

The Wagner Society



Newsletter No. 119, September 2010

IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

In Memoriam

Barbara McNulty OBE - see inside for obituary

NEWSFLASH: Melbourne to stage a Ring Cycle - at last! It's Official! - see report inside.

President's Report

Welcome to our third Newsletter for 2010.

Barbara McNulty

Members and friends of our Society would have been saddened by the news of Barbara McNulty's death on 31 July. My thanks to our editor, Dr Terence Watson, for compiling the fine tribute and obituary which appears in this Newsletter.

From a personal viewpoint, my fondest memories of Barbara came during the latter period of her presidency of the Society, when we dealt with the difficult consequences of fraud by a longstanding and trusted committee member. I have no doubt that our Society's survival at that time was due to Barbara's personal integrity. Although that matter should have ended when we were advised that criminal proceedings would not be initiated because of the age and poor health of the individual concerned, unhappily for our Society I believe that it also led to Barbara's early retirement from the presidency.

Even in the most difficult moments during this period, Barbara's eyes would suddenly flash and she would deliver a comment which would have us both in stitches. It's her keen wit and unexpected "naughtiness", as well as her warmth and charm, which I'll cherish.

When Barbara asked me to join the committee, I was sure that it was because I was relatively young and able-bodied (by our members' standards), could still move the furniture when required, and even occasionally win a battle with technology. When I teased Barbara about this she confirmed that it had always been my body and not my brain which made me such a perfect candidate for the committee.

PATRON:

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS: Prof Michael Ewans
Mr Richard King
Mr Horst Hoffman
Mr Joseph Ferfoglia

Once, when we sat together for a performance of *L'elisir d'amour* (the production with fake corrugated iron sheep on wheels), Barbara warned me that as she didn't often attend the opera with a male handbag, there could be comment on the platform. Sure enough, we were approached by several of her acquaintances who said "And this must be your son!" After that I took to calling her "Mother" and she would respond "My son, my son" (because, apparently, there was enough of me to make two sons.) Barbara rarely left a performance early, no matter how vile, and we drained this insufferable Elixir to the last drop. (I would much rather have repaired to "Aria" for solace and soufflé but stayed instead with Barbara.) I didn't believe her when she said that it was "character-building".

She bore adversity with humour. After the operation which removed a third toe, Barbara delighted in telling the story of one of her grandsons, who presented her with a copy of the Seven Times Table which he'd written out to help her in her reduced mathematical circumstances.

Trite to say, we chiefly know the people we know, through the events and circumstances we have shared with them.

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For Your **Diary**

	2011	
7 March	Wagner arranged Liszt – Jean-Efflam Bavouzet pianist – Isolde’s Liebestod	SSO - Angel Place 7pm
	2013	
Nov - Dec 2013	The Ring Cycle - Melbourne - three cycles	Melbourne Opera Theatre

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

DATE	EVENTS - 2010	TIME & LOCATION
19 September	Report back on Lohengrin by members attending Bayreuth 2010 Recital: mezzo Anna Yun and baritone Mitchell Riley with accompanist Jack Symonds: songs of Robert Schumann and Schubert and extract from Bach’s St Matthew Passion –see program below Preceded at 12:30, by pre-meeting DVD, Act 1 of Lohengrin from Munich 2009 conducted by Kent Nagano with Jonas Kaufmann in the title role (who was also the Lohengrin in the new production at Bayreuth this year)	Goethe-Institut - 2pm
24 October	New York Metropolitan Opera’s new production of Das Rheingold, being screened at the Chauvel Cinema, Paddington. (You’ll need to buy your own ticket, and the Society will organise a function after the film.)	Chauvel Cinema, Paddington
21 November	Christmas Party – please bring a plate – and WAGNER BAZAAR – please bring books, CD, video tapes etc – see below. 2.00PM TBA Festivities start at 3:00PM	Goethe-Institut - 2pm
Goethe-Institut address 90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)		

President’s Report continued

When those who gathered to mourn Barbara’s passing shared their stories at the wake, there were tales of the Barbara I hadn’t known, as well as the Barbara I had. We were all diminished by her passing.

Opera Australia to stage the Armfield Ring in Melbourne in 2013

Donner’s hammer has swung and driven away the cloud of rumours surrounding Opera Australia’s forthcoming Ring Cycle in Melbourne in Spring, 2013. To milk this metaphor even further, we must now wait three years to see what magic Neil Armfield’s Froh can weave from these vapours.

There are numerous questions surrounding the planning and announcements for this event, not least being the unavailability of Simone Young for the project. It has been suggested that the change from the more gradual “one opera a year” plan which co-sponsor Houston Grand Opera will follow, to the more exciting but fraught Adelaide-style

“big bang” approach, meant that Ms Young would not be available because she is already fully committed in 2013.

1998, 2004 and now 2013. It has been a long time between drinks.

Roger Cruickshank, 7 September 2010

New and Renewing Members

The following people joined the Society:

Andrew and Renata Kaldor [0991], Victoria Watson [0992], David Prichard [0993] and Kim Knutsen [0994]



In Memoriam: **Barbara McNulty OBE**

Past President and Life Time Member

By now, most Members would be aware of the sad news that our immediate past President Barbara McNulty died peacefully in her sleep on 30 July 2010 and that her funeral was on 5 August. Barbara joined the Wagner Society in NSW Inc in 1993 and was our President from 1997 until 2002, when she was made an Honorary Life Member for her exceptional services to the Society.

Delivering a brief eulogy at the Society's function on 1 August, our current President Roger Cruickshank said: 'Hers was a wonderful life, wonderfully lived.' He paid tribute to Barbara's enormous vitality and energy, and to her great charm and wit, which she used tirelessly promoting the Society and the music of Richard Wagner, a special love. Roger also paid tribute to Barbara's inspirational leadership during the period of her presidency and to her dignified handling of matters that unravelled during 2001 and 2002.

On the occasion of his succession to Barbara as President in December 2002 Roger confided:

For many of us, this Newsletter and Barbara McNulty's President's Reports have long been synonymous. Only now, writing my first report as president, do I realise how much of Barbara's personality was infused in her reports, making them much more than a hard act to follow. Those of you who were lucky enough to attend our AGM in July will remember the warmth and affection of the spontaneous ovation we gave Barbara when she stepped down as president. This expressed more than words could our gratitude for her tireless work on our behalf over many years on the committee....

We now have the opportunity to remember and honour Barbara more fully for her significant contribution to the Wagner Society in NSW, to promoting Wagner and his works in Australia, and the wider musical life of Sydney.

The skills and competencies that Barbara brought to her Presidency of the Society were developed during her extensive involvement in major community organisations of which she had been a member earlier in her varied career. Like all women not that long ago, Barbara was forced by the conventions and laws of the time to give up her career in nursing when she married. However, Barbara's energy and desire to contribute to the wider community was not totally absorbed by the demands of bringing up her children and running the household.

Barbara developed an interest in childhood education and soon became the Honorary President of the Kindergarten Union of NSW (now known as KU Children's Services), a position she held for many years. The Union was established in 1895 by a group led by "well known feminist and educator Maybanke

Anderson" in response to "great concern...about the many young children living with their families in very poor conditions, who were often neglected and had no access to appropriate education." Barbara was made a Life Member of the Union. Barbara also took up the position of Vice President of the Australian Early Childhood Education Association (now Early Childhood Education Australia). Apparently, Barbara let no political or bureaucratic obstacles stand in the way of promoting and supporting early childhood education as she tackled local politicians by inaugurating one of the first, if not the first, mailing campaign to politicians, to further her vision. Barbara also joined the NSW Department of Youth and Community Affairs as a senior policy advisor to contribute to state policy on this important subject.

It was for her services to the community in childhood education that Barbara was awarded her OBE (Education) (The Order of the British Empire - Dames Commander) in 1979.

