



# The Wagner Society

(Patron — Sir Charles Mackerras)

Registered Office: 141 Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo 2011  
Telephone enquiries: 358 1919 (Bus. Hours)

A recital by the distinguished German tenor

## HORST HOFFMANN

with associate artists

### WERNER BAER (Organ & Piano)

### SUZY POWELL (Flute)

Great Hall, University of Sydney

Thursday 14 February 1985 at 8 p.m.

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1. (a) *Ombra mai fù*, from "Xerxes" Handel  
(b) *Ave Maria* Bach-Gounod

*GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL* : Born 23 February 1685, Halle; died 14 April 1759, London.  
*JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH* : Born 21 March 1685, Eisenach; died 28 July 1750, Leipzig.  
*CHARLES GOUNOD* : Born 17 June 1818, Paris; died 18 October 1892, Saint-Cloud, outside Paris.

*Ombra mai fù* is the original form of Handel's celebrated *Largo*, and it comes from Handel's only comic opera, *Xerxes* (*Serse*), which was first produced in 1738 in London. The opening scene is located in a summerhouse in a Persian garden. Xerxes, King of Persia and engaged to one lady, is infatuated by another lady (whom he has not yet met), and he sings this aria in praise of a tree in her garden.

*Ombra mai fù di vegetabile  
cara ed amabile soave più.*

The shade of a dear and lovable plant  
was never more gentle.

In 1853, six years before the premiere of the one work by which he is generally remembered today, the opera *Faust*, Gounod achieved an enormous public success with his *Meditation sur le 1<sup>er</sup> prélude de Bach*. This work, consisting of the first prelude from Bach's "The Well-Tempered Clavier", over which Gounod wrote a melody, soon became known as "Ave Maria". Arrangements for a variety of instruments, with or without voices, have been published. Naturally Gounod deplored the immense popular success of this trifle and felt the annoyance of all artists when they see their important works ignored in favour of minor ones.

*Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum benedicta tu in mulieribus et benedictus fractus ventris tui Jesus. Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis peccatoribus nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.*

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord be with you, you exalted amongst women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, forgive us our trespasses now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

2. *Sonata in G for Flute and Continuo, Op 1 No 5* Handel  
*Adagio : Allegro : Adagio : Borée (Bourrée) : Menuetto*

The sonata for solo instrument and continuo was a favourite form of composition in the early 18th century, and Handel made a significant contribution to it, even though chamber music occupies only a small part of his total output. The most important of his sonatas are contained in the set of fifteen works, Op 1 - six for violin, three for flute, four for recorder and two for oboe - twelve of which had been published in Amsterdam in about 1722 and in a "more correct" edition in London shortly afterwards. The *Sonata in G* is patterned after the *sonata da camera*, which invariably ended with a number of dance movements.

3. (a) Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön, from "The Magic Flute" Mozart  
 (b) Walter's Song, from "Tannhäuser" Wagner  
 (c) Max's aria, "Durch die Wälder", from "Der Freischütz" Weber

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART : Born 27 January 1756, Salzburg; died 5 December 1791, Vienna.

RICHARD WAGNER : Born 22 May 1813, Leipzig; died 13 February 1883, Venice.

CARL MARIA VON WEBER : Born 18 November 1786, Eutin, Oldenburg; died 5 June 1826, London.

*The Magic Flute*, with a libretto by Mozart's friend Emanuel Schikaneder, was composed in the summer of 1791 and was first performed at the Theater auf der Weiden in the suburbs of Vienna on 30 September of that year. It was written in the popular form of Viennese entertainment known as *Singspiel*, in which the music was interspersed with dialogue in German. The opening minutes of Act I see Prince Tamino saved from a huge snake. Shortly afterwards he is shown a portrait of Pamina, daughter of the Queen of the Night. He falls instantly in love, and in this tender aria he expresses his feelings and hopes.

Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön,  
 wie noch kein Auge je gesehn!  
 Ich fühl' es, wie dies Götterbild  
 mein Herz mit neuer Regung füllt.  
 Dies Etwas kann ich zwar nicht nennen,  
 doch fühl ich's hier wie Feuer brennen.  
 Soll die Empfindung Liebe sein?  
 Ja, ja! Die Liebe ist's allein.  
 O wenn ich sie nur finden könnte!  
 O wenn sie doch hier vor mir stände!  
 Ich würde ... würde warm und rein ...  
 Was würde ich?  
 Ich würde sie voll Entzücken  
 an diesen heißen Busen drücken,  
 und ewig wäre sie dann mein!

This portrait is enchanting in its beauty,  
 such as no eye has ever beheld!  
 At the sight of this divine image  
 I can feel something stirring in my heart.  
 What it is, I can't exactly say,  
 yet I can feel it burning here like fire.  
 Can this feeling be love?  
 Yes, yes! It can only be love.  
 Oh, if only I could find her!  
 Oh, if only she were standing here before me!  
 I would ... would warmly, purely ...  
 what?  
 I would in sheer delight  
 press her to this my fervent heart,  
 and then she would be mine forever!

Tannhäuser was a 13th century minstrel (or "minnesinger") born in Salzburg. There is no evidence to connect him with the legend of the Venusberg - the hill within which Venus (the goddess of love) was supposed to hold court and to destroy the souls of men who fell into her hands. In his opera Wagner linked this legend with a contest of song which took place in 1210 at the Wartburg, a castle in Thuringia (central Germany). Composed between 1843 and 1845, *Tannhäuser* was first performed in October 1845 in Dresden. In Act II there is a song contest in praise of love. The first minstrel, Wolfram von Eschenbach, sings a simple, restrained song about the purity of love, sentiments which, after some comments by Tannhäuser (also called Heinrich) on the more passionate nature of love, are endorsed by Walther von der Vogelweide in his short song.

Den Bronnen, den uns Wolfram nannte,  
 ihn schaut auch meines Geistes Licht;  
 doch, der in Durst für ihn entbrannte,  
 du, Heinrich, kennst ihn wahrlich nicht.  
 Laß dir denn sagen, laß dich lehren:  
 der Bronnen ist die Tugend wahr.  
 Du sollst in Inbrunst ihn verehren  
 und opfern seinem holden Klar.  
 Legst du an seinen Quell die Lippen,  
 zu kühlen frevle Leidenschaft,  
 ja, wolltest du am Rand nur nippen,  
 wich' ewig ihm die Wunderkraft!  
 Willst du Erquickung aus dem Bronnen haben,  
 mußst du dein Herz  
 nicht deinen Gaumen laben.

That fountain, of which Wolfram told,  
 my spirit, too, beholds;  
 but the one who burned with thirst for it,  
 you, Heinrich, indeed, you know it not.  
 So lend your ears and learn:  
 the fountain is true virtue.  
 You should hold it in fervent reverence  
 and pay homage to its sweet purity.  
 If you touch your lips to it  
 to quench some wanton passion,  
 yes, if you but try to sip from its rim,  
 its magic power will vanish forever!  
 If you seek refreshment from the fountain,  
 it must be for your heart  
 and not for your palate.

*Der Freischütz* is a romantic opera in three acts which received a triumphant first performance in 1821 in Berlin. It was Weber's major operatic success and is the only German opera between Beethoven and Wagner to have remained in the international reper-

toire. The title literally means "The free-shooter", which might be paraphrased "The Marksman with magic bullets". Max, a young forester in love with Agathe, has lost confidence in his ability to compete successfully for her hand in a shooting contest. In this dramatic aria he recalls how he once roamed the forests and, laden with game, came home to her loving gaze. But now he seems cursed by an evil fate.

Nein, länger trag' ich nicht die Qualen,  
die Angst, die jede Hoffnung raubt!  
Für welche Schuld muß ich bezahlen?  
Was weiht dem falschen Glück mein Haupt?

