



Maximise

your enjoyment and understanding of

Wagner's music

Newsletter No. 123, December 2011 - January 2012

IT'S ALMOST MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Yes, it's surprising how quickly the year slips by, and membership renewal is due by 31 January!

Why renew your membership for 2012?

The best reason to renew is the expanded range of activities and events that will stimulate, educate and entertain! Our calendar will expand the number of Wagner Society events from eight to ten with more variety and interest than ever before. There will be recitals, lectures, debates, fund-raisers and social occasions, focussed on the buildup to the bicentenary of Wagner's birth and Opera Australia's forthcoming Ring production in Melbourne in 2013.

SO, MAXIMISE YOUR ENJOYMENT BY RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

You can renew your membership now using the renewal form at the back of this newsletter.

President's Report

Welcome to the final newsletter for 2011.

Your Committee has been working energetically (some members, it seems, have been writing emails almost around the clock) in organising an exciting series of events for next year. Indeed, we have such an abundance of riches that, in addition to our regular functions, we will be participating in some special events in 2012 which will probably double as fundraisers. You will be receiving details of these events as soon as they become available.



Ms Simone Young AM - Patron of the Wagner Society in NSW.
Photo: Berthold Fabricius

THE HAMBURG DAS RHEINGOLD - BRISBANE

The Queensland Premier, the Hon Anna Bligh, recently announced two coups de theatre: the first that the Bolshoi Ballet will come only to Brisbane &, more significantly for Wagnerians, that our patron Simone Young will conduct the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra and

Hamburg State Opera in two concert performances of Das Rheingold, the opening opera in Richard Wagner's greatest work, The Ring Cycle. In 2000 in Vienna, Ms Young made musical history when she became the first woman ever to conduct the complete Ring Cycle.

Ms Young will also conduct the performance of Mahler's mighty Symphony No. 2, known as the Resurrection Symphony that will feature soloists from the Hamburg State Opera.

We have also been endeavouring to increase the mix at our events, with a greater variety of performances and deliveries. We want to be relevant and interesting to a wide range of people, so that we attract not only seasoned

PRESIDENT'S REPORT continued p.3 ►

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

Lyndon Terracini's update on Melbourne 2013 Ring Cycle	P4
Die Walküre in New Zealand	P7
Melbourne Ring Cycle Artist Sponsorship Program	P5
Metropolitan Opera's "Cursed" Ring Cycle - Siegfried - Richard Mason	P8
Mise-en-Scène - A Key Element in an Outstanding Production - Prof Michael Ewans	P9
Remembering Wagner - Colleen And Michael Chesterman	P10
Country House Opera In England - Julie And Terry Clarke	P11
'Wagner Licht': Generation Y to shine a light on Wagner - Katie French	P11
10% members discounts - Fish Records & Da Capo Fine Music Books	Back Page

PATRON:

Simone Young AM

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS:

Prof Michael Ewans
Mr Richard King
Mr Horst Hoffman
Mr Joseph Ferfaglia

For Your **Diary**

2012		
Monday, 4 June (6:30PM)	Siegfried Idyll – Richard Gill in the Sydney Symphony's Discovery program	Sydney Opera House
Thursday, 9 (1:30PM), Friday 10 August (8PM) Saturday, August 11 (2PM)	Wagner under the Sails: The Opening Gala Revisited – Simone Young conducts the Sydney Symphony with Soprano Christine Brewer in excerpts from Die Meistersinger, Tannhäuser, Tristan und Isolde, and Götterdämmerung	Sydney Opera House
Wellington: Sunday, 22 July (3 PM), Christchurch: Wednesday, 25 July (5 PM) and Auckland: Saturday, 28 July (4PM).	Die Walküre in New Zealand with Simon O'Neill Tickets on sale on Monday, 16 January 2012	
23 August to 5 September 2012. (Rheingold dates TBC)**	Wagner Society in NSW Patron Simone Young and the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra and Hamburg State Opera in two concert performances of Das Rheingold,	Queensland Performing Arts Centre
2013		
Nov - Dec 2013	The Ring Cycle - Melbourne - three cycles ##	Melbourne Opera Theatre

** According to well-informed sources, there will be a Symposium probably be on Fri 24th August, 2012, in between the two concert performances of Das Rheingold. The Hamburg Orchestra's Mahler Symphony No.2 would be on that evening of the Symposium, 24th

Opera Australia has started publicising Ring activities on its website and in its 2012 subscription brochure and has released a brochure outlining donation privileges and ticket prices. If you go to the website www.opera-australia.org.au/whatson/ring_cycle, at the bottom of the page there's a section titled "Register for more information". If you click on the highlighted text "Opera Australia Ticket Services" you will create an email so that you can send OA your contact details, and receive more information about the Melbourne Ring as it is released. We should all consider registering with OA to show our support for the cycle.

Meetings **Dates** & Coming **Events**

DATE	EVENTS - 2012	TIME & LOCATION
5 February	The Souffleuse and the Singer: the working relationship between the singer and the prompt. Sharolyn Kimmorley and Robert Mitchell DVD at 12:00: Part 1 of Wagner's early Romantic opera, Der Fliegende Hollander. Hartmut Handchen conducts the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra. Juha Uusitalo sings the title role.* NB: Early start for DVD – 12PM	2pm NB: Early start for DVD - 12PM
25 March	The Melbourne 'Ring'. Maureen Wheeler, Principal Donor, and Richard Mills, Conductor, discuss their shared involvement in the 2013 'Ring' Cycle in Melbourne. DVD at 12.30: Part 2 of Der Fliegende Hollander starring Juha Uusitalo in the title role.*	2pm
22 April	Emotional Noise: the relationship between sound, music, visual image and emotions. (Wagner's sound world.) Catherine Gleeson and Andrew Belletti. (Australian Film, Television and Radio School) DVD at 12.30: Director Hans Neuenfel's production of Lohengrin, presented at Bayreuth in 2010/11. Klaus Florian Vogt sings the title role. Act 1.	2pm
20 May	Annual General Meeting Wagner's Birthday Celebration DVD at 12.30: Bayreuth 2010/11 production of Lohengrin, Klaus Florian Vogt singing the title role. Act 2.	2pm
17 June	Sins of the Father: a story about Liszt and Wagner, with musical illustrations. (by Jessica Duchon) Presented by Damien Beaumont (ABC Classic FM) In Conversation with Deborah Humble – Erda & Waltraute in the Melbourne Ring DVD at 12.30: Bayreuth 2010/11 production of Lohengrin, Klaus Florian Vogt singing the title role. Act 3.	2pm
<p>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. 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)</p>		

*Excellent preparation for those attending Bayreuth's new production of 'Dutchman' in 2012. As Juha Uusitalo sings the role of Wotan in the Melbourne 'Ring', this is a great opportunity to hear him in action.



Committee 2010 - 2011

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QUESTION: How many copies of Georg Solti's Ring have been sold? Have a guess. **Answer** on page 13

President's Report continued

Wagner lovers, but also those who are potentially open to the lure of the Master's magic.

At the last Society function, on 16th October, Lyndon Terracini, the artistic director of Opera Australia, told a packed Goethe auditorium about the plans for the 2013 Melbourne Ring Cycle. His address was informative, engaging, and at times very humorous. Your editor has brilliantly encapsulated, later in this Newsletter, the information obtained both from Lyndon's address and from speakers at an Opera Australia presentation three days later. The only thing that I can add relates to the future, beyond 2013. Lyndon told us that after 2013 it is proposed that there will be a performance of the Ring Cycle in Melbourne every three years. The 2013 production will be repeated in 2016 and 2019, although not necessarily with the same cast. After that, a new production will be mounted in 2022. What a change this will make for us Australians: to have access to our own Ring Cycle every third year!

Speaking of the 2013 Ring, Opera Australia has developed an Artist Sponsorship Programme. A list of the major performers and their sponsorship amounts is on page 5. If any reader is interested in sponsoring a performer, I suggest you contact Nicholas Selman of Opera Australia.

At the last Committee meeting, on 4 October, we discussed the Society's fundraising strategies and the amounts to be allocated to particular causes in the lead-up to the 2013 bicentenary. The Society has long provided financial support for awards and scholarships, particularly for singers who propose to study in Germany. The following resolutions were passed:

That support for the Berlin New Music Opera Award continue in 2012 and 2013, capped at \$2,500 for each year;

That support for other Awards and Scholarships continue in 2012 and 2013, and be capped at \$2,500 in total for each year;

That forms requesting donations to the Society include options for donations both for Wagner 2013 and for awards and scholarships for

singers and other artists;

That the combined annual funding commitment of \$5,000 be met from specific donations for these programmes, with any surplus donations carried forward to the following year, and any shortfall made up from the Society's working account.

A decision was also made at the meeting to increase admission prices to the Society's functions. From the beginning of 2012, the admission price will be \$20.00 for members and \$25.00 for non-members. This decision was made after considering the cost of the hire of the Goethe venue, the cost of the afternoon teas, and the amounts sometimes paid to artists and/or speakers. Under the old regime, the Society was barely breaking even, and sometimes suffering a loss. When one compares the cost of comparable events, it is still, I think, extremely good value.

