

The Wagner Society



IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

Newsletter No. 114, Dec 08 - Jan 09

In Memoriam

DEBORAH RIEDEL - (1958 - 2009)

From her Covent Garden debut as Freia in *Das Rheingold* in 1991 to Sieglinde in *Die Walküre* in the Niedhardt Adelaide Ring in 2004 – too little use of a great Wagnerian voice. See a fuller article inside.

President's Report

Dear Members

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter for 2008. If you know the third part of Clive James' thoroughly unreliable memoirs, "May Week was in June", then you'll be prepared for this, our December 2008 Newsletter, which is being printed and posted to you in February 2009. The reasons for the delay are all mine, and I apologise for them.

Past Functions

October 2008 - Associate Professor Goetz Richter

On Sunday 19 October 2008, Associate Professor Goetz Richter, Chair of the Strings Unit at the Conservatorium of Music, Sydney, gave an stimulating illustrated talk about "Wagner and Nietzsche" without, alas, extracts from *Carmen*.

That Richard Wagner, perhaps the greatest composer of his age (and also a part-time philosopher), should strike up a friendship with Friedrich Nietzsche, then a young man who would come to be regarded as perhaps the greatest philosopher of that age (and also a part-time composer), is extraordinary enough. Given the egos involved, it is perhaps not surprising that their friendship should falter, as Nietzsche found his own voice outside the Wagner circle. The surprise is that their stories, whether together or apart, were oddly parallel, even to the women who had stewardship of their legacies after death. Professor Richter's talk covered many facets of this relationship and was deeply effecting.

PATRON:	Sir Charles Mackerras
HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS:	Prof Michael Ewans
	Mr Richard King
	Mr Horst Hoffman
	Mr Joseph Ferfaglia
	Mrs Barbara McNulty OBE

November 2008 – Christmas Party

Our final function for the year was our Christmas party on Sunday 30 November. The festivities began at 1pm with an introductory documentary titled 'The Life and Times of Max Lorenz - Hitler's Mastersinger', which was kindly loaned by June Donsworth. This was followed at by a fascinating documentary on the life of Georg Solti, loaned by Terence Watson, who then showed the 1957 Bugs Bunny/Merry Melodies cartoon "What's Opera, Doc?" followed by a quiz to name the Wagner leitmotivs.

It's hard enough to keep John Culshaw's words "I'm sick on a **SEE-saw**" out of my head when I hear the Walkürenritt from *Apocalypse Now*, without now having to suppress "Kill the Wabbitt" as well. Not to mention the love duet between Bugs/Brünnhilde and Elmer Fudd/Siegfried set to the overture from *Tannhäuser*, with such memorable lines as "Oh *Bwunhilde, be my wove!*" Sometimes I guess we just have to endure the unendurable.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT continued p.3 ►

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

In Memoriam - Deborah Riedel	P5
<i>Wagner, The Dutchman And The Sea</i> - Heath Lees	P5
Robert Lepage's Ring Cycle - A foretaste?	P6
Katharina Wagner's <i>Rienzi</i>	P7
Los Angeles - Wagner Ten-Week Festival	P8
"A Dream of Wagner" - Sydney Lanier	P12

For Your **Diary**

	2009 see below for a number of performances in other states.	
Saturday 7, Tuesday 10, Thursday 12 and Saturday 14 November,	The State Opera of South Australia, with Nicholas Braithwaite conducting the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, will stage a new production of <i>The Flying Dutchman</i> .	

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

DATE	EVENTS - 2009	TIME & LOCATION
February 15	Peter Bassett will talk on "Wagner and Beethoven" Preceded by 90-minute documentary on Katharina Wagner, mostly about her 2007 Bayreuth <i>Meistersinger</i> production – as an introduction to showings of each act before each of the following Sunday functions	Goethe Institute - 2pm Documentary at 12.30pm
March 15	Warwick Fyfe on his "Coming to Wagner" – a sequel to his popular talk in 2008 Preceded by Katharina Wagner's 2007 Bayreuth <i>Meistersinger</i> production	Goethe Institute - 2pm Meistersinger at 12:30pm
MONDAY, March 23	Special event: Professor Lees on "Wagner, the Dutchman and the Sea". An introduction to the performances of <i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> in Adelaide in early November. See details below. Afterwards Professor Lees will join interested Society members for a meal at a local restaurant. Preceded by Katharina Wagner's 2007 Bayreuth <i>Meistersinger</i> production	Goethe Institute - 2pm - TBC Meistersinger at 5:50pm
April	No Function	
May 24	Society AGM – Recital by students of the Sydney Conservatorium with Sharrolyn Kimmorley Preceded by Katharina Wagner's 2007 Bayreuth <i>Meistersinger</i> production	TBC Meistersinger at 11:45am
All dates for functions after the AGM remain to be confirmed depending on the Society's financial position		
June	No Function	
July 19	TBC	TBC
August	No Function	
September 20	TBC	TBC
October 18	TBC	TBC
November 29	Christmas Party	TBC
Goethe-Institut address 90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road) Paddington Unit Church address 395 Oxford Street, Paddington (parking behind in Gordon Street)		



President's Report continued

Happily this was followed by our Christmas Party. In our raffle, which raised just under \$300, Colin Baskerville won two A-reserve tickets to operas of his choice in Opera Australia's 2009 season, donated by Roger Cruickshank, Shirley Robertson won the Christmas Cake donated by Barbara Brady, and Leona Geeves won a DVD from Bayreuth of the Kirchner / Rosalie *Götterdämmerung*.

Unhappily, I had one of those unforgiveable accidents with technology. The sign on the Goethe-Institut door asks late arrivals to phone or text my mobile phone so that they can be let in. I let someone in around 2:45 and then, thinking that there would be no others, I turned my instrument off. Alas, some half-a-dozen members, some of whom had travelled from the Hunter Valley, arrived after that and were left cooling their heels and fruitlessly phoning and texting until someone who was leaving early let them in. My apologies to those members, whose enjoyment of the party was so sorely tested; I'll make sure that I keep the accursed instrument switched on henceforward.

Katharina Wagner's *Meistersinger*

For the first 4 meetings in 2009, we will be showing material relevant to Katharina Wagner's current production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at Bayreuth.

On Sunday 15 February starting at 12.30pm, prior to Peter Basset's talk, we'll be showing a documentary entitled "Katharina Wagner's Baptism of Fire, The Road to her Debut as Director in Bayreuth", which was kindly loaned by Barbara Brady. The film documents the genesis of her new production of the *Meistersinger* in Bayreuth in 2007, and gives a unique insight into the inner workings of the Bayreuth festival. (The documentary lasts 82 minutes.)

Then before each of the next three meetings, we will show an act from the production:

Sunday 15 March Act 1 starting at 12:30pm (timings from the DVD total 85m 47s)

Monday 23 March Act 2 starting at 5:50pm (timings total 61m 40s)

Sunday 24 May Act 3 starting at 11:45am (timings total 128m 55s, including credits etc)

Future Functions

The first meeting of 2009 will be held at the Goethe-Institut on **Sunday 15 February**. At 12:30pm we will show the documentary Katharina Wagner's *Baptism of Fire*, followed at 2pm by Peter Bassett, who will give a talk on Beethoven and Wagner. Peter gave a fascinating illustrated talk last year on that "other" Sachs opera, Albert Lortzing's comic opera *Hans Sachs*, and its influences on Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*, and I'm sure he'll be fascinated to see the documentary on Katharina Wagner's production.

On **Sunday 15 March** at 12:30pm, we will show Act 1 of *Meistersinger*, followed at 2pm by a talk by Warwick Fyfe on his coming to Wagner as a singer. Warwick's talk last year on his experiences as the 2007 Bayreuth Scholar was for many the highlight of our 2008 programme, revealing the depth of this wonderful singer's love of art and music.

On **Monday 23 March** at 5:50pm, we will show Act 2 of *Meistersinger*, followed at 7pm by an illustrated talk by Professor Health Lees entitled "Wagner, the Dutchman, and the Sea", which has been prepared by Professor Lees as an introduction to the Adelaide production of the *Holländer* in November.