It was also these obvious strengths in organisation that led her to be "head hunted" for a position on the Wagner Society. It was largely through the "evangelising" efforts of those wonderful founding members of the Society, Reg and Betty Maloney and Shirley Robertson, all of whom were at the time members of the Northside Opera Study Group of which Barbara was President, that Barbara was introduced to Wagner's music in a more focussed way. While President of the Group, Barbara took it successfully through the incorporation process, using her sound knowledge of the obligations and requirements of the legislation that was also to prove useful during her presidency of the Wagner Society. However, as with so many of us, once introduced to Wagner, there was no holding Barbara back. Barbara joined the Wagner Society in 1993. Sometime after that, Barbara also joined the Friends of Bayreuth, partly to raise the profile of the Wagner Society in NSW within this influential international group of Wagnerians.

Barbara's first experience of Wagner performances at Bayreuth was in 1993 when she accompanied the Maloneys and Shirley. As Shirley recalled, once introduced to Wagner, Barbara threw herself into learning about Wagner and his works as well as attending as many performances in Australia and overseas as she could. So successful was she that she was recruited first by the Melbourne-based Investa Tours then by Hugh Hallard's Renaissance Tours to be a tour guide. Shirley remembers both a further visit to Bayreuth with Barbara in 1997 and, more dramatically, a tour to the first opera season in Riga after Latvia left the Soviet Union. Sadly, one of the tour group suffered a heart attack and Barbara had to organise for the member to be flown safely back to Australia. Other members of her tour groups remember not only her informative talks, but also the professional



and caring way in which Barbara looked after all the tour members.

In 1997, Barbara also took on the presidency of the Wagner Society (succeeding Paul Lehmann). Barbara was always on the lookout for people she could bring to the Society to give talks or make music: Antony Ernst and Robert Gibson stand out for the quality of their illuminating presentations to the Society on Wagner and his works. Barbara was also supportive of efforts to widen the appeal of Wagner, especially to younger people.

Unfortunately, it was not long before Barbara's extensive and detailed experience with running community groups led her to suspect that the finances of the Society were not what they seemed. Teaming up with the new Treasurer, Roger Cruickshank, Barbara set about the task of restoring not only the integrity of the Society's finances, but also the reputation of the Society. Barbara achieved this objective quickly and thoroughly, taking the case as far as was possible, including requesting a police investigation, before the Society's Management Committee agreed that nothing more could reasonably be achieved by pursuing the case. This period was a severe test of Barbara's judgement, management skills, organisational experience, and personal strength of character, but the high regard she earned within the Society for her skilful and judicious handling of this dark episode in the Society's history was reflected in the unanimous decision to make Barbara an Honorary Life Member of the Society when she stepped down as President in 2002 and the ovation she received from Members on that occasion.

While Barbara devoted much of her energy to promoting and running the Wagner Society, she was also making significant contributions, in time and money, to other musical organisations in Sydney. A survey of the annual reports of a number organisations shows Barbara's name appearing high in the benefactor and donor lists: for example: Melba Foundation Benefactor Patron, Patron of The Australian Ballet; Sponsor Patron of Opera Australia; Donor Sydney Opera House; Donor Sydney Symphony; Foundation Fellow State Library of New South Wales. Representatives of Opera Australia attended Barbara's funeral in recognition of her generosity.

The Pinchgut Opera has also expressed its appreciation of Barbara's support and their sorrow at her passing:

This winter has claimed a second loyal Pinchgut supporter. We are sorry to report the death of Barbara McNulty on July 30. Barbara had been with Pinchgut from the very beginning. She was among our first group of Heroes in 2003 for The Fairy Queen and we appointed her an Ambassador for Pinchgut last year. We are grateful for her continuous support and her cheerful, intelligent contribution to our work. We will miss her at our productions. Newsletter -August 2010

As a member of the Society's Management Committee during Barbara's Presidency, your Editor can attest to the validity of comments made by people to whom your Editor spoke in researching this obituary. People reinforced the point about Barbara's exceptional experience in running community groups and her commitment to their objectives, her strong organisational abilities, her egalitarianism in approaching music and people who loved music, her enthusiasm for life in general and for her tour groups in particular (who benefitted from her common sense and sense of humour), her loyalty to friends and the organisations she took up, and her openness to other people's views. Barbara was clearly someone who could be relied on to help in a difficult situation, as well as to make constructive suggestions about how to improve the Society's operations and programs. Barbara left the Society on a sound financial footing and a more respected organisation than when she assumed the presidency.

Sadly, during her Presidency Barbara's health began to decline, leading later to significant operations and rehabilitation, but only towards her last months did she allow her health problems to interfere with her concert and opera attendances. One friend particularly recalled Barbara's fortitude in the midst of tears of pain: "One mustn't grizzle:" Barbara maintained one had to get on with things.

Our deepest sympathies go to her many close friends, and to her children and grandchildren.

"Ruhe, ruhe" [Editor]

Committee 2010 - 2011

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Melbourne to be the **Scene of** Opera Australia's **Ring Cycle?** **At Last! It's Official!**

Opera Australia **will** stage Richard Wagner's four-opera Ring cycle, directed by Neil Armfield and designed by Dale Ferguson, in Melbourne in 2013. The company will create the production together with Houston Grand Opera. The Victorian Minister for the Arts, Peter Batchelor, said in his media release: "The Brumby Labor Government is delighted to be partnering with Opera Australia, Houston Grand Opera and leading Melbourne philanthropists Maureen and Tony Wheeler, to deliver the Melbourne Ring Cycle in 2013." Three cycles will be performed over three weeks. Lyndon Terracini, Artistic Director of Opera Australia, says the production, estimated to cost \$15.5 million, will become a triennial Melbourne event as Sydney lacks a suitable venue.

Your Editor is sure that he is speaking for all Australian Wagnerians in expressing gratitude to Mrs and Mrs Wheeler for their personal generosity in assisting Melbourne to have The Ring Cycle it almost had three decades ago. The state government's generosity is also acknowledged as an important ingredient in again bringing this colossus of Western culture to an Australian stage. Opera Australia must also be congratulated on deciding to stake its claim in the international operatic stakes with a production of the work that has become increasingly popular over the past 50 years – and a benchmark by which all great opera company's are measured. On the other hand, Opera Australia's media release also makes it clear that "the co-production with Houston Grand Opera will take the place of Opera Australia's Melbourne spring season at the Arts Centre in 2013." We Wagnerians trust that Melbournian opera patrons will indulge us in this momentous occasion and hope that the postponement of alternative opera fare is not too onerous.

According to the media release, the production "will feature a tailor-made orchestra to be known as The Opera Australia Ring Orchestra, which will consist of players from Orchestra Victoria, the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, as well as musicians from other major orchestras from around Australia." Your Editor hopes that some of the performers in the Australian Youth Orchestra's Brisbane Tristan und Isolde concert production in 2005 will be included to take advantage of their talents and enthusiasm.

According to Bryce Hallett in the Sydney Morning Herald "The production is certain to help Opera Australia consolidate its position in a market that has proved difficult - and at times antagonistic - since its merger with the Victoria State Opera in the late '90s (Friday, August 20, 2010 – apparently not reproduced on the Herald's website)."

The company's media release reminds us how demanding producing The Ring Cycle will be: "The production will require 600 hours of

rehearsal – 240 hours of this for the orchestra alone. No less than 350 singers, dancers, designers, costume-makers and backstage staff will be part of bringing The Melbourne Ring Cycle to fruition, along with up to 100 technicians behind the scene. The spectacular set is expected to take 14 months to build." Spectacular, indeed – Opera Australia has some spectacular international competition in Ring productions, as is shown, among many examples, by the images from the Los Angeles Ring Cycle, the DVD of the La Fura Del Baus production for the Valencia Opera Company, and the Metropolitan Opera Company's video teaser for its production that will start – one opera at a time – with Das Rheingold on 27 September 2010.

Richard Mills, who will conduct the Cycle, has limited experience so far with Wagner performances, although he managed to extract a thrilling performance from the Australian Youth Orchestra in its Brisbane concert performance with Lisa Gasteen and John Treleaven – a fact not mentioned in the OA media release! Your Editor was partly correct in his prophecy in the last edition of the Newsletter that the Houston Grand Opera's conductor, Patrick Summers, might conduct the Cycle – he will, but in Houston.