The other matter of interest from the last meeting was the fascinating presentation by Mike Day and Belinda Middlebrook, from the UTS, about their concept for a project called "Wagner Licht." This is described in detail by Katie French later in this newsletter.

Finally, I would like to give my thanks to those who have done so much for the Society this year. And I have to start with Roger Cruickshank, whose massive contribution goes back many years now. I had no idea at all, until earlier this year, how much work and responsibility Roger has been shouldering over the past years. Without his commitment and energy, I hate to think what might have happened to the Society. Most of the tasks that Roger previously undertook on his own are now spread across various members of the Committee. And we still find that we are working overtime!

The other people who deserve our special thanks are Renata and Herman Junker. Members might not realise it, but they provide the delicious afternoon teas which we devour after each of our functions at the Goethe Institute. They donate their time and energy, and I cannot imagine what we would do without their generosity and commitment, not to mention their culinary skills!

Jane Mathews



Wagner 2013 Bicentenary Donation Appeal

2013 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Richard Wagner and will be a significant international musical occasion. The Wagner Society hopes to pledge major support for the 2013 Wagner Bicentenary Celebrations. To achieve this, we have set up a 'Wagner 2013 Fund' and we need your support to help make this possible.

Making a donation to the 'Wagner 2013 Fund' will ensure the Society's contributions to the celebrations will be world class. We are considering a number of possible exciting projects. One of them involves supporting a major international artist participating in Opera Australia's Ring performances in November and December 2013. We will also continue to promote the life and works of Richard Wagner through performances and events in Sydney.

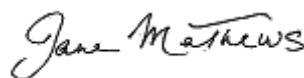
Donations are fully tax-deductible and can be made by cheque or money order by direct debit; details of the Society's bank account and postal address are given below.

BANK DETAILS

Westpac Banking Corporation,
Paddington NSW Branch
Account Name: The Wagner Society
BSB: 032040
Account Number: 911323

Our postal address is:
GPO Box 4574
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Thank you for considering this request for support - any donation to the Wagner Society's 'Wagner 2013 Fund' will make a difference.



The Hon Jane Mathews AO
President
Wagner Society in New South Wales

THE DONATION FORM IS PRINTED ON THE INSIDE BACK COVER OF THE NEWSLETTER
or can be downloaded at the Society's Website:

www.wagner.org.au/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=84&Itemid=68

Update on Opera Australia's Planning for the 2013 Ring Cycle in Melbourne

Your editor was pleased and grateful to hear Opera Australia's Artistic Director, Lyndon Terracini speaking about the company's planning for the Australian bicentenary Ring firstly at the Wagner Society function on 16 October and secondly, on 19 October, with the conductor Richard Mills and the company's Director of Development Nicholas Selman. On the first occasion, Lyndon tailored his talk to Society members' interests by, among other things, telling us about his introduction to Wagner, thanks to his elder brother (a composer and musician) playing the whole Ring over a weekend. Then Lyndon joined a Salvation Army band that often played arrangements of Wagner's music.

On his way to joining Opera Australia, Lyndon curated many festivals in Brisbane, including the innovative step of taking elements of the festivals to regional Queensland. He also attempted what would have been a major coup in Australian cultural life: he persuaded Valerie Gergiev to bring the Mariinsky Opera's production of the Ring Cycle to Brisbane in 2006. Unfortunately, there was no sympathy - indeed outright hostility - at the top political levels in the Queensland government. According to Lyndon, Gergiev was sympathetic when he was given the bad news: "I know about politics. I live in Russia!"

Many Sydney Wagnerians remember the thrilling concert version of Tristan und Isolde, organised by Lyndon as part of the Brisbane Festival and performed by the Australian

Youth Orchestra under Richard Mills, with Lisa Gasteen and John Treleavan, as one of the highlights of Wagner performances in Australia.

Once established in Opera Australia, Lyndon immediately began planning the Ring Cycle that he had spoken of as one of his priorities on his appointment. As Society members well know, to produce the Ring Cycle is both a crucial test of an opera company's claims to international significance and a huge demand on resources and talent. Among Lyndon's challenges were to find the money, the cast and the creative team. He was successful in finding backing for the production from Ms Maureen Wheeler, the Victorian Major Events Company and, of course, Opera Australia itself. The Victorian government also requested that, in return for its support, at least half the tickets would be quarantined for Australian patrons. The total direct cost was estimated to be some \$15M over two years, with about \$ 5M from the major sponsor, \$2M from Victoria over three years, and \$1M from Houston Grand Opera. Some \$1.5M was still to be found. While ticket sales would account for part of that figure, Lyndon was keen to point out that the company was very open to donations in support of the production! Significantly, the company's Board was very supportive and appreciated, for instance, that Lyndon wanted a Ring Cycle that was repeatable (in Melbourne) in 2016 and



2019 with no additional changes or adaptations. Lyndon was also convinced of the importance of the Ring Cycle as a festival event: putting it on all at once, not an opera a year. The Board also acknowledged Lyndon's point that a Ring Cycle was a hallmark of any opera company that claims international standing.

In the cast, we can count ourselves lucky, as according to Lyndon there are no other Ring Cycles planned for the latter half of 2013, so he was able to score Juha Uusitalo as Wotan, Susan Bullock as Brünnhilde, John Wegner as Alberich, Stewart Skelton as Siegmund and Gary Lehman as Siegfried (who gave up a Tristan for Vienna with Simon Rattle), Richard Berkeley-Steel as Loge, Deborah Humble as Erda and Waltraute, Miriam Gordon-Stewart as Sieglinde – an impressive line-up. Lyndon also mentioned that all the roles would have covers from within the company – an important training and development opportunity. It will be built up to a formidable 110 players, with an emphasis in approach based on 'accompanying', not overwhelming. (Richard Mills sees so much of the 'Ring' as chamber opera.)

In the creative team, Neil Armfield is well-known to Australian opera and theatre-goers as an innovative and challenging director. Lyndon mentioned that, like Elke Neidhardt and her Ring team, Armfield had retreated to the Blue Mountains to listen to the Ring Cycle before he accepted Lyndon's offer of direction. At the time of Lyndon's presentation, Armfield was working hard on his production concept and, with his designer, Robert Cousins, was, apparently, halfway through Siegfried, but by the time you read this he will have presented his full concept to the company's board. Part of Lyndon's brief to Armfield was that the production must be repeatable and give audience members, especially those new to or less familiar with Wagner, a clear sense of the narrative – a skill that Lyndon considered Armfield had. This aspect was also important, since the Houston Grand Opera would be taking the operas individually. In addition, Armfield and he were working out which version of the libretto to use as the surtitles.

Many audience members would be greatly comforted by Armfield's appointment. Who could forget his timeless production of Tristan and Isolde for Opera Australia in 1990? And who could forget the exquisite performance of Isolde in Armfield's production by Susan Bullock in Perth in 2006? Susan Bullock will perform the role of Brünnhilde in the Melbourne Ring Cycle in 2013.

However, Lyndon also talked about aspects of the preparations for the production that would have been mysterious to many of us opera-goers. He had to find a way of fitting the production into an already busy schedule of some 350 performances a year without detracting from the quality and efficiency of the company. Part of his answer was to create a specific Ring team to be responsible for all aspects of the sets and designs and costumes etc by sub-contracting those activities for other productions to external companies. The Ring Team would be able to develop

an understanding of Wagnerian aesthetics. Lyndon promised us some "big effects!"

Lyndon's focus, which is shared by 'Ring' Conductor, Richard Mills, is on establishing what each called a 'Ring' culture, a culture of learning and appreciation over a number of years. They aim to develop empathy for what they see as a 'home-grown production'. There was a repeated emphasis on 'collaboration' and team work, not only within the ranks of performers and the production team, but including audience supporters and potential donors, who, by the way, will be affectionately termed 'Ring Leaders'!

A key element in Lyndon's planning was the creation of a special invitation only Ring Orchestra, based on the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, and players from elsewhere who might be interested. The Ring Orchestra would also, representing Lyndon's long-term view, use students from the Australian National Academy of Music. Initially the students would fill in behind the section leaders, but, gradually, would be able to take over the section leaders as they gained experience. Lyndon considered that it was essential the national opera company created a Wagner tradition in Australia and the development of a Ring Orchestra would crucial achieving that aim. Mills emphasised the need for members of the Ring Orchestra to be aware of each other, the culture of Wagnerian sound, for example the attack and articulation of the brass instruments. He mentioned also that a new set of the treacherously difficult to play Wagner tubas would be used for the performances, with a team of players over the twelve performances.