This will be our first evening function at the Goethe-Institut. Professor Lees is visiting Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, and is flying up from Melbourne for one night to deliver this talk. Afterwards, we will take Professor Lees to dinner at a local restaurant (to be advised) and anyone who would like to join this meal should contact Roger Cruickshank on (02) 9357 7631.

On **Sunday 24 May** at 11:45am, we will show Act 3 of the *Meistersinger*, followed by our Annual General Meeting, a recital by singers whom we have helped with language scholarships and assisted with overseas travel costs, and



Committee 2008 - 2009

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President's Report continued

then an afternoon tea to celebrate Richard Wagner's Birthday (which this year falls on Friday, 22 May).

Last year the AGM approved an increase in the attendance fee for our functions from \$10 to \$15, which came into effect in July. Our hope was that the increase would not impact on the number of members attending functions, but that it would reduce the losses we had been making. We were not ambitious enough to hope for a profit from our functions, or that we might break even. For whatever reason, our attendances in the second half of 2008 reduced, with the result that our losses from functions have continued.

For this reason, the committee proposes to put a package of measures to the AGM which will be designed to continue with functions which are more cost-neutral, and to continue to support the artists and productions with scholarships, grants and donations. For this reason, we are not at this stage scheduling monthly meetings through to the end of 2009.

Ring Cycle in Melbourne 2012

"The Age" newspaper of 9 December 2008 reported that "Lonely Planet" publishing co-founder Maureen Wheeler is exploring the possibility of staging Wagner's *Ring Cycle* in Melbourne in 2012, and is ready to put \$12 million towards the project. The article said "It is believed the artistic administrator and dramaturg with the *Ring Cycle* staged in Adelaide in 2004, Peter Bassett, is exploring the options for Melbourne. But he said yesterday that he would not be able to discuss details until early 2009."

Ms Wheeler's extraordinary act of generosity gives us hope that the emptiness left after Elke Neidhardt's acclaimed 2004 Adelaide *Ring* will at last be filled. The Age article links conductor Lionel Friend's name with the project, and quotes the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's chief executive as confirming that the orchestra was interested in the project. The MSO's performing home, Hamer Hall, is likely to be closed for renovations for all of 2012, and the article mentions the Royal Exhibition Buildings as a possible alternate venue.

I understand that consideration was given to re-scaling and re-stagging the Neidhardt *Ring*, but that this was not feasible because of the poor state of some of the sets, and the high cost of transporting them and adapting them for a new venue.

Without using an existing opera company or access to a conventional opera house, Ms Wheeler and her team have the opportunity to create something unique with their festival performances, and I'm sure we all wish them well in bringing this great endeavour to fruition.

Peter Bassett will be talking to our Society on Sunday 15 February. Unless a public announcement has been made before that date, I understand that Peter won't be in a position to give us details of the proposal which he is putting together.

The Flying Dutchman in Adelaide in November 2009

On Saturday 7, Tuesday 10, Thursday 12 and Saturday 14 November, the State Opera of South Australia, with Nicholas Braithwaite conducting the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, will stage a new production of *The Flying Dutchman*, directed by Chris Drummond. The cast includes John Wegner (Dutchman), Margaret Medlyn (Senta), Stuart Skelton (Erik), Daniel Sumegi (Daland), Katharine Tier (Mary) and Angus Wood (Steersman). The work will be performed as three acts, and with two twenty minute intervals, will last approximately three hours.

Renaissance Tours (Tel: (02) 9299 5801, Toll Free: 1300 727 095) is offering a weekend package for the performance on Saturday 14 November, which can be extended to include an excursion to Kangaroo Island.

Opera Australia

The tragic death last year of Opera Australia's musical director, Richard Hickox, while recording in the United Kingdom, has not ended the bitter controversy which surfaced in the last months of his life regarding his direction for the company and its artistic leadership and management.

We all have our views on the company's direction, its repertoire, its treatment of Simone Young, its ensemble performers, its season in Melbourne, on the Opera Theatre itself with its problematic orchestra pit and mediocre acoustic – in fact on almost every aspect of the opera company!

Even though many of my views are not positive, I temper them with one over-riding thought – that life in Australia without Opera Australia would simply be unthinkable. For that reason alone, we need to carefully consider who benefits from the ongoing and trenchant criticism of the company, and what end its critics have in mind.

A recent article by Joyce Morgan in the Sydney Morning Herald reported that the company has appointed a five-person selection panel, including chairman Ziggy Switkowski and board member David Malouf, "to consider the criticisms made of the company in recent months and to consult a range of industry professionals." In the interests of the artistic future of this country, I wish them every success.

Death of Deborah Riedel

I'm sure we were all saddened with the news of the death of Deborah Riedel. Her role debut as Sieglinde in the Neidhardt *Ring*, for which she was the recipient of a Helpmann Award, was recorded by Melba Records and is a testament to the glory of her voice.

I last heard her in March 2008, in the role of Sieglinde in a concert performance of Act 1 of *Die Walkure* with the Queensland Orchestra conducted by Johannes Fritzsich, with Christian Elsner as Siegmund and Philip Kang as Hunding. None of the power and beauty of her voice had been tarnished.

Roger Cruickshank
2 February 2009



In Memoriam - **Deborah Riedel** 1958-2009

Ms Riedel was born in Carlingford in Sydney on 31 July 1958 and died of cancer on 8 January 2009. She studied at the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music where she won several major singing awards enabling her to continue her studies in Europe. Among other awards, in 1983 she won the Dame Sister Mary Leo Scholarship and in 1986 the *Sun* Aria prize, enabling her to study in London and Europe. The Australian Opera made her a principal singer in 1986, when she substituted for Marilyn Richardson in Richard Meale's *Voss*.

Ms Riedel was one of a number of Australians who made their names in Europe in the early 1990s, including Jeffrey Black, Bernadette Cullen, Lisa Gasteen and Simone Young. She made her Metropolitan Opera début on 5 November, 1997 as Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* for one season (1997-98) with six performances. She sang in places as far apart as Sydney (*The Magic Flute*, *Carmen*, *Maria Stuarda*, *Les Pêcheurs de Perles*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Norma*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *The Valkyrie* and *The Gipsy Princess*), San Francisco (*Don Giovanni* (as both Donna Elvira and Donna Anna), *La Sonnambula*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *La Traviata* and *Peter Grimes*), Rome and Paris (in Berlioz' *Benvenuto Cellini*), London (*Don Giovanni*, *Tosca*, *La Bohème* and *Der Rosenkavalier*) and Munich (*Faust*).

Interesting Recordings

1997 Franz Lehár: *Giuditta* / Conductor: Richard Bonyngge, Deborah Riedel, Jerry Hadley, Naomi Itami (available as an www.ArkivCD.com reissue).

2005 the Melba Company recording of *Die Walküre* from the complete recording of the Adelaide Ring Cycle – still available from Melba, CD stores and online.

2005 **Meyerbeer *Semiramide*** (1819) with *Semiramide* sung by Deborah Riedel with the Altensteig Rossini Choir and the Württemberg Philharmonic Orchestra also conducted by Richard Bonyngge (Available on Naxos CD)

Ms Riedel is survived by her husband, Paul Ferris, her parents and her sisters. There is an extended obituary by Bryce Hallett and Tony Stephens in the Sydney Morning Herald of 12 January 2009 that you can read online at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/obituaries/soprano-scaled-the-heights/2009/01/11/1231608518954.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap1>.

[Editor]

Wagner, ***The Dutchman*** And ***The Sea***

- A Lecture/Presentation By Heath Lees

The Flying Dutchman was Wagner's first major step away from the operas of his day towards a new kind of music-drama. For the first time, Wagner based his work on the story — in his words the “folk-poem” — of a mythical figure. In *The Dutchman*, he saw humanity's storm-tossed wrestling with Fate, its yearning for peace and fulfilment, and its defiant rejection of Death as the Last Word on everything.

As everyone knows, this grand scheme inspired Wagner with a powerful text and wonderful music, and helped him build a much deeper connection between the two. Less well known is the fact that the sea and its mariners actually provided the source of all the surface details and underlying swells that made Wagner's new music such an enthralling language.

In this presentation, using piano and DVD examples, Heath Lees traces out Wagner's musical and operatic background around 1839, when he first began to conceive *The Flying Dutchman*. He then shows how the liberating influence of the sea sets the course for the drama, and creates an all-embracing force for the music's constantly changing currents.

