

CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF RICHARD WAGNER

# WAGNER QUARTERLY



THE VALKYRIE ISSUE



ISSUE NO 36

# 163

DECEMBER 2021



Arthur Rackham **Brünnhilde and Grane** 1910

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear members and friends,

Somehow, we have made it through 2021. Another challenging and disruptive year. By this stage, we have enjoyed our last event at Mosman Art Gallery, and you will be reading this, the last Quarterly for 2021. And like me, hopefully plotting and planning a full live cultural engagement with our favourite companies and venues around Sydney and beyond. The Society's event calendar for 2022 (see inside) will also be bigger and varied with the introduction of Zoom Wednesdays – a venture we hope will continue to connect us to our international friends via a medium we've become accustomed to in the last two years. We are still planning the second half of events for 2022.

In my last letter to you for 2021 I want to focus on the work that goes on “behind the scenes” to present you, dear members, with the information and communications on several platforms as well as events throughout a calendar year. Much discussion and planning are undertaken to create a varied but curated programme for you. Ideas, contacts and leads are debated and pursued by the Committee. Finding appropriate venues with the right facilities (including working pianos), availability and universal access is not easy. This work is undertaken by some of our Committee members and it is time consuming. If any of you know or want to suggest a venue please contact us. Finding the artists to perform for us is

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## 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.

# ARIADNE'S CHRISTMAS THREAD CONCERT AT MOSMAN ART GALLERY ON 28 NOVEMBER 2021. PHOTOS BY LIS BERGMAN



Pamela Andrews and Jill Sullivan



Some of the 50 members and friends in the audience



Members enjoy afternoon tea



Michael Curtain



Michael Curtain, Emily Turner, Jill Sullivan and Pamela Andrews with Brangayne wine gifts. Photo: David Greer

## FOR YOUR DIARY

2022

7-13 Feb 2022	<b>Die Walküre</b> Melbourne Opera's second instalment as part of their complete Ring. Conducted by Anthony Negus. Directed by Suzanne Chaundy	Melbourne
14 - 24 May 2022	<b>Lohengrin</b> . New OA/La Monnaie co-production. Conducted by Tahu Matheson	Melbourne

## COMING SOCIETY EVENTS 2022

DAYS AND STARTING TIMES MAY VARY - PLEASE CHECK ONLINE FOR DETAILS

DATE	Some events may be subject to change and further detail in the next newsletter	LOCATION
Wed 19 Jan	7.00 pm Zoom talk. Documentary film makers <b>Wayne Groom</b> and <b>Dr Caroline Bilsborow</b> talk about and show excerpts from, their latest production: " <b>Marjorie Lawrence: The World at her Feet</b> ".	Zoom
Sun 30 Jan	2.00 Recital <b>Rebecca MacCallion</b> and <b>Bradley Kunda</b>	St Columba, Woollahra
Sun 20 Feb	1.30 <b>Robert Gay</b> talk – <i>The impact of French Grand Opera on the works of Verdi &amp; Wagner</i>	Goethe Institut
Wed 2 Mar	7.00pm BBC broadcaster <b>Christopher Cook</b> talks to us from London: <b>'Amfortas! Die Wunde ... Two Wounded Disciples'</b>	Zoom
Sun 13 Mar	2.00 Masterclass with <b>Christina Henson Hayes</b>	St Columba, Woollahra
Sun 27 Mar	12.30 DVD <b>Silent Wagner</b>   2.00 <b>Ralph Myers</b> talk - <i>Isolde in Aix</i>	Goethe Institut
Sun 10 April	12.30 DVD <b>Die Feen</b> . Delightful children's version 2.00 Talk: <b>Peter Bassett</b> : " <b>Hurry away then towards the East</b> "	Goethe Institut
Sun 1 May	1.30 DVD <b>Fritz Lang's</b> masterpiece <b>Siegfried</b>	Goethe Institut
Wed 4 May	12.30pm Award winning Author, Scriptwriter, Lecturer and Journalist <b>Erica Miner</b> talks to us from Seattle about <b>Berlioz and Wagner</b> .	Zoom
Sun 29 May	1.00 AGM 2.00 Concert: <b>Brad Cooper</b> : " <b>Heroes and the Holy Grail</b> " 3.30 Wagner's Birthday Celebrations	St Columba, Woollahra
Sun 26 Jun	2.00 Recital by soprano <b>Rachel Bate</b>	Goethe Institut
Sun 24 Jul	2.00 Talk by Antony Ernst TBC	Goethe Institut

Advice about changes to the Program will be emailed to people who have given their email addresses to the Society's Membership Secretary; the latest updates will also be available on the Society's website: [www.wagner.org.au](http://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).  
For Zoom events members will be requested to register; admission is \$10.

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

**Patron:**

Ms Simone Young AM

**Honorary Life Members:**

Mr Richard King

Prof Michael Ewans

Mr Horst Hoffman

Mr Roger Cruickshank

Dr Terence Watson

Dr Dennis Mather

Dr Colleen Chesterman

Ms Leona Geeves

## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS:

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arduous and sometimes complicated with competing dates or the availability of accompanists. Events usually run smoothly but as we've seen recently technology can almost unmake all the hard work. But we are yet to have an unsuccessful event. So, when we are having a chat over a drink and some food after an event, please think of the work that has gone into making all that happen.

In the last few years, we have expanded our communications – specially through, and as a result of, the extended lockdowns. It takes a lot of work to source and collate the plethora of information that fills the e-news for instance. E-news is something we believe is vital to connect with the membership, and beyond, because it is quick and current. This is something we don't want to scale back. Taking on and replying to registration queries for events, membership subscriptions, just replying to questions, is work that is undertaken voluntarily with no reward other than the success of the Society and its' aims. When we have a sizable, satisfied audience to an event, or hear of the success of one of our supported artists, or share the wonderful experiences in Bayreuth from members who obtain tickets through us, that means our time and effort has been worthwhile.

This leads me to the subject of our Committee and the need of your assistance. As you know we have recently lost one of our Committee and we were already one if not two members down. We will be seeking nominations to join the Committee

from those interested closer to our next AGM (in May) but in the immediate present we need help. We need assistance with some of our social media platforms (Facebook, e-news, e-news promoting our events, registration of members to events and zoom registrations). If you can help us with any or all of those, or know of someone that can, please contact me or Lis Bergmann.

Two final points before I sign off: on donations and our survey. Please take a few minutes to complete the Survey. It will help us better understand what you the members are wanting to see and hear in our events as well as a range of other matters that will help us focus our efforts. The early responses have been most interesting. On donations, I can only reiterate that you please consider giving generously to the Society to continue our support of young artists but also to support the various projects we are associated with – you can read about two of them in the next pages. A vital Society is one that is engaged, one that is passionate about what it contributes. Renewing your subscription and coming to events is wonderful. Just consider doing more.

In conclusion enjoy this all Walküre issue, keep listening and watching. On behalf of the Committee, I wish you all a great Christmas and New Year. Stay safe. See you in 2022.

**Esteban Insausti**  
President, Wagner Society in NSW Inc



## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the Valkyries issue where I explore the meaning and staging of *Die Walküre*, in preparation for the Melbourne Opera production in February. I appeal to members who are going to Melbourne to please send me your impressions afterwards. Following on from the positive feedback I received about the humorous and technical sides to putting dragons on stage, in this issue I'm looking at putting horses on stage. The March issue will feature *Lohengrin* so perhaps a swan may appear. Thanks to Peter Bassett, Minnie Biggs, Eleanor Greenwood and Richard King for their valued contributions, and thanks to Leona for following up on the progress of the singers supported by the Society.

**Errata:** In the September issue the caption to the cartoon of Wagner slaying a dragon on page 18 was incorrect. It was copied from an image bank source, but this source was incorrect. The correct caption is 'Siegfried=Wagner raises the 'treasure' of the Nibelungs.' Thankyou past Quarterly Editor Terence Watson for pointing this out to me.

I wish all my readers a Cool Yule.

**Mike Day**  
michaeldayarchitect@gmail.com

## DONATIONS TO HELP THE SOCIETY'S OBJECTIVES

We encourage members to donate to the Society to help with our regular support for artists. We also have a number of projects (see below) for which we encourage your contribution. If you want to specifically donate to one of those projects please make it clear where your donation is to be directed.

### GENEROUS DONATIONS WERE RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

John Barrer, Mike Day, Esteban Insausti and Richard King

## WAGNER SOCIETY E-NEWS

Our regular Wagner Society e-news are emailed to members at the addresses they have provided. Occasionally some members do not appear to have received these emails. This could be because their email address has changed, or emails have been going into their spam or junk mail, or for some other reason. If you feel this applies to you, please let the Membership Secretary know by filling out the Contact us form on the website or by emailing [webmaster@wagner.org.au](mailto:webmaster@wagner.org.au) and we will work to resolve this issue.

# FUTURE WAGNER SOCIETY EVENTS

WEDNESDAY 19 JANUARY - ZOOM at 7.00PM

**MARJORIE LAWRENCE: THE WORLD AT HER FEET**

Documentary film makers **Wayne Groom** and **Dr Caroline Bilsborow** will talk about, and show excerpts from, their latest production: *Marjorie Lawrence: The World at her Feet*. The film has its world premiere in December this year. Wayne and Caroline will talk about the research they undertook and conversations they had with Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Brian Castles-Onion, and Richard Davis, whose 2012 biography *Wotan's Daughter: the Life of Marjorie Lawrence*, inspired the directors to make the film. It celebrates the career of the woman who "was the most famous Australian woman in the world in the 1950s, but now has largely been forgotten," according to Wayne.

In 1928, at age 21, **Marjorie Lawrence** left Australia for Paris to study singing. Within a few years she became the greatest Wagnerian soprano in France, before being lured to the USA to perform at the Metropolitan Opera, where she starred in *The Ring*. In 1941, at the final dress rehearsal of *Die Walküre* in Mexico City, Marjorie collapsed on stage at the end of Act 2. The same evening paralysis set in and she was diagnosed with poliomyelitis.



Remarkably she partially recovered from the illness and continued singing in a wheelchair.

In 1955 M-G-M made a movie of her life, "*Interrupted Melody*" starring **Glenn Ford** and **Eleanor Parker**, which won an Oscar for best screenplay. Here is a link to a clip from the movie with Eleanor Parker as Marjorie Lawrence performing the Liebestod from *Tristan und Isolde*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdTc5D7uyP4>

Eleanor Parker had perfect pitch as a singer and she learned all the arias she sings in the movie until she had the breathing and phrasing memorised. When filming the scenes, instead of lip-synching to the tracks recorded by the great **Eileen Farrell** for the

movie, she sang full voice, but an octave lower, with Eileen Farrell's voice played even louder.

Here is a link to a clip of Eileen Farrell, who was Birgit Nilsson's favourite soprano, performing the Liebestod. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Etw5sdLa0Qg>

SUNDAY 30 JANUARY - ST COLUMBA COMMUNITY CENTRE at 2.00PM

RECITAL BY REBECCA MacCALLION AND BRADLEY KUNDA

INCLUDING LIEDER BY SCHUBERT, SCHUMANN, WOLF, BERG, MARX, AND RICHARD STRAUSS

**Rebecca MacCallion** holds a Bachelor of Music from the Australian National University, and is an alumna of the Pacific Opera Young Artist Program. She has performed the roles of Zerlina in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* for the Berlin summer Opernfest, Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, and La Sorella Infermiera in Puccini's *Sour Angelica* with Pacific Opera. In 2018, Rebecca appeared in various supporting roles in the Sydney Philharmonic Choirs' 2018 production of *Candide* at the Sydney Opera House (directed by Mitchell Butel). Rebecca's recital credits include a solo concert in the Art Gallery of NSW's esteemed Resonate series, nationwide broadcasts in ABC Classic FM's Sunday Live series, and a recital for the Project Canción Español (Spain). Rebecca is a recipient of The Australia-Britain Society Award for Voice, and grants from the Wagner Society in NSW and the Friends of the ANU School of Music. She holds a Master's degree in speech and language pathology from the University of Sydney.





**Bradley Kunda** is a unique musical talent whose career has seen him specialise in both classical guitar and collaborative piano performance, working across chamber music, opera, art song, and contemporary classical music. Bradley started his career as a classical guitarist, and for ten years was a member of Australia's premier guitar quartet Guitar Trek. His commercial recordings on the Naxos, ABC Classics and Soundset Recordings labels have earned him critical acclaim. Following nearly two years of study with the late conductor and educator Richard Gill OA, Bradley turned to his second instrument, the piano. He has since enjoyed collaborations with several outstanding Australian singers including Christine Douglas, Green-Room award winner Nicholas Jones, and numerous talented singers within the Pacific Opera Young Artist Program. Bradley has served as répétiteur for the North Sea Vocal Academy (Denmark), the New Zealand Singing School, and the Berlin Opera Academy, the latter for which his attendance was supported financially by the Wagner Society in NSW. In 2020 Bradley relocated to Berlin, where he continued his studies in collaborative

piano and operatic Korrepetition with Ara Khachaturian and Philip Mayers. Bradley holds a PhD in classical guitar performance from the Australian National University (ANU), and a Master's of Performance in collaborative piano from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. He has held teaching positions at the ANU School of Music, and the University of Newcastle School of Creative Arts. Bradley is also a designer and currently works as a Senior Designer for MuseScore, a music notation program used by over 5 million people.

## SUNDAY 20 FEBRUARY - THE GOETHE INSTITUT at 1.30PM

TALK BY ROBERT GAY THE IMPACT OF FRENCH GRAND OPERA ON THE WORKS OF VERDI & WAGNER

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 *I 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*.



**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 particular 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.

**NOTE.** Robert's talk will be in two parts, with a break for refreshments

## CONGRATULATIONS!

SIMONE YOUNG WINS GLOBAL ICON AWARD

Our esteemed Patron Maestro Simone Young AM has been announced as Advance Awards' Global Icon for 2021.

