



WAGNER  
SOCIETY  
nsw

CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF RICHARD WAGNER

# WAGNER QUARTERLY

ISSUE NO 6

# 133

JUNE 2014

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the second Quarterly for 2014.

2014 is, for obvious reasons, a quieter year than was last year. Nevertheless, we have some very special events planned for the year. We have already started on a high note. After our first event, involving cast members from the Melbourne Ring, we had meetings in March and April consisting of fascinating expositions from the two Dr Davids: Dr David Schwartz talking about family dysfunction in the Wagner clan, and Dr David Larkin talking about the two Richards: Wagner and Strauss. These talks are described in detail later in this quarterly, so I will not go into them here, except to say that the personal feedback from members who attended the functions was, on both occasions, full of unmitigated enthusiasm.

On 25 May, we had the Society's Annual General Meeting, which was attended by a number of members. The President's report was, I am afraid, considerably shorter than usual, as I had returned from overseas only the day before. But I gave a brief description of our activities in 2013, many of which were, not surprisingly, geared towards the Melbourne Ring at the end of the year. The Society's financial statements for 2013 were approved. They show the Society to be in a very solid financial position. No controversial issues were raised at the meeting, and all the items on the agenda were passed without dissent. As to the committee for the coming year, we have one new committee member: Barbara de Rome, in the place of Paulo Montoya. And Mike Day has replaced Paulo as secretary for this year. I would like to record my thanks to Paulo for his contributions to the Society.

Immediately after the AGM we were treated to a wonderful recital by bass baritone Christopher Richardson and lyric tenor Matthew Reardon, accompanied by virtuoso pianist David Curtain. Your society had sponsored Christopher to attend the Lisa Gasteen National Opera School in December last year, an experience that he described as "transformational" and "career-changing". It was also the first time that we have had duets included in a recital

PRESIDENT'S REPORT *Continued page 3*



Michael Curtain (Accompanist), Christopher Richardson and Matthew Reardon: 2013 AGM Recital with bottles of red wine provided by Brangayne Wines of Orange

**Patron:** Ms Simone Young AM  
**Honorary Life Members:** Mr Richard King  
Prof Michael Ewans  
Mr Horst Hoffman  
Mr Roger Cruickshank  
Dr Terence Watson

## FOR YOUR DIARY

2014

No Wagner performances scheduled by Sydney Symphony Orchestra or Opera Australia

Saturday 19 July	<i>Tristan und Isolde</i> – semi-staged performance by the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra – details below	4PM Auckland Town Hall
Sunday 10 & 17 August 7:00 PM	Jonas Kaufmann – two concerts of arias by Verdi, Puccini, Bizet and “others” with conductor Jochen Rieder	Sydney Opera House

## COMING EVENTS 2014 - STARTING TIMES MAY VARY

PLEASE CHECK THE SCHEDULE FOR DETAILS.

DATE	Some events may be subject to change and further detail in the next newsletter	TIME & LOCATION
15 June	<b>NB CHANGE OF SPEAKER: Professor Michael Ewans:</b> The Nicholas Lenhof 1999 Production for English National Opera of <i>Parsifal</i> 12:30 DVD PRESENTATION – Act I <i>Parsifal</i> - Metropolitan Opera 2013. (Jonas Kaufmann, Rene Pape, Peter Pattei, Katarina Dalayman, Evgeny Nikitin, Daniel Gatti (cond) Francois Girard (director)	Goethe Institut 2PM
20 July	<b>Behind &amp; Below the Stage: Marnie Sebire, Wagner Tuba, Melbourne Ring Orchestra &amp; Roger Press, Assistant Director.</b> <b>Melbourne Ring Cycle</b> 12:30 DVD PRESENTATION – Act 2 <i>Parsifal</i> – Met Opera 2013. (Jonas Kaufmann, Rene Pape, Peter Pattei, Katarina Dalayman, Evgeny Nikitin, Daniel Gatti (conductor), Francois Girard (director)	Goethe Institut 2PM
Saturday 23 August Seminar	<b>Dr Antony Ernst: Beyond the <i>Twilight of the Gods</i>: Wagner’s musical legacy.</b> (How Humperdinck, Strauss, Verdi, Respighi, Debussy, Chausson, Elgar, Mahler, Schreker, Pfitzner were influenced by Wagner) <b>NB: FUNCTION ON SATURDAY NOT SUNDAY at Willoughby Uniting Church Conference Centre 10 Clanwilliam Street (Details of cost, program and application process etc to be advised shortly) NO DVD PRESENTATION</b>	Willoughby 10:00 AM-5PM
21 September	<b>Dr James Wierzbicki: From the Sublime to the Ridiculous: The Long, Strange Ride of Wagner’s Valkyries</b> 12:30 DVD PRESENTATION - Act 3 <i>Parsifal</i> - Metropolitan Opera 2013. (Jonas Kaufmann, Rene Pape, Peter Pattei, Katarina Dalayman, Evgeny Nikitin, Daniel Gatti (cond) Francois Girard (director)	Goethe Institut 2PM
12 October	<b>George Gilmour &amp; Sarah Louise Owens: In pursuit of choral perfection: insiders’ views of the Bayreuther Festspiele Chor</b> 12:30 DVD PRESENTATION – Wagner Bicentenary Gala Concert from Semperoper Dresden, with Jonas Kaufmann, Staatskapelle Dresden conducted by Christian Thielemann	Goethe Institut 2PM
9 November	<b>Recital (details to be advised shortly) followed by Christmas Party</b> NO DVD PRESENTATION	Goethe Institut 2PM

Advice about changes to the Program will be emailed to people who have given their email addresses to the Society’s Webmaster; the latest updates will also be available on the Society’s webpage: [www.wagner.org.au](http://www.wagner.org.au). Admission to each event will be \$20 a Member, and \$25 per non-Member, unless otherwise indicated.

**Goethe-Institut address 90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)**

for the Society – a welcome innovation. After the musical performances, we enjoyed a special afternoon tea with champagne and wine, to celebrate the Master's 201st birthday three days earlier.

Many members might not know about it - I didn't before becoming President of the Society – but there is an International Association of Wagner Societies, generally known as the "Verband". We have long belonged to it, but it has become extremely German-centric over the years. It holds annual Congresses, in Germany or Austria, but only accredited representatives of Wagner Societies can attend and vote. Until very recently, these congresses were held only in the German language. It offers nothing to its members – no activities other than the annual congresses – and has never operated as a linking organisation, so as to give member societies information about each other's activities etc. To continue our membership this year would have involved paying a fee of 2 Euros per member, a total of approximately \$1,000. Accordingly, we followed many other international societies, including the New York Wagner Society, and discontinued our membership. I have recently met with representatives of the UK and Southern Californian Wagner Societies, who are seeking election to the board of the Verband in an endeavour to make it more relevant for international societies. If they succeed, and the Verband

appears to be becoming a truly international organisation, particularly one which provides a link between individual Wagner Societies, I have told them that we, the NSW Society, would be more than happy to re-join the organisation.

Finally I should again mention the Arthur Rackham books. They are quite exceptional, and I would be amazed if there was not some member who would covet them. I will bring them to the next Society event so that members can see for themselves how special they are.

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## DONATIONS

**Donations: Received since March 2014:**

Garry Tipping; John Tuckey; Mitzi Saunders; Professor Ivan Shearer AM; John Casey; Marlene and Paul Baumgartner.

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## NEW MEMBERS

Ann Robinson and Malcolm Pearse.