Heath Lees

After 25 years, Heath Lees recently retired as Professor of Music at the University of Auckland. During this period he and his wife jointly established the Wagner Society of New Zealand, and he made a reputation for himself as a speaker and radio broadcaster on Wagnerian topics.

Heath has been the guest of Australian Wagner Societies on many occasions, and has recently lectured (in fluent Scottish) to the Wagner Society of Scotland, and (in broken French) to the Cercle Wagnérien at Toulouse. His last visit to Australia (2007) coincided with the publication of his book “Mallarmé and Wagner: Music and Poetic Language” (Ashgate, UK).

Heath is also known as a composer and reviewer, and was for many years a TV host on New Zealand Television's weekly arts programmes “Opus” and “Kaleidoscope”. His current projects include a book on Beethoven, and a series of radio programmes on “Musical Markers”. He now divides his time between France and New Zealand.



Robert Lepage's **Ring Cycle** for the **New York Metropolitan Opera**

- A Foretaste With Berlioz's *Damnation Of Faust*?

I hope you saw the Metropolitan Opera's production of Berlioz' somewhat unwieldy stage work – preferably at the Met, but at least at the High Definition broadcasts at one of the Sydney cinemas. If you did, then I suspect you will have had a foretaste of the barrage of high tech computer and audio-visual effects brought to bear by Lepage to bring the highly episodic work to life. If you didn't see the production, then you missed a visual feast, but you can get a taste with a short video on the Met's website (www.metoperafamily.org/metopera/season/production.aspx?id=9929&detect=yes).

You can also see some images and video in the New York Times' review of the production on their website:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/10/arts/music/10faus.html> (See below).

In response to a request to *describe his visual approach to the opera*, Lepage replied: "I was interested to find a meeting point between the theatricality of opera and the cinematic world, to create a kind of portal where those two ways of telling stories would come together. So we created a kind of double wall that looks a bit like scaffolding at times. We have performers within that wall and we have projections coming from the back and from the front, so the three-dimensional, real-life performers are caught in a sandwich of cinematic realities. At first the singers were a bit afraid of it, but then they found that it's a very friendly environment for their voices—we're blocking the proscenium arch with this huge mirrored wall, so the voice actually bounces back into the room."

In response to a specific question about his plans for The Ring Cycle, Lepage said: "*La Damnation de Faust* is an opportunity for us to set the basis of the visual language and the technologies and interactive technologies that are going to be used in the *Ring*. The real goal is to try to push

that language far enough so that we create one of the most spectacular *Ring* cycles."

As Antony Tommasini said in his review (Between Hell and Heaven, a World of Morphing Imagery of November 9, 2008): "The imposing, four-tiered wall of Carl Fillion's set is subdivided into 24 cubicles. When individual screens drop into place, the set becomes a continuous surface, like some supersize flat-screen television, on which enormous images can be projected." All of the scenes used the cubicles that could function as small rooms, walkways or screens in a dizzying number of ways. Sometimes the screens showed a setting with, for example a flock of birds wheeling across the huge display or a forest dying by stages as Mephistopheles walks through it. The production also used a very large chorus and troops of extras (literally when the extras became the soldiers leaving for the battle with the Hungarians during the famous Rakovsky March. During the Dance of the Sylphs, each of the dancers danced within one of the cubicles onto which was projected curtaining whose movements were controlled by the dancer herself through infra-red sensors that fed her movements into a computer that then changed the movement of the curtains as if she had moved this way then that – very convincing and much easier than having to install and remove 24 sets of real curtains for the ballet. I forgot to mention that during this scene there are Spiderman-like flying around the set and acrobats climbing up the front of the wall of screens, and there's more: "red-coated demonic lizards crawl about on the surface of it, defying gravity, and soldiers march from stage bottom to top, perpendicular to the wall, before falling, wounded, three stories, into the arms of lamenting sweethearts" (John Yohalem at www.operatoday.com/content/2008/11/la_damnation_de.php).

Another review usefully summarises some of the other effects: Lepage accompanies swiftly changing scenery with computer animated projections, people walk up the wall, or magically fly through the air on invisible ropes. The travelogue becomes a dream journey whose ever-changing pictures support the flow of the music. The interaction between actors and stage techniques reaches its poetic peak in the Elbe scene. The actors, simultaneously filmed, and with their images projected on the lower half of the set, appear reflected on the water, gently distorted by waves. (Rosemarie Fruehauf & Nadia Ghattas in the Epoch Time review at <http://en.epochtimes.com/n2/content/view/7301/>).

In one of the most striking images in the production, as Tommasini describes: "When Méphistophélès, the bass-baritone John Relyea, tempts Faust, now transformed into a young man, with the prospect of the love of a young woman, Marguerite, he rows Faust across a placid lake. Suddenly Méphistophélès capsizes the boat, and Faust appears to sink into a swirling pool, where he has an underwater dance with a nymphlike creature." The swirling pool is in fact a projection onto the wall of the 24 screens that form the set's backdrop. It immediately

New Member

The following person joined the Society:

Kylie Winkworth [0976].

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. Donations were gratefully received from the following members and supporters:



brought back memories for me of the Bill Viola images for *Tristan und Isolde* that came to Sydney last year (and reviewed by Katie French - you can read her comments on the Society's webpage at www.wagner-nsw.org.au/reviews/r08/r0804_lovedeath.html). For the Editor's views on Viola's Tristan Project see the Society's website (www.wagner-nsw.org.au).

It was very easy to imagine the "swirling pool" in *Faust* being re-worked by Lepage into the opening scene of *Das Rheingold*. Tommasini wonders about Marguerite's scene "D'amour, l'ardente flamme," in Part 4, "when this tragic

young woman, awaiting execution in prison, still pines with love for Faust. Ms. Graham's face is reflected in an enormous close-up video image, engulfed in smoke and flame. Could this be a hint of what Mr. Lepage has in mind for Brünnhilde's Immolation Scene, when in 2010-11 he stages the Met's new production of Wagner's "Ring" cycle?"

You might have also sampled Mr Lepage's work in the nine hour *Lypsynch* being performed in the 2009 Sydney Festival, although it did not show the same level of audio-visual and computer-generated graphics as the *Damnation*.

[Editor]

Wagner's 'Rienzi' Takes a Cartoon-Like Turn

The new co-director of the Bayreuther Festspiele, Katharina Wagner, has moved backwards from Wagner's second last completed music-drama, *Der Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, to Wagner's first success (his third completed opera), *Rienzi*, in a production for Opera Bremen in late 2008. The political nature of *Rienzi*, in which an almost perfect leader is brought down by perfidy and a fickle Roman populace – possibly because of his own incipient capitulation to the attractions of power or possibly because he is too principled to recognise treachery in others. Written for Paris and intended to compete with Giacomo Meyerbeer's works for the hearts of the Parisians, *Rienzi* premiered in Dresden in 1842 to much acclaim, but with insuperable problems of length and logistics that still dog the work. Almost no modern production is uncut – Ms Wagner cut the work from the notional full-length five hours to four.

According to reports, Katharina Wagner has used the tonsorial school of character analysis to portray her conception of the Roman Tribune. **George Loomis**, writing in The International Herald Tribune, says: "After the opening scene, in which the bald-headed tribune quells a skirmish, he repairs to a hair salon, where he is outfitted with a wig. His vanity pumped up, he wears it at his next public appearance, along with clothes that are, according to the libretto, 'fantastic and pompous.' As his power dissolves, Rienzi adopts the hairstyle of a young girl - blond with pigtails." Loomis pinpoints the problem with the production: "During the opera's ballet, Rienzi appears in a trash bin, with an outdoor vacuum cleaner strapped to his back, which he wields as a weapon. He and the other characters never emerge as real people. You never knew for sure whether "Rienzi" was worth reviving, despite the strong appeal of much of the music. The impression is of a random series of episodes." From reports I have read of Ms Wagner's Bayreuth *Meistersinger* production, this may be a genetic failing in her approach to opera production – great gimmicks; little content.

