



RICHARD WAGNER'S BIRTHDAY CONCERT
A Wagner Society in NSW Inc presentation

VALDA WILSON, soprano
EUGENE RAGGIO, bass baritone
KATHERINE DAY, piano
THOMAS VICTOR JOHNSON, piano

2.00pm Sunday 19 May, 2024

Goethe Institut

90 Ocean Street (corner of Jersey Road), Woollahra

Bust of Richard Wagner at Wahnfried, now part of the
Richard Wagner Museum in Bayreuth.

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Wagner Society in NSW Inc.
established 1980



PROGRAMME

2.00pm CONCERT by
VALDA WILSON (soprano) and **EUGENE RAGGIO** (bass baritone)
accompanied by **KATHERINE DAY** (piano)

RICHARD WAGNER (1813-1883)
Wehvolles Erbe (Amfortas)
from **Act 1 Parsifal**
Eugene Raggio and Katherine Day

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)
Da geht er hin (Marschallin's Monologue)
from **Act 1 Der Rosenkavalier**
Valda Wilson and Katherine Day

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)
Waltzes 1 - 4, Op. 39
Katherine Day

RICHARD WAGNER (1813-1883)
War es so schmäählich
duet from **Act 3 Scene 3 Die Walküre**
Valda Wilson and Eugene Raggio
accompanied by Thomas Victor Johnson

RICHARD WAGNER (1813-1883)
Leb wohl, du Kühnes, herrliches Kind! (Wotan's Farewell)
from **Act 3 Die Walküre**
Eugene Raggio
accompanied by Thomas Victor Johnson

3.15pm (approx) **WAGNER'S BIRTHDAY TOAST**
+
REFRESHMENTS



THOMAS VICTOR JOHNSON, piano

Thomas Victor Johnson is a vocal coach and pianist based in Sydney, where he is currently a répétiteur with Opera Australia and a vocal coach at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Together with his husband, Paull-Anthony Keightley, he is also the co-founder of *vioro.co* – a creative consultancy studio. The recipient of a study scholarship from the Wagner Society in NSW in 2019, and the winner of the Richard Bonyngé Accompanists Award at the 2018 Sydney International Song Prize, Thomas is in high demand as an insightful, refined and sympathetic collaborative artist. He is a graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music,

where he studied piano performance and accompaniment with Natalia Sheludiakova. Between 2019 - 2023 Thomas was on the music staff at Staatsoper Unter den Linden, where he also served as stellvertretender Chordirektor during the 2021/2022 season. In November 2023, he was engaged as a guest répétiteur by Simone Young AM for Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concert performances of *Das Rheingold*, featuring Wolfgang Koch as Wotan, Michaela Schuster as Fricka, and Falk Struckmann as Alberich. Thomas has worked with and played for conductors including Daniel Barenboim, Christian Thielemann, Zubin Mehta, Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Antonio Pappano, Simone Young AM, Philippe Auguin, Pietari Inkinen, Thomas Guggeis, Speranza Scappucci, Massimo Zanetti, Renato Palumbo, Carlo Montanaro, Guillaume Tourniaire, Patrick Lange, Andrea Battistoni, Anthony Legge, Tom Woods, Maxime Pascal, Giuseppe Montesano, Jonathan Darlington, Antony Walker, Kristiina Poska, Pietro Rizzo, Benjamin Northey, Tahu Matheson, and Christian Badae.



Left, Valda Wilson (bottom right) in Copenhagen *Die Walküre*. Right, Eugene Raggio, Berlin Wagner Gruppe, April 2019.



Portrait of Johannes Brahms at the piano by Willy von Beckerath (1868-1938).

WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT?

On Bloomsday we will be talking to **ALEX ROSS** via zoom about Joyce and Wagner on **16 June** starting at 12noon followed by our **AGM** and a surprise (TBA), **The Goethe Institut**.

Zoom Talk with Chairman of the Wagner Society of Southern California **Dr JOHN MASTROGIOVANNI**, talking about "*Parsifal: the will and redemption*" amongst other things, on **26 June** at 12noon.

