



WAGNER
SOCIETY
nsw

CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF RICHARD WAGNER

WAGNER QUARTERLY

ISSUE NO 28

155

DECEMBER 2019

SEASON'S GREETINGS

TO OUR MEMBERS FROM THE COMMITTEE OF THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NSW



SOCIETY'S OBJECTIVES

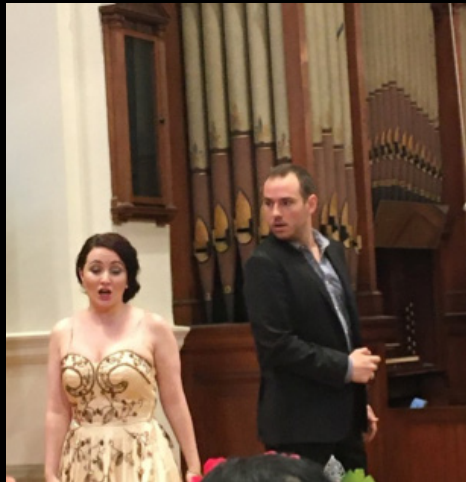
To promote the music of Richard Wagner and his contemporaries and to encourage a wider understanding of their work.
To support the training of young Wagnerian or potential Wagnerian performers from NSW.

EVENTS

Dr Robert Mitchell talking to members about Wagner and Paris on 27 October at the Goethe Institut



Our Christmas Concert on 17 November at St Columba with Rebecca MacCallion and Daniel Macey accompanied by Dr Bradley Kunda



Leona Geeves presenting the artists with Brangayne wine

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I am writing the President's Report following our attendance at the Huntington Festival in Mudgee, which is planned to be the last one to be held. The final session brought all the musicians playing at the Festival onto the stage, to participate in a piece called A Farewell to Music, commissioned by our late President, Jane Mathews, AO. It was a very moving tribute, using a short poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley, and a powerful acknowledgement to those responsible for the Festival. As Carl Vine wrote, it recognised the end of 30 years of music in the beautiful vineyard and the regret of participants with the end of the Festival.

In Sydney, the Wagner Society has had some very interesting recent meetings. In September we heard members who had tickets for Bayreuth describing the operas they had seen. Other members joined in talking about other operas seen in Europe this year. In October, Robert Mitchell, who has been a leader in the Opera Australia chorus, gave a presentation on Wagner in Paris and Riga and the influence of other composers on him during his development. In December our Christmas concert was very enjoyable. We had three young performers, one a pianist and two singers. We owe thanks to Leona Geeves for organizing this concert.

The events committee have put together an exceptional series of events for 2020 starting in February with a memorial concert for Jane with maestro Anthony Negus and singers encouraged by Jane. Details are on the Coming Events page. During the year there will be a series of talks giving insights into the major performances coming up - *Lohengrin* in Melbourne and *the Ring* in Brisbane. First up in March is Antony Ernst talking about *the Ring*, followed in later months by Peter Bassett on *Lohengrin*. A summary of all events in 2020 is on the For Your Diary page.

Society members can take much pride in our organization. 2020 is our 40th anniversary year. I would like to encourage members to renew their subscriptions and bring along their friends to our monthly meetings. We should be proud of this organization rising from a small membership to now as a dynamic and lively forum for discussion.

I would like to draw members' attention to the sad death of John Wegner AO on 19 November. John was a significant contributor to the recent growth in performances of Wagner. The Society made him Honorary Life Member for his contribution to Wagner in Australia.

President Colleen Chesterman

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear members, I hope you enjoy this December edition.

I wish to thank Alan Mulhern for the second of his two articles, written specifically for the Quarterly.

Thank you to esteemed Honorary Life Member and Past President Richard King for allowing me to republish his recollections of the early days of the society. In 2020 the society will celebrate its 40th anniversary and publish a special issue of the Quarterly. We'll need members' help. Please send me your recollections (a couple of sentences will be fine), photos, programmes, etc, so I can build up a picture of what the society has meant to its members over 40 years.

Email:

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Mike Day

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FOR YOUR DIARY

2020

5 Jan 2020	<i>Die Walkure</i> with Warwick Fyfe as Wotan. Singapore	Singapore
16 – 29 May 2020	<i>Lohengrin</i> . New OA/La Monnaie co-production conducted by Johannes Fritsch	Melbourne
28, 31 Oct 2020	Opera Queensland presents semi-staged <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> at QPAC	Brisbane
10 Nov – 5 Dec 2020	Opera Australia presents 3 cycles of a new Ring at QPAC	Brisbane

COMING EVENTS 2020 - 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
Thur 27 Feb	7.30 Jane Mathews memorial concert with Anthony Negus and singers	St Columba
22 March	12.30 DVD <i>Die Walkure</i> Act 1 2.00 Antony Ernst on the Ring	Goethe Institut
19 April	12.30 DVD TBC 2.00 Tabatha McFadyen	Goethe Institut
10 May	1.00 AGM 2.00 Peter Bassett on <i>Lohengrin</i> followed by Wagner birthday drinks	Goethe Institut
26 July	12.30 DVD TBC 2.00 Warwick Fyfe talking about his first Wotan	Goethe Institut
Aug	12.30 TBC	
27 Sept	2.00 Special event to celebrate 40 years since Wagner lovers met in Bayreuth and agreed to start a Wagner Society in Australia. Details TBC	TBC
18 Oct	12.30 DVD TBC 2.00 David Larkin on the Ring	Goethe Institut
8 Nov	Christmas party with special guest Maestro. TBC	St Columba

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)

WAGNER SOCIETY NEWSLETTERS AND QUARTERLIES ONLINE

Thanks to the work of Dr Terence Watson and also Leona Geeves, the online library of Wagner Society Newsletters and Quarterlies is now complete. Every publication, from the first Newsletter dated February 1981 to the latest December 2019 Quarterly, is now on the Society's web page: wagner.org.au/society-newsletter. Please note that, as this web page is accessible only to members of the Society, members will need to log in.

BAYREUTH 2020 TICKET ALLOCATION

In September the International Wagner Verband and the Bayreuth Festival announced a new system for the allocation of Bayreuth 2020 tickets. On 29 November the Verband reversed their decision and have reverted to the old system where members of the Wagner Society in NSW can apply for tickets through the Society. We are then allocated seats according to the Verband's quota for the society, which is based on the total membership number on 1 January. If you are considering going and have yet to apply for tickets please contact Vice President Esteban Insausti EINSAUST@bigpond.net.au

OBITUARY JOHN WEGNER AO

We sadly note the passing of John Wegner AO on 19 November. John was made an Honorary Life Member of the Society in 2015 in recognition of his outstanding operatic achievements. He was helped considerably by the Society in his early career and he in turn generously contributed to the life of the Society, giving talks to members on many occasions. It was about the time of the 1988 Meistersinger, where he sang the Nightwatchmen to great acclaim that he got involved with the Wagner Society. He had won the Bayreuth Scholarship in 1987, for which we sponsored the air fare. He sang or spoke at the Wagner Dinner in 1988 at the Menzies Hotel.

John Wegner is one of opera's success stories who went from being in the chorus for the Australian opera in Melbourne to becoming a leading Wagnerian Helden Baritone at Bayreuth and elsewhere.

Born in West Germany, John was just five when he moved to Australia. When his mother died soon afterwards, John was raised by his older brother in Melbourne. Steadily adapting to his new environment, John successfully auditioned for the St. Patrick's Cathedral choir - one of his earliest Melbourne musical experiences. John later completed an Associate Diploma in Opera and Music Theatre at the Victorian College of the Arts. He performed many roles to great acclaim with the Australian Opera as a Bass for eleven years from 1981, before moving to Europe to study the Helden Baritone repertoire at the



As Teleramund in Vienna 2009



With Dame Joan Sutherland in Les Huguenots 1990

Badisches Staatstheater, Karlsruhe where he made his European debut as Jochanaan in *Salome*.

