



WAGNER
SOCIETY
NSW

CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF RICHARD WAGNER

WAGNER QUARTERLY

ISSUE NO 21

148

MARCH 2018

A reminder for members who have yet to renew their membership of the Wagner Society NSW for 2018. Membership brings many benefits such as discounts at all our functions, access to tickets for Bayreuth, special offers to many musical performances and the informative Quarterly Newsletter. Please renew your membership as soon as possible if you haven't already done so. You can use Paypal, EFT or cheque - details available on the Society's website: www.wagner.org.au/about/membership.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2018 has started very well for the Wagner Society in NSW. Our first meeting in January was held with London-based Sydney tenor Sam Sakker, accompanied by pianist Tahu Matheson, Director of Music at Opera Australia. There were 75 attendees, over 50 of them members. Visitors included a number of Sam's family, delighted to hear him singing in Australia.

Our February meeting featured an interview with the great British bass Sir John Tomlinson. At his request I interviewed him about his experience of Wagner, which has been extensive. It was a delight to me to do this as he answered freely, breaking into song to illustrate points. His voice was still strong, though he has stopped singing Wagnerian roles. But what a career he has had! 16 years at the Bayreuth Festival singing Wotan and Wanderer, participation in the Barenboim/Kupfer presentation of the 10 major Wagner operas at the Staatsoper Berlin, when he also performed Gurnemanz, playing Wotan and Wanderer in the second season of Keith Warner's Ring at Covent Garden as well as many other major roles. He had been surprised when Daniel Barenboim invited him to play Wotan in Bayreuth, since it is a bass-baritone role, but described how he enjoyed working in the higher range of his voice. He was eloquent in describing his experience as a singer and demonstrated with musical examples, leaving us wondering why he had decided to cease singing Wagner. 95 members and friends delighted in his presentation and he generously welcomed members who had brought along programs for signing or cameras for photographs. There were also excellent questions from members and visitors. Full reports of both these meetings are in this issue of the Quarterly.

At times we must adjust our meetings and this year we have cancelled our July meeting for one in June in order to hear Celeste Haworth, a young Sydney singer has recently returned home after singing for several years in Europe.

With such strong attendance numbers at meetings, there has been increased pressure on committee members in providing afternoon tea for attendees. We would appreciate members offering to assist in this. There are only 10 members of the committee. Many members have provided delicious contributions for meetings and these are greatly appreciated. (Who did bring the delicious lime syrup cake in January?) We would also welcome members volunteering for an occasional meeting to ensure that tea and coffee is available for members on arrival or to assist in getting plates of food out to the tables. If you would like to help in any way, Barbara de Rome would be delighted to hear from you.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT Continued page 4

Patron: Ms Simone Young AM
Honorary Life Members: Mr Richard King
Prof Michael Ewans
Mr Horst Hoffman
Mr John Wegner AO
Mr Roger Cruickshank
Dr Terence Watson



Tahu Matheson and Sam Sakker at our talk and recital on 21 January



Sam Sakkar



Sam Sakker as Alfredo in *La Traviata* at ROH Covent Garden 2016

Thanks to her strong stage presence and powerful vocal performance, Celeste Haworth adds greatly to the show as Marie's sister Charlotte

(Dank starker Bühnenpräsenz und vokaler Durchschlagskraft wertete Celeste Haworth, Maries Schwester Charlotte auf, die Schicksalswendungen, mit denen ihre Familie konfrontiert wird, besser verarbeitet als Marie)

- L.E Gerth (Das Opernglas)

A photograph of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a red dress with lace sleeves, smiling. She is standing in front of a dark background. In the background, there is a smaller, faded image of her in a dark dress on a stage.

Coming attraction: Celeste Haworth – our guest talker and recitalist on 17 June

FOR YOUR DIARY

2018

Cycle Two: 18–25 June Cycle Three 25 June - 2 July	The Ring Cycle in San Francisco with Heath Lees . More information on Hayllar website: www.hayllarmusictours.com	San Francisco Opera House
21 June – 02 July	A Wagner Voyage: The Ring Cycle in Kiel and Deborah Humble in recital in Hamburg. Info on The Travelling Tenor website: www.thetravellingtenor.com	
Saturday 4 August	The State Opera of South Australia - present a concert performance of Act III of Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg . Conductor – Nicholas Braithwaite . Kate Ladner as Eva, Bradley Daley as Walther, Shane Lawrence as Hans Sachs and acclaimed British Wagner specialist Andrew Shore as Beckmesser.	Adelaide Festival Theatre
Thursday 16 & Sunday 19 August	WASO will bring Stuart Skelton and Eva-Marie Westbroek to Perth for concert performances of Tristan and Isolde . Tickets and details at http://tickets.waso.com.au/single/PSDetail.aspx?psn=10020	Perth Concert Hall
25 August	Die Walküre Act 1 and Siegfried Idyll Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Sir Andrew Davis conductor; Eva-Maria Westbroek soprano (Sieglinde); Frank van Aken tenor (Siegmund); Daniel Sumegi bass (Hunding)	Hamer Hall, Melbourne
13-22 November	Opera Australia's Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg . A co-production with Covent Garden, the cast will include Melbourne Ring veterans James Johnson as Sachs, Stefan Vinke as Walter, Warwick Fyfe as Beckmesser, with Natalie Aroyan debuting as Eva. Details: https://opera.org.au/whatson/events/die-meistersinger-von-nurnberg-melbourne	Hamer Hall, Melbourne

COMING EVENTS 2018 - SUNDAY STARTING TIMES MAY VARY

PLEASE CHECK THE SCHEDULE ONLINE FOR DETAILS

DATE	Some events may be subject to change and further detail in the next newsletter	LOCATION
25 March	12.30pm: DVD <i>Das Liebesverbot Act 2</i> 2.00pm: Wagner on a shoestring talk by Suzanne Chaundy	Goethe Institut
22 April	2.00pm: Annual General Meeting followed at 2.30pm by Concert of young singers supported by the Wagner Society	Goethe Institut
20 May	12.30pm: DVD: <i>Wagner's Jews</i> - Documentary by Hilan Warshaw , 2013. 2.00pm: TALK: <i>Wagner and Gluck</i> : Presented by Professor Michael Ewans . To be followed at 4.00pm by Wagner's Birthday champagne celebration	Goethe Institut
17 June	12.30pm: DVD: <i>The Wagner Family</i> 2010 film by acclaimed director Tony Palmer. 2.00pm: TALK and recital : Australian Mezzo-Soprano Celeste Haworth has music degrees from Vienna and Sydney and was a principal artist at the State Opera in Wiesbaden	Goethe Institut
5 August	1.00 – 5.00pm: SEMINAR: <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> - Dr Antony Ernst is a frequent guest lecturer on opera and is a music tour leader in Australia and overseas. NO DVD	Willoughby Uniting Church, 10 Clanwilliam St. Willoughby
30 September	12.30pm: DVD: <i>Wagner – a Genius in Exile</i> 2014 film by Andy Sommer 2.00pm: Brickbats and Bouquets - Bayreuth 2018 Presented by members who received tickets from the Wagner Society and attended the Bayreuth Festival	Goethe Institut
21 October	1.00 – 5.00pm: SEMINAR: <i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i> - Dr David Larkin , lecturer at the Sydney Conservatorium, presents a seminar as background to the new Opera Australia Melbourne production on 13, 17, 19, 22 November. NO DVD	Goethe Institut
25 November	2.00pm: Concert by outstanding young artists supported by the Wagner Society, followed by Christmas Party	St. Columba Uniting Church, 53A Ocean St, cnr Forth St Woollahra

Advice about changes to the Program will be emailed to people who have given their email addresses to the Society's Webmaster; the latest updates will also be available on the Society's webpage: www.wagner.org.au.

Admission to each event will be \$25 a Member, and \$30 each non-Member, \$10 (Full-time students) Seminar/Concert \$40 (m), \$45 (n-m), \$20 (fts).

Goethe-Institut address 90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)

One key area where assistance would also be welcome is for a member or a group to undertake the editing of the Quarterly, following the retirement of our long-time and greatly valued editor Terence Watson. Michael Day has kindly offered to produce the first two journals for 2018. He would be pleased to hear from anyone with skills or interest in editing or layout. In the short term we would like to hear from members prepared to provide news or reviews particularly with so many members still attending Wagner performances around the world.

I mentioned in the last Quarterly that Jenny Edwards, with the assistance of Florian Hammerbacher, has successfully improved our home page. It is a lively site with information on the Society and its events. Jenny is still seeking information on the history and development of the Society, such as photographs and newsletters from early meetings. The home page could also include reports by members on Wagner performances around the world, or reviews of Wagner on disc or DVD – all would be gratefully received.

We have finalised plans for the Wagner Society trip to Perth in August to hear Stuart Skelton and Eva-Marie Westbroek in the WASO *Tristan and Isolde*, conducted by Asher Fisch. Seventeen members have bought tickets through the Wagner Society, while another 6 are attending with relatives or friends. Members will attend on either 16 or 19 August – or possibly both! All of these have donated to a fund to support Stuart's flight and this has been topped up by the Wagner Society to \$8000 to assist WASO to bring him from Europe.

We have also finalized the provision of tickets for the Bayreuth Festival to 6 members of the Society. The number of applications was not as high as in other years, because of there not being performances of The Ring, so we did not have a ballot. All applicants have been able to get the tickets they requested. With tickets provided by the Friends of Bayreuth and the Verband of Wagner Societies, we were able to ensure that all tickets were in the stalls, with attendees getting at least one set of A1 tickets.

So 2018 has started very successfully and the events arranged for the rest of the year should be excellent, particularly the half-day seminars in August (Antony Ernst on *Tristan und Isolde*) and in October (David Larkin on *Die Meistersinger von Nurnberg*). And what a climax to the year will be the OA performances in Melbourne!

DONATIONS RECEIVED SINCE DECEMBER 2017

M F Baumgartner, Mailis Wakeham, Barbara & Nick Dorsch, John Studdert, Barbara & Ian Brady, John Hughes, Rae & Russ Cottle, Cameron Dyer & Richard Mason, Warren & Susan Walsh, Carol Bailey, Anna-Lisa Klettenberg

Our thanks for the generous donations to help the Society's objectives.

LETTER FROM THE ACTING EDITOR

Dear members,

I hope you enjoy my first attempt at editing the Quarterly. Terence and our excellent printer BEE Printmail have set very high standards for me to live up to. I'm very grateful to this issue's contributors and I hope other members can support me by writing reviews or articles for future issues. This month you will find the usual features – reviews, reports on recent meeting, diary of coming events, etc, plus detailed background material about forthcoming speakers and DVDs. There is a particular focus on the personal life of Wagner and his family and their anti-Semitism. I have done this inspired by Barrie Kosky's provocative production of *Die Meistersinger* at Bayreuth last year. I acknowledge with thanks the permission received from various international publications to republish interesting articles.

The September issue will have more about this wonderful opera as preparation for the highly anticipated Melbourne/ROH production in November. In the June issue I will concentrate on musical themes and especially *Tristan und Isolde* as background for the Perth production in August.

Mike Day

The great composer does not set to work because he is inspired, but becomes inspired because he is working. Beethoven, Wagner, Bach and Mozart settled down day after day to the job in hand with as much regularity as an accountant settles down each day to his figures. They didn't waste time waiting for inspiration.

Ernest Newman

NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS SINCE DECEMBER 2017

James and Sara Carlisle (1201); Dianne and Terry Finnegan (1202); Maggie Brown (1203); John Fawcett (1204), Jennifer Arnold (1205), Ervin and Judy Katz (1206), Georgina Carnegie and Karin Puels (1207), Trish Richardson and Andy Lloyd-James (1208), Lis Bergmann (1209), Jill Sykes and Jacqui Sykes (1210), Paul Thom and Cassandra Parkinson (1211)

DELIGHTFUL MUSICAL EVENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

21 JANUARY MEETING SAM SAKKER RISING YOUNG SYDNEY WAGNER SINGER

In January in an exciting impromptu event, we were lucky enough to have rising young tenor, **Sam Sakker**, come and talk about his life singing on the opera stages of the world.

