

# *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*

*Faeries & Vampires*

**Marschner: Der Vampyr - Sarah Ann Walker Brad Cooper**  
Duet (Malwina & Aubry) – *Du bist's, es ist kein Traum*

**Marschner/Wagner: Der Vampyr - Brad Cooper**  
Recit and Aria (Aubry)  
*Ha! Wie das grausenvolle Bild... Doch jetzt, wohin ich blicke!*

**Wagner: Tannhäuser - Luke Stoker**  
*O du, mein holder Abendstern*

**R. Strauss: Ophelia-Lieder, Op. 67 - Sarah Ann Walker**  
*Wie erkenn ich mein Treulieb?*  
*Guten Morgen's ist Sankt Valentinstag*  
*Sie trugen ihn auf der Bahre bloß*

**Schumann: Widmung**  
**Weber: Oberon Overture - Bradley Gilchrist**  
Liszt Piano Transcription

**Wagner: Die Feen - Sarah Ann Walker Brad Cooper**  
Act 1 Finale – Aria & Duet (Ada & Arindal)  
*Wie muss ich doch beklagen... So soll für immer ich nun von dir Scheiden*

*Interval*

**Weber: Oberon - Brad Cooper**  
*From Boyhood Trained in Battlefield*

**R. Strauss: Die Schweigsame Frau - Luke Stoker**  
*Wie schön ist doch die Musik*

**Wagner: Die Feen - Brad Cooper**  
Act 3 - Szene und Arie (Arindal "im Wahnsinn")  
*Hallo! Hallo!... Ich seh' den Himmel dort sich öffnen*

**Weber: Der Freischütz - Sarah Ann Walker**  
*Leise leise*

**Joseph Marx - Brad Cooper**  
*Nocturne, Nachtgebet, Selige Nacht*

**Marschner: Der Vampyr - Sarah Ann Walker Brad Cooper**  
Duett (Aubry & Malwina)  
*Halt' ein, ich kann es nicht ertragen*

**Encore**

**Schumann: Ich grolle nicht - Luke Stoker**

## Faeries & Vampyres

While tales of the supernatural and fantastical have always been a source of fascination, the Romantic period, from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, stands out as an era in which many of the darker sides of the human imagination first found concrete manifestation in literary or artistic form. During an age that witnessed the birth of the gothic novel and the popularisation of the whimsical and often dark world of German folklore by the Brothers Grimm, and produced the fantastic tales of E.T.A. Hoffmann and the first real instance of vampire genre fiction, it is little to be wondered at that composers of opera (that art form which is virtually a byword for extravagance of emotion and sensational effect) would have found inspiration in stories which explored the extremes of subjective experience and the human psyche. Many of the works in this program are linked by shared or overlapping themes of madness, the gothic and the supernatural.

The links are not only thematic however, but also musical. This program represents the two historical “bookends” of German musical romanticism, from its dawn in the works of Carl Maria von Weber and Heinrich Marschner, to its very late twilight in the music of Richard Strauss. At the centre of this history stands Wagner, who, in his megalomaniacal pursuit of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* ideal in his later music dramas, single-handedly reset the course for the future development of Western music, especially of opera. Even such a giant, however, must begin somewhere; and it is not the mature works of Wagner that are to be presented in this program, but rather a sample of his very earliest completed work, along with music by two of his most important antecedents and two later composers whose music would not have existed without his legacy.

*The Vampyre*, the novella by Lord Byron’s physician John Polidori, on which Marschner’s opera *Der Vampyr* is loosely based, had its birth in 1816 during the same weather-bound house party on the shores of Lake Geneva which also produced Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. The story is generally acknowledged as the first notable instance of vampire fantasy fiction, and spawned not only numerous other works in similar vein, of which Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* is probably the most famous, but many theatrical and operatic adaptations as well. (Its popularity and influence may be judged by the satirical treatment it received in Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Ruddigore*). Marschner’s opera, on a libretto by Wilhelm August

Wohlbrück, was first performed in Leipzig in 1828 and was an immediate success. Polidori's original, rather eerie tale is reworked into a much more melodramatic version, in which the vampire, Lord Ruthven, must seduce three maidens before dawn or perish. He is ultimately thwarted and sent to hell in Don Giovanni fashion; yet is also permitted a somewhat sympathetic aria in which he bemoans the tragic life that a vampire must live. Musically, Marschner's works owe much to Weber; yet in several important respects they look forward to Wagner as well, in particular in their emphasis on dramatic effect as a guide to the musical structure rather than the reverse. Emmy's aria telling the legend of the vampire has been noted as a model for Senta's aria about the Flying Dutchman in Wagner's opera of that name.