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## QUALITY HIGHLIGHTS:

### The Unsung Hero: The Personal Rhine Journey of a Wotan in the Wings - P. 4

Katie French

### For Sale: Rare Arthur Rackham Wagner Volumes - P. 12

### Three Reports on Society Functions - P. 8

### Wagner at the Met: Legendary Performances from The Metropolitan Opera! - P. 10

Colin Baskerville

### Wagner Society 2013 Financial Statements and Auditor's Report - P. 11

### Antony Ernst Seminar Application Form - P. 15

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## COMMITTEE 2013 - 2014

President	Jane Mathews	9360 9822
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# LAST FINAL WORDS ON T

## THE UNSUNG HERO: THE PERSONAL RHINE JOURNEY OF A WOTAN IN THE WINGS - KATIE FRENCH

It seems so long ago that Lyndon Terracini, Artistic Director of Opera Australia, and his Marketing Team, spoke to supporters of the Company, and to members of the Wagner Society, about the Company's plans for a Ring Cycle in Melbourne in 2013, to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Wagner's birth. The names of the singers were still in a state of flux, though it was clear from the start that the major roles, (other than that of Alberich, and perhaps Siegmund), would be given to overseas singers. (Who would have anticipated at that early stage how many of those roles would change hands, and that even the Conductor would ultimately change?)

However, in all the swirl of the excitement and the unknowns, there did seem to be one intriguing 'constant' in Terracini's presentations: someone from the Company at OA would both study and rehearse the central role of Wotan, and yet that person would not perform the role in Melbourne. Should the worse come to the worse and something unforeseen happen to Wotan, John Wegner would transfer from the role of Alberich, and perform that central role.

Who could this noble, perhaps naïve, chap be, who was prepared to take on board such a massive task which many experienced singers take years to master, (let alone get to perform), and then gain no glory? It was a once-in-a-lifetime learning opportunity for a young singer, and, as such, perhaps it deserved support from long-time Wagner enthusiasts? (There were also hints of opportunities for performance in the next Ring Cycle, in 2016!)

Enquiries were fobbed off: it was a secret. Answers were more forthcoming when there was mention of financial support! (Astoundingly, it had not been anticipated that anyone would want to support such a singer.) Then the name of Shane Lowrencev, was revealed to potential supporters, who were also sworn to secrecy!

Shane is a full-time principal artist with Opera Australia. He described his voice type as a Bass 'with a high top'. During his twelve year career with OA, his roles have been many and varied, and on the concert platform, he has enjoyed a distinguished career singing the bass solos in Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, and Bach's *St John Passion*— among so many others. In 2008 he had won the Australian Singing Competition's Opera Award, featuring the Youth Music Foundation Australia Award, which aims to facilitate performance opportunities and overseas study for young Australian musicians. (The Award that year was adjudicated by Cheryl Barker, Richard Bonyngge and Robert Gard.) Interestingly, more recently, audiences and critics have admired his performances in roles more often described as bass-baritone roles - as Scarpia in *Tosca*, Escamillo in *Carmen*,

and Leporello in the new production of *Don Giovanni* later this year, (having performed as the Don in the previous season).

Did Lyndon Terracini, as Artistic Director, see a bass-baritone lurking in there, and perhaps even a Wotan? By 2010, he knew the Ring cycle was coming up, and that this time around it would have 'internationals' singing the major roles, but ideally he wanted to create some new Australian Wagnerian singers for future Rings – in 2016, 2019? 'He likes to discover people.'

What follows is the personal story of a journey, as perilous as any in Norse myths or legends. It is the *bildungsroman*, the coming-of-age story, of the 'boy' who grew from 'operatic youth' to 'operatic maturity'! It even has the typical challenges and murky depths; its own heroes and villains. The following details were gleaned over a very long lunch, filled with much laughter, gasps of horror, and the growth, (on the writer's part,) of a profound admiration. It is all most informal and somewhat chatty, but to gain a real insight into what it means to say you're a 'cover' for a major operatic role, you might like to come aboard and share that journey.

One of the rewards of Shane receiving the YMFA Award was the opportunity for a study trip to England, New York and Germany. Tony Legge, the Associate Music Director of Opera Australia,<sup>1</sup> had enabled Shane to organise a session with renowned English Bass, Sir John Tomlinson in May 2010. In retrospect, when their conversation is re-told, it sounds like something from 'Monty Python.'<sup>2</sup>

'We went through some *Figaro*, and Tomlinson said, 'What other repertoire have you got; what else are you singing?' Shane replied, 'I don't know. I've been singing bass, but I've got a 'top', and I don't really know what I should sing!'

So, the hour of coaching turned into a three hour session, going through all sorts of repertoire, and finally they got on to *Der Freischutz*. He said, 'Ha, ha, have you sung a lot of German repertoire? What about Wagner? You need to start looking at Wotan. You need to start looking at *Rhinegold*... and, now.'

In an interview for The Royal Opera on YouTube, Tomlinson outlined the essential requirements for a truly exciting Wagner singer. 'Ideally he must have perfect fluency in the language, vocal technique, a wonderful theatrical presence, wonderful acting ability, a great relationship with the others on the stage, and great musicality!' (This may well seem a 'tall order', but in his defence, Shane is a 40 year old singer, who, standing well over two metres, is taller than Teddy Tahu Rhodes!) Most significantly, Tomlinson told Shane that he was a true bass-baritone, and that such singers are truly rare. 'Consequently, you will confuse a lot of people.' Tomlinson then offered to mentor Shane (who, unfortunately, was leaving for New York

# N THE MELBOURNE RING?

the next day.) True to Tomlinson's prediction, in New York, 'he confused a lot of people'!

On his return to Australia and OA, he spoke again with Tony Legge, (who was aware he had done the work with John Tomlinson), and mentioned that Tomlinson had suggested he start working on Wotan. Somewhat wryly, Legge said, 'I know. And co-incidentally, Lyndon has asked me to ask if you would learn the role of Wotan if I taught you?' Shane would have to keep it quiet. It would just be a 'study cover'.

They met the following week and went through some lieder, and Legge was impressed. 'It really suits you.' So the coaching began, and they both got very excited because Shane could sing it, and had the correct nuances. They agreed he was very young, but 'there were the makings there of a Wotan.' I thought he was just being 'nice', says Shane, in hindsight.

All of 2012 was spent learning *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*. (Originally Shane was simply to 'study cover' *Rheingold*, but the project became a moveable feast, with the menu continually changing. Out of the blue, he also acquired the role of Fafner, which also had to be learned! This meant, of course, that he would actually participate on stage in the Melbourne Ring Cycle 2013.)

The initial rehearsals started with *Die Walküre*. In at the deep end: the 20 minute monologue, and Tony said, 'You will never, ever have to memorise anything more difficult than this.' It is rambling, not melodic, and it never repeats. 'Recitative is really difficult to learn because it is not melodic, you're not 'singing' it'. It's memorising a massive monologue, which Shane would have to do as Wotan. However, until Figaro, Shane had never done any recitative, and that required a huge transition from his previous roles – a huge step up. These first sessions took place just before he went on as Don Giovanni in Melbourne. With Don Giovanni, he found he had stepped up again, and found it easier to memorise.

So, what was the learning process? Every week, he and Legge would go into the rehearsal room, and Tony would 'plunk in the melody-note-bash it' and Shane, who doesn't play the piano (!), would go back home, do a literal translation, word for word, (using the Castell Coch score), then 'sing along with my little MP3 player, with Tony plonking the notes and me singing the words. And with that sort of stuff it's just repetition, over and over, thousands and thousands of times.' 'And once you get it learned, you've got to 'get it off the book', which is like letting go your Mum's hand.' (By this stage, just being in the role of listener was exhausting! More challenges were to come.)

'At this point I was also supposed to be doing Fafner. (John Wegner was going to be doing the actual rehearsals for Wotan in *Die Walküre*.) But then they asked me to do *Die Walküre* rehearsals as well. I asked to be pulled out of Fafner!' This meant there would be no on-stage role in the Ring, so it was quite a decision. In the meantime, Shane had 'all these people thrusting books in my face. "You must read this about Wagner!!!" 'I didn't, because I wanted to come to it completely virginal! To come to it as ME'. (At that stage, he hadn't even watched a Ring Cycle - hadn't even listened to a Ring Cycle, though he had been in the chorus of *Der fliegende Holländer*, and had seen *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.)

The Hero of this epic was Tony Legge. 'He could always tell if I had listened to recordings! He'd say, 'Who does that; why are you doing that? Are you doing that because Bryn does that?' Shane is full of admiration for Tony Legge. 'I love him. He has been an absolute godsend. He's been one of my greatest advocates, he's coached me, and he won't waste his time. If he can't see progress he won't take someone on.'