John sang with iconic singers such as Dame Joan Sutherland and performed in many famous theatres worldwide - from La Scala Milan to the Royal Opera House Covent Garden and the Sydney Opera House. He first performed in the Bayreuther Festspiele in 1997 singing Donner in *Das Rheingold*. He returned in 2002 as Biterolf in *Tannhäuser* and eventually sang five different roles in six seasons at Bayreuth. These included Telramund in the 2003 *Lohengrin* and Kurwenal in the 2006 *Tristan and Isolde* as well as covering most of the major Helden Baritone roles during the festivals. From 2004 to 2006 he caused a sensation as the sinister Klingsor in the controversial and thought-provoking production of *Parsifal* by Christof Schlingensief.

John sang Wotan/Wanderer in the 1998 Adelaide *Ring* and Alberich in the 2004 Adelaide production. Unfortunately, his diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease in 2014 prevented him from appearing in his third Australian *Ring* Cycle, in Melbourne.

A five-time Helpmann and Mo Award winner for "best male performer in an opera", John was in 2016 awarded the AO for distinguished service to the performing arts as a world-renowned operatic bass-baritone, and as an ambassador for the cultural reputation of Australia.

THE RAVEN'S REPORTING

COMPILED BY CAMRON DYER

There is a regularly updated list of upcoming performances worldwide of Wagner's works on the Society's web page: wagner.org.au/ravens-reporting that takes the list to 2024

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

A new easy and streamlined payment method, set up by member Florian Hammerbacher, is being introduced for 2020 and onwards.

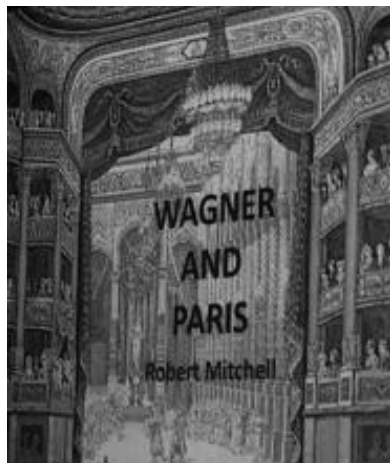
Each member will be sent a customised invoice by email. You can pay by Visa, Mastercard and Amex, and a receipt will be emailed on receipt of payment.

Members who do not have email addresses will be sent a letter listing alternative payment methods.

Rates are: Single \$75 | Double \$110 | Pensioner Single \$45
Pensioner Double \$65 | Student \$25

REPORTS ON RECENT MEETINGS

27 OCTOBER DR ROBERT MITCHELL



Longstanding Wagner Society member Robert Mitchell informed and entertained us with a talk about some early influences on Wagner during his time spent in Paris and Riga, illustrated with slides and recordings of relevant composers and their works.

Wagner's first period in Paris 1839 – 42 was spent mostly with the National Opera at the Salle le Peletier. The building burnt down in 1873 - two years before the Palais Garnier was finished after 14 years of design and construction (about the same length of time as the Sydney Opera House). Wagner hugely admired Paris, despite the general lack of enthusiasm the French showed towards his works. In his *Music of the Future* (1860). Wagner wrote about how inspired he was by the great operas he saw in Paris and in 1867 he wrote to King Ludwig about Paris being “.... the cultural capital of the world – a city of infinity variety, brilliance, and filth”.

Before Paris Wagner had spent 2 years in Riga at the City Theatre conducting a broad repertoire of French, German and Italian works. In Riga he also worked as a journalist and recorded that he very much liked *La Muette de Portici* (1828) by Daniel Auber (1782 – 1871). This opera became a model for *Rienzi*, which Wagner started composing in Riga. Robert played a recording of an excerpt from *La Muette de*

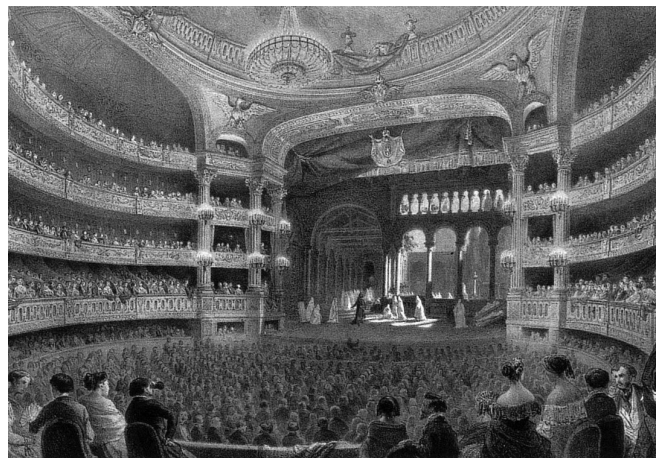
Portici, pointing out Auber's use of rhyming couplets in the libretto similar to those used in *Rienzi*.

Later in his career Wagner became very critical of some French composers, but he did pay tribute to **Étienne-Nicolas Méhul (1763 - 1817) and Fromental Halévy (1799 – 1862), whose works he saw in Paris.** Robert played excerpts and showed the texts from Méhul's *Joseph* (1807) and Halévy's *La Juive* (1835) plus an excerpt from *Guillaume Tell* (1829) by Gioachino Rossini (1792 – 1868). Wagner described this opera as “.... a model of expressive declamation.”

Robert argued that all these operas had elements which contributed to *Rienzi*. Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791 – 1864) recommended *Rienzi* to the Dresden Opera and in 1842 Wagner moved there for the first performance. He stayed for 7 years and premiered *Der fliegende Holländer* **there in 1843 and Tannhauser** in 1845.

Wagner had brief trips to Paris in 1849, 1850 and 1858 and between 1859 and 1861 conducted concerts and prepared for the production of *Tannhauser*. The 1861 premiere at the Salle le Peletier was a debacle and the opera was withdrawn after only 3 performances. Although it was to take three decades before Wagner's name would again appear at the Paris Opera, under the Second Empire, a circle of fervent advocates of his music formed including Baudelaire, Champfleury, Mendès, Pauline Viardot, Gounod and Padeloup who put on *Rienzi* **at the Théâtre Lyrique in 1869.**

Robert concluded his very interesting talk with a long excerpt from Act 1 of *La Juive*, which is being presented by Opera Australia in July 2020



Tannhauser at Salle le Peletier



La Juive 1835 Premiere

RIGA, THE CITY OF WAGNER'S YOUTH by Viacheslav Vlasov

Richard Wagner lived and worked in Riga from 1837 to 1839. Six facts from the biography of the young (24-27-year old) composer will give us an idea of what his Riga youth was like, and what place did Riga occupy in his life and work.

1. Flight from creditors. Need brought Wagner to Riga. Almost all his life, and especially during his youth, he lived in debt. Persecuted by creditors, the young composer grasped the offer of the position of Kapellmeister of the local theater in Königsberg. Unfortunate fate would befall him as the theater was soon bankrupt. Riga was his only real opportunity to escape and earn money to cover the debts. So in 1837, Wagner became the conductor of the Riga German Theatre. The city sheltered him but dreams of a large salary, allowing him to live in style, remained dreams.

2. First Infidelities. Wagner fled to Riga not only to escape the creditors but also to avoid a desperate situation in his private life. Already in Königsberg, his young wife-actress Minna has left him and ran away with some other gentleman. Well paid work in Riga might allow him to return his wife and provide her with the carefree home life she desired. In 1838, Minna came to Riga and reunited with Richard, but she could not stick to her word and suppress her frivolous nature known even before her marriage to Wagner. As fate would have it, she succumbed to the courtship of the director of the local opera house.