An afternoon with baritone **SIMON MEADOWS** on **14 July** at 2pm preceded by a DVD (Richard Strauss Gala from Dresden), **The Goethe Institut**.

On the 20th anniversary of the SOSA Ring **MICHAEL SCOTT-MITCHELL** and **NICK SCHLIEPER** talk about their work and experience, on **28 July** at 2pm preceded by a DVD (The Ring without Words with Lorin Maazel), **The Goethe Institut**.

A talk by **ANTONY ERNST** on *Die Walküre* **18 August** at 2pm preceded by a DVD (Lotte Lehmann masterclass), **The Goethe Institut**.

WSSA President **GEOFFREY SEIDEL** talks to us on *Lola Montez* on **29 September** at 2pm preceded by a DVD (TBA), **The Goethe Institut**.

Friend of the Society **ROBERT GAY** returns on **20 October** at 2pm to talk about *Cosima Wagner*, **The Goethe Institut**.

DIE WALKÜRE SYMPOSIUM join us for the continuing series on *The Ring* in the week of the SSO-Simone Young performances on **10 November** starting at 10.30am, **The Goethe Institut**.



VALDA WILSON, soprano

Blessed with a 'full soprano voice, crystal clear', 'sensuous and sensitive phrasing', Valda Wilson has gained a reputation as a true singing actress on the operatic stage, an outstanding interpreter of the works of Mozart, Strauss, Handel, Verdi and Puccini.

She enjoys collaborative relationships with conductors including Sébastien Rouland, Marko Letonja, Richard Bonyngé, Christopher Ward, Gaetano d'Espinosa, Philippe Herreweghe, John Fiore, Erin Helyard and John Nelson, and directors Eva-Maria Höckmayr, Lorenzo Fioroni, Roland Schwab, Vasily Barkhatov, Wolfgang Nägele and Lindy Hume.

Recent highlights include performances of *Beethoven 9* and the concert aria 'Ah! Perfido' with the Bremer Philharmoniker, the Strasbourg Philharmonique, and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra; house debuts at the Royal Opera House Copenhagen (*Die Walküre*) and the New National Theatre Tokyo (*Orfeo ed Euridice*); as well as major role debuts at the Saarländisches Staatstheater where she has been a member of the ensemble for several years. These include the Feldmarschallin (*Der Rosenkavalier*, R. Strauss), Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*, Mozart), Vitellia (*La clemenza di Tito*, Mozart), Marguerite (*Faust*, Gounod), Violetta (*La Traviata*), Leonora (*Il Trovatore*), Elisabeth de Valois (*Don Carlos*, 5-act French version), and most recently an immense success in her first major Puccini role: 'So intimate, so moving, yet in the depths of tragedy so beautiful in timbre... *Suor Angelica* unquestionably crowned the evening.' (*Il Trittico*).

Valda's irreverent Australian sense of humour has proven an asset to the world of German and Austrian operetta - particularly the characters of Hanna Glawari (*Die lustige Witwe*) and Rosalinde (*Die Fledermaus*). In 2012, she was chosen by Richard Bonyngé to be the only featured soloist at the Westminster Abbey memorial service for the late Dame Joan Sutherland with the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, conducted by Sir Antonio Pappano.

Valda's extensive discography includes a recording of Handel's *Rodelinda* with Maestro Bonyngé, *Theodora* for Pinchgut Opera (ABC Classics), songs of Franz Schreker and Paul Hindemith with the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz and Christopher Ward, Verdi's *Un giorno di regno* and a CD of Beethoven with Marcus Bosch and Capella Acquila.

