

# The Wagner Society

IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

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## Newsletter

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## COMING EVENTS

Sunday, December 15th	Christmas Party The Church in the Marketplace Bondi Junction Plaza	2.00pm
Sunday, February 16th	Afternoon Tea Clifford Grant Galleries 77 Glebe Point Road Glebe NSW 2037	2.00pm

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Stephen Bennett, Bayreuth scholarship winner 1992	page 3
Clifford Grant Gallery for February afternoon tea	page 3
Notes from the President	page 3
The Seattle Ring 1991	page 4
Florence Austral, our blazing Brunnhilde	page 5
Nancy at the Met (cont)	page 7
How to get to Bayreuth (cont)	page 8
Deborah Riedel - a fresh Ring	page 8
Bayreuth 1991 - impressions	page
The Treasurer's Report	page 10
The Wagner Society program in 1992 on 2MBS	page 10
The Covent Garden Ring	page 11
Polemics: Turner on Wagner	page 12

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## **STEPHEN BENNETT BAYREUTH SCHOLARSHIP WINNER FOR 1992**

STEPHEN BENNETT, Bass baritone, has been announced the winner of the 1992 scholarship and the Wagner Society extends its warmest congratulations to this young singer, whose career began as a founding member of the Leonine Consort in 1978, two years after beginning singing lessons at the age of 19. He made his solo debut in 1979 in Handel's *Samson*, in the part of Harapha, and his operatic debut followed in 1983 as Colline, in *La Boheme*, for Rockdale Light Opera.

Since being made a resident principal bass with Australian Opera, Stephen's repertoire has taken in roles ranging from *Alcina* to *Die Meistersinger*. His list of achievements since 1983 in his pursuit of Awards and Scholarships plots a sure upward path, culminating this year in an impressive Double - the Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship and The Bayreuth Scholarship. 1992 is going to be a most significant year in the career of Stephen Bennett and we wish him well.

## **CLIFFORD GRANT**

A change of venue for the Wagner Society will be hosted by Clifford Grant at THE CLIFFORD GRANT GALLERY, at 77 Glebe Point Road, Glebe (692 8224), the first Wagner Sunday for 1992! Sunday 16th February marks the inauguration of 1992's activities with an afternoon of differences. The Gallery is renowned for its fine art and Clifford Grant himself is one of Australia's finest singers. Clifford Grant retired after his performances with Joan Sutherland in *Les Huguenots* in late 1990.

This special event will cost a little extra, \$10 a head, for a wonderful afternoon tea, a chance to view some beautiful paintings, and some music.

## **NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Since the last Newsletter we have had some unfortunate news - being advised that we won't be able to use the Goethe Institute as our venue for the next six to eight months, due to its refurbishment. Fortunately we've been able to obtain the Cole Room at the Church in the Marketplace, Bondi Junction, until December this year.

We were extremely lucky to get this venue in time for the talk by Noel Staunton, Technical Administrator of the Australian Opera, who gave a very interesting and informative talk about all the pitfalls of putting live Opera on to a stage. This was very much appreciated by all present.

Kerry Llewellyn also gave us up to date information about the Hobart Festival Opera.

At this moment we have not decided what format the Christmas Party will take, but it will be held in the Coleman Theatre, the Church in the Marketplace, cnr Oxford and Grosvenor Streets, Bondi Junction, on Sunday 15th December.

Some of the Committee as well as myself have been to the Wolanski Library at the Opera House and we have nearly come to the conclusion that this would be the most suitable venue to place the books owned by the Wagner Society.

Hoping to see you at the Christmas Party on Sunday, 15th December - please make an extra effort to come as we would love to see you. Bring a friend!

Special thanks to the Uniting Church for allowing us the use of their rooms.

Olive Coonan  
President

## THE SEATTLE RING

Seattle Opera claims it is the leading Wagner opera company in America. We have found reference to complete Seattle **Ring** Cycles in 1975, '77, '84, '86, '87 and to **Tannhäuser** in '84, **Die Walkure** in '85 and **Die Meistersinger von Nuremberg** in '87 and '89. Their claim is surely reinforced by their 1991 **Ring** Cycle, which was a "refined, changed and improved" version of the original 1986 production. Speight Jenkins, General Director of Seattle Opera, takes pride in this modern production which, he believes, compares more than favourably with the conventional Metropolitan **Ring**. It is deliberately thought-provoking and unashamedly theatrical.

