



WAGNER
SOCIETY
nsw

CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF RICHARD WAGNER

WAGNER QUARTERLY

ISSUE NO 45

172

MARCH 2024

The Brisbane Ring



Deborah Humble as Waltraute



Warwick Fyfe as Alberich

[Photos: Wallis Media/OA]

THE SOCIETY'S OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Society are to promote the music of Richard Wagner and his contemporaries, to explore a wider understanding of their work, and to support Wagnerian productions in Australia and emerging Wagnerian performers from NSW

PHOTOS OF RECENT EVENTS

PHOTOS BY MIKE DAY AND MARIE LEECH

SUNDAY 11 JANUARY AT GOETHE INSTITUT WARWICK FYFE TALKED ABOUT THE BRISBANE RING



Louise Allison, Terence Watson and Lynette Longfoot



Leona Geeves, Warwick Fyfe, Dr Sarah Penicka-Smith and Mel Penicka-Smith



Glen Barnwell, Margaret Harris and Mitzi Saunders



Geoff Crawford, Deirdre McCann and Lisbeth Roberts



Rhonda Dalton and Michael Gleeson-White



Nick and Barbara Dorsch, Renate Junker, Jill Sykes



Chris Ford and David May

FOR YOUR DIARY

2024

11 May – 2 June	3 <i>Ring Cycles</i> at Deutsche Oper. Directed by Stefan Herheim , conducted by Australian Nicholas Carter (I) and Sir Donald Runnicles (2, 3)	Berlin
16 June – 9 July	3 <i>Ring Cycles</i> conducted by Anthony Negus	Longborough
20, 21 June	WASO/Asher Fisch Selections from the <i>Ring</i>	Perth Concert Hall
28 Jul – 25 Aug	Bayreuth Festival with Simone Young AM conducting two <i>Ring Cycles</i>	Bayreuth
2 – 25 Aug	<i>Tristan und Isolde</i> with Stuart Skelton and Samuel Sakker	Glyndebourne
15, 17 Nov	SSO/Simone Young AM <i>Die Walküre</i> in concert	SOH

COMING SOCIETY EVENTS 2024

STARTING TIMES AND VENUE MAY VARY - PLEASE CHECK ONLINE FOR DETAILS | WEDNESDAY ZOOMS TO BE ADVISED

DATE	Some events may be subject to change and further detail in the next newsletter	LOCATION
Sun 10 March	12.30pm DVD Erich Leinsdorf rehearsing <i>Parsifal</i> 2.00pm Talk by heldentenor Simon O'Neill ONZM	Goethe Institut
Wed 20 March	7.00pm Broadcaster Christopher Cook talks about 'Wagner in Britain'	Zoom
Sun 21 April	12.30pm DVD Weber's <i>Euryanthe</i> 3 Acts	Goethe Institut
Sun 19 May	1.00pm Annual General Meeting 2.00pm Concert with soprano Valda Wilson and bass-baritone Eugene Raggio followed by Wagner's birthday celebration	Goethe Institut
Sun 16 June TBC	12.30pm DVD Lotte Lehman masterclass 2.00pm Talk TBC	Goethe Institut
Sun 14 July	12.30pm DVD <i>The Ring</i> without words – Lorin Maazel 2.00pm Talk by baritone Simon Meadows	Goethe Institut
Sun 10 Nov	10.30am WSNSW Symposium on <i>Die Walküre</i>	Goethe Institut

Advice about changes to the Program will be emailed in our e-news 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.

Admission to each event will be \$25 a Member, and \$35 each non-Member, \$10 (Full-time students); Seminar/Concert \$40 (m), \$50 (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

Professor Michael Ewans

Mr Horst Hoffman

Mr Roger Cruickshank

Dr Terence Watson

Dr Dennis Mather

Ms Leona Geeves

Mrs Barbara Brady

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT	P.5
FUTURE WAGNER SOCIETY EVENTS	P.7
FINANCIAL SOCIETY MEMBERS AS OF FEBRUARY 2024	P.10
REPORTS ON RECENT WAGNER SOCIETY EVENTS	P.11
THE BRISBANE <i>RING</i> DECEMBER 2023: THREE IMPRESSIONS	P.13
OTHER REVIEWS OF THE BRISBANE RING CYCLE 2023	P.21
THE COMPOSERS WHO INFLUENCED WAGNER OR WERE INFLUENCED BY HIM. PART 2	P.22
TCHAIKOVSKY AND THE BAYREUTH MUSIC FESTIVAL	P.25
COMPUTER GENERATED DESIGNS BY WOUTER DE MOOR USING MICROSOFT BING AND ADOBE PHOTOSHOP	P.28

YOUR DONATIONS HAVE HELPED THESE STARS



Elizabeth Campbell



John Wegner



Bernadette Cullen



Daniel Sumegi



David Stanhope



Marilyn Richardson



Stuart Skelton



Jennifer Condon



Lisa Gasteen



Warwick Fyfe



Tabitha McFayden



Samuel Sakker

These are some of the 100 ARTISTS the WSNSW has assisted OVER 40 YEARS.
We target \$20,000 annually towards supporting emerging Wagnerian performers from NSW.
Help continue to support our talented artists.

PLEASE DONATE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear friends,

The year is well under way with the Society presenting two events, one live and one on zoom (to reconvene our Wednesday Zoom series of international and interstate speakers). The amazing Warwick Fyfe kicked off our event season on 11 February with entertaining observations on the Brisbane *Ring*, with a few references to Bendigo and Melbourne along the way. Alexandra Steiner charmed us from Berlin via zoom. There is a strong emphasis on singers in this year's event calendar. Next we host one of the two great Antipodean heldentenors of our time, Simon O'Neill, on the 10th of March. Later in the year, fingers crossed, we'll reconnect with Stuart Skelton on his return to Sydney for performances of *Die Walküre*. Then we host Simon Meadows (the Alberich in Bendigo) and, if all the planets align, Catherine Foster, the reigning Bayreuth Brünnhilde and Isolde. That is not to mention a couple of concerts with some amazing local talent. All in all, a mix of established and emerging stars to look forward to hearing and meeting.

Speaking of stars, I am sure you have all heard the news that SSO Chief Conductor and our Patron, Simone Young AM, has been invited to conduct the *Ring* at Bayreuth this year. This is incredibly exciting but also a well-earned honour (some would argue overdue) for one of the foremost Wagnerians of our time. Simone is no stranger to Bayreuth and I am sure she will make a spectacular debut in the pit.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



Dear readers, this issue concludes the series of short items about the composers who influenced Wagner and those whom he influenced. The highlight is an extract from a major article written by Tchaikovsky after he attended Bayreuth in 1876. This issue also includes two terrific responses to the Brisbane Ring. Thanks Minnie and Terence. The cover photos show two of the most outstanding performers in Brisbane – Deborah Humble and WSNSW member Warwick Fyfe – both artists supported by WSNSW in their early years. . My gratitude as always to Leona and Lis for proofreading.

Mike Day
michaeldayarchitect@gmail.com

The other great news is that her tenure as Chief Conductor with the SSO has been extended until 2026. That would allow her to conclude the *Ring* project as Chief and perhaps tempt her to stay on beyond 2026.

Talk of singers and great artists leads me to the subject of the Society's role in all this. Please indulge me. Our objectives "are to promote the music of Richard Wagner and his contemporaries, to explore a wider understanding of their work, and to support Wagnerian productions in Australia and emerging Wagnerian performers from NSW". In order to achieve this we need your help - being a member is a perfect start. Coming to events is another way of helping. Getting involved is yet another step and that can take many forms. Contributing to the catering at events is one. Writing articles or reviews for the Quarterly another. Letting the Committee know what you would like to see and hear in the Quarterly and at our events yet another. The most traditional and effective form of help is a donation. The membership subscriptions and the small profits we make from events do not cover the costs of running the Society - insurances, guest/speaker fees, hall hire, printing the Quarterly, let alone sponsoring emerging artists or supporting special projects. You all have heard me spruik for donations at every opportunity. And I don't blame you if you think that I overdo this. Whilst talking money doesn't come naturally to me, I believe that it is critical for both the operation and objectives of the Society. We do much already but would like to do a lot more.

Our strategy is to establish individual projects with funding targets. Some projects are ongoing such as our support for emerging artists. There are future projects that will require your assistance such as the publication of the *Ring* Symposia papers (2023-2026). In future the Society would like to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 >

ERRATA

I received the following note from **Colin Piper**, who spoke at our *Das Rheingold* Symposium in November. I apologise for my misquotes. Ed.

"I would like to correct 2 things that are mentioned in the December 2023 Wagner Quarterly (page 10).

The quote I have ALWAYS used since a dearly departed percussion colleague from the 70s, Ian Bloxson used it in an interview on ABC radio with Caroline Jones is; "jack of all trades and master of SOME". Perhaps I was mis-heard at the talk, but I can say almost with certainty that I wouldn't have used the word "none". I also think that I said that Berlioz's *ideal* orchestra was made up of the vast list I read out...it was his ideal...not what he needed in most cases in his works... though the Requiem certainly tops the list when it comes to the requirement for 16 timpani!"

support (and encourage) any project related to Wagner and the genre of opera, whether they be a performance or an educational programme, including those by our friends at Pacific Opera, Willoughby Symphony Orchestra and other companies we are loosely connected with. The flagship companies, OA and SSO, are well catered for with terrific and dedicated marketing and philanthropy teams. Many of our members feature prominently in the ranks of their donors. We do not want to compete with this nor discourage individuals to continue to support our best. On the contrary. However, we would like to attract more assistance towards the Society's purview, which is the dissemination of the music of Wagner and his contemporaries, amongst those who have no or limited access to the great institutions here, interstate or overseas. We will list our projects, or causes if you like, in future to make it easier for you to select what you'd like to contribute towards.

There are a number of very generous members whose recent contributions have made a big difference (recent emerging artists we have been able to sponsor, the Wagner Tubas for Melbourne Opera's *Ring*, FARA, etc.). We encourage others to be as generous in future. And you will be celebrated in the pages of this publication no matter the size of your contribution. But more importantly be happy in the knowledge that your contribution has helped an artist or bring a special project to realisation. So please consider donating to one of the WSNWS projects. Contact me to learn more.

Happy listening.

Esteban Insausti

President | Wagner Society in NSW Incv

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 mailing contactr@wagner.org.au and we will work to resolve this issue.

WAGNER SOCIETY NEWSLETTERS AND QUARTERLIES ONLINE

The online library of Wagner Society Newsletters and Quarterlies is now complete. Every publication, from the first Newsletter dated February 1981 to the latest December 2020 Quarterly, is now on the Society's web page: wagner.org.au/society-newsletter. Please note that, as this web page is accessible only to members of the Society, members will need to log in.

GENEROUS DONATIONS WERE RECEIVED SINCE DECEMBER 2023 FROM THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

Camron Dyer, Pam McGaw, Russ Cottle, Diana Rose Orr, Minnie Biggs, Mr Books

COMMITTEE 2023 - 2024

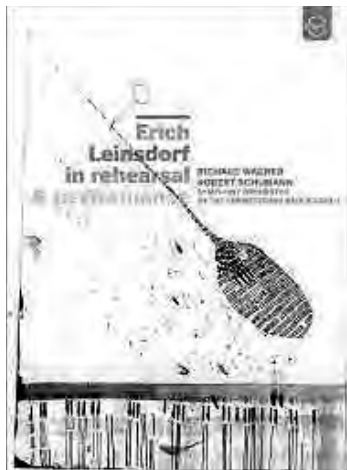
President.....	Esteban Insausti.....	0412 282 070
Vice President 1	Mike Day	0413 807 533
Vice President 2	Marie Leech.....	0418 679 626
Treasurer	Danny May	0414 444 100 contact@wagner.org.au
Secretary.....	Ross Whitelaw.....	rosswhitelaw35@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Julie Clarke	jmc50wagner@gmail.com
Members.....	Nick Dorsch	0419 751 694
	Robert Mitchell	
	Margaret Whealy	
	June Donsworth	
Quarterly Editor	Mike Day	michaeldayarchitect@gmail.com
Artists Liaison.....	Leona Geeves	lg03415@gmail.com
Webmaster.....	Lis Bergmann.....	lisbergmann89@gmail.com
Public Officer	Alasdair Beck.....	0414 357 441

FUTURE WAGNER SOCIETY EVENTS

SUNDAY 10 MARCH AT THE GOETHE INSTITUT

12.30PM DVD ERICH LEINSDORF IN REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE

Parsifal: Prelude Act I; Act I Scene II Interlude; Prelude Act III, Interludes from Act III



DVD Notes: **Erich Leinsdorf** (1912-93) was 77 when he was filmed with the orchestra of Südwestfunk in these rehearsals and performance. His most internationally renowned period had been his leadership of the Boston Symphony though after 1967 he accepted only one further fixed appointment – as

conductor of the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra from 1977 to 1980. Otherwise, he was something of a free agent, taking on a series of guest conductorships, though in his last years he worked a great deal with the Südwestfunk Orchestra.