A blogger on the mostlyopera.com website injected some local relevance into the discussion by suggesting that most German critics had reacted favourably, seeing the story as "paralleling the fate of Rienzi with that of the CSU (Christian democratic political party in Bavaria), having just lost the absolute majority (on September 27th 2008) in the Bavaria State Election for the first time in half a century." Indeed, the story of *Rienzi* should be capable of being interpreted as a commentary on just about any contemporary political regime, with a clear moral for leaders who lose touch with the people they rule.

Catherine Hickley in her Bloomberg review concurs with Loomis in wondering about the point of locating a key scene in a hairdressing salon: it "diminishes the stature of the characters, making a mockery of their power games. It also reduces the grandiosity of the work of the young composer. Trouble is, Katharina Wagner gives us nothing to replace it -- we are left wondering why we should care at all about this story and these characters." Reinforcing her point, Hickley laments that Ms Wagner "has also turned it from drama to farce, especially the first two acts. Megalomania becomes vanity, violence becomes impudence in her interpretation. Rienzi is a preening, prancing, buffoonish showman, a media politician with a penchant for kitsch and an out-of-control ego. Part Liberace, part Silvio Berlusconi."

Hickley notes that the set for the last three acts: "...some of the grandeur of the story returns -- too late to recapture interest. A staircase leaking blood is a vivid means of conveying the loss of life on the battlefield. Yet you can't forget that the bloodshed was all caused, of course, by an army equipped with vacuum cleaners. (Or were they those powered leaf sweepers? Are we missing some deeper ecological message here? Who knows?)" (the set by Tilo Steffens, consisting mainly of a large flight of stairs, makes the stage look cramped)

Both Loomis and Hickley had good words for most of the singing, with Loomis particularly approving the chorus, even if they were made to do strange things. Loomis considered that... "the conductor, Christoph Ulrich Meier, does an admirable job holding the work together. And in Mark Duffin, the company has a tenor who can really sing the daunting title role...". Others in the cast were, as Adriano, a young nobleman torn between admiration for Rienzi and loyalty to his father, the Russian mezzo soprano Tamara Klivadenko, Patricia Andress as Rienzi's sister Irene, and Pavel Kudinov and Loren Lang as the noblemen Colonna and Orsini.

I suspect that Loomis would also have agreed with Hickley's summation: "the production adds to evidence that she has a long way to go to prove that she is an opera director by more than birthright." You can read the full reports at the following websites: <http://www.iht.com/articles/2008/10/22/arts/loomis.php?pass=true#>

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601088&refer=muse&sid=at9uNH7EwdKw>.

[Editor]



Los Angeles - **Richard Wagner Ten-Week Festival**

15 April-30 June 2010

Los Angeles Opera and more than 50 Southern California arts and educational institutions will stage a 10-week festival in spring 2010 to support the company's production of The Ring cycle. The Ring Festival LA will include performances, symposiums, concerts, special exhibitions and film screenings. The LA Opera's General Director, Plácido Domingo, the LA Mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa, acknowledged the philanthropist, Eli Broad, whose \$6 million foundation gift is underwriting the Ring. In addition, according to the Company's website, "film festivals throughout the city will acknowledge the movie industry's debt to Richard Wagner not only regarding the use of myth and archetypes in story-telling about universal emotions, but also in the use of musical motives in movie soundtracks. Los Angeles will celebrate Wagner as no other city in the world can." The *Ring* cycle will be conducted by James Conlon and designed and directed by Achim Freyer. The Company's website also contains some photos and videos to give you a taste of the production.

Ring Cycle 1

DAS RHEINGOLD, Saturday, 5/29/10
DIE WALKÜRE, Sunday, 5/30/10
SIEGFRIED, Thursday, 6/3/10
GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG, Sunday, 6/6/10

Ring Cycle 2

DAS RHEINGOLD, Tuesday, 6/8/10
DIE WALKÜRE, Thursday, 6/10/10
SIEGFRIED, Sunday, 6/13/10
GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG, Wednesday, 6/16/10

Ring Cycle 3

DAS RHEINGOLD, Friday, 6/18/10
DIE WALKÜRE, Sunday, 6/20/10
SIEGFRIED, Wednesday, 6/23/10
GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG, Saturday, 6/26/10

The cast will include: Wotan-Vitalij Kowaljow, Loge-Arnold Bezuyen, Alberich-Gordon Hawkins, Mime-Graham Clark, Fricka-Michelle Deyoung, Erda-Jill Grove, Siegmund-Plácido Domingo, Sieglinde-Martina Serafin, Brünnhilde-Linda Watson, Siegfried-John Treleaven, Gunther-Alan Held, and Hagen-Eric Halfvarson.

The Opera Company's website already has much information about the festival, including the following attractions – many others will be added over the following months:

American Jewish University - Seminar on "Richard Wagner and the Jews: The Use of Wagner by the Nazis," moderated by Dr. Michael Berenbaum and featuring a dialogue with Gottfried Wagner, great-grandchild of Richard Wagner and son of Wolfgang Wagner.

Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum - "The Challenges of Singing Wagner," a conversation on the joys and difficulties of singing the composer's works and the unique technical equipment singers require.

Goethe-Institut Los Angeles - A screening of the documentary *Wagner und die Frauen* (in German with English subtitles) directed by Andreas Morell.

OPERA America - OPERA America will hold its annual Opera Conference in Los Angeles in 2010. The conference will include a variety of opera specific events, performances, speakers, workshops with a special emphasis on Wagner.

Southern California Wagner Society - "Digital Wagner," an online-offline chat room / reception for people to mix, mingle, and share their love of all things Wagner and stories of how they became besotted with the composer. Dr. Sherwin Sloan, Chairman of the Southern California Wagner Society will preside over the festivities.

University of California Los Angeles - "Wagner in LA: The Opera of the 21st Century."

USC Thornton School of Music - A presentation of *Das Liebesverbot*.

Keep abreast of the developments at the Company's website: <http://laoperaring.com/festival/events.php>, or better still, subscribe to their email newsletter. However, be aware that the Company is charging a compulsory donation of approximately the price of the ticket as well, although the donation decreases with the cheaper tickets. Tickets range from US\$2,200 (US\$1,100 tax deductible portion – if you happen to pay tax in the USA) to US\$100 (handrail obstructed – US\$20 tax deductible portion). More ticket information is on the company's website at www.losangelesopera.com/ticketing/subscription/ringcycle/welcome.aspx. If you can't make it to LA, it appears that the full cycle will be performed in San Francisco in the summer of 2011.

[Editor]



The Cambridge Companion to Wagner

- Notice From Colin Baskerville

Edited by Thomas S. Grey, Cambridge University Press, 2008, AUD \$49.95, on sale Abbey's, Gleebooks, Kinokuniya
Sixteen key scholars, ranging from Dieter Borchmeyer to Barry Millington, contribute in depth essays with essential footnotes and bibliography. The Chronology is separated into four parts:

- Biographical and Historical Contexts;
- Opera, Music, Drama;
- Ideas and Ideology in the Gesamtkunstwerk and
- After Wagner: Influence and Interpretation.

The last section includes a compelling account by Mike Ashman of "Wagner on stage: aesthetic, dramaturgical, and social considerations". This brings us up to date with a history of significant productions. Furthermore, the footnotes detail DVD releases with technical commentary. There are a number of major productions from places such as Leipzig of great interest and basically unknown to Australians. Deborah Riedel (Freia) adorns the front cover. [A fitting tribute as, sadly, Ms Riedel died this week.]

President's Report for the Society's 28th Year

- From 1 January To 31 December 2008

Dear Members

I am pleased to present the President's Report for 2008, the 28th year of the Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated.

Functions

The Society's 2008 functions were generally held in the Goethe-Institut, and included:

- in February, Alan Whelan gave an illustrated talk on Wagner's 3-month visit to Russia in 1863;
- in March, Warwick Fyfe spoke about his study tour in Europe in November 2007, as the 2007 Bayreuth Scholar;
- in April, Glenn Winslade spoke about his experiences singing in Bayreuth;
- in May, we held our AGM at the Paddington Uniting Church, which included a recital by students from the Conservatorium of Music, accompanied by Sharolyn Kimmorley;
- in July, Peter Bassett gave a talk on Lortzing's singspiel *Hans Sachs*, and its connections with *Die Meistersinger*;
- in August, we helped organise a recital by Lisa Harper-Brown and Warwick Fyfe at St Stephens Uniting Church in Macquarie Street, accompanied by Stephen Mould;
- in September we held two functions: Dr Robert Gibson gave a talk on the life and music of Richard Strauss at the Paddington Uniting Church; and Christopher Brodrick, the President of the Wagner Society of New Zealand, gave a talk on Wagner and the visual arts;
- in October, Associate Professor Goetz Richter gave a talk on Nietzsche and Wagner; and
- at the end of November, we held our end-of-year party a little earlier than usual.