The process must have been hilarious because the Call Sheet at the Opera Centre, every week, said '90 minutes Lawrencev rep.' So people were suspicious about what they were doing. Were there any repercussions? 'People were jealous: I was called 'Lyndon's Golden Boy', accused of 'spying'. Did he ever despair? 'Oh yeah, oh God.' I thought, I can't do this, it's not going in my head. It was music that I'd never experienced. I couldn't understand why I was singing certain notes, and was confused, and Tony would say, 'It's because it's not in the chord; everyone goes through it.' Then came a significant turning point, about half way through the learning of the monologue. 'I had a coaching session with Brian Jauhiainen, an American Bass from Bel Canto Global Arts, which promotes young artists in opera. I sang some of the monologue.' Tony Legge, who had been listening, declared, 'I am so proud of you.'! For the first time Shane felt maybe he was doing the right thing, 'and it made me want to work harder.'

Then came his first professional airing. (Those of you who wish to hear Shane's progress at this stage of the process can Google the following: Shane Lawrencev: Wotan's 'Leb Wohl.' A YouTube site will pop up.) Filmed around 23 August, 2012, it occurred during the launch of Opera Australia's 2013 Season. He is introduced to the guests by Lyndon Terracini, and the orchestra is conducted by Richard Mills. For his colleagues, it was a case of shock and awe, 'as they had no idea until then that I was venturing into this repertoire.' On re-viewing the recording, his response is, 'I've come a long way vocally since then...and my German is a lot better, too!'

Was there any feed-back from Lyndon? ‘Much later, in Melbourne, we had a rehearsal for *Das Rheingold*, and Terje didn’t want to sing, and no-one had heard me since the early piano dresses six months ago. But I’d come so far, and people, like (Director) Josh Hecht, all these people were in the audience, and I couldn’t see them. And people couldn’t believe the change in my voice. Yet I felt so relaxed about it! How easy it was for me.’ And Lyndon had gone to all the music staff and said, ‘What about Shane?!’ ‘But, he didn’t say that to me.’

There were other more expected repercussions as well. ‘I was so tired; Sue Bullock (Brünnhilde in the Melbourne production), and Richard Berkeley-Steele (who sang Loge), couldn’t believe how hard I worked, because ‘I sang out for every rehearsal’. He was told to ‘mark’, but Shane said, ‘No, because I’m trying to sing it in’.

Going down to Melbourne in 2013 was crunch time. ‘I was really knackered because Terje Stensvold, (who sang Wotan), hadn’t arrived yet, and I was doing every rehearsal for him. Then there was the concern about John Wegner, and I was always the last to know.’ Then John withdrew from the covering of Wotan so he could focus just on Alberich, and the full responsibility became Shane’s. His reaction, perhaps naively, was, ‘That’s fine, but I want a prompt.’ It carried its own difficulties, as there was no in-house prompt.

So what were the rewards? ‘What everyone was noticing was how all of this work, and this repertoire, were affecting my voice; it was opening out my ‘top’, using areas of my voice I had never used before, and working out how to use those ranges, and where to place it. What it taught me was how to sing naturally, because you’ll never get through singing that many hours if you’re ‘putting on an opera voice’. This technique has enabled him to sing Escamillo, and Scarpia.

Were there rewards in appreciating Wagner’s music? ‘I’m a complete convert: it’s gorgeous, gorgeous music. However, I had to learn to detach. For example, Wotan’s ‘Farewell’: that took a long time, because you keep breaking down, getting really emotional. But that’s part of the process. Tony would say, ‘Don’t listen to the music, don’t listen to what the orchestra is doing, just concentrate on what you’re doing or you’ll break down, and like every other Wotan who’s learning it, you’ll cry.’ So that was the next chapter in the process – to detach.

Then John Wegner pulled out of the role of Alberich as well, and an Australian from the Company, Warwick Fyfe, a ‘cover’, like Shane, was going to go ‘on’. What a frisson that caused!

By the beginning of June, 2013, the ‘piano dress rehearsals’ in Melbourne were going well, except that during that period, Shane had been informed that he was to ‘cover’ Scarpia for John Wegner in *Tosca*, a role he still had to learn. ‘It was frantic. For one performance of ‘Tosca’ in which I was covering Scarpia, I was called at 5.30pm, with the performance to commence at 7.30.’

*Siegfried* was to start rehearsals in about three weeks when Tony Legge, ominously, approached him, and suggested they needed to ‘talk about your life!’ And here came another

‘add-on!’ He was to learn, and then to rehearse, the role of the Wanderer in *Siegfried*. He began the process of ‘note-bashing’ the Erda scene, and the pivotal confrontation between Siegfried and Wotan. A week before the rehearsal, he and Tony Legge were still ‘note-bashing’. So ... he made himself some ‘palm cards!’ ‘I don’t know how I did it without dying—without spontaneously combusting.’ (Frankly, neither did I.) So, for a week he ran around with palm cards, trying to hold Wotan’s Spear, trying to do actions in front of Susan Bullock and Co., whose advice was to ‘go home and watch some crappy TV and pour yourself a whisky.’

Then Terje Stensvold, the ‘Ring’s’ Wotan/Wanderer, arrived – (and Shane, of course, was now his ‘cover’, not John Wegner!) Not only that, Terje decided it would be best if he watched Shane for the first few days so that he could get a feel of the production.<sup>3</sup> Shane ‘hid in the coaching room with my palm cards’, and at 10.30a.m. on the dot, the time for rehearsals to start, ‘this boy with his palm cards’, as he describes himself, came blasting through the door to avoid any possibilities of there being time for any pleasantries. Terje was sitting there at a table, ‘looking relaxed and gorgeous in his white moleskins’, and Shane took a deep breath and launched into the first scene with Mime. At its completion, he shot out the door.

Not so lucky on his return: he was confronted by Terje, who introduced himself (and Shane does a beautiful interpretation of this Norwegian), and says, ‘Good boy, you are singing right on the money! You’re perfect. Let’s go and have lunch!’ It was during that lunch that Terje informed Shane that it had taken him four years to learn the role that Shane had ‘learned’ in twelve months. He, and the other overseas singers, made Shane only too aware of what an achievement it was, and that he should be proud. His proudest moment was the dress rehearsal of *Rhinegold*, two days before the performance, when Terje (who had ‘walked it’), said, ‘I don’t know why they’ve got me here.’ Subsequently, he said, ‘You have a wonderful future career as a helden-baritone, so just remember me in your memoirs.’<sup>4</sup>

And the rest is history: Terje Stensvold performed as a marvellous Wotan/Wanderer, Warwick Fyfe thrilled everyone with his idiosyncratic Alberich, and Shane climbed into his car, drove back to Sydney, and got on with his day job.....

So, will this remarkable journey, which overcame such herculean challenges, have a happy ending? What does an Australian singer do about pursuing an international career as a potential Wotan, when he already has a full-time career, (and a family<sup>5</sup>)?

When he goes to Europe on long-service leave in September/October 2014, armed with Lyndon’s List of contacts, he will find out! That journey will take him to London, where Susan Bullock will ‘organise’ him, and he will consult again with Sir John Tomlinson; then to Germany, with Terje Stensvold assisting him in Frankfurt, and Berlin (assisted by contacts recommended by Brett Dean). ‘Even if I can get a role as Escamillo, who cares where it is.’ He is also entering competitions. ‘The problem is that there is nothing really for anyone over 32<sup>6</sup>. What is not recognised is that lower voices take longer to hit their stride, and it is at that point that singers need help.’ In addition, he is not going overseas to get

some coaching; he is in search of a career. He's ready. 'I've got a "package" when it comes to performance.' The benefits of singing Wotan have been that he is singing Escamillo freely, as well as the roles of Scarpia, and Leporello. The remarkable thing is that, 'after studying and rehearsing Wotan, everything now seems so achievable!' We must wish him well!

(Endnotes)

1. Tony Legge is the former Director of Opera at the Royal Academy of Music, and former Head of Music at the English National Opera. He is internationally renowned as an opera pianist, vocal coach and recitalist. As such he has assisted many young singers in preparation for their careers. He worked at Bayreuth for six seasons, where he assisted on the Barenboim/Kupfer Ring Cycle, and Die Meistersinger von Nuremberg.