The major thesis of the production is that "the lust for power and the compromises and alliances we are forced to make in our lives threaten our capacity for true, selfless, love." To explore this thesis, the virtues and weaknesses of most characters were presented with emphasis. The resultant realistic drama contrasted with the many theatrical devices:

- The Valkyries riding on fibreglass horses that actually flew (but with no attempt to hide the wires controlling them)
- Brunnhilde being put to sleep in a mess of stage props because Wotan had no suitable site for her punishment, having been caught ill-prepared for her disobedience. (He had organised things better by the beginning of **Siegfried**, when her sleeping figure lay in a kind of mausoleum).
- The massive fire of the Immolation
- The use of symbols such as towers, ladders, stair-cases, picture frames, curtains, paintings... These constantly remind the audience that the action is only fiction but do so without detracting from the impact of the psychological drama.

The singing was of a uniformly good standard but did not reveal any great new Wagnerian star. The only inadequacy was Wotan (played by Roger Roloff), whose failing powers at times brought him to the point of inaudibility. His display of anger at Brunnhilde's disobedience was so muted as to give little ground for the Valkyries' fear. However, Roloff had played the same role in 1986 and 1987 **Rings** and continued to be received as a great favourite of the enthusiastic audience, even though he no longer portrayed a convincingly powerful leader. William Johns sang consistently and was as rotund a **Siegfried** as he had been a **Tristan** in Sydney. Gudrun Volkert sang beautifully. As Brunnhilde she was more



seductive than warlike.<sup>1</sup> Our attention over the entire cycle did not flag. The supra-titles were a great help and the excitement of the event was aided by a superb analysis given before each opera by Michael Mitchell. The friendliness of the well-informed, largely American audience in the foyers and dining areas also contributed to our enjoyment. In short, we found the Seattle **Ring** Cycle a musically and intellectually satisfying experience. We feel this was in no small measure due to the preparation provided by our afternoons at the Wagner Society.<sup>2</sup>

Bill and Edna Watson

The Clifford Grant Gallery  
77 Glebe Point Road  
GLEBE NSW 2037  
692 8224

## FLORENCE AUSTRAL OUR BLAZING BRUNNHILDE

CLAREMONT CD set GSE 78-50- 37/38 "DIE GOTTERDAMERUNG" EXCERPTS. Conducted by Albert Coates, Leo Blech, Lawrance Collingwood, with leading roles taken by Walter Widdop, Florence Austral, Ivar Andresen, Gota Ljunberg etc.

This 2-CD set is a salutary issue for Wagner lovers here in Australia. On it, some 34 shellac sides of 78 rpm discs have been expertly processed into digital format, to provide 2 $\frac{1}{4}$  hours of music from **Die Gotterdammerung**. The sound is acceptable mono but it is fair to ask why we should listen to such historic Wagner as this, in the era of CD stereophony. I can suggest two good reasons, I believe. Firstly, this set gives generous access to the vocal prowess of the Melbourne-born Florence Austral (1894-1968), one of the great Wagnerian Sopranis of the 1920s and '30s. She was a colleague of and quite a match for Frieda Leider and Gertrude Kappel in their primes. Secondly, we can gain an idea of the pioneer electrical recording process (1925 - 1930) that yielded Wagner excerpts like these and nurtured at least two

<sup>1</sup> [Miss Volkert takes her Brunnhilde to Cologne Opera this month and next, to sing alongside Siegfried Jerusalem and Robert Hale. Also of note, Warren Ellsworth (the Siegmund at Seattle) becomes Parsifal at La Scala this month, under Muti. Ed.]

<sup>2</sup> [Bill & Edna's glowing account of the Seattle **Ring** hints at the renowned and generous hospitality of that city, especially toward Ring visitors... apart from any scenic day-tripping, Seattle offers an engrossing series of Wagner seminars (held in the city's plush ballroom and spread across two non-performance days). Nine expert papers were given and Ring-goers could hear and discuss, for instance, "Do Leitmotifs Have Meaning?", "Aspects of Love in the Ring" (led by Barry Millington), "Some Questions Mime Forgot to Ask Wotan" and - a problem that now bedevils Wagner staging everywhere - "The Director versus the Composer". This last paper was given by that leading Wagner authority, Bryan Magee. Would that Australia's next complete Ring cycle might be embellished with similar informative discussions for our better understanding and enjoyment of Wagner! Ed]

generations of Wagner enthusiasts prior to the advent of LP. In this document of Wagner performance 60 years back we find some outstanding singing and also conducting with a sense of the dramatic, that would be welcomed in any opera house today, bar none.