Prior to some of the meetings at the Goethe-Institut, we showed excerpts of DVDs.

Finances

The accounting firm WalterTurnbull kindly agreed to continue to audit our annual accounts "pro bono". I'd like to thank WalterTurnbull, its Executive Director Mr Mark Driessen, and Mr Christopher Ritchie, for their generosity and diligence in undertaking this work on our behalf. I'd also like to acknowledge our thanks to Ms Julie Carroll, who approached WalterTurnbull on our behalf and has secured their services.

Thanks

We continue our good relations with the German Consulate, the Consul General, and with the Goethe-Institut, and we thank the Institut's Director, Klaus Krischok, and its officers and staff for their continued help and support.

We provide financial assistance each year to the Bayreuth Scholar, who is selected by Opera Foundation Australia and in 2008 was Cameron McKenzie, and are very please to be able to support students from the University of Sydney Conservatorium of Music and other young singers with German Language scholarships to study at the Goethe-Institut, and in some cases with contributions towards the cost of their overseas study.

There are many people in the Society I wish to thank, and foremost among them special thanks go to the members of your Committee who worked so hard on your behalf throughout 2008 - our Vice President, Julian Block, our Honorary Secretary Alan Whelan, our Honorary Treasurer Michael Moore, and our committee members Gaby Bremner-Moore, Terence Watson and Dennis Mather.

I'd particularly like to give Terence Watson, our Newsletter editor, special thanks. I regularly receive favourable



comments about the high standard of our Newsletter from members and from Wagner Societies within Australia and overseas, and I'd like to commend Terence for his hard work on our behalf.

Special thanks are also due to Renata and Herman Junkers who give so generously of their time to provide the afternoon teas at our functions; to John Studdert our web-master, whose work on the web-site is also the subject of praise from other Societies; to our newly-returned Ravens, Camron Dyer and Richard Mason; and to Alasdair Beck, our Public Officer. I'd also like to thank those members who come early to our functions and lend a hand setting up the tables for afternoon tea, and with the name tags.

Finally

And finally I would like to thank you, our members, whose commitment to the Society and support for our functions, ensures that we can continue to promote the works of Richard Wagner, to provide scholarships and assistance for young artists, including the Bayreuth Scholar, and to further the aims of our Society.

Your continuing support and encouragement keeps our Society strong. Thank you all.

Roger Cruickshank, 20 January 2009

(This report will be tabled at the Society's 2009 Annual General Meeting, scheduled for Sunday 24 May 2009)

Alphabetical Membership List As At 31 December 2008

Financial members have their membership number included:

Kay Abrahams (0966), Paul Alger (0255), Carl Andrew (0772), F. John Augustus and Kim Ryrie (0963), Philip Bacon (0890), Sybil Baer, Carole Bailey (0663), Patricia Baillie (0108), Norma Barne, Glen Barnwell (0944), Douglas Barry (0942), Colin Baskerville (0817), Janette Bates (0785), Marlene and Paul Baumgartner (0393), Margareta Baxter (0775), Sandra Beesley (0759), Phillip Bennett (0925), Fred and Irma Beringer (0975), Julian Block (0745), Richard Bloor (0967), Tony Bonin, Jan Bowen (0743), Barbara and Ian Brady (0380), Gabriella Bremner-Moore and Michael Moore (0819), Bill Brooks and Alasdair Beck (0765), Susan and James Buchanan (0423), Richard Buckdale and Murray Johnstone, Margaret Budge (0275), Frances Butcher (0918), Richard Button (0931), Margot Buttrose, Julie Carroll (0928), Stephen Carroll, John Casey (0114), Maurice Cashmere, Ann Casimir (0501), Alexander Cater and Rosemary Cater-Smith (0638), Humphrey Charles and Pauline Alexander (0951), Terry and Greg Chesher (0685), Colleen and Michael Chesterman (0649), Julie and Terry Clarke (0496), Christopher Coffey, Aviva and Alec Cohen, Adrian Collette (0734), Daryl Colquhoun (0732), Joan and Maxwell Connery (0334), Susan Conrade, Rae and Russ Cottle (0843), Alexander Cozzolino (0930), Moya Crane (0545), Roger Cruickshank (0669), Elizabeth and Barry Dale (0953), Catherine Davies (0921), Michael Day and Philip Cornwell (0606), Barbara de Rome (0207), Lorenza dei Medici, David Delany and Alister Wong, Charlotte and Hartmut Derichs (0661), Ian Dicker, Susette and Martin Dickson, Clyde Dominish (0807), June Donsworth (0884), Barbara and Nicholas Dorsch (0154), Barbara and Andrew Dowe, Brian Ducker (0487), Sandy and Phil Dudgeon (0788), Heinz Ebert (0378), Phillip Emanuel (0947), Clive Evatt (0624), Michael Ewans (Honorary Life Member), Steve Fargo (0964), William Felbel (0893), Igor Ferdman, Judy Fergolia (0045) and Joseph Fergolia (Honorary Life Member), Jennifer Ferns (0034), Michele and Onofrio Ferrara (0706), Mary and Graeme Fogelberg (0880), Bob Foster (0850), Edith Freeman (0907), Alan Freeman (0974), Brian Freestone and Charles Brady, Stephen Freiberg and Donald Campbell (0585), Vic and Katie French (0945), David and Sabina Full (0883), Warwick Fyfe (0755), Ingrid Garofali (0778), Paola Garofali (0914), Louis Garrick (0971), Richard Gastineau-Hills (0068), Leona Geeves (0087), Diana Wang and Peter George (0873), William Gillespie OAM (0776), Sue Gillies, MaryAnne and Nick Gillott (0955), Elizabeth Gordon-Werner (0878), Andrew Goy (0723), Robert Graham (0904), Nance Grant (0120), Helen and Kevin Grant (0681), Dennis Gray, Tim Green (0933), John Gregory-Roberts (0748), Paul Gresham (0932), Joan Griffin (0540), Maxwell Grubb (0858), Peter Hall, Hugh Hallard (0799), Wendy and Andrew Hamlin (0593), Derek Harrison and Marcus Susanto (0939), Siss Hartnett and Britt Hartnett (0667), Pat and Frank Harvey (0427), Mary Haswell (0857), Simon Hatcher (0333), Alan Hauserman and Janet Nash (0876), Melinda Hayton (0757), Clare Hennessy (0019), Margaret Hennessy (0019A), Marie Hiscock, Patricia and Roy Hodson (0894), Horst Hoffmann (Honorary Life Member), Pauline Holgerson (0863), Glenn Horne (0948), Theo Hudson (0489), Cynthia Hughes, Irvine Hunter (0744), Ian Hutchison, Agnes Brejzek and Esteban Insausti (0433), Elizabeth Jacka (0898), Cherry Jackaman (0441), Judith Jacks, Douglas Jamieson (0090), Peter Jenkins, Brett Johnson (0779), Anthony Jones (0455), Gillian and Brian Jones (0751), Anne Jones (0861), Colin Jones and Paul Curran, Erika Jumikis, Renate and Herman Junker (0866), Naomi Kaldor (0796), Despina Kallinikos (0596A), Iphygenia Kallinikos (0596B), Angela Kayser (0845), Joseph Kelleher (0965), Susan Kelly, Richard King (Honorary Life Member, 0015), Vanessa King (0306), Julie King and D Woodley-Page (0007), Anna-Lisa Klettenberg (0847), Sylvia and Karl Koller (0052), Ira Kowalski (0536), Hannelore Laundl (0962), Marie Leech (0916), Paul Lehmann (0471), Carole and Jim Leigh (0452), Gary Linnane (0960), Britta and Harry Littman, Robert Lloyd (0795), Lynette Longfoot (0922), Bruce Love (0468), Charles MacKerras (Patron), Colin Mackerras (0859), Erin Flaherty and David Maloney (0952), Charles Manning (0940), Jennifer Manton (0718), Libby Manuel, Annie and Terry Marshall (0403), Camron Dyer (0544), Dennis Mather and John Studdert (0696), Jane Mathews (0622), Diana McBain (0419), David McCarthy (0648), Tony McDonald (0420), Gillian and Kenneth (0Tim), McDonald (0935), Pam and Ian McGaw (0548), John McGrath (0310), Robert McHugh, Barbara McNulty OBE (Honorary Life Member, 0601), Mary Meppem, Neville Mercer (0737), Irene and Wolfgang Merretz (0115), Judi Mitchell, Patricia Moore (0515), Elsie and James Moore (0811), Elizabeth Moser (0659), Judith Mulveney (0599), Peter Murray and Andrew Laughlin (0958), David Mutton, Helen and Bill Naylor (0643), Barbara and Peter Nicholson, Margery and Geoffrey Nicoll, Walter Norris (0204), Monica and Aliro Olave (0735), Diana-Rose Orr (0844), Claire Pate, Damien Pignolet (0969),