In town for rehearsals for Brett Dean's *Hamlet* in Adelaide, I hadn't heard Sam since he sang in a pop up *Messiah* performance in Lindfield, which I helped to organise some years ago.

His extended family joined him, since many of them also hadn't heard him sing recently. He told us about attending Sydney Grammar and indeed, one of his teachers was in the audience. Sam had attended the Queensland Conservatorium and had sung in Opera Queensland and Opera Australia choruses and toured as Don Ottavio to regional Australia. But a freelance career on that level wasn't his idea of life!

Sam went to Berlin on a holiday and reached the finals of the auditions for the Staatsoper, but headed back to Melbourne to study and complete a Commerce degree. Success finally came to Sam when he gained a place in the prestigious **Covent Garden, Royal Opera House Jette Parker Young Artist Program** (as had several of his Australian colleagues).

The young tenor spent several years in the program singing on the stage of Covent Garden and appearing before Royalty. Now he is singing principal roles around the world.

Sam's voice featured in the duet he played from the documentary about *Sardanapalo*, an unknown Franz Liszt opera recently found in Weimar. Liszt had spent nearly seven years composing this opera based on Lord Byron's 1821 tragedy. The great composer abandoned his incomplete draft in 1852 shortly after conducting Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* in Weimar. Act 1 of the opera has been "rebuilt" by Cambridge University academic. Dr. David Trippett.

Sam interspersed his chat with a selection of three **Tchaikovsky Songs**, Opus 6, No.1 (*Do not believe, My friend*), No. 5 (*Why*) after Heine, and No. 6 (*None but the lonely heart*) after Goethe. He also gave us a Wagner treat, Erik's *Willst jenes Tag's du nicht* from *Der Fliegende Holländer*, and *Der Trunkene im Frühling* (*The Drunkard in Spring*) from Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*.

Sam was accompanied by accomplished pianist, **Tahu Matheson**, Head of Music at Opera Australia, who had just the previous weekend conducted, at very short notice, the iconic Sydney event, **Opera in the Domain** to an audience of thousands.

It was extremely exciting to hear Sam open up about his life in such an amusing way and we wish him the greatest success in his future career.

Leona Geeves

11 FEBRUARY MEETING

A SPECIAL AFTERNOON WITH SIR JOHN TOMLINSON

The first contact with our honoured guest was the sound of a deep sonorous voice followed by a glimpse of white hair, braces and red pants. This was Hans Sachs or perhaps der Wanderer out for coffee and cake on a hot Sunday afternoon. First impressions of John Tomlinson were of a man very comfortable with himself and the world, someone who was confident and social, in command, a charismatic personality that didn't take himself too seriously but was able to pull off sartorial exuberance. And what followed once he took the stage at the Goethe Institute with our President Coleen Chesterman didn't disappoint.

So on a hot and humid Sunday afternoon in February we were having an audience with Sir John Tomlinson. It was a very well attended event with one of the biggest turn outs for quite a while – we had to pull out extra chairs to get everyone seated. This was not surprising given the pulling power of the main event, a Wagnerian star who is both very popular and renowned for his singing-acting. The word legend is bandied about too freely these days but to attach it to someone like this great British bass baritone is both banal and an understatement. It is fair to say that most of those gathered had seen and heard this great artist in one of the many roles he has created in a career that is in its 5th decade and counting.

Our President gently guided or prompted John Tomlinson to tell the story of his career from the very beginning. This he did with aplomb in an assured performance that betrayed the man's facility with story-telling. And let's mention the speaking voice which is as deep and compelling as his singing voice.

CONTINUED OVER PAGE >

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS:

DELIGHTFUL MUSICAL EVENTS AND DISCUSSIONS	P.5
THE CHALLENGES OF <i>TRISTAN UND ISOLDE</i> IN MELBOURNE – Terence Watson	P.7
WAGNER'S JEWS	P.9
WAGNER AND GLUCK	P.14
WAGNER SOCIETY MEMBERS AT 31 DECEMBER 2017	P.22

Born in the north of England Sir John studied engineering in the early 1960s before embarking on a stage career. It was apt that he related - as an aside – a thought that came to him whilst looking out to the harbour, his engineering training and mind still turning to issues such as trying to calculate the degree to which the steel of the Sydney Harbour Bridge would expand in the heat of February. An interesting insight into Sir John who would forensically calculate and engineer the personality and circumstance of the character he is portraying. No doubt that engineering training stood him in good stead for the work required to undertake the “Personenregie” of a Wotan or Hagen or Hans Sachs in the major houses of Germany. He did speak of the directors that guided his roles but alas not in enough detail for my satisfaction (the tyranny of time and so much to get through stepping in).

This was an opportunity to see and hear close up a singer-actor that for me has set the standard to which I judge Wagnerian performances. John Tomlinson was my first live Wotan in the great Harry Kupfer production at Bayreuth (1988-1992). He sang all the Wotans from the youngish chaotic go getter in “*Das Rheingold*”, the troubled (mis) manager in “*Die Walkure*” and the ageing has-been in “*Siegfried*”. It was interesting to hear Sir John speak of his vision of the “Ring” with Society President Coleen Chesterman, which clearly implied that Wotan has to be performed by the same singer/actor in order to successfully develop and present the huge emotional arc of the role. Sir John’s Wotan is a tragic figure with human flaws (not godlike at all). From the time he sacrifices one of his eyes to wrest a branch from the World Ash Tree he sets in motion an inevitable catastrophe that will engulf the gods and pass the management baton to humans. Sir John very carefully and engagingly described how Wotan carves the laws and contracts that give the world structure and organisation into the spear fashioned from the World Ash Tree. The “Ring” shows a figure that is not in control despite moments of delusion. No doubt that having sung in many “Ring” productions Sir John would have come to a personal vision of the tetralogy or at least formulated one as a part of his scientific/mathematic engineering methodology. I will never forget the entry of a defeated resigned Wotan after the death of Siegfried (“*Götterdämmerung*”, Bayreuth, 1992), shoulders hunched, coming to pay his respect to the fallen “hero” and throwing

his broken spear into what would become the funeral pyre. A moment that was heartbreaking, totally invented by Harry Kupfer but so totally of the “Ring”. Was it John Tomlinson or a stand in that was responsible for that wonderful bit of acting? I didn’t ask.

Assisted by short but evocatively sung excerpts from the various music dramas you could see (and hear) why he was (and is in our memories) one of the truly great interpreters of the role of Wotan. These days aged 70 years up he feels that he no longer has the stamina and strength required to prosecute such massive roles. Nevertheless singing the opening words of the Tsar from Mussorgsky’s “*Boris Godunov*” there seem to be no lack of energy, commitment, understanding and bravura.

The lasting impression for me is of an actor-singer that is charming, charismatic and highly intelligent. Not just a bass-baritone who has carefully managed his instrument but someone who has an opinion on what he is singing based on research as well as intuition particularly regarding the role he is portraying as well as contributing to the narrative of the production he is in. As a director manqué I could imagine that a cast with John Tomlinson in it would make life slightly more easy/interesting/challenging but at the end of the day make whatever contribution I may have made to a production look and sound even better. I look forward to seeing and hearing him in Barry Kosky’s production of Dmitri Shostakovich’s “*The Nose*”. Thank you to those who managed to obtain the presence of one of the truly great Wagnerian interpreters for a Sunday afternoon.

Esteban Insausti (0433)

All our artists were presented as usual with **Brangayne wines**, kindly supplied by Brangayne Wines of Orange

22 APRIL 2.00pm
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Followed at 2.30pm by a Concert of young singers supported by the Wagner Society

REMINDER

On 25 March at 2.00pm Suzanne Chaundy the director of the Melbourne production of Tristan and Isolde will talk to us about Wagner on a Shoestring. Suzanne’s 30 year international career has included directing opera, text based theatre and outdoor festivals. Suzanne previously directed Melbourne Opera’s Tannhäuser (2016) and Lohengrin (2017). This talk follows the 12.30 DVD showing of Act 2 of *Das Liebesverbot*, Wagner’s comic opera (1836), based on Shakespeare’s Measure for Measure. Recording from Teatro Real, Madrid. Conducted by Ivor Bolton. Directed by Kasper Holten. 2017



Neal Cooper and Lee Abrahmsen as Tristan and Isolde

REVIEW: THE CHALLENGES OF *TRISTAN UND ISOLDE* IN MELBOURNE - 3, 5, 7, 10 FEBRUARY 2017 by Terence Watson

Conductor: Anthony Negus; Melbourne Opera Orchestra.

Cast: Tristan: Neal Cooper; Isolde: Lee Abrahmsen; Brangäne: Sarah Sweeting; King Marke: Steven Gallop; Kurnewal: Michael Lampard; Michael Dimovski: Shepherd; Henry Choo: Sailor.

Production: Director: Suzanne Chaundy; Set Designer: Greg Carroll; Video projections: Yandell Walton and Keith Deverell.

I was booked to attend the opening night of Wagner's music-drama with my university friend Rod Niemack and we were at dinner in Acland Street when a woman at the next table received a text message and exclaimed: "Oh no, the opera's cancelled!" I then got the same message. Suddenly, the anticipation of months evaporated. After we finished eating, we went to the Palais Theatre's box office, exchanged the tickets for the Wednesday performance, hoping by then the indisposed soprano would be well again. I went home on Sunday after a very enjoyable weekend. I checked with the Palais' box office on Monday night and was reassured that Ms Abrahmsen was indeed going to sing. Then I booked my flight to and from Melbourne. That Wednesday turned out to be very hot, about 36 degrees, and the Palais' airconditioning struggled to make any difference. I tried to pretend it was Bayreuth in summer. The sweltering temperature rather overdid the sultry atmosphere intrinsic the music-drama.

I enjoyed the performance overall. The two stars were very exciting. Lee Abrahmsen was particularly impressive for someone who has not sung the role before, who was recovering from illness and delivered an almost perfect vocal performance and to act well into the bargain! She was Elisabeth in Melbourne Opera's *Tannhäuser* two years ago. In my view, she was better than Petra Lange as Isolde in last year's *Tristan und Isolde* in Bayreuth—much more secure and rounded in the top of her range, but she probably needs a little more heft in the lowest part of the register, but that should come with age and experience. The tenor Neal Cooper, of whom I had heard nothing, matched her note for note and probably acted a little better since he seems to have understudied and sung the role in quite a few places. He had no problems that I could detect with that dreadful extended monologue in Act 3! He seemed to be a quite slightly built person, so where did the power come from, I wondered! (The same question could be asked of Ms Abrahmsen.) I gather the conductor intends to take Abrahmsen to Europe to introduce her to various opera houses in which he has worked: fingers crossed for her career!

Sarah Sweeting as Brangäne continued her impressive series of Wagnerian roles with Melbourne Opera: Venus in their 2016 *Tannhäuser*; Ortrud in their 2017 *Lohengrin*. She has a warm, secure mezzo voice, is a fine actress as well, and brought a winsome concern for Isolde's welfare to her role. Steven Gallop as King Marke was suitably commanding,

with a solid and flexible bass that well conveyed the character's grief at the loss of a friend, his sense of betrayal at the apparent cuckolding, and distress about how he is to continue his life. Kurnewal always arouses sympathy in the audience, and Michael Lampard built on this empathy to give energetic and committed support to his friend and lord, while singing with a warm, resonant tenor voice. Michael Dimovski brought a youthful vulnerability and sweet tenor voice to the Shepherd, and Henry Choo sang affectingly as the lovelorn and homesick Sailor.

The sets were not as exciting as the ones for *Tannhäuser*, but better than the ones for *Lohengrin* (reviewed by me in previous issues of *The Wagner Quarterly*). The video back projection for Act 1 was of the sea as seen over the stern, and the leaden sea heaved more or less in time with the surge of the music. I wanted the surge to freeze for a while when the potion took effect, and perhaps to unfreeze again as the act ends and reality intrudes, but that did not happen.