Established in 2012, The Advance Awards recognise the work of Australians who are making an impact on the global stage in industry sectors that are of particular importance to Australia, including the Arts. The Icon Award recognises outstanding Australians with immense talent who represent Australia on the world stage to diverse audiences. Simone, who will take up the post of Chief Conductor of the SSO in 2022, said, "I am driven to try to live up to the mastery of the great composers and to communicate, as best I can, their powerful messages of compassion and humanity".



## WEDNESDAY 2 MARCH - ZOOM at 7.00PM

'AMFORTAS! DIE WUNDE... TWO WOUNDED DISCIPLES'. THE CULTURAL HISTORIAN CHRISTOPHER COOK EXPLORES THE POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD OF *PARSIFAL* AND THE CURIOUS SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN AMFORTAS AND KLINGSOR



Christopher Cook

**Christopher Cook** is a British broadcaster and journalist. His work can be found in places such as the Guardian and the New Statesman. His current academic work includes positions at Syracuse University, London Centre and American University (London Programme). Christopher is a regular contributor to BBC Music Magazine and International Record Review and has written for The Gramophone. He chairs pre-concert events for the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Hallé Orchestra, the London Philharmonic

Orchestra and Study Evenings at the Royal Opera House where he also interviews for their 'Meet the...' programmes and Glyndebourne Opera. For the past four years he has curated pre-performance talks at English National Opera. Christopher also does interviews for the London Wagner Society, which can be accessed through their website.



Bayreuth 2017 - Ryan McKinny as Amfortas and Derek Welton as Klingsor

## SUNDAY 13 MARCH - ST COLUMBA COMMUNITY CENTRE at 2.00PM

### CHRISTINA HENSON HAYES MASTERCLASS WITH UP-AND-COMING YOUNG SINGERS

**Christina Henson Hayes** is an American born, Julliard trained singer and vocal coach and also a graduate in medicine from the University of New Jersey. She has pioneered research and practice in biomechanical vocal function, working with both career singers and cancer/reconstruction patients. She has worked with concert artists who have sung at the Met, Covent Garden, La Scala and Opera Australia. Christina is coach and choirmaster with the Lyric Opera of the Central Coast and is the founder of **Outlaw Opera**, which is a concert series in two acts that highlights the most villainous and thrilling moments from operatic history. It breaks down some of the art form's most famous works into palatable, bite sized theatre. It is a fantastic format for those wanting to give opera a try and for those starting to refine their tastes.


### JANE MATHEWS AO SCHOLARSHIP


The Society has been negotiating with PACIFIC OPERA to establish a \$5,000 annual scholarship to help young potential Wagnerians. The Scholarship is intended to be gifted in honour of our late President the Hon Jane Mathews AO. More information will be forthcoming shortly. If you are interested in contributing to this project please contact the President.

Richard Wagner's

# Die Walküre

THE RING CYCLE





Following the triumph of *Das Rheingold*, Suzanne Chaundy's massive new production of *Die Walküre* moves to Her Majesty's Theatre with Andrew Bailey's magnificent set and the acclaimed 90-piece Melbourne Opera Orchestra, led by the distinguished Wagner specialist Maestro Anthony Negus. Warwick Fyfe stars as Wotan with Kirstin Sharpin as Brünnhilde, Lee Abrahmsen as Sieglinde, Bradley Daley as Siegmund and Sarah Sweeting as Fricka, leading an all-Australian cast. Performance dates: 7, 9, 11, 13 February

Take advantage of the discounted tickets for Wagner Society members. See e-news.

## REPORTS ON RECENT MEETINGS

SUNDAY 12 SEPTEMBER - ZOOM

2.00PM - ANNA-LOUISE COLE IN CONVERSATION WITH ROBERT MITCHELL

40 members and friends logged on to Zoom to enjoy a very stimulating conversation between our experienced singer/interviewer **Robert Mitchell** and rising star dramatic soprano **Anna-Louise Cole**. We had been looking forward to seeing Anna-Louise in the postponed Brisbane *Ring* as both Sieglinde (Cycles 1 and 2) and

Brünnhilde (Cycle 3). Unfortunately, we will have to wait another year but, on the basis of this conversation, Anna-Louise demonstrated to us that it will be well worth the wait. She came across as a dedicated, thoughtful, confident and attractive personality with a solid technique and a very powerful and expressive voice – ideal for the heavier Wagner roles. Covering Sieglinde for the 2016 Melbourne *Die Walküre* and covering the demanding roles of Salome and Turandot, as well as singing Aida, for OA showed her that she has the stamina for big roles. She expressed her gratitude to Tahu Matheson and Ray Lawrence for their mentoring and encouragement. Musical interludes during the conversation included a recent clip of Anna-Louise



Anna-Louise Cole



Kirsten Flagstad



Birgit Nilsson

effortlessly singing Elizabeth's aria *Dich, teure Halle* from *Tannhäuser*. She also played clips of performance by great sopranos who inspire her – Kirsten Flagstad and Birgit Nilsson. The Zoom ended with Anna-Louise and Robert discussing the importance of understanding every word of Wagner's texts and the different vocal demands of the Brünnhilde roles over the course of the *Ring*. Anna-Louise expressed her great disappointment at the delays to the Brisbane Ring but, luckily, we will be able to see her as Turandot in Opera Australia's production in March.

In sum – an informative and entertaining hour, which can be accessed on our website.

**Baudelaire:** “*What I underwent is indescribable....One feels oneself suddenly taken away and subjugated....I underwent a feeling of such a bizarre nature....of allowing myself to be penetrated, invaded, a truly sensual pleasure...*”

In August 1876 a handful of French composers made pilgrimages to Bayreuth and, upon returning, they talked and wrote profusely about what had taken place; Saint-Saëns, for example, wrote five articles about the Bayreuth experience and Catulle Mendès three. A few years after, concerts of Wagner's music began to take place in Paris and by the mid-1880s, the music and thinking of the now-deceased Wagner had ignited nearly the entire intellectual and artistic movement in Paris, including the most distinguished and the most gifted artists, writers, and composers. The effect of Wagner's music was deeply felt. Ravel and Chabrier had similar experiences during performances of the prelude to *Tristan und Isolde*: the music so moved them that they broke into tears and sobbed. Composer Guillaume Lekeu fainted during an 1889 Bayreuth performance, and Vincent D'Indy broke down and wept while experiencing the death of Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung*.

Wagner's influence on French music was overwhelming. Testimony to this were Wagnerian-inspired music dramas, including Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Bruneau's *Le Rêve*, Chapentier's *Louise*, Reyer's *Sigurd*, Chausson's *Le Roi Arthus*, and D'Indy's *Fervaal*. Additionally, composers such as Franck, Gounod, Lekeu, Bizet, Massenet, Saint-Saëns, Duparc, Fauré, Delibes, and Ravel were all inspired by Wagner, as well as the poets and writers Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, LaForgue (who influenced Eliot and Pound), Valéry, Colette, Dujardin, de Nerval, Gautier, Mallarmé, Proust, Verlaine, Ghil, Baudelaire, Morice, and Vignier.

Excerpt from the Introduction to the score for *Istar* by Vincent D'Indy by Don Robertson, published by Musikproduktion Höflich.



**SUNDAY 10 OCTOBER ZOOM**  
**2.00PM - TALK BY DR RACHEL ORZECH *FRANCE'S WAGNER: 1840S TO WWI***



Rachel Orzech

Young Melbourne academic Dr Rachel Orzech treated 35 members on Zoom to a fascinating summary of the difficult relationship between the French and Wagner in the period between 1840 and the first World War.

Rachel started by describing the complex and painful, personal and passionate background to the conflicts caused by Wagner's ideas and music. Wagner's early romantic operas were not well known in France and he was desperate to have them staged at the Paris Opera, which was the most prestigious in Europe. He visited Paris several times but was unable to get his works performed. He was better known for his writing, which was already polarising sections of French society. He gave three concerts in 1860 and it was reported that the music had a strong physical and psychological effect on many of the listeners, but it received hostile reviews. In 1861 *Tannhäuser* was performed and created an enormous scandal and no other works were performed in Paris for another 30 years, apart from a *Lohengrin*, (directed by Charles Lamoureux, with the help of Vincent D'Indy). in the Eden Theatre. Despite the antagonism of the press, many music lovers attended Bayreuth performances and many French composers were influenced by the music. Rachel played samples of works by D'Indy, Chabrier and Chausson, which demonstrated this influence.

Wagner greatly antagonised and outraged the French in 1870 by publishing a farce, "*Une Capitulation*", which mocked France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. Wagner's chauvinism and nationalism was still resented 20 years after his play and there was violent political and musical opposition to attempts to perform *Lohengrin* in Paris in 1887. Rachel showed some vicious anti-Wagner cartoons from the period. Wagner's works, however, were being performed in the provinces and in 1891 the Paris Opera finally agreed to produce *Lohengrin*, rather than being thought backward. It was a triumph and over the next 20 years Wagner was

performed more than any other composer. His works, along with all German composers were banned during WWI.

Rachel finished her fascinating talk by announcing her forthcoming monograph, *Claiming Wagner*, which examines the Parisian press reception of Wagner during the period of the Third Reich, and will be published in 2022. Hopefully we can have her talk to us in person about this in due course.



Forgetting insults: 1870: Vanquished Paris is outraged by Wagner 1887: Paris licks Wagner's Lohengrin

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

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

**BRANGAYNE OF ORANGE VINEYARD**

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

**DA CAPO MUSIC SECONDHAND AND ANTIQUARIAN MUSIC BOOKSTORE**

Upstairs at 51 Glebe Point Road, Glebe, NSW, 2037 - Above SAPHO BOOKS  
 Website: <http://www.dacapo.com.au>  
 Please phone Da Capo if you have any queries: +61 2 9952 4498  
 Or email Da Capo at: [music@dacapo.com.au](mailto:music@dacapo.com.au) or **Meredith Baillie** - on [shop@sapphobooks.com.au](mailto:shop@sapphobooks.com.au)  
 The cafe attached to **Sappho** serves great coffee, wine & snacks.

## SUNDAY 28 NOVEMBER - MOSMAN ART GALLERY 2.00PM - CHRISTMAS PARTY/CONCERT



### NOTES BY JUNE DONSWORTH

A feast of beautiful singing to indulge the Members after a troubled year of lockdowns, cancellations, separation from loved ones, social isolation, uncertainty about the future, frustration and disillusionment (with our political leaders).

Some highlights-

- Pamela Andrews, soprano, excelled in her singing of the September song from Strauss' Four Last songs, showing commendable range and clarity of tone and interpretation.
- Emily Turner, with a beautiful young soprano voice, sang and acted with affecting emotion the lovely song Oh! Quand Je Dors by Liszt.
- Jill Sullivan, mezzo soprano, sang Fricka's aria from *Die Walküre* with a superbly resonant mellow voice, sensitive change of volume and great dramatic power.
- The three singers were expertly accompanied on piano by Michael Curtain, who not only was very attentive to the singers' needs, but also displayed a most becoming pair of Cardinal-red socks.

A really delightful recital followed by a very convivial catchup between Members.

### ARIADNE'S CHRISTMAS THREAD PROGRAM

BEETHOVEN (1770 – 1827) Adelaide Op. 46 - **Jill Sullivan**

BRAHMS (1833 – 1897) Phänomen und Die Boten der Liebe (duets), Op. 61 - **Pamela Andrews and Jill Sullivan**

BRAHMS Rhapsody in b minor, Op. 79, No. 1 - **Michael Curtain**

LISZT (1811 – 1886) Oh! Quand je dors - **Emily Turner**

LISZT Der du von dem Himmel bist (version 3) - **Jill Sullivan**

WAGNER (1813 – 1883) Euch Lüften, die mein Klagen (Elsa's aria from Lohengrin) - **Pamela Andrews**

WAGNER Ortrud! wo bist du? (Elsa and Ortrud's duet from Lohengrin, Act II) - **Pamela Andrews and Jill Sullivan**

R STRAUSS (1864 – 1949) Ich schwebte, Op. 45 - **Emily Turner**

R STRAUSS September (from Vier letzte Lieder, Op. posth.) - **Pamela Andrews**

WAGNER Wo in Bergen du dich birgst (Fricka's scene from Die Walküre) - **Jill Sullivan**

R STRAUSS Es gibt ein Reich (from Ariadne auf Naxos) - **Pamela Andrews**

R STRAUSS Marie Theres! Hab' mir's gelobt (final trio from Der Rosenkavalier) - **Pamela Andrews, Jill Sullivan, Emily Turner**



Emily Turner. Photo: David Greer

## COMMITTEE 2021 - 2022

President	Esteban Insausti	0412 282 070
Immediate Past President	Colleen Chesterman	9360 4962
Vice President 1	Mike Day	0413 807 533
Vice President 2	Marie Leech	0418 679 626
Treasurer	Margaret Whealy	0414 787 199
Secretary	Ross Whitelaw	rosswhitelaw35@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Lis Bergmann	lisbergmann89@gmail.com
Members	Nick Dorsch	0419 751 694
	Robert Mitchell	
Quarterly Editor	Mike Day	michaeldayarchitect@gmail.com
Artists' Liaison	Leona Geeves	lg03415@gmail.com
Public Officer	Alasdair Beck	9358 3922



## MEMORIES



## FRANK MARJASON: THREE BOOKPLATES...

by Richard King, Hobart

An excerpt from THE NEW AUSTRALIAN BOOKPLATE SOCIETY Newsletter No. 62, September 2021

In 1989 to mark his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Wagner Society of New South Wales commissioned a bookplate for Richard Wagner's grandson Wolfgang Wagner (1919-2010) from Sydney printmaker Frank Marjason (1914-2011). I had known the artist's mother when I was young; Gladys Marjason was also an exceptional artist in her own right. In the 1950s she was a great mentor to me, opening doors to the art world and artists of Sydney, and no doubt laying the foundations for my own journey into music and the arts. Frank was at that time a teacher of printmaking and drawing at Willoughby Workshop Arts Centre on Sydney's lower North Shore.

