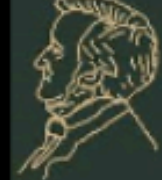


Bayreuth



The cast

Great client? Great architect? Great builder?



Richard Wagner



Cosima Wagner



King Ludwig II

Patron



Carl Brandt

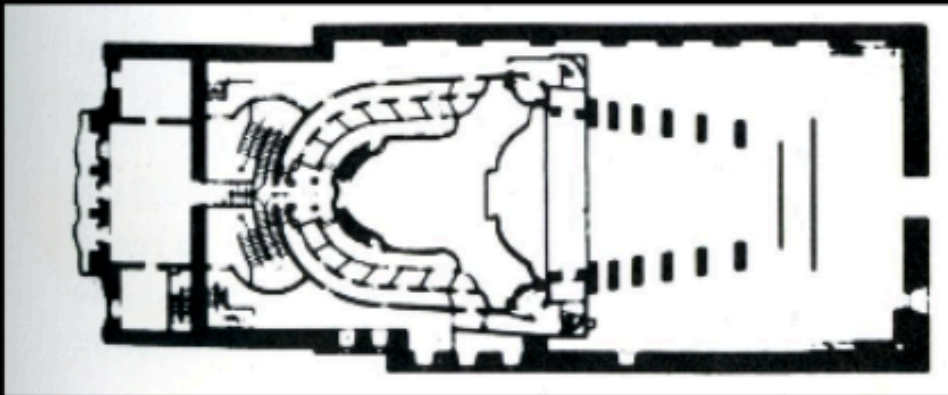
Stage technician



Otto Brückwald

Architect

Margrave Opera House, Bayreuth 1750



The Festspielhaus dedication concert was held here on 22 May 1872. Wagner conducted Beethoven's 9th