Wagner's exposure to Marschner's *Der Vampyr* was certainly hands-on: he conducted a performance of it during his tenure as chorus director at the opera company in Würzburg in 1833, and also rewrote the ending of one of Aubry's arias, at the request of his brother-in-law who was singing the role. In the same year he finished his own first complete opera, *Die Feen*, which remained unperformed during his lifetime and is still rarely heard today. Despite the clear influence of Weber and Marschner, features of Wagner's later works can already be detected, such as themes of redemption through love, long expository narratives, and subject matter on a grand mythological scale. With this work Wagner also set an important precedent in writing the libretto himself, a practice he was to maintain throughout his compositional career, as it afforded him complete control over his works' conception. The convoluted plot in *Die Feen* (based on Carlo Gozzi's *La Donna Serpente*) hinges on a familiar enough fairy tale theme – that of love between a mortal and a supernatural being – but is lent an added level of drama by the fact that Ada, the fairy princess, is forced to taunt the hero Arindal to the point of madness, as a condition for their being allowed to marry.

Wagner regarded Weber as a guiding force in the development of his own ideas about opera, in his seriousness of emotional portrayal and dramatic intent, as well as in his daring musical innovations. The two operas of Weber featured in this program also have elements of the supernatural, though to differing extents. *Der Freischütz* of 1821, regarded as a landmark work in the creation of a specifically German operatic style, is renowned for its unearthly portrayal of the supernatural in the Wolf's Glen scene. The aria "Leise, leise..." is sung by the heroine Agathe while waiting with a sense of foreboding for news from her lover Max about

whether he has won the shooting contest that will allow him the right to marry her.

*Oberon* is a rather different matter, a fanciful tale worthy of the Arabian Nights, much of the action of which does indeed take place in Baghdad, as Oberon, king of the Fairies, tries to find the one couple on earth who have been truly faithful to each other through all trials and struggles. Composed for Covent Garden to an English libretto, it was to be Weber's last work; he died in London only months after its first performance in 1826.

"O du mein holder Abendstern", from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, needs little introduction, being one of the moments in all of Wagner most amenable to being performed as a stand-alone aria. In context, however, its expression of Wolfram's pure, sacred love for Elisabeth is also a premonition of her death. Once again it is the theme of redemption through love which drives the plot of this work of Wagner's early maturity, which had its first performance in 1845.

At the other end of the historical spectrum is the music of Joseph Marx and Richard Strauss, both composing well into the middle of the twentieth century in a late romantic style which, while somewhat backward-looking if compared to the new experiments in modernism, nonetheless continued to further push the boundaries of the harmonic and expressive resources made possible by Wagner's musical language. Marx, sometimes called "the master of Romantic Impressionism", is best known today for his output of some 150 songs, many of which remain unpublished. Three of these, from 1910-12, are presented in this concert, all with a nocturnal theme.

Both songs and operas constituted a major part of Strauss's output. Madness is treated in the *Ophelia-Lieder* op. 67, published in 1918. These three songs, on texts taken from Shakespeare's Hamlet, present Ophelia in the extremity of grief and derangement, in response both to the death of her father Polonius at Hamlet's hand, and to Hamlet's apparent seduction and then unexplained rejection of her. In contrast, *Die Schweigsame Frau*, an opera from 1935, shows the composer in the bittersweet comedic mode of which he proved himself to be such a master in many of his later operas.

## **Sarah Ann Walker Soprano**

Sarah Ann Walker, a New Zealander, was a Young Artist with Pacific Opera where she performed 1st Lady from Mozart's *The Magic Flute* in 2011, and previously a Young Artist with NBR New Zealand Opera where she understudied the roles of Liu in Puccini's *Turandot* and Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust*. Sarah Ann has also been a soloist with some of New Zealand and Australia's most renowned orchestras including the Winter Festival, the Summer Festival and the Christmas Concert with The Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra, and The Blossom Festival. She was also the soloist for Mozart's *Requiem*, *Solemn Vespers* and *Missa Brevis* with various NZ orchestras.

She has also sung with such Australian orchestras as the Australian Youth Orchestra, the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and debuted in 2012 with the Willoughby Symphony.