While Neil Armfield has extensive opera experience, there is no mention in his biography of directing any Wagner since his beautifully restrained Tristan und Isolde for the Australian Opera with Stuart Challender in 1990.

The cast will include Susan Bullock as Brünnhilde, Juha Uusitalo as Wotan, Gary Lehman as Siegfried and John Wegner as Alberich. Your Editor heard Susan Bullock perform magnificently as Brünnhilde in Toronto inaugural Ring Cycle in 2006 and again, coincidentally, as Isolde in the Western Australian Opera Company's revival of Armfield's Tristan in Perth in 2006. This revival would also have been Richard Mills's debut as the conductor of a fully-staged Wagner opera, but he suffered a heart attack shortly prior to the opening. And many of us enjoyed Wegner's raunchy Alberich in the Adelaide Ring in 2004 and will be looking forward to a similarly arresting interpretation of a contentious role.

Intriguingly, Opera Australia will premiere the production before it transfers to Houston. If you are interested in reading the Houston's local press coverage of the simultaneous announcement, you can find it on The Houston Chronicle's website at www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/ent/7173173.html. According to the report, the Houston Grand Opera has had a history of Ring Cycle production a little like our national company's: "The only Ring Cycle opera that HGO has produced in its 55-year history was Die Walküre, in 1960." HGO will also put on one opera a year, rather than attempt to stage the whole Cycle as Opera Australia is planning.



Opera Australia to take on Ring Cycle in 2013, Robin Usher, *The Age* August 25, 2010 - <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/opera/opera-australia-to-take-on-ring-cycle-in-2013-20100825-13rhn.html>

Los Angeles Opera Company's extensive multi-media coverage of its Ring Cycle:

<http://www.laoperaring.com/media.php>

Metropolitan Opera's trailer:

<http://www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/season/production.aspx?id=11052&type=OpeningNight>

San Francisco Ring Cycle:

<http://sfopera.com/ring/dasrheingold/watch.aspx>

(a couple of videos, some audio and some photographs)

Your Editor received a comment from Ms Wheeler about the two paragraphs of the article in the last Newsletter beginning "You may also remember that *The Age's* Robin Usher..." drawing attention to the unwarrantedly speculative nature of *The Age's* report and pointing out that she has never publicly referred to \$12 million as the size of her donation. The Editor regrets any unintended offence to Ms Wheeler from the citing of *The Age's* inaccurate report.

A Revolutionary *Ring* In Los Angeles

- Graham Bruce

At the suggestion of fellow LA Ring attendees Katie and Vic French (NSW Society members), Queensland Society member Graham Bruce kindly forwarded for publication in our Newsletter the review he wrote for the Queensland Newsletter. (Vic and Katie thought Graham was being rather too generous about the production, but did agree that it was a completely different approach to the Ring. By comparison, Katie and Vic also saw the San Francisco Opera's production of *Die Walküre* with Nina Stemme and Mark Delavan being the stand-out singers, prompting Vic and Katie to book already for the full cycle between 14 June and 3 July 2011.) Editor.

Achim Freyer's current production of the **Ring** for the Los Angeles Opera begins a new era in American **Ring** productions, long dominated by the naturalism seen in stagings, such as those at Seattle and the Metropolitan Opera in New York. New productions in San Francisco and New York also look like challenging this tradition, but neither quite so radically as this Los Angeles staging.

The director, Achim Freyer is a disciple and protégé of great German playwright Berthold Brecht whose theories on dramatic performance challenged contemporary notions of realistic representation on stage. There was a political aim in this: Brecht claimed that naturalistic stagings encouraged the spectator to immerse him/herself in the action, to empathize with it, preventing an objective appraisal of its social and political implications. The latter could be achieved, he claimed, only by a non-naturalistic presentation where the audience was constantly reminded that the performance was not "real life", but a viewpoint expressed in dramatic form. To achieve what he called this "alienation effect", Brecht often made actors swap roles in mid performance, allowed women to play men's roles and vice versa, and used stagey sets which eschewed realistic representation.

The influence of Brecht's theories and strategies can clearly be seen in Achim Freyer's set designs and stage movement,

and Amanda Freyer's costumes. A giant eye is visible on various parts of the stage throughout the tetralogy, reflecting the eye which Wotan exchanged for wisdom at the fountain by the World Ash Tree; In *Die Walküre*, the tilted disc which forms part of the sloping stage throughout is made to resemble a huge clock with a fluorescent hour-hand which a stage extra continually moves forward. This, according to Freyer, represents "divine time, immortality, and eternal return. Wotan throws the sword Nothung [the fluorescent tube] into the centre of the stage as a symbol of sovereignty and death. He sets off divine time, indicated by his spear"; Valhalla is no grand structure but a small cup-cake-like toy perched perilously up stage; two cut-out book ravens, Wotan's birds, placed on either side of the down-stage area shelter the prompters who make no attempt to disguise their presence, and indeed are totally revealed as the ravens "fly up" at the end of *Götterdämmerung*; both the front and back scrims are used to comment on the action: a comic-book explosion as the Wanderer appears, a spiralling ring, or flashing swords; and throughout the whole cycle, black-clad extras facilitate much of the stage action.

The costumes are similarly non-naturalistic, most of singers wearing masks. Often the singers are locked into position behind and in front of a kind of pod or shell, while doubles perform such stylized action as Freyer allows. Wotan, as well as wearing an imprisoning wire globe on his head is often represented on parts of the stage as a huge hat and cloak; at one stage 4 or 5 representations of him are visible. Freyer remarks that "shadows, reflections, doubles and the different forms in which figures appear in any given moment reflect their personality schisms, the search for and loss of identity of all the characters". Fricka has hugely extended arms, Froh carries a rainbow-hued accordion, and Loge, god of fire, has a bright red costume with flame-like peaks. The latter also remind us of comic-book representations of the devil, echoing the mischievous nature of Loge. The



twins, Siegmund and Sieglinde both have their faces and costumes split into black and grey sides. "Because of their dangerously close kinship to the gods", Freyer notes, "[Wotan] splits the pair into male and female halves, who forever yearn for reunion." Siegfried, who first appears as a bear, strips off bear-head and top to reveal a muscle suit and a garish orange wig.

Clearly, then, this was not a singer-friendly production given the static nature of the figure placement, the transference of much of the action to doubles, the unflattering non-naturalistic costumes, and the dangerously steep slope of the set. What was the result in terms of performance? Some singers revelled in the staging. Graham Clark as Mime was prime among these, finding a huge range of communicative devices via his yellow-gloved fingers, and cheekily removing his mask to commune with the audience on many occasions. Also relishing the part and dominating the stage in *Das Rheingold* was Arnold Bezuyen in a winning performance as Loge. The same could be said of Richard Paul Fink's superb Alberich. And all three of these were in excellent voice. By contrast with these engagingly manic performances, Vitalij Kowaljow dominated *Die Walküre* mainly by vocal means. Showing no signs of strain even at the end of the work, the voice beautiful throughout, his outstanding singing overcame any perceived hindrances due to static figure placement and movement. Equally beautiful singing came from Placido Domingo as Siegmund, his performance belying his 68 years. Less beautiful vocally, but grippingly convincing dramatically was Eric Halvorsen as Hagen.

It was evident, however, that some singers did not feel comfortable in this staging. Chief among these was John Treleaven as Siegfried. In the first act of *Siegfried*, he seemed merely to be going through the motions, his lack-lustre performance contrasting sharply with Graham Clark's Mime. Things improved only slightly in the later acts and in the final opera. His discomfort seemed reflected in his unsteady vocalization, the sustained notes sounding like a slow trill. One thought nostalgically of his excellent Tristan in Brisbane some years ago. Though it was rather less evident, the Brünnhilde, Linda Watson, also seemed none too pleased with the production. But in her case, her fine singing made up for any lack of enthusiasm: in finer voice than that heard at Bayreuth two years ago, she showed little sign of tiring even by the final scene of *Götterdämmerung*, the voice ringing out thrillingly.

