyrie* (vol. I) and *Siegfried* & *Götterdämmerung* (vol. II). Ruetten und Loenig, Frankfurt A/M. 1910-1911. Limited edition, signed by Arthur Rackham. This is no.96. 25 x 19cm, bound in original publisher's full vellum, gilt titles, t.e.g., others untrimmed. Gilt medallion with 'RW' to front cover.

"The renowned illustrator, Rackham, has given us here splendid illustrations of Wagner's heroic Ring Cycle. There

are 64 tipped-in, tissue guarded, colour plates. The set presents very well indeed. There are a few marks and some very light soiling to the vellum bindings and occasional light browning or foxing to some pages. Overall, a handsome copy, in excellent condition, of this rare set.

"Note on the set numbering: For the American and British editions, both also dated 1910 & 1911, some claim that the edition was 1100 or, some, 1150 copies, all signed by the artist. This set is numbered in Rackham's hand as no. 96, making it an early printing of the edition."

Patricia also made enquiries about any other similar volumes of the Rackham libretti. There are currently two sets on the internet market, although it is unlikely that they are as early as no.96. Both are selling for a little over \$A5,000. In the circumstances, we thought that we should make these two volumes available for purchase by our members for the starting price of \$4,000. Anyone who is interested in purchasing these unique volumes should contact Society President, Jane Mathews, by email at [mathewsj@ozemail.com.au](mailto:mathewsj@ozemail.com.au).

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### ADDRESS FOR SUNDAY FUNCTIONS

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

# ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2015

1. Please provide your name, address and membership number

<b>Name</b>	.....
<b>Address</b>	.....
	City..... State..... Postcode.....
<b>Membership Number</b>	.....

2. Please renew my/our membership from 1 January to 31 December 2015 on the following basis *(please tick one)*

.....	Single member \$65 (single pensioner member \$36)	
.....	Shared members \$95 (shared pensioner members \$56)	
.....	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:*

*Please use your bank's internet banking facilities to send your payment electronically to*

**Westpac Banking Corporation, Paddington NSW Branch**  
**Account Name:** The Wagner Society  
**BSB:** 032040  
**Account Number:** 911323  
**Payee Reference:** Your surname, initials and membership number  
*(These will be printed on the Wagner Society's bank statement)*

**4(c). There is a new facility on the Society's Home page ([www.wagner.org.au](http://www.wagner.org.au)) for credit card payments using PayPal.**

**6. Signatures**

	Signature	Signature
...../...../2015	Name in BLOCK LETTERS	Name in BLOCK LETTERS
Date renewed		