

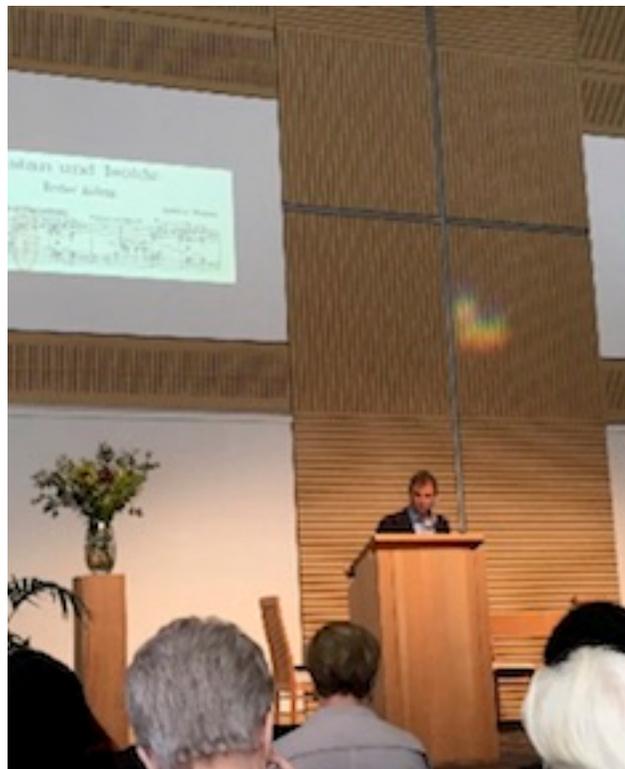
'Tristan Und Isolde' Seminar by Dr Antony Ernst, 5 August 2018

1.00 – 5.00pm, Seminar on 'Tristan und Isolde'

Venue: Willoughby Uniting Church, 10 Clanwilliam Street, Willoughby

Dr Antony Ernst is a director, dramaturg, lecturer and arts administrator who has worked with companies and universities in Australia, New Zealand, Europe and America. He started as a dramaturg with Opera Australia, has worked as a house director in Dresden, Düsseldorf and Rome, has completed a doctorate and directed Opera Australia's new production of Salome (2003). He is Orchestra Director of the Royal Danish Orchestra. Dr Ernst is a frequent very popular guest lecturer on opera and is a music tour leader in Australia and overseas. (WASO's concert productions of Tristan und Isolde are on 16 & 19 August in Perth.)

Previous presentations to the Wagner Society by Dr Ernst include Lohengrin (2017) and Beyond the Twilight of the Gods: Wagner's Musical Legacy (2014).



Society members always look forward to Antony Ernst's annual seminar and this year he was more brilliant than ever. His ability to talk and keep the audience of more than 50 members and guests engaged for hours without using notes, seamlessly incorporating visuals, recordings and piano quotes was extraordinary. He effortlessly explained and made clear difficult concepts from Kant, Schopenhauer and Buddhism and their influence on Wagner and Tristan und Isolde. He made me believe I understood Kant's theory of phenomena and noumena and how Wagner uses this with reference to Tristan's and Isolde's preferred (real) world of night to the (false) world of day. Antony's light touch and wicked sense of humour and irony kept us smiling throughout. He also incorporated some wonderful music by Bach and Sibelius to demonstrate the use of chromaticism, as well as sections from the finales of Acts 1 and 2 of Tristan with the incomparable Kirsten Flagstad.

One of his main insights, to which he returned several times during the afternoon, was about the importance of the und in Tristan und Isolde and its relationship to the famous 'Tristan Chord'. In example after example Antony demonstrated the revolutionary impact of Tristan und Isolde on all Western music and drama that came after. In Tristan Wagner created a complete musical/theatrical world in real time expressing the inner emotions of the lovers – the first 'subjective' opera.

By Michael Day