Along with the late Dr Leonard Hansen, we had conceived of the idea of forming a Wagner Society in Sydney to encourage the performance of his 'music dramas,' as Wagner called them, and to assist aspiring young singers to further their careers with scholarships. The first ever meeting of the Society was convened in 1980 by Leonard in Bayreuth, with fellow attendees of the Festival ... so many people with great enthusiasm ensured its success over the following years. Every year after that date there was always a group of Aussies who had made their pilgrimage to Bayreuth.

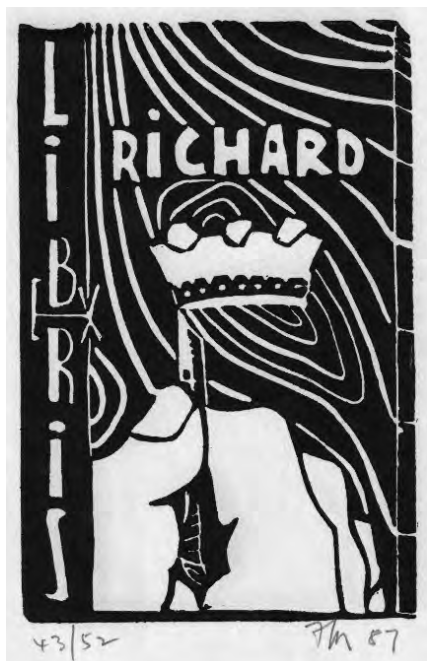
Through the organization, The Friends of Bayreuth, meetings with the Wagner family were arranged and we were regular

guests to backstage tours and a private dinner with Wolfgang and his wife Gudrun, in the small dining room of the Festspiel house. There were always only about six or eight of us which enabled us to have detailed conversations with Wolfgang who often was the director of one of the productions.

During one of our committee meetings in 1989 the idea of a special gift to mark Wolfgang's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday was on the agenda, and I suggested a bookplate because it is such a personal item and something we felt sure no one else would have thought of. So it was agreed, and I suggested Frank be commissioned. The design was left to Frank and he came up with the Parsifal motif along with incorporating the W in capitals which also transforms into the swan, a feature of the opera *Lohengrin*. All were delighted with the concept.

Frank Marjason's art training had begun in early 1930s with a year of night drawing classes at East Sydney Technical College as he was employed by the Commonwealth Bank where he remained for the rest of his working life, interrupted by service during 2<sup>nd</sup> world war. In the 1960s he studied, also at night, with Louis Kahan in Melbourne and later in Canberra with Tom Gleghorn and John Coburn. He retired from the Bank in 1974 and continued painting whilst exploring various graphic arts, and in 1986 was introduced by Ruth Burgess to the woodcut and linocut. Frank said that the linocut immediately appealed to him because of its 'speed, simplification of the subject, directness and predictability.'

## Linocuts by Frank Marjason



For Richard King, 1987



For Wolfgang Wagner, 1989



For the Wagner Society NSW, 1989

Later on in that year we commissioned another bookplate for the growing reference library the Wagner Society was creating. Around that time I saw an article about the people who had the greatest number of books written about them in all languages the world over. Christ Jesus had by far the greatest number followed by Napoleon and third was Richard Wagner, with over twenty-three thousand! The astonishing thing is, about six to ten new books are written and published about Richard Wagner, the man and or his works, each year. What can be said in these new books that has not already been said in twenty-three thousand others?

I had commissioned a bookplate for my own books from Frank in 1987, again leaving him to create the design. His depiction of the hand using the fine knife to carve out the image must be unique, I think, in the world of the bookplate. Instead of using my surname, King, he substituted a crown – a man of great humour indeed!

All the bookplates were hand printed by the artist in editions of fifty prints. We gave Wolfgang the original linocut block in case he should need to print more for his library. (Note: a photo of the handover was in Quarterly No 18, Sept 2020)

I am sure, from memory, that Frank also created bookplates for friends and family. Research for someone in the future. Frank died in 2011 in his mid-nineties, still active until the day he died.

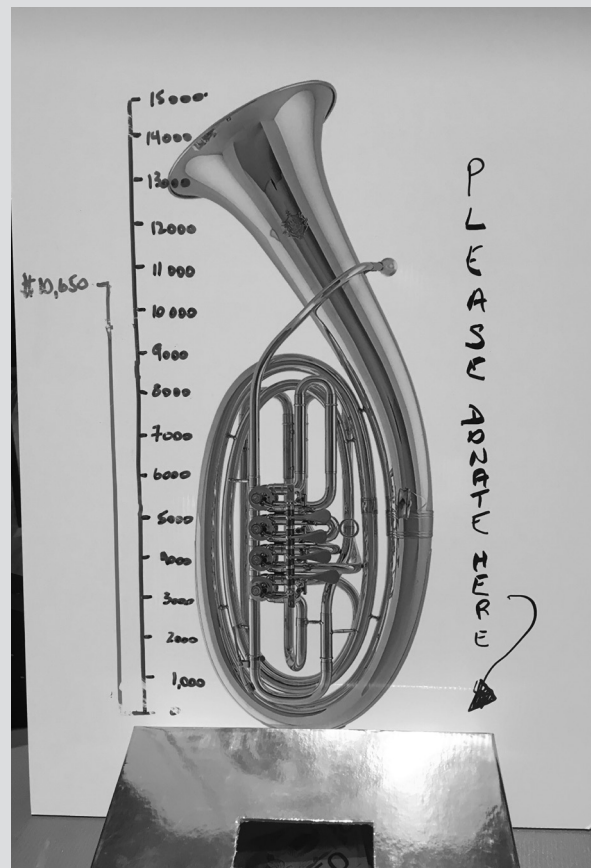
**Editor’s Note:** Richard King has very generously donated to the Wagner Society and given copies of the original linocuts to the Bookplate Society.

**The New Australian Bookplate Society** was founded in Sydney in 2006 to raise awareness of bookplates as both a historical and contemporary artform. It has about 75 members in Australia and elsewhere, including designers, collectors and those who just love bookplates. The Society publishes a quarterly full-colour Newsletter, in hard copy and digital formats, has a website at [www.bookplatesociety.org.au](http://www.bookplatesociety.org.au) and social media presence. Enquiries can be directed to the president Dr Mark Ferson at [newaustralianbookplatesociety@gmail.com](mailto:newaustralianbookplatesociety@gmail.com)

## WAGNER TUBA APPEAL

The Society raised \$15,000 from donations last year to buy two Wagner tubas for Melbourne Opera, which were used in *Das Rheingold* in February. We are committed to raising the same amount again for two more tubas for *Die Walküre*. To date we have raised \$10,650, including generous recent donations from Shirley Breese, John Barrer, Jennifer Ferns, Richard King, Esteban Insausti, D May and Ross Whitelaw, plus a very generous donation from Garry Richards. We appeal to members to help us reach our goal before the curtain goes up at her Majesty’s Theatre in February 2022.

Wagner was inspired to invent the Wagner tuba after a brief visit to Paris in 1853. He visited the shop of Adolphe Sax, the inventor of the saxophone. They showed him a saxhorn, which combined technical features of both standard tubas and French horns and was similar to the instrument that Wagner ultimately wanted for the *Ring*, where its purpose was to bridge the acoustical and textural gap between the French horn and trombone. It features in the Valhalla motif. Since then, other composers have written for it, most notably Anton Bruckner, in whose Symphony No. 7 a quartet of them is first heard in the slow movement in memory of Wagner, and Richard Strauss, who composed several works that used the Wagner tuba, including his Alpine Symphony. The sound produced by the instrument is variously described as “smoky,” “metallic,” “unearthly” and “majestic.” The Wagner tuba nominally exists in two sizes, tenor in B♭ and bass in F, with ranges comparable to those of horns in the same pitches while being less adept at the highest notes. Several 20th-century and later manufacturers have, however, combined the two instruments into a double Wagner tuba that can easily be configured in either B♭ or F.



# DIE WALKÜRE: A BRIEF HISTORY & SYNOPSIS

Wagner completed the music of *Die Walküre* by March 1856 but, as with *Das Rheingold*, he wished to defer any performance of the new work until it could be shown in the context of the completed cycle. However, in 1870 the Munich premiere was arranged at the insistence of his patron, King Ludwig II of Bavaria. More than the other *Ring* dramas, *Die Walküre* has achieved popularity as a stand-alone work, and continues to be performed independently from its role in the tetralogy. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die\\_Walk%C3%BCre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_Walk%C3%BCre)

The Norse god **Wotan** - like his counterparts in the south, Zeus and Jupiter - got around as they say. He wasn't named "all-father" for nothing. The second opera of Richard Wagner's *Ring* cycle is about three of his offspring.

First, the illegitimate daughter **Brünnhilde**, who is a Valkyrie - a collector of the heroic dead slain in battle - and after whom this opera is named. Her mother is **Erda** - mother earth. Then there are the twins **Sigmund** and **Sieglinde** - their mother is a mortal woman

In one of the most unexpected of turnarounds after managing, in *Das Rheingold*, to save Walhalla and briefly maintain dominance over the world, in *Die Walküre* it all comes undone though the humanity of the gods.

Unlike the father gods of the South, Wotan has future sight after drinking from the Urdar-well. This one drink was expensive though, and he paid by sacrificing his left eye. It is with this wisdom and prophetic gift that Wotan hoped to outwit the forces marshalled against him and using his children as a player would sacrifice chess pieces, finds that the ruthlessness, lies and duplicity required to keep his grip on power is finally beyond even his abilities.

## ACT 1 SYNOPSIS

As a large storm rages, Sigmund finds shelter from his enemies in a large dwelling built around a massive ash-tree. Unarmed and wounded, he collapses with exhaustion. Sieglinde enters; she tells Sigmund that she is the wife of Hunding, and that he may rest here until Hunding's return. As they talk, they look at each other with growing interest and emotion. Hunding returns and questions Sigmund's presence. Calling himself Wehwalt ("woeful"), Sigmund explains that he grew up in the forest with his parents and twin sister. One day he found their home burned down, his mother killed and his sister gone. Recently he fought with



Thérèse and Heinrich Vogl, the first Sieglinde and Sigmund Munich 1870

the relatives of a girl being forced into marriage. His weapons were destroyed, the bride was killed, and he was forced to flee. Hunding reveals that he is one of Sigmund's pursuers; Sigmund may stay, he says, but they must fight in the morning. Before leaving, Sieglinde gives a meaningful glance to a particular spot on the tree in which, the firelight reveals, a sword is buried to the hilt.

Sieglinde returns, having drugged Hunding's drink. She reveals that she was forced into the marriage and that during their wedding feast, an old man appeared and plunged a sword into the trunk of the ash tree which neither Hunding nor any of his companions have been able to remove. She is longing for the hero who will draw the sword and save her. When Sigmund

expresses his love for her, she reciprocates, and when he speaks the name of his father, Wälse, she recognises him as Sigmund, and realises that the sword was left for him. Sigmund then draws the sword from the tree. She reveals herself as Sieglinde, his twin sister. Sigmund names the sword "Nothung" and declares that it will be her protection. The two sing of their passionate love for each other, as the act ends.

**Editor's Personal Note:** I first heard Wagner's music at age 12 when my best friend Philip's parents played me the last scene of ACT I of *Die Walküre* on scratchy 78rpm records. The overwhelming passion of the music completely swept me away and I have been an addict ever since. Philip's oldies stimulated my interest by telling me how they had actually attended a performance of *Die Walküre* just before the start of the war and that Hitler had been sitting a few rows behind them. I loved studying history and found it fascinating that, less than 20 years before I heard the music, they had been in the presence of such evil while hearing such beautiful music. Apart from the exhilaration of the power of the music I was thrilled by the romance of the Spring night and the finding of the sword. I was too naïve to understand the full sexual content and the text wasn't fully explained – I certainly wasn't informed of the incestuous goings on. I saw my first *Die Walküre* 15 years later in the superb Sadler's Wells production under Reginald Goodall, with a radiant Rita Hunter, magnificent Norman Bailey and a very impressive Clifford Grant. An abiding memory of the night I attended was the failure of the smoke machine to turn off during the magic fire music, so that the entire Coliseum completely filled with smoke, obscuring stage and pit. Happy days. A few months later I attended the Covent Garden production and was electrified by the live sound, which was wonderful of course because Georg Solti was conducting.

## DIE WALKÜRE AND THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE

by Peter Bassett

At first glance, Richard Wagner's great cycle of four music dramas, *The Ring of the Nibelung*, appears to be a mythical story about a golden ring that is made, lost, cursed and coveted by Alberich the Nibelung. But the work is much more than just a mythical tale. It is an allegory of politics and power, of love and vengeance, of humanity's struggle for a better world, and of the psychological forces that shape our goals and determine our actions.

Wagner wrote the text and music for the *Ring* between 1848 and 1874 and, in the process, developed his own approach to lyric drama. Opera had lost its way he believed; no one took it seriously anymore. Like the first exponents of the art form in northern Italy during the Renaissance, he drew inspiration from the ancient Greeks for whom drama had a vital social, even religious role. Never one to do things by halves, he set out to use drama – and particularly its most expressive vehicle, music – to make audiences think hard about the world and themselves. This was no longer opera as entertainment; this was opera as revelation!

Wotan is 'the sum of the intelligence of the present', said Wagner. Defined by his instincts for control, the god exploits his half-mortal son Siegmund and, when faced with a crisis of his own making, sacrifices him, just as he abandons his favourite daughter, the Valkyrie Brünnhilde when she displays the compassion which he suppresses. Time and again, love and power are seen to be incompatible.

In *Das Rheingold*, Alberich had renounced love in pursuit of power, and Wotan had come close to doing the same when he traded the goddess of love, Freia for the great fortress Valhalla. However, by the end of *Rheingold* Freia had been redeemed, and love, though devalued, had not been extinguished. Now, in *Die Walküre*, love flickers back into life on a stormy night in front of Hunding's hearth. It heralds not only the onset of Spring and the passionate relationship between Siegmund and Sieglinde but also the compassionate feelings arising from Brünnhilde's annunciation of death to Siegmund. The result is the Valkyrie's defiance of Wotan, Sieglinde's escape, Brünnhilde's mortality, Siegfried's birth and, ultimately, the downfall of the gods.