The concert preserved here was given in 1989 in Karlsruhe. Despite his earlier reputation as something of an irascible conductor, Leinsdorf here cuts a thoroughly disciplined, no-nonsense and unthreatening figure. He explains – all in German (with subtitles) – that he employs the composer’s transitions in the *Parsifal* preludes and interludes as all other arrangements have a ‘common problem’ – which is that none of them are by Wagner. It shows Leinsdorf’s seriously jesting spirit in these encounters. With jumper sleeves rolled up, and glasses, but baton-less he offers clear, helpful advice. Sometimes it’s couched in the form of a suggestion-cum-admonition: he turns to the flutes and says; ‘In one breath? Think about it.’ We then see the flute principal turn with a shake of the head to a colleague. Later on, Leinsdorf worries away at details with her, before finally, satisfied, giving her an eloquent thumbs-up. He is scrupulous about horn entries, getting them to rephrase. ‘No, the mood is lost’ he says, working them still harder.

It’s interesting that without glasses and in tie and tails he looks very much older in the concert than he had during the rehearsals. There’s a greater gravity about his deportment too, a more piercing and expressive control. He positively beams at the young flautist as she carries out what he’d asked in the rehearsal and then, beside himself with delight, and during the concert, blows her a kiss.

2.00PM TALK ACCLAIMED HELDENTENOR SIMON O’NEILL ONZM TALKS TO US

New Zealander, **Simon O’Neill** is one of the finest heldentenors on the international stage. He has frequently performed with the Metropolitan Opera, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Berlin, Hamburg Vienna and Bayerische Staatsopern, Paris Opera, Teatro alla Scala and the Bayreuth,



Salzburg, Edinburgh and BBC Proms Festivals, appearing with a number of illustrious conductors including Daniel Barenboim, Sir Simon Rattle, James Levine, Riccardo Muti, Valery Gergiev, Sir Antonio Pappano, Pierre Boulez, Sir Mark Elder, Sir Colin Davis, Edo de Waart, Fabio Luisi, Sir Donald Runnicles, Christian Thielemann, Jaap van Zweden, Daniel Harding, Simone Young, Andris Nelsons, Pietari Inkinen, Esa Pekka Salonen and Gustavo Dudamel.

Most recently Simon made his debut at Opera National de Paris and returned to the Bayerische Staatsoper in the title role in *Parsifal*. He also appeared as Siegmund in *Die Walküre* for Oper Leipzig, and the title role in *Tristan und Isolde* at Santa Fe Opera with James Gaffigan, Sydney Symphony as Florestan in *Fidelio* with Simone Young, Boris in *Katya Kabanova* with the London Symphony Orchestra and *Siegfried* in concert with the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunk both with Rattle and then with Sinfonieorchester Basel and Elder. The 2023/24 season includes a return to San Francisco Opera in the title role of *Lohengrin* under Eun Sun Kim, Mahler’s *Das Lied von der Erde* and *Symphony No.8* in Bremen, Dunedin and Madrid, a role debut of Loge in *Das Rheingold* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Dudamel. He returns to the Sydney Symphony for *Gurrelieder* with Maestro Young, *Tannhäuser* in Tokyo and makes his debut with the Royal Danish Opera in the title role in *Tristan und Isolde*.

WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH AT 7.00PM ON ZOOM

BROADCASTER **CHRISTOPHER COOK** TALKS ABOUT 'WAGNER IN BRITAIN'



Christopher Cook began his career in television, producing for BBC-2 and Channel 4. He continues to broadcast regularly on BBC Radios 3, 4, 5 and the BBC World Service. Christopher teaches 'Cultural Studies' for the University of Syracuse on their London Programme, courses on 'Theatre and Culture; and the History of Theatre for the British American Drama Academy

and was Visiting Professor at the University of the Arts, London until 2013. He has been a visiting Gresham College Professor where he has lectured on the visual construction

of UK television news programmes and the making of modern celebrity. And he is presently a Visiting Research Fellow in the Theatre Department at Birkbeck College in the University of London. 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 is also the Chairman of the Deal Music and Arts Festival. In March 2022 he spoke to WSNSW via Zoom about *Parsifal's* Amfortas and Klingsor.

SUNDAY 21 APRIL AT THE GOETHE INSTITUT

12.30PM DVD *EURYANTHE* - A "HEROIC-ROMANTIC OPERA" BY CARL MARIA VON WEBER



Jacquelyn Wagner (*Euryanthe*), Theresa Kronthaler (*Eglantine*), Norman Reinhardt (*Adolar*), Andrew Foster-Williams (*Lysiart*), Stefan Cerny (*King Louis VI*)

Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, Arnold Schoenberg Chor, conducted by Constantin Trinks Stage Director Christof Loy

"Aiming at psychological truth, never sinking to melodrama or allowing the tension to drop—and, in his searching, mid-20th-century

staging, ultimately making sense of a piece often dismissed as impossible—Loy takes the opera seriously...Jacquelyn Wagner is a thrilling exponent of the title role, her fluent lyric soprano fresh and full of feeling, her level of engagement stirring in what is overall a performance of extraordinary quality" Opera Magazine August 2020.

Please note: This production includes full-frontal male nudity

ANNOUNCEMENT SIMONE YOUNG AM AT BAYREUTH 2024

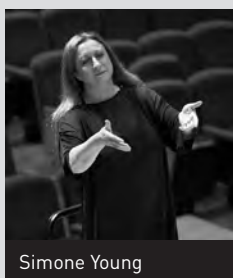
With **Philippe Jordan** having withdrawn from conducting this summer's Bayreuth *Ring* cycles, our Patron, **Simone Young**, will replace him – in the process becoming the first woman to conduct the tetralogy at Bayreuth in the 147-year history of the festival.

Simone, who is also the first Australian to conduct at Bayreuth, will be part of a majority-female conducting team that also includes **Oksana Lyniv** and **Nathalie Stutzmann**.

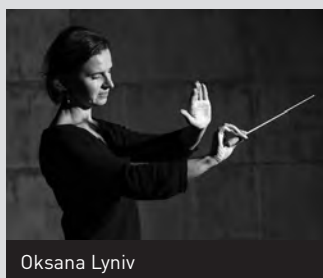
This means that for the first time, there will be more female conductors than male conductors at the festival. Previously, no woman had ever stood on the podium at Bayreuth in any capacity until 2021, when *The Flying Dutchman* was led by Ukrainian conductor Oksana Lyniv.

"We are thrilled that Simone Young has been invited to conduct at the Bayreuth Festival," said Sydney Symphony Orchestra CEO **Craig Whitehead**.

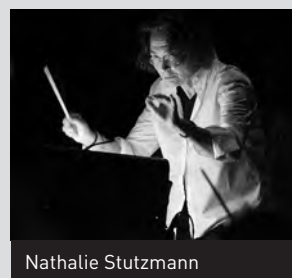
"This invitation is a clear recognition of Simone's status as one of the world's great conductors of Wagner's music – an artistry we were privileged to witness in Sydney recently for our performances of *Das Rheingold* in November. We are tremendously excited about this opportunity for Simone. Sydney audiences will also have the opportunity to experience Simone's musical leadership as our Ring Cycle in Concert project continues when we perform *Die Walküre* in 2024."



Simone Young



Oksana Lyniv



Nathalie Stutzmann

SUNDAY 19 MAY AT GOETHE INSTITUT

1.00PM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTE: ONLY CURRENTLY PAID-UP MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE

2.00PM CONCERT WITH SOPRANO VALDA WILSON AND BASS-BARITONE EUGENE RAGGIO, ACCOMPANIED BY KATHARINE DAY



Germany based, Australian born soprano, **Valda Wilson**, is an outstanding interpreter of the works of Mozart, Strauss, Handel, Verdi and Puccini and is a consummate musician who enjoys bringing to life the works of contemporary composers. Her most recent operatic highlights include critically acclaimed 2023 world

premiere performances in the title role of Sarah Nemtsov's *Ophelia*, followed by an equally successful Violetta (*La traviata*) and debut as Suor Angelica (*Il trittico*) at the Saarländisches Staatstheater where she has been a principal soprano member of the ensemble for several years.

Valda's other 2022/23 house debuts were at the Royal Opera House Copenhagen (Helmwige, *Die Walküre*), the New National Theatre Tokyo (Euridice, *Orfeo ed Euridice*) and l'Opéra Royal de Versailles (Wellgunde, *Das Rheingold*). Other recent major role debuts include the Feldmarschallin (*Der Rosenkavalier*, R. Strauss), Alcina (*Alcina*, Handel), Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*, Mozart), Vitellia (*La clemenza di Tito*, Mozart), Marguerite (*Faust*, Gounod), Micaëla (*Carmen*, Bizet), Violetta (*La traviata*), Leonora (*Il trovatore*), Elisabeth de Valois (*Don Carlos*, 5-act French version, Verdi).

Valda, who has been supported by WSNSW, was scheduled to sing for us in July 2022 but was forced to cancel because of Covid. Valda is in Sydney preparing for her role debut as Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* for Pinchgut Opera in May, and will be presenting a delightful program of arias from her wide repertoire.



Australian-Maltese bass-baritone, **Eugene Raggio** has toured the title role in *Das Phantom Der Oper* for Stuttgart's Central Musical Company successive years. He has toured with *Opera Australia*, *Co-Opera* and sung with *Berlin Opera Festival*, *York Trust Summer Opera*, *Dei Gratia Baroque* (UK), *Nagambie Lakes Opera Festival* and *Carols in the Domain*. His repertoire includes *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Lohengrin*, *Eugene*

Onegin, *Hänsel and Gretel*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Armide*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *La Boheme*, *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*.



Katharine Day is a concert pianist and is the founder and artistic director of Music To You. She holds degrees from the University of Melbourne and a Post Graduate Diploma in Advanced Solo Studies from the prestigious Royal College of Music, London. She has more than three decades of piano teaching experience from kinder to

PhD level and her performance credits include being the Principal Pianist of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra for 2 years and over 20 appearances as a concerto soloist. Katharine was the very warmly received accompanist at WSNSW concerts on May and July 2023.

The concert will be followed by bubbles and cake to celebrate Wagner's birthday.