In both the presentations, Lyndon and Richard Mills were keen to point out that after the recent premiere of his opera The Love of the Nightingale, and his conducting of Electra in January 2012, Mills would be concentrating on learning the music and working out such things as the pacing of climaxes and the singing lines, as well bringing to bear a composer's knowledge of, and insight into, the

OPERA AUSTRALIA
THE MELBOURNE RING CYCLE 2013
ARTIST SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

ARTIST	ROLE	SPONSORSHIP DONATION	PATRON
RICHARD MILLS	CONDUCTOR	\$75,000	
JUHA UUSITALO	WOTAN / WANDERER	\$80,000	
SUSAN BULLOCK	BRUNNHILDE	\$50,000	CONFIRMED
JOHN WEGNER	ALBERICH	\$45,000	CONFIRMED
GARY LEHMANN	SIEGFRIED	\$45,000	
STUART SKELTON	SIEGMUND	\$45,000	
DEBORAH HUMBLE	ERDA / WALTRAUTE	\$30,000	
MIRIAM GORDON-STEWART	SIEGLINDE	\$30,000	
PETER COLEMAN WRIGHT	GUNTHER	\$30,000	
DANIEL SUMEGI	FASOLT / HAGEN	\$25,000	
RICHARD BERKELEY-STEELE	LOGE	\$25,000	



deepest workings and architecture of Wagner's complex score. His preparation, to which he is devoting three hours a day, consists of sitting at the piano playing the entire work, and singing it! Part of this preparation also involves immersing himself in the tradition of Wagner performance as preserved in recordings. In addition too, Mills would be heavily involved in managing the Ring Orchestra, scheduling rehearsals, matching scores and singers, working with a new edition of the score of which not all the parts are yet available, down to such matters as bowings, and schedules for the performances themselves, to be fair for the singers and players.

Richard Mills made the thoughtful statement that 'in the light of each day, a diamond will refract differently', and in such a way, 'each Ring Cycle will reflect changes in its relevance and meaning.' However, he also emphasised that this Ring Cycle had to have integrity – it had to last, until 2019, not be a one Ring Cycle wonder. Whilst he emphasised that this would be an Australian Ring Cycle, there would be no gimmicks to obscure the journey, no 'Speedos' on Rhinemaidens!

Lyndon also filled us in about the activities that would surround each Cycle, each of which would take eight days. On performance days, Heath Lees would be conducting a lecture/demonstration of that opera's highlights. On the days off, there would be a choice of activities in which attendees could immerse themselves in the "Wagner experience," from those in the "Festspielhaus" aka the Spiegeltent, to a debate on the Jewish question, a film festival in Federation Square, including "What's Opera, Doc," and a New York company performing a miniature Ring as well as another company touring regional Victoria with a 90 minute Ring!! There would also be pre-Cycle dinners, brass bands marching to Wagner's music down Swanston Street.

But, perhaps most exciting of all, Lyndon foreshadowed using the Chorus and other company members to stage concert versions of Marschner's *Der Vampyr* and Wagner's *Die Feen*. In addition, the chorus would be giving concerts. Perhaps the Wagner Society in NSW should begin lobbying Opera Australia to bring these performances to Sydney as well in the between years of the Ring Cycle?

Lyndon admitted that he was not yet sure what the company might undertake in Sydney, but he was open to suggestions from the Wagner Society in NSW. Lyndon hinted that it might be possible to stage concert performances of Wagner's operas in Sydney, given that Sydney did not have a theatre suitable for staging full Wagner productions.

Lyndon advised that there would be a live simulcast of the Ring Cycle, if all tickets were sold, as well as a film made of the performance, although he was still working on the technical issues of the placement of cameras etc so as not to interfere with patrons' pleasure (NB see Richard Mason's comments below). The filming may therefore take place during general rehearsals, although Lyndon wryly observed that singers often pull out all stops when a camera focusses on them! A documentary about the making of the Melbourne Ring Cycle will also be made for sale worldwide.

At the 19 October meeting, the most important matter announced was the donors' benefits schedule and the ticket prices. A brochure is available from Opera Australia, but the information does not seem to have made it to their website at this time. The ticket prices range from \$2000 Premium Reserve, through \$1600 A Reserve to \$1000 for C Reserve and \$600 for D Reserve. The tickets would go on sale in three periods: 1st – to Ring donors; 2nd – to Opera Australia subscribers; 3rd – general public (at the end of 2011). The entry level for donor privileges is \$1500.

In the light of all this talk of an Australian Ring Cycle, what of the Adelaide Ring Cycle? It was as if it had never occurred! It was only when asked what lessons had been learned from the Adelaide Ring Cycle that a somewhat startled Terracini re-grouped, and suggested how important it was to have enduring productions. Overseas sales were now an essential part of new productions, so that having productions that were appealing to partners was of financial importance. Most importantly, this opera cycle had to become part of OA's repertoire, so audiences must want to see it again and again.

Lyndon has been very busy recently. Not only has he had major presentations about the Melbourne Ring Cycle, but he has also delivered in Melbourne the annual Peggy Granville-Hicks Lecture that is full of sobering and thoughtful observations about the future of opera – and classical/serious art music in general. He rightly draws attention to the dramatic changes in Australia's demographics over the last 20 years – and the worrying implications for future audiences for these art forms – and then spells out the challenge: "When we do have performances that accurately reflect the street demographic, and when those artists are able to respond emotionally the way they have been conditioned to respond from birth, then we will communicate with very different audiences and be seriously doing something of profound importance artistically." Your Editor would encourage to read his speech – and let me know your views. The speech can be read in full at: <http://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/opera/peggy-glanvillehicks-address-20111101-1mntn.html#ixzz1da8yAplA>. [Katie French and Editor]

Donations

The Society welcomes all donations and they can be addressed to the Treasurer, Wagner Society in NSW Inc, at the Society's GPO Box address shown on the back page of this Newsletter. Such donations help us to carry out our objective "to promote the music of Richard Wagner and to encourage a wider appreciation of the significance of his achievements." Donations are tax-deductible and receipts will be issued.

The following donations have been received to the end of October 2011:

Paul Alger, Marlene and Paul Baumgartner, Barbara Kiessling, Hannah and Willi Spiller.



Simone Young AM - Wagner Society in NSW's New Patron - Hamburg in Brisbane

"Having one of the world's leading conductors perform Das Rheingold before its performed anywhere else in Australia in 2012 really makes a statement about Brisbane's growing status as an arts and cultural hub," Ms Bligh said.

"Led by the celebrated choreographer John Neumeier, the world-famous Hamburg Ballet company will premiere two works, Nijinsky and A Midsummer's Night Dream. The orchestra for the performances of Midsummer Night's Dream will be the Queensland Symphony orchestra under the direction of young Brisbane-born conductor Simon Hewett who is Hamburg Ballet's resident conductor and is shaping an international career in both ballet and opera."

The national exclusive Hamburg presentation will run at QPAC from 23 August to 5 September 2012. According to well-informed sources, there will be a Symposium probably be on Friday, 24 August 2012, in between the two concert performances of Das Rheingold. The Hamburg Orchestra's Mahler Symphony No 2 would be on that evening of the Symposium, 24 August.

Please go to www.qpac.com.au to join the waitlist. Tickets go on sale in 2012. You can read Premier Bligh's announcement at: www.cabinet.qld.gov.au/mms/StatementDisplaySingle.aspx?id=76858. [Editor]

Die Walküre in New Zealand



The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra has just announced that "Internationally-renowned Wagnerian tenor **Simon O'Neill** returns home to join the crème de la crème of New Zealand and international singers for this concert performance of Wagner's astounding Die Walküre." O'Neill has sung Siegfried at the Royal Opera House and La Scala.

Simon O'Neill Siegmund
Edith Haller Sieglinde
Christine Goerke Brünnhilde
John Wegner Wotan

Jonathan Lemalu Hunding
Margaret Medlyn Fricka
Pietari Inkinen Conductor

There are three dates in three cities in New Zealand: Wellington: Sunday, 22 July (3 PM), Christchurch: Wednesday, 25 July (5 PM) and Auckland: Saturday, 28 July (4PM). Tickets will be on sale on Monday, 16 January 2012. You can keep abreast of developments at the website: www.nzso.co.nz/tickets/season-subscriptions/purchase-or-renew. [Editor]

Director of Bayreuth's 2013 Ring Cycle Will Be: Frank Castorf - He Will!!!

Katharina Wagner has announced that director Frank Castorf will direct the bicentenary Ring Cycle at Bayreuth in 2013. According to Ms Wagner at the launch of the program for the anniversary year in Berlin, The Leipzig Opera will stage Wagner's early work Die Feen (The Fairies) and the production will be performed in concert in Bayreuth. For the Bayreuth Oberfrankenhalle, productions are planned of the operas Das Liebesverbot (The Ban on Love) and of Rienzi. (The Oberfrankenhalle is the large sports stadium in which concerts are sometimes given during the Bayreuth Festival.)

In an interview last Sunday Castorf said to her: 'Yes, I would like to do it,' Wagner told journalists. There

are only a few open questions in the contract." Ms Wagner has defended the choice of the Berlin theater director: "...every artistic decision is also an aesthetic choice, Technically, Castorf was 'a true professional.'"

There will also be an anniversary concert on 22 May 2013, with Christian Thielemann conducting.