'Man is god perfected' wrote Wagner in 1849 when sketching a drama called *Achilles*, in which we see a hero exercising

his free will while the gods yield to humanity – both themes of the *Ring*. At the time, Wagner was much taken with the ideas of the contemporary philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, and even dedicated his essay *The Artwork of the Future* to him. Feuerbach also influenced Karl Marx, but whereas Marx believed that the liberation of mankind depended on the emancipation of the proletariat, the young Wagner believed it could be achieved through love.

Lovelessness is at the heart of all that goes wrong in the *Ring*. Whether deliberately chosen as in the case of Alberich, or the product of circumstance as in the case of Wotan and Fricka, lovelessness carries the seeds of destruction, as Wagner once noted. The corollary is that an act of love – especially love to the point of self-sacrifice – carries the seeds of life. Brünnhilde will carry the grace of compassionate love furthest in the *Ring*, but she encounters it first in Siegmund who rejects a blissful afterlife from which Sieglinde would be excluded, left to the mercies of Hunding.

Initially we see Brünnhilde as Wotan's exuberant daughter, then as his confidant – no, his *alter ego*. When he punishes her, he is punishing himself and when he abandons her, he is abandoning himself. Furious and humiliated by his own predicament as much as by her disobedience, he condemns her to be stripped of her godhead and left for the first man who chances by. Yet, for all his hard-heartedness and suppressed emotion, Wotan undergoes a strange and moving process of self-discovery. Trapped in a political and moral quagmire, he begins to accept the inevitability of his demise and the end of the gods. At Brünnhilde's pleading, his rage subsides, and compassion returns to his heart, and so he agrees to surround her - his 'valiant, glorious child' – with protective fire through which only one who does not fear the point of his spear will be able to pass.

*Die Walküre* begins with a life changing act of passionate love, and it ends with a sublimely moving act of compassionate love. And yet, the *Ring* is full of ironies, not the least of which is Wotan's failure to notice that when he agonizes to his daughter over how to create a free agent who, as he puts it, by defying him would be dearest to him, that person is already at his side. **Peter Bassett**

### NOTHUNG, SIEGMUND'S SWORD

In Norse mythology, Gram ("Wrath") was the name of the sword that Sigurd (Siegfried) used to kill the dragon Fafnir. It was forged by Weyland the Smith and originally belonged to his father, Sigmund, who received it in the hall of the Volsung after pulling it out of a log into which Odin had stuck it — nobody else could pull it out. The sword was destroyed and reforged at least once. After it was reforged, it clove an anvil in half. In the Nibelungenlied, Siegfried's sword is called Balmung. ("Destruction").

The name "Nothung" (Modern German Nothung = "Child of Need") was invented by Wagner.



## ACT II SYNOPSIS

On a high mountain ridge, Wotan instructs Brünnhilde, his Valkyrie daughter, to protect Siegmund in his forthcoming battle with Hunding. Fricka arrives, and in her role as goddess of family values demands that Siegmund and Sieglinde be punished for their adultery and incest. She scorns Wotan's argument that he requires Siegmund as a "free hero", who can further his plans to recover the ring from Fafner, uninhibited by Wotan's contracts. She retorts that Siegmund is not free but is Wotan's pawn, whose every move the god seeks to direct. Defeated by Fricka's argument, Wotan reluctantly agrees that he will not protect Siegmund. The Wotan-Fricka dialogue is illustrated by wonderfully subtle orchestration of motifs that express Fricka's sour disillusion with her marriage, and Wotan's bitterness and frustration as he is unable to answer his wife's forceful arguments.

After Fricka leaves, the troubled Wotan gives Brünnhilde the full story, and with great sorrow rescinds his earlier instruction; he orders her to give the victory to Hunding and then departs. In a letter to Franz Liszt Wagner wrote: "In disconsolate and dispassionate hours what I was most afraid of was Wotan's great scene, and especially the revelation of his fate to Brünnhilde ... . **This is the most important scene for the development of the whole of the great four-part drama ... .**"

Siegmond and Sieglinde now enter, and Sieglinde

faints, consumed with guilt and exhaustion. Brünnhilde tells Siegmund of his impending death; he refuses to follow Brünnhilde to Valhalla when she tells him Sieglinde cannot accompany him. Siegmund still believes that his father's sword will assure him of victory over Hunding, but Brünnhilde tells him it has lost its power. Siegmund threatens to kill both Sieglinde and himself. Much moved, Brünnhilde decides to defy her father and grant victory to Siegmund.

Hunding's call is heard; he arrives and attacks Siegmund. Under Brünnhilde's power, Siegmund begins to overpower Hunding, but Wotan appears and shatters Siegmund's sword with his spear. Hunding then stabs him to death. Brünnhilde gathers up the fragments of the sword and flees on her horse, Grane, with Sieglinde. Contemptuously, Wotan strikes Hunding dead, and swearing that Brünnhilde will be punished for her defiance, sets out in pursuit of her.



Irène Theorin as Brünnhilde, James Morris as Wotan, The Met 1998



Susan Bullock as Brünnhilde, Stuart Skelton as Siegmund, Miriam Gordon-Stewart as Sieglinde, Melbourne 2013



Greer Grimsley as Wotan, Jamie Barton as Fricka, Chicago Lyric Opera 2019



Eva-Maria Westbroek as Sieglinde, Jonas Kaufmann as Siegmund, The Met 2011

## SIEGMUND AND SIEGLINDE, WOTAN AND FRICKA - WAGNER'S USE OF PAIRED CHARACTERS IN THE *RING*

EXTRACTS FROM ELIZABETH BREMMER'S ESSAY *WAGNER'S USE OF PAIRED CHARACTERS IN THE RING*

Richard Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung* is a richly complex work that can be analysed in many different ways on several different levels. One way to explore Wagner's themes concerning human desires and motivations is by looking at various pairs of characters and how they interact. Some are fairly obvious foils showing the contrasts between two opposing ideas. Others are two facets of the same human desire.

In the first two operas alone, *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, there are several pairs of characters, many involving Wotan, that serve as vehicles for Wagner's ideas on the corruptive force of power and the positive force of natural love. Wagner clearly believes in the moral supremacy of love unhindered by the bonds of human corruption. However, Wagner seems to portray this love as an inherently weak force when paired with the desire for power and because of this power difference, the characters that most embody love usually end up suffering the worst hardships. Despite this, love is an ever-present force that is never completely defeated.

*Die Walküre* focuses more on the nature of love as its main subtext instead of the dynamic between love and power. Many of the characters can be clearly identified as representing either love or its antithesis, the world of artificial law. The main pair of characters, Siegmund and Sieglinde embody the kind of natural love outside the artificial bonds of society that Wagner views as the ideal form of love. The fact that Siegmund and Sieglinde are meant to be together is made expressly clear by the use of the love motive during the moment that they first are able to see each other clearly. This is before they have even verbally declared their love, emphasizing the spontaneous and natural genesis of their love as opposed to a coupling that is the result of marriage. Again, Wagner's story is heavily influenced by aspects of *The Saga of the Volsungs*, in this case the story of Signy and Sigmund, and again the source story conveniently allows him to express his own views of the world while keeping

some of the surface elements the same. The aspect of both stories that is most striking for the modern viewer or reader is the incestuous nature of the relationship between two of the main characters. In *The Saga of the Volsungs*, it is part of a cold-blooded scheme. In *Die Walküre*, the two lovers are unaware of their blood relation at first, but at some point, during the first act, they realize they are twins. Interestingly, they seem neither surprised nor disturbed by this fact. The final line of act one ends with Siegmund calling out

"Bride and sister be to your brother; the blood of these Wälsungs is blessed!"

Wagner uses the incestuous aspect of the relationship to stress the natural and inevitable nature of their love. The family relationship can be seen as a symbol of deep spiritual kinship that they share through their common negative experiences with a society that is bound by law. Together they symbolically represent Wagner's own concept of ideal love. Additionally, by portraying his two lovers as breaking the incest taboo, possibly one of the oldest human created rules of society, Wagner shows how his concept of love is completely independent of the bonds of society.

During the final scene in act one the love between Siegmund and Sieglinde is given approval by nature itself when spring comes bursting through the doors. Unlike Alberich's and Wotan's desires which are in opposition to nature, the love between Siegmund and Sieglinde is so much in tune with natural forces that even the weather changes in response to their love. This association is further emphasized in Siegmund's speech comparing the union between himself and Sieglinde with the union between the personified forces of Love and Spring. "To clasp his sister here he has flown; for Love called to the Spring; and Love lay hidden deep in our hearts". Interestingly the poetic images used to describe

### LONELINESS WITHIN MARRIAGE

In a lengthy review in *The New York Review* of the 2011 Met *Die Walküre* entitled *The Lonely Gods*, critic Stephen Greenblatt contrasts the works of Wagner and Milton and their attitudes to the relations between the divine and the human. He also contrasts their beliefs about marriage and living outside the law:

...."Both *Paradise Lost* and *Die Walküre* are about the power of love and analyse the devastating experience of loneliness in marriage. In his prose works about Divorce Milton writes powerfully about a strange form of suffering: loneliness not in a state of radical isolation but in the everyday, continual presence of an unresponsive spouse. (Milton had an unhappy first marriage). In the *Die Walküre* Act II argument between Wotan and Fricka Wagner depicts with exceptional sensitivity the sense of household captivity without refuge or redemption. (Wagner also had an unhappy first marriage). In Act I Siegmund sees Sieglinde's misery at being trapped in a forced, loveless marriage with Hunding. At this point of desperation what awakens in both is a dream of an escape from the torment of loneliness, their almost unbearably intense discovery of their passionate love for one another...."



Love and Spring also include incestuous implications. This is another example of Wagner's use of incest to symbolize the naturalness of true love.

Despite the fact that Siegmund and Sieglinde's love is the kind of natural love that Wagner condones, it is still portrayed as a relatively weak force in *Die Walküre*. As a couple, Siegmund and Sieglinde do not survive because they have already been in contact with the world of artificial law. For Sieglinde, living under the laws that Wotan had created damaged her psychologically. After their flight from Hunding's house, Sieglinde seems to have a change of heart crying "Fly from the cursed one, far let her flee! Dishonoured am I, bereft of grace: the purest hero I must abandon, for how can this guilt wife dare to love him?" She then begins to hallucinate, seeing Siegmund torn apart by Hunding's dogs. The bonds of artificial society still have a hold on Sieglinde's psyche and she is unable to reconcile her natural tendency to love with the demands of society which state that she must stay true to her husband even though she does not love him. When she finds that Siegmund has been killed she is quick to decide that suicide is the only way to be reunited spiritually with Siegmund. It is only when Brünnhilde tells her that "love commands" that she live to bear the son which she carries that she decides to live, and even then, she only lives long enough to bear her son.

Siegmund, in contrast to Sieglinde's psychological battle, has a physical confrontation with Hunding, who symbolizes the laws of human society, especially marriage. Even before the battle begins, Siegmund is doomed to failure because he has been unwittingly drawn into the world of Wotan and his corruption. Even though Siegmund is unaware of it, Wotan is attempting to use him to regain the ring of power. Siegmund has also been pursued his entire life by those who follow the laws that Wotan created, and the sword that Siegmund wields is both provided by Wotan and broken by him. The pure force of love cannot survive in a world of artificial laws and so Hunding, embodiment of marriage and society, kills Siegmund with the assistance of Wotan, who was the creator of the law, and at the behest of Fricka, the symbol of marriage. Before Siegmund encounters Hunding for the second time, the reader or viewer is already aware of what is going to happen to him because of Wotan's interaction with Fricka, his wife, who has not changed her opinions since the events in *Das Rheingold*.

She continues to act as the advocate of marriage. Scene one of act two is almost exclusively devoted to Fricka and Wotan's argument over the love of Siegmund and Sieglinde. Fricka insists that the sanctity of marriage be upheld, insisting that such vows are holy. Wotan's retort directly states Wagner's view on marriage. "Unholy call I the vows that bind unloving hearts" Wotan even condones the incestuous nature of the relationship because of the purity of their love and encourages Fricka to bestow her blessing. She, however, refuses to give her blessing and insists that Wotan break the sword that he has given to Siegmund. Soon after, she states "Siegmund I claim as my slave", yet another of Wagner's commentaries on marriage. By using Fricka, the strongest symbol of marriage, to make this statement against one of the characters symbolizing love, Wagner is demonstrating how humanity as a whole cannot be free to love when artificial human laws, like those of marriage, are still in effect.



Konrad Wilhelm Dielitz 1845-1933 Wotan's Farewell to Brünnhilde 1914

Wotan in this confrontation with Fricka begins to show signs of being torn between love and power. The first indication of this is when Fricka mentions his affairs, first with Erda and then with a human woman. These affairs result in the Valkyries and the twins Siegmund and Sieglinde. In Fricka's words, Wotan's "glance searched and lusted for love". It is clear that Wotan desires the kind of spontaneous love that marriage does not provide. The fact that three of his children, Brünnhilde, Siegmund, and Sieglinde, embody the kind of pure love that he subconsciously seeks is an even greater indication of this. On a symbolic level, the fact that Wotan's children, but not Wotan himself, are able to experience love, represents the separation from law that must occur before love can truly flourish. Wotan's inability to stand up to Fricka demonstrate how Wotan is an unwilling captive in a cage of his own creation. In his own words, "I forged the fetters; now I'm bound. I, least free of all living!". It is clear later that he truly loves his children; however, because of Fricka's demands and his own plot to keep the ring out of Alberich's hands, he is forced to suppress his love and kill Siegmund. Both Fricka and Wotan act as the agents of Siegmund's death. Fricka's part is not through direct action, but through forcing Wotan to uphold the laws of marriage from which he himself unconsciously wishes to escape but consciously is not able to separate himself from.

