

Sunday 27 March 2022

Talk by Ralph Myers on 'Isolde In Aix'

*A Wagner Society in NSW in-person event
at the Goethe Institut, Woollahra*

Program

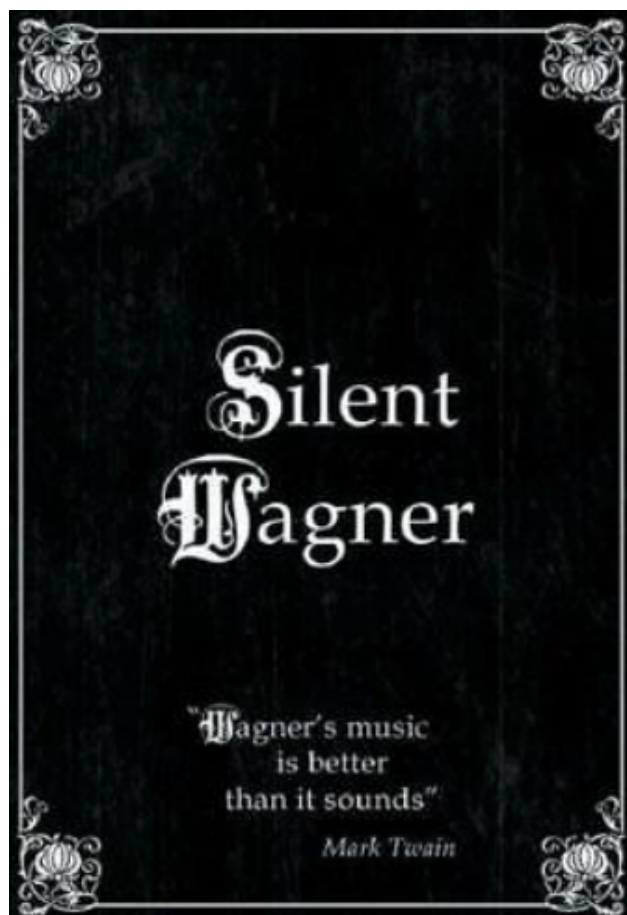
**12.30pm [AEDT]: DVD - Silent Wagner: The Life and Works
of Richard Wagner**

**2.00pm [AEDT]: Talk by Ralph Myers [Designer of the Aix en Provence
Tristan und Isolde] on 'Isolde in Aix'**

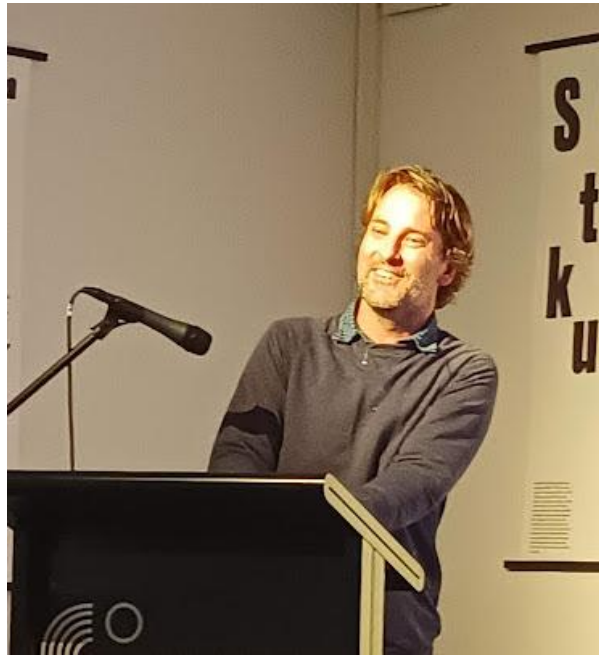
Report

DVD - Silent Wagner: The Life and Works of Richard Wagner

This pioneering 1913 silent movie 'bio-pic' by Carl Fröhlich was a surprising hit with our members, who were very amused by the witty commentary by Tony Palmer about what was happening on the screen and also events from his career as a Wagner chronicler.



Talk by Ralph Myers



Esteban Insausti reports - For our second venture into scenography we were very lucky to host the designer and director **Ralph Myers**. Ralph, who has had a successful career as a designer in Australia and overseas, as well as running the iconic Belvoir Street Theatre as Artistic Director from 2011 to 2015, talked to us about his experience designing the **Simon Stone** directed *Tristan und Isolde* at Aix-en-Provence. It was a candid exposition of the process of “putting on a show” as well as the toll its reception has on individuals. It was surprising that the negative reception had a toll on Ralph, given that it is well known that this is a form of “sport” in European houses. It was also surprising that he felt that part of the blame fell on his shoulders rather than on the director. It was very interesting to hear about Simon Stone’s process or thinking for the production and the cavalier way that he treats the creative team (who would do cartwheels for him). This underscores the subservient role of a designer to the director. Perhaps why some directors cut to the chase and design themselves or designers become directors (for the reverse but similar reason: control). Ralph’s many versions of the design for *Tristan* (see the slides on our website) document Simon Stone’s “thinking” process and highlight Ralph’s professionalism to deliver on the vision. The Aix *Tristan und Isolde* may be “challenging” conceptually but there is no doubt about the quality of the “realistic” set and the beautiful images of the skyline and sea backing the set. I recommend a viewing (it is still available to watch through the Aix website and Medici). On a separate note, the 2021 Aix- en-Provence festival was largely an Aussie affair with 4 major productions by two of our “enfants terribles”, Barrie Kosky (*Falstaff* and *Golden Cockerel*) and Simon Stone (*Tristan und Isolde* + *Innocence* by Kaija Saariaho), as well as Ralph’s designs for Tristan and Stuart Skelton as Tristan himself. Should have been something for us to celebrate as a cultural nation “punching above our weight” but alas only those in the know got to know.