Between 1927 and 1930, HMV and German Electrola recruited artists who regularly made up top casts in both London and Berlin for black label (ie budget) Wagner recordings in the "D" series. This effectively excluded top-fee voices of the time such as Lauritz Melchior and Frieda Leider from many of these Wagner albums issued around the world. In their stead, the fine Walter Widdop (1892-1949) and Rudolf Laubenthal (1896-1972) shared the music of the elder Siegfried while no fewer than three Hagens were collated, the Swede Ivar Andresen, the German Emanuel List and the Australian basso, now forgotten, Fred Collier (1885-1964). Two very experienced Wagner conductors were engaged for this album of excerpts from *Die Gotterdammerung* - the Englishman Albert Coates (whose early training had been Russo-German) and the perennial Leo Blech from Germany. The music of Brunnhilde was claimed, like the *Ring* in the final scene, by the unflagging clarion voice of our Florence Austral.

The rather sparse liner notes with this set describe how the use of ribbon microphones after 1925 made possible not only recordings in the Bayreuth Festspielhaus itself (on the Columbia label) but studio recordings as well, of long Wagner excerpts best suited for home listening... In the event, *Das Rheingold* proved rather intractable to such "highlights" treatment but the three "days" of the *Ring* yielded dramatic episodes that could well survive the four-minutely interruptions of ending sides. We today can re-experience those pioneering Wagner sets thanks to this CD recreation that has used the famous album of 16 HMV discs (D 1572-87) and two deftly added orchestral episodes also conducted by Coates (D 1080 & D 1092).

Assessing the quality of these historic extracts from *Die Gotterdammerung* is a doubly difficult task. While one's ears soon grow accustomed to the deadened mono sound, CDs and staged performances still raise the expectation of musical and dramatic completeness, something necessarily beyond this set of excerpts... As well, the emphasis in the music recorded is placed on the Prologue and the last Act, leaving the first two Acts rather thinly accounted for. However, the standard of performance is commandingly fine, especially so on the second CD of the set, which can be fairly termed a Florence Austral "spectacular".

The entire continuous Prologue (some 23 minutes) is to be heard, with some rather dour Norns and a splendidly clean duet from Austral and Widdop. From Act I itself we hear only Hagen's Watch (black-toned and baleful but with some vagaries in Andresen's intonation) and a truncated rendition of the Waltraute scene. Here Austral is palpably placed well back from the (single?) mike so as to achieve a balance between her powerful voice and the rather stodgy mezzo (Maartjie Offers) - a pity! The first CD ends with Hagen's call from Act 2, again slightly edited down and shorn of Gunther's arioso at the end. A steadier-voiced Andresen characterises well here.

Two critical episodes from Act 2 (the oaths on Hagen's spear and the plot to kill Siegfried) start the second CD on a very high performance plane indeed. Austral outshines her partners and impressively tackles the upward leaps in the plotting scene. Act 3, is well served in this set - the Rhinedaughters scene is complete with some excellent Berlin singers. Rudolph Laubenthal gives a solid account of Siegfried's Narrative and Death and, after the Funeral March, we cut straight to Brunnhilde's opening words in the final scene - "Schweigt eures Jammers". Florence Austral's vocal sureness and her shading of the text merit it the tag



"outstanding". One only regrets that she never sang this particular work here in Sydney in the Fuller season of 1934. The smaller parts of Guttrune and Hagen are included, making Austral's Immolation both complete and very moving. The conductor, Albert Coates, contributes much to the final scene, as elsewhere in this set. Thrusting and dynamic would best describe Coates' approach, yet he never seems to blur or rush the orchestra past the unfolding drama that is in the score. True the orchestral sound is boxed, but not at all indistinct.

On balance, then, the vocal merits of this set have to be deemed somewhat uneven across the multi-casting employed, while the orchestras (mainly the London Symphony and the Berlin State Opera) perform well. This CD set enhances one's respect for Wagner standards of 60 years ago; with reservations as noted. It offers a welcome experience for the Wagner-at-home enthusiast of today.