<https://www.laits.utexas.edu/wagner/selectedessays/pdf/bittner.pdf>

## ACT III SYNOPSIS

The Valkyries congregate on the mountain-top, after the most famous horse ride in all music. Brünnhilde arrives with Sieglinde, and begs her sisters for help, but they dare not defy Wotan. Sieglinde tells Brünnhilde that without Siegmund she no longer wishes to live. Brünnhilde tells Sieglinde that she is pregnant by Siegmund and urges her to remain alive for her child's sake, and to name the child Siegfried. Brünnhilde gives the fragments of the sword Nothung to Sieglinde, who resolves to save the child. We hear the "Reconciliation" motif in which Sieglinde praises Brünnhilde for her rescue: "O highest of wonders! Noblest of maids!". ("Into her ecstatic outcry: 'O hehrstes Wunder!' Sieglinde must put all the intensity of which she is capable, she must release a great flood of emotion, enraptured and enrapturing." Wagner). The motif will next be heard at the very

end of the *Ring* cycle, bringing the entire tetralogy to a close on a note of reconciliation and optimism. Wotan is heard approaching with great wrath.

When Wotan arrives, the Valkyries vainly try to hide Brünnhilde. He faces her and declares her punishment: she is to be stripped of her Valkyrie status and become a mortal woman, to be held in defenceless sleep on the mountain, prey to any man who finds her. The other Valkyries protest, but when Wotan threatens them with the same, they flee. In a long discourse with Wotan, Brünnhilde explains that she decided to protect Siegmund knowing that this was Wotan's true desire. Wotan consents to her request that he surround her resting place with a circle of fire that will protect her from all but the bravest of heroes. He bids her a loving farewell and lays her sleeping form down on a rock. He then invokes Loge, the demigod of fire, and creates a circle of perpetual fire around her.

## THE VALKYRIES

Valkyries (from Old Norse *valkyrja*, "chooser of the slain") are the maiden attendants of Odin, who, at his command, rode over battlefields and bore the souls of the bravest of the slain to Valhalla, Odin's great hall. In *Die Walküre* the Valkyries are the warrior-daughters born to Erda through Wotan, whose sole purpose as angel-like muses of death is to inspire warriors to martyrdom so the Valkyries can gather them in Valhalla, restored to life, to help Wotan forestall Alberich's threat to capture Valhalla and enslave the gods.

## THE RIDE

The convocation of the Valkyries in Act III is Wagner's finest action sequence – a virtuoso exercise in the massing of forces and the accumulation of energy. At the beginning, winds trill against quick upward swoops in the strings; horns, bassoons, and cellos establish a galloping rhythm, at medium volume; then comes a trickier wind-and-string texture, with staggered entries and downward swooping patterns added; and, finally, horns and bass trumpet lay out the main theme. Successive iterations of the material are bolstered with trumpets, more horns, and four stentorian trombones, but the players are initially held at a dynamic marking of *f*, allowing for a further crescendo to *ff*. When Rossweisse and Grimgerde appear, filling out the Valkyrie ensemble, the contrabass tuba enters fortissimo beneath the trombones, giving the sense of maximum reinforcements arriving. Alex Ross in *Wagnerism*.



Bayreuth 1896



Bayreuth 1953 Wieland Wagner



Seattle 1986



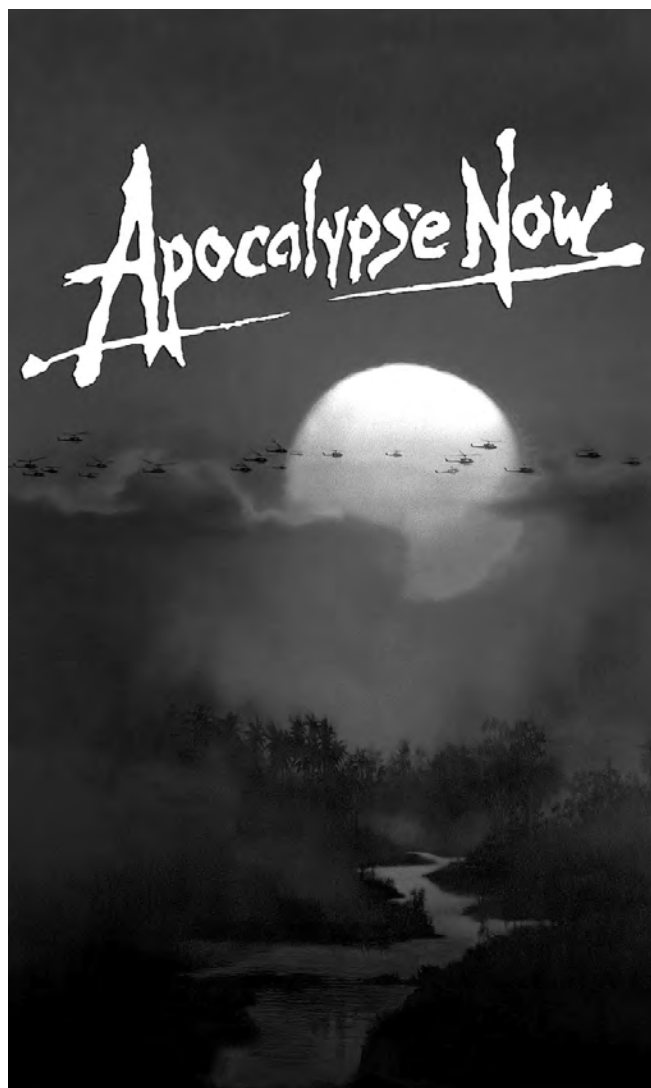
Houston Grand Opera 2015

## THE USE OF THE RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES IN FILM

Wagner was always interested in technical innovation and for the first production at Bayreuth in 1876 used a 'Magic Lantern' to project images of the Valkyries riding through the clouds. He was the most 'cinematic' of composers well before the invention of moving images on film. The use of leitmotifs, which he developed to perfection is now ubiquitous in the movies. His music has been used on the soundtrack of countless films, commercials and TV shows. Below is a list of some of the feature films that have used the Ride of the Valkyries.

Alex Ross has an excellent New Yorker YouTube clip about the use of The Ride in *The Birth of a Nation*, *Apocalypse Now* and *Jarhead* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MO-ZFut5vTI>

Film	Year	Director
The Birth of a Nation	1915	D. W. Griffith
The Scarlet Empress	1934	Josef von Sternberg
The Lion Man	1936	John P. McCarthy
Sullivan's Travels	1941	Preston Sturges
Red River Valley	1941	Joseph Kane
What's Opera, Doc?	1957	Chuck Jones
8½	1963	Federico Fellini
Mondo Trasho	1969	John Waters
Lisztomania	1975	Ken Russell
Apocalypse Now	1979	Francis Ford Coppola
The Blues Brothers	1980	John Landis
Jarhead	2005	Sam Mendes
Valkyrie	2008	Bryan Singer
Watchmen	2009	Zack Snyder
Florence Foster Jenkins	2016	Stephen Frears



## NOTABLE BRÜNNHILDES AND THEIR GRANES

### Amalia Materna 1844 -1918

The Austrian Soprano Amalia Materna was perhaps most admired for her interpretations of the works of Richard Wagner. She sang the role of Brünnhilde in the first complete Ring Cycle in Bayreuth (1876), appearing also in the first Vienna performances of *Die Walküre* (1877) and *Siegfried* (1878), and in the first *Ring Cycle* in Berlin. (1881). In 1882 she originated the role of Kundry in *Parsifal* at Bayreuth, repeating the role there at every festival until 1891. The original 1876 production of *Die Walküre* at Bayreuth featured the black stallion Cocotte, a prized equine loaned for the purpose of playing Grane by King Ludwig II of Bavaria. During the rather fraught final rehearsals Ernest Newman observed....the one model member of the company with whom Wagner had no trouble from first to last, one artist by the grace of God who did cheerfully, and with the highest competence whatever was demanded of him, who never felt a single pang of jealousy of his colleagues, never considered himself slighted or underpaid, never whined, never stormed, never sulked, never threatened to throw up his part and return to the place from whence he came....was Cocotte.



Amalia Materna with Cocotte 1876

## NOTABLE BRÜNNHILDES AND THEIR GRANES (CONTINUED)



Thérèse Vogl 1878 Munich

### Thérèse Vogl 1845 – 1921

Thérèse Vogl performed Sieglinde at the premiere at the Munich Opera on June 26, 1870, in the company of her husband who sang Siegmund. She also played Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold* in Munich on September 22, 1869. Her husband played Loge. In 1878 she played Brünnhilde in Munich

In 1907, the musical review of Lyon quoted an extract from *Souvenirs sur Richard Wagner* by Angelo Neumann, in which the famous Wagnerian impresario evoked the real Grane of the Tetralogy :

[...] During my stay in Munich [in 1878] ..., I attended a stage rehearsal of the Twilight of the Gods and I was able to see for the first time the famous jump through the flames of Thérèse Vogl. The horse, once ridden by King Maximilian, possessed to an incredible degree the instinct necessary for his role as Grane; his entire job was to play that role. When the moment came when Brünnhilde exclaimed: "Heia, Grane, greet your master," he was full of agitation, panting; his feet beat the floor of the stage. At the time of the last call; "Siegfried, this is the salvation of your blessed wife," he turned abruptly and galloped across the stage on his way to the stake. Thérèse Vogl, who represented Brunehilde, took advantage of a moment during this race, threw herself on the horse, grasping its mane tightly, and soon both seemed to have been killed, rushing into the midst of the flames.

This was masterfully rendered from the point of view of the stage and the illusion of the spectators. Thérèse Vogl, to whom I expressed my admiration, assured me that, despite her qualities as an excellent rider, she could only perform this "jump into the fire" with the Munich horse. She added that one would be tempted to consider this horse understood the music, because at the end of the Twilight of the Gods, he used exactly the same measure, without her making any sign and without waiting for her to be mounted on him, acting like he knew she would ride during her run.

Mr. Angelo Neumann then relates that Thérèse Vogl, having to play the part of Brunehilde in Berlin, wanted to have her horse from Munich. It was a real diplomatic question. Kaiser Wilhelm I consented, at the request of King Ludwig II of Bavaria, to have the horse housed in the royal stables in Berlin and promised that it would be given special care. The affair had no result, however, because poor Grane died before he had been able to show the Berlin public his scenic talents. <http://munichandco.blogspot.com/search?q=grane>

### Marjorie Lawrence 1907 – 1979

When singing Brünnhilde at the Metropolitan Opera Marjorie Lawrence was told not to ride the horse into Siegfried's funeral pyre. She did anyway. In her autobiography she states that there was never any question about whether or not she would ride the horse. As a country girl and an experienced horsewoman, she knew it would be easier to ride the horse rather than lead him through the flames. After that first performance the audience went wild. In fact, the last performance she sang at the Met before she was stricken with polio in the spring of 1941 was *Götterdämmerung* and she made her final exit on horseback.



### Rita Hunter 1933 – 2001

Rita Hunter was a superb Brünnhilde in the Goodall *Ring* in London in 1970. Stephen Jay Taylor wrote of her: She found the endless business of apostrophising a horse who wasn't there so ridiculous that she begged the poor producer - Glen Byam Shaw - to see what he could do to oblige her. The designer, Ralph Koltai, and he very rapidly discounted the idea of having a real one, the likelihood of Rita being able to mount being itself beyond the computation of probability, and eventually went out and filmed some wafty-maned nag running around a mist-filled field which was - rather effectively, I have to say - front-projected onto a scrim at the appropriate moments in all three acts the wretched beast is supposed to appear. Rita was a very happy bunny about having something to sing to and about, though - like most singers - was entirely less than thrilled about the scrim.

<https://rec.music.opera.narkive.com/zjwreRN6/has-wagner-s-ring-ever-been-performed-with-live-horses>

Wagner Society NSW members will fondly remember Rita after she retired to Sydney. She often attended Society meetings and became an Honorary Life Member.



Rita Hunter and Norman Bailey 1970

## GRANE IN NORSE LEGEND

Hjordis gave birth to a son who was named Sigurd. In keeping with tradition, Sigurd was placed under the care of a foster father, Regin, the son of Hreidmar. Regin taught him runes, sports, chess, and languages.

One day Sigurd went into the woods, where he came upon an old man with a long beard. The man, who was none other than Odin, offered Sigurd a horse, saying, “Raise this horse carefully, for it is descended from Sleipnir.”

Sigurd named this horse Grani. Grani seems to have a special bond to Sigurd, in one instance in *The Saga of the Volsungs* he mopes because Sigurd is pining after Brynhild. Another example of this attachment is shown when Gunnar and Sigurd go to win Brynhild as Gunnar’s queen. In order to do so they must cross a ring of fire. Gunnar’s horse will not cross the fire so he asks Sigurd if he can borrow Grani. Sigurd agrees but Grani refuses to carry him through the fire. Sigurd changes shape with Gunnar and rides Grani again. Now feeling Sigurd’s spurs, Grani crosses the flames. As Gudrun laments after Sigurd’s death she mentions Grani:

“Grani made a great din when he saw his wounded master. Later I spoke with him as if he were a man, but his head dropped toward the earth and he knew Sigurd had fallen.” (*Saga of the Volsungs*)



Grani on the Sigurd Portal carved door post from a medieval stave church in Hylestad, Setesdal, Norway

## GRANE IN WAGNER’S RING

While a seemingly minor character, Wagner’s noble horse **Grane** has a big role to play in the *Ring* cycle. As the loyal steed of heroine **Brünnhilde**, Grane transports her throughout her journey, from battlefields to Valhalla, the dwelling of the gods, to Midgard (Earth) and beyond. When she must part with her lover Siegfried, she gifts him Grane as a token of her love. Grane’s big moment, however, is at the climax of *Götterdämmerung* when he takes Brünnhilde on to their final

destination into the flames of the funeral pyre of her newly slain beloved. With this act, Brünnhilde destroys Valhalla and the gods once and for all and restores peace to the world.