Colin Piper (0222), Neville Pollard (0856), Ingrid and David Price (0968), Marian and Rodney Purvis (0874), Elle Rasink and Kate Aitken Rasink (0806), Kenneth Reed (0041), Garry Richards (0366), Juliet Richters and Alan Whelan (0899), Shirley Robertson (0416), Heather and Peter Roland (0855), Amanda and George Rosenberg (0943), Lorraine Royds, John Sanders (0972), Mitzi Saunders (0683), Cecilia Segura, Penelope Seidler (0781), Ruth Shane, Ivan Shearer (0954), Sam Sheffer (0101), Sir Nicholas and Lady Shehadie (0798), Nizza Siano (0619), Tina Skidmore (0961), John Small (0915), Jeffrey Smart and Ermes de Zan, Robert Spillane, Hannah and Willi Spiller (0671), Lourdes St George, Ross Steele (0838), Richard Steele, Vince Stefano (0936), Meredith Stokes and David Bremer (0885), Richard Stone and John Thomson (0615), Douglas Sturkey, Jean Louis Stuurup (0075), Margaret and Bill Suthers (0014), Annemarie Swebbs (0476), Charles Terrason (0439), Pamela and Graham Thomas (0957), Peter Thompson (0746), Robert Thurling (0830), Isolde Tornya, David Triggs (0223), Paddy Trumbull, Susan Upton, John Vallentine, Warren and Susan Walsh (0956), Jane and Barry Walters (0655), Terence Watson (0657), Greg Watters (0892), Janet and Hugh Wayland (0010), Ann Weeden (0561), Stephen Whale (0973), Robin and Ron White (0970), Ross Whitelaw (0527), Margaret Whitlam (0325), Deanne Whittleston and Anthony Gregg (0839), Suzanne Williams (0929), Gary Wilson (0834), Alfredo Zaniboni (0946), Sharon Zelei (0937), Anna Ziegler (0443).

Sidney Clopton Lanier - 19th Century Poet, Musician And Wagnerian

TO RICHARD WAGNER. A DREAM OF THE AGE.

November, 1877

I SAW a sky of stars that rolled in grime.
All glory twinkled through some sweat of fight.
From each tall chimney of the roaring Time
That shot his fire far up the sooty night
Mixt fuels — Labor's Right and Labor's Crime —
Sent upward throb on throb of scarlet light,
Till huge hot blushes in the heavens blent
With golden hues of Trade's big firmament.
The workmen drove by night and snored by day:
Young Force was fain to mould all nature new;
Art, raging to reverse each fair old way,
Poor Epileptic! her sad circle drew
All zigzag—puled and laughed when she should pray.
Men's tongues accented life's large Word untrue—
Shouted the trifling prefix, Time, full high,
But slurred th' Eternal Syllable, in a sigh.
Fierce burned that flame of Trade: yet all was well.
Hope dreamed rich music in the rattling mills.

"Ye Foundries, ye shall cast my Church a bell!"
Loud cried the Future from the furthest hills:
"Ye groaning Forces, crack me every shell
Of customs, old constraints and narrow ills:
Thou, lithe Invention, wake and pry and guess,
Till thy deft hand can make us happiness!"

And I beheld high scaffoldings of creeds
Crumbling from round Religion's perfect Fane;
And a vast noise of rights, wrongs, powers, needs
Cries of new Faiths that called, "The Way is plain!" —
Grindings of upper against lower greeds—
Fond sighs for old things, shouts for new—had reign
Below that stream of golden fire that broke,
Mottled with red, above the seas of smoke.

Hark! Gay fanfares from horns of old Romance
Open the clouds of clamor: who be these
That, paired in rich processional, advance
From darkness, o'er the murk-mad factories,
Into yon flaming road, and sink, strange Ministrants!
Sheer down to earth with many minstrelsies!

And motions fine, and mix about the scene,
And fill the Time with forms of foreign mien?

Bright ladies and brave knights of Fatherland;
Sad mariners, no harbor e'er may hold;
A Swan soft floating tow'rds a tragic strand;
Dim ghosts of earth, air, water, fire, steel, gold,
Wind, care, love, lust; a lewd and lurking band
Of Powers—dark Conspiracy, Cunning cold,
Gray Sorcery; magic cloaks and rings and rods;
Valkyries, heroes, Rhinemaidens, giants, gods!

Now marvels fall: each shape of yon wild Past
Dissolves, as cloud will melt away with cloud,
In later kindred type; the modern Last
Explains the antique First; a mighty crowd
Of gods and powers and ancient secrets vast
New-live in steam and crank and lever loud:
The large Norse forces smile to man, as mild
As tender giants to a little child.

Then, in my dream, those accidents of sight
Passed into hearing: life was turned to sound:
I heard the voice of ancient day and night
With later voices swell, so linked and bound
That never any ear could part aright
Those threads of tune that each through other wound:
And yet, O mystery of mysteries!
All seemed to sing one Fugue in many keys.
Grim songs of sinews, metals and blown fires
Roared as from hot clay furnace-throats expressed;
Deep hymns, of knights' and ladies' dear desires,
Dull hearts of smiths and clerks made manifest;
The lissome strings of Greek and Hebrew lyres
Twang'd out the modern Theme; East uttered West;
Pale girls by spinning spools in factories
Sang Elsa's woes and Brünhild's passionate pleas.

.....
O Wagner, westward bring thy heavenly art!
No trifer thou: Siegfried and Wotan be
Names for big ballads of the modern heart.
Thine ears hear deeper than thine eyes can see.
Voice of the monstrous mill, the shouting mart,
Not less of airy cloud and ware and tree,
Thou, thou, if even to thyself unknown,
Hast power to say the Time in terms of tone!



Sidney Lanier (1842-1881), the American poet and musician may be typical of people in the later 19th Century who were deeply influenced by Wagner. Lanier began playing the flute at an early age, and his love of that musical instrument continued throughout his life. He fought in the Civil War, captured by the British and imprisoned

This poem is reproduced from *The Galaxy* (Volume 24, Issue 5, Nov 1877, pages 652-53) that is available online as part of a huge project by the USA Library of Congress and affiliated organisations to create a digital library of American publications. This poem can be accessed at http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?ncpsbib:5:/temp/~ammem_hlQi::@@@mdb=hurstonbib,mcc,ncpm,ncpsbib,vv.

Shortly after the war, Lanier taught school briefly, he was also a clerk and a musician - he was the regular organist at The First Presbyterian Church in Prattville, Alabama. Later he decided to capitalise on his talent for the flute and travelled to the northeast USA in hopes of finding employment as a musician in an orchestra. He taught himself musical notation and quickly rose to the position of first flautist in the the Peabody Orchestra in Baltimore, Maryland . Apparently, he heard Hans Von Bülow conduct the Peabody Orchestra – but not in Wagner’s music.

One can understand at least one aspect of his attraction to Wagner as he wrote a number of works based on mediaeval texts: *The Boy's Froissart* (1878), a retelling of Jean Froissart’s *Froissart's Chronicles*, which tell of adventure, battle and custom in medieval England, France and Spain, *The Boy's King Arthur* (1880), based on Sir Thomas Malory’s compilation of the legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, and *The Boy's Mabinogion* (1881), based on the early Welsh legends of King Arthur. Interestingly, Lanier had a reputation for his interest in the development of the then modern music, and especially in orchestral music. He was familiar with the biographies of Chopin, Beethoven, Schumann, and Wagner and he left behind a translation of Wagner’s “Rheingold”.