3. Ideas for his own theatre. Wagner did not like The Riga German Theatre. It was tiny. Still, from there he adopted several ideas for design of his own theatre in Bayreuth, i.e. deeply located orchestra; dark auditorium; lack of luxury in décor; a very few boxes; seats located in the ascending order: all this he owed Riga.

4. *Rienzi*. Wagner was distressed by the need to write vaudeville-like opera. He wanted to create a serious, real Opera. But the public willingly visited and paid money for vaudeville, and the money was much needed by the composer. If not Riga, the Parisian audience would certainly appreciate the real opera, thought Wagner, and in between the “vaudeville”, he created the opera *Rienzi*. During the years of his life in Riga, Wagner finished the libretto, the first and second acts of the opera.



Former Riga German Theatre

5. Facing the orchestra. There is a joke which has its roots in Riga about how, when addressing a conductor, one music official said: “And why, my dear, are you standing with your back to the hall? You will have a venerable respected audience listening to you!” This official meticulously followed old etiquette standards and considered it mandatory for conductor to lead the orchestra facing the public. Etiquette was radically changed in Riga in 1837 when the young conductor, Richard Wagner turned to face the orchestra to achieve more contact with the musicians. Since then this has become a new standard.

6. Overture to commemorate the memory of Riga. Vanity and arrogance in the young composer increased from year to year. And, so did his debts. He hated the idea of sharing his wife with Minna’s frustrated admirer – the director of the German Theatre. Ultimately, the director dismisses Wagner. In 1839, the Wagners flee from Riga on a smuggler’s ship. They dreamed of getting to Paris. Riga’s farewell to them was an enormous sea storm. It was this storm that composer commemorated later in the famous overture to the opera *The Flying Dutchman*.

To summarize; over the course of two years Riga gave Richard Wagner quite a lot: shelter from bondage; family reunion; new ambitions; ideas for his own theater and sounds of the sea storm for the overture to his first really serious opera *The Flying Dutchman*. It can rightfully be said that Wagner’s conducting style, as well as opera *Rienzi*, genuinely belong to Riga.

Extract from https://www.richard-wagner.org/userdata/filegallery/original/106_1707_wagners_riga

29 SEPTEMBER WAGNER AROUND THE WORLD

Following a gem of a documentary “The Searchers of the Grail” a small but committed group of members gathered at the Goethe Institute to hear the thoughts on Wagner productions seen at Bayreuth and elsewhere over the past year. After a brief introduction by our President Colleen Chesterman and a few words about our late beloved former President Jane Matthews we were off on analysing the last Bayreuth season. Hugh Hallard (799) started proceedings with a detailed account of his experience of Barry Kosky’s “*Meistersinger*”. With fresh memories of the video (for those of us who haven’t had the opportunity to see it live) Hugh took us through that landmark production.

Next David May (1146) and Ross Whitelaw (527) took us through the balance of the Bayreuth season: *Parsifal*, *Tristan und Isolde* and a new strange *Tannhauser*. Ross also spoke about a revival of the *Lohengrin* which wasn’t part of the Society’s allocation to which he was lucky enough to have a ticket. As an antidote to the craziness of the Bayreuth *Tannhauser*, Esteban Insausti (433) spoke about a new production in Amsterdam set wholly in the Salle Le Peletier bringing all sorts of overtones to the Paris version of the

score. Esteban also quickly showed a production of *Rienzi* from the Deutsche Oper Berlin and a *Meistersinger* with an all legend cast of Meisters from the Staatsoper unten den Linden.

Founding member Susan Kelly (4) spoke of *the Ring* from Dusseldorf (Ring am Rhein) with passion and humour. We were left with no uncertainty as to her endorsement to avoid this production. This brought some general discussion about young directors and their perceived disservice to the music of Wagner. Esteban, as quasi moderator for the afternoon, once again pleaded for an understanding and acceptance of German contemporary theatre in the context of a very busy and lively theatre/opera scene which encourages a discourse across productions far richer in history and politics than we would experience here in Australia. After passions had been stirred we all repaired to the foyer for much need sausages *mit senf*, some sauerkraut and beer. To be continued in 2020...

Esteban Insausti

17 NOVEMBER CHRISTMAS CONCERT

This year’s Christmas Concert was an absolute delight. Three attractive young Australian artists thoroughly entertained us with a wonderful mix of lieder, arias and duets. Soprano Rebecca MacCallion demonstrated a beautiful voice and sensitive acting in the Wolf and Strauss lieder and was very vivacious and expressive with baritone Daniel Macey in the Mozart duets. Rebecca was delightful in the Lehar, interacting with the appreciate audience and being very playful with her lively accompanist husband Dr Bradley Kunda. The Society sponsored the couple earlier this year for a period of study at the Berlin Opera Academy and they are moving to Berlin in 2020. We wish them every success.

Daniel Macey was also a very engaging performer, equally convincing as serious Beethoven, slightly camp Korngold and lecherous Mozart characters. Daniel won the Wagner Society in NSW Best German Lied Award at the Sydney International Song Prize 2019 with his Beethoven cycle. We look forward to watching his Australian and international careers develop.

As a wonderful finale we were spontaneously treated to a passionate performance of Chopin’s Revolutionary Study, one of the Op 10 Etudes, by visiting young Bulgarian pianist Evgeny Genchez, in Sydney for the Glebe Music Festival. Thanks to Honorary Life Member Dennis Mather for organising this surprise Christmas gift.

The concert was followed by the traditional raffle to help raise money to support young artists plus delicious savouries and cakes with wine and bubbles.

Many thanks to Leona Geeves for organising the artists

PROGRAMME

Hugo Wolf

In dem Schatten meiner Locken
Das verlassene Mägdlein

Ludwig v. Beethoven

An die ferne Geliebte

Richard Strauss

Zueignung
Morgen

Engelbert Humperdinck

Eine Hex’steinalt, Haust tief im Wald
(*Hänsel und Gretel*)

Erich Korngold

Mein Sehnen, mein Wähnen (*Die Tote Stadt*)

Franz Lehar

Meine Lippen, sie küssen so heiß (*Giuditta*)

Wolfgang Mozart

La ci darem la mano (*Don Giovanni*)
Crudel! Perché finora (*Le Nozze di Figaro*)

FUTURE WAGNER SOCIETY EVENTS

27 FEBRUARY 2020

JANE MATHEWS TRIBUTE CONCERT

7.30pm St Columba, Ocean St, Woollahra

Maestro Anthony Negus has very generously offered to contribute a musical evening in honour of his recently deceased close friend Jane Mathews. He will accompany singers Pamela Andrews, Eleanor Greenwood and Laura Scandizzo in a program of works by Wagner, Richard Strauss and others. Program details will be emailed to members closer to the event. The Society is grateful to Leona Geeves for organising the event. Please bring your friends along.



The Honourable Jane Mathews AO



Maestro Anthony Negus



Pamela Andrews



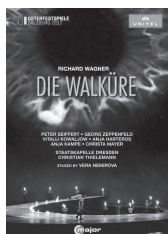
Eleanor Greenwood



Laura Scandizzo

22 MARCH

12.30PM DVD: DIE WALKÜRE ACT 1



This Walküre was staged at Salzburg in 2017 but harks back to an earlier era. That year marked the 50th anniversary of the Salzburg Easter Festival, and to commemorate the occasion, the first production in the event's history was re-created. So what we have is the Karajan/Schneider-Siemssen with some slight adjustments for modern times by director

Vera Nemirova. The cast is outstanding, with Peter Seiffert as Siegmund and Anja Harteros as Sieglinde, and with Christian Thielmann conducting the Staatskapelle Dresden.

2.00PM DR ANTONY ERNST

Wagner Society favourite Dr Antony Ernst will talk about "The Ring – where myth, music and psychology meet." (Valuable background for members going to Brisbane).