For more of Castorf's biography see the Goethe website: <http://www.goethe.de/kue/the/reg/reg/ag/cas/por/enindex.htm>

See the Wikipedia article on postdramatic theatre at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postdramatic_theatre., [EDITOR]



Review: *Siegfried* - Metropolitan Opera 1/11/11 - “This Ring Is Cursed” - Richard Mason

Conductor: Derrick Inouye [replacing Fabio Luisi, replacing James Levine]; Producer: Robert Lepage; Sets: Carl Fillion; Costumes: François St-Aubin

Cast: Jay Hunter Morris [replacing Gary Lehman, replacing Ben Heppner] [Siegfried], Bryn Terfel [Wanderer], Deborah Voigt II [replacing Deborah Voigt I] [Brünnhilde], Patricia Bardon [Erda], Gerhard Siegel [Mime], Eric Owens [Alberich], Hans-Peter König [Fafner], Mojca Erdmann [Woodbird]

This is the third instalment of the new Ring at the Met. *Götterdämmerung* premieres in January, followed by complete cycles in April/May 2012.

The Good

Bryn Terfel gave a formidable interpretation of the Wanderer as an angry but not bitter old man, cynical but not world-weary. His confrontation with Alberich was superb: the contrast between light- and dark-Alberich accentuated. Terfel's voice has darkened and deepened over the years, and, with more depth and subtlety of characterization, he has the potential to be a successor to James Morris in the role.

Erich Owens was a strong Alberich and Gerhard Siegel a suitably scheming and devious Mime. Patricia Bardon sang well as Erda; König and Erdmann were also good in their respective roles.

Jay Hunter Morris may be remembered in Sydney as a very good Pinkerton [on DVD with Cheryl Barker]. I have also seen him as Walther in San Francisco. His voice is solid but not powerful, a pleasant tone with a nice legato. He also acts very well with a boyish charm, and in these roles the combination has been enough to provide good interpretations. However, the voice lacks colour variety, and as Siegfried he became more boring as the opera progressed. The turning point was the forest murmurs scene, which requires fine shading and use of a wide colour range, all lacking. However, as the Met's 4th choice for the role – Ben Heppner was originally scheduled, but vocal problems and poor reviews at Aix have led him, wisely, to withdraw; the role was then scheduled to be shared between Gary Lehmann and Stephen Gould, but the former withdrew for some unspecified illness, whilst the latter was not available – one should be generous, and give him a B+ for (almost) making it through to the end.

So, the above list sounds like a respectable performance, and indeed, if the curtain had come down after the Wanderer's departure in Act III, one would have rated the whole performance as reasonably good.

The Bad

The conducting was fast, and superficial rather than exciting. Indeed, the conductor seemed so desperate to get to the end of the opera that he ignored a disturbance in the auditorium (described below) to start Act II. By the end he had managed to shave a full 30 minutes off the

running time. The Met orchestra seemed grateful for the early night, as they managed to keep together and play quite well.

The production made extensive use of the “machine” now familiar from the cinema showings to project variously the murky undergrowth, the forest and the rocks surrounding Erda's cave. The dragon was less scary than an average Disney film, just a neck and head that swayed around a bit. All Siegfried could do was run back and forth below the head until the moment came to stab it in the neck. Copying Chéreau, Fafner was re-transformed back into a giant after being stabbed, which thankfully removed the dragon. The production didn't add a great deal, was overly literal at times – Sieglinde giving birth was unpleasant, the child Siegfried running across the stage unnecessary, whilst a projected fluttering Woodbird will become irritating with repeated viewings. As with previous instalments the machine severely restricted the available stage space.

Worse, the machine completely malfunctioned after Terfel's exit. First, the lift placing Brünnhilde in position failed to operate, so she had to walk on stage, past Siegfried tactfully looking the other way, until she reached the middle of the stage, when she lay down, waiting to be woken. Fortunately most of the audience did not quite grasp what was happening – she covered her face and hair so she might have been another Walküre, perhaps Waltraute, offering some guidance [perhaps I shouldn't give directors out there any ideas] – otherwise laughter would have descended.

Secondly, the machine became stuck, including the light projections, so that, instead of a view from a mountaintop, Brünnhilde and Siegfried met, conversed, and embraced whilst menaced by a wall of fire.

The Ugly

There was once a soprano called Deborah Voigt, who had a promising career ahead, singing a superb Sieglinde as well as other dramatic roles, and a fine Marschallin. However, she had a tendency to be put on weight. She lost the role of Ariadne because the director insisted the interpreter wore a “little black dress”. She decided to diet, which didn't work, and finally resolved on a “stomach-stapling” operation to solve the problem once and for all. Whilst successful for the weight, the lack of support for the voice started to cause vocal problems. Unfortunately she tackled heavier roles such as Senta and Tosca, which, combined with this lack of support, caused the voice to deteriorate further. She is, of course, repeating the history of Maria Callas. Contracted to sing in *La Sonnambula* at La Scala, and fearing ridicule due to her large size (her friend the director Visconti proposed to dress her in a Swarovski necklace to distract the audience) Callas went on a crash diet. Within 10 years her career was over. Whilst unwilling to predict an unhappy ending for Miss Voigt, suffice to say that she is now loud, harsh, and at times piercing. She is developing a nasty wobble



and scoops occasionally. She attempted a trill which fell flat. I have no desire to hear her sing again.

A couple of final remarks. Whilst the Met cinema broadcasts no doubt give pleasure to many people, anyone attending the Met should beware any broadcast performances. There are 9 cameras in total, 2 on the level of the Dress Circle looking down, 2 on the sides on large booms which swing around distractingly, 2 at the front of the aisles, and 2 on the sides (about 1/3 of the way back). And finally, a small "rabbit" that runs on a track at the front of the stage to take close-ups. It is impossible to sit anywhere in the theatre without being distracted by at least 1 camera movement, and I would estimate at least 20% of the seats have their performance ruined by the more intrusive cameras. Moreover, any potential attendee should be aware that, not only is the above true for the broadcast performance itself, but also for the one preceding, no doubt to provide backup footage in case of problems.

Obviously there is a balance between the needs of the general public and those in the theatre, but it seems to me that Mr Gelb has gone much too far in one direction. Other houses are cutting down on these experiments, or at least investing in modern cameras which are more discreet. Those in Vienna are at the side of the stage and

about 8" in diameter, whereas the Met seems stuck with 1980s "big is best" technology. It seems incomprehensible why the cameras are not restricted to the dress rehearsal and the Saturday performance. In any event, attend the Met with foreknowledge, or risk a ruined evening.

Finally, on returning to my seat in the middle of Row B, the elderly woman in the aisle refused to stand when requested, instead suggesting I sit somewhere else. She only stood up when I politely insisted, and then subjected me to a stream of four-letter f- abuse. The man whose seat was next to mine was directly behind the conductor in Act I, and was hoping to take one of two empty seats in the front row. When the couple returned to take their seats at the last minute, he had to get past that woman as the lights went down. She absolutely refused, and screamed abuse at him, whilst the conductor came in, took his bow, and started Act II. She continued this for about 30 seconds, before giving in, and letting him take his seat. This disruption ruined the start of Act II for much of the audience.

When I went to complain to the stage manager in the interval, I was preceded by a queue of people asking to change their seats because they couldn't see due to the cameras. This Ring is cursed.

Letter to the Editor - *Mise-En-Scène* - A Key Element in an Outstanding Production - Prof Michael Ewans

As a relatively poor (and now retired) academic I am unable to fly around the world in pursuit of productions of the Ring, much though I would like to. So it was a great good fortune for me to have been a speaker at a conference near San Francisco on dates in May 2011 which enabled me to see the Siegfried of the Zambello/Runnicles Ring in dress rehearsal.

I was therefore most interested to read the two reports on the complete cycle in the last Newsletter, from which I learnt the 'American Ring' concept behind Zambello's staging of the trilogy. (I had wondered why power lines featured so prominently in the prelude/interlude projections in Siegfried; now I know.)

Katie French's review seems to me to highlight the importance of this Ring. In my view (after going to as many Rings as I can, and reading reviews of all that I can't) Zambello's production is probably the most important cycle since Patrice Chéreau's Centenary Ring at Bayreuth 1976-9.¹ I don't have anything to add to French's evaluation of Zambello's production concept, which is clear, lucid and above all not gimmicky; and I deeply regret that I heard and saw the brilliant Nina Stemme only in the one drama in which her part is relatively small. But I do want to add something.

Your reviewers tend to concentrate on the overall concept of a Ring, and then on the quality of the voices and the conducting. Only very rarely do they evaluate practical stagecraft – though Katie French's comments on Zambello's Die Walküre II.1 are an exception, and very helpful. But the detail of the *mise-en-scène* is

a key element in an outstanding production, and also an area in which many opera directors are less than successful. Zambello in my view is right up there with Chéreau in devising meaningful stage business which arises from the text and the music. I should like to mention in particular someone who does not arouse a comment from your two reviewers: Stacy Tappan as the Forest Bird. I don't know whether Zambello's decision to have the Bird played by a real young woman, visible to the audience first from an elevated platform and later down at ground level, is wholly original; I simply don't know enough Rings to be sure if it has or has not been done before. But it was brilliantly done, from Tappan's first appearance right through to the skittish, playful way in which she first toys with Siegfried and then leads him off to Brünnhilde's rock in the closing bars of Act 2. Every movement, gesture and posture of this singing actress was carefully thought out and highly effective. This was an outstanding example of a mastery of stagecraft which was visible throughout Zambello's Siegfried. To close with another example, the forging scene in Act 1 was precisely enacted; every phase of Siegfried's work was clearly shown to the audience as and when the stage directions require it. And if you noticed the ladder fixed to the back of the caravan, you might or might not have guessed that Mime would play the final moments of Act 1, in which he almost hysterically celebrates his anticipated triumph, up on the roof. This was great opera directing.