Durch die Wälder, durch die Auen,  
zog ich leichten Sinn's dahin;  
alles, was ich konnt' erschauen,  
war des sichern Rohrs Gewinn.  
Abends bracht' ich reiche Beute,  
und wie über eignes Glück,  
drohend wohl dem Mörder, freute  
sich Agathes Liebesblick!

Hat denn der Himmel mich verlassen?  
Die Vorsicht ganz ihr Aug' gewandt?  
Soll das Verderben mich erfassen?  
Verfiel ich in des Zufalls Hand?

Jetzt ist wohl ihr Fenster offen,  
und sie horcht auf meinen Tritt,  
läßt nicht ab vom treuen Hoffen:  
Max bringt gute Zeichen mit!  
Wenn sich rauschend Blätter regen,  
wähnt sie wohl, es sei mein Fuß;  
hüpft vor Freuden, winkt entgegen -  
nur dem Laub den Liebesgruß.

Doch mich umgarnen finstre Mächte!  
Mich faßt Verzweiflung, foltert Spott!  
O dringt kein Strahl durch diese Nächte?  
Herrscht blind das Schicksal? Lebt kein  
Gott?

No, I shall bear the torment no longer,  
the fear which dashes any hope!  
For what misdeed must I pay?  
Why am I delivered up to false Fortune?

Through the forests, through the meadows,  
light of heart I used to make my way;  
everything my eyes espied  
fell to my trusty barrel. game  
In the evenings I would return laden with  
and as if rejoicing at her own good fortune,  
no doubt threatening to the murderer,  
joy would shine in Agathe's loving gaze!

Has Heaven then forsaken me?  
Has Providence quite averted her eyes?  
Must Ruin seize me in its grip?  
Have I fallen into the hands of Chance?

Now, no doubt, her window is open,  
and she is listening for my step,  
clinging to her faithful hope:  
Max will bring a good omen with him!  
When the leaves move and rustle,  
she thinks, no doubt, it is my foot;  
she jumps for joy and waves -  
just to the leaves her loving greeting.

But dark powers hold me ensnared!  
I am seized by despair, tormented by mockery!  
Oh, is this darkness impenetrable to light?  
Does blind Fate rule? Is there no God?

#### I N T E R V A L

#### 4. Lohengrin's Narration and Farewell

Wagner

*Lohengrin*, composed between 1846 and 1848 and first performed at the Hof-Theatre in Weimar in August 1850 with Liszt conducting, was conceived in the summer of 1845 after Wagner had studied various medieval legends dealing with the Holy Grail (the cup supposedly used by Jesus at the Last Supper, and in which Joseph of Arimathaea received the last drops of Jesus's blood at the cross). The opera is set in Antwerp in the first half of the tenth century. It has a firm historical background: the visit in 932 by King Henry the Fowler to enlist allies for a forthcoming war with Hungary. "In the foreground there are two linked dramas. One is of human relations, about a woman's unquestioning faith in her husband, and the undermining of that faith by a woman who has established an unnatural dominance over *her* husband. The other is the legend of the pure chivalrous knight who comes to the rescue of a damsel in distress. Wagner combined them in a clear and effective play" (Andrew Porter). In Act I Lohengrin defends Elsa against certain false accusations and she promises that she will never ask his name or origins. However the seeds of doubt are placed in her mind during Act II and, following her marriage to Lohengrin in Act III, she insists on asking the forbidden questions. He agrees to tell, in the presence of the King, everything Elsa wishes to know. He discloses that he is a knight of the Holy Grail (i.e. a holy warrior whose duty is to guard the sacred cup), called Lohengrin, the son of Parsifal.

In fernem Land, unnahbar euren Schritten,  
liegt eine Burg, die Monsalvat genannt;

In a distant land, (which) your footsteps  
cannot approach,  
there stands a castle, called Montsalvat;

ein lichter Tempel stehet dort inmitten,  
so kostbar, als auf Erden nichts bekannt.  
Drin ein Gefäß von wundertät'gem Segen  
wird dort als höchstes Heiligtum bewacht:  
es ward, daß sein der Menschen reinste  
pflegen,  
herab von einer Engelschar gebracht.  
Alljährlich naht von Himmel eine Taube,  
um neu zu stärken seine Wunderkraft:  
es heißt der Gral, und selig reinster  
Glaube  
erteilt durch ihn sich seiner Ritterschaft.  
Wer nun dem Gral zu dienen ist erkoren,  
den rüstet er mit überirdischer Macht;  
an dem ist jedes Bösen Trug verloren,  
wenn ihn er ersieht, weicht dem des Todes  
Nacht.