In traditional productions, Grane was portrayed by a live horse. Modern productions rarely use live animals. Grane and the other Valkyries’ steeds are often not embodied at all or are large props or projections.

### **DIE WALKÜRE** by MINNIE BIGGS

My mother said, “We are going to the opera!”

I was very young, a small child.

What was the opera?

Did I have any idea?

I was dressed up and off we went to meet her friend, Aunt Connie.

Aunt Connie had a box at the old Metropolitan Opera House. The Famous Horseshoe Circle.

There were several chairs at the front of the box and a small area behind with a comfortable padded bench, more like a chaise longue.

Aunt Connie lay there throughout the opera while my mother and I sat on little gilded chairs. No one told me anything. About anything. We sat and sat for a very long time. I can remember looking at the stage. There were two huge people, a man and a woman. Mostly

unmoving. Standing and singing. They were dressed in great hunky robes and had weird things on their heads. At least one of them did. There they stood, heavy, solid. And sang. And sang. On and on. And on.

*(How did I feel? Was I bored? Impatient? Interested? No memory at all. If a seed was planted, it took a long time to grow.)*

I wondered why Aunt Connie would pay a lot of money for a box and spend the long hours just listening to the music, with her eyes closed, in the dark, away from the stage. *(Actually, the very grown-up me might like that a lot, particularly for many of the productions we are treated to these days).*

Much later I was told they were Kirsten Flagstad and Laurenz Melchior. Her last performances. But Met archives say it was probably Melchior and Helen Traubel (no slouch) for the dates I imagine remembering. Or if it was Flagstad and Melchior I was very small indeed. Very.

# FIVE CREATIVE WAYS DIRECTORS PUT HORSES ON STAGE

by Emma Del Valle, July 16, 2014 <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/57706/5-creative-ways-directors-put-horses-stage>

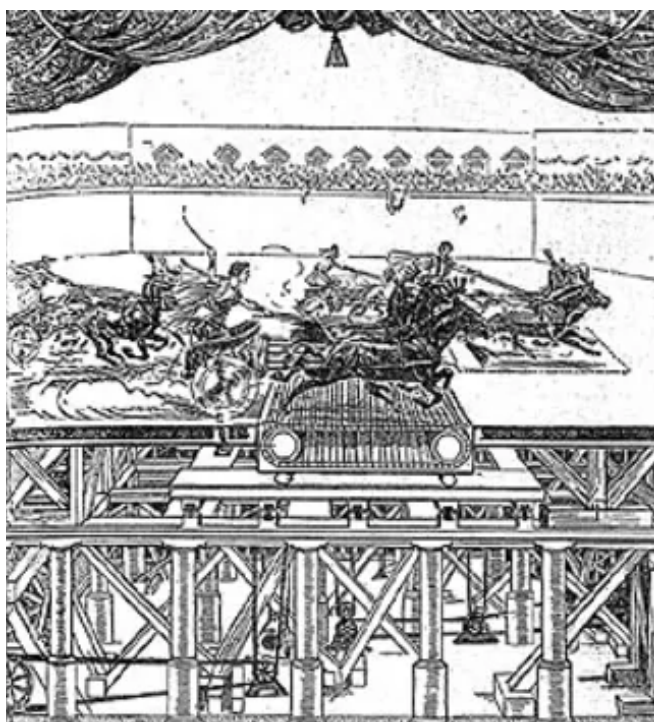
Theatre technicians, directors, and playwrights rarely balk at the idea of testing the limitations of what can and cannot be done on a stage. From periods in which enormous spectacle was the fashion to more modern, minimalist phases, there have always been different approaches to creating the illusion of the play and its particular problems.

A number of productions throughout theatrical history have needed to deal with one specific challenge: horses. Hippodrama was a genre developed for the express purpose of showcasing horsemanship. However, it typically was staged in an arena with a dirt floor and stadium seating that was well-suited for equestrianism. The first hippodromes were large Greek amphitheatres, where horses and chariots raced in a circle.

Getting a horse onto a stage in a theatre, however, is a little more complex. Here are a few notable instances in which directors and designers have approached this challenge with creativity, resourcefulness, and absurdity.

## 1. The *Ben Hur* Stage Play

A stage adaptation of the 1880 novel *Ben Hur: A Tale of Christ* by Lew Wallace opened in 1899 and instantly astonished audiences with its chariot race scene. Four chariots, with four horses apiece, thundered forward at top speed in front of the audience. A team of horses would pull ahead of the other, then fall back, while another team took the lead. And yet, this all took place within the confines of a theatre stage. The effect was achieved using a set of separately rigged treadmills, which could advance and retreat independently



A diagram of the treadmill apparatus in action

of one another. The chariots contained hidden electric motors that turned their wheels to match the illusion of the sprinting horses. A panoramic backcloth rolled in a continuous loop behind the chariots to mimic the appearance of the scenery flying by. Dust was even sprayed out behind the chariots. The spectacle was one of the best of its time.

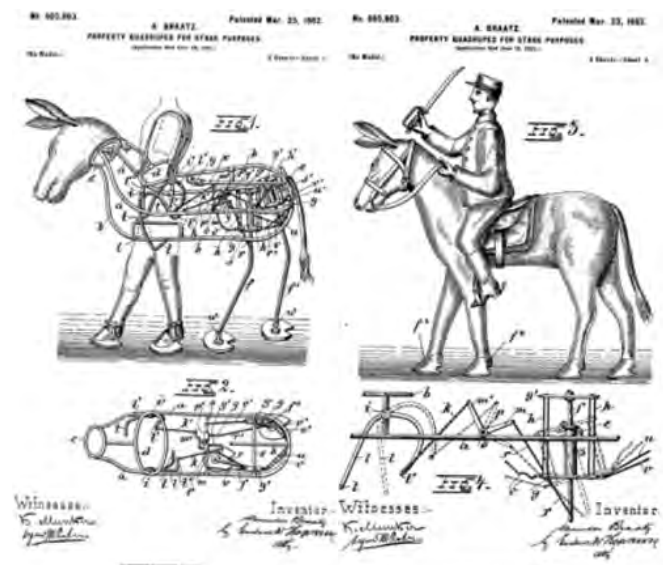
Even the horses were convinced that they were actually racing. One of the chariot drivers, William S. Hart, a former Western star who played Messala, said that he felt sorry for his team of horses because they had to lose every night. In fact, one night, the horses were so hellbent on winning that they actually outran the treadmill.

## 2. “Property Quadruped for Stage Purposes”

Sometimes, though, you don’t want to bother with an elaborate system of treadmills or pulleys or ramps, and you just want to get the point across that there’s a horse onstage without getting fancy about it. At least that was the idea behind US Patent #695,903.

Alexander Braatz, a music hall performer, invented this unintentionally silly-looking device in 1901, as a substitute for equestrian performers. Braatz described his creation as such: The present invention consists of a property quadruped for stage and pantomimic purposes, according to which the two front legs of the animal are those of the person performing, and by their movement the hind legs are moved mechanically by suitable levers and cords, as hereinafter set forth.

The internal workings of the suit are clearly complex and constricting, and one can’t help but wonder what happens if one gets stuck in the thing.

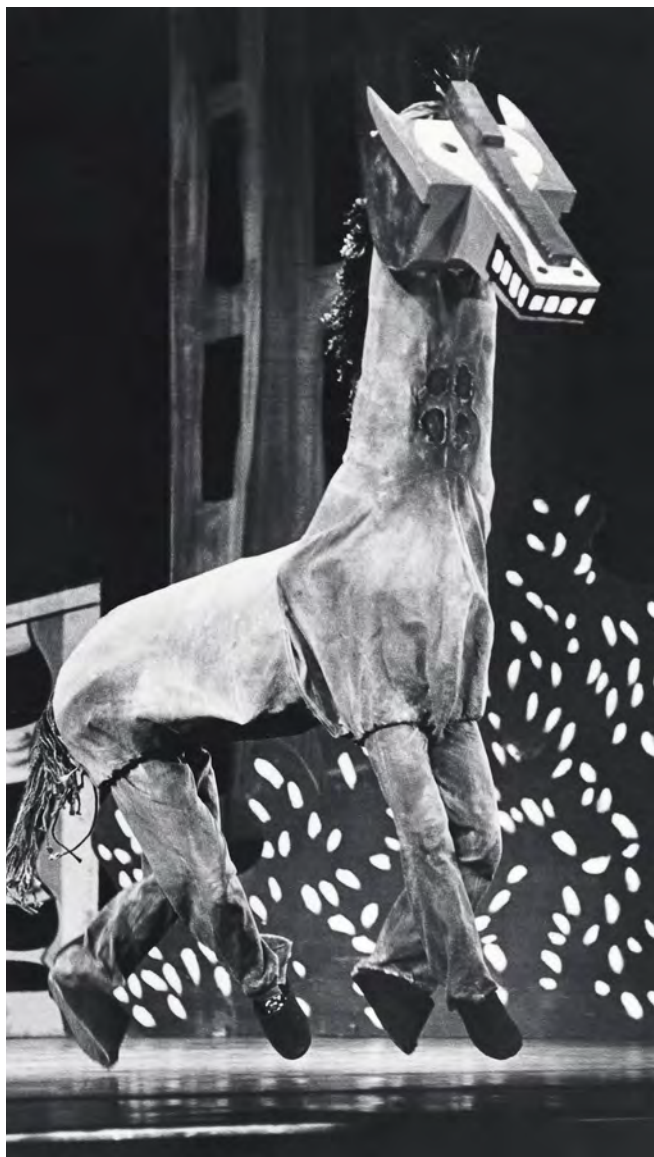


The diagrams accompanying the patent, provided by inventor Alexander Braatz

### 3. Picasso's Horse

In 1917, the ballet *Parade*, composed by Erik Satie, was first performed by the Ballets Russes. The choreography was done by Léonide Massine, the scenario was created by Jean Cocteau, and the costumes were designed by Pablo Picasso. The score was written for typewriters, sirens, airplane propellers, Morse tickers, lottery wheels and two pianos. As could be expected, the ballet was a surreal, avant garde experience. In fact, the term “surreal” was coined in Guillaume Apollinaire’s program note for the ballet, three years before the widely acknowledged beginning of the Surrealist art movement. Picasso designed some of these costumes using cardboard, which, while creating a distinctly cubist effect, hampered the movements of the dancers significantly.

The horse is composed of two performers: one who stands upright and holds up the head, and another who has the unfortunate task of performing bent over, gripping his partner by the waist. The costume originally included a mannequin rider, but it fell off during the premier performance to the laughter of the crowd. Picasso did not bother to fix it for the following performances.



Picasso's horse costume

### 4. Helmets



*Equus* Broadway 2008

Some productions place such a heavy emphasis on horses as characters that it is impossible to expect actual horses to handle the job. In Peter Shaffer’s 1973 play *Equus*, in which a young man develops a religious fascination with horses and ends up blinding six of them in a fervour, costuming made it possible to pull off this kind of drama. In recent stagings, horses have been played by actors with spare, cage-like horse-head helmets on wiry, hoof-like stilts.

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In the November 2021 Richard Jones production of *Die Walküre* for ENO the horses are cloth draped actors with horse helmets.

Continued on Page 24 >



*Die Walküre* ENO London 2021

## 5. Puppets

*War Horse*, which premiered in 2007, took on its dilemma of having a horse as an actual protagonist in a similar way. The actors who operate the puppet that portrays Joey, a horse that is sent to the cavalry in WWI and witnesses the horrors of war, are clearly visible to the audience. However, the puppet is a captivatingly animated, life-sized horse, created with steel, leather, and aircraft cables. The puppets, built by the Handspring Puppet Company, manage to artfully describe horses without seeming too much like, say, Patent # 695,903.

Whether these horses have been real, fake, or really bad fakes, they've all contributed something to the history of theatre, and its technical innovations. They can also help us see, in a little capsule, some of the many different styles of theatre we've invented throughout history. Let's give them a hoof.



Two horse puppets from *War Horse*

## WRITING ABOUT *THE RING*

Countless books and academic papers have been written about *The Ring*. Among the most influential writers in English were **George Bernard Shaw**, who looked through a Socialist lens; **Robert Donington OBE**, whose interpretation was Jungian; and **Deryck Cooke**, whose profound musical analysis was sadly left incomplete by his premature death. **Bryan Magee**, the late Philosopher **Sir Roger Scruton**, music critic **Barry Millington** and Australia's **Peter Bassett** have also contributed greatly to the literature of Wagner studies in English and are well worth reading for their insights into Wagner and his works.

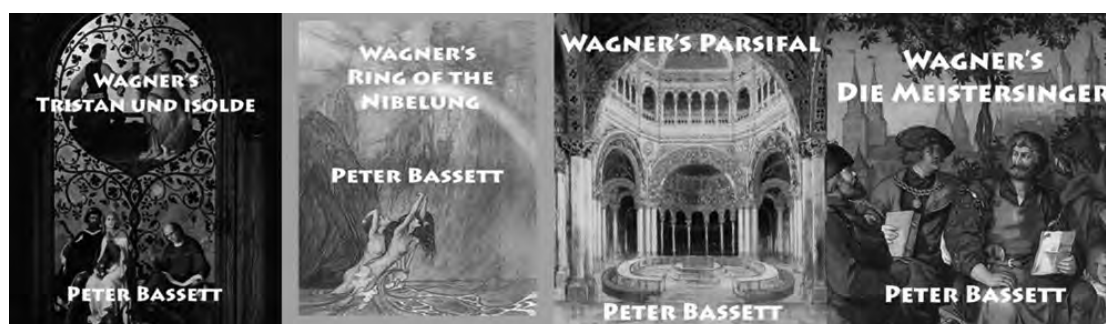
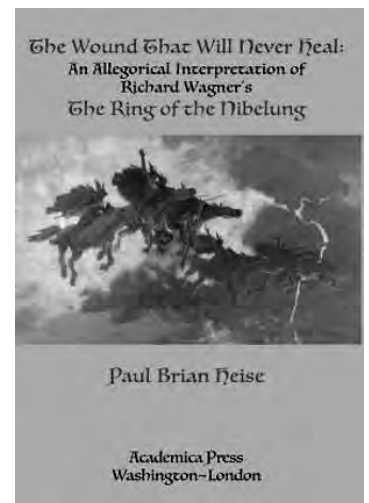
This year the American Wagner scholar **Paul Brian Heise** has published *The Wound That Will Never Heal – An Allegorical Interpretation of Richard Wagner's The Ring of the Nibelung*. (Academia Press, Washington and London 2021). This follows on from his website [www.wagnerheim.com](http://www.wagnerheim.com), which has been documenting nearly 35 years of his deep research into all aspects of Wagner's art and philosophy.