Interiors by G G Bibiena 1696 - 1757



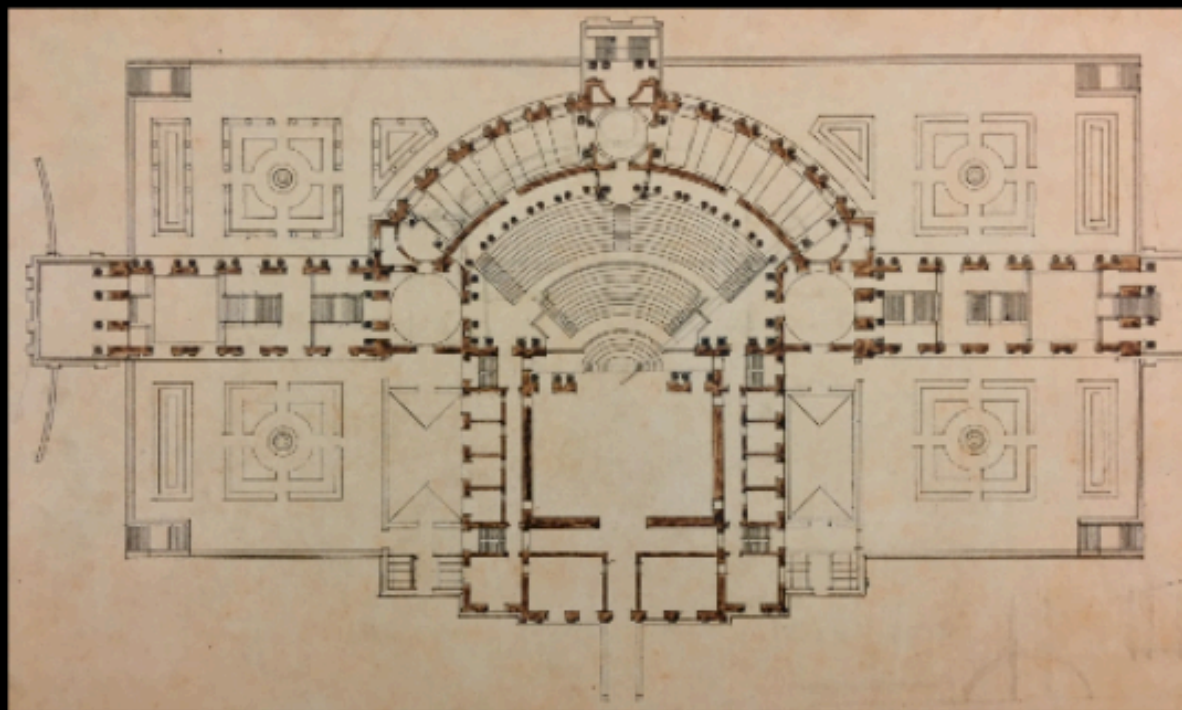


Bayreuth The idea

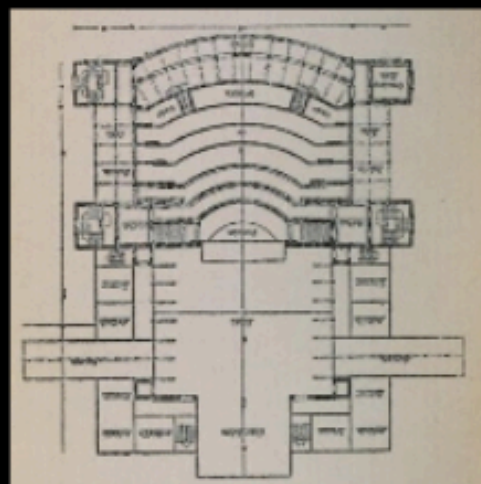
“I am genuinely thinking of setting Siegfried to music, only I cannot reconcile myself with the idea of trusting to luck and of having the work performed by the very first best theatre that comes along: on the contrary, I am toying with the boldest of plans [...]. According to this plan of mine, I would have a theatre, made of planks, erected here on the spot and have the most suitable singers join me here and arrange everything necessary for this one special occasion, so that I could be certain of an outstanding performance of the opera.”

Richard Wagner to Ernst Benedikt Kietz (1816–1892), 14 September 1850

Semper's Munich Opera House plan compared with Bayreuth plan



Ludwig II



Bayreuth 1870

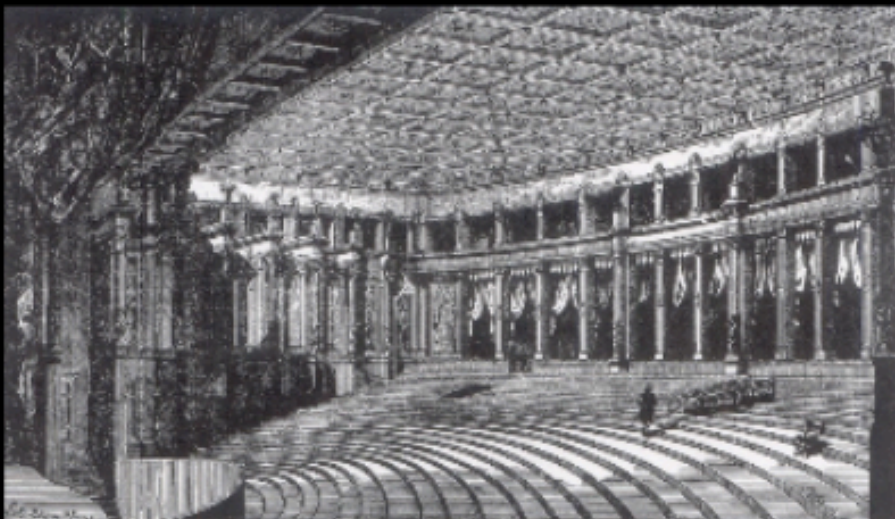
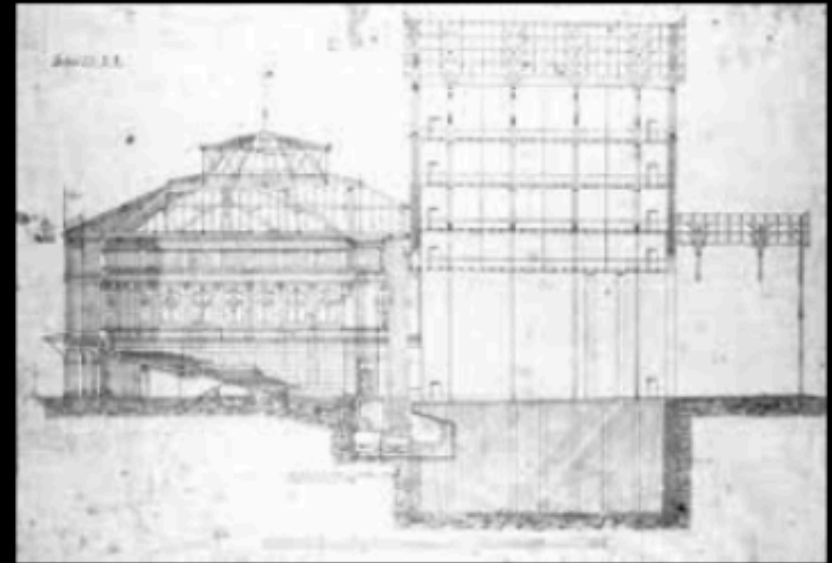
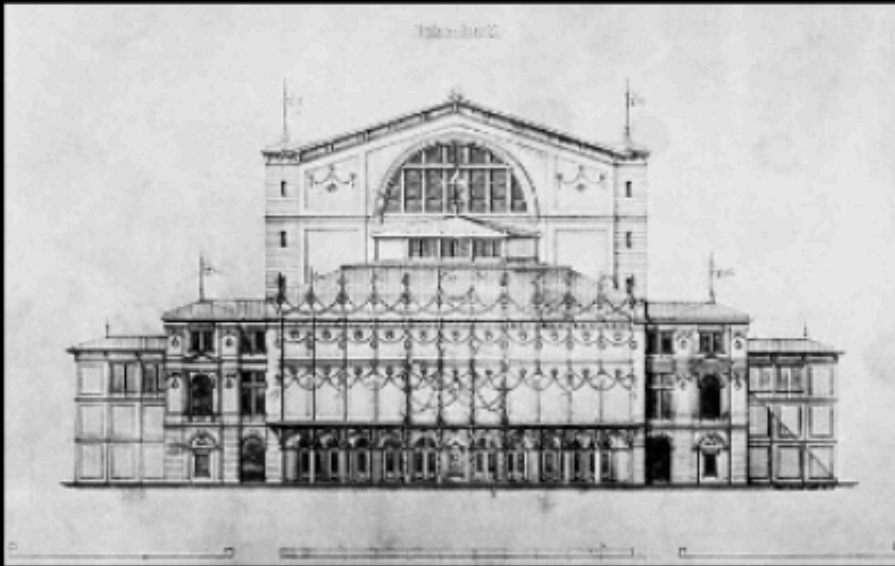