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



FINANCIAL WAGNER SOCIETY MEMBERS AS OF 25 FEB 2024

Kay Abrahams [966], Paul Alger [255], Bruce Allen & Denise Warner [1285], Louise Allison [1279], Ursula and Martin Armstrong [1061], Carole Bailey [663], Glen Barnwell [944], Patrick John Barrer [1227], Colin Baskerville [817], Barbara Beasley [1104], Alasdair Beck & Dr Bill Brooks [765], Dr Jane Beeby & Philip Beeby [985], Marco Belgiorno-Zegna [1109], Ron & Kim Bennett [1258], Lis Bergmann [1209], Minnie Biggs [1130], Richard Bloor [967], Bettina Boss [1272], Steven Bowden & Edward Liew [1238], Jan Bowen AM [743], Claire Brauer [1050], Professor Thea Brejzek & Lawrence Wallen [1254], Dr Jean Callaghan [1278], Judy Carpenter [1245], John Carrigan [1183], Dr John Casey [114], Prof Michael Chesterman [649], Julie & Terry Clarke [496], Rae & Russ Cottle [843], Alexander Cozzolino [930], Gavin Crank [1193], Dr Geoffrey Crawford [1282], Roger Cruickshank [669, HLM], Rhonda Dalton [1121], Catherine Davies [921], Michael Day [606], Michele Day [1264], Barbara de Rome [207], Dr June Donsworth [884], Nick & Barbara Dorsch [154], Vicki Douglas [1288], Camron Dyer & Richard Mason [544], Jean Eagar [1277], Prof Michael Ewans [0, HLM], Jennifer Ferns [34], Dianne and Terence Finnegan [1202], Jenny Edwards [1034], Chris Ford [1088] (cheque signed T R Ford), Warwick Fyfe & Dr Ruth Frances [755], Richard Gastineau-Hills [68], David Geer [1264], Leona Geeves [87, HLM], Helen Gillam [1170], Michael Gleeson-White [1085], Dr Miriam Goodwin & Rolf Duels [1037], Dr Elizabeth Gordon-Werner [878], Dr Andrew Goy [723], Robert Graham [904], Tim Green [933], Tim Griffin [1289], Hugh Hallard [799], Simon Hatcher [333], Alan Hauserman & Janet Nash [876], John Hughes [1199], Dr Gail Huon

[1168], Ian Hutchinson [1103], Esteban Insausti & Agnes Brejzek [433], Peter Ivanoff [1101], Prof Elizabeth Jacka [898], Brett Johnson & Alan Ren [779, 1217], Jennifer & Lionel King [1284], Julie King [7], Richard King [15, HLM], Irena Kowalski [536], The Hon Justice Francois Kunc SC [999], Dr Marie Leech [916], Carole & Dr Jim Leigh [452], Paul Lindwall & Joanne Frederiksen [1283], Gary Linnane [960], Lynette Longfoot [922], Peter Mason & Henry Burmester [997], Dr Dennis Mather [696, HLM], Danny May [1244], David May [1146], Diana McBain [419], Christopher McCabe [1196], Dr David McCarthy [648], Phillip McEachran [1049], John McGrath [310], Helen Meddings [1114], Irene & Wolfgang Merretz [115], Dr Robert Mitchell [1014], Monica & Aliro Olave [735], Diana-Rose Orr [844], Melanie & Sarah Penicka-Smith [1270], James Phillips [1286], Colin Piper [222], Reginald Neville Pollard [1239], Kevin Herbert Powell [1222], Kenneth Reed AM [41], Vivien Reed [1233], Garry Richards [366], Dr Juliet Richters [1273], Janice Roberts & Achim Leistner [1140], Mitzi Saunders [683], Mandy Shaul [1178], Nizza Siano [619], Renate Siegel [1215], Robert Smallwood & Leigh Summers [1280], Patricia Smith [1221], Lyn Stephenson [1274], Dr Lourdes St George [895], Nigel Stoke [1136], Jill Sullivan [1287], Prof Hugh Taylor AC [990], Prof Paul Thom & Cassandra Parkinson [1211], Janet Tomi [1214], Robert & Estelle Tsenin [1226], Dr Terence Watson [657, HLM], Derek Watt [1241], Dr Greg Watters [892], David Wayne [1181], Simon Whitaker [1267], David Whitehouse [1291], Ross Whitelaw [527], Graeme Wiffen [1220], Robert Woodley [1248], Jill Hickson Wran [1108], Roswitha Wulff [1186], Steven Yu [1237], Alfredo Zaniboni [946]

WE WARMLY WELCOME NEW MEMBERS WHO JOINED SINCE DECEMBER 2023:

[1282] Dr Geoffrey Crawford – 2023 | [1283] Paul Lindwall & Joanne Frederiksen – 2023 | [1284] Jennifer and Lionel King – 2023 | [1285] Bruce Allen and Denise Warner – 2023 | [1286] James Phillips – 2023 | [1287] Jill Sullivan – 2023 | [1288] Vicki Douglas – 2024 | [1289] Tim Griffin – 2024 | [1290] Mr Glen Richards and Ms Helen Cox - 2024 | [904] Robert Graham - Re-joined Jan 2024 | [1202] Dianne and Terence Finnegan - Re-joined Feb 2024 from 2018 | [1291] David Whitehouse - 2024 | [1292] Dr Jason Catlett

REPORTS ON RECENT WAGNER SOCIETY EVENTS

SUNDAY 11 FEBRUARY AT THE GOETHE INSTITUT

12.30PM DVD SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE GALA OPENING CONCERT (SECOND HALF)

This DVD was planned for 17 September but couldn't be shown due to equipment malfunction.

Several of our members attending this DVD showing had been present at the Opera House concert and remembered how exciting the occasion was. It was filmed live on 29

September 1973 with **Birgit Nilsson** and **Charles Mackerras** with the SSO. This film showed the second half, with excerpts from *Götterdämmerung* – Siegfried's Rhine Journey, Siegfried's Funeral March and Brünnhilde's Immolation Scene. Charles Mackerras became WSNSW's first Patron in 1981. .



2.00PM TALK WARWICK FYFE TALKED ABOUT HIS BRISBANE RING EXPERIENCE

'This was our first event for 2024 – and a great success - we had an overflow attendance of enthusiastic admirers and were treated to a fabulous hour's entertainment by a master performer; Sydney-sider and WSNSW member, helden bass-baritone **Warwick Fyfe**. Warwick spoke about his Brisbane *Ring* experience for 40 minutes, followed by 20 minutes of audience questions/ comments. He was full of praise for his fellow singers, especially **Deborah Humble** and **Anna-Louise Cole**, and shared with us that he had been treated with great consideration by maestro **Philippe Auguin** and the direction/ design team. He also told some witty backstage anecdotes that were strictly to be kept confidential. Warwick spoke with complete frankness about his impressions of the production. When he was discussing *Das Rheingold* the WSNSW audience registered its disapprobation of the Entry of the Gods with a pointed murmur and agreed enthusiastically with his praise for the Rhinemaidens' scenes. All agreed that the aerialists were fabulous. The afternoon ended with a splendid afternoon tea, generously supplied by members.



WEDNESDAY 21 FEBRUARY AT 8.00PM ON ZOOM

ALEXANDRA STEINER TALKED TO US FROM BERLIN

This was a delightful Zoom - German soprano **Alexandra Steiner** answered questions by WSNSW Secretary **Ross Whitelaw** about her career in general and her Wagnerian roles in particular. These include a flower maiden in *Parsifal*, Woglinde in *Das Rheingold* and, most recently, the Woodbird in *Siegfried* at Bayreuth. She described the special, joyful, atmosphere during rehearsals and performances at Bayreuth. She was inspired by the group of talented singers, musicians, directors, designers and technicians - all dedicated to creating the best possible experience. Even in controversial productions everyone is loyal to the director's vision. Alexandra took us through the Bayreuth auditioning process, which was a very nurturing and positive experience; working with the conductor and director to test each applicant's full range of attributes, not only their voice.. She described what it is like to sing on the great stage. "A beautiful experience, with waves of sound flooding the stage", but added how difficult it is for the conductor, who hears the singers after he has heard the orchestra. Alexandra first visited Australia as an exchange student when she was 15. Let's hope she can come back and perform here sometime soon. She is looking forward to working with Simone Young in Bayreuth this August.

THE OPERA ROOM *FIZZ AND FOLLY* CONCERT SUNDAY 21 JANUARY AT AMPICO TOWERS, NEWTOWN

Quite a few WSNSW members attended this delightful concert of popular arias and ensembles organised by a group of seven fulltime members of the Opera Australia chorus, along with associate artist, pianist and vocal coach, **Thomas Johnson**, who was sponsored by WSNSW in his early career and is now on the OA staff. Calling themselves **The Opera Room**, the group has a common desire to step into the spotlight, broadening the parameters that connect them through music as soloists and ensemble artists. Among the singers were **Bronwyn Douglass**, who covered Sieglinde in Brisbane. She sang for us last year and has been sponsored by WSNSW. Also in the group is **Ruth Strutt**, who sang Rossweisse in Brisbane.

To subscribe please email contact theoperaroom@gmail.com See details below about future events.



JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

THE OPERA ROOM

Dear Subscriber,
Thank you for attending our recent 'soft-launch' event:

FIZZ AND FOLLY

Audience member Vivian Wheatley captured these memorable moments which we are pleased to be able to share with you. We also share our thanks to our host Robert Mitchell, whose home was the perfect place to launch The Opera Room!

Soprano Bronwyn Douglass serenading the audience with 'Vilja' from Lehár's *The Merry Widow*.

Audience members enjoy refreshments in the garden after the concert.

Ensemble singers Keara Donohoe, Gavin Brown, Nathan Lay, Anthony Mackey and Bronwyn Douglass delight with their voices.



Mezzo-soprano Keara Donohoe performing with associate-artist Thomas Johnson at the piano.

Our wonderful audience!

Full company Bows. L-R: Ruth Strutt, Gavin Brown, Tom Hamilton, Thomas Johnson, Nathan Lay, Keara Donoe, Anthony Mackey and Bronwyn Douglass.

Coming Up

LIEDER BY CANDLELIGHT

In April 2024 we look forward to welcoming you back to The Opera Room, for an ambient exploration of the German Lied. Venue, date & time, and artist details will be announced shortly!

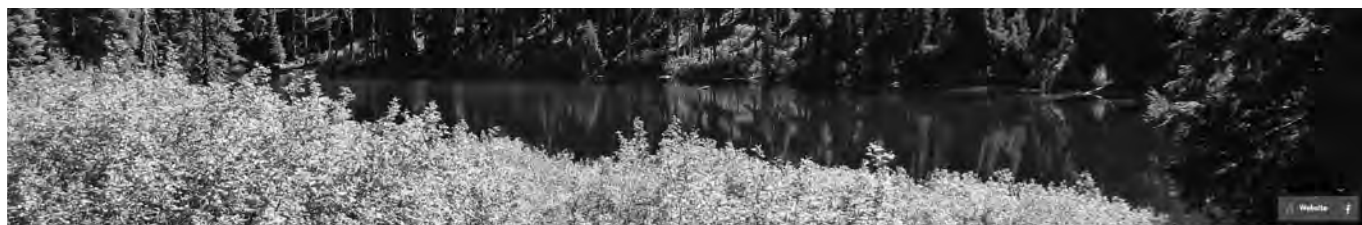
Follow us!

@theoperaroom

@theoperaroom

For a glimpse into our careers at Opera Australia, we invite you to join the "Opera Australia Chorus" private group on Facebook.

THIS EMAIL WAS SENT BY LOUISE HEAST © THE OPERA ROOM. IF YOU WISH TO UNSUBSCRIBE, PLEASE LET US KNOW VIA REPLY EMAIL.



wagner society nsw
5 subscribers

HOME VIDEOS PLAYLISTS CHANNELS DISCUSSION ABOUT

SUBSCRIBE

WAGNER SOCIETY YOUTUBE CHANNEL

We encourage members to visit our YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/c/wagnersocietynsw>

In addition to including many fascinating early recordings and illustrations there are clips from earlier and recent Wagner Society concerts and talks.

THE BRISBANE RING DECEMBER 2023

THREE IMPRESSIONS

THE FIRST CYCLE by Terence Watson

Who could have imagined, even after the 1998, 2004, 2013, and 2016 *Ring Cycles* in Adelaide and Melbourne, that Australia would have two productions in the same year. Even more surprising is that a small state-based company achieved a remarkably successful production at its first attempt, while the national opera company chose not to revive again its bicentenary production, but to embark on a very different production. This situation gives us the unprecedented opportunity to consider the merits of both productions and to wonder about the future of Wagner productions generally in Australia. I won't repeat my comments about the Bendigo *Ring Cycle*; they are available at the Wagner Society in New South Wales website at <https://wagner.org.au/sites/default/files/inline-files/0.pdf> or in the June Quarterly Issue Vol 42 No 169. Here, though, I will compare some aspects of the two production's approaches to staging this monumental artwork. There is no doubt that the Brisbane *Ring Cycle* will also go into Australian theatrical history as a spectacular presentation with digital imagery that often delighted, always amazed, and many times established a suggestive and emotionally arousing setting for the narrative.