Prof Michael Ewans
Honorary Life Member

¹ If any members are not convinced of the central importance of Chéreau's Ring, please read my article in *Miscellanea Musicologica* 14 (1985).



Remembering Wagner

- Colleen and Michael Chesterman

This year, 2011, we had two unplanned glimpses of Wagner's life and death. In June, we spent a week at the Bach Festival in Leipzig, where Wagner was born on 22 May 1813. In September, we spent a week in Venice, where he died on 13 February 1883.

Leipzig is rich in sites recognising their resident composers, such as Mendelssohn's house and the Schumanns' apartment. The connection with Wagner is recognised by a bust in a garden near the Gewandhaus. We went to look for the house at 3 Bruhlstrasse where he was born, but found only a construction site for a new shopping mall. At the site of the house, hoardings had a reproduction of a portrait of Wagner and a drawing of the house, with a brief description. We could not find out whether anything more permanent would mark the spot when the mall is donations from completed.

Wagner had a heart attack and died in Venice at the age of 69. He often escaped the chill of a German autumn and winter by going to Italy and since his first visit in 1858 came to Venice 6 times. On the last of these, following the first performance of Parsifal at Bayreuth, Wagner and Cosima arrived at the Hotel Europa in September 1882. They then found more comfortable, well-heated accommodation on the mezzanine floor of Ca' Vendramin Calergi, a 16th century palazzo on the Grand Canal. This palazzo had been restored in 1844 by the Duchesse de Berry, whose nephew still owned it.

Ca' Vendramin Calergi is now the Venice Casino. In 1995, the room where Wagner had died was given by the Municipality of Venice to the local Richard Wagner Association. In 2003 a German collector Josef Lienhart bequeathed to the Association his collection of scores, posters, letters, paintings, lithographs and other Wagnerian memorabilia, the largest dedicated to the composer outside Bayreuth. With the support of the Casino, the Association established the Centro Europeo di Studi e Ricerche Richard Wagner in the other 3 rooms of Wagner's apartment.

As well as organising concerts, scholarships for young musicians and a Wagner Days Festival in the Casino's Festival Hall and La Fenice, the Association opens the Richard Wagner Rooms for tours at 10.30 Tuesday and Saturday mornings and 2.30 Thursday afternoon. Reservations are required and can be booked on arwv@libero.it. The hour-long guided tour is free, though visitors can make donations. We found it a most rewarding visit. Our enthusiastic guide, who had just been to Bayreuth for the first time, was taking around a German group, but provided a briefer English commentary for us.

The Casino itself is an excellent example of a Venetian palazzo with a medieval well in the courtyard and some handsome rooms. The Wagner rooms on the first floor are set back from the Canal and have been well

furnished. Included are items from Wagner's period, including couches upholstered in the original pattern, based on descriptions in a book written by Henry Perl and published in Augsburg two months after Wagner's death. Extracts from the book in German and Italian are displayed. Appropriate music plays softly as the guide describes the works he composed here and in other Venetian palazzi, his love of Venice and his warm relationship with his gondolier. Outside one room is a pomegranate tree planted at the time of Wagner's visit. There is a rare poster of the first performance of The Ring in Italy at La Fenice just 3 months after Wagner's death. There is also fascinating memorabilia, such as letters requesting loans, reviews of Wagner operas, even a note to the Hotel Europa, ordering a dozen bottles of champagne to be given to his gondolier.

The guide related moving stories of Venice's response to Wagner's death. Musicians hired gondolas and moored outside to play themes from his works. Cosima arranged for a black-shrouded funerary gondola to bear Richard Wagner's remains down the Grand Canal to the railway station for the return to Bayreuth, a journey evoked powerfully in Franz Liszt's two pieces for piano entitled La lugubre gondola. It seems fitting that Venice has repaid the composer's affection with this beautifully-maintained memorial, as well as a bust in the Giardini by the Riva degli Schiavoni.

Another interesting example of Wagner's influence can be found in the Palazzo Fortuny. Mariano Fortuny, a Spaniard, is today remembered mainly for his wonderful printed and pleated dresses. He was also a passionate Wagnerian and first went to Bayreuth in 1892. Fortuny was much impressed by the design of the Festspielhaus. He was inspired to design theatres with similar domes and stage scale, to develop cycloramas and to use lighting and reflections to create a 'total work of art'. Models of these are displayed in his Palazzo. Also on display are paintings by Fortuny of scenes from Wagnerian operas, particularly Parsifal.

New Members

The following people joined the Society:

Christine Malcolm [1040], Olive Laing [1041], Mary & Jonathon Threlfall [1042], Audrey Blunden [1043], Janelle Berents [1044], Shane Simpson [1045], [1046], Lea Maher [1047], Betsy Conti [1048], Phillip McEachran [1049], Claire Brauer [1050], Sarah Ann Walker [1051].



Country House Opera in England

- Julie And Terry Clarke

Small opera companies abound in the UK these days. For many years travelling groups such as Pavilion Opera, founded in 1981 and still going, present fully staged operas to piano or small orchestra accompaniment in the libraries or hallways of stately homes. I well remember Cherubino actually disappearing through the library window at Sledmere House and Violetta, herself, playing the opening bars of the overture to *La Traviata* before being seamlessly replaced by the actual pianist.

Other venues include Holland Park in London, Clonter Farm in Cheshire and country houses up and down the land. Modern composers such as Jonathan Dove are actually writing operas for small venue touring companies.

Some of the more notable venues we have visited, and seen for ourselves the remarkable quality of the work.

GLYNDEBOURNE

It all began with Glyndebourne. The wealthy John Christie had installed an organ into a large room in his spacious house in the Sussex Downs on the south coast of England. Here they gave amateur operatic productions and it was at one of these that the 48 year old, apparently confirmed bachelor, met the Canadian soprano Audrey Mildmay. They married in 1931 and immediately embarked on building a proper working theatre in the grounds of the house where fully staged, high quality professional opera could be performed.

They were greatly aided by Hitler's persecution of the Jews, since Fritz Busch from Dresden and Carl Ebert from Berlin came to be conductor and producer and between them provided international experience.

The first season of Mozart operas in 1934 lasted two weeks and from the start achieved the highest possible standard due to long rehearsal time and scrupulous attention to detail. By the start of World War Two the theatre had been almost doubled in size and the tradition and standard had been firmly established. During the war, however, the festival closed and the house was used as an evacuee centre.

The festival re-opened in 1950 and has continued to thrive under successive generations of Christies. A new opera house was completed in 1994 and opened with a production of *La nozze di Figaro* just as the old one had 60 years before.

John Christie was passionate about Wagner, but it wasn't until 2004 that the first Wagner opera, *Tristan und Isolde* was performed. This was a truly memorable production, directed by Nikolaus Lehnhof with the glorious Nina Stemme in the title role. This was followed by *Die Meistersinger* in 2011.

Glyndebourne still retains all the old traditions, top class productions with young up and coming singers. There are still the long intervals where the formally dressed audience can picnic on the lawns and gardens.

LANGBOROUGH

Longborough Festival Opera was founded by Lizzie and Martin Graham whose dream is to be the first private opera house, since Bayreuth, to stage a full Ring Cycle. The village of Longborough is set in the heart of the Cotswolds and the house itself overlooks some of the most beautiful views in England. The Grahams converted an old chicken shed into a small opera house and furnished it with 500 seats from Covent Garden, which were being replaced during the major renovation of that house.

Other operas have been performed there every summer since 1998 and every year the facilities improve, the orchestra grows and standards have risen. In the early years they did performances of the Jonathan Dove edited Ring in English, however their sights have always been set on the real thing.

In 2007, LFO embarked on their Ring with a full length production of *Das Rheingold*, sung in German with an orchestra of 60 players conducted by Anthony Negus and directed by Alan Privett. Subsequent years have seen *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* and next year will see completion of the cycle with the whole staged in 2013. This year we saw a truly exciting young American tenor, Daniel Brenna, as *Siegfried*, a thrilling find who sustained this massive sing right through to the final climax with Alwyn Mellor as *Brünnhilde*.

Like Glyndebourne the audience dress formally and picnic in the lawns and car park during the intervals.

GRANGE PARK

Grange Park Opera takes English eccentricity to new heights. Grange Park is a large estate and country house near Winchester belonging to the Baring family. The house itself is virtually derelict, but attached to it is a beautiful small theatre constructed in 2002 from a gutted and unoccupied neo-classical temple. The prime mover for this enterprise is a diminutive Indian lady called Wasfi Kani who, with unflinching spirit and energy, has converted a small scale opera company – Pimlico Opera – into an important opera festival.