2. Sir John Tomlinson has performed all the great bass roles in the Wagnerian repertoire. He appeared at the Bayreuth Festival for eighteen consecutive years from 1988; as Wotan, the Wanderer, King Marke, Titirel, Gurnemanz, Hagen and the Dutchman.

3. Terje Stensvold had sung with the Norwegian National Opera from 1972-99. His main focus was on high baritone roles, however, he was aware he had a depth in his voice which he had never been able to utilise. He 'retired' in his fifties, began singing lessons, and with a remarkable 'second wind', resumed his career as a 'Wagner baritone', a 'helden baritone. At the age of 53, he was finally singing the roles he should have been singing.

4. Stensvold sang his first Wotan in 2005. He has now sung that role more than 120 times. 2014 is to be his final year as an opera performer.

5. Shane is married to Elizabeth – a music teacher, who is the proud owner of five harps! They have four children: a mixed-double of twins; an older son, Harrison, who works in 'props' for OA in a gap year whilst preparing for NIDA in 2015; and another young son!

6. For example, Operalia, the annual World Opera Competition founded in 1993 by Placido Domingo, is restricted to singers aged 18 – 23, 'already performing at a highly skilled level.'

## TRISTAN UND ISOLDE IN AUCKLAND ON 19 JULY 2014

- Peter Bassett

### TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE

Peter has kindly drawn your attention to a semi-staged performance by the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra of Wagner's most passionate music-drama. Conductor Eckehard Stier will lead an impressive cast through this challenging work: Lars Cleveman Tristan (Cleveman has just made his Metropolitan Opera debut in the equally demanding role of Siegfried); Annalena Persson Isolde; Daveda Karanas Brangäne; Bo Skovhus Kurwenal; Marco Stella Melot. Ticket prices are Adults/Senior: \$64-\$139 (Public Ticket price). You can also add a dinner package at one of two nearby art institutions' cafés. Further details and bookings from Auckland Philharmonia's website: <http://apo.co.nz/concert-events/wagner-tristan-und-isolde> (through Ticketmaster NZ) or call Auckland – 0011 649 970 9700.

Peter is also leading a five-day tour from 17–21 July 2014 for Renaissance Tours, with the performance as at least one of the highlights. Further details, including Peter's exclusive symposium on the music-drama on the morning of the performance) are available from Renaissance Tours' website: <http://renaissancetours.com.au/opera/tristan-und-isolde-in-auckland/> or call Toll Free: (AU) 1300 727 095.

## FOR SALE

### RARE ARTHUR RACKHAM WAGNER VOLUMES AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE BY WAGNER SOCIETY IN NSW MEMBER

A member of the Society has very generously donated two volumes of Arthur Rackham's illustrated libretti of the four Ring operas: *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* in Volume 1, and *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* in Volume 2. These are limited editions. They are dated 1910, numbered 96 and signed by Rackham himself. The illustrations are extraordinarily vivid. Patricia Baillie, a highly experienced antiquarian book expert and a member of the Society, has examined the books and written the following comments:

"Two handsome vellum bound volumes, Arthur Rackham: Illustrations of The Ring Libretti. *Der Ring des Nibelungen – Ein Bühnenfestspiel für drei Tage und einen Vorabend, von Richard Wagner*. Two volumes. Contains libretti of : *Das Rheingold* & *Die Valkyrie* (vol. I) and *Siegfried* & *Götterdämmerung* (vol. II). Ruetten und Loenig, Frankfurt A/M. 1910-1911. Limited edition, signed by Arthur Rackham. This is no.96. 25 x 19cm, bound in original publisher's full vellum, gilt titles, t.e.g., others untrimmed. Gilt medallion with 'RW' to front cover.

"The renowned illustrator, Rackham, has given us here splendid illustrations of Wagner's heroic Ring Cycle. There

are 64 tipped-in, tissue guarded, colour plates. The set presents very well indeed. There are a few marks and some very light soiling to the vellum bindings and occasional light browning or foxing to some pages. Overall, a handsome copy, in excellent condition, of this rare set.

"Note on the set numbering: For the American and British editions, both also dated 1910 & 1911, some claim that the edition was 1100 or, some, 1150 copies, all signed by the artist. This set is numbered in Rackham's hand as no. 96, making it an early printing of the edition."

Patricia also made enquiries about any other similar volumes of the Rackham libretti. There are currently two sets on the internet market, although it is unlikely that they are as early as no.96. Both are selling for a little over \$A5,000. In the circumstances, we thought that we should make these two volumes available for purchase by our members for the starting price of \$4,000. Anyone who is interested in purchasing these unique volumes should contact Society President, Jane Mathews, by email at [mathewsj@ozemail.com.au](mailto:mathewsj@ozemail.com.au).

## THREE REPORTS ON S

## DR DAVID SCHWARZ: VALKYRIES OF THE WAGNER CLAN: FAMILY DYSFUNCTION SET TO MUSIC - TERENCE WATSON

On 2 March 2014, David Schwartz returned to reveal to the Society from a psychologist's perspective some of the internal dynamics of Wagner's relation to important women in his life in a *Tale of Five Wives* (with the term "wives" used somewhat symbolically). Acknowledging the complexity of Wagner the man, David likened investigating him to working on the Kabbalah: many entrances, many false starts and many interpretations. In essence, as the character Siegfried shows us, Wagner considered that the man is not complete until he is joined with a woman: the *ewig weibliche* – the eternal feminine. But what does this concept entail? To answer the question, David suggested, we need to interrogate Wagner's biography by asking four questions: What was Wagner's model for the eternal feminine; how did his definition match the women in his life; what were those women really like; and what impact did those women have on the life and work of Wagner?

David used Johanna Wagner, Wagner's mother, to explore the ambiguities and implications of both their birth stories: Johanna's as the supposed child of a royal parent and Wagner's as the (possibly illegitimate) son of his mother's lover Ludwig Geyer. "Did he sense that there was something wrong with his mamma's birth story" and so by extension his own might he suspect? David reminded us that Wagner's first "girlfriend" was a Jewish girl from the Jewish quarter in the Leipzig Am Bruhl in which they both lived and the possible impact that her father's rejection of him as a suitable mate for his daughter might have had on Wagner's

attitudes to Jewish people. David suggested that this rejection predisposed Wagner to seeking out damaged and needy women to compensate for his encounter with a strong, confident woman.

These early experiences, David suggested, could account for the possible diagnosis of Wagner as having developed a narcissistic personality disorder, with one of the major implications being Wagner's tendency to idealise the women with whom he sought to have sexual relations, only for the relationships to break down in the practical sphere. This situation was compounded because the women he often chose were damaged and needy themselves making them easier for Wagner to possess. When Wagner moved on, emotionally and psychologically, he left them confused and in pain.

The important "Valkyries" in Wagner's life (and not in chronological order), David nominated as Minna, Cosima, Winifred Klindworth (selected by Cosima to be Wagner's son Siegfried's wife), and Mathilde Wesendonck. David suggested that, underpinning Wagner's attitude to his women was an attempt to possess Beauty through Power which instead transforms Beauty into a corporate entity (symbolised, for example, in The Ring Cycle as the Tarnhelm). Of all these, David contended, only Mathilde did not fit the model: she was not needy, not an outsider, but desired an artistic (at least) relationship with Wagner. David's fresh take on key women in Wagner's life gave us much to think about.

## DR DAVID LARKIN: R1 AND R2 – THE TWO RICHARDS: STRAUSS & WAGNER - TERENCE WATSON

David Larkin also made his return visit to the Society on 6 April 2014, this time to talk about the relationship between the older and younger Richards. David recounted the tale of Hans von Bülow hailing Strauss as Richard 2, but Strauss rejecting the accolade by saying "No! After Richard 1, there can be no Richard 2!" On another occasion, Strauss (over)stated the case for Wagner's achievement: "In Wagner, music reached its highest capacity for expression. He completed a 4000 year development of art from the temple of Babylonian to *Parsifal*."