The Act 2 set was reminiscent of the grotto from the Bacchanal and scene 2 of Act 1 of the company's *Tannhäuser* production, but this time instead of projections of women's heads turning back and forth, we had streams of water that turned into cascades as the climax arrived, then died down during Marke's lament. Some of the reviewers have claimed that there was little or "no chemistry" between the two leads. However, I wonder how many productions of the music-drama the reviewers have seen; so many other productions have the singers hardly even sharing the stage together. In this production, Tristan and Isolde snogged a lot, embraced on the convenient couch in the grotto, and even looked as if they were about to do "it." In a welcome change to the usual take on the love duet, they sang most of it in an embrace, which for me constitutes far more "chemistry" than is usually evident in productions of the work.

The Act 3 video backdrop was disappointing for me—an endless loop of vague clouds of "smoke" or "mist" perhaps over the ocean or a beach, in dull greys, oranges and whites. It appeared to me rather like Monet's paintings of London in a pea-souper at sunset. I gather from the program that the projections were intended to suggest "an exposed liminal space beneath a scorching sun (the setting described as 'Tristan's birthplace...')." Not having experienced a "liminal space," to my knowledge, I do not know quite what to make of this description. Sometimes, it is hard to have the right mood if one is not sure what the stimulus is supposed to be. I was even more confused when the final video image of the act seemed to be that of a huge close up of the blazing sun seen through the same bushfire smoke. Given that Tristan and Isolde are now supposed to be in their desired realm of the night, a huge moon or just the stars mentioned in the text would have fitted better. However, this is being fussy when the whole production continues the high standards set by Suzanne Chaundy and her teams in their Wagner series.

My major reservation was the way the conductor directed the orchestra. While Anthony Negus has conducted the work many times before, on this occasion he seemed to think he was conducting the Marvel Comic's superhero action movie version of the music-drama. I've never heard the music so consistently LOUD. In the *Limelight* review (I think) he was quoted as saying something like: "You know there's only 1 fff in the whole work"!!! His interpretation included number of enormous thwacks on the timpani that could have come out of Verdi's "Dies Irae"! Admittedly, these mostly came within the climaxes of the first two acts, but such emphatic gestures, and the generally high volume chosen, seemed to me to make the overall performance lopsided. It might be that the conductor thought that he needed to have the orchestra play loudly in the vast spaces of the Palais, but I had no trouble hearing the music when the orchestra was playing those deliciously sensuous and sensual chamber music sections. I have, though, to make it clear that the musicians played very well. The horns, which have many very exposed section, had no fluffs that I picked up. There were only occasional awkward entries in some other sections—perhaps they hadn't recovered from playing 4fff! With this orchestral ensemble gaining more experience

playing Wagner, whose works still do not seem to be considered standard repertoire by our other opera companies, the delicacy and precision needed to play this score in particular will come.

The performance was worth the price of a second ticket to Melbourne to experience this wonderful work. Unfortunately, the Palais was about a third full, but spread thinly through the stalls and front circle. I felt sorry for the company, given how well attended the previous performances have been. Perhaps the weather scared people off!

I would also like to compliment the Melbourne Opera for its dedication to the works of Wagner. His works are peaks of western music and any company attempting to meet the challenge they offer deserves the support of all Wagnerians in Australia (and Australasia in general). I might be dreaming to think that, perhaps, with such successes under their belt, this adventurous, highly professional company might someday soon tackle The Ring Cycle! Certainly, Suzanne Chaundy's willingness to explore the possibilities of video for creating the *mise en scène* might help solve some of the technical demands involved in undertaking such a huge work.

WAGNER SOCIETY MEMBERS SPECIAL OFFERS AND 10% DISCOUNTS - ASK BEFORE YOU PURCHASE AT:

The Wagner Society Management Committee has negotiated a 10% discount for Wagner Society members: just mention that you are a member!



Fish Fine Music was born in 1982 as two small stores known as The Record Collector. After almost a decade as Sydney's largest classical music retailer, the company expanded to include popular music stores and in 1991 we re-branded ourselves as Fish Fine Music.

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

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

STORE LOCATIONS:

TOWN HALL SQUARE
 P: 02 9264 6458
 Shops 30-31, 464-484 Kent St,
 Sydney, NSW 2000
 E: townhall@fishfinemusic.com.au

THE ITALIAN FORUM
 23 Norton Street
 Leichhardt NSW 2040
 8014 7762

www.fishfinemusic.com.au

www.fishfinemusic.com.au

DA CAPO MUSIC SECONDHAND AND ANTIQUARIAN MUSIC BOOKSTORE

Upstairs at 51 Glebe Point Road
 GLEBE NSW 2037

Above SAPPHO BOOKS

Website: <http://www.dacapo.com.au>

Please phone Da Capo if you have any queries:
 +61 2 9660 1825

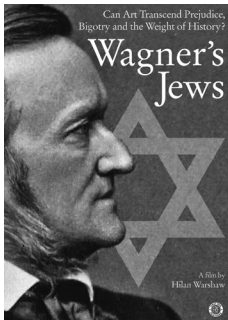
Or email Da Capo at: music@dacapo.com.au
 or **Meredith Baillie** - on shop@sapphobooks.com.au

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

BRANGAYNE OF ORANGE VINEYARD

Brangayne of Orange has kindly agreed to offer Members a 10% discount if they purchase any of their wines. Please call and order by phone (02 6365 3229) and mention your membership of the Wagner Society.

FUTURE EVENTS



15 JUNE DVD WAGNER'S JEWS

A documentary, produced, directed and written by **Hilan Warsaw** in co-production with WDR/ARTE

REVIEWS OF WAGNER'S JEWS

Wagner's Jews: A Fascinating Perspective on Wagner's Attitude to the Jews

By Jim Pritchard From seenandheard-international.com
14/10/2013

It is worth beginning my comments with the publicity blurb for this important new documentary –

The German opera composer Richard Wagner was notoriously anti-Semitic, and his writings on the Jews were later embraced by Hitler and the Nazis. But there is another, lesser-known side to this story. For years, many of Wagner's closest associates were Jews - young musicians who became personally devoted to him, and provided crucial help to his work and career. They included the teenaged piano prodigy Carl Tausig; Hermann Levi, a rabbi's son who conducted the premiere of Wagner's Parsifal; Angelo Neumann, who produced Wagner's works throughout Europe; and Joseph Rubinstein, a pianist who lived with the Wagner family for years and committed suicide when Wagner died. Even as Wagner called for the elimination of the Jews from German life, many of his most active supporters were Jewish - as Wagner himself noted with surprise.

Who were they? What brought them to Wagner, and what brought him to them? These questions are at the heart of Hilan Warsaw's documentary Wagner's Jews, the first film to focus on Wagner's complex personal relationships with Jews. Filmed on location in Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, Wagner's Jews tells these remarkable stories through archival sources, visual re-enactments, interviews, and performances of original musical works by Wagner's Jewish colleagues - the first such performances on film.

Parallel to the historical narrative, the film explores the ongoing controversy over performing Wagner's music in Israel. In a different form, the questions dividing Wagner's Jewish acquaintances still resonate today: is it possible to separate artworks from the hatreds of their creator? Can art transcend prejudice and bigotry, and the weight of history?

I have never had a problem discussing this issue because although I am not Jewish my mother and grandmother were and they had escaped the *Anschluss* from Vienna to arrive

in England before the Second World War. On film Warsaw, who is a violinist and conductor, never takes sides and pieces together the contributions of his talking heads with consummate skill to attempt to reconcile the ambivalence people might have towards Wagner because of his *Das Judenthum in der Musik* publication.

I came across a *Haaretz* interview recently with Irad Atir who recently completed a PhD on Wagner: he suggests Wagner was a special kind of anti-Semite as 'His opposition to Jewishness was part of his opposition to the socio-political and cultural reality of the period in general, including the non-Jewish German reality. He criticized certain aspects of Germanism; for example, the conservatism, religiosity, pride in aristocratic origins, and militarism. He also criticized Jewish separatism and lust for money. For him, there were good Germans and bad Germans, good Jews and bad Jews.' Atir, another musician, is reported as believing the only way to understand Wagner's art, which expresses political, sociological and musicological ideology, is to approach it neutrally. The usual link between Wagner, racism, anti-Semitism and Hitlerism should be ignored – and this, I suspect, is Warsaw's thesis too.

"I hate you, Richard Wagner . . . but I hate you on my knees."

Leonard Bernstein

Atir's research also sheds light on Wagner's approach to Jews in his operas and shows it is not as 'one-dimensional' as some would want us to accept as fact

and that although the composer 'points out and alludes to Jewish characters; for example, through text that contains sibilant consonants in the case of Alberich and his brother Mime in the *Ring*, the most important example of a positive attitude, or at least a complex one, is taken from the *Ring*. The character who must be understood as Jewish – I explain why it must be so through musical analysis as well – is the character Loge, the god of fire. He is cunning but also acts in a positive way, helping good people; a Jew who has undergone change. The music associates him with the German world and the Jewish world. Sometimes it's gratingly chromatic compared to the accepted mid-nineteenth century taste, and sometimes it's different, expressing purity.' Arid continues, 'Another example: the Rhinemaidens mock



Alberich, an ugly “Jewish” character, although he committed no crime against them. The “dark” world within Alberich turns to evil only after the “good” world has hurt him without cause. That means the “good” world also contains elements of evil.’

These thoughts are very much in the spirit of Warsaw’s film though its 55-minutes length does not allow him to explore any of the ideas – *pro or contra* Wagner – in any great depth.

Who knew there was an Israel Wagner Society? *Wagner’s Jews* begins with the plans of its founder, Jonathan Livny, to organize a Wagner concert at Tel Aviv University that soon apparently incurred the wrath of Uri Hanoach, leader of the Holocaust Survivors and was subsequently cancelled. Indeed in the film Hanoach is shown saying ‘As long as I live, I will make sure that Wagner will not be performed in Israel.’ If I recall correctly, this was pronounced with the romantic music that accompanies the wedding ceremony at the opening of *Lohengrin* Act III in the background! Intriguingly Leon Botstein, Conductor Laureate of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, posited that *Lohengrin* is possibly a classic Jewish fantasy: ‘I – without having my name or my race known – am going to rescue this country. That is the fantasy of the outsider coming into the centre, in triumph. And that’s the fantasy of *Lohengrin*. It appealed to every aspiring young Jew.’

And so the debate in this fascinating exploration of Wagner’s attitude to Jews and Jewishness ping-ponged back and forth across both sides of the ideological divide all set against a lucid exposition of the historical background of the time in which Wagner lived and the writings of the composer, his wives Minna and Cosima and others. What was certain was how much Botstein, and the other interviewed musicians – Zubin Mehta, Asher Fisch, and Tzvi Avni as well as the absent Daniel Barenboim – insist Wagner should be performed in Israel. Indeed *Wagner’s Jews* concludes with a travel documentary shot of a Tel Aviv beach and the realization that it will probably need the passing of all the Holocaust survivors before Wagner can be accepted just like any other composer in Israel.

Following the first screening of the film screening there was a Q&A involving Warsaw, Alan Miller (a film director and co-founder of Truman Brewery) and Igor Toronyi-Lalic (co-founder and classical music editor of *theartsdesk.com*). It was chaired with all the gravitas of a public school debating society event by someone from the ‘Battle of Ideas 2013’ and really didn’t reach much conclusion. Miller thankfully seems to disagree with Woody Allen’s quip that ‘Every time I hear Wagner I feel like invading Poland’ and Toronyi-Lalic dug himself into a hole with some nonsense about Wagner as misanthropic and anti-humanist and showed little of the open mind needed, I would have thought, for a ‘classical music editor’. Peculiarly he suggested he was repulsed by Wagner yet embraces his music – in another context this is the argument some of those trapped by Operation Yewtree try and get away with!