In 2009, they did a concert performance of *The Flying Dutchman*, but this year a full staged production of *Tristan und Isolde*, with Alwyn Mellor (again) and Richard Berkeley-Steele in the title roles. The first act was played in a modern ship's cabin, the second in a bedroom that opened into a dream-like forest and the third where *Tristan* lay mortally sick in his dilapidated island home. There were some rather enigmatic and occasional superfluous pieces of business, but the standard of the



music and the singing was well sustained to the very end where Isolde sang her Liebestod in front of the stage curtain to Tristan alone.

Part of the bizarre charm of Grange Park comes in the intervals where most of the audience repair to the main house. There one finds a fully set up high class restaurant amid the devastation of the ruined interior. The walls are crumbling, the staircase is missing and the patrons are protected from falling plaster by artfully draped netting. Nonetheless a legion of young people provided a rapid, hot and excellent meal with dessert and coffee in the second interval.

GARSINGTON

The last of these country house operas is Garsington Opera. Garsington is a village 5 miles south east of Oxford. The Manor House, built in the 16th century, was once the home of Lady Ottoline Morell, a doyenne of the Bloomsbury Group. The owner of the house Leonard Ingrams was a keen opera enthusiast and for 22 years Garsington offered semi-

outdoor performances of chamber operas. Ingrams died in 2005 and the company has now left Garsington, although the name remains for the time being, and has moved to a 600 seat pavilion in the grounds of Wormsley Park, near High Wycombe, which belongs to the Getty family. This glass and steel pop-up opera house is said to be one of the most thrilling venues in Britain, although reviews of the modern, grunge Magic Flute were less than glowing.

The repertoire has been Mozart, Strauss and Rossini; champagne is served before the performances. There are long dinner intervals and evening dress is suggested.

Despite the straightened financial times we live in, particularly for the arts, these country house opera companies survive and seem to flourish and maintain an astonishingly high standard of performance and full auditoria. Without government subsidies, they exist on ticket sales and sponsorship – at Grange Park, Isolde's legs were supported by Judith Lawless and Kevin Egan!

Richard Wagner: A Cycle of Sonnets (1907)

- William Morton Payne

The website www.archive.org is a wonderful non-profit initiative to build an Internet library. Its purposes include offering permanent access for researchers, historians, scholars, people with disabilities, and the general public to historical collections that exist in digital format. Founded in 1996, and located in San Francisco, the Archive has been receiving data donations from many online sources, including the Library of Congress and many North American universities. Now the Internet Archive includes texts, audio, moving images, and software as well as archived web pages in our collections, and provides specialized services for adaptive reading and information access for the blind and other persons with disabilities.

Among its treasures is a huge collection of books about Richard Wagner. All have been scanned by a range of volunteers and organisations, including the Google book scanning project. All of the books are now out of copyright and so available to download for free. Given the large number of e-book and document readers around, most books are available in a range of formats (epub, pdf, mobi, djvu etc) for Kindles, Nooks, Kobos, or pdf programs – so you can choose one for your device or computer. The following sonnet is taken from one of these books and is the first of the cycle of 15 sonnets about each of Wagner's works, from Rienzi, and ends with one

on Bayreuth. Your Editor will slip in other Wagner-related books from this website from time to time.

RICHARD WAGNER

He fought and loved and suffered, all his years
He gave with pure devotion to his art,
And for his guerdon felt the poisonous dart

Of envy and the heat of scorn that sears.

Yet how that tale of adverse fate endears
To us his vision-haunted life, whose part
It was to wake the hope that gives men heart

And strength renewed, and to the conflict cheers.

By ways mysterious did his spirit fare
Steadfast and strong its mission to fulfil,
And win the crown ; the joys he knew that thrill

And griefs that plunge the soul in black despair.

He learned creation's secret, and laid bare
The tragic striving of the Cosmic Will.

If you would like to read the rest of the sonnets, you can find the book online or download a copy from this address:

<http://www.archive.org/details/richardwagnerac00payngoog>. [Editor]



'Wagner Licht': Generation Y to Shine a Light on Wagner - Katie French

In his recent Address honouring the Australian composer, Peggy Glanville-Hicks, Opera Australia's artistic director, Lyndon Terracini confronted both Sydney and Melbourne guests with what he called 'the elephant in the room: the changing demographic of Australian audiences.' In feisty words, he described how opera companies overseas have had to close because of resistance to change from small groups with a sense of 'patrician entitlement'. His attitude is that 'Opera must change – or die'! Surprisingly, perhaps those wished-for winds of change are already stirring in Sydney.

At a recent meeting of the Committee of the Wagner Society, Mike Day, lecturer from the School of Design in the Faculty of Design Architecture and Building at the University of Technology Sydney, and one of his students, Belinda Middlebrook, presented their concept for a project entitled 'Wagner Licht', which would involve the planning and construction of light and sound installations inspired by Richard Wagner's music dramas.

The project, as part of a celebration of the bicentenary of Wagner's birth in May 1813, is anticipated to be both interdisciplinary and collaborative, involving students from general design, lighting and sound design, and theatre. (By its very nature it's already sounding like Wagner's concept of Gesamtkunstwerk!)

Belinda, who is studying for a Bachelor of Interior and Spatial Design, sub-majoring in Theatre, recently participated in the Prague Quadrennial, an international Scenography festival. In that multicultural environment she realised that the project which her supervisor had proposed had the potential for international collaboration, with students and professionals from design universities working together, and using new technologies and ideas to illustrate the project.

For Belinda, the project has involved the rather unenviable task of a crash course in Wagner, his writings, his theories on theatre, and most importantly, his works – something which most Wagner lovers come to experience, understand and love over a period of years, if not a lifetime. She has found him to be 'an amazing artist', one which her generation has missed out on, viewing classical music as 'old fashioned and uninteresting.' She now views him as a 'radical', arguing that if he were alive today he would still be challenging how audiences view performance and how they listen to music.

So, how to broaden the demographic, and introduce new generations to Wagner's music theatre in a compelling way?

Hers is the techno-savvy generation, the generation that thrives on instant communication technologies, on the media, and digital technologies, and it's through using these new technologies in light and sound design that she hopes to get fellow students on board.

Belinda has become fascinated by Wagner's distinctive use of the leitmotif, and following what she calls 'its individual journey'. This journey she feels could perhaps be translated into expressive light, colour and sound. Rather 'innovatively', she suggests that DJ 'mixes', with abstract sounds and beats, could be mixed with Wagner's libretto to take the audience on a journey of heightened emotions.

She envisages commissioning 'design teams' of both students and professionals, nationally and internationally, each interpreting a range of leitmotifs in multi-media installations. Teams would work within the same dimensional framework of a cube, so that ultimately, members of an audience could step into the radical world of the leitmotif. When the installations were brought together in 2013, they would result in the creation of a 'sub-city of Wagnerian spaces'!

Before we all get too excited, it should be pointed out that Belinda is presently conducting the feasibility study. This involves designing three leitmotifs using light and projection in a team including two music students, and two DJs creating a hypothetical sound piece. Her results are to be presented to her Supervisor in December, 2011.

If successful, it's the search for Sponsorship in the first part of 2012, (they have Osram, Xenian/Philips, and Zumtobel in their sights); Design and Fabrication by March, 2013; culminating in a joint exhibition at the spectacular 'Vivid' Festival in Sydney in May/June, 2013, just in time for the Wagner Bicentenary.

With talent and sponsorship on their side, they could well provide what Lyndon Terracini is looking for – a means of connecting with a contemporary opera audience. Through shining a light on Wagner, they may become the opera-goers and opera-designers of the future.

QUESTION: How many copies of Georg Solti's Ring have been sold? Have a guess. **Answer** 18 million



Leipziger **Richard Wagner** Festspiele

- 12 - 26 May 2013

Coincidentally, your Editor was following up references on the internet to a special 2013 celebration in Leipzig and was pleased to find the following information that might be of interest to you!

A 22 June meeting of the city council approved an 'extraordinary grant' ('außerordentlichen Zuschuss') to support celebrations for the upcoming two-hundredth birthday of the city's greatest son, Richard Wagner. Oper Leipzig, under the leadership of Intendant Ulf Schirmer, will work in collaboration with the Bayreuth Festival. Full details have yet to be announced, their revelation being scheduled for a Berlin press conference on 27 October.

The Leipzig Opera will stage Wagner's early work Die Feen (The Fairies) and the production will be performed in concert in Bayreuth. For the Bayreuth Oberfrankenhalle, productions are planned of the operas Das Liebesverbot (The Ban on Love) and of Rienzi. (The Oberfrankenhalle is the large sports stadium in which concerts are sometimes given during the Bayreuth Festival.)

"The "Leipzig Wagner Festival", which now has a secure place in the internationally recognised festival calendar of the composer's native city. Founded in November 2002, the "Richard Wagner Gesellschaft Leipzig 2013 e. V." intends to reclaim the composer for his hometown.

For this reason the "Wagner Festival" was initiated in May 2006. As we understand it, the festival is a contemporary, spirited, but also ironic program of events which reflect the (quite controversial) facets of the music and life of Richard Wagner. Blind allegiance and outdated exegesis are not our purpose. The great Leipzig-born composer's 200th birthday in 2013 is approaching. By then, we wish to build a "Festes Spielhaus" (a sort of "Permanent Festival Playhouse") on Leipzig's "Green Hill" (the Fockeberg)."