However, this assessment came much later in Strauss's career, after the young composer had overcome an initial aversion to his music, prompted, in part, it seems, by his father's antipathy to Wagner's over-chromatic writing, experienced firsthand as first horn in the world premieres of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, *Meistersinger*, *Rheingold* and *Walküre* at the Munich Court Opera. By the age of 18, Strauss the younger had heard all of Wagner's mature works. About a decade later (1871), Strauss the younger had changed his mind and

begun to learn much from the Master since playing the score of *Tristan und Isolde* on the piano.

David informed us of the importance to Strauss of finding his dramatic vocation in writing the libretto for his first opera *Guntram* (premiered 1894), through the encouragement of Alexander Ritter, a noted composer and violinist, and first violinist in the famous Meiningen Court Orchestra at the time. David then took us on an entertaining and very informative tour of Strauss's operas from the musical inside, pointing out both echoes, reminiscences and borrowings from Wagner's work, and how Strauss had made them his own.

Strauss also stepped into Wagner's shoes as conductor at Bayreuth: as assistant conductor in 1888 and 1891, then conducting *Tannhäuser* in 1894 and much later *Parsifal* in 1933 and 1934, replacing Toscanini, who had withdrawn because of the Nazis' attitude to Jews. Strauss later observed of this decision as "a gesture of respect for the Festival and my small help to Bayreuth."



# N SOCIETY FUNCTIONS

Strauss wrote a number of other libretti until, with *Elektra* and *Rosenkavalier* he began his long and fruitful collaboration with Hugo von Hofmannsthal to help him avoid having two young lovers “bursting into a Wagnerian kind of screaming.” In 1916, around the time of *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912) and *Die*

*Frau ohne Schatten* (1918), Strauss wrote to Hofmannsthal: “I hope to move forward wholly into the realm of un-Wagnerian emotional and human comic opera.” Certainly, most Wagnerians would appreciate Strauss’s achievement in meeting his own high and personal standard.

## WAGNER AND BEYOND - REVIEW OF CONCERT ON 4 MAY 2013 - LEONA GEEVES

The Wagner and Beyond concert was initially conceived as a musical adjunct to Antony Ernst’s all day seminar on Saturday 23 August, Beyond the Twilight of the Gods. Previous Wagner Society concerts have showcased early Wagner and his contemporaries, such as Carl Maria von Weber and Heinrich Marschner. The current concert planned to showcase composers who were influenced by Wagner, such as Giuseppe Verdi, Rossini and the French composers, Henri Duparc, Claude Debussy, Francis Poulenc and Ernest Chausson.

Six upcoming young singers, five of whom the Wagner Society has financially supported with German courses presented a concert of songs and arias either written by Richard Wagner or composers who were influenced him or as in the case of Carl Maria von Weber, were a major influence on him. Weber’s “Und ob die Wolke” was sung by Emilie Lemasson, who also sang Richard Strauss’ aria from *Ariadne auf Naxos*, “Es gibt ein Reich”. All but one of these singers has studied at the Sydney Conservatorium at some stage.

Emilie is a freelance performer and music teacher, and also sings on cruise ships. She has won many awards and competitions and has also sung as soloist with vocal groups Vavachi, Due Voci and Joubert Singers and the Resonance recitals at the Christ Church Lavender Bay. Emilie sang the seldom heard French Songs of Richard Wagner – “Mignonne”, “Dors mon Enfant” and “L’Attente” to which baritone, David Greco added Henri Duparc’s “Phidylé” and “L’extase”. David also sang the other *Tannhäuser* aria, “Blick ich umher.”

David, whom you may have seen in Pinchgut operas or the Australian Chamber Orchestra Timelines concerts or the odd Brandenburg concert, jumped in to provide a deep voice and help out. He gained his master’s degree in the Netherlands and has performed with the Tallis Scholars, Glyndebourne Festival Opera and the Academy of Ancient Music. David is deputy lay vicar at Westminster Abbey London. You can read more about him at [www.davidgreco.info](http://www.davidgreco.info).

Regina Daniel’s French offerings were “En proie à la tristesse” from Rossini’s *Le Comte Ory*, Debussy’s “L’âme évaporée” and Poulenc’s “Berceuse”. Regina has just been awarded the 2014 Dame Joan Sutherland Award from the Australian Opera Awards Committee, which will fund an audition trip to Europe later this year. Regina has sung with Pacific Opera,

Oz Opera schools and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. She won the National Aria Competition in 2012 and was the runner up in the 2013 Melbourne German Opera Award. She has attended the Lisa Gasteen National Opera Summer School for 2 years on full scholarship. Last year at the Sydney Eisteddfod, Regina won the Wagner Society in NSW German Singing Award. You can read more about Regina at [www.reginadanielsoprano.com](http://www.reginadanielsoprano.com).

Catherine Bouchier, who has had an interesting opera career in festivals in England and Europe, as well as appearances with Opera Australia before she left, has returned to Sydney for family reasons. She opened the concert with Strauss’ aria from *Arabella*, “Das war sehr gut Mandryka” and closed the concert with Korngold’s “Mariettas Lied” from *Die Tote Stadt*.

Tenor Matthew Reardon, who also sang at the recital after our recent AGM, is a second year scholarship holder in the Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust and was also a scholarship holder in the Lisa Gasteen National Opera Summer School, had been contemplating a career in radio after a communications degree and time in Germany and Austria. He made his opera debut in the Australian opera, *Pecan Summer* by Aboriginal composer Deborah Cheetham. He opened the second half with songs by the composer Wagner mentored Engelbert Humperdinck’s “Verratene Liebe” and “Sonntagsruhe” as well as Strauss’ divine “Lied Befreit”.

We are very grateful to all our singers as well as their talented accompanist Michael Curtain who accompanied brilliantly as he also did after the AGM. He is originally from Tasmania, but after study at the Sydney Conservatorium has been accompanying Opera Australia Schools program, Sydney Philharmonia choirs, Sydney Eisteddfod, Sydney University graduate choirs and for the Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonygne Foundation. He is also involved in music theatre.

All of these singers are deserving of attention and their needs are many - language coaching, music coaching, accompanist fees, audition costs, travel costs etc. The Society’s aim has always been to support young singers. Your attendance fees help with that support, as do your donations. But, if you ever feel inclined to support a particular singer or singers, it is tax deductible and the Society would be very happy to organise it for you as we have done in the past.

## WAGNER SOCIETY - POST 25 MAY 2014 AGM RECITAL

by Leona Geeves

After the AGM the Society held as usual a small recital of young singers whom we have assisted. The singers, bass baritone **Christopher Richardson** and tenor **Matthew Reardon** had met at the **Lisa Gasteen National Opera School**, where the **Wagner Society** had provided the funding for Chris' scholarship. They discovered in their ensembles that they liked singing duets and had plans for a recital in Sydney. The Wagner Society decided to foster this and the idea was born. Chris hails from Tasmania and is now based with his family in Sydney. [www.christopher-richardson-bassbaritone.com](http://www.christopher-richardson-bassbaritone.com). Matt is from Sydney but trained in Perth and is a Melba Opera Trust scholar.

They were accompanied by Michael Curtain, also from Tasmania, but now working in Sydney as a repetiteur for Opera Australia touring schools program (see above review for more details and front and back photos).

The singers displayed their flair for languages and their strengths. Chris, who has a growing career in oratorio, thrilled us with Handel's "Where'ere you Walk" from *Semele*, and "Es ist genug" from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. An aria from

*Rinaldo*, "Sibilar gli angui d'Alett"o, some Gerald Finzi songs "Come Away, Death" and "Fear No More the Heat of the Sun", some Lieder, Schumann's "Widmung" and Schubert's "Liebesbotschaft" and a Fauré song "Cygne sur l'eau" were added to the mix. Chris' Wagner offering, "O Du mein holder Abendstern" was very moving.

Matthew sang two arias, Mozart's "Vedrommi intorno" from *Idomeneo* and "Ch'ella mi creda" from Puccini's *Girl of the Golden West*, with some very exciting high notes. Their duets were Schumann's "Blaue Augen hat das Mädchen", Puccini's Rodolfo - Marcello duet, "O Mimi, tu piu non torni" from *La Bohème* and the exciting "Au Fond du temple saint" from Bizet's *Pearlfishers*.