Most recently, Sarah Ann was the soloist for Handel's *Solomon* with UNSW Orchestra, and sang the role of Giorgetta with Sydney Independent Opera's production of *Il Tabarro*, the soprano solo in the Verdi *Requiem* with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra. In 2013, Sarah will continue to work with Opera Australia and will also make her debut with the North Sydney Symphony with Strauss' *Four Last Songs*.

<http://sarahannwalker.com/>

## **Brad Cooper Tenor**

Brad Cooper studied at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, the National Opera Studio in London and with Marilyn Horne on a Fellowship at the Music Academy of the West in California.

Brad's career in Europe has taken him to some of the great musical hubs of the World including the Opera Comique and Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, The Palace of Versailles; Opera Cologne in Germany; The Grachtenfestival and Nationale Reisopera in the Netherlands; the English National Opera, English Touring Opera and Opera Holland Park in the United Kingdom; The Aqua Festival in Cape Town and Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow for concerts with Soprano Superstar, Anna Netrebko.

Memorable roles have included Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Aubry in Marschner's *Der Vampyr* and creating the role of Clem in Mischa Hamel's *Snow White*.

Brad's standout performance as Davey in Jonathan Dove's *Siren Song* for Amsterdam's Grachtenfestival was released live on Chandos Classics to widespread critical acclaim.

Having returned to Australia in 2011 Brad is now a full time member of the Opera Australia Chorus. He appeared as Vierter Jude in OA's 2012 production of *Salome* and in 2013 he will cover the role of Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*.

Brad has been awarded the Nance Atkinson Trust Scholarship, the Australian Opera Auditions Committee's 'Dame Joan Sutherland Award', a Dame Joan Sutherland Society Scholarship and The Royal College of Music Award in the Australian Singing Competition.

<http://bradcoopertenor.com/>

### **Luke Stoker** Bass

Australian bass, Luke Stoker, originally hails from Tamworth NSW. He completed much of his tertiary musical training in Brisbane before becoming a member of the Opera Queensland Young and Developing Artist Program in 2011. In the same year, he covered the role of José Castro in *La fanciulla del West*. In 2012, he covered Zuniga in Opera Queensland's production of *Carmen* as well as working with the Opera Australia chorus in several productions. Luke is currently working with the Opera Australia chorus. He will travel to Germany in August 2013 having won the Sydney Eisteddfod German Opera Award and will work with the Cologne Opera Studio for one year. He has been awarded the Wagner Society NSW German Language Study Scholarship.

[www.lukestoker.com](http://www.lukestoker.com)

### **Bradley Gilchrist** Accompanist

Bradley Gilchrist is a graduate of the Western Australian and Sydney Conservatoria and the Escuela Superior de Musica, Madrid. He is much in demand as a freelance accompanist and repetiteur in Sydney, specialising in vocal repertoire. Bradley worked for several years as a repetiteur at the Han National Ballet of Korea and as accompanist and coach at the Accademia Europea di Firenze. As opera repetiteur, he has worked for several Australian opera companies and studied at the Lisa Gasteen Opera Summer School. He is undertaking advanced conducting studies with Simon Kenway.



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Upcoming Society Events

14 April, 2 pm	Dr David Schwartz: <i>Wagner on the Couch: Psychological Motivation in The Ring</i>	Goethe Institut
22 May, 6 pm	<i>Wagner Licht</i> Exhibition opening and Wagner Birthday Dinner	Venue TBA
26 May 2 pm	Annual General Meeting and concert	Goethe Institut
30 June, 2 pm	Tony Legge, Opera Australia Associate Music Director: <i>My Bayreuth Career</i>	Goethe Institut
14 July, 9.30 am -5.00 pm	<i>Riding the Storm: Seminar on The Flying Dutchman</i>	Goethe Institut
11 August, 2 pm	Lisa Gasteen: <i>Preparing for Major Wagnerian Roles</i>	Goethe Institut
25 August. 2 pm	<i>Swords and Storms</i> . Concert by David Corcoran; accompanist Bradley Gilchrist	Mosman Art Gallery
8 Sept, 2 pm	Neil Armfield: <i>The Ring Adventure</i>	Goethe Institut
6 October, 2 pm	Susan Bullock and Richard Berkeley-Steele: <i>Singing Wagner</i>	Goethe Institut

For further information, check [www.wagner.org.au](http://www.wagner.org.au)



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