So, the singing apart, just how successful was this Brechtian vision of Wagner?

There were some quite magical things. I think I've seldom been so impressed visually by the final scene of *Siegfried*. There is no change of scenery from the previous scene where Wotan has confronted Siegfried. What remains centre stage is Wotan's huge cloak. Amid startling lighting effects as the background glows red and the tilted stage turns blue, one of the black-clad extras opens the cloak with a sword to reveal the "sleeping", yet vertical Brünnhilde who is now drawn upwards to a more elevated, God-like position. As she wakes to Siegfried's kiss and

hails the sun, the dark backdrop rises to allow the light to infuse upstage and reveal the wire figure of Grane, a quite lovely, if non-naturalistic effect. Now as Brünnhilde begins to realize the implications of her loss of godhead, and her possible "defilement" by a man, extras pass by her, stripping off small pieces of her costume, and revealing black hand-prints on the dress. The climax of these stylized, "defiling" movements comes as Siegfried pulls off a last piece, revealing now a greater amount of red in the formerly black and white costume. Human passion has begun to grow in Brünnhilde and she now literally comes to earth as she is lowered to the stage. Now comes the most beautiful moment: red swathes of material snake out from her central position and gradually fill the whole stage floor as her passion grows under Siegfried's urging. As the duet reaches its end, the embracing couple is gradually covered up by the swathes of red material which are bound around them. It is a wonderful visualization of the passionate ecstasy of the music.

Another very successful production piece was the famous forging scene in Act 1 of *Siegfried*. Wagner's very gestural music gives us a very detailed description of the filing down of the pieces of the sword, the firing, and the hammering, so that a naturalistic performance of the forging procedures seems to be called for (and is implied in Wagner's stage directions). Just how to present it does offer a problem to all directors. Freyer's decision, of course, avoids any naturalistic representation. Instead, he gives us a wonderful sound and light display. The sword, Nothung, has been portrayed throughout as a lighted fluoro tube. Now hundreds of fluoro swords appear on the stage floor, and on the scrims front and back. These change colour and direction sometimes in time with the rhythm of the music, sometimes in counterpoint to it. It is extremely effective visually and a brilliant solution to the production problems of the scene.

Perhaps the most famous scene of the tetralogy is the Ride of the Valkyries in the last act of *Die Walküre*. Few productions risk putting real horses on stage (Chéreau's 1976 production at Bayreuth was an exception, and the horses disappeared a year later) so any attempted naturalistic presentation involves compromise. Here, Freyer employs the same play-school style props seen elsewhere in the production: the Valkyries "ride" on wire contraptions which have the shape of a horse (clearly relatives of the wiry Grane), but with the addition of a back wheel; these "toy" horses and the joyous performance of the laughing warrior girls encapsulate nicely the humour of the scene while the strewn-about body parts of the dead warriors that they have collected add a touch of black humour. Later, the abandoned wire "horses" positioned around the circular disc change their function to become torches, spurting flames as Wotan summons Loge to surround the sleeping Brünnhilde, while the whole of the disc glows red.

Against the many successful scenes, however, must be set the occasions where Freyer's approach has a lesser effect. Among these, the most irritating is that of Wotan's famous narration to Brünnhilde in the second act of *Die*



Walküre. This is one of the great scenes of the **Ring**, as Wotan explains his past dishonourable actions and his despair of finding a solution. It is a scene that severely tests the vocal and dramatic skills of the performer because of its static nature, yet can be (as it was here in Kowaljev's superb performance) extraordinarily moving. Clearly anxious that there is so little action in the scene, Freyer has every person and object appear on the stage as Wotan remembers them. The device begins by being simply distracting and then becomes laughingly predictable as everything mentioned troops around the stage disc. The *reductio ad absurdum* of the device occurs when Wotan tells how Alberich, "love's dark enemy, begets a son in anger": the woman seduced by Alberich is shown with lecherous actions and balloon-like breasts, and the baby (Hagen) is wheeled on in a pram. The great narration is, quite simply, trivialized. Later, a similar production strategy is used in the three questions duel between the Wanderer and Mime in the first act of Siegfried.

Perhaps the most disappointing result of Freyer's approach comes in *Götterdämmerung*. In Act 1, Gunther, Gutrune, Siegfried and Hagen mainly stand behind shells or pods which mimic their costumes. These are drawn unsteadily across the stage to their positions downstage after the Norns scene. The Brechtian alienation effect is here at its most extreme since these shells and the costumes of the characters are garish in colour and more crudely drawn than those we have seen so far. The visual ugliness and the static positioning pose a problem for the audience. The distancing effects result not in audience contemplation and questioning but simply in boredom, lightened here only by the strong singing of Alan Held (Gunther) and Jennifer Wilson (Gutrune). The extreme distancing is no

less of a problem in Act 2 where the stylized movements of the Gibichung chorus clad in Gunther look-alike masks, and bearing fluoro swords become predictable and finally tedious. Then in Act 3, in the hunting scene where Siegfried is murdered, the chorus are given a series of choreographed movements, sometimes lying on their backs, sometimes lifting their legs in the air, and at one stage, as Siegfried describes the instructions given by the Woodbird, making fluttering, bird-like movements with their fingers. This encapsulates what, for me, are two major problems in Freyer's staging of the **Ring**: first, his refusal to allow the effectiveness of moments of stillness on stage; secondly his unwillingness to allow the performance of his singers to make its impact by itself without the addition of bits of stage business.

Conductor of the Ring, James Conlon, demonstrated what a strong grasp he has of the structure and significance of the score in his excellent introductory talks before each opera. Given these inspired and enthusiastic pre-performance talks, the results in the pit were, for me, sometimes a little disappointing. Overall, the orchestral playing was very fine, a reading free of exaggerations or quirks. Often, though, a little more dynamism seemed called for, particularly in the very sluggish first acts of *Die Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung*.

The Los Angeles **Ring** is certainly a bold and often quite brilliant production. Both *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried* seem to me innovative and very successful. A pity, then, that the inspiration sometimes flags and the distancing effects in the final opera seem to lose their effectiveness, perhaps making us question whether Brechtian alienation effects do, after all, offer a strategy suited to opera production.

Tannhäuser Und Der Sängerkrieg Auf Wartburg

– Richard Mason

Vienna Staatsoper – 16th June 2010 [opening night of a new production]

Johan Botha [Tannhäuser], Anja Kampe [Elisabeth], Michaela Schuster [Venus], Christian Gerhaher [Wolfram], Ain Anger [Landgraf], Gergely Némethi [Walther], Alexandru Moisiuc [Biterolf], Marcus Pelz [Reinmar], Alois Mühlbacher [Shepherd]; Production: Claus Guth, Christian Schmidt; Lighting: Olaf Freese; Movement: Konrad Kuhn; Conducted by Franz Welser-Möst

[The Editor apologises to Richard for holding over his review until this issue, but the last issue was already overdue and filled with sad news.]

This production was the last of the 19-year reign of Ioan Holender as Direktor, the longest in the history of the Staatsoper. It epitomised the era in many ways: confusing production, the casting a combination of inspirational and perverse.

Johan Botha has been preparing for the title role for many years, building up through a succession of heavier roles. This was his first *Tannhäuser* in an opera house. The

voice had the superb combination of weight, beauty and elegance that one can normally only dream about in this role. The taxing 3-part aria in Act I was sung with full voice throughout and ringing tones. The vocal characterisation was superb, the acting just acceptable. Mr. Botha is generously proportioned, and moves around the stage slowly. A previous appearance in a new production as *Otello* was ruined by him being forced to continuously ascend and descend a set of stairs – the effort distracted from his vocal concentration to produce a dull result. A joke doing the rounds after the performance was that, to prevent a repeat, his contract for *Tannhäuser* stated "Mr Botha will stand at the front of the stage throughout, always facing the audience when singing. He will walk back and forth across the front of the stage no more than 3 times in each act. He will fall to the stage once only in each act. He will kneel, but only if he is assisted in rising by another cast member or a piece of furniture."