In all it was a delightful way of showing the singers' gratitude for the support offered by the Wagner Society and we look forward to hearing them both again very soon.

[Your Editor welcomes the inclusion of duets in these programs – a delightful innovation and one to be repeated, we hope!]

## WAGNER AT THE MET: LEGENDARY PERFORMANCES FROM THE METROPOLITAN OPERA! by Colin Baskerville

Kirsten Flagstad sang an all-Wagner concert in the Sydney Town Hall on Thursday, 7 July 1938. Joseph Post conducted the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. The Sydney Morning Herald news item put the heading ISOLDE WITHOUT PEER in capital letters. The children and grand-children remember and amplify the raves of their parents who attended. It is therefore an audio treat for today's audiences to hear Kirsten Flagstad in the full role of Isolde in *Tristan und Isolde* recorded on 16 April 1938, months before she travelled to Australia. Tristan is sung by Lauritz Melchior.

The broadcast restoration team has released nine Wagner operas. The General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera, Mr Gelb, who once worked for Sony, is to be commended for rescuing these outstanding performances. Audio buffs wonder about the technology used to record and keep these broadcasts. This information is omitted from the lavish booklet. Why "This performance" and not "That performance"? Wálhall issued a 1937 performance of *Tristan und Isolde* with Flagstad and Melchior. The audiences were spoilt if they attended both performances. Contemporary Australian audiences see performances years apart. Remember Marilyn Richardson and Lisa Gasteen? They sang the role a long time ago in Sydney (conductor Stuart Challender) and Melbourne (conductor Simone Young). It's time for Sydney audiences to hear the work "live" again. [Neil Armfield's production of this opera was also revived in Perth in 2006 with Susan Bullock and Allan Woodrow, with Lionel Friend conducting. Ed.]

Back on 30 January 1937 Kirsten Flagstad sang Brünnhilde to Lauritz Melchior's Siegfried in *Siegfried*. On 11 January 1936 Lauritz Melchior sang Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung*. On 17 February 1940 Lauritz Melchior sang Siegmund, Kirsten Flagstad sang Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre*. This is probably the most successful restoration and well-sung of the set. Marjorie Lawrence sings Sieglinde here. During the above-mentioned *Götterdämmerung* she sang Brünnhilde and stunned audiences by riding a live horse on stage in the Immolation Scene.

The information above is enough to justify an immediate purchase of this Sony 25 CD limited edition, deluxe, disc set, 88765427172. The remaining operas include a young Victoria de los Angeles as Eva in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Astrid Varnay's voice in *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Tannhäuser* is not as well recorded as at Bayreuth. Live performances are rarely perfect. The conductors sometimes cut out precious pages from the score. By the way, the conductors were Fritz Reiner, George Szell, Erich Leinsdorf, Fritz Stiedry and Arthur Bodansky.

There is a companion set called **Verdi at the Met: Legendary Performances from The Metropolitan Opera**. The singing in both sets is rarely equalled today. Enjoy.

**AUDIT REPORT TO MEMBERS**

## THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INCORPORATED

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated, which comprises the Balance Sheet as at 31 December and the Income Statement for the twelve months ended 31 December 2013, prepared from the cashbook accounting records of The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated, in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards.

The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated Executive Committee is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements noted above and the information contained therein. I have conducted an audit of the financial statements in order to express an opinion on them to the members of The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated.

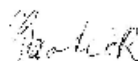
My audit has been performed in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the statements are free of material misstatement. My procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the statements, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the

financial statements are presented fairly in accordance with applicable Australian Accounting Standards so as to present a view which is consistent with my understanding of the financial position of The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated.

It was not practical to establish control over cash received for Membership Fees, Lectures and Functions, Donations and Other Fundraising Income prior to the initial entry into the accounting records. My audit therefore, was limited to the amounts recorded in the records.

**Audit Opinion**

Subject to the above, I report that in my opinion, the financial statements of The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated are properly drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated as at 31 December 2013 and its results as recorded in the accounting records for the year then ended.



Jan Bastick MIPA AGIA JB

Date: 15/11/14

**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2013**

	2013	2012
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
<b>Bank Accounts</b>		
Working Account	3,233.00	59,483.00
Donation Account	41,770.00	42,431.00
	<u>45,003.00</u>	<u>101,914.00</u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Bayreuth income and expenditure in advance	-	523.00
Opera Australia Ring	-	41,000.00
Donations in advance		
Membership revenue in advance	2,644.00	930.00
	<u>2,644.00</u>	<u>42,453.00</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>42,359.00</u>	<u>59,461.00</u>
<b>MEMBERS EQUITY</b>		
Surplus brought forward	59,461.00	24,573.00
Surplus 2012	- 17,102.00	34,888.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>42,359.00</u>	<u>59,461.00</u>

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2013**

	2013	2012
<b>INCOME</b>		
Membership	17,180.00	20,095.00
Lectures and Functions	27,508.00	24,046.00
Donations	45,445.00	15,565.00
Interest	496.00	231.00
Other Fundraising Income	1,820.00	2,157.00
	<u>92,449.00</u>	<u>62,094.00</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Newsletter	7,864.00	5,910.00
Function Catering Expense	2,399.00	2,005.00
Function Room Hire	6,530.00	4,590.00
Payments to Presenters	8,085.00	3,285.00
Sponsorships	76,440.00	7,500.00
	8,233.00	3,916.00
	<u>109,551.00</u>	<u>27,206.00</u>
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)</b>	<u>- 17,102.00</u>	<u>34,888.00</u>