According to the biography by Edwin Mims: “In New York he revelled in Theodore Thomas’s orchestra, then just beginning its triumphant career. He writes, August 15, 1870: “Ah, how they have belied Wagner! I heard Theodore Thomas’s orchestra play his overture to ‘Tannhaeuser’. The ‘Music of the Future’ is surely thy music and my music. Each harmony was a chorus of pure aspirations. The sequences flowed along, one after another, as if all the great and noble deeds of time had formed a procession and marched in review before one’s EARS instead of one’s EYES. These ‘great and noble deeds’ were not deeds of war and

statesmanship, but majestic victories of inner struggles of a man. This unbroken march of beautiful-bodied Triumphs irresistibly invites the soul of a man to create other processions like it. I would I might lead a so magnificent file of glories into heaven!”

Another biography of Lanier, quotes from a letter to his wife: “The philosophy of my disappointments is, that there is so much CLEVERNESS standing betwixt me and the public . . . Richard Wagner is sixty years old and over, and one-half of the most cultivated artists of the most cultivated art-land, [as to his] music, still think him an absurdity.”

Lanier’s poem is interesting for its prefiguring of George Bernard Shaw’s famous anti-capitalist interpretation in *The Perfect Wagnerite*, not published until 1898. Lanier signals his socialistic political view in the opening: “Labor’s Right and Labor’s Crime”. Another angle is signalled in Lanier’s words: “I beheld high scaffoldings of creeds/ Crumbling from round Religion’s perfect Fane;/ And a vast noise of rights, wrongs, powers, needs/ Cries of new Faiths that called, ‘The Way is plain!’” that reflect the passionate debates over religion and science that characterised the late 19th Century, focussed around Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution. The whole poem is bathed in a Pre-Raphaelite light, deriving no doubt, from Lanier’s immersion in mediaeval literature and probably influenced by paintings by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt.

Lanier’s final heart-felt plea – “O Wagner, westward bring thy heavenly art!” – gains considerable poignancy in retrospect as Wagner himself was frequently considering moving to America around this time, believing he would receive greater respect, assistance and remuneration and suffer few slings and arrows from the partisan artistic worlds of Europe. Lanier’s final assessment : “Thine ears hear deeper than thine eyes can see./...Thou, thou, if even to thyself unknown,/ Hast power to say the Time in terms of tone!” is also interesting, giving Wagner’s music the last word, so to speak, in defining the age. Lanier’s poem, *The Symphony*, is a similarly passionate call for art to be given its rightful place over mundane activities. It opens with the apostrophe to that key of capitalism: “O Trade! O Trade! would thou wert dead!/The Time needs heart -- ‘tis tired of head:/ We’re all for love,” the violins said”. Lanier concludes the poem with a Wagnerian proposition: “Music is Love in search of a word.” You can read the full text of *The Symphony* at the Gutenberg site for electronic books - http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page.

[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 2013.

February 2009

Basel
 Budapest
 Chemnitz
 Chicago

 Dresden
 Essen
 London

 Los Angeles
 Milan

 Mulhouse
 Oslo
 Stockholm
 St Petersburg
 Strasbourg
 Stuttgart
 Tallinn
 Weimar

Holländer – February 2, 22, 24.
Die Meistersinger – Feb 1, 8, 15.
Tristan und Isolde – February 28.
Tristan und Isolde – February 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28.
Tristan und Isolde – February 22, 25.
Das Rheingold – February 5.
 The Royal Opera
Holländer – February 23, 26.
Das Rheingold – February 21, 25.
Tristan und Isolde – February 5, 8, 12, 17, 21, 25.
Siegfried – February 27.
Die Walküre – February 7, 10, 16, 19, 22.
Ring – February 24, March 3, 12, 21.
Lohengrin – February 9.
Siegfried – February 2, 7, 10, 13.
Holländer – February 19.
Tristan und Isolde – February 28.
Götterdämmerung – February 22.

March 2009

Barcelona
 Berlin

 Staatsoper

 Budapest
 Chemnitz
 Darmstadt
 Detmold
 Dresden
 Duisburg
 Hamburg

 Leipzig
 London

 Los Angeles
 Madrid

 Mulhouse
 New York

 Stockholm
 St Petersburg
 Stuttgart

 Tallinn
 Tokyo
 Wiesbaden
 Wuppertal
 Zurich

Die Meistersinger – March 17, 23, 29.
 Deutsche Oper
Holländer – March 19, 22.

Parsifal – March 6, 9.
Tannhäuser – March 18, 21.
Tristan und Isolde – March 21.
Die Meistersinger – March 22.
Siegfried – March 28.
Tristan und Isolde – March 1.
Parsifal – March 29.
Das Rheingold – March 1, 12, 15.
Die Walküre – March 8, 22.
Tristan und Isolde – March 1, 8, 21.
 The Royal Opera
Holländer – March 1, 4, 7, 10.
Das Rheingold – March 1, 5, 8, 11, 15.
Tannhäuser – March 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29.
Siegfried – March 1.
 The Met
The Ring – March 28, April 11, 18, 25.
Das Rheingold – March 25.
 Opera Orchestra of New York
Rienzi – March 19.
Ring – February 24, March 3, 12, 21.
Parsifal – March 3.
Holländer – March 4, 6, 13.
Lohengrin – March 29.
Tristan und Isolde – March 7.
Das Rheingold – March 7, 10, 13, 15, 18.
Tristan und Isolde – March 21.
Tristan und Isolde – March 8, 14.
Siegfried – March 8.
Götterdämmerung – March 15.
The Ring – March 20, 22, 25, 29.

April 2009

Altenburg
 Atlanta
 Barcelona
 Bari

Lohengrin – April 13.
Holländer – April 25, 28.
Die Meistersinger – April 3, 8, 14, 18.
Die Walküre – [no actual dates].

Berlin

 Bordeaux
 Bremen
 Budapest

 Chemnitz

 Detmold
 Dresden

 Duisburg
 Düsseldorf
 Essen
 Florence
 Hamburg
 Leipzig

 London

 Los Angeles
 Madrid
 Munich
 New York

 Riga

 Salzburg

 Stockholm
 Stuttgart
 Tokyo
 Vienna

 Weimar
 Wuppertal
 Zurich

Staatsoper
Lohengrin – April 4, 8, 12.
Tannhäuser – April 30.
Rienzi – April 4, 7, 18.
Tannhäuser – April 2, 12.
Parsifal – April 5, 10, 13.
Holländer – April 10.
Tristan und Isolde – April 11.
Siegfried – April 3, 26.
Parsifal – April 10, 13.
Holländer – April 12, 15, 17.
Parsifal – April 12, 26.
Holländer – April 10, 25.
Das Rheingold – April 13.
Götterdämmerung – April 29.
Die Walküre – April 5.
Parsifal – April 4, 10, 12.
Holländer – April 16, 24.
 The Royal Opera
Lohengrin – April 27.
Walküre – April 4, 8, 12, 16, 19, 22, 25.
Tannhäuser – April 2.
Parsifal – April 9, 12.
 The Met
The Ring – March 28, April 11, 18, 25; 27, 28, 30, May 2.
Das Rheingold – April 23.
Die Walküre – April 6.
Götterdämmerung – April 24 [no other dates].
 Easter Festival
Siegfried – April 4, 13.
The Ring – April 6, 9, 13, 15.
Lohengrin – April 2, 8, 13, 19, 25.
Die Walküre – April 3, 6, 9, 12, 15.
 Staatsoper
Parsifal – April 9, 11, 15.
The Ring – April 8, 9, 11, 13.
Tristan und Isolde – April 13.
The Ring – April 1, 3, 5, 8.