Heise proposes that the entirety of *The Ring's* music, libretto, and dramatic structure can be construed in extraordinary detail within one universal frame of reference. Further, he proposes that Wagner's other canonical operas and music-dramas, from *The Flying Dutchman* through *Parsifal*, can be fruitfully construed in light of the coherent worldview which Heise maintains gives *The Ring* its conceptual and artistic coherence. While this overall framework does not exhaust the meaning of *The Ring*, Heise believes it to be the first successful effort to

construe it as a whole. His major conclusion about the work is that it concerns the death of religious faith and assaults on religion by science. Religious feeling, Heise said, lives on in art. This interpretation is the centrepiece and raison d'être of his website and book.

"Briefly put, *The Ring*, on Heise's interpretation, is an exploration of man's religious sense, of the human need for the transcendental, and of the hope for redemption that endures even in our time of cynicism and materialist frivolity, and which can be satisfied, now, only through the truthful enchantment conveyed to us by art. In developing that theme Heise has made, it seems to me, one of the most important contributions to Wagnerian scholarship that we have seen."

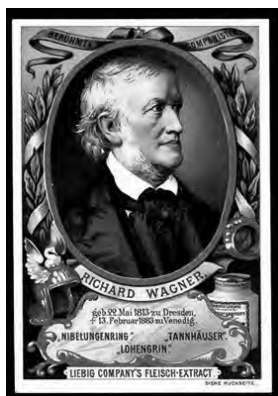
"Heise's book is not an easy book. But it is a deep book. All Wagnerians know that *The Ring* is full of enigmas. But the enigmas are resolved by Heise in a most pleasing, intense and persuasive way. ... I don't agree with all that he says. But he awakens interest, argument, dissent and wonder at every



Peter Bassett is offering digital versions of his published books. They may be accessed and downloaded at: [www.wagnerebooks.com](http://www.wagnerebooks.com) and are priced very reasonably at US\$10.00 each.

point, linking the text minutely to the musical realization, and bringing this great work to life in a way that I hope you will appreciate as much as I have." (Quotation from Roger Scruton's Introduction to [www.wagnerheim.com](http://www.wagnerheim.com))



ILLUSTRATING *THE RING 1* - THE TRADE CARDS OF THE LIEBIG COLLECTION

Richard Wagner

The collectible cards of the **Liebig Meat Extract Company** were not only extremely popular when they were first released in 1872 but remain so to this day. In a time before commercial travel and mass information, they provided an eye-opening window to the wider world. The origin of these highly collectible trading cards comes from unexpected beginnings: the business of selling concentrated meat stock. The method behind this meat extraction came from

the German chemist Justus von Liebig. Liebig made the process public, wanting to share his invention with the world so even those who could not afford actual meat might at least still have the taste of it in their soups and stews. An English firm, who owned large cattle farms in South America, decided to start the production of the meat extract in 1850 and named it after its inventor. Soon, "Liebig Fleischextrakt" was sold all over the world. The OXO Tower in London was purchased by the company in 1920 and a large factory erected.

Liebig's trading cards were lithographically printed on coated card by hand in vibrant technicolor, representing the finest examples of the Victorian master-printer's art. Subjects included detailed illustrations of opera characters, exotic animals, scientific discoveries and historical architecture. Whilst they were an advertising tool, Liebig's trade cards essentially became educational tools covering almost every field of knowledge. Before the mass-information age, these cards were seen as more than just a marketing gimmick,

instead like an encyclopedia with the range of topics covered and information in the sets. The cards eventually became more popular than the meat extract they were trying to sell.

An estimated 1,500 sets were published with a total of 11,000 cards printed. The cards themselves mostly came in sets of six, but also 12, and, having been issued in many countries can be found in several different languages. Cards were always released in the same size of 4.1" x 2.8". The reverse of most cards bears advertising for the Liebig Company products or a recipe. The last lithographed series came out around 1939, but more interesting cards were edited until the seventies.

Over forty sets are directly or indirectly related to opera and opera composers. Opera sets tell the libretto of the opera in six images, while the composers and opera characters sets depict the composer lives and the heroes and heroines in famous operas. Refer to the back cover for six Liebig cards illustrating highlights from *Die Walküre*.

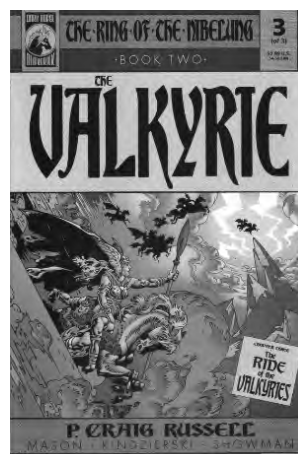


Wagner at the Villa Wesendonck 1858

ILLUSTRATING *THE RING 2* - GRAPHIC NOVELS

In 1989 DC Comics published *The Ring* as a graphic novel in four instalments, sponsored by Opera News.

The creative team of Roy Thomas (writing), Gil Kane (drawing), Jim Woodring (colour) and John Costanza (lettering) were among the leading comic strip artists of the day, having worked for DC and Marvel for many years and been responsible for the likes of Conan the Barbarian, Spiderman, The Justice Society and many others. The sequential drawings work particularly well for Wagner's action-packed dramas as they can show in vivid detail many events that are normally too difficult to realise in the theatre or are only talked about rather than shown. The libretto and its original sources have obviously been studied in some detail and the dialogue bubbles closely translate the original dialogue and evoke the rhythms of the music. I found myself humming the familiar themes as I looked at the drawings. The sequences are cinematic in the same way that Wagner is cinematic, with closeups of passionate embraces, rapid cutting and changing of viewpoints of the flight and fight scenes and a great sense of dynamic movement. It doesn't totally escape being typical 80's kitsch, with some cliched stereotyping and plenty of gore, rippling muscles, bare breasts and big hair. Subtle and nuanced it isn't, but, nevertheless, it is a ripping yarn and a surprisingly good introduction to the great work. Thanks for June Donsworth for lending me her copy.

DC Comics *the Valkyrie*  
P Craig Russell*Die Walküre* The end of Act 1

Another set of comics of *The Ring* was published by Dark Horse in 2000. It was created, written and drawn by prize winning illustrator P Craig Russell. It is slightly less lurid than the DC version and more suitable for younger readers. It is worth a look. **Mike Day**

## NEWS FROM SINGERS SUPPORTED BY THE SOCIETY

### *DAS RHEINGOLD* – MELBOURNE OPERA - SINGING WAGNER, FROM THE SINGER'S PERSPECTIVE

by Eleanor Greenwood



Eleanor Greenwood



Sarah Sweeting



Eddie Muliaumaseali'i



Lee Abrahmsen

*Das Rheingold*, the first of the music dramas in the Ring, first performed in 1869, was staged in Melbourne in February 2021, at a time when it was likely not being performed anywhere else. I was fortunate enough to understudy for the production, gain insights and skills from coaching sessions and take part in rehearsals of this majestic piece. I decided to ask the singers involved about their experiences in performing this work, and what it was really like to interpret and sing Wagner's magnificent music. Firstly, I spoke to **Sarah Sweeting**, the mezzo soprano cast as Fricka.

'Performing these roles has been nothing but an immense joy', Sarah tells me over the phone during Melbourne lockdown. As well as Fricka, Sarah has performed roles such as Brangäne, Ortrud and Venus in various productions. She has a warm regard for these experiences and explains how her voice feels at home in the repertoire. 'My voice feels at home here, there is no struggle, no fear, just ease.' The music itself and the experience of singing it, she says, helped her as a singer as well as a performer, describing it as a wonderful fit.

'Is that because when I finally came to sing Wagner I'd finally learnt how to manage my voice through years of experience, or is it the actual repertoire and how Wagner wrote it that made it easy?' She suspects it was potentially a combination of both. When I ask what it is like to sing Wagner, she answers by explaining the concept of 'speaking on the breath', a term she had heard before, but one that now resonates with her. When I ask if that is a technical approach, she answers yes, but says it is also important conceptually. 'As the singer, I am involved in a constant conversation, one that is sung-through.' In terms of the orchestra's role in the operas, she explains this is also unique, 'you are aware that you're just one part of the whole thing rather than feeling like a solo singer being accompanied, and to be honest I just love singing these roles.' Indeed, it is evident when listening and when studying this music, the orchestra has a role of expressing and revealing much of the character's inner feelings and emotions, particularly as compared to other music where you must be able to hear all of

those details in the voice of the singer alone. Of course, a good singer will be able to add much to their interpretation in any case but in the context of Wagner, much is made known to the singer and audience through the orchestra.

Sarah's partner **Eddie Muliaumaseali'i**, echoes similar sentiments when I ask him about his experience singing Wagner. He uses the example of singing Mozart as compared to singing Wagner in order to outline his point. He explains that when you sing Mozart, you will sing recitative and in doing so, you are conversing with other characters. 'These are like short bursts of energised speaking to each other, usually before you move on to your aria or ensemble.' In Mozart you are often able to leave the stage after your scenes as well, he explains. In contrast to this, 'when singing Wotan you remain on stage for nearly the whole piece'. He says that what became apparent during preparation sessions with Melbourne Opera's Head of Music, Raymond Lawrence, was that when singing Wagner you are singing through expanded, energised and constant conversation and it can be unrelenting, so details like your breaths must be well planned to ensure you are not behind the orchestra. Eddie says that in comparison to Mozart, what's required is a different kind of energy and a different kind of stamina that your body learns to use. Although he must use the exact same machine to sing this music, 'the energy used to operate the machine is being used in a very different way'. The Wagner experience is like 'singing an amalgamation of both recitative and aria in one' and the stamina required is immense.

Eddie sang the role of Wotan in the production. Originally the role was to be shared with Wagnerite, Warwick Fyfe. That was however before Warwick found himself stuck on the wrong side of the New South Wales/Victorian border, at the wrong time, and sadly he could not take part. Excitingly, we will see them both return to the role in the next instalment.

I then ask the singers what it is like to perform these roles here at home, in Australia. 'Well, the thing is - we always sell out!', Sarah tells me. She explains how when it comes

to mounting Wagner works, they have actually proven to be wonderful vehicles through which the company can introduce opera to opera beginners and new audiences. In her experience, many people report being 'simply blown away', experiencing the music for the first time and hearing the full orchestra play it. Indeed, I agree this music can speak to everyone no matter their previous listening experience or prior exposure to opera.

'These are very demanding works, but notably, they are able to be cast entirely with fine Australian singers.'. I must agree this is worth noting and celebrating.

Next, I speak to Soprano, **Lee Abrahmsen**. She sang the role of Freia, and her past roles include those of Isolde, Elisabeth and Senta. She is currently preparing the role of Sieglinde.

When I ask Lee what it is like to sing Wagner, she answers enthusiastically, 'It is exhilarating!'

She describes her journey towards Wagnerian repertoire as a long one, however points out how grateful she is for that fact. She explains how she has come from an approach involving the Italian 'bel canto' style of singing, and this, she says, is very important. She recalls how in early lessons she sang nothing more than scales and arpeggios for a whole year before she was allowed to sing an aria. The focus was on 'producing a pure, bright, unforced and expansive sound, with absolute breath control.' This has influenced and informed her approach to singing Wagner roles and it is clear this adds to her incredible ability to navigate them successfully and portray them to audiences. By the time she was asked to sing her first Wagner role, that of Elisabeth in *Tannhäuser*, she had already studied and sung much of the standard lyric repertoire using bel canto technique, and this was the same approach she took to the Wagner soprano roles.

A couple of years after Elisabeth, she was asked to sing the role of Isolde, something she said came as somewhat of a surprise at first. 'I even dropped my latte when the producer

asked me!', she exclaims. The approach to learning this role, Lee explains, was for her the same as the approach she took to preparing roles such as Butterfly. 'You need to be aware of the orchestration, when it is full, when it is sparse.' She also suggests you should never 'mark' the voice in rehearsal. 'Always send the voice out with ease'. She mentions soprano greats, including Flagstad, Behrens and Nilsson. These are the singers she listens to and respects for their style of vocal production.

In the middle of a pandemic, Melbourne Opera were able to bring Maestro Anthony Negus and Carmen Jakobi to Melbourne to work on *Das Rheingold*. The singers including all covers received expert language preparation and guidance from Carmen, and musical rehearsals with Maestro David Kram and head of music Raymond Lawrence. Members of the Richard Divall Emerging Artist programme were fortunate enough to have coaching with Maestro Negus as well as language coaching with Carmen Jakobi

Melbourne Opera and its sponsors have achieved much in mounting *Das Rheingold* during a global pandemic. The company have used Australian singers, supported emerging talent and in doing so, they have created opportunities for a vast array of Australian creatives. The production was directed by Suzanne Chaundy. She will soon be commencing rehearsals for *Die Walküre*, planned for Her Majesty's Theatre in February, with an alternate cast to be seen in Bendigo.

Before signing off, as a Rheinmaiden cover myself I must mention the exhilaration felt in hearing the Prelude played many times. The world's lullaby. As Alex Ross describes it, 'out of a rocking cradle, a universe emerges'. I cannot wait to see what will happen in this universe in the next drama – *Die Walküre*. We hope you can all join us there.