A further inspired piece of casting was Christian Gerhaher, famous as a lieder singer but relatively new to



opera. Apart from the odd occasion when he pushed the voice, his baritone was beautifully coloured, with fine phrasing, and a superb "Evening Star" aria.

Anja Kampe is a frequent Leonora and Senta. The main part of her voice is very expressive and colourful. However, the top part of the voice is piercing, harsh, and with suspect intonation. On the whole just about acceptable. She is tall and slim.

Michaela Schuster's sole qualifications for Venus were that she is also tall and slim. The voice was harsh, loud and unspeakably ugly. Only in a few bars when she sang more softly was there any beauty. Certainly the most unsexed Venus I have heard: enough to make one flee the Venusberg with one's fingers in one's ears.

The boy soprano Mühlbacher from the St Florian's Boys' Choir was very fine, the first time a singer from this choir has performed a solo role at the Staatsoper. The other singers were fairly good: Ain Anger made a distinguished Landgraf, a surprise from a singer who often coarsens the voice for expression.

The conductor and music director-designate Welser-Möst performed his first Wagner since his controversial account of the Ring cycle. I did not like his Walküre – too loud and too fast. However, in Tannhäuser he redeemed himself, with a steady, weighty beat, speeds on the whole slightly slower than normal, with the gradual transitions required in Wagner. Unlike Die Walküre, he allowed sufficient room for the singers to be heard, although, as noted above, several sacrificed art to volume on their own account. It goes without saying that the Vienna Philharmonic horns were particularly noble and beautiful.

The production was an odd collection of various ideas. There was some link with psychoanalysis – Act III was set in a famous lunatic asylum, and there were doubles for Tannhäuser, Elisabeth and Venus. There were various colour symbols - Venus tended to wear green, and had red roses, whereas Elisabeth wore white and had white roses, but not in Act III when she wore a dowdy green dress. Venus and Elisabeth had similar figures and the same red shingled hair. There was a link with opera houses and performance – Act I started behind the opera curtain, and Act II was set in a recreation of the foyer of the Staatsoper itself, with 3 walls showing busts of famous composers. The middle bust was Rossini, and through this door Tannhäuser exited - to Rome (geddit?). Visiting the foyer in the interval, the missing fourth wall contained all the German composers – Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Haydn. Wolfram bore more than a passing resemblance to Schubert. The Act II audience was dressed in late 19th century costumes, although when the Landgraf appeared they all exited, to return in Venetian masques. Another persistent idea was that Tannhäuser was watching a giant cinema screen on which his past was acted out.

Make of all that what you will, and probably there is nothing to make of it. Booming for the production team outnumbered applause by around 2:1. Personally I do neither, and I believe it would be far more hostile for incompetent directors to be greeted by silence: most relish booming.

My test of such nonsense is whether it adds to or subtracts from my appreciation of the performance. In Act I, it added by placing Botha at the left front of the stage for his great aria, which was magnificent. In Act II it was mildly distracting, but did no damage. In Act III it subtracted three times: the pilgrim's chorus was sung by twitching lunatics, Elisabeth's aria concluded with her swallowing two bottles of pills and dying on stage, and Wolfram in his great aria kept fiddling with a gun, creating an absurd and inappropriate sense of tension. In all three cases I looked away, eliminating the contradiction between music and action.

On a final point, in an interview Welser-Möst indicated that in choosing future directors, he would be aiming to find productions that last a long period of time, abandoning the "contemporary" Eurotrash style where productions last only a few seasons, and therefore have to be (and certainly look) cheap. It is also interesting to note that in this time of austerity, horrible productions are failing the monetary test. In the current season a particularly offensive Macbeth had to be replaced by an Otto Schenk Traviata for the second half of its run, so bad were the ticket sales. Perhaps audiences are acquiring good taste and discrimination? One lives in hope.

As the applause for Botha started at the end of the performance, cameras and reporters from the 2 main Austrian TV news channels entered the auditorium. They commented on the audience reaction to the performance, and particularly focused on the booing for the production team. Can you imagine this in Sydney? Man sagt, nur in Wien.

Email Addresses

Email is for many members the communication method of choice, and it's vital for us to have your current email address if you want to receive reminders about Society functions, or in the future to receive the Newsletter electronically. The Society's email address is info@wagner-nsw.org.au (info at wagner hyphen nsw dot org dot au).

If you'd like to receive reminders about forthcoming Society events and occasional matters of interest to members, just send us an email from your current email address, with "Email reminder service" in the "subject" line. If you'd like to take part in the pilot for electronic delivery of the Newsletter, make sure that we have your current address by enrolling (or re-enrolling) in the Email Reminder Service.

Some people have particularly avaricious anti-spam programs which devour emails from nice people like us, and each different email program (such as Outlook) has its own way of avoiding this. Some programs let you nominate the Society as a "favourite" or "trusted address", to ensure that our emails do not suffer that fate, and if you take the time to make us "trusted" you'll ensure that you receive our emails for as long as you want to.



Redemption In Ten Dimensions. Stefan Herheims's Bayreuth *Parsifal*

- Dr Jim Leigh

Part 3 of a three part exposition and introduction for audience members of the current Bayreuth production.

(For ease of reference Dr Leigh's shorthand lists of aspects of the production, dimensions and symbols are repeated at the end of this section – Part 3 will be in the next issue of the Newsletter. The full review is on the Society's website.)

Act 3

The prelude begins with the curtain closed. At its climax, the curtain opens on a replica of the Bayreuth stage, also with closed curtain. This curtain opens revealing war ruins with a cloudy background. The theatre-within-a-theatre effect stands for the artificial nature of theatre in contrast to the stark reality of war. The scene of destruction will later make the contrast between the beauty of organic growth on Good Friday with the perversion of art under Hitler (compared with Hitler's own watercolours).

Instead of the bed, only a mattress remains. It lies against the fountain wall. Gurnemanz lies on the mattress. Kundry kneels in front of the grave (still dressed as Herzeleide/Germania). Both her arms are behind the little stone wall on the grave. This scene recalls Syberberg's Act 3 image of Kundry lying on Wagner's death mask in a pile of snow. Gurnemanz awakens Kundry with a kiss. She cries out, goes to centre stage and points to the ruins, which actually include an image of a ruin in Hiroshima today kept as a memorial of the atomic bomb destruction. With Kwangchul Youn (Gurnemanz) and Mihoko Fujimura (Kundry) on stage, this is all the more poignant.

Parsifal enters. He is now a mature adult, dressed as Germania. He has red hair, carries a sword and a shield, but no spear. He wears the imperial German crown. This is a recollection of Amfortas entering dressed the same way as King in Act 1. Parsifal will become the new King. As Gurnemanz reminds Parsifal it is Good Friday, Parsifal lays down his weapons and crown in the fountain. This alludes to the Celtic and Germanic myths of a dead hero's weapons being thrown into the sea after his burial. As Gurnemanz sings "the spear, I know it," a white spear rises magically out of the fountain.

As Parsifal sings of the difficulties of his wanderings, Kundry rushes out of the inner theatre to the grave. As Parsifal sings of the return of the spear, Gurnemanz seizes the spear in the fountain and pulls it out. Water gushes forth. This alludes to the idea of spear and the Grail as the renewer of life. The return of the spear, from a violent zone to a peaceful one, has the effect of recreating the renewing source of life, symbolised by water, and thus is acting as a surrogate Grail for the Grail kingdom.

In Liebermann's 1982 Geneva Parsifal, the Grail was the last water vessel remaining after a nuclear war. Gurnemanz bows to Parsifal and offers him the spear. As he sings of

the death of Titurel, Parsifal sticks the spear into a ruined tree. This is a clear parallel with Wotan (in the Ring), damaging the world ash tree by cutting a spear from it, and plunging the sword into the tree for Siegmund, to give him a false hope of victory. The spear in the Ring is the source of law that creates all Wotan's difficulties. It is possibly a reference to Parsifal as the fifth part of the Ring, although Schopenhauer is not really a significant feature of the production.