One of the selling points of Opera Australia's Brisbane production of *The Ring Cycle* was that it would be the "world's first fully digital *Ring Cycle* production." Quite what that claim entails is problematic. Opera Australia's production of this work is not the first to employ digital projections. The Metropolitan Opera's 2010-2012 production by Robert LePage, for example, used digital imagery extensively: even more so in its 2019 revival. If I recall correctly, all the imagery was of the natural world, and intended to project a recognisable locale onto the Machine that dominated the stage. The Bendigo *Ring* also used digital projections tightly integrated into the *mise en scène*, also largely to establish a locale for the characters, but also to influence the audience's mood (*Stimmung*) in accordance with Wagner's credo in *A Communication/Revelation to My Friends*:

...no mood (Stimmung) could be permitted to be struck in any one of these scenes, that did not stand in a weighty relation to the moods of all the other scenes, so that the development of the moods from out each other; and the constant obviousness of this development, should establish the unity of the drama in its very mode of expression. Each of these chief moods, in keeping with the nature of the material, must also gain a definite musical expression, which should display itself to the sense of hearing as a definite musical Theme (369).



Das Rheingold Scene 1

The creative team of the Brisbane *Ring Cycle* clearly had these effects on mood in mind as they aspired to expand the range and significance of the digital imagery in its evocation of mood and emotion.

The program contains comments about the intentions of the company and the creative team, about the significance of *The Ring Cycle* generally (by conductor Philippe Auguin), and this production (by commissioner Lyndon Terracini, CEO Fiona Allen, Director Chen Shi-Zheng, and Digital Content Designer Leigh Sachwitz).

I will focus on these comments to try to understand and evaluate the intentions and the results, rather than a scene-by-scene account of the production. There are many insightful, sometimes witty, and generally laudatory reviews on the Internet by Australia's music and theatre critics. Our members will be familiar with Dr David Larkin from his informative talks to the Wagner Society and his reviews are well worth reading. Other reviews were published in *Limelight* and major newspapers. Links to some of these reviews are given below. I agree with many of their assessments, but my overall reaction is that this production is less successful as a presentation of Wagner's great artwork than the Bendigo *Ring*, though clearly much more spectacular to watch.

Both Fiona Allen, and Director Chen, tell us that Lyndon Terracini approached Chen to create a "fully digital production" in 2017, i.e. a year after the revival of Opera

Australia's bicentenary Cycle. This might make us wonder why it didn't deserve a second revival. Most other opera companies keep productions in their repertoire for many years. Perhaps Lyndon will tell us the reasons in his memoirs! More intriguingly, we might ask why Lyndon was thinking digitally. We might recall that, on 9 December 2008, the Age's Robin Usher had reported that the one-time owners of *Lonely Planet*, Maureen and Tony Wheeler, were interested in helping to subsidise a *Ring Cycle*. At the time, there was speculation that the artwork could be presented in the Exhibition Building in Melbourne with digital projections to reduce the cost of the production. Sadly, that venture failed to happen, but an Opera Australia production did arrive in 2013. Was Lyndon, though, building on that earlier idea? But what did Lyndon and Chen understand a "fully digital production" to be like?

First, I feel a need to register a quibble about the concept of a "digital production." This would seem to be misleading, since at least half the production must be analogue, that is, the singers, the orchestra, the props, and of course the many screens. A fully digital production would then seem to need to be presented in Virtual Reality or Augmented Reality. The creative team for Bayreuth's current production of *Parsifal* seems to have attempted (generally unsuccessfully, some reports suggest), to present such an experience at selected moments, when the more adventurous and/richer members of the audience were instructed to don their VR goggles. We could wonder at the reaction of the singers to a gaggle of blank goggles in the audience instead of human eyes watching their intense performances.

In response to Lyndon's brief, Chen tells us in his Director's notes for the program that he conceived the production as a "game-changing kind of a Chinese *Ring Cycle*," then he says he developed the concept into a "version that's neither a modern interpretation of classical Western culture, nor an adaptation to an Eastern framework." Chen then outlines his ambitious intention to universalise the work: "to expand the works references beyond European history to our shared universe, making it relevant to all people — a new world myth, like a mosaic where each jagged piece reflects our past, present, and future." We might consider that, with its admixture of mythological elements from ancient Greek, Roman, Christian, Nordic, Icelandic, Hindu, and Buddhist cultures, Wagner had done a pretty good job of creating a universal work in his own "mosaic." This aspiration, though, might explain the images of the universe in act three of *Die Walküre*, more galactic imagery in act two of *Siegfried*, and the galaxies seen flying back and forth through the palace windows in the latter part of act three of *Götterdämmerung*, as well as an array of popular culture references to science-fiction and science-fantasy movies, games, etc.

All directors of new productions of *The Ring Cycle* are probably aware of Wagner's oft quoted dictum from his letter of 8 September 1852 to Franz Liszt in Weimar: "*Kinder, macht Neues! Neues! und abermals Neues! —hängt Ihr Euch ans Alte, so hat euch der Teufel der Unproduktivität, und Ihr seid die traurigsten Künstler!*" ("Children, do new things! New things! and new things again! —if you cling to the old, the devil of unproductivity/ barrenness will have you and you will be the saddest of artists!") (to Franz Liszt, Weimar Zurich, 8 September 1852).

Rather than enunciating a general principle, as many directors et al have understood it, Wagner seems to have intended it as a specific critique of people who reproduce or rearrange their own works, rather than creating unique new works, as he believed he was doing. He specifically refers to Berlioz's reworking of his opera *Benvenuto Cellini*, a waste of time, in Wagner's view. Rather, Berlioz should create new works. However, when it comes to a new staging of an existing work, we enter different waters. We are often willing to see new, provocative stagings of Shakespeare's plays, especially if they help us understand the complex works better. The question might then be, how far we are willing to follow a staging that seems to have a life independent of the artwork itself and which might not illuminate the artwork much or at all? These philosophical and technical questions have faced western culture for many centuries, as directors tackled the challenges in staging, for instance, ancient Greek tragedies.

I do not know if Chen was aware that he was also entering into a long-standing philosophical, aesthetic, and cultural debate in the late 18th and early 19th centuries when he tells us that he wanted to use Wagner's artwork to create a "new mythology." The German philosopher Schelling captured this aspiration for a new mythology in his 1802-03 *Philosophy of Art*, some of which Wagner probably read. Schelling writes:

Every truly creative individual must himself create his own mythology, and this can occur using virtually any material or content, thus also from that of a higher physics [because Schelling wanted to blend philosophy and science]. This mythology, however, will quite definitely be created, and is not allowed to be designed simply according to the instructions of certain ideas of philosophy, since in the latter case it would likely be impossible to give it independent poetic life (p. 75).

This aspiration was and still is "in the air" in many cultures. We see it in Western capitalist consumerism, the Chinese Communist Party's reframing of Marxist Communism, the Russian president's construction of an imaginary imperial history, and in former President Trump's deconstruction of US democratic mythology, along with the efforts of lesser demagogues around the world.

What then might Chen's interpretation of Wagner's own mythopoeic aspirations entail? Chen points us toward a core element of both his interpretation and the aesthetic in which it will be embedded: "To me, ancient mythology is equivalent to modern science fiction." I would have liked to have read more about what he meant by this statement, given that most modern science fiction recapitulates many of the same motifs and themes as ancient mythology, though in radically different costumes and locales. So, does Chen mean that replacing horns and bearskins (at the worst) with Matrix-style trench coats, and locales from the "multiverse," which Chen also mentions, achieves his intention of creating a "new mythology?" From the variety of cultural references contained in the multitude of visual images, it could be concluded that Chen has not created a "new mythology," but a largely independent artwork parallel to Wagner's own mosaic of mythological references. I think that, despite some of the

questionable ethical and moral implications of some pieces of Wagner’s mosaic, his pieces form a generally coherent mythology about human beings and our ambivalence about taking a stand on hard ethical subjects.

Ironically, perhaps, once we leave the realm of the gods, the digital imagery becomes relatively representational, so that we can recognise that we are “in” the Hunding hut, “on” the Rhine, “in” a castle hall, etc, at the same time as a cascade of coruscating, kaleidoscopic more abstract images flood our vision. And our minds, since many of the images reference films and series some of us would have seen. But what is the “new mythology” being created by the digital staging? I haven’t been able to formulate one, partly because I don’t think one is on offer.

The Designer of the “digital stage,” Leigh Sachwitz, offered an expansion of Chen’s concept — “it’s total sci-fi about gods and dragons in the struggle for survival.” This seems, at one extreme, to reduce centuries of human mythopoeticizing to the often-juvenile stories concocted from one or other of human myths for blockbuster films and video games aimed at teenagers, and at the other, to the elevation of works created by one person, such as novels, movies, series, to the status of mythologies that have emerged out of centuries of human experience, contemplation, and imagination.

Sachwitz explained what she meant by the ambit concept of a “digital stage” by referring to “digital and interactive design” and a “long piece of modern digital art,” which suggests that the design could stand alone in an art gallery. Sachwitz saw her task as “delivering images which go way beyond creating scenery and evoke deep emotion inside the audience member. [...] To take the audience in journey, to let them play with their own imagination, to inspire.” The images which Chen and she and her creative team have chosen are indeed radically different from the generally supplementary uses of digital projections in earlier productions of *The Ring Cycle*, and from the very naturalistic scenery that Wagner approved for the premiere, and which reflected his personal tastes in art. In many instances, the images are also inspirational, or rather, aspirational, in seeking to direct the audience members’ emotions and moods in particular directions.

One question raised by Sachwitz’s approach to the role of digital imagery in the production is whether



Keanu Reeves as Neo in *The Matrix*

or not the emotions to be evoked in the audience members complement, contradict, or reinforce the emotional effects that Wagner seems to have been seeking to arouse. A situation in which the scenic elements complement Wagner’s intentions about emotional responses will probably result in a relatively straight production. One which contradicts or questions Wagner’s intentions will probably result in a more controversial directorial production, even, in some people’s view, a “Eurotrash” production.

There is no doubt that this production falls somewhere in between: it is not provocative in any “Eurotrash” manner, nor does it question Wagner’s underlying political views, nor does it insert overt political messages. Yet, the digital imagery takes the production well out of the “straightforward” category. However, if the observation of my companion in this experience is right, then the projections in the curtain of what seems like a cascade of lights and Chinese characters do evoke the opening of the film *The Matrix*, then the creative team might be understood to be exploring the supposed difference between reality for people in the Matrix, and Reality for those outside the Matrix who manipulate the reality of those inside. We could read this as referring to the gods of *Das Rheingold* as those who exist in Reality, and the other characters as existing in an illusory reality; or vice versa, perhaps.

We could also understand this in a Feuerbachian sense that the gods are products of human imagination and we have lost control of them. Chen makes a similar point when he asserts that he sees the work as presenting the “core idea of gods and



Daniel Sumegi as Wotan 1999 Brisbane 2023 OA photo

humans being one.” Wagner was deeply influenced by some elements of Feuerbach’s philosophy, particularly his assertion in his 1841 *The Essence of Christianity*, which Wagner read in 1849 in Zurich: “*The personality of God is thus the means by which man converts the qualities of his own nature into the qualities of another being. — of a being external to himself. The personality of God is nothing else than the projected personality of man*” (226).

Mythologies can be understood as presenting a people’s broad consensus about who they are and what their purpose is. On that score, does *The Matrix*, or any of the other movies or series really represent a consensus of US, Western, or global views about who human beings as a whole are, and what our purpose might be?

Where, then, does such a view of reality/Reality leave an audience trying to decipher or decode the many images presented to us in this production? Its immediate effect, for me at least, was to split my attention as I tried to make sense of the imagery while also trying to both enjoy and assess the singing, orchestral playing, characterisations, and interactions between the characters, which would have surely been Wagner’s preference? But then Wagner built his own politico-aesthetic-moral agenda into the artwork. The difference, though, is that his agenda is fully integrated into *The Ring Cycle*, whereas the messages of the digital imagery compete with, even displace at times, Wagner’s messages.

In the post-modern age, perhaps, we have become familiar with the dangers of accepting anyone’s “agenda” uncritically, and with the benefits of identifying elements in artwork that no longer reflect contemporaneous ethical and cultural values. Most “Eurotrash” directors would justify their interpretations on such a basis. In none of Chen’s or Sachwitz’s comments is there any suggestion that they are seeking to impose any particular critique on Wagner or his artwork. Rather, their comments suggest a great respect for this monumental artistic achievement.