COMMITTEE 2019 - 2020

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WAGNER: FROM REVOLUTIONARY TO MYSTIC - PART 2

by Alan Mulhern - Jungian Analyst

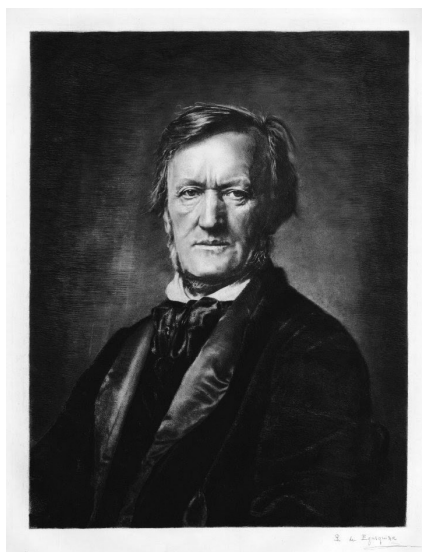
Wagner's Ring Cycle is a mytho-music-drama, which means its subject is the origins, development, and destiny of human consciousness. It is in four parts, each a mighty opera-drama in its own right.

Das Rheingold illustrates the origins of the gold in the Rhine (symbol of the unconscious, the primeval beginnings), guarded by the Rhine-maidens (the benevolent forces of nature), and how the abuse of power (human nature) to control the ring leads to the loss of love and our primal innocence.

Die Walküre shows the fall into conflict, the struggle for power, and the emergence of hatred and division that characterises humans in their fallen condition. Yet the love between Siegmund and Sieglinde is a light in the darkness at the start of this opera while the fate of Brunhilde, the fallen child of Wotan, is the dramatic focus at its end. The mortalisation of Brunhilde is the descent of the gods into Mankind – rather like Christ into human form.

Siegfried is brought up in ignorance of his parents, fights the dragon, unconsciously gains the ring. By this means he wins Brunhilde who has been set on a mountain surrounded by fire. The hero is a symbol of human consciousness freed of its constraints and fulfilling its great potentiality. But it is the love between two humans that is its realisation. However, the Ring carries its curse – those who possess it cannot love. Thus, the human condition is caught in a deep contradiction between love and power. Siegfried defeats the lower powers (the dragon and Mime the dwarf) and the higher realm (Wotan). But the human realm turns out to be totally treacherous. Siegfried therefore symbolises modern mankind freed from superstition, who rejects and destroys the Gods of religious civilisation (Wotan) and at first overcomes the forces of the underworld and frees the ring from its imprisonment. However, it carries a curse since power and wealth (i.e. the aims of our civilization) destroy love. We could extend this into modern times by arguing that the earth, our mother, is destroyed by our science, greed, and insistence on power.

In *Götterdämmerung* Siegfried turns out to be a flawed hero who after creating a new world with Brunhilde – pure love of man and woman - loses it through foolishness, pride, and lust. Brunhilde, who he betrays so cruelly, leads the old order of the Gods to its final destruction in an ecstatic farewell and the ring returns to the Rhine. Is this a possible redemption through the feminine? Or is this the Schopenhauerian negation of the will, the giving up of the world and its illusions? Is Wotan's great acceptance of the fate of himself and the gods (patriarchal civilisation?) also an expression of this philosophy? Wagner continually changed the ending and I suspect it was one of the most difficult decisions of this great music-drama. When it was pointed out to him that since the Ring was restored to the Rhine Maidens there was no need for the Gods to fall he



Wagner by Rogelio de Egusquiza

replied the meaning was in the music rather than the script - not exactly a satisfactory answer from someone who crafted his drama with such thoroughness and mastery. In the end it was left deliberately ambiguous and we are left to "read" into it what we can. For my part I feel the ending carries sublime resolution. The totality of struggle of the human species, all its hopes, sufferings, passions, greed, and love find their peace only in death, either of the individual or the human species itself. It is the great abnegation and therefore it is indeed a Schopenhauerian ending for it was this philosophy that, by his own admission, filled Wagner's vision.

The symbolic significance of this great opera cycle is in terms of human consciousness and its key dilemmas. When Wagner constructed the libretto and plot of The Ring Cycle he was an atheist and believed, like Feuerbach, that mankind should replace the gods. However, Wagner always believed that religious myths contained essential deep and valuable truths – what Jungians call archetypes. Science, the horde of knowledge that is accumulated through industry and science, destroys religion but as Feuerbach argued it is Art that comes to replace religious feeling. For Schopenhauer it was music that had the supreme ability to do this.

Wagner, true his artistic instincts, was increasingly constructing a vast creation myth. So that by the time he arrives back (remember he is working backwards on the libretti) to the beginning he starts with such a myth – the gold in the Rhine and its theft is actually a myth quite similar to that of the book of Genesis of the Old Testament. The bible has the Garden of Eden, temptation, eating of the apple (becoming conscious), sin and the fall, the consequences for mankind, possible redemption. *The Ring Cycle* has the primal state of humanity in nature (the Rhine), the theft of the gold, the loss of primal innocence and the loss of love through the lust for power; a fallen state of mankind and possible redemption. Wagner is modelling his grand myth of humanity on the creation myths of which genesis is an outstanding example. In other words he is following, perhaps unconsciously, an underlying archetypal template.

Wagner believed, like Carl Jung, that human consciousness and its drama can only be expressed in symbols. He believed that institutional religion had fixed and made rigid the dynamism, complexity and fluidity of these symbols and then forced them on mankind through repression and persecution. However Art, and especially music, with its fluid imagination, its capacity to play and suspend reason, can free these symbols from the human craving for power that has paralysed them. Art, in Wagner's view, replaces religion. Certainly whenever one leaves a good Ring production there is a certain ecstasy in the audience who sense some great mystery has been revealed – perhaps like the Orphic or Eleusian mysteries of Ancient

Greece. What they have participated in, I suggest, is a creation myth with the state and destiny of humanity as its major focus: all of this in a magnificent music drama with incomparable music. Nothing like this has been attempted in the history of Art (except, arguably, for William Blake) and certainly not in music. It is a superlative achievement.

Schopenhauer and *The Ring*

Schopenhauer maintained we are the embodiment of the metaphysical will, so that willing, longing craving are our basic nature. Music is also a manifestation of that metaphysical will, its voice in the empirical world. It is like the voice of the Delphic oracle which requires an archetypal sensitivity to interpret. Music, as conceived by Schopenhauer and created by Wagner directly corresponds to the truth of inner being.

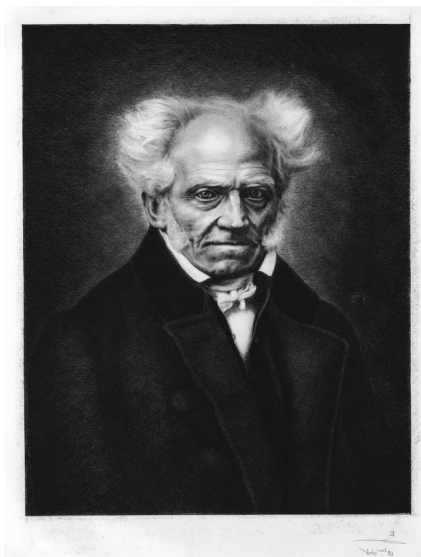
Music, says Schopenhauer (and to grossly simplify), essentially, creates and represents our desires and conflicts, explores them and then tries to satisfy or resolve them. Well, that is like our life – creation of wants and the intense desire to fulfil them. Eventually it is only the end of life, of the piece of music, that terminates our insatiable longing. Suspension and prolonged non-resolution of musical phrases maintain unsatisfied desire – again like life, like human consciousness itself. And Wagner takes this idea and builds into his operas - especially *Tristan and Isolde*. But it is increasingly there as the *Ring Cycle* progresses.

