

SUNDAY 21 MAY

2.00PM ANNUAL WAGNER BIRTHDAY CONCERT

A full house of enthusiastic members and friends enjoyed a delightful concert performed by the first two winners of the Jane Mathews AO Scholarship (sponsored by WSNSW for Pacific Opera); sopranos **Ellen McNeil** and **Olivia Swain**, accompanied by **Katherine Day**. The concert ended with everyone singing *Happy Birthday Dear Richard*. This was followed by a delicious afternoon tea with Barbara Brady cutting the birthday cake (made by Barbara de Rome) and a raffle, with some wonderful Wagner prints as prizes generously donated by our host Robert Mitchell, as well as a selection of books provided by Esteban.

PROGRAM

Ellen

Ich bin Euer Liebden sehr verbunden (The Presentation of the Rose),
Der Rosenkavalier, Richard Strauss
Und ob die Wolke sie verhülle, *Der Freischütz*, Carl Maria von Weber

Olivia

Einsam in trüben Tagen (Elsas Traum) from *Lohengrin*, Richard Wagner
Cäcilie, Op 27 No.2, Richard Strauss

Ellen

Elfenlied, *Mörrike-Lieder No. 16*, Hugo Wolf
Ständchen (Serenade), Op. 17 No. 2 Richard Strauss

Olivia

Es gibt ein Reich from *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Richard Strauss
Dich, teure Halle from *Tannhäuser*, Richard Wagner

ON RICHARD STRAUSS - AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW - A FILM BY ERIC SCHULZ

THOUGHTS BY MINNIE BIGGS
 MARCH 13 2023

This was a most rewarding and interesting film, quite inside the life of Strauss with marvelous clips of his conducting.

One line stood out for me:

Strauss conducting *Til Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks* in Vienna 1944.

Vienna, 1944.

Many questions.

The Jews in the Viennese orchestras, there must have been many of them, nearly all Jewish musicians in Vienna. What year did they begin to be removed?

Did they all go at once or one or a few at a time?

No need to ask where they went.

Were there so many Aryan musicians in Vienna to fill all those places?

Strauss conducted. As he had conducted a hundred times before. Already quite a few times he led a completely Aryan orchestra.

What about the audience? Also, largely Aryan Austrians. The larger component of Jewish listeners long gone. Maybe one or two hidden in themselves.

1944.

How did they feel, that audience, listening to the joy of *Til Eulenspiegel*? Hearing him chasing the girls, upsetting the

apple carts, were they fully enjoying his merry pranks? Did their mood change with the funeral march, did they mourn his hanging, did they foresee their own end? Did it all really end as a (musical) joke?

1944.

In the middle of a war without end.

Music transcends and Strauss would have conducted the orchestra as he always did, meticulously and himself. He was doing his job, his work, his life work and the (Aryan Austrian) orchestra was playing its instruments with attention and delight. With extra delight working under the composer conductor himself.

Did the music transcend, for that audience? Were they able to forget for an hour the deprivation, the horrors, the memories of the war?

Not initially their war, but now their war.

Alas it was not a musical joke. Not a joke. Not in 1944.