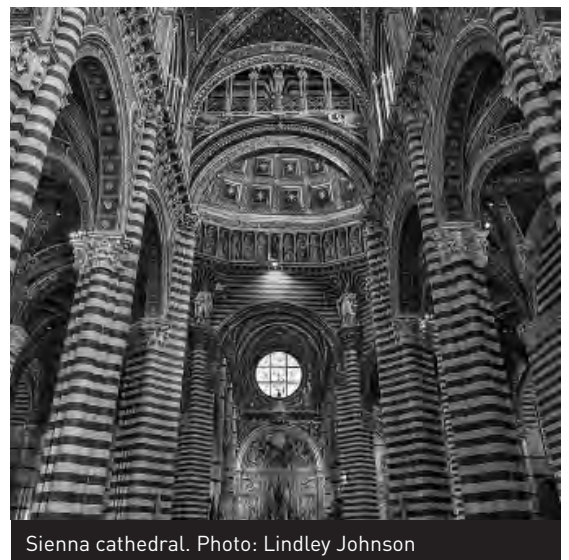
Unlike Chen and Sachwitz and her team, the conductor Philippe Auguin has long experience in opera, and Wagner in particular. Auguin pointed to one of the aspects of the discourses of the artwork when he introduced the concept of the “ideal spectator.” Wagner had very specific ideas about this spectator that entailed the submission of this spectator to his changing politico-aesthetic-moral guidance, as embodied in his artwork, from vague *Junge Deutschland* principles to outright reactionary doctrines in his later essays, such as *Was ist Deutsch, Religion und Kunst, Deutsche Kunst und Deutsche Politik*, and *Was nützt diese Erkenntnis?* (*Of What Use is this Knowledge?*). In this context,

“ideal spectator” is a loaded term in any discussion of Wagner’s relationship to his audiences. In brief, that figure could be described as anyone open to indoctrination by Wagner through his artwork. Auguin seems to point to this feature of Wagner’s aesthetic practice in suggesting that the artwork contains “subliminal messages or clear warnings:” to whom and about what? I would have liked to read more of Auguin’s thinking on this point. He hinted at the orchestra’s crucial role in promoting Wagner’s agenda when he said the orchestra “tells us the true meaning of each moment in the work.” It might be true within Wagner’s *Weltanschauung*, but is it true in and of itself? Is it true, for example, that the greatest sacrifice a female human being can make is to immolate herself on a Pyre that is also burning her lover and their horse?

I said earlier that Wagner’s preferred very realistic portrayals of the locales of each episode of his artwork. He did insert stage directions as guidance, as he does at the beginning of *Das Rheingold*: “*At the bottom of the Rhine (Greenish twilight, lighter above, darker below. The upper part of the scene is filled with moving water, which restlessly streams from right to left. Toward the bottom, the waters resolve themselves into a fine mist, so that the space, to a man’s height from the stage, seems free from the water, which floats like a train of clouds over the gloomy depths.*” This stage direction seems to call for the kind of dynamic video projection Sachwitz and her team created. His stage direction for scene two calls for a more realistic painted backdrop or projection: “An open space on a mountain height (The dawning day lights up with growing brightness a castle with glittering pinnacles, which stands on the top of a cliff in the background. Between this cliff and the foreground, a deep valley through which the Rhine flows is supposed.” For *Parsifal*, he similarly wanted his set designers Max Brückner and Paul von Joukowsky to reproduce the nave of Siena Cathedral as the Grail Hall—a provocative moment of cultural appropriation in itself.



Grail Hall for Parsifal by Paul von Joukowsky-Public Domain



Sienna cathedral. Photo: Lindley Johnson

It is therefore one of the interesting features of the Brisbane digital staging that its imagery tends towards more realism as the artwork moves from the gods to the mediaeval human world of the Gibichungs and their Vassals, although the realism is qualified by many popular culture references to such entertainments as “The Game of Thrones,” “The Wheel of Time,” and *The Lord of the Rings*—my thanks to another Wagner Society in NSW member for these suggestions. These references seem to be very strong in the digital rendering of the Gibichung Hall, while the forest in which Siegfried dies recalls the glittering tree in the film *Avatar*. The references to *The Lord of the Rings* seem to include Sauron’s eye, which seems to dominate much of the ending of the final music-drama—possibly Wotan’s or Alberich’s eye watching the world nearing its end. It would result in an even longer review to comment more specifically on the digital imagery. If members were not able to see the production in Brisbane, there are images of it on the internet, as well as in the many reviews published in the press coverage (see below).

I’m happy to concede that I am not acquainted with gods or demigod heroes, that I know of, nor have I visited any divine realm, so I have no idea what they might behave like or look like. While dazzled by the changing kaleidoscopic imagery of *Rheingold*, I found it hard to derive a cogent understanding of the imagery. Once past the exquisite realistic opening scene of the Rhine daughters frolicking in the Rhine and over their Coral playground, the rest of the digital projections range between abstract (horizontal bands of colour in white), semi-realistic (for the underground pillared chamber of Nibelheim), to the abstract again (for the piling of the gold), to the rave party (when the gods enter Valhalla through a tunnel of smoke and laser light with rainbow bursts of colour).

Many props were wheeled on and off by one or some of the many helpers, according to the narrative. Wotan’s and Fricka’s Divan was one of the most effective of these. The quasi-Chinese Divan and accompanying lion dragons served many purposes. It arrived with Fricka in lotus position and Wotan in louche lounging position. During their contretemps in *Walküre*, the Divan splits apart to represent their marital dissension. Inexplicably, in *Rheingold* the Divan becomes the locus for Freia’s covering with gold. Except she isn’t! She stands next to the Divan while the Nibelungen workers, helped puzzlingly by numbers of Valhalla helpers, pile the gold on to the Divan. Freia is never obscured from anyone’s sight! The Divan and its golden cargo and Fasolt’s body are then just wheeled off stage — practical, but hardly thrilling.

For *Walküre*, the Coral was matched by a large Bonsai tree also in white, and also lit by various colours to match the action and set the mood. Brünnhilde was consigned to a triangular prop, point down, reminiscent of the floating rocks of Zhangjiajie National Forest Park in Hunan province in China or, as my companion said, of those in the first *Avatar* film. A delightful touch was the wheeling on stage of a small Chinese dragon that encircled the Rock and then

burst into flame. Sadly, it did not reappear for later Rock appearances; instead, the circle was suggested in the screens through icy crags lit with a range of fiery colours. I should also mention the dazzling appearance of the Valkyries on a phoenix. Though truncated, it provided a mythologically suggestive alternative to a horse.

In A1 of *Siegfried*, Mime has a stylised forge that looks like a model of a Kerl-class battleship from *Star Wars*, but which Siegfried does not split in half. In A2 there are no props on stage, unless one includes the clichéd mist/smoke, which regrettably reappears often in this production. There is also a mainly bare stage in A3, until the Rock trundles forward to be bathed in changing mood lights.



Avatar 2009 floating rocks



Brünnhilde’s Rock Brisbane 2023. OA photo

In the Prologue of *Götterdämmerung*, the Norns, dressed as ancient Middle Eastern pottery goddesses, seem to spin a rope or web out of themselves like spiders. A1s1 was dominated by a vast white table, with a small video screen and perhaps a model of Gibichung city, perhaps to suggest the power and status of the ruling family. A1s2 returned us to Brünnhilde's Rock. S3 returned us to the family's Hall, with the table turned parallel to stage front. In A3s1 the Vassals light real fires on the stage—an odd but effective touch of realism. After Siegfried's murder, the helpers placed his body on a sleigh, which looked very much like Mime's forge, and pushed him off stage. In A3s3 the stylised funeral Pyre emerged from backstage, lit with a variety of colours as the action progressed. Grane-Phoenix arrived, but hid behind the Pyre, rather than leaping onto it with Brünnhilde on its back. The Pyre is finally bathed in rainbow colours.

Some of these props were aesthetically striking and effective, especially the Rhine daughters' Coral playground, and the Bonsai World Ash Tree. Though Brünnhilde's Rock was

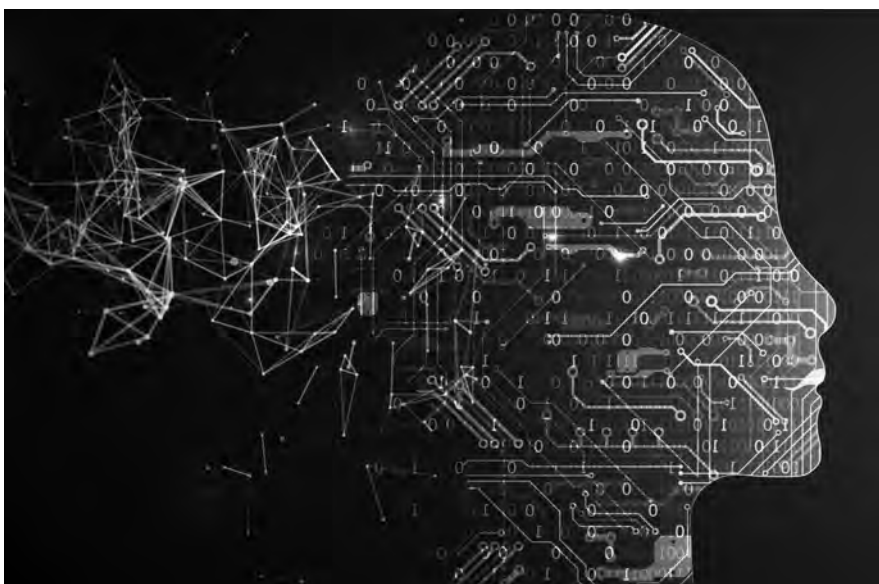
similarly large, it lacked the simple beauty of the Coral and Bonsai, instead looking unfinished and drab. The pyramidal funeral Pyre was imposing, though as awkward as the Rock for characters to mount. I assume that neither the Rock nor the Pyre could be lowered in darkness from the fly tower, and then spectacularly lit, because of the track work needed to hold and move the video screens. Instead, they trundled in rather clumsily, with the Rock squeaking on its way.

The problem of what to do with people and props no longer needed by the narrative or directorial vision faces all theatrical creative teams. How the problem is solved is a mark of the directorial imagination and inventiveness. On this score, I think Suzanne Chaundy and her team showed more ingenuity and perhaps more theatrical experience in solving the problems that the Brisbane *Ring Cycle* seemed to sidestep awkwardly. Or, perhaps it was an indication of a Brechtian directorial decision to regularly break with naturalistic theatre conventions: or a post-modernist refusal to contrive Realism in any detail.



The Norns *Götterdämmerung* Act 1 Scene 1

While I was at times bedazzled, delighted, intrigued, bemused, challenged, and at other times frustrated, by the almost constant changing of the digital displays, I was also conscious of having my attention distracted from what I take to be the point of attending Wagner's *Ring Cycle*: to experience Wagner's artwork, not someone else's overlay of it with an almost independent artwork that could stand alone in the gallery, as a digital interpretation of themes from Wagner's artwork. This is a quite different situation from the director dropping the swastika banner into the middle of say *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* or dressing the Vassals in fascistic uniforms.



Neural network

Despite these reservations, I found that aspects of the digital displays underscored aspects of Wagner's artwork, rather than distracted from it. As the artwork unfolded, it became obvious that there were visual motifs in the projections that gave visual form to musical and narrative motifs. One of the most arresting for me was the gradual development of a weblike structure (possibly also a neural network) from its early appearance in act two of *Die Walküre*, through its growth in *Siegfried*, to its full expression in *Götterdämmerung*, and then to its fragmentation after Siegfried's death. I understood the web to be the rope being woven by the Norns until it is broken, possibly by Siegfried's death — "*Es riss! Es riss!*" cry each of the Norns. Ironically, Siegfried tells the

Rhine daughters: “My sword will sever the Norn’s rope!” (But how does he know about the Norns!?)

The trajectory of the web’s appearances reinforces the idea that the entire narrative demonstrated the role of fate in Wagner’s conception of world history and human existence. Whether one accepts such a belief depends on one’s predisposition, but the belief makes for compelling drama, as Wagner’s models, the ancient Greek dramatists, well knew. Real life, though, is far more complicated, but for 15 hours or so it is rewarding to follow a story in which Fate so clearly runs its course. The irony of *The Ring Cycle* is that the people who were once Vassals are no longer enfeoffed to anyone. It is for them now to choose the kind of world they will inhabit. But in such a world in which they seem to exist, what does Fate have in store for them? It is possible to read the other three music-dramas as Wagner’s possible answers to that problem, but none of them offers us any realistic way to conduct our lives.