Selbst wer von ihm in ferne Land entsendet,  
zum Streiter für der Tugend Recht ernannt,  
dem wird nicht seine heil'ge Kraft entwendet,  
bleibt als sein Ritter dort er unerkannt:  
so hehrer Art doch ist des Grales Segen,  
enthüllt - muß er des Laien Auge fliehn;  
des Ritters drum sollt Zweifel ihr nicht  
hegen,  
erkennt ihr ihn, dann muß er von euch ziehn.  
Nun hört, wie ich verbotner Frage lohne!  
Vom Gral ward ich zu euch daher gesandt;  
mein Vater Parzival trägt seine Krone,  
sein Ritter ich - bin Lohengrin genannt.

Now that his secret is known, he must withdraw, despite Elsa imploring him not to leave her. He promises the King victory over his enemies. The boat drawn by a swan (on which he had arrived in Act I) returns and, amid intense suspense, he goes towards the bank and gazes sadly at the swan. If only Elsa had kept faith for one year, he could have stayed with her. He hands her his horn, his sword and his ring, for her to give to her brother when the latter at length returns.

Mein lieber Schwan!  
Ach, diese letzte, traur'ge Fahrt,  
wie gern hätt' ich sie dir erspart!  
In einem Jahr, wenn deine Zeit  
im Dienst zu Ende sollte gehn,  
dann durch des Grales Macht befreit,  
wollt' ich dich anders wieder sehn!  
O Elsa! Nur ein Jahr an deiner Seite  
hätt' ich als Zeuge deines Glücks ersehnt!  
Dann kehrte, selig in des Grals Geleite,  
dein Bruder wieder, den du tot gewähnt.  
Kommt er dann heim, wenn ich ihm fern im  
Leben, du ihm geben!  
dies Horn, dies Schwert, den Ring sollst  
Dies Horn soll in Gefahr ihm Hilfe  
schenken, verleih;  
in wildem Kampf dies Schwert ihm Sieg  
doch bei dem Ringe soll er mein gedenken,  
der einst auch dich aus Schmach und Not  
befreit!  
Leb wohl! Leb wohl! Leb wohl, mein süßes  
Weib! noch bleib!  
Leb Wohl! Mein zürnt der Gral, wenn ich  
Leb Wohl! Leb Wohl!

in its midst, there stands a shining temple  
more magnificent than anything known to man.  
Within, a vessel of miraculous power  
is guarded as the holiest of holies:  
it came to pass that only the purest tend  
it,  
a host of angels brought it to this earth.  
Every year a dove approaches from Heaven  
to renew once more its wondrous power:  
it is called the Grail, and the grace of  
purest faith  
is conferred through it upon its knights.  
Now, he who is chosen to serve the Grail  
is armed by it with supernatural strength;  
any evil deceit is useless against him,  
once he is chosen, even the shadow of death  
must yield.  
Even if it sends him to distant lands,  
chosen to champion the right of virtue,  
his sacred power is not taken from him,  
if as its knight he remains there unknown;  
but so exalted is the Grail's blessing,  
that if revealed, he must flee the gaze of  
the uninitiated; knight,  
so you should not harbour doubts about the  
for if you recognise him, he must depart.  
Hear now, how I reward the forbidden question!  
The Grail it was that sent me here to you;  
my father Parsifal wears its crown,  
its knight am I - Lohengrin is my name.