## NANCY AT THE MET (CONT)

The next opera I attended was *The Marriage of Figaro*. I am not a Mozart fan and did not look forward to it with any great anticipation. However, to my surprise, I really enjoyed it. Felicity Lott was an attractive Countess vocally and physically. Marie McLaughlin was a suitably pert, scheming and likeable Susanna and Andreas Schmidt a believable Count Almaviva. Thinking about it afterwards, I realised that whilst the whole cast were either good or excellent, it was the outstanding performances of Frederica von Stade as Cherubino and Samuel Ramey as Figaro which transformed this opera for me. Samuel Ramey<sup>3</sup> must surely be one of the great singers of today. His Figaro was perfectly in character - beautifully sung in true Mozart style.

The last Opera I attended was *I Puritani* and it was a sheer delight. Edita Gruberova as Elvira was entrancing. What a voice she has! She not only sang brilliantly but acted well and looked attractive. The Arturo, Stamford Olsen, was a replacement for Chris Merritt, who was ill. He sang very well but did not fully match the brilliance of Gruberova. Luckily, the Opera does not give them much singing together, so the imbalance in voice did not spoil the performance. Anthony, Gavaneli, Plishkov and Robbins all did well in their respective roles. The Chorus also sang very well, but I could not help noticing they moved much less than the Australian Opera Chorus and with less involvement than we enjoy here in our productions.

Richard Bonyng conducted brilliantly and scored a personal success. He received a great ovation from the audience, much to my delight.

My three nights at The Met were memorable.

Nancy Williamson.

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<sup>3</sup> Subsequently I heard him sing Scarfia in *Tosca* at Covent Garden. He was really thrilling. In this vehicle he could fully reveal the power and beauty of his voice. He played Scarpia as a villainous, passionate aristocrat, not a thug, as so often interpreted. James Conlon was the Conductor, Jean Pierre Ponnelle was responsible for Production, Set and Costume Design. I felt both fulfilled their functions excellently.

## HOW TO GET TO BAYREUTH CONT.

APPLICAT IONS TO	ADDRESS	CONTACT	CLOSING DATE	CONDITIONS
The Box Office Bayreuth	Der Kartenburo Festspielhaus D 8580 Bayreuther 2 Postfach 2320 Germany		November 15 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o send for application form before closing date</li> <li>o form will have instructions for payment - fill in and return late Dec/early Jan confirmation (or otherwise) of ticket allocation posted direct to applicant</li> <li>o NB: a <b>Ring</b> cycle must be included in all applications (unless it's a year without one)</li> <li>o accommodation: dependent on ticket allocation</li> <li>o travel: independently arranged</li> </ul>
Lufthansa Airlines	Sydney Office, Lufthansa House, Macquarie Street 367 3800	Louisa or Yvonne of Reservations	Being processed now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o You must travel with Lufthansa</li> <li>o You must travel either First or business class</li> </ul>
The Wagner Society of Western Australia	2 Kanella Road Shelley WA 6155	The Secretary, Mrs S Wombwell	"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o opera tickets, accommodation and travel provided as a package</li> </ul>

**MARILYN RICHARDSON**  
 has won the Australian Artists' Creative  
 Fellowship Award for 1991 our  
 congratulations to this  
 well-loved artist.

### DEBORAH RIEDEL A FRESH RING

The Australian lyric soprano, Deborah Riedel, has come a long way since her Australian Opera Young Artist days in 1986. This year alone has seen Deborah in two leading roles (Parmina and Micaela) in Sydney with that of Juliet scheduled for next year.

Moreover, she was chosen to sing opposite Jose Carreras in his concert tour last



month. Before that Deborah had been in London for her Covent Garden debut and, we believe, her first Wagner role.

Das Rheingold is of special interest to us, marking as it does the Covent Garden debut of Deborah Riedel, as Freia. Despite the critics' dour headlines she was well received. "Riedel's flights as Freia were beautifully shaped, colored and controlled" - said Paul Griffiths in The Times; while The Observer praised her as "strikingly ardent". The Guardian described her as singing "sweetly and freshly as Freia".

102.5Mh  
 Sydney's Fine Music Station  
 2pm  
 4th Sunday of every month  
 Arthur Carter

## BAYREUTH 1991 - IMPRESSIONS

To those who have been to a first night it is unnecessary to tell of the crowds of people at the Festspielhaus craning to see all the dignitaries and commenting on the clothes but these last were a major disappointment this year. Recession dressing has hit Bayreuth!

