



"The Ballet from *Robert le Diable*" 1876 by Edgar Degas (1834-1917)

To find out more about the Wagner Society in NSW Inc.
please go to: www.wagner.org.au

A Lecture by **ROBERT GAY**
a Wagner Society in NSW Inc event

**The impact of French Grand Opera
on the works of Verdi & Wagner**

1.30PM Sunday 20 February 2022
Goethe Institut
90 Ocean Street (cnr Jersey Road) Woollahra

The impact of **French Grand Opera** on the works of **Verdi & Wagner**

A talk by **Robert Gay** for the Wagner Society
Sunday 20 February 2022

French Grand Opera sprang into vigorous life in Paris during the 1830s, with hugely successful works by Meyerbeer, Halévy and others magnificently staged at the Paris Opéra. The early heyday of this new operatic genre marked a formative period for both Verdi and Wagner who were about to embark on their first operatic ventures, culminating for Wagner in the huge success of *Rienzi* – a French Grand Opera in all but language – in Dresden in 1842, and for Verdi with the favourable reception in Paris of *Jérusalem* – a hastily organised rewrite in French of his earlier *Lombardi* – which premiered at the Opéra in 1847.

Verdi went on to compose *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* and *Don Carlos* for two of the Paris *Expositions Universelles*, while Wagner unfairly suffered the indignity of a fiasco at the Opéra with his revised 'Paris version' of *Tannhäuser* in 1861. Nevertheless, many features of French Grand Opera can be clearly discerned in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and perhaps even more surprisingly in *Götterdämmerung* and *Parsifal*.

DONATIONS TO WSNSW

Your Society has a number of recurrent philanthropic projects for which we seek your help. Two such projects are mentioned below. Please consider donating generously. Contact the President for details.

We are close to our target of \$15,000 towards two **Wagner Tubas** for Melbourne Opera (used throughout their Ring).

We are also embarking on a **Singing Scholarship** with **Pacific Opera** in honour of Justice Jane Mathews OA. If interested in contributing please contact the President.



ROBERT GAY

After gaining a BA, Dip. Ed. from the University of Sydney, Robert trained as a lyric baritone in London and Munich before turning to the field of music education with a position at 2MBS-FM. He has taught music history courses at Sydney University's Centre for Continuing Education since 1985. Robert's musical expertise ranges wide, from baroque to modern. He particularly enjoys placing works in their larger contexts – musical, biographical, social and historical. Since 1987, Robert Gay has managed to combine his passion for music and his love of teaching with his enthusiasm for travel. He has visited the great opera houses and concert halls of Europe and America and heard most of the great singers and instrumentalists of the last half-century. Robert was President of the Sydney Schubert Society for eighteen years, and for several years was a guest lecturer for ADFAS.

WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT?

Christopher Cook in a Zoom Wednesday from the UK, **March 2**

Masterclass with Christina Henson Hayes, March 13 at St Columba

Ralph Myers talking about the Simon Stone directed *Tristan und Isolde*
March 27 preceded by DVD *Silent Wagner*

Peter Bassett "Hurry away then towards the East" **April 10**
preceded by DVD *Die Feen*