I believe Warsaw got closest to the truth about Wagner suggesting that he was just trying to create a stir with *Das Judentum in der Musik* and he gives evidence for this in his film. I agree it undoubtedly reflected some of Wagner’s

despicable private opinions but it is clear that there were nuances to his anti-Semitism that allowed him to befriend Jews and I will never accept it was just that he had to exploit them for his own ends. Put simply – in the days before social media – he needed to court controversy to get himself better known.

For more about *Wagner’s Jews* visit <http://www.overtonefilms.com/wagners.html>.

Wagner’s Complicated Relationship with the Jews, now on Film

New York musician Hilan Warsaw found himself smitten by Richard Wagner in his youth, and set out to understand his ‘push-pull’ relationship with Hitler’s favourite composer.

Judy Maltz www.haaretz.com May 15, 2014 9:32 AM

The music of German composer Richard Wagner was never played in his parent’s home: Too many bad associations with Hitler and the Nazis, explains filmmaker Hilan Warsaw.

So it wasn’t until he began playing violin in a New York City youth orchestra that Warsaw was first introduced to the work of the notoriously anti-Semitic 19th-century German opera composer. And rather embarrassingly, he found himself smitten. I just loved the music. But, at the same time, it was something that my conscious mind told me was anathema, he recalls.

Over the years, Warsaw – whose family lost many relatives during the Holocaust – developed what he describes as a push-pull relationship with Hitler’s favourite composer. And it made him curious about the other Jews in Wagner’s life. So curious, in fact, that he decided to devote the past several years to making a film on the subject. The fruit of that effort, *Wagner’s Jews*, is playing in Tel Aviv at the Docaviv festival, Israel’s premier event for documentary film.

Produced, directed and written by Warsaw, the feature-length film focuses on the Jews who were some of Wagner’s closest associates, among them the gifted young pianist Carl Tausig, who was almost like a son to him; the conductor Hermann Levi, who happened to be the son of a rabbi; and the pianist Joseph Rubinstein, who lived in Wagner’s home for many years and killed himself when the composer died.

The film also explores the complicated relationship of post-Holocaust Jews, both in Israel and abroad, with Wagner’s music. Although it is not well known that Wagner had many Jewish supporters and friends, notes Warsaw, neither should it be all that surprising. Wagner was not living in 1938 Germany, he notes. He was living in the mid-to-late 19th century, and it would not have been possible for him to operate effectively in the music world of his time without coming into contact with Jews, since there were many in the music world in Europe at that time.

“It’s also not surprising that these Jews were willing to be associated with him, because if they were not going to associate with every composer who expressed anti-Semitism, the only ones left for them to be working with would be their dads.

Wagner’s anti-Semitism was certainly not a rarity at the time, but neither was it as prevalent as assumed, according to Warsaw. His case in point is the little-known story, brought to light in the film, of Wagner’s first wife, Minna Planer. Although they had a rocky relationship from the start, it was Judaism in Music – his famous essay attacking the Jews – that brought things to a head in their marriage. This proves there was a virulence to his anti-Semitism that even his wife couldn’t deal with, posits Warsaw.

The son of an Israeli mother and American father, Warsaw grew up in Manhattan, where he attended Ramaz yeshiva high school. As for his unusual name: I tell people it’s a new-age Hebrew name – a masculine form of Hila. He studied conducting at the Mannes College of Music in New York and Aspen Music School, before transitioning to film studies at New York University.

The reason I left conducting is that I didn’t want to spend the rest of my life interpreting someone else’s work – I wanted to create my own, he says. It was also a natural move because for me; film is very, very musical. And by making films about musical subjects, my love of music stays alive.

Did Warsaw’s work on the film change his views? Originally, when I heard that Wagner had many Jewish associates, I thought that maybe he was just an anti-Semite in theory but not in practice, or that maybe this is something not as extreme as we’ve been led to believe, he responds.

But while working on the film, my view of Wagner the man became darker; because the more I explored his relationships with Jews, the clearer it became to me that these were largely exploitative relationships.

When asked if he supports or opposes the ban on staging Wagner’s operas in Israel, Warsaw hesitates for a moment. I don’t have a strong moral feeling about this one way or the other, he says. Let me put it this way. I can understand the reasons for the ban very well. But I actually think that people

make a bigger deal of it than needs to be made, because Israel is not the only example in the world of a democracy where performing arts organizations tailor their repertoires to what they think their audiences will accept.”

“I don’t think it’s a freedom of speech issue – I think it’s an issue of a social symbol,” he added. “So I understand the ban and, to a certain degree, I really empathize with it. But I can’t really say I’m 100 percent in favour of it, the reason being my own life experience. “I grew up in America, not in Israel. I had the opportunity to play Wagner’s music, to study it, and those were formative experiences for me. I’m aware that had I grown up in Israel, I would probably not have been able to have those experiences. So for me to come out and be a partisan of the ban wouldn’t be 100 percent honest.


Richard Wagner was a great composer - but also a virulent anti-Semite.

As the Wagner festival at Bayreuth opens, **Adrian Mourby** asks whether we can play his music with a clear conscience
theguardian.com/au Friday 21 July 2000

Around 150 years ago, a failed composer and revolutionary used an assumed name to publish his latest 25-page pamphlet. Although Richard Wagner’s ideas were to find their final form 20 years later in his opera cycle The Ring, his early attempts at philosophy reflect recognisably Wagnerian concerns: that nature is destroyed by industry; that it is unnatural to pursue power at the expense of love; that capitalism is corrupt; that the state often at odds with the people; that we live in an age where entertainment is considered more important than art.

Nothing much to argue with there. But what people today remember from Wagner’s quasi-philosophical period is his contention that it was the Jews who were responsible for much that was going wrong in art and society. His essay Das Judentum in der Musik (Judaism in Music) contained an

Richard Wagner



It should not be presumed that these people (the Jews), who are so separated from us by their religion, have any right to make our laws. But why blame the Jews? It is we who lack all feeling for our own identity, all sense of honour.

AZ QUOTES



End of Act 2, Barrie Kosky's *Die Meistersinger*, Bayreuth 2017

attack on one Jewish composer in particular. "Mendelssohn has shown us that a Jew can have the richest abundance of talents and be a man of the broadest culture," he wrote, "but still be incapable of supplying the profound, heart-seizing, soul-searching experience we expect from art."

Had Wagner not written *Judaism in Music* his views on Europe's Jews might have gone with him to the grave. Certainly we would probably not find his music banned in Israel today, nor a whole academic industry involved in mining his musical texts for seams of anti-Semitism.

The notion that artists don't have to be as beautiful as the works they create is a commonplace now - except in the case of Wagner. *Judaism in Music* is what has made him the unforgivable exception.

There are many people who would like to see the book banned and who treat the idea of even discussing Wagner's views as revisionist and inherently racist. Yet, as Alexander Knapp, lecturer in Jewish Music at London University points out, "Wagner was not the only the only composer to show antagonism towards Jews. Chopin, Liszt and Mussorgsky are also on record as having made comments that could be regarded as anti-Semitic."

Indeed it was a 19th-century commonplace for left-wing revolutionaries - Marx among them - to be hostile to the Jews whom they held responsible for propping up bourgeois capitalism during the failed revolutions of 1848-50.

Why then is Wagner singled out today for such opprobrium? In Knapp's view, "The crucial difference is that Wagner was espoused by Hitler and the Nazis." Although Wagner did not advocate the Holocaust - he died before Hitler was born - there is no doubt that his music was adopted by Germany's architects of mass destruction.

The American academic Paul Lawrence Rose, author of *Wagner: Race and Revolution*, is a firm believer that Jews must make sure that Wagner is never forgiven. "There was a Holocaust and Wagner's self-righteous ravings, sublimated

into his music, were one of the most potent elements in creating the mentality that made such an enormity thinkable," he says. "If time renders ridiculous the ban on Wagner, then the simple passage of time will also cause the Holocaust itself to fade into a distant memory. Appalling as this possibility is it seems likely to eventuate."

Rose has no truck with either seeking to understand Wagner's anti-Semitism or separating it off from his musical output. "The only way to counter this abyss of forgetfulness is through ritual or institutional forms of remembrance. The Israeli ban on Wagner is a pre-eminent rite for warding off the dissolution of one of the core experiences of Jewish history and memory."

In Tel Aviv today, the New Israeli Opera still has no plans to perform Wagner, although the question is hotly debated. There have always been Jewish enthusiasts for Wagner and great Jewish interpreters of his work. Daniel Barenboim and James Levine have both conducted at Bayreuth. Zubin Mehta, musical director of the Israeli Philharmonic, has tried on four occasions to programme Wagner but has always been dissuaded by the force of public anger.

The musical director of New Israeli Opera, Asher Fisch, has made no secret of the fact that he'd like to hear Wagner performed. "What is happening here is Israeli society taking an easy way out," he says. "We have German cars now, we have German electric machines in our homes. We have regular relations between our governments and armies, but we seek to ban Wagner. Why do we do so? Because there is no money tied up in culturally elite activities like music. No one suffers financially if we refuse to play Wagner or Beethoven. In Israel we only reject Germany where it does not matter."

But those who seek to exonerate Wagner by differentiating between the composer and the pamphleteer have another problem: the argument that anti-Semitism underpins not only his philosophy, but his music.

Knapp is suspicious of these arguments. "For me music, per se, cannot be anti-Semitic," he says, "though its context may be - a distasteful parody or racist text for instance. But how can a chord or sequence of chords be anti-Semitic?"

But a fellow Jew, the American academic Marc Weiner, has traced anti-Semitic images through the Wagner canon. "Wagner's anti-Semitism is integral to an understanding of his mature music dramas," he says. "I have analysed the corporeal images in his dramatic works against the background of 19th-century racist imagery. By examining such bodily images as the elevated, nasal voice, the 'foetor judaicus' (Jewish stench), the hobbling gait, the ashen skin colour, and deviant sexuality associated with Jews in the 19th century, it's become clear to me that the images of Alberich,

Mime, and Hagen [in the Ring cycle], Beckmesser [in Die Meistersinger], and Klingsor [in Parsifal], were drawn from stock anti-Semitic clichés of Wagner’s time.”

Given that Wagner blamed the Jews for the materialism and reactionary values that were inhibiting Europe’s spiritual development, it was perhaps inevitable that he drew on Jewish clichés to create his villains. Surprisingly, though, Weiner refuses to write off what Wagner does with them. “Wagner’s racism led him to create some of his most complex, rich, and enigmatic dramatic figures, as well as some of his most haunting, iconoclastic, and beautiful music,” he says.

There are of course those who refuse to accept that Wagner was anti-Semitic at all - but such an argument carries no serious weight today. In the view of John Deathridge, professor of music at King’s College, London, both Wagner’s defenders and detractors are missing the point. “I think the admirers are in denial and the critics overplay the Jewish issue,” he says. “In the end neither position accounts fully for the obviously wide resonance Wagner’s works still enjoy.”

He also points to the new ending that Wagner added to Das Judentum in der Musik when it was republished - this time with his own name on the title page - in 1869. “Wagner actually addresses the Jews, by saying, ‘Remember that one thing alone can redeem you from the curse which weighs upon you: the redemption of Ahasverus - destruction!’ This cannot mean that Wagner is literally calling for the destruction of the Jews, since in the same breath he is offering them redemption. What Wagner is suggesting, in theatrical language, is that Jews should rid themselves of their Judaism. This explains why Wagner offered to take Hermann Levi, the first conductor of Parsifal, and a Jew, to have him baptised a Christian. Wagner is not advocating murder! He can’t be, otherwise why bother to suggest the idea of redemption?”

There is no doubt that the debate over Wagner’s anti-Semitism is going to rumble on and, as we approach the end of this first decade of the 21st century, the preparations for his 200th anniversary will no doubt be overshadowed by Jews who claim that by celebrating Wagner the world is denying the suffering of their race.