Gottfried Semper
1803-79
Dresden uprising 1849

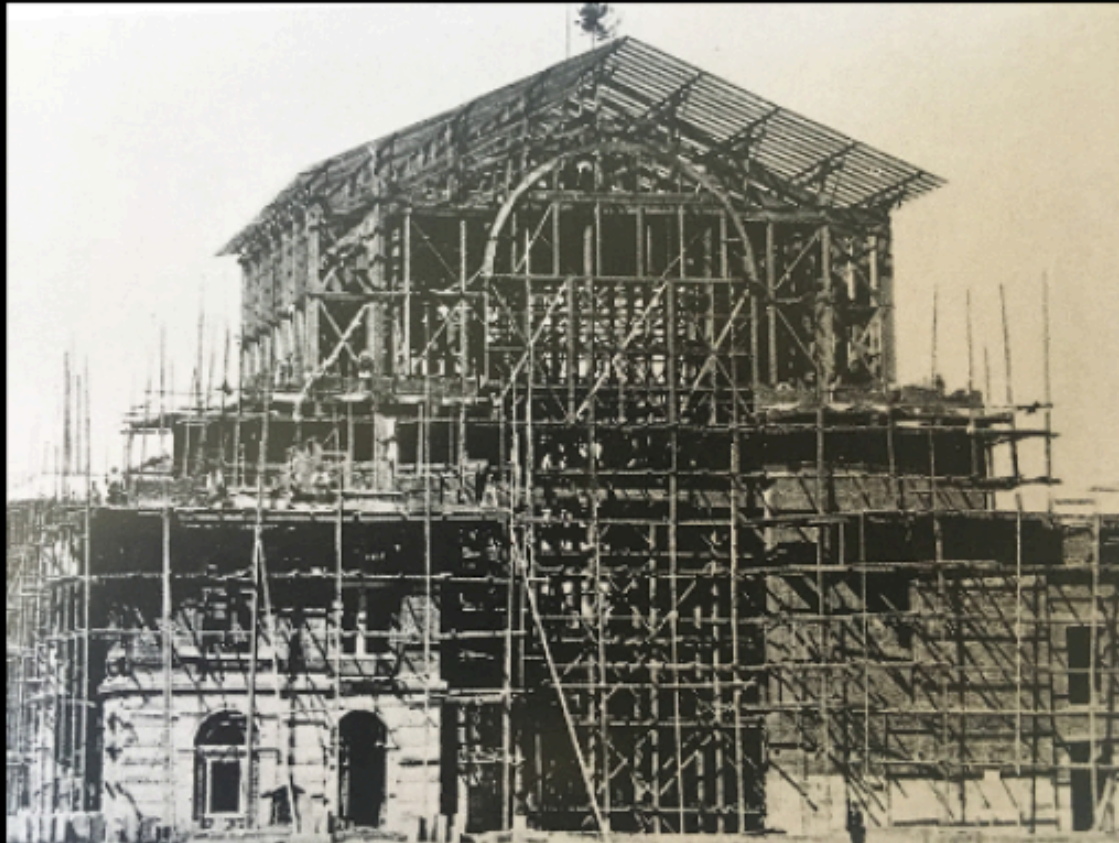
SemperOper, Dresden
1841/1878



Bayreuth design by Otto Brückwald (after Wilhelm Neumann)