Parsifal takes his clothes off, and a huge wound is seen on his back. Kundry bathes him. Gurnemanz puts a long white gown on Parsifal. A blue waterfall is now seen behind the action. As Gurnemanz sings of Amfortas a large projection of Amfortas is seen in the waterfall. He wears a dark suit and a crown of thorns. Kundry washes Parsifal's feet, dries them with her hair and applies ointments. Parsifal is anointed as the Grail King. The cleansing is meant to represent reconciliation with the historical past.

At the "Good Friday magic" stage lights come on outside the inner theatre. This is meant to transfer the theatre to us, the audience, as if we, the German Wagner loving folk, ourselves caused the scene of destruction we are looking at (presumably by continuing to support Bayreuth during the Nazi era). This is a reference to a 2002 Munich production of *Das Rheingold*, (Herbert Wernicke) where the Bayreuth auditorium was represented on the stage and the actors in the production sat there, reversing the role of actors and audience. The lighting and reversal effect is meant to represent the "weih" [dedication] in *Bühnenweihfestspiel* ie a dedication of the stage by an alteration of our relation to it.

As Parsifal sings of how beautiful the flowers in the meadow are, post World War 2 "clean up" women come in, outside the inner stage, with buckets, shovels and mattocks. This dramatic contrast is significant in several dimensions of interpretation. Equating the flowers in the meadow with Parsifal's recollection of the flower maidens in the Magic Garden, we have (1) the clean-up ladies as doing the clean-up work that the Flower maidens might do after the destruction of Klingsor's magic garden (reduced role of women); (2) Kundry's double role when serving Klingsor or the Grail; (3) The punishment for the complicity of German womanhood in Nazism in their blind love for and faith in Hitler.

As Gurnemanz sings "That is the magic of Good Friday, my lord" to Parsifal, the clean up ladies look at us, the audience, asking us to share in the purification, but also telling us that we, the next generation, must also suffer. Kundry helps one woman up the steps to the inner stage. The others then help each other drag their tools along.

Gurnemanz is now at the grave. Kundry and Parsifal are on the ramp to the inner theatre. As Gurnemanz sings "nature, absolved from sin, gains its innocence," the inner curtain opens to reveal a stage-



wide mirror in which we, the public, are reflected. The houselights go on and the lights around the stage shine brighter. We cannot easily be freed from the collective guilt (of the knowledge of the happenings in the Nazi era), but making allowance for and defending our role in these happenings is not in itself deserving of blame.

As Parsifal sings of his imminent redemptions of Kundry, Amfortas and the Grail and, metaphorically, of the German nation and us, he points to the audience. As the bells for Titirel's funeral ceremony sound, Gurnemanz pulls out the spear from the tree and gives it to Parsifal. With a magic gesture, he uses the spear to close the curtains of the inner theatre. Kundry, Parsifal and Gurnemanz stand on the grave and on the curtain a large video image of them appears. It fades and cloudy shadows obscure them.

Wagner's magic stage tricks and synthesis of the arts (music, acting, poetry, dance, painting, and stagecraft) were revolutionary in his time, but now new technologies like video have broken his spell and the ability to control things from his grave. History moves on.

To the Titirel motif in the music, Wagner's death mask is projected on the curtain. Superimposed on it is a blown up image of the little wall on the grave being constructed. This is a reference both to the Syberberg film, where similar imagery was used, and to the idea of Wagner's gigantic influence on the production through his idea of 'Gesamtkunstwerk.' The building of the wall refers to the post-war rebuilding of Wahnfried and the 1951 reopening of the Festival.

During the march to the Grail temple, the text of the advice of Wieland Wagner given in 1951 at the festival, "to refrain from political discussion in the interests of the smooth running of the festival, which is concerned only with art", is shown on the curtain. This advice has since had the opposite effect. The style of opera production, especially in Germany, has since taken on a much stronger political aim as in, for example, the present production.

The curtain opens on the Bonn Bundestag of the new Federal Republic of Germany soon after its creation in 1949. The German Federal eagle on the floor is reflected in the mirror over and behind the parliamentary seats. Six members of parliament bring in the sarcophagus of Titirel, draped in the German Federal flag. They place it on the stage where the bed used to be. Parsifal stands on the left of the inner stage proscenium, Gurnemanz on the grave and Kundry on the right column. This image symbolizes the search for redemption of Germany in democracy, rather than dictatorship, but, in equating Amfortas with the new German parliamentary leadership, his still open wound is equated to residual stains of Nazism in the members, in spite of the Nuremberg trials and the de-Nazification tribunals.

The identification also resonates with the Arthurian Knights of the Round Table as the source of European democracy. The sword in the stone (Excalibur) equates to the spear in the tree, while the Round Table knights' search for the Grail equates to the Grail knights' search for the spear. The return of the spear can be identified with the re-arming of Germany.

Amfortas enters, in dark suit and wearing his crown of thorns. The members rustle their papers aggressively and demand that he uncover the Grail. Instead, he opens the lid of the sarcophagus. Smoke comes out of it. The members recoil. They equate the sign of death with Amfortas' refusal to open the Grail. At "Mein Vater Hochgesegneter der Helden," Amfortas reaches into the sarcophagus and pulls out ashes that he scatters on the floor. This is supposed to be an allusion to the spiritual and bodily healing power of the sacred ashes of the dead in Hindu mythology, as promulgated more recently by the modern guru Sathya Sai Baba. In the mirror, we see inside the sarcophagus a mummy wearing the German Kaiser crown. The speaker's desk is seen, reflected in the heart of the Federal eagle. With the order "uncover the Grail," Parsifal moves to centre stage. Amfortas takes off his shirt and singlet. With his words "slay the sinner in his agony, then the Grail can shine clear again," Amfortas grips the spear and lays it himself on his wound. With "O blessed be your suffering," Parsifal touches the head of Amfortas.

In the heart of the Federal eagle a great red hole appears. The blood in the Grail is a source of life as well as suffering.

The heart of the eagle is a further Grail symbol. The Grail as a source of sustaining food for all equates to democratic government with a voice for all. The bleeding heart is again the history of the Third Reich. Parsifal points the spear at the public (us). The point glows red. He then points it into the heart of the eagle. With "open the shrine," the eagle glows red, the eagle is flooded and smoke rises from the heart. Parsifal merges unobtrusively into the parliament.

A child appears on the grave. Gurnemanz and Kundry stand on the ramp with him as a little family group. With "Erlösung dem Erlöser", the mirror tilts to reveal the Festspielhaus orchestra and the audience. A dove rises over the stage. Redemption to all at last!

This final scene has several dimensions. By pointing the spear at the audience, Parsifal has made us a form of Grail as well. The tearing out of the heart of the eagle (Grail) to nourish the young recalls the Christian Pelican myth where pelicans apparently feed their young their own blood from their chest (they don't actually, they just reach into their pouch).

The replacement of the aggressive heart of the eagle by an innocent gentle family scene again suggests the emergence of a new non-aggressive Germany. Parsifal's quiet disappearance into the parliament suggests yet another interpretation of "Erlösung dem Erlöser" Berthold Brecht's play Galileo has a significant exchange:

Andrea: unhappy is the land that has no heroes;

Galileo: unhappy is the land that needs heroes.

Germany having now become a free well-ordered democracy, needing no heroes, will be "redeemed" from the requirement of further redemption and we the public, can now enjoy Wagner without guilt feelings. Certainly, the Jewish conductors Daniel Barenboim and James Levine, who have conducted extensively at Bayreuth in recent years, would not be too concerned. Indeed Barenboim's Israeli-Palestinian west-Eastern Divan Orchestra played at Bayreuth this year.