But Weiner believes that it is in his people’s own interest to stop boycotting Wagner. “It would be naïve to feel that we must whitewash Wagner’s works in order to be able to enjoy them, for such an argument suggests that there is such a thing as an ideologically unproblematic work of art. On the other hand, it would be equally indefensible to censor the works (their performance or publication) altogether, even in Israel, for, ironically, to do so would mean that Wagner had won - that his works were indeed reserved for Germans, and that Jews had no place in their reception and enjoyment.”

Whether a 19th-century composer can be forgiven for an act of 20th-century genocide remains to be seen. The argument is bound to rest with the Jews, who are divided between those who accept Wagner with his faults and those who see him as a hate figure: one who must continue to be punished beyond the grave for acts that were not perpetrated in his lifetime.

German opera festival confronts Wagner anti-Semitism head-on

Edgy new production by Australian Jewish director met with rapturous applause and rave reviews at renowned Bayreuth festival

Pauline Curtet and Deborah Cole
www.timesofisrael.com 26 July 2017

BAYREUTH, Germany (AFP) - An edgy new opera production by Australian Jewish director Barrie Kosky tackling Wagner’s anti-Semitism head-on won rapturous applause at Germany’s renowned Bayreuth opera festival and rave reviews Wednesday.

An audience including German Chancellor Angela Merkel cheered the four-and-a-half-hour staging of “The Master-Singers of Nuremberg” on opening night Tuesday at Bayreuth, the festival dedicated to the works of Richard Wagner. Critics said they were impressed with the first production ever by a Jewish director at Bayreuth, now in its 106th year, and called it chillingly relevant.

Spiegel Online said Kosky’s “remarkably entertaining and convincing” staging effectively used Wagner’s notorious anti-Semitism to take on “hatred of Jews in general” in today’s Europe.

National daily Die Welt said Wagner’s toxic ideology had always been an “elephant in the room” which Kosky had opted to make “the actual subject of his staging.”

Wagner’s musical and artistic legacy from the 19th century is infused with anti-Semitism, misogyny and proto-Nazi ideas of racial purity. His grandiose, nationalistic works were later embraced by the Third Reich, and Adolf Hitler called him his favourite composer.

Nevertheless in purely musical terms, Wagner’s achievements are undeniable and his operas figure in the standard repertoire of houses around the world - apart from Israel which maintains an effective ban on public performances of his work.

The Bayreuth festival, still run by the Wagner family, long tried to separate the works from their murky origins. But reviewers said the pairing of Kosky with one of Wagner’s most iconic operas marked a bold break with that tradition.

First performed in Munich in 1868, “The Master-Singers” is essentially a hymn to the supremacy of German art. It was one of Hitler’s most-loved operas and its music was misused for propaganda purposes by the Nazis.

‘Frankenstein creation’

In the production, Kosky embeds the opera’s setting of Nuremberg in the city’s grim 20th century history as the birthplace of the Nazi race laws, the setting of the party’s giant torch-lit rallies and, after the war, the scene for the trials of Hitler’s henchmen.

“Whoever wants to understand National Socialist Germany must know Wagner.”

Adolf Hitler

An entire act is set in the Nuremberg 'Trials' wood-panelled courtroom, and a key character, the town clerk Sixtus Beckmesser, is presented as a grotesque Jewish caricature recalling Nazi smear-sheets.

"I am the first Jewish director to stage this piece in Bayreuth and as a Jew that means I can't say, as many do, that Beckmesser as a character has nothing to do with anti-Semitism," Kosky told public broadcaster 3sat. "Of course it does. In my opinion Beckmesser is a Frankenstein creation of everything Wagner hated - Jews, the French, the Italians and critics."

Kosky has run Berlin's Komische Oper for five years and introduced a little-known repertoire from the turbulent 1920s and 1930s by Jewish composers later forced to flee the Nazis. He admitted in an interview with AFP last year that he has "many contrasting emotions" about Wagner's masterpiece.

"Can you just portray the work as just being a simple fairy story, (given) the history of the piece?" he asked.

POSTSCRIPT - The Family makes amends

In 2012 Bayreuth inaugurated "*Silenced Voices*", an impressive open-air exhibition directly in front of the opera house. This addressed the Wagner family's involvement with Nazi regime propaganda and its direct effect upon



the festivals anti-Jewish casting policies. It showcased twelve large panels portraying the tragic life stories of 53 Jewish artists, musicians and singers associated with the festival who were persecuted, defamed or not employed for "racial" or political reasons. Due to the great response from guests and citizens, the city of Bayreuth decided to keep this installation on the "green hill" permanently.



20 MAY TALK

WAGNER AND GLUCK

Professor Michael Ewans

(Honorary Life Member of the Wagner Society in NSW)

Wagner recognized the greatness of Gluck, and in his prose writings he praises him as a predecessor equal in stature to Mozart; but he was reluctant to admit the importance of Gluck's late, Greek-based 'reform operas', since he was concerned to present *himself* as the great reformer who replaced opera by music drama.

However, not long before writing the three important prose treatises of 1848-50 – in fact just before he had to leave Dresden – Wagner had paid Gluck the unique tribute of writing a complete new adaptation into German of his opera *Iphigénie en Aulide*. This version includes cuts and alterations, a re-orchestration of the music, a very large number of new stage directions and above all a new ending. Wagner conducted his arrangement in 1847 to great acclaim, and it was performed in Germany and Austria well into the twentieth century.

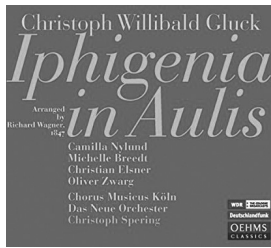
Professor Ewans paper first critiques the position on Gluck which Wagner took in his theoretical writings, and then examines the adaptation of *Iphigénie* quite closely. Coming as it does between Wagner's last grand opera, *Lohengrin*, and the first of the 'stage festival plays' of the *Ring*, Wagner's

reworking of Gluck sheds light on a pivotal stage in his own development towards becoming a music dramatist, rather than a composer of conventional operas. There are also some very interesting affinities in subject matter between *Iphigénie* and Wagner's own work.

Michael Ewans retired from the Chair of Drama at the University of Newcastle, Australia in 2011; he is now is Conjoint Professor in the School of Humanities and Social Science. He was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 2005. His eleven books include *Janáček's Tragic Operas*, *Wagner and Aeschylus: the 'Ring' and the 'Oresteia'*, and *Opera from the Greek: Studies in the Poetics of Appropriation*. He published in 2016 a new book analysing stage performances of scenes from 24 operas on DVD; *Performing Opera: a Practical Guide for Singers and Directors* (Bloomsbury Methuen Drama). He has recently published an article on Pierre Audi's double bill of Gluck's two *Iphigénie* operas - 'Gluck the modernist', *Studies in Musical Theatre* 9.2, 2015.

NOTE: Michael Ewan's talk will be followed by Wagner's Birthday champagne celebration

HERE ARE REVIEWS OF THE CD OF THE WAGNER VERSION AND A DVD OF THE ORIGINAL GLUCK VERSION



Gluck/Wagner: *Iphigenia in Aulis*

CD Review by **Tim Ashley**
theguardian.com/au 10 April 2014

Nylund/Breedt/Elsner/Zwarg/
 Chorus Musicus/Köln/Das Neue/
 Orchester/Spering (Oehms)

This is a beautiful set, but a curious one. Its release marks the tercentenary of Gluck's birth, an anniversary that hasn't as yet, in the UK at any rate, received anything like the attention it is due. However, deriving from a German radio production in April last year, this brings another, altogether more prominent anniversary into the frame – what we have here is not Gluck's original *Iphigénie en Aulide*, first heard in Paris in 1774, but a German-language version prepared by Wagner for performance in Dresden in 1847.

That Wagner should be drawn to Gluck was inevitable. The latter's revolutionary demands for a total work of art comprising drama, song and dance, conveyed in music of absolute directness, pre-empt Wagnerian aesthetics. Of all Gluck's operas, it is *Iphigénie en Aulide* – with its conflicts between human love and divine proscription, and its redemptive heroine willing to sacrifice herself for the greater good – that fits most closely with Wagner's preoccupations.

But unlike Berlioz, whose edition of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* still forms the basis of many modern performing versions, Wagner distorts as much as he adapts, and in streamlining Gluck, narrows his range. Dance is integral to Gluck's synthesis, but Wagner cuts the ballet. Passages are re-written to blur the divisions between recitative and aria way beyond Gluck's original intentions. Wagner, chameleon-like, never strays beyond Gluck's harmonic scheme, though his re-orchestration, beefed up with extra wind and brass, sounds Beethovenian at times.

Handsomely conducted by Christoph Spering, and boasting some terrific choral singing from the Chorus Musical Köln, the recording is very fine. The great performance comes from Oliver Zwarg as Agamemnon, dignified, anguished and trapped, Wotan-like, in a hell of his own making. Christian Elsner's Achilles is nicely pitched between hero and bully-boy. Michelle Breedt's Clytemnestra could do with more elemental rage, but Camilla Nylund makes a fine Iphigenia, radiant and noble rather put-upon and father-fixated. It remains, however, something of a wasted opportunity. Wagner's *Iphigenia* is just not as good as Gluck's, a new recording of which would have been infinitely preferable.



Gluck: *Iphigénie en Aulide*

DVD Review by John
operaramblings.wordpress.com

Posted on April 5, 2013

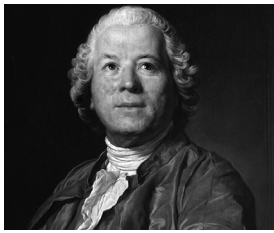
Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide* is finally available on Blu-ray and DVD. It was staged and recorded as a double bill with *Iphigénie en Tauride* at De

Nederlandse Opera in September 2011 in productions by Pierre Audi. It's excellent in just about every respect. The cast is to die for, the production is interesting and so is the staging in the rather challenging space of The Amsterdam Music Theatre, which also poses problems for the video director. Backed up, on Blu-ray, by a 1080i picture and DTS-HD-MA sound it's a pretty compelling package.

Gluck's libretto is based fairly closely on the Euripides play though Menelaus and Orestes are cut and it ends with the assumed, non-extant, ending where Diana forgives everyone and reunites the lovers rather than spiriting Iphigenia off to Tauris. Audi sets the production in, more or less, the present. The Greek soldiers wear combat gear, Agamemnon wears the dress uniform of a high ranking officer and Iphigenia and Clytemnestra wear rather fetching camo couture, except in the final scenes where Iphigenia seems to be wearing a suicide bomber belt. The set is a bare stage with metallic staircases rising either side. The orchestra is behind the stage and beyond them is a gallery that isn't used much though it has a role to play in the final scene. It's simple and effective and allows the audience to focus on the characters.

The cast, as I said earlier, is amazing. Véronique Gens sings the title role with Anne-Sofie von Otter as Clytemnestra. Frédéric Antoun is Achilles and Nicolas Testé sings Agamemnon. All four sing and act superbly. All four characters are utterly believable; the father and daughter torn between love and duty, the distraught, yet dignified queen and the dashing and impulsive young hero. It's a timeless story effectively told. And the music is just gorgeous. The main characters are well backed up by the rest of the cast, with an especially fine cameo by Christian Helmer as Calchas, and by the off-stage chorus. Marc Minkowski and Les Musiciens du Louvre, Grenoble provide suitably idiomatic direction and accompaniment.

I'm not sure what to make of Misjel Vermeiren's video direction. It's a challenging set to film, not helped by low lighting levels. He responds by using a lot of weird camera angles, including directly overhead, and a lot of close ups. Ultimately it doesn't matter too much as the glory here is the singing and the acting rather than the staging. The picture and sound quality (surround and stereo) are both first class. There is a short bonus interview with Audi on the disk and a synopsis and essay in the booklet, but no track listing. Subtitles are English, French, German, Dutch and Korean.