With all the former Vassals assembled on stage at the end of the Brisbane *Ring Cycle*, do the digital displays hint at any way forward for them? It is probably a bit of a stretch to read the rainbow colours in the Pyre at the end of the production as a statement about modern political, social, and cultural values of diversity, inclusion, and respect, rather than a clever ironic pointing back to the Rainbow Bridge of *Rheingold*.

In commenting on the singing, characterisation, orchestral playing, and stage movement of the Brisbane *Ring Cycle*, I find it hard to avoid comparisons with these elements of the Bendigo *Ring Cycle*. It is with these elements that the rubber hits the road, so to speak. We might be tempted to close our eyes to a staging that doesn’t please us, but none of us, I suspect, would plug our ears not to hear the music and how the singers present their characters to us. Philippe Auguin and Anthony Negus, for me, represent two different approaches to conducting this artwork. Auguin drew a sound out of the orchestra that reminded me of mid-20th century styles of Wagner conducting: full-bodied, sonorous, evenly paced, focused on the magisterial, with graduated transitions between moods. Negus opted for an interpretation with greater emphasis on moment-to-moment changes of tempi and volume, more *attacca* in the production of the sound, but then allowing the music to slow and swell for the great emotional moments. With Auguin, I felt that the orchestra was doing the leading, while with Negus I felt that the orchestra was working with each character and his or her situation. Both orchestras, though, are to be commended highly for their achievement: neither has a history of performing *The Ring Cycle*, but I certainly hope that both orchestras soon have the chance to play it again for us. The chorus of Vassals was, as with the bicentenary *Ring*, thrilling to hear and watch as they moved more easily around the stage than many of the principals. So was the chorus in Bendigo.

In the singing and characterisation, there was greater variation between the two productions. Overall, I preferred the singing in Bendigo, partly because it was more secure, and partly because it was better integrated with character

and personality. There was little difference between the singers of the lesser roles in both productions. There was, for me, little to choose between Lise Lindstrom and Antoinette Halloran, except for the former’s greater experience in the role. Halloran, though, grew impressively into the role over the 2nd cycle, and promises much for future appearances as Brünnhilde. I would choose James Egglestone and Lee Abrahmsen, the Siegmund and Sieglinde in Bendigo, over Rosario La Spina and Anna-Louise Cole in Brisbane, as much for the intensity of their very physically intimate embodiments of the doomed sibling-lovers as for their rich singing. The Brisbane couple hardly touched, though they both sang with passion. I would also choose Bradley Daley over Stefan Vinke for similar reasons. I have heard Vinke sing this role in several productions, but have been worried about the increasing roughness in his voice. With Bradley Daley in Bendigo, though, there was hardly any strain and many passages where he sang more lyrically and with greater nuance than Vinke in Brisbane. Both singers, though, entered their characterisations with commitment and intelligence so that the problematic character of Siegfried was accorded more depth and sensitivity than Wagner wrote into his text. Deborah Humble continues to amaze with the range and subtlety of her characterisations and the strength and nuance of her voice. I would be happy to hear her in any Wagner production. Her portrayal of Fricka was richer and more psychologically convincing than Sarah Sweeting’s in Bendigo, and her Waltraute, reprising her appearance in Bendigo, was hair-raising in its ferocity and desperation. It was also a great pleasure to hear Lianne Keagvan, with her rich, dramatic contralto voice and haunting characterisation, reprise her role as Erda.

The most problematic, for me, of the singers in Brisbane was Daniel Sumegi as Wotan. I have always found his articulation of texts hard to understand. His diction in his upper register is clearer to my ear so that I could follow the German text (with my schoolboy level of German), but in his lower register, his enunciation seemed to me to disappear into a growl with a degree of vibrato that obscured his words completely. I checked with a German speaking neighbour, who admitted to the same difficulty. In contrast, Warwick Fyfe’s diction as Wotan in Bendigo was very clear through the range of vocalisation demanded by Wagner’s score. This difference was evident in Brisbane where Fyfe’s singing of Alberich was so emphatically clear and defiant that he sang Sumegi off the stage.

The ways in which characters interacted with each other were, for me, superior in Bendigo, perhaps simply because of Suzanne Chaundy’s greater experience in directing opera singers and perhaps also a greater commitment to naturalistic acting. In Brisbane, perhaps also because of a larger stage and auditorium, there seemed always to be greater distance between the characters most of the time, so that intimacy seemed to be generally out of the question. Vinke was one of the exceptions as he seemed to be drawing on his long history of performing as Siegfried to bring a degree of closeness and warmth to his engagement with Brünnhilde and even Guttrune.

CYCLE TWO - SOME NOTES AND EXPERIENCE by Minnie Biggs

Approaching through a long dark tunnel, suddenly brightly lit with yellow signs, or cars, and then again, long and dark. An appropriate path to the much-touted new *Ring Cycle*. Which was full of black and brilliant digital colour. We arrived. The name of the opera was spelled out on a curtain of streamers, the Famous Four Minutes led us into the water of the river Rhine. Maidens swimming and floating and flying through the water as we dove in and swam with them. A perfect beginning. The best digital effects of all.

We come to Wagner's music dramas in different ways. Listening, hearing, watching, understanding, thinking, feeling, and with the intention of the composer and writer in mind. How do these interact with each other or with the music drama itself? Does the watching and understanding enhance or get in the way of the feeling? Questions I asked myself as I watched and listened and felt. Unquestionably the digital water and the digital fire were perfect simple backdrops for the music. The digital water for Siegfried's Rhine Journey was sublime, we were there, sailing down that river, and heading for the beginning of the end. The dragon, the aerial wood bird, perfect. The floating swords. Beautiful.

Interesting as many of the pixilated designs were, did they mean something? Was I meant to understand them? These were not questions I wanted to consider as I listened. Distracting. If beautiful and interesting. The dancers. Dancers? In the *Ring*? Dancers. Why? Who knew?

We were told there is a Chinese influence and a universal view. Did these help or hinder? Chinese lions, Chinese landscapes in the middle of? Gigantic phoenix instead of horses, beautiful phoenixes but not horses. The dots and lines of a star map for the rainbow bridge? No. The table of ice in the Gibichung palace and the geometrical blue and black backdrops, yes. Good, fitting, appropriate. Finally, a trace of the seasons we were meant to enjoy, icy winter of the end of the world. But the springtime blossoming of the bonsai not - ash tree in *Die Walküre* not as effective. The other seasons? Missed them.

The Norns would have provided the ideal subject for digital magic, even my imagination ran wild with possibilities. But no, three figures arose from under the stage in basket dresses, holding a string, the background was one of those often - used spider web patterns moving and changing. Hardly the spinning of the rope of fate. Unfocused.

So much to enjoy, the voices and music, except for most of the four performances there was a disconnect between the voices and orchestra. They were correct and in tune but they did not meld together. Alberich managed to get them together and there were moments for Siegfried at the end when he blended with the orchestra, but for the most part, sad. Dead spots on the stage? Acoustics? Where I was sitting? Disappointing. Very.

There was a lack of direction. It felt as if singers were wandering wanderers not sure where to go or how to be. (This was explained by Liane Keegan in a pre - concert symposium: 'There was little direction'. She asked where to go, what to do? You decide. The costume will tell you. Once in the costume she asked what to do with her hands with the extended fingers? See what you do. She did.) Erda is not a role that demands a great deal of movement or advice but poor Wotan and Fricka in Rheingold, wandering.

Alberich was outstanding, as always. His voice projected and he acted the role, his own director.

Finally, there came one of those inexplicable experiences. Waltraute and Brünnhilde, towards the end of act one of *Götterdämmerung*. Deborah Humble and Lise Lindstrom. I was transported. Carried away to another world, absorbed, affected, grieving with Waltraute's pleas for help, entirely caught up in their fraught exchange. Where indeed was I? The power of music, of this music drama. Feelings nearly impossible to describe or express. That magic. Moments that make the entire sixteen hour's-worth their weight in pure Rhine gold, the niggles and criticisms gone, burned in the glorious fire of the end of the world.

Minnie Biggs January 2024



Götterdämmerung funeral pyre Brisbane 2023



Minecraft Aztec sacrificial pyramid

REVIEWS OF THE BRISBANE RING CYCLE 2023

David Larkin

Wagner on big screens: Opera Australia's digital *Rheingold* is a mixed bag www.bachtrack.com/review-rheingold-shi-zheng-auguin-opera-australia-brisbane-december-2023

Phoenixes and magic fire: Opera Australia's *Die Walküre* is a hit www.bachtrack.com/review-walkure-shi-zheng-auguin-opera-australia-brisbane-december-2023

Nature goes hi-tech: Opera Australia's *Siegfried* a triumph for Stefan Vinke www.bachtrack.com/review-siegfried-shi-zheng-auguin-opera-australia-brisbane-december-2023

Songs amid ice and fire: *Götterdämmerung* provides a fine close to Opera Australia's Ring Cycle www.bachtrack.com/review-gotterdammerung-opera-australia-wagner-ring-cycle-vinke-lindstrom-qpac-december-2023

Chantal Nguyen

Behind the scenes: Opera Australia's vast, digital *Ring Cycle* www.bachtrack.com/feature-behind-the-scenes-opera-australia-digital-ring-cycle-october-2023

Jansson J. Antmann

Das Rheingold (Opera Australia): Chen Shi-Zheng's finely crafted *Ring Cycle* heralds a return to Neue Bayreuth, but with a human touch. www.limelight-arts.com.au/reviews/das-rheingold-opera-australia/

Die Walküre (Opera Australia): Chen Shi-Zheng's meticulous staging of the second opera in Wagner's tetralogy proves his *Ring Cycle* is one for the ages. www.limelight-arts.com.au/reviews/die-walkure-opera-australia/

Siegfried (Opera Australia): The third opera in Wagner's tetralogy throws up plenty of challenges, but Chen Shi-Zheng tackles them boldly and triumphs. www.limelight-arts.com.au/reviews/siegfried-opera-australia/

Götterdämmerung (Opera Australia): A six-star finale to Chen Shi-Zheng's five-star *Ring Cycle* sticks to the script and proves all the world loves a good bedtime story. www.limelight-arts.com.au/reviews/gotterdammerung-opera-australia/

Olivia Stewart

Fifteen hours of Wagner: Opera Australia's *Ring Cycle* brings big spectacle – and a world first – to Brisbane www.theguardian.com/music/2023/dec/07/opera-australia-richard-wagner-ring-cycle-brisbane-der-ring-des-nibelungen

Michael Halliwell

Das Rheingold ★★★★★ *Die Walküre* ★★★★★: Opera Australia's new *Ring* is underway www.australianbookreview.com.au/arts-update/101-arts-update/11697-das-rheingold-die-walkure-opera-australia

Siegfried ★★★★★ *Götterdämmerung* ★★★★★1/2: Chen Shi-Zheng's Asian-Pacific *Ring* <https://www.australianbookreview.com.au/arts-update/101-arts-update/11761-siegfried-goetterdaemmerung-1-2-chen-shi-zheng-s-asian-pacific-ring-by-michael-halliwell>

THE THIRD CYCLE by Mike Day

As a total experience – music, production, talks, symposia, friends, cocktails, local food, the Brisbane riverfront, museums and galleries – it was a wonderful week. I have many criticisms of the production, but, in the end, the music always triumphs. What an amazing, indestructible, hymn to love, human genius and creativity the *Ring* is. I went with some younger friends who are classical music lovers but not opera goers. They were unfamiliar with the *Ring* and were enraptured by the music and the visual production. Being familiar with video games, Minecraft, DC and Marvel comic's Superheroes, *Lord of the Rings*, *Game of Thrones*, Fanart, etc. my youngest companion responded with enthusiasm to Director/Designer Chen's visual references to popular culture. Is this the way to build a new younger audience for Wagner? My friends also heard the link between Wagner's 'cinematic' music and modern gaming music, which often uses sweeping orchestral themes and leitmotifs. Gaming music is some of the most engaging orchestral 'classical' music being composed today. E.g., *'Starfield'* by Inon Zur. I think it's well worth listening to as performed and recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra; it's full of soaring melodies, atmosphere and drama. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXjy0pnEDCc>

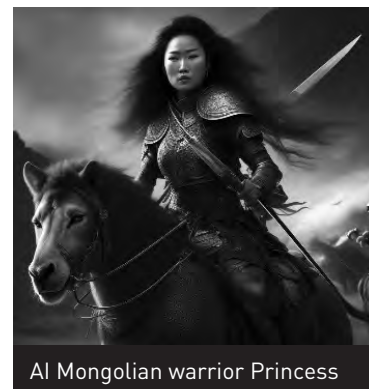
As *Ring* virgins, my friends found Peter Bassett's talks and the Symposium very useful, along with the pre-performance talks in the foyer. We had good seats in the centre of the back of the circle – perfect view and balanced orchestral sound quality and at eye level with the surtitles. From this distance the LED screens weren't too dominant and the lighting of the actors was exemplary. The use of large-scale sculptural elements was effective and the variety of images extraordinary and sometimes very beautiful. But, at other times, the visuals were quite banal, too cartoonish for my taste with too much distracting movement. A younger audience, with shorter attention span, would be entertained by all the busy-ness. My final conclusion was that it was rather superficial – very few stimulating ideas or profound insights. Apart from the aerialists, the dancers, in my opinion, were an irritating mistake. Well executed but irrelevant. Ribbon dancers in the forge scene? NO! Siegfried threw his glove at them in annoyance! If there is a revival the dancers could easily be eliminated. A new director who cared about what the actors and their characters were doing would also be a step in the right direction. But I mustn't carp – the singers and musicians were totally committed and we all had a marvellous time.



