



A Talk by **ROBERT GAY**
a Wagner Society in NSW Inc event

**Part 2 of The impact of French Grand Opera
on the works of Verdi & Wagner**

2.00PM Sunday 18 September 2022
Goethe Institut

90 Ocean Street (cnr Jersey Road) Woollahra

"The Ballet from *Robert le Diable*" 1876 by Edgar Degas (1834-1917)

To find out more about the Wagner Society in NSW Inc.
please go to: www.wagner.org.au

The impact of French Grand Opera on the works of Verdi & Wagner

Part 2

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French Grand Opera sprang into vigorous life in Paris during the 1830s, with hugely successful works by Meyerbeer, Halévy and others magnificently staged at the Paris Opéra. The early heyday of this new operatic genre marked a formative period for both Verdi and Wagner who were about to embark on their first operatic ventures, culminating for Wagner in the huge success of *Rienzi* – a French Grand Opera in all but language – in Dresden in 1842, and for Verdi with the favourable reception in Paris of *Jérusalem* – a hastily organised rewrite in French of his earlier *Lombardi* – which premiered at the Opéra in 1847.

Verdi went on to compose *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* and *Don Carlos* for two of the Paris *Expositions Universelles*, while Wagner unfairly suffered the indignity of a fiasco at the Opéra with his revised 'Paris version' of *Tannhäuser* in 1861. Nevertheless, many features of French Grand Opera can be clearly discerned in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and perhaps even more surprisingly in *Götterdämmerung* and *Parsifal*.

DONATIONS TO WSNSW

Your Society has a number of recurrent philanthropic projects for which we seek your help. One such project is the **Jane Mathews AO Scholarship**, named in honour of our former President, Justice Jane Mathews AO.

The Society joined with **PACIFIC OPERA** to establish a \$5,000 annual scholarship to help young potential Wagnerians. It also forges stronger ties between our two organisations. The first Scholarship has been awarded to **Ellen McNeil**.



ROBERT GAY

After gaining a BA, Dip. Ed. from the University of Sydney, Robert trained as a lyric baritone in London and Munich before turning to the field of music education with a position at 2MBS-FM. He has taught music history courses at Sydney University's Centre for Continuing Education since 1985. Robert's musical expertise ranges wide, from baroque to modern. He particularly enjoys placing works in their larger contexts – musical, biographical, social and historical. Since 1987, Robert Gay has managed to combine his passion for music and his love of teaching with his enthusiasm for travel. He has visited the great opera houses and concert halls of Europe and America and heard most of the great singers and instrumentalists of the last half-century. Robert was President of the Sydney Schubert Society for eighteen years, and for several years was a guest lecturer for ADFAS.

WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT?

Slegfried, Melbourne Opera at the Elizabeth Murdoch Hall, **September 25**

Jessica Harper, soprano & **Joseph Eisinger**, cello recital at St Columba,
November 6

Christmas Party and **Wagner Reiseberichte** (Wagnerians return with comments & tales from recent travels), **November 27** at Robert Mitchell House