Dear swan!  
Alas, how gladly would I have spared you  
this last sad trip!  
In a year's time, when your term  
of service was to end,  
then, freed by the Grail's power,  
I hoped to see you again in other guise!  
O Elsa, I'd have desired just one year  
at your side to witness your happiness!  
Then, blessed in the Grail's protection,  
your brother, who you believed was dead,  
would have returned.  
When he comes home and I am far away,  
give him this horn, this sword, this ring!  
This horn will aid him when in danger,  
in the fury of battle this sword will  
grant him victory;  
but by the ring he shall remember me,  
who once freed you as well from shame and  
distress!  
Farewell! Farewell! Farewell, sweet maid!  
Farewell! The Grail will be angered if I  
stay any longer.  
Farewell! Farewell!

## 5. Concertino for Flute and Piano, Op 107

Chaminade

*CÉCILE CHAMINADE : Born 8 August 1857, Paris; died 18 April 1944, Monte Carlo.*

One of the few female composers whose works have been internationally known, Chaminade studied in Paris with Benjamin Godard and others. Although she wrote a lyric symphony for chorus and orchestra plus other large-scale works, her fame rested on her numerous songs and short piano pieces - "agreeable drawing-room music", as they have been called. The one-movement *Concertino* (or miniature concerto) for flute belongs to this genre. Its character is one of elegance and nobility, displaying the flute to advantage in a variety of styles, including some impressive virtuoso passages.

## 6. The Prize Song, from "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg"

Wagner

*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* is Wagner's only comic opera - and a most successful one, with real comedy backed by the lyric inspiration of the Prize Song and the springing vigour of the various choruses. "It is a moving and beautiful opera, a long, rich musical and dramatic poem to wit and wisdom, to ardent, impetuous young love and tender, prudent, paternal care, to dashing artistic adventure and justly cherished tradition. A world without *Die Meistersinger* would be a poorer place; it is one of the necessary operas" (Andrew Porter). Composed between 1862 and 1867, it received a triumphant first performance in June 1868 in Munich, and during the next two years it was produced all over Germany and in Vienna. The highpoint of the work occurs near the end when Walther sings the Prize Song. It is a poetic description of the miracle which inspired the song. He sings of wandering into a magic garden where he saw a beautiful maiden, whom he knew to be his Muse, Eva. The music she inspired will transport them to the heights of Parnassus and to Paradise. [Parnassus is a mountain in central Greece once celebrated as a home of the Muses.]

Morgenlich leuchtend im rosigen Schein,  
von Blüt und Duft  
geschwellt die Luft,  
voll aller Wonnen nie ersonnen,  
ein Garten lud mich ein,  
dort unter einem Wunderbaum,  
von Früchten reich behangen,  
zu schaun in selgem Liebestraum,  
was höchstem Lustverlangen  
Erfüllung kühn verhieß das schönste Weib,  
Eva im Paradies!

Gleaming in morning's rosy glow,  
with blossoms and perfume  
suffusing the air,                   delights,  
filled with all kinds of unthought-of  
a garden invited me,  
to gaze there, beneath a tree of wonders  
richly hung with fruit,  
in a blissful dream of love,  
on what fulfilment of supreme desire  
was boldly promised by the most beautiful of  
women,  
Eva in Paradise!

Abendlich dämmernd umschloß mich die Nacht;  
auf steilem Pfad  
war ich genaht  
zu einer Quelle reiner Welle,  
die lockend mir gelacht;  
dort unter einem Lorbeerbaum,  
vor Sternen hell durchschienen,  
ich schaut' im wachen Dichtertraum,  
von heilig holden Mienen,  
mich netzend mit dem edlen Naß,  
der hehrste Weib, die Muse des Parnass!

In evening's twilight I was enfolded by  
night;  
I had approached by a steep path  
a spring's pure waters,  
which laughed at me enticingly;  
there under a laurel tree,  
through which the stars shone brightly,  
I saw in a poet's waking dream  
sacred-sweet of expression,  
sprinkling me with the noble water,  
the loftiest of women, the Muse of Parnassus.