The Valkyries – Brisbane 2023



Wonder Woman 2017 movie



Al Mongolian warrior Princess

THE COMPOSERS WHO INFLUENCED WAGNER OR WERE INFLUENCED BY HIM. PART 2

Wagner and Johann Sebastian Bach 1685 – 1750



Bach's supreme achievement was as a polyphonist. His North German Protestant religion was the root of all his art, allied to a tireless industry in the pursuit of every kind of refinement of his skill and technique. Sonata form was not yet developed enough for him to be interested in it, and he had no leaning towards the (to him) frivolities

of opera. Although some of the forms in which he wrote—the church cantata, for example—were outdated before he died, he poured into them all the resources of his genius so that they have outlived most other examples. The dramatic and emotional force of his music, as evidenced in the Passions, was remarkable in its day and has spoken to succeeding generations with increasing power. Suffice it to say that for many composers and for countless listeners, Bach's music is supreme—to quote **Wagner: 'the most stupendous miracle in all music'**. <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095439222>

Of Beethoven and Mozart Wagner said: "As far as fugues are concerned, these gentlemen can hide their heads before Bach. They played with the form, wanted to show they could do it too, but Bach showed us the soul of the fugue. He could not do otherwise than write in fugues."

Wagner and Felix Mendelssohn 1809 – 1847



No musician was ever more severely criticised than Richard Wagner, and it is equally certain that Wagner spared no opportunity to express his contempt for those who believed in views contrary to his own. Nevertheless, he was not by any means insensible to the greatness of other musicians. Nor was he so deadly in his hatred of "Judaism in Music" that he failed to appreciate the genius of Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847).

Here is something of what he had to say about Mendelssohn's powers as a composer: "Mendelssohn was a landscape painter of the first order, and the Hebrides overture is his masterpiece. Wonderful imagination and delicate feeling are here presented with consummate art. Note the extraordinary beauty of the passage where the oboes rise above the other instruments with a plaintive wail like the winds over the seas.

Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage also is beautiful; and I am very fond of the first movement of the Scottish Symphony. No one can blame a composer for using national melodies when he treats them so artistically as Mendelssohn has done in the Scherzo of this symphony. His second theme, his slow movements generally, where the human element comes in, are weaker. As regards the overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it must be taken into account that he wrote it at seventeen, and how finished the form is already!"

<https://etudemagazine.com/etude/1910/11/wagner-on-mendelssohn-and-schumann.html>

Wagner and Anton Bruckner 1824-1896



Wagnerian influences are undeniably present in Bruckner's work. Before being introduced to Wagner's music in 1863, and attending the first performance of *Tristan und Isolde* in Munich two years later – another epiphanic moment – Bruckner had been fascinated by the formalism

of Italian and German polyphony. After Wagner, all of these conceptions of order were exploded for Bruckner. He absorbed Wagner's ideas about expanding the orchestra, particularly in his use of reinforced brass sections (he also employed Wagner tubas in his final three symphonies). Similarly, he introduced Wagner's harmonic innovations into his own symphonic work. Bruckner attended the Bayreuth performance of the Ring cycle in 1876 and his Third Symphony, sometimes known as his "Wagner Symphony", quotes heavily from his hero's work, particularly the strings from Wagner's *Tannhäuser Overture*. When Bruckner met Wagner shortly before the publication of his third attempt at a symphony, he showed both his Second and Third to the older composer, asking which one he'd like to be dedicated to him. In beer-addled high spirits, Bruckner reportedly forgot which one Wagner had specified and had to write to him, asking him to jog his memory. The resulting dedication for the Third Symphony made no bones about who it had been inspired by, reading: "To the eminent Excellency Richard Wagner the Unattainable, World-Famous, and Exalted Master of Poetry and Music, in Deepest Reverence Dedicated by Anton Bruckner". One gets the feeling that Eduard Hanslick's damning appraisal of the symphony as "a vision of Beethoven's Ninth becoming friendly with Wagner's Valkyries and finishing up being trampled under their hooves" may well have seemed like a compliment to Bruckner. Excerpt from article *The At Home Guide: Bruckner and the shadow of Wagner* by Danny Riley on Bachtrack <https://bachtrack.com/at-home-guide-bruckner-wagner-influence-symphonies-june-2017>

Wagner and Engelbert Humperdinck

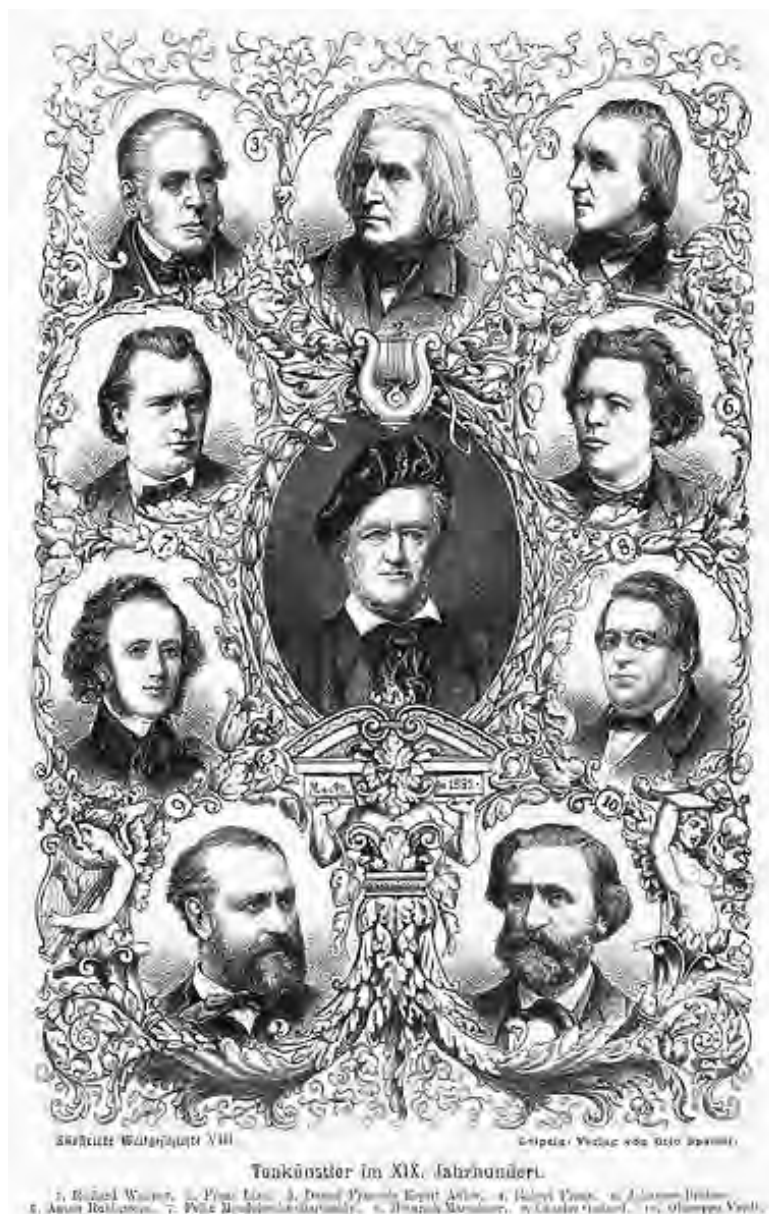
1854-1921



After his studies in Cologne and Munich, and further studies in France and Italy, Humperdinck became a follower of Wagner, whom he met in Italy in 1881.

Wagner invited him to help with the preparation of *Parsifal*, and Humperdinck quickly became part of the Wagner family circle, joining the family in Bayreuth. He became a music teacher to Wagner's son, Siegfried. (He also taught Schoenberg). He is a true turn-of-the-century mix of influences, and another one of those rare figures in music history - a composer who became a household name on the basis of a single work; *Hänsel und Gretel*. Richard Strauss, who conducted the first performance (in 1893) described it as "a masterpiece of the highest quality... all of it original, new and so authentically German.". The score of *Hänsel und Gretel* is a perfect fusion of childlike, but never childish, melodic simplicity and a Wagnerian harmonic language - more *Meistersinger* diatonicism than the chromatics of *Tristan*, admittedly - all cloaked in rich orchestral hues, which is almost unique in operatic history. James Conlon of LA Opera, in an excellent programme note analysis, wrote: "*Hänsel und Gretel* could be said to be Wagner's shortest opera ... The children become heroes, experiencing the same challenges that face the protagonists of Western culture's classic mythology. Within the contours of their simple story resides an essential human experience: the challenge each of us must face when we confront difficulties, obstacles and evil in order to achieve a goal... The rite of passage from childhood to an awakened consciousness is the core of the opera. The children must fend for themselves when in danger. The confidence that they have the resources to find solutions for serious challenges is their reward. The existential challenge experienced by Hansel and Gretel is no less powerful than that presented to Siegmund as he draws the sword from the tree, or to Siegfried when he slays the dragon, or to Brünnhilde when she sacrifices herself and restores the world order. It is entirely appropriate that this 'children's story' be wrapped in Wagnerian riches."