Construction



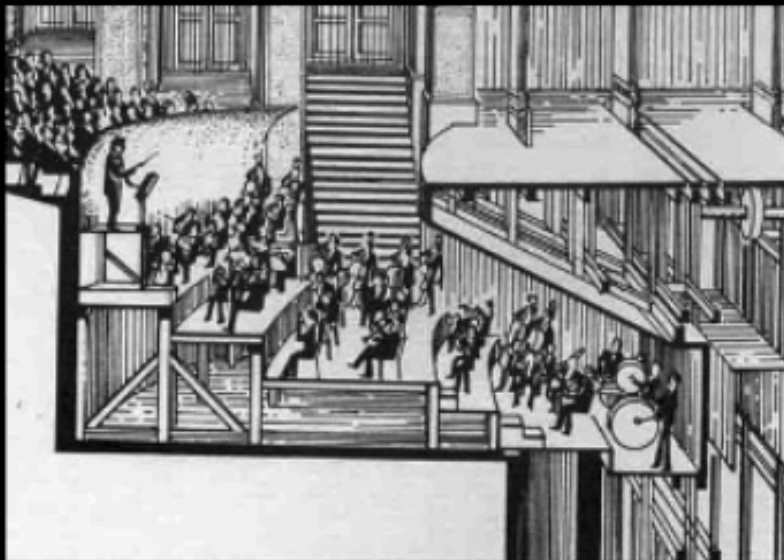
Conceived as an inexpensive 'temporary' structure



Traditional Bavarian
Fachwerk (Half-timbering)



Orchestra pit



Circulation



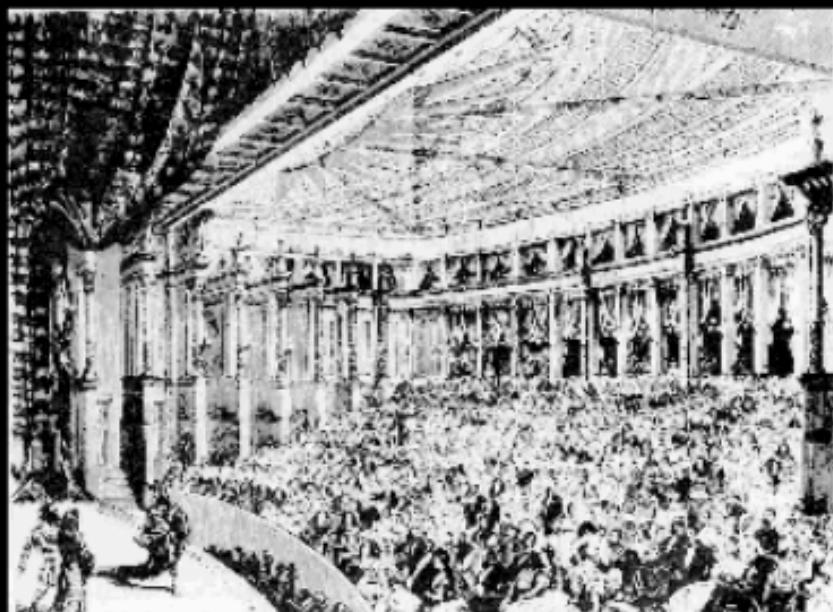
The auditorium



Decorations



First festival 13 August 1876



Opening performance *Das Rheingold*



Scenery by Josef Hoffmann



Josef Hoffmann
1831 1904



First festival 13 August 1876

*"I did not believe you would do it', said the Emperor. But who did not share this disbelief? ...If I ask myself seriously who has made this possible for me, that on the hill near Bayreuth there is erected a completely executed large theatre-building, according to my specifications, which must be imitated by the whole modern theatre-world, with the best musically-dramatic forces gathering around me in order to **voluntarily** undertake an unprecedented new, difficult, and exhausting artistic task, and to accomplish it with pleasure to their own astonishment, I can first of all only point to these effective artists ... "*

Wagner reflecting on the first Festival



Time line



1874



1968

- 1850 Wagner's first idea for special theatre
- 1862 Introduction to *Gotterdammerung* includes recommendation for festival theatre
- 1864 King Ludwig II offers to build theatre
- 1865 Wagner exiled
- 1867 Semper designs Opera House in Munich
- 1871 Bayreuth site chosen
- Early 1872 Brückwald becomes architect
- 29 Apr 1872 Ground breaking ceremony
- 22 May 1872 Foundation stone laid.
Beethoven 9 performed
- 2 Aug 1873 Topping out
- 1874 Ludwig withdraws support
- 1875 Ludwig re-engages
- 13 Aug 1876 First Festival - *Ring*
- 1882 Royal annex added
- 26 Jul 1882 Second Festival - *Parsifal*
- 13 Feb 1883 Wagner dies
- 1888 Full electrification
- 1930 Gallery added. 280 seats
- 1958, 68 Structural framing renewed

A family affair



Cosima and Siegfried



Siegfried and Winifred



Winifred and Hitler



Wieland and Wolfgang



Katharina and Eva