Christoph Willibald Gluck: the composer who deserves better

Rupert Christiansen asks why Gluck's tercentenary will pass by largely unheralded in 2014
 telegraph.co.uk 05 Jan 2014

Opera lovers had a bumper time of it in 2013, with jamborees marking the centenaries of three great masters Britten, Verdi and Wagner. This year (2014) it's a shame that we're not celebrating equally loudly the 300th birthday of another composer whose importance to the development of the art form can hardly be over-stated – Christoph Willibald Gluck, born in an obscure German principality near Nuremberg in 1714.

Apart from *Orfeo ed Euridice* – or rather its Housewives' Choice favourite “*Che farò?*”, as sung by Kathleen Ferrier – nothing by Gluck has ever been widely popular and he will doubtless always remain a specialist taste. One can immediately hear why: his greatest music is marked by a measured dignity that doesn't offer easy entertainment or sensual charm for audiences craving instant gratification. A reformer by nature and a neo-classicist at heart, he deplored the florid excesses and amorous intrigues of conventional 18th-century opera and aspired in works such as *Iphigénie en Tauride* and *Alceste* to return to something redolent of the moral and spiritual grandeur of Greek tragedy.

Rather than showy arias designed to show off prima donnas' techniques framed by fanciful plots, Gluck cultivated a purified style shaped by expressive declamation, dramatic dialogues and solemn choruses, underpinned by simple orchestration and unchromatic harmonies.

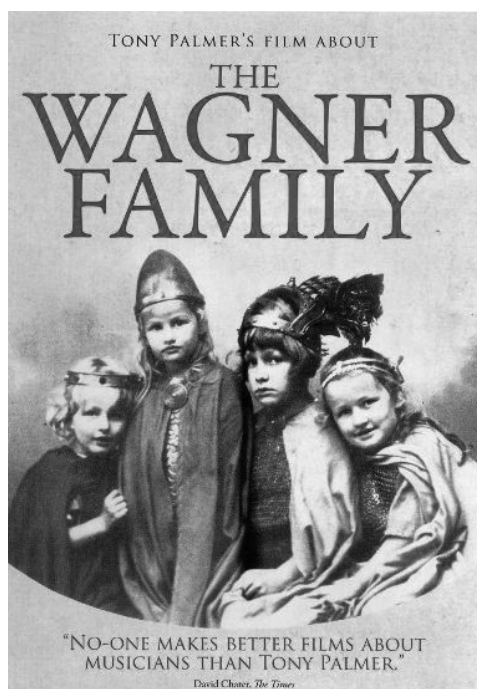
He could write wonderfully rich melodies too (emanating from the throat of a Régine Crespin, the aria “*O malheureuse Iphigénie*” from *Iphigénie en Tauride* can be even more heart-rending than Orfeo's “*Che farò?*”), but they are conceived not as applause-seeking highlights so much as soliloquies charged with emotional and spiritual intensity. One might sum it up by saying that Gluck took opera seriously.

As a result, his writings as well as his scores have certainly been of enormous influence: on Mozart in *Idomeneo* and the Masonic passages in *Die Zauberflöte*; on Rossini in his serious operas; on the Berlioz of *Les Troyens*, on Wagner in his quest for the high moral ground. Yet today, even though his modestly scaled works are relatively inexpensive to mount and easy to cast, opera houses seem to shy away.

There are reasons for this. The absence of any sensational element means that he's not good box office, and modern producers don't know how to handle such spare and chaste material. Another drawback, baffling to our contemporary sensibility, is his habit of arbitrarily introducing a God ex machina to resolve tragic dilemmas in his final scenes.

One notable recent attempt to grapple with these problems was made by the late German choreographer Pina Bausch, whose danced versions of *Orfeo* and *Iphigénie en Tauride* carried considerable force and gave the dramas a new theatrical dimension.

But it's sad that at his tercentenary, the oeuvre of this seminal figure isn't being explored in any depth and that a major operatic institution such as Glyndebourne hasn't had the courage to honour his achievement by engaging the likes of Sarah Connolly or Alice Coote – superb Gluckian interpreters both – for the title-roles of *Alceste* or *Iphigénie en Tauride*.



17 JUNE DVD

THE WAGNER FAMILY

Directed and edited by **Tony Palmer**. Gonzo Multimedia TP-DVD172, 106 mins, subtitled

This is a film about a family, a family which has ruled the theatre in Bayreuth in southern Germany for the last 140 years, some say still the greatest theatre in the world. There's no doubt that Richard Wagner who built it was the most influential composer in the whole of the 19th Century. But his family has survived a mixture of lies, deception, fraud and dangerous political alliances. The story of this family is a soap opera that makes Coronation Street look like Noddy-in-Toyland. It's a family – in many ways the Royal family of Germany – at war with itself.

REVIEWS OF *THE WAGNER FAMILY*

“Palmer is one of the era’s best art-documentary makers; *The Wagner Family* is a superb film.”

Andrew Billen - THE TIMES

“An extraordinary achievement. A superb piece of work.”

Barry Millington - EVENING STANDARD

“A storming curtain-raiser. Palmer casts narrative convention to the wind, instead immersing us immediately in the bewildering genealogy of the Wagners. It’s an astonishing tale which Palmer’s tells with all his usual brilliance.”

Gabriel Tate - TIME OUT

Observations: Hitler at the heart of Wagner

Jessica Duchon

They’ve been called the “royal family” of Germany; their machinations have been compared to those of the power-crazed characters depicted in their ancestor Richard Wagner’s *Ring Cycle*; and all of it is for the sake of power at the Bayreuth Festival, in Wagner’s own opera house. The significance of the ongoing saga of the Wagner family is vastly increased by the fact that Adolf Hitler is intimately mixed up in the whole sorry affair.

It was only a matter of time before Tony Palmer, music documentary director par excellence, got his teeth into their story. Invited by Melvyn Bragg to contribute to the last-ever series of *The South Bank Show*, Palmer has produced a hard-hitting account that proves just how far some members of this family have gone to retain power. The content may not be entirely new, he says, “but what is new is the way that we have pulled the entire story together”.

Most striking, of course, is the Hitler strand. The German dictator’s notorious friendship with the English-born Winifred Wagner – wife of Wagner’s son, the homosexual Siegfried – proved extremely expedient to him. “When he went to Bayreuth, the world took its eye off him: they thought he was just having fun at the opera,” Palmer says. “But in fact he was sitting in the Wagners’ house, planning the invasion of Poland with the children’s geography textbook.”

But the full archives remain closed. If the Wagner family is ever to come to terms with its history, Palmer suggests, the contents of those archives must be revealed. Then there will be a whole new film to make.

Thursday 10 September 2009 <http://www.independent.co.uk>

The Wagner Family

Review by David J Baker

“If you haven’t got anything nice to say about anybody,” Alice Roosevelt Longworth once said, “come sit next to me.” Director Tony Palmer must have extended the same invitation to the biographers, musicians and especially the Wagner descendants who address the camera in this verbose documentary that seems incapable of organizing its justified biliousness and outrage.

Palmer’s scattershot approach, circuitous narrative and inadequate identification of speakers and their relationships can make a viewer long for the clarity and focus of a Ken Burns or *Sixty Minutes* documentary or even a History Channel cram course. Perhaps there are just too many targets — the twentieth-century Wagners’ ignominious affiliation with Hitler; the new generation’s infighting; the *Regie*-hubris raging in the Bayreuth temple today. But when even the scholars indulge in questionable tactics on camera, disparaging or imitating the minor players, the moral compass fogs up. At times a numbing effect sets in, and you may even start to suspect the motives of Palmer’s star witness, whistleblower Gottfried (son of Wolfgang), who rats out Grandma, Dad and Uncle Wieland with the newfound zeal of a desperate plea bargainer.

At least the denunciations result in a few scoops. Even dabblers in the voluminous Bayreuth/Wagner histories know that the master’s only son, Siegfried, led a double life as secretly gay bearer of the precious Wagner seed. (He was wedded, at age fifty-seven, to eighteen-year-old Winifred, who bore Wolfgang, Wieland and two daughters.) We learn here, from Wieland’s former mistress, soprano Anja Silja, of the shadows cast by that history, and more importantly of Wieland’s anguished guilt about his own wartime experience operating a concentration camp of his own, Flossenburg, close to home in Bayreuth. “That is what killed him,” she states, recalling his death from cancer in 1966. It is also news that, according to one daughter, Wieland’s work at Bayreuth drew heavily on funds from Silja, when we thought the young soprano had merely provided romantic and artistic inspiration.

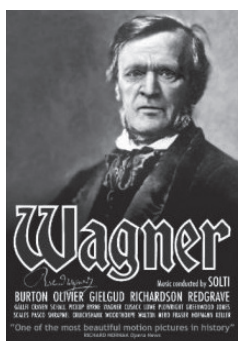
Both grandsons escaped legal consequences for their past, but the film portrays Wolfgang as the greater villain thereafter. It is possible to doubt some of the accusations, such as that he evicted Wieland’s family from their lifelong home, “Wahnfried,” and destroyed historical evidence, but the footage we see of Wolfgang vilifying his nieces and his own children is almost sickeningly self-incriminating.

In its zeal to equate Wagner and Nazism, the film cites some simple-minded charges, such as branding *Parsifal* a paean to German racial purity. Too often Palmer relies on knee-jerk associations, pairing Nazi footage with a Wagnerian soundtrack as if the two arose from a single source.

And yet, even this confused jeremiad eventually airs some interesting artistic and ethical issues concerning the current Wagner generation. Wolfgang's daughters Eva and Katharina, codirectors at Bayreuth, question the family's exclusive right to rule the festival in perpetuity and the composer's exclusive domination of its repertoire. Gottfried's final comment after all the crimes and recriminations also has considerable resonance: "Can you be proud to be a Wagner?"

https://www.operanews.com/Opera_News_Magazine/2012/2/Recordings/The_Wagner_Family.html

And finally here's a *Gramophone* review of the director's cut of Tony Palmer's epic series with Richard Burton as Richard Wagner.



Wagner: A Film by Tony Palmer

British director Tony Palmer has been making films about music and musicians since the late 1960s, his *idées fixes* ranging from Ginger Baker's drumming for Cream to Richard Wagner. Palmer's energies remain directed towards explaining to the layman the mysteries behind artists' biographies, or their

creations, and the interview remains his favoured form for doing this. Even the heart of a feature film like *Wagner* – newly available in an original-length director's cut (just under eight hours) – is to be found when Richard Burton's intriguing, almost Brechtian assumption of the title-role speaks directly to camera.

Like a Meyerbeer opera, Wagner at full length is better than Wagner truncated. Charles Wood's storyline, running from the composer's Kapellmeister days in Dresden to his death, and linked by Andrew Cruickshank's skilfully understated narrations, unrolls at a pace that can better accommodate the many drop-in set pieces. Of these, by far the best are the most fictional (or should that be the most 'spun?'): Wagner's Hitler-like speech to the Vaterlandsverein, his proto-*Jewishness in Music* rant about Meyerbeer at a Zürich reception, his dropping of gold coins on Meyerbeer's head as the latter arrives for the Paris *Tannhäuser*, and the taking over the end of *Parsifal* from Hermann Levi with the dismissive 'you should be baptised'. Here Palmer and Wood are so right in spirit while playing free with detail that one wishes that there had been more like this.

