

# Behind The Scenes At The 2016 Melbourne Ring, 3 September 2017

## **2.00pm: Presentation by Luke Gabbedy and Tanja Binggeli**

A fascinating talk was given by baritone Luke Gabbedy and Tanja Binggeli on learning a difficult role in a language you don't speak.

The Wagner Society had sponsored, baritone, Luke Gabbedy, as Gunther in the 2016 Ring. He also covered the role of Donner. Luke had completed a Diploma of Performing Arts and Bachelor of Music Performance at the West Australian Conservatorium of Music, been a finalist in major singing competitions and had sung over 30 roles with Opera Australia. But he had only once sung a role in German!

Tanja Binggeli is the German Opera Language Coach for Opera Australia where she has worked on the company's German language productions for the past 10 years, including two complete seasons of Der Ring des Nibelungen, and Parsifal. Tanja also worked managing the Music Department and Young Artist program from 2008-2012 under former Associate Music Director, Tony Legge. Tanja has been teaching the opera course at NIDA since 2013 and is writing her first book on the topic of Classical Music and the Human Body. She was training to be a classical singer when she undertook a degree in European languages with Honours in German.

On Sunday 3 September 2017, they spoke about their backgrounds and lives and what brought them together on Wagner's major work. They discussed the difficulty of singing in a language you don't speak and how they actually go about learning a complicated role in a foreign language. German is a very difficult language and the vowel sounds are many and varied, as well there is the difficulty of placement of emphasis on syllables and words.

"It is so important that a singer understands what they are singing about," Tanja says. "It's also helpful to understand the subtle differences between English and the language they're singing in, to know the real flavour of individual words."

They were presented with wine gifts by the Society's sponsors, Brangayne of Orange.