Guided by Schopenhauer and increasingly by his own instincts the music becomes the supreme guiding force and the stage action is the surface phenomenon. The music becomes the true underlying reality – the noumenon – to use Kantian and Schopenhauerian terminology. There is a liberation of orchestral mastery and the leitmotifs develop great complexity of meaning. Wagner is liberated by his interpretation of Schopenhauer's argument that music is the supreme art form. Yet, the musical meaning and drama are tightly inter-related (like the unconscious and the ego in Jungian psychology); there is a powerful philosophical and metaphysical argument developing across the vast arc of *the Ring Cycle* and the music matches this with equivalent grand structural but dynamic links (the leitmotifs are one example of this) that span the whole cycle creating an awesome impact that is outside of reason, arousing archetypal and spiritual instincts, at times in numinous ecstasy. The noumenon, the underlying reality, the deep unconscious has been created, demonstrated and experienced through music and is an initiation drama, that is a passage to a higher stage of consciousness.

Die Walküre is about the impossibility of love in the world – straight Schopenhauer. From now on everything in the opera sub-serves the music which is a manifestation of this metaphysical will. The invisible reality is the music which is manifested on the stage and in words.

Following Kant we have then the Schopenhauerian philosophy that the phenomenal world, is constructed by our consciousness. There are a priori, that is to say pre-existing, pre-structuring categories of space, time and causality that

determine the very nature of our experience. Behind it there is a noumenal world impossible to reach according to Kant but according to Schopenhauer we can glimpse it through certain experiences in sexuality, compassionate love, and in music. Wagner takes this possibility of entrance into the noumenal very seriously and builds his late operas around them. He is very clear on this point:



Schopenhauer by Rogelio de Egusquiza

“As we construct the phenomenal world by application of the laws of space and time which exist a priori in our brain, so this conscious representation of the Idea of the world in the drama would be conditioned by the inner laws of music, which assert themselves in the dramatist unconsciously, much as we draw on the laws of casualty in our perception of the phenomenal world.”

Brian Magee comments in *Wagner and Philosophy*: “This is pure Kantian-Schopenhauerian metaphysics turned into a theory of opera”.

The Ring, although it starts off in a philosophical world of political optimism and the importance of reform, finishes, in its musical composition,

in Schopenhauerian tragedy. Nevertheless, as Magee convincingly argues in his excellent book:

“... in *The Ring* the text is important to the understanding of the whole in a way that it is not in *Tristan* or *Parsifal*; we have to comprehend and connect the concepts expressed by the text before we give ourselves spontaneously to the musical expression of the emotions which lie behind these concepts. *The Ring* is unique among great musical stage-works in having at the core of its emotional music-drama a text”.

The Ring is a music-drama which is not merely an allegory or parable. Although Wagner starts consciously in 1848 from the political positions of the young socialist, as the work proceeds he is concerned with philosophical and spiritual matters as well as those of music and drama. He constructed a myth in a similar way that religions do. The great creation myths present the origins, history, dilemmas, and destiny of human consciousness. This is the psyche (the conscious and the unconscious together) reflecting upon the emergence of consciousness itself. This is done through symbolic narratives that are rooted in the deep psyche. This has been the province of the world's religions and their mythologies. Wagner's genius was that he was the first to put this into a musical drama of such magnitude and impact. The requirements for such a task are so enormous that it has not been achieved since and some think never will be again.

Alan Mulhern is director of the *Quest Series* - more information at www.alanmulhern.com

The reader is probably aware of Wagner's veneration of Beethoven. You may be interested in a series of podcasts that have just begun on the subject of Beethoven's 3rd symphony. They explore the role of myth and archetype in this symphony. See <https://alanmulhern.podbean.com/>

APPROACHING 40

This is the first of a series of articles about the past history of the Wagner Society in NSW, leading up to the 40th Anniversary of its founding next year. My thanks to Richard King for providing this piece, published for the 20th Anniversary in 2000. I invite other members to send me their recollections, photos and anecdotes. A sentence or two would be most welcome. Mike Day, Editor

THE WAGNER SOCIETY - 20 YEARS ON

by Richard King

Through the wonderful synchronicity of life, a chance remark opens doors and creates a new realm of experience. Dr Leonard Hansen, making his first visit to Bayreuth in 1980, asked the Lufthansa staff if they knew of other Aussies making the pilgrimage, preferably someone who had been there before. My friends at the airline mention Murray Smith and me as regular visitors, although we were not booked for that year. We already knew Leonard through our work, but we were unaware of his interest in Wagner. During his visit to our gallery, we discussed starting a Society in Australia with the principle aims of promoting Wagner's work, of encouraging singers and musicians, and of demonstrating to our friends at the (then) Australian Opera that there was an audience for Wagner's music dramas.

I had been a member of the British Wagner Society since 1966, but I had failed to obtain any Bayreuth tickets through them. A chance remark at dinner one evening with a friend from Lufthansa enabled me to obtain tickets by flying with that airline. I suggested to Leonard that he obtain a copy of the British Society's constitution and talk with the "Friends of Bayreuth" people during his visit to Europe. We would launch our society on his return.

Leonard was very enthusiastic and convened the first meeting in Bayreuth with several Aussies he had met on the trip. From memory, these were Betty Berryman, Reg and Betty Maloney, Margaret and Clare Hennessey, and Leonard's life partner, Michele Arnould. The gallery, "The Print Room", became our venue for events and the registered office of the Society. At that stage, the thought of incorporation had not been developed, although we were aware of the legal implications should anyone injure themselves while on our premises or participating in an event.

It was a time of "much enthusiasm". Our first public meeting was publicised mainly by word of mouth and a small advert in the Sydney Morning Herald, attracting about thirty people. Many gave extra money to become "foundation members". A few weeks later we had public screening of Wagnerian documentaries at the AMP theatre at Circular Quay. The crowd was so big that many were turned away. The Society was born.

It became a standard joke that we had a business called the Wagner Society and a hobby called The Print Room! We had lectures by our patron, Charles Mackerras (later Sir) picnics, theatre parties, fundraisers, and recording afternoons at the Concordia (German) Club and the gallery. Annual dinners were arranged on or near the Master's birthday.

The membership continued to expand and our reputation, too. Knowledge of our existence and endeavours began to spread interstate with various people taking on the task of forming their own state Societies. As far as I know, all are still in existence and thriving, as is our group. Our friends at the Australian Opera began to realise we were a force to be reckoned with. One evening, for example, a group of us went to a restaurant at Darlinghurst frequented by the Opera's top brass and singers. As we walked in, Moffat Oxenbould said "Look out! Here's the Wagner mafia!"

We sponsored the Bayreuth Scholarship, but later provided the airfare for the Scholarship winner. Sponsorship of headline singers in AO productions also gave the Society a high profile by being acknowledged in the programs and, often, by having "flyers" placed on the seats, thus encouraging more people to join. Leonard would often match, dollar for dollar, the amount the Society would donate to AO productions. He dearly loved the Society, giving all his spare time to running it, as did our Committee members. There was always a lot of paperwork, as well as the constant demands of making good contacts.

Our guests of honour at our annual dinners regaled us with song or repartee. Werner Bauer, for example, gave very generously of his time and experience, accompanying our singers and finishing with a rendition of Happy Birthday as though composed by Wagner himself.

Leonard became unwell in the late 1980s and stood down as President. I succeeded him for a number of years. The indomitable Olive Coonan then followed and, through her tenacity, continued our steady growth. The Goethe Institut in Woollahra became our second home. Jessie Anderson's memorable spreads of fine food in excellent quantities have passed into folklore. Jessie and Keith have retired to the country, as have I.