~Eleanor is currently an Emerging Soprano at Melbourne Opera and covered the role of Wellgunde in *Das Rheingold*. In 2018 Eleanor received a grant from the Wagner Society in NSW towards the costs of studying German repertoire~

## A LETTER FROM JESSICA BLUNT

To the Wagner Society NSW,

I've now arrived in London and had about four days to adjust to the time difference before starting our orientation meetings at the Royal Academy of Music - having building tours and getting to know our tutors and teachers. Our speaker at the postgraduate welcome meeting mentioned two things that I really loved. He said during our interviews they weren't just looking for someone who could play music or sing, but someone who had the passion to drive that career forward and had a 'spark in their eye'. He also said that there is more to being a musician than just endless hours in the practice room - he wanted us to be full, rounded people, and enjoy and explore all the creative and cultural experiences London has to offer! I really love this approach to music, and particularly opera - as singing actors we can use our own experiences to draw from emotionally, and finding a balance between practice, study, and life is important.

Leaving Australia during COVID was exceptionally difficult, not even considering the closed borders and not knowing when I'll be allowed to return home. Saying goodbye to my family and partner for an unknown period of time was the hardest part. Months ago, I had my travel exemption approved, and my flights and travel advice were changing up until the day I left. I had three days to pack up my Sydney apartment but couldn't take my belongings to my parents' place in Newcastle, so it



has all been left on top of my bed until they can eventually come to pick it up! Leaving Sydney was a multi-step process: a pre-departure COVID19 PCR test with adequate paperwork in the 72-hour period before arrival in the UK, then you had to fill in your Passenger Locator form, have all your documents and travel exemptions ready. At check in, they took your temperature and wouldn't even let you approach the check-in desk before going through all your paperwork. Border security had to be rung to be given a personalised departure number, and then once on the plane there were probably only 15 people to fill a Boeing 777. In Singapore, our four-hour transit time was limited to one tiny cordoned-off area in the airport, and arrival at Heathrow was similarly monitored (but not nearly as strict as leaving Australia!) We also needed a COVID test on arrival. I must also take twice-weekly lateral flow tests to monitor that I have not contracted the virus in London, which I think is such a great way to keep safe.

I am lucky to be living at a postgraduate college with other students from around the world, all of whom are delightful and friendly and I already feel quite at home.

We had our first audition on Tuesday for members of the vocal faculty in the Susie Sainsbury Theatre. It was the first time I had sung on a stage in 18 months, and after a long hard year and a half of singing alone to YouTube accompaniment and living room recitals, I can't explain the joy I felt to be back on a stage, performing with a real accompanist and feeling that connection to the music and the people around me. I had a ball, gave it my all, and was surprised to find I couldn't help but have a few tears after - the adrenaline and the emotion of performing, especially after practicing for no apparent purpose other than maintaining my instrument throughout all this pandemic time really caught up to me. I was able to remember why I do what I do and how much I love it. I'm feeling so very lucky to be here, made all the more possible by the generous donation of the Wagner Society, and I'm so excited for real classes to start next week!

Best,

**Jessica Blunt**

September 2021

## A LETTER FROM JESSICA HARPER



Dear Wagner Society NSW,

I write to, firstly, thank you sincerely for your support of my studies during the months of May – August 2021. I have had a very difficult time financially recently, and your support made an enormous difference to what I was able to achieve before leaving Germany for postgraduate studies in Belgium.

Secondly, I would like to report on my coachings with Thomas Cadenbach, which were initially centred around, not just the music of Wagner, Clara Schumann and Strauss, but also much around the particularities of German language prosody, and the relationship of poetry to music in the *Lieder* genre, as well as in operatic works. It has become apparent that I will sing a lot of German repertoire in my life and career, so this period of immersion in research and coaching has been such an enriching gift for me.

The repertoire studied was:

- Waldvogel (*Siegfried*), Richard Wagner
- Eva (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*), Richard Wagner - only half of this role was able to be studied in the time - this work is far denser than I previously understood it to be and requires much more time than I allocated. We have made plans to continue working on this when I am able to visit Herr Cadenbach again in the future.

- Opus. 13, Clara Schumann (*Sechs Lieder*)
- Opus, 40 and 104, Robert Schumann
- *Wesendonck Lieder*, Richard Wagner
- 'Dich Teure Halle' (*Tannhäuser*)

We worked both in Dresden and in Berlin over the summer and finished up a few weeks before I embarked on a trip to Budapest to compete in the IV International Éva Marton Competition. I am proud to say that I am the only Australian to have been offered a place in the live rounds of this competition, and I made it to the Semi Finals (top 24 candidates out of approx. 250).

Since moving to Europe I have understood that how I was taught in Australia was incredibly beneficial, but that there are many gaps in the education of young singers. There is so much work to be done as a singer in studying the text of a work, as much as there is in studying the music. We have a difficult time doing this properly in Australia, as it is so necessary to be immersed in a language to fully comprehend its layered meanings. I look forward to enriching the educational practices of young Australian singers by passing on what I have learned and encouraging them to spend time abroad.

Thank you so much again for your support. I look forward to recording a recital for you and making it digitally available in the near future. I look forward even more to performing for you live when I am able to next return to Australia.

Warm regards,

**Jessica**

November 2021

## UPDATE FROM MICHELLE RYAN

FROM MICHELLE'S BLOG 22 SEPTEMBER (<https://michelleryansopranoblog.wordpress.com/2021/09/22/>)

Hello All,

It has been a while since my last update, and so much has happened worldwide since I last posted interviews with students studying abroad. I think of you all often and want you to know that I send all my love and thoughts as you battle this current wave of infections and cope with the restrictions. I can empathise completely, having spent between November-May in lockdown, living by myself. This was not entirely fun, but I was very blessed to be able to go and practise and eventually rehearse again at the theatre during that time.



From Left to Right- Me (Waldvogel), Catherine Foster (Brünnhilde), Patrick Lange (GMD Conductor), Sasha Golubitskaia (Piano), Andreas Schager (Siegfried), Thomas De Vries (Alberich) and Helena Kühn (Erda).

By July, we were able to do a few performances at the State Theatre Wiesbaden before the end of the season (my last performance prior to this being October 15!) I performed two performances of both Wagner's *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* from the Ring Cycle, conducted by our General Music Director, Patrick Lange.

A highlight for me was singing my last show as the role of Waldvogel (The Woodbird) with one of the most famous Siegfrieds of our time, Andreas Schager. This production directed by our Intendant Eric Uwe Laufenberg involves Waldvogel spending a lot more time on stage than usual! Below is a picture of our small cast, me standing next to Catherine Foster (Brünnhilde). We performed to a very small crowd but enjoyed being able to be on stage again!!!

Vaccines were offered and strongly encouraged to those employed by the theatre, enabling me to get two BionTech shots before the summer holidays began. I had found out that I qualified for the final week of rounds for both the Hans Gabor Belvedere Singing Competition taking place in Germany and the Concorso Lirico Internazionale di Portofino, Italy. I participated in both of these competitions and sang in the next rounds but unfortunately didn't make it to any finals. However, it was an incredible experience for me to be a part of these competitions and meet many singers from Europe! This was new to me as I had only been a part of Australian competitions up until now. There was also a great opportunity to attend a dinner in Portofino with the semi-finalists of the Italian competition where I was lucky enough to sit across from the Director of La Scala, Dominique Meyer! We chatted for some time with my colleague Fleuranne Brockway and he shed a lot of light on the Opera Industry. I will never forget this opportunity.

After being part of two International Singing Competitions, it was time for a holiday! I had a wonderful time in Italy exploring the culture, history, food, music and much more! It was truly a dream to be able to swim in salt water again after such a long time! During my time I had a great week of vocal lessons with Sherman Lowe in Treviso. There was also the opportunity for me to do some language study at both Accademia Leonardo in Salerno on the west coast, as well as the Istituto Italiano in Firenze, Tuscany.

Now I am back in Wiesbaden and have enjoyed preparing roles while doing a few extra hobbies as there is a little extra time before my rehearsals start. The next season is looking to be a very busy one for me! Due to the pandemic, and this last twelve months not really being a proper season at the theatre, the German Australian Opera Grant and the Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden agreed to extend me a further year on full scholarship. I am so grateful for this and am looking forward to the work ahead! The roles I am preparing are Gretel from *Hänsel und Gretel* (also the Dew Fairy/Sandman), Zerlina from *Don Giovanni*, Servilia from *La Clemenza di Tito*, Sophie from *Werther*, Fourth Maid from *Elektra*, Mascha from *Pique Dame* and Die Seele from the modern production *Babylon*. As well as these roles I am preparing a recital program to perform in the gorgeous Foyer at the Theatre, with my friend and pianist who is Kapellmeister at Theater Bremen, Will Kelley.

I do hope that by the time I send another update restrictions have eased significantly in Australia!

Stay well and safe,

**Michelle xo**

## CONGRATULATIONS! FLEURANNE BROCKWAY



WSNSW member mezzo-soprano Fleuranne Brockway is the 2021 recipient of the prestigious Dame Heather Begg Memorial Award. Established by Dame Heather Begg's estate, the \$25,000 grant is provided through Melba Opera Trust. The award is offered each year to a young singer or singers

from Australia or New Zealand to provide funding for travel and tuition to refine and mature an already-evident operatic talent. Fleuranne is currently a member of the principal ensemble at the Hessisches Staatstheater, Wiesbaden and in

December will appear as Charlotte in *Werther* (Massenet).

'[Receiving this award] is a very full-circle moment for me as Dame Heather Begg was one of the reasons I came to opera in the first place. My first operetta was seeing a re-run of Opera Australia's *The Mikado*, with Dame Heather Begg as *Katisha*. I had never experienced anything more hysterical, exciting, or magical. This first production really shaped what I love about opera, which is bringing life to the character on stage and through the voice. [She] was a huge inspiration for me and continues to be to this day. I am honoured to continue her legacy and to try and live it out through my craft.'

<https://www.melbaoperatrust.com.au/melba-magazine/>

## REST IN PEACE

### Norman Bailey CBE

We were saddened to learn of the death at age 88 on 15 September of the great bass-baritone Norman Bailey.

He was born in Birmingham, England and debuted in 1959 at the Vienna Chamber Opera. He then linked up with the Landestheater Linz until 1963 and then became a member of the Deutsche Oper Am Rhein. He returned to England

in 1967, joined the ENO and gained fame for his Wagner roles. His *Wotan* in ENO's 1970s *Ring Cycle* is still praised by audiences to this day, and his other great roles for the ENO throughout the following decades include the *Dutchman* and *Hans Sachs*. He performed roles in German and in English. He sang *Sachs* in Sydney in 1998. (Editor's Note: I attended a performance of *Die Meistersinger* when everyone sang in English apart from Bailey, who sang in German)

### Clifford Grant OAM

Our condolences go to the family and friends of popular bass Clifford Grant, who died on 7 October aged 91. Cliff was known for many roles with Sadler's Wells Opera, Covent Garden Opera, Welsh National Opera, Glyndebourne, San Francisco Opera, the New York Metropolitan and Australian opera companies. Cliff was born in Randwick, Sydney and studied at the Sydney Conservatorium and began his singing career with New South Wales Opera and Victorian Opera.

After being "discovered" by Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngé in 1965, he joined the Joan Sutherland/JC

Williamson opera company in Australia as principal bass. Later the same year he travelled to London to audition for Sadler's Wells Opera (later English National Opera). During the period from 1965 to 1976 he sang many of the best-known bass roles including *Fafner*, *Hunding* and *Hagen* in the Goodall *Ring Cycle* at the ENO.

He returned to Australia in 1976, where he joined Australian Opera, playing principal roles until retiring in 1990 to run his own art gallery in Sydney, where a Wagner Society in NSW event was held. He was also a talented artist who held several one-man shows in London and Sydney.

### Malcolm Donnelly AM

Our condolences go to the family and friends of the outstanding baritone, Malcolm Donnelly, who died at age 78 on 10 October. He was born in Sydney and studied at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. In 1968 he won the Sun Aria Competition, which started his career with the Elizabethan Trust Opera. From there he travelled to London for vocal study and joined the Scottish Opera in 1971. He spent most of the next decade with that company, singing small parts at first, but gradually taking on the major roles by Mozart, Verdi, Puccini

and others – a total of 38 roles. As a member of the ENO between 1981 and 1985, he sang most of the big Verdi roles and, at the same time, he enjoyed a successful international career. He returned to Australia and debuted in 1985 with Opera Australia, where he appeared in principal roles in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Nabucco*, *Macbeth*, *Hansel und Gretel*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Otello*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Il Trovatore*, *Tosca*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *The Eighth Wonder*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and *Lindy*. His work with the State companies included *The Ring*, *Falstaff*, *The Flying Dutchman* and *Tosca*

### Bernard Haitink CH KBE

Renowned Dutch conductor Bernard Haitink has died at his home in London on 21 October aged 92.

Born in Amsterdam in 1929, Haitink won many awards and was a major figure in the UK's classical music scene. Even in his final months at the podium his performances with the London Symphony Orchestra were described as "ravishing". For 27 years he was chief conductor of the

Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam. famed for his performances of Mahler and Bruckner. Haitink performed with almost all of the world's big orchestras in Amsterdam, Chicago and Dresden and notably in the UK with the London Philharmonic, Glyndebourne Festival Opera and at the Royal Opera House from 1987-2002 where he was renowned for his interpretation of Wagner. He made more than 450 recordings and saw his job as to embrace the orchestra without suffocating them.

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Telephone: 0412 282 070 [Esteban Insausti, President]  
Website: [www.wagner.org.au](http://www.wagner.org.au) | Website enquiries: [webmaster@wagner.org.au](mailto:webmaster@wagner.org.au)

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**Die Walküre Leibig Trade Cards 1883**

Refer to article on page 25

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The Wagner Quarterly is designed, produced and distributed by MKR Productions  
154 Matcham Road, Matcham NSW 2250 | Ph: 0402 834 419 | Email: [michael@mkproductions.com.au](mailto:michael@mkproductions.com.au)