

# 27 October 2019 - Wagner & Paris, by Dr Robert Mitchell

Sunday 27 October 2019

1.00pm: DVD – Sydney Opera House Gala Opening Concert 1973

2.00pm: Talk by Dr Robert Mitchell

Goethe Institut, 90 Ocean Street (cnr Jersey Road), Woollahra

## 1.00pm: DVD – Sydney Opera House Gala Opening Concert 1973



Australia's musical landscape changed forever on the evening of 29 September 1973, when the brand-new Sydney Opera House opened the doors of its Concert Hall to the public for the first time. In front of a packed, emotion-charged house, the great Australian conductor Sir Charles Mackerras made a triumphant homecoming in an all-Wagner concert that sent the critics searching for superlatives. Featuring the greatest Wagnerian soprano of the 20th century, Birgit Nilsson, as soloist, this was an electrifying opening for the iconic building.

Program (45mins)

1. Introduction
2. Siegfrieds Rheinfahrt (Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine)
3. Trauermarsch (Siegfried's Funeral March)
4. Schlussgesang der Brünnhilde (Brünnhilde's Immolation Scene)

## 2.00pm: Dr Robert Mitchell talks to us



A veteran of over 5,200 performances in more than 120 operas, baritone Robert Mitchell first sang with Opera Australia at the opening of the Sydney Opera House in 1973 and made his last appearance with the OA

chorus in the 2017 concert performances of Parsifal. Having principally undertaken chorus responsibilities during those 44 years, his final principal role with OA was as The Captain in the world premiere seasons of Kate Miller-Heidke's *The Rabbits*. Robert's other roles included Spalanzani: *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, Lillas Pastia/Guide: *Carmen*, Antonio/Annibale: *The Gondoliers*, Liberto: *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Maître d'Hôtel: *The Merry Widow*, Diener: *Lulu*, Government Whip: *The Eighth Wonder*, Officer: *Der Freischütz*, Messenger: *La Traviata*, Penizek: *Countess Maritza*, Frère Jean: *Roméo et Juliette*, Polish Gentleman/Soldier: *Death in Venice*, and others in *La Bohème*, *The Mikado*, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *Boris Godunov*, *Yeomen of the Guard*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Capriccio*. Robert has also been a soloist for the Sydney and Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festivals, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Chamber Soloists of Sydney and the Warringah and Wollongong Symphonies and has broadcast for ABC Classic FM. In 2015 he gave the first performance of Australian composer Gordon Kerry's song cycle 'Jean à Jean' which Robert commissioned in memory of his late partner Denis Condon.

After completing the Diploma of Music Education, for his Master of Creative Arts (University of Wollongong) Robert undertook a survey of the work of French singer/teacher Pierre Bernac. For his PhD (University of Sydney) he prepared a critical edition of Offenbach's five-act operetta *La Vie Parisienne*. A past State and National President of the Australian National Association of Teachers of Singing (ANATS), Robert has taught at Macquarie and Western Sydney Universities. He has lectured to music interest groups and written articles on a wide variety of musical subjects, teaches singing privately and is currently chairman of the Opera Australia Benevolent Fund.