When Leonard was President he would not keep the Committee members disciplined and on the subject. He loved hearing about everyone's experiences of all subjects. On the other hand, Olive would only allow a short time to outline the agenda item; no one was allowed to interrupt. The Chairman of the British Society sat in on a meeting one evening. Leonard later asked him how our meetings compared with theirs. The visitor said he was amazed by the amount of material the Committee got through in such a short time. Olive would say of me: "He doesn't even butter you up, before he tells you off!" By and large, we had great fun at these meetings with only the odd occasion when "ideologies" clashed.

No Committee members were reimbursed. When a member would continually criticise or complain about our way of working, I would always invite them onto the Committee. Our secretaries have done a wonderful job of keeping minutes, typing correspondence, etc. Keeping the membership records was a particularly onerous task. The ticketing for theatre parties and Bayreuth was very time consuming. All those who have resigned or passed on over the years gave their all. We were very fortunate to have such great people on board.

As I used to say at many gatherings of members and friends, there are people being born into the physical realm and then dying without ever experiencing the spiritual journey of Wagner. To me, life would not have been complete if I had never turned the handle and opened the door to something so life enhancing. Here's to the Wagner Society in NSW (and like Societies elsewhere)! May it continue to grow and prosper!

(Clare Hennessey asked me to write this memoir and if I have not mentioned someone, who should have been recognised, please forgive; it is not intentional.)

Richard King, Member No. 15
Past President
Honorary Life Member

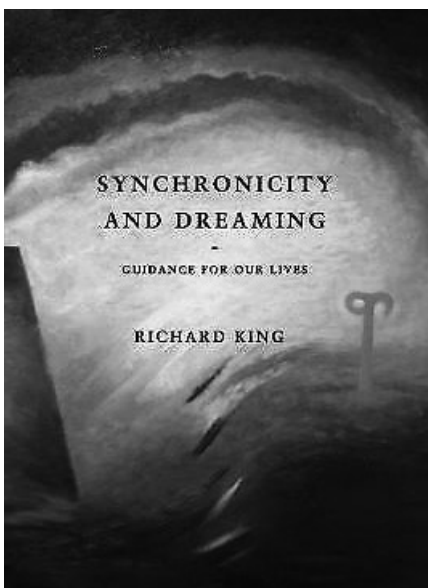


Dr Leonard Hansen *Sir Charles Mackerras*



John Wegner c 1988 *Paul Frey.*
Goethe Institute Sydney

From Richard King's photo album
 Top: Dr Leonard Hansen with Sir Charles Mackerras
 Bottom: John Wegner and Paul Frey



SYNCHRONICITY AND DREAMING

Is a book based upon the author Richard King's own experiences of synchronistic events and dreams over seventy years, from which he carved out his own path, philosophy, self-reliance and responsibility. This led him to understand life's infinite possibilities and abundance - should we take the time to contemplate one's inner journey with gratitude and compassion for all sentient beings, with redemption even for what appears to be the most vile one can imagine... By taking stock of daily events, one realises he or she is in the right lane travelling in the right direction on life's highway. The transit stops being just inner peace and happiness, the destination beyond our wildest imagination.

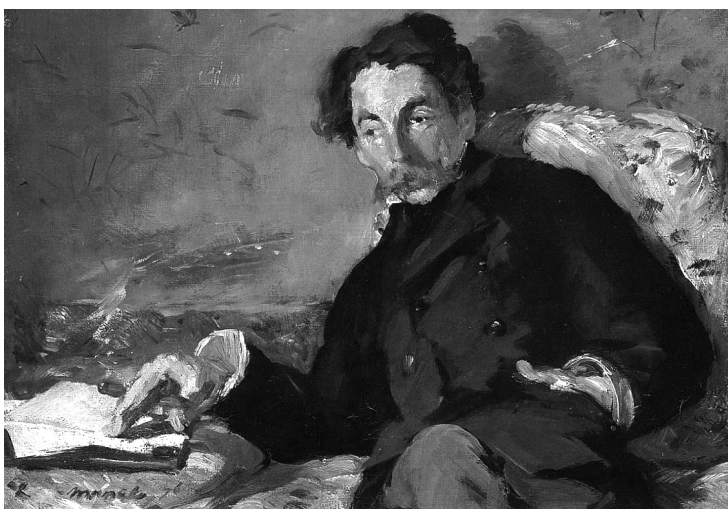
HOMAGE TO RICHARD WAGNER

Stephane Mallarme 1842 - 1898

The silence now funereal of a pall
Spreads more than one fold on this furniture
Which must with lack of memory bestir
A collapsing of the central pedestal.

Our old triumphal sport of the magic book,
Hieroglyphs exciting many still
To spread with wings a too familial thrill -
Bury it rather in a cupboard-nook.

From smiling loather original uproar
To those of mighty splendours has sprung forth
In temple courtyard for their image fashioned,
Loud golden horns aswoon on vellum, the god
Richard Wagner glittering consecration
Ill silenced even by ink in sibylline sobs.



Stephane Mallarme by Edouard Manet 1876

NOTE

Extract from *Mallarmé Contra Wagner* by Eric Lawrence Gans, *Philosophy and Literature*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Volume 25, Number 1, April 2001

In early 1885, Edouard Dujardin wrote to Stéphane Mallarmé for a contribution to his newly founded *Revue wagnérienne*. Mallarmé, admitting that he had never seen--and perhaps never heard--anything of Wagner, replied to Dujardin in July that he was working on a "half article, half prose poem," and that "never has anything seemed to me more difficult." A month later, the *Revue* published a text, more prose poem than article, entitled «Richard Wagner, rêverie d'un poète français.»

Wagner was an increasingly obligatory reference for the French avant-garde after his death in 1883. But as far back as 1862, the 20-year-old Mallarmé, no doubt influenced by Baudelaire's enthusiastic ground-breaking article "Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris" of the year before, had included Wagner along with Mozart and Beethoven in a group of three creators

of the "mystery" of music, in a brief article entitled "Artistic Heresies: Art for Everyone." Characteristically enough, what fascinated the young Mallarmé was not music itself so much as the "signes sévères, chastes, inconnus" ("severe, chaste, unknown signs") (OC, p. 257) with which it was written, which give music the advantage over poetry--written in the universally understood alphabet--of being inaccessible to the uninitiated. This characteristic emphasis on writing over sound reappears in the "Hommage" sonnet for Wagner published in Dujardin's journal in January 1886, where Wagner's music is described as "mal tu par l'encre même en sanglots sibyllins" ("badly silenced by the ink itself in Sibylline sobs") (OC, p. 71). As we shall see, however, the relation between music and poetry suggested in "Art for Everyone" had by then been reversed. [End Page 14]

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MEMBER REVIEW

ANOTHER NOT REVIEW - THE BARENBOIM *RING CYCLE* - SEPTEMBER 2019

by Minnie Biggs, November 19 2019

It was in Berlin, and is it not interesting that we refer to the Bayreuth *Ring*, the Met *Ring*, the San Francisco *Ring*, but not the Berlin *Ring*.

It is the Barenboim *Ring*. There is a good reason why. It is his *Ring*.

Of course he performs it. In His opera House. With His orchestra. With whom he has played for years. Indeed that is what makes all the difference. Not to mention that he has been conducting the *Ring Cycle* for half his life.

The production by Guy Cassiers from 2010, feels dated and a bit ordinary. and that may have been its saving grace. There were no horrors. Occasionally dancers appeared, once or twice one could imagine a reason, a shape they formed- the tarnhelm, for example, as they gathered around Alberich. Other times just dancers moving, sometimes nude, but they did not intrude. The colourful projections chimed in quite well with the story, plenty of brilliant red flames, watery greys. Interesting that there is nothing I can remember of note from the sets and staging, two months later, that stood out as memorable, nor anything disturbing enough to mention- a lot of nude writhing figures in some of the projections? I loved the voluminous skirts. The Rhine maidens, swishing them like water. The Valkyries waved their massive skirts with little strings attached to look like horse riding (!) Brunhilde dragged a vast one around, to the consternation of some, but I found the fabric and movement an enchanting bonus. Erda's skirt or cape rose up to envelop her beautifully.