My first opera was **Lohengrin** - Paul Frey - is there any better? Perhaps Domingo in the past. Lohengrin was dressed in blue and grey, not the usual white or silver, which was my main disappointment. Eva Johansson as Elsa also wore grey but in her singing complemented Paul Frey greatly. Ortrud, Telramund and the Herald were all excellent. The Konig, Manfred Schenk, reminded me strongly of Donald Shanks. I was enamoured of the singing but not the sets. The wedding bed was set in a field with clear plastic sheets edged in gold; Telramund and his henchmen disguised as animals around the stage. Of the Swan, least said, soonest mended but I think the Australian Opera's is marginally better! There was a league of nations in this year's chorus - particularly from Asia... which bodes well for Wagner in the future.

**Parsifal** was next on Friday 26th July and Placido Domingo was in the audience, receiving a standing ovation. I disliked the Christmas Tree forest but again the singing was outstanding. I saw Reinhard Heinrich (costume designer for this production and the Australian Opera's **Meistersinger**) but didn't get a chance to say hello.

The 1991 **Ring** was all Rs.... red heads, running and rolling on stage, rivets on the props, remarkable single, radioactive ruins, rituals.... Perhaps Wotan's progeny all having red hair had something to do with the radioactivity as well as the genes! The production was most exhausting for the audience (and even more so for the cast). The rolling and running around stage appeared not to affect the quality of the singing. I saw two Brunnhildes - Deborah Polaski (from her rather rocky 1988 Bayreuth debut) returned for **Walkure** to some strong appreciation and Anne Evans performed in **Siegfried** and **Gotterdammerung**. Anne Evans is Gwyneth Jones' neice - Dame Gwyneth was part of the audience, again receiving a standing ovation. Donner and Froh sang beautifully but appeared, like Wotan, to be on the verge of a

nervous breakdown all through **Rheingold**. Philip Kang was Hagen (with laryngitis) and so was ghosted by Manfred Schenk, a disconcerting effect with Hagen stage centre and his voice stage right. My impression of Harry Kupfer's direction of the **Ring** was that every time the tension built up throughout the operas he organised something to break it down.

Margaret Budge

## THE TREASURER'S REPORT

Our financial position is safe but stationary, not what we would want at a time of ever-rising costs. Next year we will need to increase membership fees and membership numbers. However, we have the large, recurring expense of the Scholarship at \$2300 and naturally we hope to make a suitable donation for the Australian Opera's **Parsifal** in 1993. \$5000 is the amount suggested. This means we need to raise more money to improve our bank balance. Your Committee is looking at ways to do this. It is open to suggestions from members.

Sue Kelly  
Treasurer

## "THE WAGNER SOCIETY PRESENTS....."

On 2MBS 102.5Mhz at 1.00pm on the fourth Sunday of every month in 1992 your Society is broadcasting the following:

January	Australian Artists in wagner (Jan 19)
February	<b>Rienzi</b> under Review
March	John Wegner - our Wotan to be
April	<b>Die Walkure</b> Act I on Telarc CD
May	Scenes from <b>Parsifal</b> in a new recording
June	The Wagnerian art of Jessye Norman
July	<b>Lohengrin</b> Act I (Bayreuth recording)
August	<b>Lohengrin</b> Act II Scenes 2 & 3
September	<b>Lohengrin</b> Act III
October	Leonie Rysanek - Veteran of the "New Bayreuth"
November	Richard in Arrangement

The Ronald Dowd Summer School for  
Singers  
January 9-19, 1992  
Bathurst - Charles Sturt University  
Telephone (02) 332 4622

## THE COVENT GARDEN RING

Gotz Friedrich has adapted his 1984 production from Berlin to suit the Royal Opera House's stage, so that 2 complete cycles could be given in September/ October, conducted by Bernard Haitink - the first such in London since Welsh National Opera's in 1987 and, before that, Friedrich's earlier production from 1976-82 and the first Covent Garden Ring cycle complete in nine years.

The response has been mixed (eg, "Ring shining only fitfully"; "a sombre, enclosed look"; "caught in a time tunnel"). Complaints about the staging and design have been offset with praise for the singing. Some of the flavour of the comment is indicated in a potpourri of quotes from The Guardian, The Times and The Observer.