Conclusion

This complex, incredibly ambitious production of Wagner's final summative, and in my opinion, real masterwork was a challenge in the theatre. From row 1 I still did not, and could not take it all in at once. I had even read the detailed analysis a few days before. However, I did find it much easier to absorb than Schlingensiefel's version and the actions were much better synchronised to the text and music. I think this production needs to be seen several times for full comprehension. After all, this is not opera, it is not even music drama- it is a Stage-Consecration-Festival-Play, and all four of these elements were emphasised.

The actual singing, acting and conducting were generally very good. The Flower maidens were a bit weak, but Parsifal (Christopher Ventris), Gurnemanz (Kwangchul Youn), Kundry (Mihoko Fujimura), Amfortas (Detlef Roth) and Klingsor (Thomas Jesatko) were excellent.

As soon as I got back to Sydney, however, I turned out the lights at home and played right through the beautiful, spiritual, perfectly played Herbert von Karajan 1981 DGG studio recording with the incomparable Berlin Philharmonic, just so I could listen to Parsifal by Richard Wagner and, using the mind's eye, imagine the ideal stage picture.

The main features of the production are

1. Wagner's Parsifal told with much more stage concretisation of events past and present. This is normally only narrated or implied in the music.
2. The history of Germany 1870-1951, depicted in stage action and film.
3. The history of Wagner's creative and personal life, the establishment of the Bayreuth Festival and the building of Wahnfried are depicted in stage action and film.
4. The reception history of the opera Parsifal.
5. The unconscious, psychological development of Parsifal and Wagner is depicted on stage by symbolism, both with actors and physical symbols.

6. Direct confrontation with the audience by making them part of the production.
7. Use of parallel actions and multiple characterisations to depict the individual and collective unconscious.
8. Use of dream sequences and magical set transformations.
9. Use of simultaneous hybrid sets and stage symbolism to interrelate the Parsifal, German history, psychological and Wagner history lines.
10. Use of theatre within a theatre.

10 Dimensions

1. Wagner's Parsifal, both the music drama itself and its reception history
2. Personality development of the human
3. Psychoanalysis, both Freudian and Jungian
4. Male/Female gender relations both individual and societal
5. Religion, in relation to society, war, race.
6. The Grail and Spear as symbols. (There are at least ten different Grail symbols)
7. Contrast between dreams and reality
8. Wahnfried
9. Bayreuth Festival
10. German History

The Top 10 Grail symbols

1. Actual grail vessel in red, rose, and white
2. Bed
3. Wagner's grave
4. Bathtub
5. Fountain
6. Altar
7. Heart of Federal German eagle
8. Speaker's desk in parliament
9. The search for immortality
10. Womanhood

September Function Program:

Robert Schumann- Dichterliebe, op. 48 (excerpts) (1840)

Mitchell Riley, baritone
Jack Symonds, piano

- I. Im wunderschönen Monat Mai
- II. Aus meinen Tränen sprießen
- III. Die Rose, die Lilie, die Taube
- IV. Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'
- V. Ich will meine Seele tauchen
- VI. Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome
- VII. Ich grolle nicht

Robert Schumann- Gedichte der Königin Maria Stuart, op. 135 (1852)

Anna Yun, Mezzo-soprano
Jack Symonds, piano

- I. Abschied von Frankreich
- II. Nach der Geburt Ihres Sohnes

- III. An die Königin Elisabeth
- IV. Abschied von der Welt
- V. Gebet

Franz Schubert- Die schöne Müllerin, D 795 (excerpts) (1823)
Mitchell Riley

- VI. Der Neugierige
- XVI. Die liebe Farbe
- XVII. Die böse Farbe

from Johann Sebastian Bach- St. Matthew Passion, BWV 244 (1727)
Mitchell Riley

Recit.- Am Abend, da es kühle war &
Aria- Mache dich, mein Herze, rein



Wagner **Bazaar** – 21 November **Christmas** Function

After a long absence from our program, we are organising another “bring and buy” for Wagner recordings, books, memorabilia etc, primarily as a fund-raiser for the Society’s commemoration of the bicentenary of Wagner’s birth in 1813 – something for Sydney, while Melbourne has The Ring Cycle. The Bazaar is being organised to take advantage of an especially generous donation of Wagner books, CDs, DVDs and memorabilia by Society Member Robert Lloyd, as listed below. Remember, this might be a great time to downsize your collection as well, or buy that rare item that another Member has decided to donate – all to the good cause of making a splash for Wagner in 2013.

Robert Lloyd’s donation includes:

CDs

Wagner

Lohengrin Kubelik Bavarian Radio Orchestra 1971 – King, Janowitz, Jones, Stewart, Riddersbusch
 Solti Ring Cycle on Decca – original CD transfer
 Der Ring Furtwängler La Scala 1950 – Frantz, Weber, Svanholm, (only complete recording of) Flagstad
 Der Ring Sawallisch, Böhm, Levine, Nilsson, Schneider, Varviso Bayreuth extracts – Nilsson, Silja, Frey, Hofmann, Jung, McIntyre, Riddersbusch etc
 Tristan und Isolde Böhm Bayreuth 1966 – Nilsson, Windgassed, Ludwig, Talvela, Waechter
 Tristan und Isolde Karajan Bayreuth 1952 – Vinay, Mödl, Weber, Jotter, Malaniuk
 Parsifal Knappertsbusch Bayreuth 1951 – Windgassen, Mödl, Weber, London etc
 Parsifal Knappertsbusch Bayreuth 1954 - Windgassen, Mödl, Hotter, Greindl, Neidlinger
 Parsifal Knappertsbusch Bayreuth 1962 – London, Talvela, Hotter, Thomas, Neidlinger, Dalis
 Parsifal Boulez Bayreuth 1971 – King, Jones, Crass, Stewart, McIntyre, Riddersbusch
 Parsifal Karajan Berlin Philharmonic 1981 – Van Dam, Moll, Hofmann, Vejzovic
 Parsifal Goodall Welsh National Opera 1985 – Ellsworth, Meier, McIntyre, Joll, Folwell
 Parsifal Kubelik Bavarian Radio Orchestra 2003 – Weikl, Moll, Salminen, King, Mazura, Minton
 Meistersinger Knappertsbusch Wiener Staatsoper 1996 – Schöffler, Dönch, Treptow, Gueden
 Parsifal highlights Levine Bayreuth 1987 – Hofmann, Meier, Sotin, Estes, Salminen
 Wagner – The Best of the Ring – Böhm Bayreuth 1973 – Nilsson, Rysanek, Windgassed, King, Adam, Neidlinger
 Toscanini NBC Symphony Orchestra – Wagner Preludes
 Wagner extracts Knappertsbusch Vienna Philharmonic 1956, 58, 60 – Flagstad, London, Nilsson
 Wagner & Strauss Furtwängler & Merola 1949 & 1950 – with Set Svanholm and interview with Flagstad
 Wagner extracts– Bruno Walter & Flagstad 1952 – various orchestras
 Wagner Die Walküre Act II – Reiner & Flagstad, Lehmann, Melchior, Schorr
 Wagner extracts - Sydney Opera House Opening Concert 1973 – Mackerras,

Nilsson, Sydney Symphony Orchestra
 Wagner Love Duets 2000 – Pappano, Royal Opera House Orchestra – Domingo & Voigt
 Wagner extracts Albert Queensland symphony Orchestra 1986 – Marilyn Richardson
 Wagner extracts Thielemann The Philadelphia Orchestra 1998

Mozart

Don Giovanni Furtwängler Vienna Philharmonic 1950 – Gobbi, Schwarzkopf, Greindl, Welitsch, Dermota, Kunz

Beethoven

Fidelio Masur Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig 1981 – Altmeyer, Jerusalem, Nimsgern, Adam, Meven, Nossek

Richard Strauss

Richard Strauss Conducting Richard Strauss – SIGNED BY STRAUSS – 4 CD set – FOR AUCTION