The first reason I had for going to Berlin was to hear the two most outstanding performers at the Met *Ring* last April. In my opinion the best Siegfried played by Andreas Schlager, and the best ever Wotan, Michael Volle. Wotan never wavered, always sang with the clearest strongest voice. And Siegfried, strong and convincing. Hagen sung by Falk Struckmann was evily outstanding. Simon O'Neill a beautiful impressive Siegmund as was Anja Kampe as Sieglinde. Irene Threorin was Brunhilde, given to some shrieking in the beginning but mercifully she mellowed down. Or up!

But now I know the real reason for going to this *Ring* and it was of course Barenboim. I heard Wagner as never before. The music was seamless. The words: musical, musicality, are the essential ones. The amazing brass were brilliant but never pushing themselves to the fore. They blended, while still bright. I had other-worldly moments with the drums. How was it possible for drums to sound so musical? Was it the drummer, or the conductor and or years of playing together?



A combination of both. Perhaps it is my ever-increasing knowledge and acquaintanceship with the *Ring* but in this performance I heard the remarkable difference in the music in Siegfried at the beginning of Act Three. Yes, there were those 12 years!

While I am in no competition for the *Ring* attendance contest, of the few I have heard I have come to know the story and the music and the profound meaning of the work, the lessons Wagner offers us, the advice he leaves us with. Knowing them better all the time. And I wonder about the Wotan in me, the Fricka, the Brunhilde, even the Alberich- where does he lie in me?

I'd go anywhere for another Barenboim *Ring*. Let's hope.
PS.

Daniel Barenboim conducted the first two Wagner operas and the next night he was at the Pierre Boulez Saal, playing piano for the Beethoven horn sonata and then he conducted the Boulez piece *Sur les Incises* for three pianos, three harps and three percussions. What a man!

Patron:	Ms Simone Young AM
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IN MEMORIUM - JESSYE NORMAN

15 SEPTEMBER 1945 - 30 SEPTEMBER 2019



As Sieglinde at the Met

Jessye Norman was considered one of the world's pre-eminent opera and song performers, blessed with a rich, voluminous, deeply textured voice. As much a mezzo as a soprano, its unique quality was immediately recognisable. It was, as one critic aptly put it, "a mansion of sound". Norman was as likely to be found singing the mezzo solo in Verdi's Requiem as Strauss's high soprano Vier letzte Lieder. She also increasingly favoured off-the-beaten-track operatic roles by Schoenberg or Janáček over standard fare. One of her favourite sayings was, "Pigeonholing is for pigeons".

"I have always been drawn to things other people might consider unusual. I'm always taken by the text and beautiful melody. It's not important to me who has written it. It's just more reasonable to have an open mind about what beauty is," Norman said in a 2002 interview with the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

A native of Augusta, Georgia, Jessye was singing gospel songs in church by age 4. Finishing high-school, she attended Howard University in Washington DC before doing her graduate studies at Peabody and at the University of Michigan. In 1968, she was a finalist in the Metropolitan

Opera Auditions, and appeared on the Met stage for the very first time in the Winners' concert - she sang "Voi lo sapete" from *Cavalleria Rusticana* and «Du bist der Lenz» from *Die Walküre*. Heading to Europe, she won the prestigious ARD Vocal Competition at Munich in 1969, and soon thereafter made her operatic debut as Elisabeth in *Tannhauser* at Deutsche Oper, Berlin. The role of Elisabeth became a standard in her repertory, soon to be joined by a number of other Wagner roles, including *Die Walküre's* Sieglinde and *Parsifal's* Kundry.

After a few seasons of singing opera at such venues as the Maggio Musicale, La Scala, and Covent Garden, Jessye moved to London and for five years concentrated on symphonic and recital work; from 1975 to 1980, she built a sterling reputation in these fields. She returned to opera in 1980, singing Strauss's Ariadne at Hamburg, made her US operatic debut in 1982 singing both Stravinsky's Jocasta and Purcell's Dido at Philadelphia, and came to the Met in 1983 with a thrilling portrayal of Cassandra in *Les Troyens*.

She won five Grammy Awards and received the First-Class Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and the Arts in 2008.

NEWS FROM YOUNG SINGERS SUPPORTED BY THE SOCIETY

REPORT FROM MAIA ANDREWS

I am writing to recount my experiences of intensive study with renowned tenor and vocal teacher Gioacchino (Jack) LiVigni in London at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden and in NYC at the National Opera Centre America earlier this year.

I'm very grateful to the Wagner Society in NSW for making this incredible opportunity possible. Tenor Jack Li Vigni is an internationally in-demand vocal instructor. His first vocal teacher was his own father, dramatic tenor Salvatore LiVigni, but he also coached and studied with many legendary singers including Franco Corelli and Carlo Bergonzi and is also an alumnus of The Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia. He sang countless lyric tenor roles in major opera houses in Europe and America, including the Metropolitan Opera of New York. He is now a voice instructor for Royal Opera House Covent Garden's Jette Parker Young Artist Program, faculty member for Brooklyn College CUNY, and the General Director of the Mediterranean Opera Studio and Festival. He teaches "students of all levels but is selective about talent and will only accept a new student after an initial consultation" as he "believes that learning to sing requires time, patience, determination, consistency, and significant talent" (<http://gioacchinolivigni.com/teaching/>).

I was lucky enough to meet Jack in January of this year in London and he not only accepted me as a student but invited me to learn from him intensively. Thanks to the Wagner Society in NSW, in just under 1 month I had 15 lessons with this vocal technique guru. Jack also invited me to watch the lessons of his other students at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden and at the National Opera Centre, where I learned an immeasurable amount. His technical concepts were cemented in my brain after hearing the difference in his other students, especially the younger sopranos.

Jack sometimes teaches up to 10 hours in a day, so they were very intense days! Jack's ability to control his larynx in such a way that he can mimic the student's sound and then immediately shift to the desired sound, is nothing short of remarkable, not to mention incredibly beneficial to a student. Every question can be answered by this man! He so clearly distinguishes between what is theory and what is practice in a graspable way, which is so important as singing is often described with such intangible concepts. I've had so many teachers with massive amounts of theoretical knowledge of the larynx, but often that information, although very important, is not actually the most useful information to be focusing on while singing. Often with operatic technique, there are many counter-intuitive ideas at play, and I believe Jack explains these concepts as clearly as it gets.

During this study trip, I managed to see Verdi's *La forza del destino* at ROH Covent Garden and of course made many trips to the Metropolitan Opera (*Tosca*, *Don Giovanni*, *Rigoletto*). One major point Jack repeats is that we must always work towards a theatrical sound, which often sounds pretty offensive in a



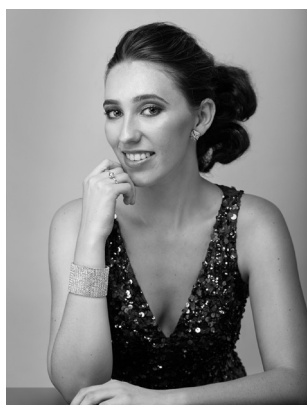
Maia Andrews. Photo Kitt Photography

practice room. It sounds in fact completely ugly in your own head, takes a lot of courage to persist with, and takes faith that it will ring as a beautiful sound in a larger space. I believe a lot of modern singing teachers encourage a beautiful sound for a room, which is great for Lieder, but not so good for the theatrical sound which is required of course for houses like ROH Covent Garden or the Met. Seeing singers like Joseph Calleja, Jonas Kaufmann, George Gagnidze, and Ferruccio Furlanetto, in these houses, I always had Jack's voice ringing around in my head 'now THAT'S a theatrical sound'. Since learning from Jack I was successful in two auditions, both of them landing me the role of Pamina in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, one with the Musikfestival Oper Oder-Spree (which I performed this past European summer 9 times over 2 weeks for an open air festival in Neuzelle and Beeskow in Brandenburg), and one with the Kammeroper Köln which will take place in Cologne next April.