## WAGNER SOCIETY IN NSW MEMBERSHIP AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2013

Prof M Ewans [Honorary Life Member]; Dr S M Kelly [0004]; Mrs J King [0007]; Dr W & Mrs M Suthers [0014]; Mr R J King [Honorary Life Member]; Miss C Hennessy & Miss M Hennessy [0019]; Miss C Hennessy & Miss M Hennessy [0019]; Mrs J Ferns [0034]; Mr K Reed [0041]; Mr J Ferfaglia [HLM] & Mrs J Ferfaglia [0045]; Dr K & Mrs S Koller [0052]; Mr R Gastineau-Hills [0068]; Ms L Geeves [0087]; Mr D Jamieson [0090]; Mr S Sheffer [0101]; Ms P Baillie [0108]; Dr J Casey [0114]; Mr W & Mrs I Merretz [0115]; Miss N Grant MBE [0120]; Dr N & Mrs B Dorsch [0154]; Mr W B Norris [0204]; Miss B de Rome [0207]; Mr C J Piper [0222]; Mr D Triggs [0223]; Mr P E Alger [0255]; Mr J M McGrath [0310]; Mr S Hatcher [0333]; Mr M & Mrs J Connery [0334]; Mr G Richards [0366]; Mr H Ebert [0378]; Mr I & Mrs B Brady [0380]; Mr & Mrs Baumgartner [0393]; Mrs A & Mr T Marshall [0403]; Mrs S Robertson [0416]; Mrs D McBain [0419]; Mr A F McDonald [0420]; Mr J & Mrs S Buchanan [0423]; Dr F & Dr P Harvey [0427]; Ms A Brejzek & Mr E Insausti [0433]; Mr C Terrason [0439]; Dr J & Mrs C Leigh [0452]; Mr A N Jones & Mr J S Liga [0455]; Mr B R Love [0468]; Mr B C Ducker [0487]; Mr T Hudson [0489]; Dr R T & Mrs J M Clarke [0496]; Miss A Casimir [0501]; Mr R Whitelaw [0527]+Q65; Ms I Kowalski [0536]; Mrs J E Griffin [0540]; Mr C W Dyer [0544]; Mr I & Mrs P McGaw [0548]; Ms A Weeden [0561]; Dr S Freiberg & Mr D Campbell [0585]; Mr A & Mrs W Hamlin [0593]; Miss I Kallinikos [0596]; Mr M Day [0606]; Mr R Stone [0615]; Ms N Siano [0619]; The Hon Justice J H Mathews [0622]; Mr C Evatt [0624]; Mrs R Cater-Smith [638]; Mr W F & Mrs H Naylor [0643]; Dr D L McCarthy [0648]; Professor M & Dr C Chesterman [0649]; Dr T G Watson [0657 Honorary Life Member]; Mrs E M Moser [0659]; Mrs C Bailey [0663]; Mr R Cruickshank [0669 Honorary Life Member]; Mr W & Mrs H Spiller [0671]; Mrs M Saunders [0683]; Dr G & Mrs T Chesher [0685]; Dr D Mather & Mr J Studdert [0696]; Mr P & Mrs B Nicholson [0704]; Mrs J Manton [0718]; Dr A Goy [0723]; Mr D G Colquhoun [0732]; Mr L Terracini [0734]; Mr A & Mrs M Olave [0735]; Mr N Mercer [0737]; Ms J Bowen [0743]; Dr I J Hunter [0744]; Mr J & Mrs R Block [0745]; Mr P Thompson [0746]; Dr J Gregory-Roberts [0748]; Dr B R S & Mrs G Jones [0751]; Mr W Fyfe [0755]; Ms M A Hayton [0757]; Ms S Beesley [0759]; Dr W S Brooks & Mr A C Beck [0765]; Mr C Andrew [0772]; Mr B Johnson [0779]; Mrs P Seidler [0781]; Mrs J Bates [0785]; Mrs S & Mr P Dudgeon [0788]; Mrs N Kaldor [0796]; Sir Nicholas & Lady Shehadie [0798]; Mr H Hallard [0799]; Mrs I Tornya [0800]; Mr C G Coffey [0816]; Mr C J Baskerville [0817]; Mr M Moore & Mrs G Bremner-Moore [0819]; Ms L M Royds [0823]; Mss Bellamy & Bloch [827]; Mr R Thurling [0830]; Mr G Wilson [0834]; Mr R H Steele [0838]; Ms D Whittleston & Mr A Gregg [0839]; Mr C Brady & Mr B Freestone [0840]; Mr R & Mrs R Cottle [0843]; Mrs D Orr [0844]; Mrs A M Kayser [0845]; Ms A Klettenberg [0847]; Mr B Foster [0850]; Mr P J & Mrs H E Roland [0855]; Mr R N Pollard [0856]; Mr M Grubb [0858]; Mrs A Jones [0861]; Ms P S Holgeron [0863]; Mr E de Zan [0865]; Mr H & Mrs R Junker [0866]; Mr P & Mrs D George [0873]; Mrs M Purvis The Hon Dr R N Purvis [0874]; Mr A Hauserman & Ms J Nash [0876]; Professor M Cashmere [0877]; Dr E Gordon-Werner [0878]; Dr J Donsworth [0884]; Ms M E Stokes & Mr D Bremer [0885]; Mr P Bacon [0890]; Dr Greg Watters [0892]; Prof F R & Mrs N P Hodson [0894]; Dr L St George [0895]; Professor E Jacka [0898]; Dr J Richters & Mr A Whelan [0899]; Dr D Sturkey [0902]; Mr R D Graham [904]; Mrs M Meppem [912]; Mr J Small [915]; Dr M D Leech [916]; Mrs F M Butcher [0918]; Mrs C H Davies [921]; Ms L Longfoot [922]; Mrs N Barne [0926]; Ms J Carroll [928]; Ms S Williams [929]; Mr A Cozzolino [930]; Ms D Pysik & Mr R J Button [931]; Mr Tony Maher [932]; Mr T Green [933]; Ms S Zelei [937]; Mr D Harrison & Mr M Susanto [939]; Mr C Manning [940]; Mr D Barry [0942]; M. G H et Mme. 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## ANGELO NEUMANN'S PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF RICHARD WAGNER

(b Vienna, 1838; d Prague, 1910). Neumann was an Austrian tenor and impresario who was born into a Jewish family in the small town near Bratislava. Among his most famous roles was the "Night watchman" in *Die Meistersinger*. He was also the Manager of the Leipzig Opera 1876–82. After meeting Wagner, as he recalls in the extract below, he formed a touring company based in Leipzig to give Wagner's operas, especially *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, in London, Paris, Rome and St Petersburg among many others and so was instrumental in bringing Wagner's music-dramas to a much wider audience more quickly than might have otherwise been the case. Neumann's first produced *Der Ring* at the Stadttheater, Leipzig, 28 April 1878. The following extract from Neumann's memoir focuses on his first encounters with Wagner at a crucial moment in the composer's life, ending with the summons to Munich.

It was the celebrated singing teacher of those days, Therese Stilke-Sessi of Vienna, who gave me my first introduction to the genius of Richard Wagner and fired me with an early enthusiasm for his new and wonderful style. This remarkable woman was training me for the stage and taught me among other things the part of Wolfram von Eschenbach in "Tannhauser." I mention this particularly as in those years the early [eighteen]forties it was rare indeed to find a singer with this role in his repertoire, and managers then found it most difficult to cast this important part.

Being young and impressionable, I soon became an ardent disciple of the Master, yet even I at this time, in spite of my devotion to the cause, found it utterly impossible one night to sit through an entire performance of "The Flying Dutchman" given at the Royal Opera in Vienna under exceptionally favourable circumstances. I frankly confess that I left, thoroughly bored with that long duet, at the close of the second act. I was then a mere boy of nineteen, however, and my judgment could hardly have been considered quite sound....

In the year 1862, after engagements in Pressburg and Dantzic, I myself became a member of the Royal Opera Company in Vienna, and this very year Richard Wagner began his career in that city. He was presenting his "Tristan," which after forty-seven preliminary rehearsals was finally set aside as utterly impracticable for the stage!

At the same time, however, he was striving to interest the Viennese in his works by giving those wonderful concerts in their great theatre. He then lived at the Hotel Kaiserin Elizabeth, and as my rooms were in that same quarter, it often chanced that I met him on the street going to and from rehearsals, generally talking to himself, and usually flourishing his great red bandanna....

His presence brought life and swing into the artist world of Vienna, and the question of the hour was, "Do we, or do we not, approve of these innovations?" I myself together with most of the younger musicians was a most enthusiastic partisan of the Master, and took a gleeful share in his triumphs at those concerts. The greatest of these, perhaps,



was the Tausig Concert, which took place in the huge "Redouten Saal," Wagner himself conducting. It opened with the Overture to "Freischütz," and before its finish the audience broke out in uncontrollable enthusiasm. Even the Master himself seemed satisfied with this performance and at its close called up Richard Levy, the leader of the horns, with whom he had worked untiringly at the rehearsals and whom he now publicly embraced for his magnificent playing. I can see him yet as he stood there on the platform always with that unfailing red handkerchief in his hand mumbling, "There, there! That will do now! There! That will do!" in vain attempt to stop the frantic cheering.

One night Wagner was present at a performance of "Lohengrin" in the old Karnthnerthor Theatre. He sat in the director's box, and between the acts came behind the scenes with the manager, Matteo Salvi. We soloists were introduced and he said a few slight words of praise, which we afterwards heard were polite fictions, for he wrote to a friend that he was anything but pleased with the performance! ....

Naturally with so many innovations it was no easy task in those early days to satisfy his requirements; and at best the work was thankless, for it was an accepted fact that music-lovers who could sit out the "Huguenots" or the "Prophet" (each fully as long as "Lohengrin") would leave the theatre thoroughly exhausted after two acts of this new and intricate Wagner music.

“What! you sat through the whole of ‘Lohengrin?’” they would ask if I happened to join my friends late at some café after the opera; for in those days I rarely missed a Wagner performance!

In the spring of 1864 Karl Eckert (late conductor of the Vienna opera) called me to Stuttgart to play a short engagement. When I returned to my hotel after our first rehearsal of “Don Giovanni” I was greatly annoyed by a man in the next room, who seemed to be pacing up and down in the most horribly squeaky boots. It continued so incessantly and the noise was so irritating that I finally rang for the porter and asked what sort of a caged lion it was they kept next door! To my great surprise the man answered that my restless neighbour was Richard Wagner !