The Wagner Festival in Leipzig is initiated, curated and organised by the city's Richard Wagner Society. It takes place every year around 22 May, the day that Wagner was born. The festival forms part of a series of events leading up to the major anniversary celebrations in 2013, which will mark 200 years since the birth of the great Leipzig-born composer.

If you would like to keep abreast of developments in Leipzig, you might like to add these websites to your bookmarks:

<http://wagneropera.blogspot.com/2011/06/cooperation-between-bayreuth-festival.html>

http://www.wagner-festtage.com/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3&Itemid=9
[Editor]

The Wagner Experience - A Website to Help You Prepare for the Ring in Melbourne

A friend of your Editor recently drew his attention to a website he had stumbled on while searching for other information – he isn't a Wagnerian! However, your Editor was impressed with the website and thought that it might be of interest to any Wagnerians seeking to prepare for the Melbourne Ring Cycle, or just increasing their general knowledge of Wagner.

The site is edited by John Weinstock, who is (or perhaps was) Professor of Germanic Studies at the University of Texas. Among the courses he offers are Old Icelandic, Introduction to Old Norse, Old Norse Literature, and The Vikings and Their Literature.

The website is divided into: Wagner's Ring, Ring motives, Ring tonal structure, Ring plot, and Ring characters. For people, like your Editor, who are not musically very literate, the Ring motives section is particularly helpful, with all the key leitmotiv listed in order of appearance with MP3 files you can play. The website address is:

<http://www.utexas.edu/courses/wagner/indexflash.html> and Professor Weinstock's academic page is at:

<http://studentorgs.utexas.edu/flesa/gsc/weinstock.htm>. [EDITOR]



The Raven's Reporting - Compiled by Camron Dyer

There is a regularly updated comprehensive list on the Society's Website <http://www.wagner-nsw.org.au> that takes the list to 2014.

February 2012

Berlin	Deutsche Oper Tristan und Isolde – 19, 25
Bremen	Tannhäuser – 19
Budapest	Tannhäuser – 12, 15, 29.
Dallas	Tristan und Isolde – 16, 19, 22, 25
Darmstadt	The Ring – 11, 12, 18, 25.
Düsseldorf	Die Walküre – 24
Essen	Tristan und Isolde – 5, 12, .
Frankfurt	Götterdämmerung – 5, 10, 18, 26, .
Freiburg	Lohengrin – 3, 16.
Hamburg	The Ring – Jan 28, Feb 5, 12, 19.
Hannover	Tannhäuser – 4, 8.
Kiel	Lohengrin – 12.
Leipzig	Die Meistersinger – 11, .
Meiningen	Das Liebesverbot – 1, 19.
Munich	Das Rheingold – 4, 8, 12.
Nuremberg	Holländer – 8, 26.
Ottawa	Opera Lyra Holländer – 29 [concert performance].
Toulon	Lohengrin – 3.
Vilnius	Holländer – 2.
Zurich	Die Meistersinger – 3, 5, 11, 14, 18.

March 2012

Berlin	Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra in the Philharmonie Tristan und Isolde – 27. Staatsoper Das Rheingold – 30. Tristan und Isolde – 10, 18, 25. Tristan und Isolde – 3.
Braunschweig	Tannhäuser – 3.
Budapest	Parsifal – 22, 26.
Copenhagen	Siegfried – 26.
Cottbus	Parsifal – 10, 18.
Detmold	Götterdämmerung – 3.
Essen	Die Walküre – 24.
Frankfurt	Götterdämmerung – 3.
Freiburg	Lohengrin – 3, 10.
Hamburg	The Ring – 1, 4, 7, 11.
Kiel	Lohengrin – 4, 24.
Leipzig	Parsifal – 24.
Lyon	Parsifal 6, 9, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 25.
Ma Saarbrücken	Parsifal – 10, 17.
Tokyo	Holländer – 8, 11, 14, 17, 20.
Vienna	Staatsoper Tannhäuser – 18, 21, 25. Holländer – 16, 18, 20, 22.
Warsaw	Tristan und Isolde – 31.
Würzburg	Parsifal – 30.
Zagreb	

April 2012

Berlin	Deutsche Oper Lohengrin – 15, 19, 22, 25, 28. Rienzi – 20, 26, 30. Staatsoper Die Walküre – 1.
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Budapest	Parsifal – 6, 9.
Cologne	Die Meistersinger – 1, 8, 15, 29.
Copenhagen	Parsifal – 11, 14, 18, 22, 30.
Cottbus	Siegfried – 29.
Darmstadt	The Ring – 5, 6, 8, 9.
Düsseldorf	Die Walküre – 1.
Essen	Siegfried – 7.
Freiburg	The Ring – 2, 3, 5, 7.
Halle	Siegfried – 28.
Hamburg	Parsifal – 6, 22
Karlsruhe	Lohengrin – 1 [no other dates].
Kassel	Parsifal – 6 [no other dates].
Kiel	Lohengrin – 6, 29.
Leipzig	Parsifal – 6. Die Meistersinger – 9.
London	Holländer – 28 [no other dates].
Mannheim	Lohengrin – 3, 6, 25. Parsifal – 14 [no other dates].
Munich	Parsifal – 5.
New York	The Met The Ring – 7, 13, 21, 24; 26, 28, 30, May 3. Tristan und Isolde – 3, 6, 8, 11. Holländer – 7, 16.
Nice	
Nuremberg	
Paris	Bavarian State Opera at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées Die Walküre – 24 [concert performance].
Prague	National Theatre Parsifal – 4. Parsifal – 6, 15.
Saarbrücken	Staatsoper Parsifal – 5, 8, 12.
Vienna	Die Walküre – 20. Holländer – 25, 27, 29. Lohengrin – 28 [no other dates].
Vilnius	Tristan und Isolde – 5, 8, 15, 22, 27.
Warsaw	Parsifal – 6, 14.
Wiesbaden	
Würzburg	
Zagreb	

May 2012

Aachen	Tristan und Isolde – 20, 26.
Berlin	Berlin Philharmonic Die Walküre [concert] – 20, 23, 27.
Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra in the Philharmonie	Tannhäuser – 5.
Deutsche Oper	Lohengrin – 1.
	Die Walküre – 25, 28.
Cardiff	Tristan und Isolde – 19, 26.
Cologne	Holländer – 4, 9, 11, 13, 18, 20, 23, 26, 28. Die Meistersinger – 5.
Copenhagen	Parsifal – 4, 8, 13.
Cottbus	Siegfried – 20.
Dessau	Götterdämmerung – 12, 20.
Detmold	The Ring – 12, 13, 17, 20.
Duisburg	Holländer – 4, 11, 16.
Freiburg	The Ring – 25, 26, 28, 30.



Halle
Hamburg
Hannover
Kiel
Madrid
Mannheim
Meiningen
Munich
New York
Prague
Saarbrücken
Sofia
Vienna
Würzburg

June 2012
Aachen
Amsterdam
Augsburg
Berlin
Birmingham
Cardiff
Cologne
Cottbus
Dessau
Essen
Frankfurt
Gateshead
Hamburg
Hannover
Karlsruhe
Kiel
Leeds
Meiningen
Munich
Saarbrücken
Tokyo
Toulouse
Valencia
Würzburg

July 2012
Aachen
Amsterdam
Bayreuth

Siegfried – 1.
Parsifal – 6
Tristan und Isolde – 28, 31.
Die Walküre – 12, 28.
Götterdämmerung – 26.
Lohengrin – 19, 27.
Rienzi [concert] – 21, 24, 27.
Lohengrin – 14, 22.
Das Liebesverbot – 13, 27.
Siegfried – 27, 31.
The Met
The Ring – 26, 28, 30, 3; 5, 7, 9, 12.
National Theatre
Parsifal – 18.
Parsifal – 16, 25.
Siegfried – 18 [no other dates].
Holländer – 19, 22, 25.
Tristan und Isolde – 6, 13, 19.
Tristan und Isolde – 1, 7, 17, 24.
Parsifal – 12, 15, 18, 21, 25, 28.
Holländer – 23 [no other dates].
Komische Oper
Die Meistersinger – 10, 17, 24.
WNO at Birmingham Hippodrome
Tristan und Isolde – 16.
Opera North at Symphony Hall
Die Walküre – 30 [concert performance].
Tristan und Isolde – 2.
Die Meistersinger – 7.
Siegfried – 16.
Götterdämmerung – 3, 30.
The Ring – 26, 28, 30, July 1.
The Ring – 2, 7, 10, 17; 22, 24, 28,
July 1.
Opera North at The Sage
Die Walküre – 23 [concert performance].
Holländer – 9, 13.
Tristan und Isolde – 3.
Das Rheingold – 4, 28.
The Ring – 14, 17, 21, 24.
Lohengrin – [no actual dates].
Lohengrin – 9.
Opera North at Leeds Town Hall
Die Walküre – 16, 20, 27 [concert per
formance].
Das Liebesverbot – 2, 21, 23.
Siegfried – 3.
Götterdämmerung – 30.
Parsifal – 6.
Lohengrin – 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16.
Tannhäuser – 17, 22, 24, 26, 29.
Fesitval del Mediterrani
Tristan und Isolde – 23, 27, 30.
Tristan und Isolde – 3.
Tristan und Isolde – 1, 7.
Parsifal – 2, 5, 8.
Holländer – 25, 31.
Tristan und Isolde – 26.
Lohengrin – 27.