I believe it was Jack's training which got me both vocally and mentally ready for these auditions. I also believe it was his training which got me through my first outdoor (without amplification) summer festival engagement in Germany. Our final rehearsal block consisted of all-day rehearsals for two weeks in the lead up to the premiere, rehearsing outdoors in the heatwave Germany had this year! With no day off in between, we then ran the show 4 times. We finally then had 3 days break, but that's exactly when the audition for the other production of *Die Zauberflöte* was being held in Cologne, so I made the 6 hour trip over to sing Pamina's aria once again (I'm now well and truly over my fear of that very naked aria) and was gladly successful! The rest of the run in Brandenburg was received very well and although it was an intense time, I'm so happy I had the vocal stamina to last the festival with no cover, and also enjoy my stage time with my colleagues without fear. These are the sorts of opportunities that are really building me as a hireable lyric soprano, but it's simply not doable without the right training. This is why I'm so grateful for the funds the Wagner Society in NSW provided me to learn from Jack.

Maia Andrews 19 September 2019

LETTER FROM SARAH PRESTWIDGE



Dear Dr. Colleen
Chesterman,

I am writing to you to inform you of my recent study trip to Munich, Germany. I spent a month in Munich soaking up the opera scene and learning the German language.

During my time in Munich I had the opportunity to work with industry professionals that gave me some incredible insights into what a career in

opera will look like and the 'on the job' skills that I'll need. I learnt about the fach system, how to get an agent, what to expect in an audition, and of course, the complicated framework associated with applying for a visa to Germany. With starry eyes, I spent my spare time watching operas at the Bayerische Staatsoper.

Notable director, Barbara Schone and actress Anneye Krefit guided me through my audition arias and various scenes, coaching me in valuable acting techniques. I had singing lessons with Narelle Martinez each day, which focussed heavily on Bel Canto technique and sustainable breathing. Other distinguished artists that I worked with during this time include; Peter Schone (Baritone), Christopher McMullen-Laird (Conductor) and Martin Cooke (Baritone).

I also studied German language with a tutor as well as practising my German conversation skills at the local coffee shops during my 'kaffee und kuchen' breaks.

As I was participating in the Audition Training Program, I was invited to perform in each masterclass, and I did four mock auditions in preparation for the final agent audition. This final audition was completely in German, including the interview. I received very favourable feedback and advised of additional repertoire that would be suitable for my fach. The programme culminated with a performance that included music from *La Traviata*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Der Schauspieldirektor*, *Candide* and many more.

On return to Australia, I jumped straight into rehearsals for the Pacific Opera 'Scenes Concert', *Carmina Burana* (The soprano solo) in Melbourne, Deborah Cheetham's *Eumeralla* at QPAC and Rockdale Opera Company's *The Gypsy Baron*. It has been a very hectic six months, but the opportunities I've had have been exciting, inspiring and enlightening.

The experience would not have been possible without the generous support of the Wagner Society in NSW with your generous donation towards my study. I thank you again for your support as I navigate the next step in my operatic career.

Kind Regards,
Sarah Prestwidge

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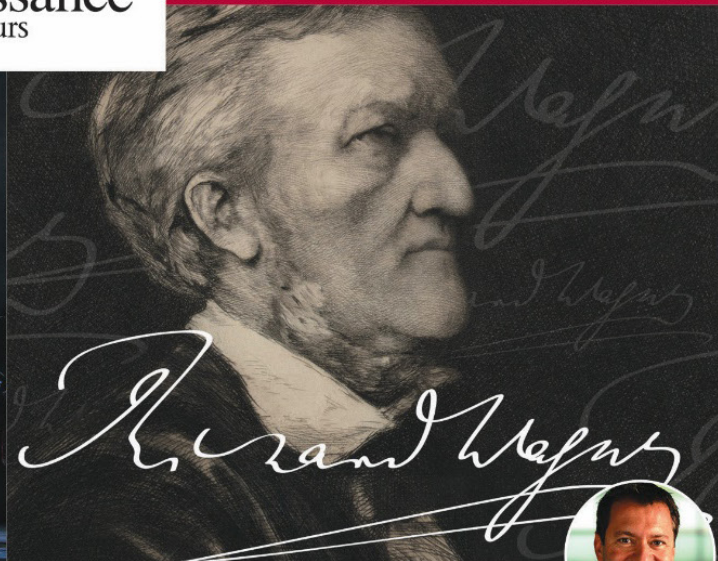
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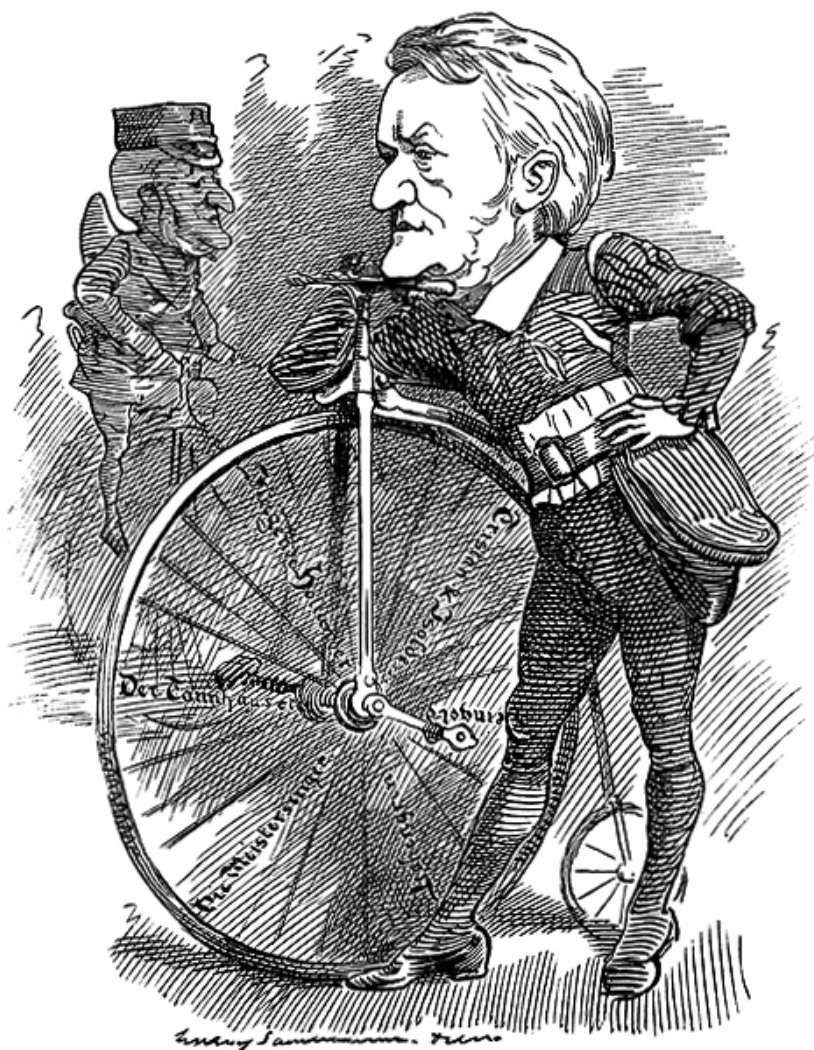
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PUNCH'S FANCY PORTRAITS.—No. 82.



HERR WAGNER,

THE BI-CYCLE-IST OF HER MAJESTY'S AND DRURY LANE.

ADDRESS FOR SUNDAY FUNCTIONS

(unless otherwise advised in Coming Events)

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

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