Elsewhere, we get as much mountains and water in Vittorio Storaro's state-of-the-art landscape photography as the soundtrack (mostly under Solti) gives us the aggressive Nibelung music and the Fire music. It becomes a cultural equivalent of those business lectures that interpolate porn clips to keep the audience awake. There's also more than a dash of 'lurve' silliness – watchable only once – in the appearance of non-actors Sir William and Lady Walton as the royal family of Saxony, and the camping around of British acting knights Gielgud, Olivier and Richardson as Ludwig II's ministers. And facts are either very right (Beethoven's Seventh given with Wagner's own score emendations) or very wrong (the Paris *Tannhäuser* sung in German). None the less, if you don't take things too seriously – it's a movie, not a docu – enjoyment and increased curiosity about the subject matter is virtually guaranteed. Do try also to catch up with Carl Froehlich's 1913 silent *Wagner* and William Dieterle's comically compact 1956 *Magic Fire*, music 'arranged by' Korngold.

www.gramophone.co.uk

17 JUNE TALK

CELESTE HAWORTH



Vivacious Australian Mezzo-Soprano **Celeste Haworth** has music degrees from Vienna and Sydney and was a principal artist at the State Opera of Wiesbaden singing a wide variety of roles over the 2015/16/17 Seasons including: **Marcellina**, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Mozart; **Meg Page**, *Falstaff*, Verdi; **Emilia**, *Otello*, Verdi; **Meg Page** in *Falstaff*, Verdi; **3rd Maid** in *Elektra*, Strauss; **Suzuki** and **Kate Pinkerton** in *Madama Butterfly*, Puccini; **Innkeeper** in *Boris Godunov*, Mussorsky; **Charlotte**, *Die Soldaten*, Zimmermann.

Other roles sung at the Vienna Conservatorium of Music included: **Dorabella**, Cossi Fan Tutte, Mozart; **Marchesa Melibea**, *Il Viaggio A Reims*, Rossini; **Mother Goose**, *The Rake's Progress*, Stravinsky and **La Voix**, *Les Contes de Hoffmann*, Offenbach. She has worked with international Wagner/Strauss singers such as Catherine Foster, Dalia Schachter, Camilla Nylund, Klaus Florian Vogt and many more.

She has performed in many concerts as a soloist in Wiesbaden, Vienna, Frankfurt, Singapore and Sydney and more recently has been a broadcaster with **Fine Music** 102.5 FM, Sydney.

For more information see www.celestehaworth.com

Celeste will entertain us with songs, anecdotes and a Q&A session

SON OF CORNWALL - CROWDFUNDING A DOCUMENTARY

Mainz/Germany, February 2018



Going on a road trip along Cornwall's picturesque shore in summer 2018, opera singer John Treleaven gives his son, filmmaker Lawrence Richards, exclusive insights into his unusual life. The feature-length documentary explores what it takes to lead a successful life as an artist. To finance the project that has been a long-held dream of his, Richards and his production company Indievisuals chose crowdfunding.

Lawrence Richards is a filmmaker with a passion for people and their stories. It has been his dream since he started out to make a documentary about his father John Treleaven who made it from fisherman's son in Cornwall to an international opera star. John who recently retired can look back on a life of success and turmoil. Engagements took him all around the world from Scotland to the USA, Japan, South Africa and Mainz, Germany where the young family with two kids decided to settle down in the 90s. Over the years Lawrence filmed his father on stage and backstage to capture unique moments and great performances. But working as an artist, always under the scrutiny of the audience and critics, John's incredible lifestyle also brought darkness which he wasn't always able to cope with.

But with the archive material, there was always something missing, a more personal touch, more insight into the person John really is. That's why John and Lawrence are going on a two-week road trip along Cornwall's coast. One of the highlights will be a concert sung by John in his hometown Porthleven, Cornwall, at the end of their journey. During

the road trip they will explore themselves and each other, dive deep into the past & present and what it means to lead the life of a creative. Why take on the struggles and pressure of an artist's life? Is it worth taking on all the negative sides just to fulfil one's dreams? Are there regrets, as a singer, as a father? Along with archive material of John's great opera performances, exclusive interviews of companions and an enthralling soundtrack, *SON OF CORNWALL* is a tribute to & conversation with John Treleaven – Cornish boy, opera singer, father, star.

Through the crowdfunding campaign, Lawrence will be able to not only pay the film crew during shooting and postproduction but also gains the freedom to make the personal, authentic documentary he always envisioned. The campaign will run for forty days beginning end of February. As a thank you supporters can receive the DVD, get a credit in the film, a meet & greet with John and even an exclusive concert. The goal for the campaign is to reach 60.000€. More information on the campaign can be found on our website: <https://igg.me/at/sonofcornwall>

Contact

Indievisuals - Lawrence Richards
Mail: sonofcornwall@indievisuals.de
Poststraße 37
55126 Mainz
Tel.: +49 172 6857292
<http://www.indievisuals.de/>

“A WAGNERIAN VOYAGE”

This June, *The Travelling Tenor* has curated “*A Wagnerian Voyage*”, to experience the first showing of Kiel Opera’s new production of Wagner’s Ring Cycle. The production will be conducted by Georg Fritzs, directed by Daniel Karasek and stars Australian heldentenor **Bradley Daley** as Siegfried. The Wagnerian Voyage will also include a specially arranged recital from Australian mezzo soprano **Deborah Humble** and pianist **Sharolyn Kimmorley** AM in the North German city of Hamburg.

The Travelling Tenor, unique small group opera tours, was established in 2016 by tenor **Adam Player** with his travel consultant sister, Carly Jack, with the aim of connecting opera lovers to wonderful opera performances overseas and they are particularly interested in celebrating the wonderful work that our Australian opera artists are doing around the world.

- Guests on “A Wagnerian Voyage” will enjoy a 12 day musical and cultural journey from June 21 to July 2, 2018 throughout Northern Germany. Principal highlights include:
- Premium seats to the premier cycle of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at Theater Kiel.
- An Exclusive private backstage tour at Theater Kiel, to learn about their new production of The Ring Cycle
- An opportunity to meet with **Bradley Daley**, the Australian Heldentenor, who stars as Siegfried in the Kieler Ring.
- A recital in Hamburg with International Wagnerian mezzo soprano, **Deborah Humble**, accompanied by Australian **Sharolyn Kimmorley** AM and featuring special guest Australian viola player, **Lisa Bucknell**. The program will feature Wagner’s sublime Wesendonck Lieder, along with the Zigeunerlieder and Two Songs for Viola, Alto and Piano by Brahms. The recital will be followed by a glass of bubbly and an opportunity to chat to the performers.

Biographies



the Royal Albert Hall, Lake District International Summer Music Festival, Ryedale Festival, Manchester’s Bridgewater

Adam Player, who will host “A Wagnerian Voyage”, completed a Bachelor of Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music before graduating with a Master of Music from the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, UK. He has been part of major national tours of Australia and the United Kingdom, has sung at the Edinburgh Festival, BBC Proms at

Hall and has performed with companies including Opera Australia, Pinchgut Opera, Adelaide Festival, OzOpera, Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour, English Touring Opera, Garsington Opera, Wexford Festival Opera, and the Hallé orchestra.

Adam was awarded the William McLeod Johnstone Prize for male singers from the Royal Northern College of Music and was a recent recipient of an International Opera Awards Bursary. Adam will be appearing as an Apprentice in Opera Australia’s *Meistersinger* in Melbourne later this year



Deborah Humble is one of Australia’s most successful international artists and a favourite of the Wanger Society in NSW. She began her musical education in Adelaide, gaining a Bachelor of Music Performance and continued her studies in Melbourne completing a Master of Music and Diplomas of Arts and Education. In 2004, Deborah

was awarded the prestigious Dame Joan Sutherland Scholarship and the following year, she became a Principal Mezzo with the State Opera of Hamburg where she has sung many roles.

Deborah received international acclaim for in Hamburg’s *Ring Cycle* conducted by Simone Young.

Her international engagements include appearances with Edinburgh Festival, Festival d’Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg Easter Festival, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Singapore Lyric Opera, Seattle Symphony, Stuttgart Philharmonic, Hamburg Philharmonic, London Mozart Players, the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris. Closer to home, she has performed with the State Opera of South Australia, Opera Queensland, the Sydney, Melbourne, Queensland and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras and the Adelaide and Brisbane Festivals.

Members will remember her outstanding performances in the Melbourne Ring. In 2017, she made major appearances in Lille, London, Melbourne and New Zealand.



Bradley Daley was born in Australia and studied music at the University of Southern Queensland and the Queensland Conservatorium before continuing his private studies in the United States and Europe. Since making his debut with the English National Opera, Bradley has worked with a variety of

companies in the United Kingdom and Europe. These have included Opera North, Welsh National Opera, Holland Park Opera and Co-Opera Ireland. He has performed regularly with Muziektheatre Transparant in Belgium, Compagnia d'Opera Italiana di Milano, Opera Nomade in Paris; in 2005, he was invited to give the first performance of a Western opera at the Hanoi Opera House.

Most recently, in Australia, Bradley has been performing major principal roles with Opera Australia - Curley in *Of Mice and Men* (Green Room Award), Don José in *Carmen*; Opera Queensland - Florestan in *Fidelio*, Rodolfo in *La bohème*, Dick Johnson in *La fanciulla del West*; State Opera of South Australia – title role in *Otello*, Narraboth in *Salome*, Canio in *Pagliacci*; Victorian Opera - Mao Tse-tung in *Nixon in China* (Green Room Award), Erik in *Der fliegende Holländer*. In 2016 Bradley Daley sang Siegmund in Opera's Australia production of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.

Kiel's Ring Cycle features a cast of acclaimed international Wagnerians along with striking sets by visual artist Chiharu Shiota, who's work appeared as part of the 20th Biennale of Sydney. It is the perfect opportunity to experience The Ring Cycle in a city that you may not have visited before and is the perfect time of year to visit Northern Germany. With beautiful boutique accommodation and wonderful inclusions, only a few spaces remain. The Travelling Tenor is offering those that book the remaining spaces on "A Wagnerian Voyage" a complimentary room upgrade in Hamburg as well a luxury welcome gift per room on arrival. Please visit www.thetravellingtenor.com for more information and booking. Alternatively you can call 1300 765 677 or email info@thetravellingtenor.com to find out more.

MEMBERSHIPS ARE NOW OVERDUE

Please see www.wagner.org.au/memberships for details on how to pay.

If the name on your quarterly is preceded by *** then you appear not to have paid.

Please remember to attach your name as we have a number of payments we cannot identify.

Any queries, email jenny.edwards@uts.edu.au

THE RAVEN'S REPORTING, COMPILED BY CAMRON DYER

There is a regularly updated list on the Society's Website www.wagner-nsw.org.au that takes the list to 2024.

www.wagner.org.au/events-performances/performances/ravens-reporting

EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR EASY CONTACT AND ADVICE ON FUNCTIONS AND DEALS!

Regular emails are sent to those members of the Society whose email addresses we have on file. If you have not been receiving these emails, please ensure we have your current email address by filling in the form on the Society's contact web page: www.wagner.org.au/contact-us.