EUGENE RAGGIO, bass baritone

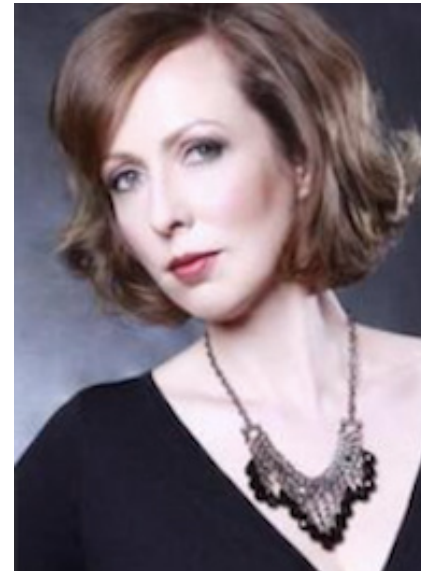
Australian-Maltese Bass Baritone, Eugene Raggio is a graduate of the Elder Conservatorium (Adelaide) and a graduate actor of the Adelaide Centre for the Arts and the International Film School Sydney.

In 2014 Eugene was a young artist with Australian Contemporary Opera Co. He has appeared in the Inaugural Nagambie Lakes Opera Festival Vic and toured with Opera Australia in Victoria/NSW and nationally with Co-Opera. In the EU he has appeared with Berliner Wagner Gruppe, Berlin Summer Festival, Berlin Dramatic Voices; Yorke Trust and Dei Gratia (UK). He has toured the German speaking world with *Das Phantom Der Oper* (Arndt/Gerber - ASA Events) successive years. Eugene's repertoire includes: *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Lohengrin*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Hänsel and Gretel*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Armide*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *La Traviata*, *The Consul* and *Mozart y Salieri*. Eugene is the founding conductor of the Australian Remembrance foundation and Organist/Director of music at the shrine of St Anne. He is completing his debut feature film *Trittico*. Eugene is shortly to tour with Opera Australia's new production of *La Bohème* in the roles of Benoit and Alcindoro.



KATHERINE DAY, piano

Pianist Katherine Day, who has accompanied artists at a number of recent Wagner Society events, is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts and London's Royal College of Music. In 1999, she won the VCA concerto competition and finalist in the RCM's concerto trials 2002. In 2007, Katherine won the Liederfest Accompanist Prize and travelled to the UK to tutor on the 2008 and 2009 Frensham Heights international master course for pianists, assisting master pianist Julian Jacobson. She has performed countless art song recitals, with singers Margaret Haggart, Shu Cheen Yu, Bradley Cooper, Michael Smallwood, David Hobson, and Alteouise DeVaughn.



In 2016, Katherine curated and performed in Canberra's Satie Festival, organising ten pianists to perform the marathon work *Vexations* at the National Portrait Gallery. This performance received national coverage on ABC TV. Katherine toured the Eastern seaboard and South Australia in 2017 for Promac Production's *Mikado* and La Prima Opera's *Encore*, was soloist in Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto* with the National Capital Orchestra and with Melbourne New Orchestra. As an orchestral pianist, Katherine was been Principal Pianist with the Canberra Symphony Orchestra for three years, most recently performing in the Westlake Oboe Concerto with Diana Doherty. Katherine appears regularly as a concerto soloist, performing the Grieg *Concerto in A minor*, Mozart *Concerto in D minor*, Gershwin *Rhapsody in Blue*, F. X. Mozart *Concerto in E flat* and Beethoven *Concerto in G Major*. Katherine is also sought after as a chamber musician, recently performing arias, lieder, duos, and trios in Sydney, Cairns, Port Douglas and Taree. Katherine has performed with: mezzo soprano Alteouise DeVaughn, sopranos Ellen McNeil and Olivia Swain; cellist William Howard; violinists Kirtley Leigh, Khalida de Ridder, and Linda Gilbert. In February 2023, Katherine appeared as a soloist for Narooma's Montague Artist series and the Sapphire Coast Music Society in February. She performed the same programme in August for the Vivace Berrima Series and St Stephen's Macquarie Street, Sydney. Katherine is a recording artist with MOVE Records and is featured on albums with Shu-Cheen Yu and Peter Sheridan. She is currently working on producing a solo album of miniatures by Krenek, Joachim, Granados and Mozart. She can be heard on recordings for ABC Classic FM and 3MBS FM.

Wieland Wagner at Bayreuth 1955, Wotan's farewell, Hans Hotter and Astrid Varnay.