Der Rosenkavalier Heger Vienna Philharmonic 1933 – Lehmann, Schumann, Mayr, Olszewska
 Der Rosenkavalier Schippers Metropolitan Opera 1964 – Schwarzkopf, Edelmann, Della Casa, Dönch, Raskin, Morell
 Elektra Mitropoulos Maggio Musicale Fiorentino 1951 – Konezni, Hirtsch, Mödl, Braun, Klarwein
 Operatic Orchestral Works Challenger Sydney Symphony 1989

Debussy

Pelléas et Mélisande Cooper Metropolitan Opera Orchestra 1945 – Singher, Sayão, Kipnis, Tibbett

DVDs

Wagner

Tannhäuser Levine Metropolitan Opera 1983 – Cassily Weikl, Nagy, Marton, Troyanos
 Tony Palmer’s Complete Wagner (4 disc set)
 Tony Palmer’s Parsifal: the Search for the Grail 1998 with Gergiev Kirov Orchestra – Domingo, Urmana, Putilin
 Der Ring Boulez/Chéreau Bayreuth Centenary production
 Der Ring – The Making of the Centenary Production
 Der Ring Levine Metropolitan Opera 1990 – Behrens, Jerusalem, Lakes, Ludwig, Morris, Norman, Salminen

Strauss

Der Rosenkavalier Kleiber Wiener Staatsoper 2001 – Lott, Von Otter, Bonney, Moll, Nornik
 Strauss & Mahler recital Schwarzkopf, Seefried, Fischer-Dieskau

Singers

Schwarzkopf A Self Portrait
 Waltraut Meier – A Portrait of the Singer – with Semyon Bychkov

BOOKS

Wagner

Meistersinger full piano score with English text German Edition
 Wagner Without Fear – Michael Tanner



Wagner - Michael Tanner
The Wagner Compendium – Barry Millington
The Wagner Family Albums – Wolf Siegfried
The World Theatre of Wagner – Charles Osborne
The Ring: Anatomy of an Opera - Fay and Wood
Bayreuth: A History of the Wagner Festival – Spotts
Acts: The Autobiography of Wolfgang Wagner
The Wagner Operas - Ernest Newman
Wagner as Man and Artist - Ernest Newman
Wagner on Music & Drama - Goldman & Sprinchorn
Wagner at Bayreuth: experiment and tradition Skelton
Wagner's Parsifal – Bassett
The New Grove Wagner – Deathridge & Dalhaus

Misc.

Solti on Solti: A memoir
Gustav Mahler – Bruno Walter, with introduction by Michael Tanner
The Orchestra Speaks – Bernard Shore

Books on/by Neville Cardus:

Cardus on Music
Autobiography
Conversations with Cardus
Ten Composers (including Wagner)

Memorabilia

VHS Tapes
The Art of Conducting: Great Conductors of the Past
The Art of Singing: Golden Voices of the Century
Meistersinger Stein Bayreuth 1984 – Weikl, Prey, Jerusalem, Häggander, Schimi
Höllander Nelsson Bayreuth 1985 – Estes, Balslev, Salminen, Schlemm, Schunk, Clark
Tristan und Isolde Barenboim Bayreuth 1983 – Kollo, Meier, Schwarz, Salminen, Becht
Parsifal Stein Bayreuth 1981 – Jerusalem, Randova, Weikl, Sotin, Roar, Salminen
The Golden Ring: The Making of Solti's Ring
Wagner in Bayreuth with introduction by Wolfgang Wagner
Der Rosenkavalier Karajan Vienna Philharmonic Salzburg Festival 1961 – Schwarzkopf, Jurinac, Rothenberger
The Magic Flute Bonyng Australian Opera 1986 – Kenny, Wilson, Fulford, Leahmann, Shanks

Printed

Large scale fold-out plan and interior of the Festspielhaus
Books on King Ludwig II, travel in Germany, Bayreuth guides

Your **New Website** - www.wagner.org.au

The Society's Webmaster, John Studdert, pressed the magic button to activate your new website two weeks ago. John has provided this overview of the magic he is mastering to bring you the new look website.

The website is now driven by an up-to-date content management system called Joomla! It has been operating for over a month with minimal problems, but please be patient as we tame this new savage beast. The Committee hopes that Members will embrace its new functionality. We are still awaiting a new banner!

The new website will be updated much more regularly than in the past so please bookmark its URL and use the website to ascertain the latest news about the Society, Society functions (including last minute changes in schedule or programs), peruse the new image galleries and to ascertain news about Wagner and music in general.

How to find the website: www.wagner.org.au or www.wagner-nsw.org.au ? Well the answer is both, at least for the moment. For some time the Society has owned both www.wagner.org.au and www.wagner-nsw.org.au domain names. In the intricate process of launching the new website the new website was linked to www.wagner.org.au and this is where it will stay for the moment though both 'wwws' will work for a little while.

Features of the New Website

Joomla! allows for a range of new functionalities. These include:

- A calendar for Society functions and events of interest to members
- A 'Latest Events' section which lists forthcoming functions and events over a two month period
- A facility for Members to register. (Why register?)
 1. Joomla! allows us to designate 'Members Only' areas and in the near future we will be placing members only material on the site; such as the full Newsletter that contains material that should not be placed in the public domain.
 2. Registered members can comment on Articles on the site
- Image galleries can be more easily created
- Latest news can be placed on the site with a minimum of fuss
- Joomla! can be operated from any computer, anywhere and it is planned that other members of the Committee, such as your Newsletter Editor, will be able to update the site when required.

How do I Register?

In the first instance we ask you to send a request via the contact form on the site. You will then receive a site generated email with simple instructions. While the Society Webmaster can monitor who is registered your login and password details are known only to you. At this stage only members invited to register. Once you have registered feel free to comment on articles on the site.

Feedback at all times is welcomed.



The **Wagner Society** in NSW Incorporated
Application Form for **Tickets** to the **Bayreuth** Festival 2011

	Applicant 1	Applicant 2
Name		
Email Address	
Mailing Address (If you are successful, your tickets will be posted to this address)	
Mobile Phone		Other Phone
Membership No		
Signature/s		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tick this box if you wish to be allocated the less expensive tickets.	

Applications

- Any current financial member of the Society may apply for one set of tickets in her or his own name, and any two current financial members with a shared membership may apply for one set of tickets in each of their names (i.e. two sets of tickets for the two members);
- Applications on this form must reach the Society before 1 October 2010, posted to GPO Box 4574, Sydney NSW 2001 or emailed to wagner_nsw@optusnet.com.au (wagner underscore nsw at optusnet dot com dot au).

Allocation of tickets

- Normally in November or December each year, we find out the number of sets of tickets that we have been allocated for the next year's festival. We will email these details to applicants, with an approximate A\$ cost for each set of tickets, plus an A\$100 processing fee per set which the Society retains.
- Where there are more applicants than sets of tickets, a ballot is conducted on the following basis:
 - applicants who have been financial members of the Society for two or more years and who have not within the past five years (for the Bayreuth Festivals in 2005 to 2009) received tickets through the Society will be balloted first;
 - other applicants of two or more years standing will be balloted second; and
 - all remaining applicants (including late applications received on or after 1 October) will be balloted last.
- Allocation of seating is at the discretion of the Society, and we will attempt to give each member attending the festival a range of seating locations according to our allocation. Shared members will be seated together wherever possible.

Payment for tickets

- When we receive our allocation or, if a ballot is required, immediately after that ballot is held, we will contact the successful applicants and arrange for payment to be transferred to our bank account so that we can send the full payment to the Festival by the due date. It's vital that we are able to contact you quickly, so you need to make sure that if you're away at this time we have reliable contact details or the name of someone who can make the payment on your behalf.
- If we have not received a response within 48 hours of our attempt to contact you, your application will be deemed to have been withdrawn and we will approach the next applicant on the list.
- If you are unable to transfer your payment within 5 business days of our request, your application will also be deemed to have been withdrawn and we will approach the next applicant on the list.



ADDRESS

Please note our permanent address for all correspondence

The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc

GPO Box 4574 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Telephone: 8021 0974 (Roger Cruickshank, 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. Just click on the address (link) to access the website.)

**Address for Sunday Functions
Goethe Institut
90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)**