Berlin
Erl
Essen
Frankfurt
Karlsruhe
Mannheim
Meiningen
Munich
Salford Quays
Savonlinna

August 2012
Bayreuth
Santiago

September 2012
Enschede
London

October 2012
Berlin
Enschede
London
Ludwigshafen
Milan

November 2012
Berlin
London
Ludwigshafen
Milan

December 2012
Ludwigshafen
Milan

2013
Amsterdam
Baden-Baden
Cottbus

January 2013
Munich

February 2013
Frankfurt

Tannhäuser – 28.
Parsifal – 29.
Komische Oper
Die Meistersinger – 8.
Lohengrin – [no actual dates].
The Ring – 26, 28, 30, July 1.
The Ring – 22, 24, 28, July 1.
Lohengrin – [no actual dates].
Lohengrin – 17.
Tannhäuser – 1.
Das Liebesverbot – 6.
The Ring – 3, 4, 6, 8; 10, 11, 13, 15.
Siegfried – 6, 13.
Opera North at The Lowry
Die Walküre – 14 [concert performance].
Holländer – 20, 23, 26, 28.
Holländer – 6, 12, 18, 24.
Tristan und Isolde – 1, 7, 14, 20, 26.
Lohengrin – 2, 8, 13, 19, 25.
Tannhäuser – 3, 9, 15, 21, 27.
Parsifal – 5, 11, 16, 22, 28.
Tannhäuser – [no actual dates].
Götterdämmerung – 30.
Royal Opera
The Ring – 24, 26, 29, October 1.
Staatsoper
Siegfried – [no actual dates].
Götterdämmerung – 3, 6, 9, 13, 16.
Royal Opera
The Ring – 2, 4, 7, 9; 16, 18, 21, 24;
26, 28, 31, November 2.
Siegfried – 26, 28.
Siegfried – [no actual dates].
Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra in the
Philharmonie
Das Rheingold – 22.
Die Walküre – 24.
Royal Opera
The Ring – 26, 28, 31, 2.
Götterdämmerung – 30.
Siegfried – [no actual dates].
Götterdämmerung – 2.
Siegfried – 7 [no other dates].
The Ring – [no actual dates].
The Ring – [no actual dates].
The Ring – [no actual dates].
Siegfried – [no actual dates].
The Ring – [no actual dates].



Geneva Halle **Das Rheingold** – [no actual dates].
Götterdämmerung – 23.

March 2013

Berlin Staatsoper
The Ring – 22 [no other dates].
Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra in the Philharmonie
Siegfried – 1.
Götterdämmerung – 15.
The Ring – 3, 5, 7, 9.

April 2013

Berlin Staatsoper
The Ring – [no actual dates].
Munich **Holländer** – 14, 17, 20.

May 2013

Milan **Götterdämmerung** – 18 [no other dates].
Sofia **Götterdämmerung** [no actual dates].
Leipzig **12-26 May Wagner Festival**
Das Liebesverbot [no actual dates].
Die Feen [no actual dates].
Rienzi [no actual dates].

June 2013

Milan **The Ring** - [no actual dates].
Munich **Holländer** – 28.
Tannhäuser – 29.

July 2013

Munich **Das Rheingold** – 13.

August 2013

Seattle **The Ring** – 4, 5, 7, 9; 12, 13, 15, 17; 20, 21, 23, 25.
Bayreuth **The Ring** [no actual dates].
Holländer [no actual dates].
Tannhäuser [no actual dates].
Lohengrin [no actual dates].

September 2013

Berlin Deutsche Oper
Die Walküre – 22.
Siegfried – [no actual dates].
Götterdämmerung – [no actual dates].
Enschede **The Ring** - [no actual dates].

October 2013

Enschede **The Ring** - [no actual dates].
Geneva **Die Walküre** – [no actual dates].

November 2013

Dresden **Tristan und Isolde** – 16 [no other dates].
Melbourne **The Ring** – 3 cycles [no actual dates].
Valencia **Götterdämmerung** – [no actual dates].

December 2013

Melbourne **The Ring** – 3 cycles [no actual dates].
Valencia **Götterdämmerung** – [no actual dates].

2014

January 2014

Berlin Deutsche Oper
Siegfried – [no actual dates].
Geneva **Siegfried** – [no actual dates].

March 2014

Geneva **Götterdämmerung** – [no actual dates].

May 2014

Vienna Staatsoper
Die Walküre – [no actual dates].

June 2014

Barcelona **Die Walküre** – [no actual dates].
Geneva **The Ring** – 13 – 18; 20 – 25 [no other dates].

Vienna Staatsoper
Die Walküre – [no actual dates].

August 2014

Seattle **Die Meistersinger** – 2, 7, 10, 13, 17, 20, 23.

Lost Member - Wilhelmina Gardner

Can you help us to find Wilhelmina Gardner? On Thursday 17 February 2011 we received a direct payment of \$60 by EFT into our working bank account with the details "W Gardner Member". On Sunday 20 February, we welcomed Wilhelmina Gardner to our first function in 2011 (David Larkin's talk "Cui bono? The Liszt-Wagner relationship reconsidered"). However, we never received Ms Gardner's membership application form, so we haven't been able to contact her since then. We haven't sent her any Newsletters, letters or emails. We've tried using the electronic white pages (which list only one Gardner in Sydney) and we've googled her name. A Wilhelmina Gardner was a Councillor for the Vaucluse Ward of the Woollahra Municipal Council between 2006 to 2008, and someone with that name was active in local issues in the Eastern Suburbs over many years. But all these links are old and have phone numbers and email addresses which go nowhere. Where we have been able to speak to a human being about Ms Gardner, they have been unable to help us quoting their obligations under the Privacy Act. So we're appealing to you, our members. Do any of you know a Wilhelmina Gardner who might be our new member number 1002? If so, could you contact our membership secretary, Dennis Mather, or ask Ms Gardner to contact him? Thanks for your help. [Roger Cruickshank]



Annual **Membership Renewal** 2012

1. Please provide your name, address and membership number.

Name
------	-------

Address
	City.....State.....Postcode.....

Membership Number
-------------------	-------

2. Please renew my/our membership from 1 January to 31 December 2012 on the following basis (please tick one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Single member \$60 (single pensioner member \$35)	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shared members \$90 (shared pensioner members \$55)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Students \$25 (include a copy of your current ID Card)	

3. I/We wish to donate the following amount to the Society. (Donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible, and receipts will be issued. All donations are acknowledged in our Newsletter*.)	\$ _____
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4. Total Please complete this form and post it to: The Treasurer The Wagner Society in NSW Inc GPO Box 4574 Sydney NSW 2001	\$ _____
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4(a) Renewing by cheque or money order - Please include your cheque or money order, made payable to **The Wagner Society**, when you post this form.

4(b) Renewing by bank account transfer - Please use your bank's internet banking facilities to send your payment electronically to:

Westpac Banking Corporation, Paddington NSW Branch

Account Name: The Wagner Society
BSB: 032040
Account Number: 911323
Payee Reference: **Your surname, initials and membership number**
 (these will be printed on the Wagner Society's bank statement)

6. Signatures

..... Signature Signature
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...../...../2012 Date renewed Name in BLOCK LETTERS Name in BLOCK LETTERS
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A person ceases to be a member if they fail to renew their annual membership by 31 January each year.





Wagner 2013

Wagner **Society in NSW Inc** Donation Form **2011**

Name
Address City.....State.....Postcode.....
Email
Membership Number

I wish to donate the following amount to the Society's 'Wagner 2013 Fund'.
Donations are tax-deductible, and receipts will be issued.
All donations are acknowledged in our Newsletter

\$ _____

Donation by cheque or money order

Please complete this form and post, with your cheque or money order made payable to

**The Wagner Society to:
The Treasurer
The Wagner Society in NSW Inc
GPO Box 4574
Sydney NSW 2001**

Donation by bank account transfer

Please use your bank's internet banking facilities to send your payment electronically to

Westpac Banking Corporation, Paddington NSW Branch
Account Name: The Wagner Society
BSB: 032040
Account Number: 911323
Payee Reference: Your surname, initials and '2011 Donation'
(This will be printed on the Wagner Society's bank statement)

.....
Signature

.....
Name in BLOCK LETTERS

...../...../2011



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

Website enquiries: 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)

WAGNER SOCIETY MEMBERS – SPECIAL 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!



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.

Fish Fine Music exists purely because our team has a passion for music. Our policy is to carry the largest classical range of CDs and DVDs in Australia and we remain committed in the long term to the unsurpassed audio quality of the CD format.

We welcome you to both our online store and our two Sydney City locations, and endeavour to bring you the fine music you want with the finest of service.

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or

email Da Capo at: music@dacapo.com.au

or

Meredith Baillie - on shop@sapphobooks.com.au

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

Address for Sunday Functions

Goethe Institut

90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)