May 2009

Atlanta
 Bergen
 Berlin

 Bordeaux
 Bremen
 Chemnitz
 Copenhagen
 Detmold
 Düsseldorf
 Essen

 Florence
 Frankfurt
 Hamburg
 Indianapolis
 Leipzig

 London

 Munich
 New York

Holländer – May 1, 3.
Götterdämmerung – May 21.
 Deutsche Oper
Tannhäuser – May 10, 28, 31.
Tannhäuser – May 4, 8, 10, 12, 16.
Rienzi – May 2.
Holländer – May 17.
Tristan und Isolde – May 10, 13, 16, 21.
Die Walküre – May 6.
Holländer – May 3.
Das Rheingold – May 3, 17.
Die Walküre – May 31.
Götterdämmerung – May 3, 6, 9.
Lohengrin – May 3, 7, 14, 17, 21, 24.
Die Meistersinger – May 21.
Das Rheingold – May 15, 17. [in concert]
Tristan und Isolde – May 3.
Holländer – May 31.
 The Royal Opera
Lohengrin – May 3, 5, 8, 11, 14, 16.
Holländer – May 14, 17, 21.
 The Met
The Ring – April 27, 28, 30, May 2; 4, 5, 7, 9.



Seville
Stuttgart
Tallinn
Valencia
Vienna

Washington,DC
Wels, Austria

Wuppertal
Würzburg

June 2009
Berlin
Chemnitz
Copenhagen
Detmold
Dresden
Düsseldorf
Essen
Freiburg
Frankfurt
Hamburg
Tallinn
Valencia

Vienna

Wuppertal
Würzburg
Zurich

July
Aix-en-Provence

Bayreuth

Erl
Essen
Munich
Stuttgart
Würzburg
Zurich

August 2009
Bayreuth

Seattle

September
Enschede
Lübeck
Speyer

Season 2009/10
Barcelona
Freiburg

October 2009
Enschede
Freiburg
Hamburg

November 2009
Vienna

January 2010
Nice

Tristan und Isolde – May 22, 25, 28, 31.
Lohengrin – May 3.
Tristan und Isolde – May 2, 9.
Götterdämmerung – May 30.
Staatsoper
Das Rheingold – May 2.
Ring - May 5, 6, 8, 10; 16, 17, 19, 21.
Siegfried – May 2, 5, 9, 14, 17.
Lohengrin – May 24, 30.
Parsifal – May 26, 28.
Tristan und Isolde – May 24.
Tannhäuser – May 2, 7, 10, 19, 24, 29.

Deutsche Oper
Tristan und Isolde – June 10, 14, 21.
Holländer – June 3.
Tristan und Isolde – June 3, 7, 10, 14.
Siegfried – June 7, 13.
Holländer – June 2, 5, 7.
Holländer – June 13.
Die Walküre – June 11, 14, 20, 28.
Siegfried – June 14, 21, 25, 27.
Lohengrin – June 1, 6.
Die Meistersinger – June 1.
Tristan und Isolde – June 13.
Götterdämmerung – June 2.
Ring – June 15, 16, 18, 21; 22, 24, 27, 30.
Staatsoper
The Ring – June 6, 7, 9, 11
Tristan und Isolde – June 1.
Tannhäuser – June 5, 24.
The Ring – June 24, 27, July 1, 5.

Götterdämmerung – July 3, 6, 9, 12.
Tristan und Isolde – July 25.
Die Meistersinger – July 26.
The Ring – July 27, 28, 30, August 1.
Die Meistersinger – July 11, 17, 26.
Die Walküre – July 4.
Lohengrin – July 5, 8, 12, 15, 19.
Tristan und Isolde – July 22, 26, 29.
Tannhäuser – July 3, 19.
The Ring – June 24, 27, July 1, 5.

Tristan und Isolde – Aug 4, 13, 17, 28.
Meistersinger – August 3, 6, 14, 18, 26.
The Ring – July 27, 28, 30, August 1; 7, 8, 10, 12; 20, 21, 23, 25.
Parsifal - August 2, 5, 15, 19, 27.
The Ring – August 9, 10, 12, 14; 17, 18, 20, 22; 25, 26, 28, 30.

Das Rheingold – September 26, 29.
Siegfried – September [no actual dates].
The Ring – [no actual dates].

Tristan und Isolde – [no actual dates].
The Ring – [no actual dates].

Das Rheingold – October 2, 6, 9, 11.
Götterdämmerung – [no actual dates].
Siegfried – October 18 [no other dates].

The Ring - 2 cycles [no actual dates].

Parsifal – January 15, 17.

February 2010
Berlin Deutsche Oper
Die Meistersinger – February 5, 13, 21.
Siegfried – February 11, 14, 17, 20, 23.

March 2010
Oslo
Tannhäuser – March 6 – April 10 [no other dates].
Salzburg Easter Festival
Götterdämmerung – March 27.
The Ring – 1 cycle – [no actual dates].

April 2010
Berlin Staatsoper Fesstage
Siegfried – [no actual dates].
Götterdämmerung – [no actual dates].
Deutsche Oper
Siegfried – April 23, 30.
Oslo
Tannhäuser – March 6 – April 10 [no other dates].
Salzburg Easter Festival
Götterdämmerung - April 5.

May-June 2010
Los Angeles
The Ring – May 29, 30, June 3, 6; 8, 10, 13, 16; 18, 20, 23, 26, .

Season 2010/11
Amsterdam
Berlin
Hamburg
Milan
New York
The Ring – New production begins.
Staatsoper
The Ring – [no actual dates].
The Ring – 2 cycles [no actual dates].
The Ring – [no actual dates].
The Met
The Ring – New production begins.

September 2010
Enschede
Lübeck
Die Walküre – [no actual dates].
Götterdämmerung – September [no actual dates].

October 2010
Enschede
Hamburg
Die Walküre – [no actual dates].
Götterdämmerung – October 17 [no other dates].

2011
Baden-Baden
Barcelona
The Ring – [no actual dates].
Parsifal – [no actual dates].

June 2011
Lübeck
The Ring – June [no actual dates].

Season 2011/12
New York
The Met
The Ring – 3 cycles [no actual dates].

September 2011
Enschede
Siegfried – [no actual dates].

October 2011
Enschede
Siegfried – [no actual dates].

September 2012
Enschede
Götterdämmerung – [no actual dates].

October 2012
Enschede
Götterdämmerung – [no actual dates].

2013
Amsterdam
Baden-Baden
The Ring – [no actual dates].
The Ring – [no actual dates].

August 2013
Seattle
The Ring – 3 cycles [no actual dates].

September 2013
Enschede
The Ring – [no actual dates].

October 2013
Enschede
The Ring – [no actual dates].



Annual Membership Renewal for 2009

1. Please provide your name, address and membership number.			
Name		
Address	Street		
	City State P'Code		
Membership Number		
2. Please renew my/our membership from 1 January to 31 December 2009 on the following basis (<i>please tick one</i>)			
<input type="checkbox"/>	Single member \$50 (single pensioner member \$30)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shared members \$75 (shared pensioner members \$50)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Students \$20 (<i>include a copy of your current ID Card</i>)	\$	
3. I/We wish to donate the following amount to the Society. (<i>Donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible, and receipts will be issued. All donations are acknowledged in our Newsletter*.</i>)		\$	
4. Please post this form to The Treasurer The Wagner Society in NSW Inc GPO Box 4574 Sydney NSW 2001		\$ Total Sent	
5. Please make your payment by posting your cheque or money order made payable to The Wagner Society along with this form to the address above, or <i>Use your bank's internet banking facilities to send your payment electronically to:</i> Westpac Banking Corporation, Paddington NSW Branch Account Name: The Wagner Society BSB: 032040 Account Number: 911323			
Please Tick One:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cheque enclosed	<input type="checkbox"/>
			Electronic payment made
6. Signatures			
 Signature Signature	
...../...../2009 Date renewed Name in BLOCK LETTERS Name in BLOCK LETTERS	
If possible, would people who make electronic payments send an email with details (kind of membership, amount of donation, etc) to the Society's email address, infoa@wagner-nsw.gov.au , to ensure smooth processing of your applications.			



ADDRESS

Please note our permanent address for all correspondence

The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc

GPO Box 4574 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Telephone: 9357 7631 (Roger Cruickshank, President)

Website: <http://www.wagner-nsw.org.au>

Website enquiries: webmaster@wagner-nsw.org.au

(most website addresses used in this Newsletter will be on the Wagner Society's website in the relevant article)

Address for Sunday Functions

Goethe Institut

90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)