COMMITTEE 2017 - 2018

President	Colleen Chesterman	9360 4962
Vice President	Leona Geeves	9957 4189
Vice President	Mike Day	0413 807 533
Treasurer	Margaret Whealy	0414 787 199
Secretary	Barbara de Rome	0411 018 830
Membership Secretary	Jenny Edwards	9810 6033
Members	Mailis Wakeham	9331 7353
	Tony Jones	0412 572 624
	Nick Dorsch	0419 751 694
and Technical Consultant	Florian Hammerbacher	wagner_nsw@optusnet.com.au

OTHER FUNCTIONS

Public Officer	Alasdair Beck	9358 3922
Quarterly Newsletter Editor	Mike Day	michaeldayarchitect@gmail.com
Webmaster	Ashish Nanda	wagner_nsw@optusnet.com.au

WAGNER SOCIETY MEMBERS AT 31 DECEMBER 2017

Kay Abrahams [0966], Carole Adams [1158], Paul Alger [0255], Ursula Armstrong [1061], Jennifer Arnold [1205], Marje Ashworth [1173], Lachlan Astle & Neil Matthews [1015], John Augustus & Ken Ryrice [0963], Margrit Bachmann [1132], Carole Bailey [0663], Rosalind Baker [1090], Glen Barnwell [944], Marie Bashir [0798], Colin Baskerville [0817], Janette Bates [0785], Paul and Marlene Baumgartner [0393], Barbara Beasley [1104], Jane and Philip Beeby [0985], Marco Belgiorno-Zegna [1109], Pattie Benjamin [0987], Janelle Berents [1044], Nicole Berger [1038], Irma and Fred Beringer [0975], Jeff Bertucen [1176], Minnie Biggs [1130], Christine Bishop [1068], Rosemary and Jessica Block [0745], Richard Bloor [0967], Audrey Blunden [1043], Jan Bowen [0743], Ian and Barbara Brady [0380], Claire Brauer [1050], Ben Bravery [1194], Michael Moore [0819], Bill Brooks & Alasdair Beck [0765], Maggie Brown [1203], Frances Butcher [0918], Neil and Marcia Cameron [1059], Marty Cameron [1200], James & Sara Carlisle [1201], John Carrigan [1183], John Casey [0114], Maurice Cashmere [0877], Ann Casimir [0501], Holly Champion [1198], Humfrey Charles & Pauline Alexander [0951], Mike and Colleen Chesterman [0649], Julie and Terry Clarke [0496], Jonathan Clarke [1160], Daryl Colquhoun [0732], Joan and Maxwell Connery [0334], Rae and Ross Cottle [0843], Rowena Cowley [1122], Alexander Cozzolino [930], Gavin Crank, Peter Craswell [1030], Roger Cruickshank [0669], Elizabeth and Barry Dale [0953], Rhonda Dalton [1121], Catherine Davies [921], Mike Day [0606], Barbara de Rome [0207], Ermes de Zan [0865], Christine Deer [1064], June Donsworth [0884], Barbara and Nick Dorsch [0154], Barbara and Andrew Dowe [1126], Brian Ducker [0487], Sandy and Phil Dudgeon [0788], Heinz Ebert [0378], Jenny Edwards [1034], Greg Ellis [1174], Keith Elvy & Peter Dunphy [0988], Jenny Emmerton [1128], Mr Clive Evatt [0624], Michael Ewans [0], John Fawcett [1204], Igor Ferdman [949], Judy Ferfaglia [0045], Jennie Ferns [0034], Dianne and Terry Finnegan [1202], Chris Ford [1088], Charles Brady & Brian Freestone [0840], Stephen Freiberg & Donald Campbell [0585], Vic and Katie French [945], Mr Robert French, Warwick and Ruth Fyfe [0755], Richard Gastineau-Hills [0068], Ms Leona Geeves [0087], Diana Wang and Peter George [0873], Helen Gillam [1170], Michael Gleeson-White [1085], Miriam Goodwin & Rolf Duels [1037], Elizabeth Gordon-Werner [0878], Andrew Goy [0723], Robert Graham [904], Tim Green [933], Maxwell Grubb [0858], Patrick Timbs Hall [1169], Elisabeth Hall, Hugh Hallard [0799], Helen Halley [1007], Florian Hammerbacher [1171], Derek Harrison [939], Pat and Frank Harvey [0427], Simon Hatcher [0333], Alan Hauserman & Janet Nash [0876], Louise Havekes [1166], Melinda Hayton [0757], Robert Henderson [1005], Clare Hennessy [0019], Margaret Hennessy [0019A], Pauline Holgerson [0863], Raymond and Beverley Hollings [1036], Theo Hudson [0489], John Hughes [1199], Irvine Hunter [0744], Gail Huon [1168], Ian Hutchinson [1103], Mary Ingham [1164], Agnes Brejzek & Esteban Insausti [0433], Peter Ivanoff [1101], Liz Jacka [0898], Douglas Jamieson [0090], Glynis Johns [1120], Brett Johnson [0779], Tony Jones [0455], Anne Jones [0861], Renate and Herman Junker [0866], Andrew Kaldor [0991], John Kaldor [0996], Joe Kelleher [0965], Susan Kelly [0004], Margaret Kelly [1185], Heinz Kestermann [0995], Richard King [13], Margaret King [1145], Julie King [0007], Anna-Lisa Klettenberg [0847], Sylvia and Karl Koller [0052], Ira Kowalski [0536], Francois Kunc [999], Hannelore Laundl [0962], Marie Leech [916], Carole and Jim Leigh [0452], Gary Linnane [0960], Juliet Lockhart [1019], Lynette Longfoot [922], Kurt Looser [1124], Ian MacKenzie [1003], David Maloney & Erin Flaherty [0952], Charles Manning [940], Libby Manuel [0950], Camron Dyer and Richard Mason [0544], Peter Mason & Henry Burmester [997], Dennis Mather [0696], Jane Mathews [0622], David May [1146], Diana McBain [0419], Christopher McCabe [1196], David McCarthy [0648], Phillip McEachran [1049], Pam and Ian McGaw [0548], John McGrath [0310], Helen Meddings [1114], Neville Mercer [0737], Irene and Wolfgang Merretz [0115], Robert Mitchell [1014], Helen and Bill Naylor [0643], Matthew Nicholson [1156], John O'Brien [1119], Monica and Oliro Olave [0735], Oonagh Redmond [1116], Diana-Rose Orr [0844], Rosemary Oxer [1177], Malcolm & Yvonne Pearse [1144], Suzan and Gary Penny [1004], Colin Piper [0222], George Polonski [1167], Marion and Rodney Purvis [0874], Adrian Read [1077], Kenneth Reed AM [0041], Paul Rein [1129], Garry Richards [0366], Shirley Robertson [0416], Anne Robinson [1143], Penny Robson [1192], Michael Rodriguez & Roslynne Moxhan [1134], Peter and Heather Roland [0855], Barbara Ross [1195], Peter Rowe [1185], John Sanders [0972], Mitzi Saunders [0683], Maite Serra [1197], Mandy Shaul [1178], Ivan Shearer [0954], Sam Sheffer [0101], Nizza Siano [0619], Ruth Silver [1054], Hannah and Willi Spiller [0671], Lourdes St George [0895], Ross Steele AM [0838], John Studdert [0696], Nigel Stoke [1136], Richard Stone [0615], Ros and Tony Strong [1027], Douglas Sturkey [0902], Isolde Sültemeyer [0978], Marita Supplee [1184], Hugh Taylor [0990], Lyndon Terracini [0734], Peter Thompson [0746], Robert Thurling [0830], Garry Tipping [1026], Isolde Tornya [0800], Kay Vernon [1039], Anna von Rueffingen [1179], Nadine Wagner [1100], Mailis Wakeham [1139], Warren and Susan Walsh [0956], Terence Watson [0657], Greg Watters [0892], David Wayne [1181], Flora and John Weickhardt [0979], Margaret Whealy [1149], Richard White [1194], Mr Warner Whiteford, Ross Whitelaw [0527], Deanne Whittleston & Anthony Gregg [0839], Gary Wilson [0834], Ray Wilson [1072], Kylie Winkworth [0976], Donna Woodhill [1093], Jill Hickson Wran [1108], Roswitha Wulff [1186], Alfredo and Toni Zaniboni [946]



Some of the 95 members and guests who attended Sir John Tomlinson's talk on 11 February



Sir John Tomlinson with President **Colleen Chesterman**



Sir John Tomlinson and **Peter Coleman-Wright**



Sir John Tomlinson with Vice President **Leona Geeves** with wine donated by our partner Brangayne of Orange Vineyards



Sir John Tomlinson as Wotan

ADDRESS

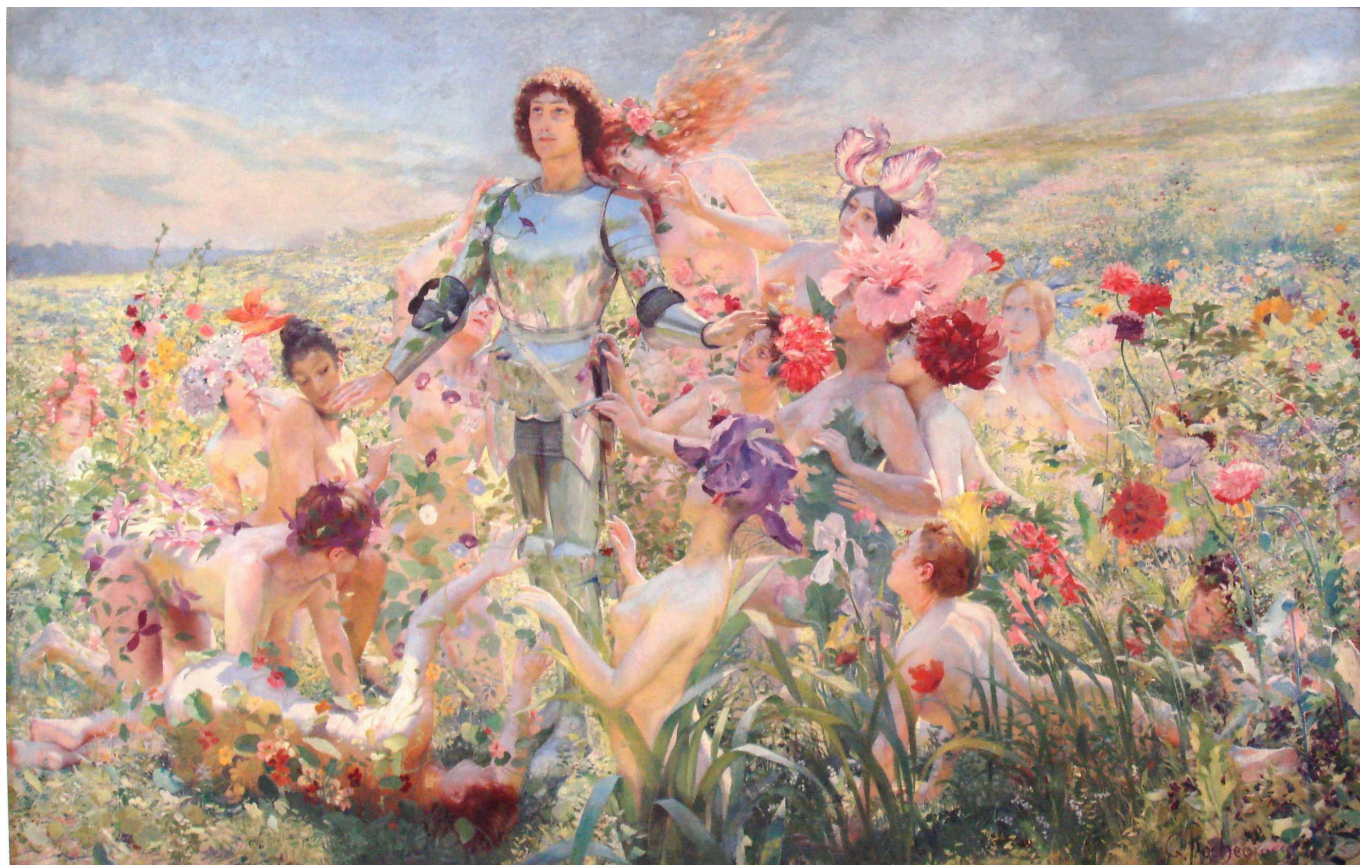
Please note our permanent address for all correspondence:

The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc
GPO Box 4574 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Telephone: 9360 4962 (Colleen Chesterman, 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)



Georges Rochegrosse. Le chevalier aux fleurs (Parsifal) 1894

PARSIFAL BY PAUL VERLAINE

Conquered the flower-maidens, and the wide embrace
Of their round proffered arms, that tempt the virgin boy;
Conquered the trickling of their babbling tongues; the coy
Back glances, and the mobile breasts of subtle grace;

Conquered the Woman Beautiful, the fatal charm
Of her hot breast, the music of her babbling tongue;
Conquered the gate of Hell, into the gate the young
Man passes, with the heavy trophy at his arm,

The holy Javelin that pierced the Heart of God.
He heals the dying king, he sits upon the throne,
King, and high priest of that great gift, the living Blood.

In robe of gold the youth adores the glorious Sign
Of the green goblet, worships the mysterious Wine.
And oh! the chime of children's voices in the dome.

The Wagner Quarterly is laid out, produced and distributed by the friendly and expert team at BEE Printmail
49 Herbert Street, Artarmon NSW 2064, Ph: 9437 6917, Email: beeprint@printd.com.au

ADDRESS FOR SUNDAY FUNCTIONS

Goethe Institut, 90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)