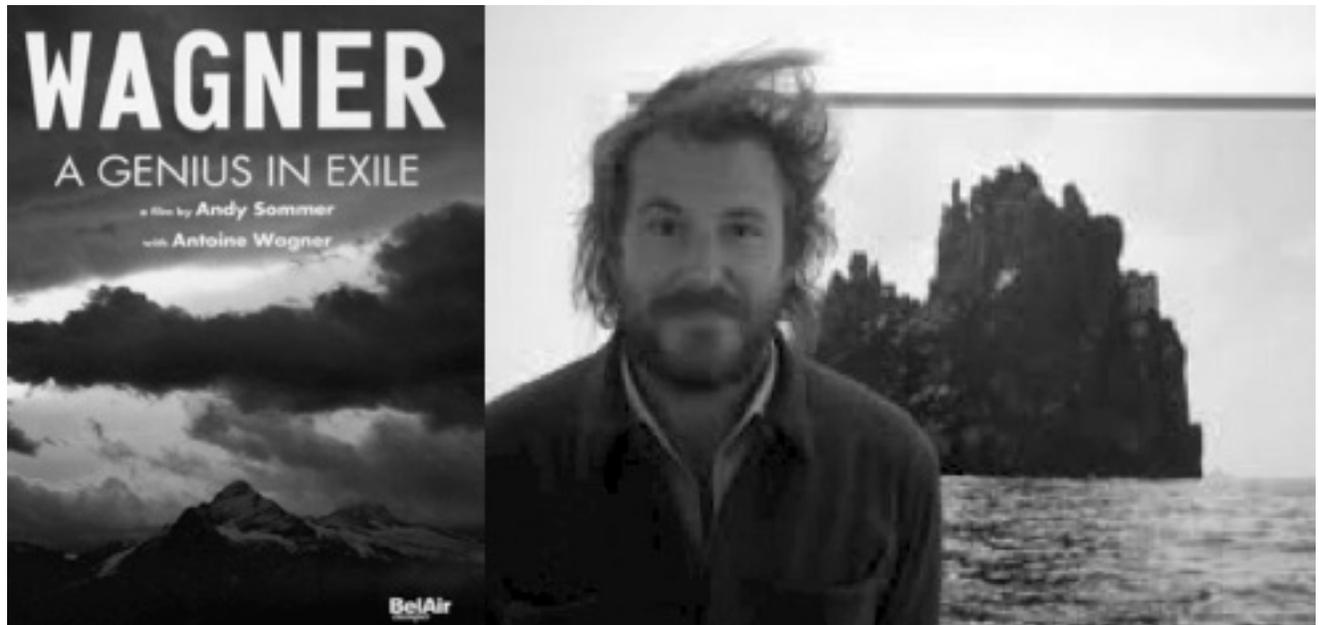


Brickbats & Bouquets, Bayreuth 2018, 30 September 2018

12.30pm: DVD: Wagner - a Genius in Exile
2.00pm: Brickbats and Bouquets - Bayreuth 2018



Wagner - a Genius in Exile

Antoine Wagner, a photographer and filmmaker living in New York, has long had a special passion for shooting landscapes and nature. But it wasn't until he investigated a famous distant relative that he came to see deeper roots to his professional interests. Wagner, 30, is the great-great-grandson of Richard Wagner, as well as the great-great-great-grandson of Franz Liszt. As the son of Eva Wagner, the co-director of the annual Wagner Festival in Bayreuth, he was steeped in family history as a child. "Growing up my mother used to work late so I'd go and hang out with her at the opera. I've always had the opportunity to learn more about it and be part of discussions about my ancestor. But this was the first time I feel where I got a connection that was so strong."

Earlier this year, Antoine Wagner produced and starred in a documentary film with the director Andy Sommer called "Wagner: A Genius in Exile," a musical road movie in which he is shown retracing his great-great-grandfather's flight to Zurich, Switzerland after he became enmeshed in the

Dresden revolutions of 1848 and 1849. “On the barricades in Dresden, he got threatened with imprisonment and possibly the death penalty,” Antoine Wagner explains. “So he packed up his belongings, got a fake passport from his friend Franz Liszt, headed to Lindau overnight and crossed Lake Constance and got to Rorschach. He basically manages to cross over the glaciers, frozen peaks and from hut to hut in Zurich.” Antoine Wagner says he was particularly interested in exploring the shielding and inspiring effect of the mountainous Swiss landscape on his relative’s music and psyche. “The first sets in Bayreuth were basically copy-pastes of Swiss landscapes,” he noted.

After reading about the composer’s travels and studying maps of northern Switzerland, the filmmakers constructed a route that would take place over five weeks in the summer of 2012, extending from Lake Constance to Zurich. They also interviewed numerous musicians, scholars and other experts. During the filming, Antoine Wagner also developed a forthcoming book of landscape photography called Wagner in Switzerland as well as a traveling exhibition of “photo sculptures” that will tour Europe. The filmmaker has also come to realize that listening to Wagner requires an effort that goes beyond background listening. “It can’t be ambient music and the soundtrack of your life,” he said. “The amount of concentration required due to the subtexts and the amount of layers is endless.”

Jul 25, 2013 · by Brian Wise - <https://www.wqxr.org/story/308639-antoine-wagner-how-i-came-know-my-family-heritage/>

Brickbats and Bouquets - Bayreuth 2018

Presented by members who received tickets from the Wagner Society and attended the Bayreuth Festival.

Over the course of a pleasant couple of hours an enthusiastic audience was entertained by members who had received tickets from the Wagner Society and attended the 2018 Bayreuth Festival.

Garry Richards gave us detailed insights into the Hollander set in an electric fan factory. Peter Cresswell was very enthusiastic about Parsifal, set in contemporary Mosel, which was unanimously agreed to have been a very moving experience. Peter also recommended the Kosky Meistersinger, set in Wahnfried and the Nuremburg Trials courtroom, but wasn’t impressed by Tristan und Isolde, unlike both Florian and Esteban who found Act 2 especially insightful and moving. Jenny Fearn saw Meistersinger in 2017

and again this year and described the quite substantial changes that had been made to the staging – one of the unique characteristics of Bayreuth where productions are always seen as works in progress. Jenny also told us about her experience of the Ring in Erl – very beautiful and enjoyable. Georgina Carnegie described her first Bayreuth experience this year and her enthusiasm reminded many of us about our first visit experiencing the charm of the town and the wealth of possible other activities, plus of course, the superb acoustics of the theatre and the extraordinary power of the chorus. She loved the humour of Die Meistersinger and the beauty of the orchestral playing in Parsifal. We were surprised to hear from Georgina that Placido Domingo was booed for his woeful conducting of Die Walkure. Nick Dorsch finished off by talking about seeing a Ring in Leipzig instead of Bayreuth this year – this seemed a worthwhile alternative.

We then all continued with lively discussion over afternoon tea, including Bratworst and sauerkraut to continue the Bayreuth mood as well as the usual delicious cakes provided by generous members.