The set, devised by Peter Sykora, consists of a static Time Tunnel - a series of concentric rings in diminishing perspective, grey, "dismal" and generally deemed unsuitable to the relatively shallow Covent Garden stage - based on the Washington Subway. "Yet", according to The Guardian in its review of Das Rheingold, "the representation of the Rhine at the very start, with its enveloping waves of translucent plastic, is simple and effective". Alberich's control of Nibelheim is designed by Sykora and Friedrich as "a fair-ground booth, with science fiction machinery." Alberich (Ekkehard Wlaschiha) and Loge (Kenneth Riegel) are singled out for praise in their singing and their characterful confrontation in this scene. Loge is made up to suggest Wagner himself. The Erda (Anne Gjevang), James Morris as Wotan and Helga Dernesch as Fricka, Franz-Josef Selig as Fafner and Gwynne Howell as Fasolt as well as Deborah Riedel were all singled out for praise.

The closing scenes however were not widely liked, "...the Gods perform(ing) their snail-slow cavortings towards (Valhalla) across an ugly fitted carpet of rainbow stripes." (The Guardian)

However, these same critics were both surprised and pleased with the musical excellence of Die Walkure as performed one week later; it was described as "bringing a massive structure unerringly to an overwhelming climax." Bernard Haitink's conducting of Wagner seems to have redeemed itself in the eyes of the critics - "the rapturous excitement from the pit", "his eager partnership with the singers" and his "combination of energy, imagination, expertise and sheer artistic honesty.... wonderfully exciting".

John Tomlinson as Hunding sang with "black intensity". In the same vein, the critics uniformly praised Poul Elming, making his debut at the Garden, singing Siegmund. "Startingly vivid and engaging... Bayreuth's current choice for the role. A lean and lanky figure, he carries no excess weight, either in his voice... There is also a likeable freshness and freedom in his singing." Brunnhilde's costume however received some brickbats - a "skin-tight leather play suit and absurd helmet."

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*[Members of the Society are invited to submit their views on Wagner productions or any aspects of Wagnerian opera that they wish to have aired - the newsletter is keen to reflect the views of the Society's membership]*



## POLEMICS

Excerpt from W J Turner, Variations on the Theme of Music, 1924

I believe - antipathetic as some of Wagner's music is to me, and conscious as I am of his limitations - that we shall never have a greater musical work than the **Ring**... My criticism of Wagner is that in his greatest and most daring work, he failed to achieve what he set out to do. No matter how often I hear the **Ring**, I am completely convinced until I arrive at **Gotterdammerung**. Dull patches here and there I used to find when I was first familiar with **Rheingold**, **Walkure** and **Siegfried** have one by one disappeared with every hearing until there are no dull patches, no dull moments even, in the first three music dramas of the cycles... What a magnificence of life. No need for me to expiate on the quality and variety of this life! Mr Ernest Newman's twenty-foot shelf-length of books on Wagner testifies sufficiently to that.

Then we come to **Gotterdammerung** and we find all through the first act no hint of failure. Then comes the second act and we are rudely shaken. The whole architecture, grand and sublime as it seemed, tumbles about our ears. If in **Gotterdammerung** Wagner had risen to the height of the matter he had set himself - and which at that point he had to attempt - the **Ring** would have been incontestably and immeasurably the greatest work of art ever created by man. But in **Rheingold**, **Walkure** and **Siegfried** Wagner had scaled mountains, the highest Alps, one may even say, of music; then he spread his wings to fly into the empyrean and fell dismally into the mud... Wagner in the second act of **Gotterdammerung** has become self-conscious.

The music is fabricated, uninspired; and it is uninspired, I believe, because in its final stage in the poem of **Gotterdammerung**, the **Ring** had ceased to be true to Wagner and that is why it has no meaning to us; but Wagner took enormous pains to hide its emptiness from himself and from us... Like Paradise Lost, the **Ring** contains many sublime truths. The point that I am anxious to make is just this, that it is only when uttering these sublime truths, only when he wholly felt that what he was expressing was true (which also means O strange paradox! - only when he was unconscious of what he was saying) that Wagner could write great music. But I believe Wagner became more conscious that he did not believe what he was saying than Milton ever did...

Wagner, I feel, was intellectually uneasy as well as spiritually faithless in the **Gotterdammerung**, but he covered up his uneasiness with prodigious signs. But how the music changes when he gets something in which he again believes! What a change from the artificial paroxysms of so much of Act II to the Trauermarsch of Act III! But death is always an unfailing stimulus to artistic genius and, in spite of the Trauermarsch and the closing scene, **Gotterdammerung** always leaves me with the feeling that I have been cheated of a sublime experience.

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*[Have you any views on Wagner you would like aired in the newsletter? Please contact the editors or submit copy - the next issue goes to print in February 1992 and copy is invited by mid-January]*