Later my host, a great music-lover and a friend of all artists, confided to me that Wagner was in great financial straits and had been forced to abandon the *table-d’hôte* (it was then customary to pay at the table), as he was utterly without funds. Marquart, our genial host, then asked me to go to Wagner and offer him the two best rooms in the house and a standing invitation to their *table-d’hôte* in the name of the hotel management, saying that he wanted no pay, but was only glad and proud to have so great an artist as his guest! I had to decline this delicate commission, having no personal acquaintance with the Master, but I explained the circumstances to my friend Eckert, who seemed to be the only man in Stuttgart knowing Wagner well enough to act in the matter.

Eckert himself relieved Wagner’s financial embarrassment, for he dared not tell the Master of Marquart’s well-meant proposition. Mme. Eckert had sent to Vienna for a small deposit of seven hundred Gulden she had there in the bank.” And Wagner must wait till that comes,” they said,” before he can leave for Switzerland!”

That night was my first performance of Don Giovanni. Wagner sat in the parquet and seemed quite contented

## GREAT AUSTRALIAN WAGNERIANS IN RECITAL

7:00 pm Thursday 3 July

Verbrugghen Hall, Sydney Conservatorium  
Macquarie St Sydney

Warwick Fyfe accompanied by Stephen Mould  
(piano) and Aleksander Mitsios (organ)

Songs by Schumann, Mahler, Wolf, Pfitzner,  
Arlen and Sullivan as well as opera excerpts by  
Wagner , Strauss and Puccini

Warwick is a member of the Wagner Society  
of NSW and, as Alberich, was a star of the  
Melbourne Ring

Bookings from 02 9319 6255 Tickets \$49

with our rendering. If, as Weissheimer says in his book of recollections, “Neumann’s abnormally long legs stuffed into those interminable white tights . . . appeared to amuse the Master,” I shall not contradict him here! Possibly that costume may have made me look longer than usual! But my friends say this is a libel!

On my way home I stopped to see Eckert, who had not been at the theatre owing to a family bereavement; and after congratulating me on my success, of which he had already heard, he said, “Did you know that the King has called Wagner to Munich? He left to-day.” So I have always felt that fate brought us together at one of the most important turning-points of his life. I was his neighbour in those days, and through my friend Eckert and his charming wife shared his anxieties and his joys.

Personal Recollections of Wagner by Angelo Neumann,  
Translated from the Fourth German Edition

by Edith Livermore, New York: Henry Holt & Co.,  
1908, available for free download in a variety of  
formats at [www.archive.org](https://archive.org/details/personalrecolle01neumgoog) (<https://archive.org/details/personalrecolle01neumgoog>).

## GOING TO A RING CYCLE THIS YEAR?

Andrew Fergusson from the Wagner Society of South Australia proposed a solution to the problem of putting attendees to Ring Cycles in touch with each other, if they wished. He has created a self-subscription email list using Mailchimp (please don’t ask....). Current members of Wagner Societies in Australia and New Zealand can subscribe to the list via an online form that requires a first name, surname, email address and the name of the Wagner Society to which they belong.

The website contains a list of Ring Cycles, currently 10 in 2014, and participants can indicate which one(s) they are attending. This information will then be compiled and emails sent to provide contact information about others who are attending the same cycle (s). Subscribers will only receive information relating to the cycles that they indicate.

**To subscribe to the mailing list, just follow the link on our web-site or subscribe to the list on [www.wagnersa.org.au/contact/contact-groups/](http://www.wagnersa.org.au/contact/contact-groups/).**

## THE RAVEN’S REPORTING, COMPILED BY CAMRON DYER

There is a regularly updated list on the Society’s Website [www.wagner-nsw.org.au](http://www.wagner-nsw.org.au) that takes the list to 2017.

## REGISTRATION FORM

**Dr ANTONY ERNST**

### BEYOND THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS: WAGNER'S MUSICAL LEGACY

Find out how Humperdinck, Strauss, Verdi, Respighi, Debussy, Chausson, Mahler, Schreker, Pfitzner... were influenced by Wagner

**SATURDAY, 23 AUGUST 2014 | 10am-5am**

Willoughby Uniting Church Conference Centre  
10 Clanwilliam St, Willoughby 2068 (off Penshurst St)  
many buses on Penshurst St and some onsite and street parking available



#### STEP 1: ATTENDEES

Name
Address
Email
Phone

#### STEP 2: PAYMENT

Members: \$55.00 | Non-members: \$65.00

**PayPAL:** [www.wagner.org.au](http://www.wagner.org.au)

**EFT:** The Wagner Society, Westpac, Paddington: BSB: 032040: A/C 911323 (Please include name and Ernst in your transfer details)

**Pay by Cheque:** Make payable to The Wagner Society

#### STEP 3: REGISTER

Send this registration form to: Workshop Registration, Wagner Society in NSW  
GPO Box 4574, Sydney NSW 2001  
**OR** Register online at [www.wagner.org.au](http://www.wagner.org.au)

#### WAGNER SOCIETY MEMBERS – SPECIAL OFFERS AND 10% DISCOUNTS – ASK BEFORE YOU PURCHASE AT:

The Wagner Society Management Committee has negotiated a 10% discount for Wagner Society members: just mention that you are a member!

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Fish Fine Music was born in 1982 as two small stores known as The Record Collector. After almost a decade as Sydney's largest classical music retailer, the company expanded to include popular music stores and in 1991 we re-branded ourselves as Fish Fine Music.

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Or email Da Capo at: [music@dacapo.com.au](mailto:music@dacapo.com.au)  
or **Meredith Baillie** - on [shop@sapphobooks.com.au](mailto:shop@sapphobooks.com.au)

The cafe attached to Sappho serves great coffee and wine and snacks.

#### BRANGAYNE OF ORANGE VINEYARD

Brangayne of Orange has kindly agreed to offer Members a 10% discount if they purchase any of their wines. Please call and order by phone (02 6365 3229) and mention your membership of the Wagner Society.

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## ADDRESS

Please note our permanent address for all correspondence:

The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc  
GPO Box 4574 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Telephone: 9360 9822 (Jane Matthews, President)

Website: [www.wagner.org.au](http://www.wagner.org.au) | Website enquiries: [wagner\\_nsw@optusnet.com.au](mailto:wagner_nsw@optusnet.com.au)

(All website addresses used in this Newsletter are reproduced in the PDF version of the newsletter on the Wagner Society's website in the relevant article - Members Area)

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Leona Geeves Society Vice President with Michael Curtain (accompanist) being applauded by the singers for his marathon effort in playing 14 complex and widely different pieces: Catherine Bouchier (soprano), Matthew Reardon (tenor), Regina Daniel (soprano), Emilie Lemasson (soprano), David Greco (baritone) at the 4 May 2013 concert at Mosman Art Gallery.



*pompom*

### Samuel Quinteros *Wotan, erwache!*

25 June - 20 July 2014  
Opening night Wednesday 25 June 6-8pm

This exhibition of new paintings presents the first instalment of an ongoing project, a restaging of Richard Wagner's epic cycle of music-dramas, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, in selected parts. Responding to the dramatic-musical text in a purely pictorial form, this collection of paintings represents a comprehensive re-imagining, in which most key symbols are visible but nothing else is business as usual.

Samuel Quinteros graduated with honours from Sydney College of the Arts in 2013. Quinteros was selected for *Hatched* 2013, the annual exhibition of work by the best of the country's art school graduates, at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, and in 2014 he exhibited in the Australia Platform at Art Stage Singapore, curated by Aaron Seeto. Quinteros is currently undertaking a year-long artist residency at Curwoods Lawyers in the Sydney CBD. *Wotan, erwache!*\* is his first solo exhibition at Galerie pompom.

\* Wotan, awake!

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[pompom@galeriepompom.com](mailto:pompom@galeriepompom.com)

Image details: Samuel Quinteros, *Nur Seh nende kennen den Sinn!*, 2014, oil on canvas, 61 x 91.5 cm

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## ADDRESS FOR SUNDAY FUNCTIONS

Goethe Institut, 90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)

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