Huldreichster Tag,  
dem ich aus Dichters Traum erwacht!  
Das ich erträumt, das Paradies  
in himmlisch neu verklärter Pracht,  
hell vor mir lag,  
dahin lachend nun der Quell den Pfad mir  
wies;  
die dort geboren, mein Herz erkoren,  
der Erde lieblichstes Bild,  
als Muse mir geweiht,  
so heilig ernst als mild,  
ward kühn von mir gefreit

Most glorious day,  
to which I awoke out of a poet's dream!  
What I had seen in my dream, Paradise,  
lay bright before me,  
its glory divinely transfigured anew,  
laughing on its way the spring now showed  
me my path;                                   chosen,  
she who was born there, whom my heart has  
earth's most delightful sight,  
destined to be my Muse,  
as sacredly serious as she is generous,  
was boldly wooed by me

am lichten Tag der Sonnen,  
durch Sanges Sieg gewonnen  
Parnass und Paradies!

in the sun's bright day,  
and by the victory of my song was won  
Parnassus and Paradise!

All German translations by Nic Witton.

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*The program notes were compiled by Michael Edgeloe.*

HORST HOFFMANN, currently performing in *Norma* for the Australian Opera, studied at the Conservatorium of Music in Hanover and made his debut as Tamino at the Hanover State Theatre. Since 1965 he has performed as a guest artist in Stuttgart, Munich, Bayreuth and several other German opera houses, as well as in Belgium, Italy, France, Holland and Central and South America. Last year he sang in *Aida* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* for the Australian Opera, and in April he performs in *Parsifal* in Antwerp. Future Australian performances include Janáček's *Kátya Kabanová* for the Australian Opera and *Aida* for the Lyric Opera of Queensland. He appears in this recital by courtesy of the Australian Opera. WERNER BAER has enjoyed a long and varied career in many areas of music, both in Europe and in Australia. Born in Berlin, he studied the organ with Karl Straube, kantor at Bach's Thomas-kirche in Leipzig, and piano, composition and conducting at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik. Forced to leave Germany in the 1930s, he eventually came to Australia, served in the Australian army and worked for many years for the ABC in various senior positions. He is an authority on the life and music of Wagner, and has frequently lectured for the WEA and broadcast on the ABC on Wagner's operas. [A new WEA series of lectures begins this month on Wednesday mornings at 10.30 at the Opera House, starting on 27 February. Call 264 2781 for further information.] In 1977 he was awarded the MBE and Queen's Jubilee Medal. SUZY POWELL was educated at the NSW State Conservatorium of Music, after which she studied in New York and at the Guildhall School of Music in London. She returned to Australia in 1974 and has performed with the Sydney Symphony and Australian Chamber Orchestras. She is active as a freelance and recording musician.

MEMBERSHIP in the Wagner Society is open to all who are interested in Wagner and his music. Benefits include lectures and special bookings for operas, receptions for visiting artists and a newsletter. At the Fifth Annual Dinner on 24 May RITA HUNTER will both sing and speak. The cost of membership for the 14 months ending 31 March 1986 is \$18 (\$30 double). Please send a cheque payable to the Society to 141 Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo, 2011, or you may join at the door tonight.

BACH ORGAN RECITALS : Sydney organist DAVID KINSELA is playing the complete organ works of Bach in eleven recitals, on Sundays at 7.30 p.m. in the Chapel of Knox Grammar School, Wahroonga, and repeated on the following Wednesdays at 8 p.m. in St Mary Immaculate Church, Waverley. The first recitals, on 24 and 27 February, mix the familiar and the unfamiliar : Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C, Trio Sonata No 1, "Dorian" Toccata and Fugue in D minor, Fughettas and Preludes on Christmas Chorales, Fugue on a theme of Corelli, and others. Admission costs \$8 (Concessions \$5) for each recital. Ten vouchers, valid for any combination of persons at either venue, can be purchased for \$50.

FERENC LISZT AND HIS COUNTRY 1869-1873 : An important and fascinating new book about Liszt and his involvement with Hungary has been published. Copies are available at the special price of \$24 (posted \$26) from Michael Edgeloe, 17/40 Epping Road, Lane Cove, 2066. Phone : 428 1463.