<https://tomprettyhill.wixsite.com/u3aopera/post/h%C3%A4nsel-und-gretel-wagner-s-shortest-opera>



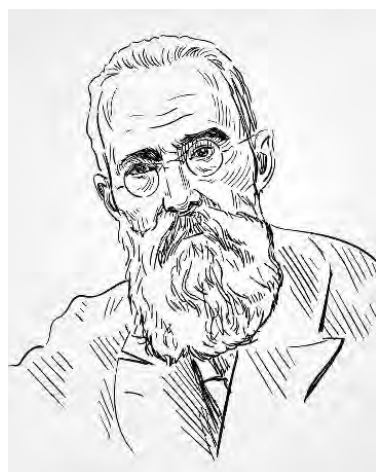
Famous composers of the 19th century arranged around Richard Wagner, Franz Liszt, Daniel Francois Esprit Auber, Robert Franz, Johannes Brahms, Anton Rubinstein, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Heinrich Marschner, Charles Gounod, Giuseppe Verdi 1881

Wagner's influence outside of Germany

Wagner's influence within German "serious" music was extraordinary, of course. But more unique was his influence on non-German composers, and on non-German genres. For one thing, Wagner was essentially an opera composer. This was a genre that was quintessentially Italian up to this point, but Wagner imbued it with the influence of the symphony, which would continue to pervade opera through the present day (at this point, it's everywhere, as a result of Wagner's work). Every composer from around the world heard his music. Composers made pilgrimages to hear his premieres, and his music became a talking point for the entire musical world. His influence was massive on French opera (e.g., **Massenet**), on Italian opera (e.g., **Verdi**, but especially **Puccini**), even on Russian music (e.g., **Tchaikovsky**, later **Rachmaninov**, etc.). The greatest composers of this age met at Wagner's premieres, in Bayreuth. People travelled for weeks or months to hear this music, and the influence that it had was staggering. Everyone of this period defined themselves as either pro- or anti-Wagnerian, and even those who were

anti-Wagnerian often ended up being more influenced than those who were pro-. In this sense, Wagner was both the musical voice of his generation, *and* the first composer to initiate a move towards globalization in classical music. (This is ironic, since Wagner's rhetoric was incredibly anti-global; his impression of himself was that he was asserting German dominance, rather than influencing the entire musical landscape of the western world). Excerpt from article by David Leigh <https://www.quora.com/How-did-Richard-Wagner-change-the-face-of-music>

Wagner and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov 1844 – 1908



Afflicted with crippling self-criticism from early in his career, **Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov** had his life altered when he encountered Wagner's "Ring of the Nibelung" performed by a touring German company in St. Petersburg in 1889. From

then on, his creative energies were renewed and he concentrated almost exclusively on opera and vocal music. "The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh and the Maiden Fevronia," generally considered Rimsky's most Wagnerian score, was the 14th of his 15 operas, and the last to be premiered during his lifetime. The libretto was by Vladimir Bielsky, with considerable input from the composer; Bielsky was also the librettist for Rimsky's other two late operatic masterpieces, "Tsar Sultan" and "The Golden Cockerel." Both men shared the then-fashionable Russian interest in pantheism and primitive, quasi-pagan Christianity. Composition of "Kitezh" occupied Rimsky from March 1903 to February 1905.

"What terrible harm Wagner did by interspersing his pages of genius with harmonic and modulatory outrages to which both young and old are gradually becoming accustomed and which have procreated d'Indy and Richard Strauss." Rimsky-Korsakov

Other composers' reflections on Wagner

Giuseppe Verdi 1813 - 1901

"Wagner surpasses every composer in his rich variety of instrumental colour, but in both form and style he went too far. At the outset he successfully avoided mundane subject-matter, but he later strayed from his idealistic aims by carrying his artistic theories to extremes and committed the very error that he had set out to reform: and so, the monotony, which he avoided with such success, now threatens to dominate him."

Gioacchino Antonio Rossini 1792 - 1868

"One can't judge Wagner's opera '*Lohengrin*' after a first hearing, and I certainly don't intend hearing it a second time". "Wagner thought Rossini unserious; Rossini thought Wagner 'lacked sun'. Wagner also became the butt of a phrase Rossini had used down the years to describe musicians about whom he had certain reservations - "He has some beautiful moments but some bad quarters of an hour!" Richard Osborne, *Rossini*

Robert Schumann 1810 - 1856

"For me Wagner is impossible... he talks without ever stopping. One can't just talk all the time."

(Wagner "It is impossible to communicate with Schumann. The man is hopeless; he doesn't talk at all.")

Hugo Wolf 1860 - 1903

On the occasion of Wagner's visit to the Austrian capital in 1875, Wolf followed his carriage wherever it went and stood in the lobby of the master's hotel until he was allowed to show him his songs. As Wolf said: 'I conceived an irresistible inclination towards Richard Wagner, without having yet formed any conception of his music'; it was enough that this man had the reputation of being the greatest opera composer of all. The polemics that surrounded Wagner's cause – his battles with the Viennese critic Hanslick and other Brahmsians – clearly enhanced his status in Wolf's eyes.

Gabriel Fauré 1845 - 1924

"If one has not heard Wagner at Bayreuth, one has heard nothing! Take lots of handkerchiefs because you will cry a great deal! Also take a sedative because you will be exalted to the point of delirium!"

Gustav Mahler 1860 - 1911

"There is Beethoven and Richard, and after them, nobody."

Ralph Vaughan Williams 1872 - 1958

"Wagner used to read the libretti of his operas to his friends; I am glad I was not there."

Giacomo Puccini 1858 – 1924 after playing the opening chords of *Tristan* on the piano.

"Enough of this music... the rest of us are dilettantes and mandolin players."

Paul Hindemith 1895 – 1963

"Not until the turn of the century did the outlines of the new world discovered in *Tristan* begin to take shape. Music reacted to it as a human body to an injected serum, which it at first strives to exclude as a poison, and only afterwards learns to accept as necessary and even wholesome."

Claude Debussy 1862 - 1918

"Wagner - A beautiful sunset that was mistaken for a dawn."

Jean Sibelius 1865 - 1957

Early in his career, Sibelius was an enthusiastic Wagnerian. A performance of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth had a strong effect on him, inspiring him to write 'Nothing in the world has made such an impression on me, it moves the very strings of my heart'. Later, Sibelius began to feel disgust for Wagner's music, calling it pompous and vulgar.

“I know of only one composer who measures up to Beethoven, and that is Bruckner.”

- Richard Wagner -

TCHAIKOVSKY AND THE BAYREUTH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Excerpts from a special article by **Tchaikovsky** for the Moscow journal *Russian Register*, in which it appeared over five issues between May and August 1876

It concerns the first performance of Wagner's complete *Ring Cycle* in Bayreuth—*Das Rheingold* on 1/13 August, *Die Walküre* on 2/14 August, *Siegfried* on 4/16 August, and *Götterdämmerung* on 5/17 August 1876—conducted by Hans Richter.

The article is divided into five parts with the following subjects:

Part I: An outline of the genesis of the *Ring Cycle* and how the Bayreuth Festival Theatre came to be built;

Part II: A synopsis of the plot of *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*;

Part III: A synopsis of the plot of *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*;

Part IV: A tourist's walk through Bayreuth, including interesting descriptions of the Festival Theatre and Wagner's Villa Wahnfried; a description of the reception for Emperor Wilhelm I and the procession of musicians, including a fascinating 'snapshot' of Wagner himself and some admiring remarks on Liszt; a very amusing account of the trials and tribulations faced by hapless tourists in this small Bavarian town; a list of those famous composers who had not come to the Festival, as well as of those Russians who had; a description of the performance practice and audience etiquette at the Festival;

Part V

My readers, who may perhaps be thinking that I have spoken far too much about Bayreuth and everyday life here, are no doubt expecting that I shall now finally address the most essential question, that is provide an assessment of the merits of Wagner's great creation and discuss the musical delights which I have experienced here. If that is so, then I must beg my readers' pardon and promise that at some point later on (albeit in a rather distant future) I will undertake a detailed analysis of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Over the last winter I had indeed tried to familiarize myself, even if somewhat superficially, with this massive work, and, naïve as I am, I had assumed that it would be sufficient to hear it once in a proper stage performance for me to get to grips with the work and acquire a firm notion of it. I was deeply mistaken.

Wagner's tetralogy is such a colossal work in terms of its gigantic proportions, it is so complicated in its musical facture, so finely and profoundly thought through and fashioned, that a great deal of time is necessary to study it, and, above all, one has to listen to it more than once. As everyone knows, it is only after listening to a musical work several times that its merits and faults become fully clear to you. It is often so that what you didn't pay sufficient attention to the first time round suddenly strikes you and produces an unexpectedly enchanting effect when the work is performed a second time. And, vice versa, some episode which captivated you to start with, and which you regarded as the most successful part of the work, pales before the new gems you discover in the music after studying it further. However, even that is not enough: after one has acquainted oneself sufficiently with new music by listening to it several times, it is necessary to allow one's immediate impressions to settle, as it were, to sit down with the score and study it closely, and to compare what is on the page with what you have heard—only then can one attempt to formulate well-founded and reliable judgements. I shall certainly try to do all this at some point, but for the time being I would just like to share with my readers a few general observations regarding both the music as such and its presentation on the stage.

First of all, I should say that anyone who believes in art as a civilizing force, anyone who is devoted to art irrespective of any utilitarian purposes it may serve, must experience a most agreeable feeling in Bayreuth at the sight of this tremendous artistic enterprise which has finally attained the desired goal and, by virtue of its vast dimensions and the degree of interest it has awakened, acquired epoch-making significance in the history of art. At the sight of this huge building, erected on the foundations of that need for aesthetic pleasure which has always been intrinsic to mankind at all stages of its development; at the sight of this multitude of people from all social strata, who have come together in this little corner of Europe solely in the name of art, so equally dear to all of them; at the sight of this whole unprecedented feast



Tchaikovsky 1873



Bayreuth 1876

of music and drama, how ridiculous and lamentable those preachers of tendentious art seemed all of a sudden—those preachers who, in their blindness, consider our century to be that of the utter decline of pure art!

The Bayreuth Festival is a lesson for those inveterate enemies of art who treat the latter with arrogant disdain and proclaim that it is unfitting for civilized people to occupy themselves with anything else other than what is of direct, practical use. In the sense of contributing to the material prosperity of mankind, the Bayreuth Festival, of course, is of no consequence whatsoever, but in the sense of a quest for the realisation of artistic ideals it surely is fated, in some way or other, to acquire a tremendous historical significance. As to whether Wagner is right to go so far in the service of his idea, or whether he has overstepped the limits defining the balance of aesthetic factors which ensure that a work of art is durable and lasting; whether or not art will now take Wagner's achievement as its starting-point and proceed along the same path, or whether *Der Ring des Nibelungen* marks in fact a point of inflexion after which only a reaction in the opposite direction is possible—those are as yet open questions. What is, however, certain at any rate is that something has taken place in Bayreuth which will occupy the thoughts even of our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The principles which Wagner adheres to consistently in the music of the *Ring* are as follows:

Since opera, in his view, is nothing other than drama accompanied by music, and since the characters in a drama are supposed to speak rather than sing, Wagner irrevocably banishes from opera all rounded and self-contained musical forms, i.e., he does away with arias, ensembles, and even choruses, which he uses episodically and very moderately only in the last part of his tetralogy. That is, he banishes that conventional element of opera which to us had not seemed offensive or false merely because routine had made us quite insensitive to it.

Since in the moments of passionate intensity to which people living in a social community are subject nobody would think of striking up a song, arias are to be rejected; and since as a rule two people do not speak to one another at the same time, but rather one will let the other speak out first, there can be no duets either. Similarly, since people in a crowd do not generally all utter the same words together at the same time, a chorus must also be out of the question, and so on and so forth.

Wagner, by apparently forgetting in this context that the truth of life and the truth of art are two quite different truths, is in effect striving after rationality. In order to reconcile these demands of truth with the requirements of music, Wagner exclusively recognizes the form of the recitative. All his music—and it is a music which is profoundly conceived, always interesting, often splendid and exciting, though at times also a bit dryish and unintelligible, a music which is astonishingly rich from the technical point of view and equipped with an instrumentation of unprecedented beauty—all his music, I emphasize, is entrusted exclusively to the orchestra. The characters sing mainly just completely colourless successions of tones which are tailored to the symphony being performed by the invisible orchestra.

There are almost no deviations from this system in *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Where they do occur, there is a quite strong justification for them. Thus, for example, in Act I of the third part of the tetralogy



Siegfried sings two songs. The point is that, thanks to the fact that in real life a blacksmith forging a sword might very well be singing a song, the audience gets to hear two magnificent rounded vocal numbers, which in their own way are probably unique in the whole work. Each character is provided with a special brief motif which belongs to him or her alone, and which recurs whenever that character appears onstage or is mentioned by someone

else. The constant recurrence of these motifs forces Wagner, if he is to avoid monotony, to present these motifs in a new form each time, whereby he reveals an astonishing richness of harmonic and polyphonic techniques.

This richness, however, is far too lavish: by constantly straining the listener's attention, the latter eventually feels exhausted by it, and towards the end of the opera (especially in *Götterdämmerung*) this exhaustion reaches a point where the music ceases to be experienced as a harmonic combination of notes and becomes instead like a tedious rumble. Is this what art is supposed to achieve?

If I, a musician by profession, was overcome by a sensation of spiritual and physical fatigue close to utter exhaustion, imagine how worn out the non-specialists in the audience must have ended up feeling! True, the latter is far more preoccupied with the wonders taking place on the stage than with the musicians sweating their guts out in the concealed orchestra pit and the singers straining themselves to breaking-point, but surely one must assume that Wagner wrote his music so that people would actually listen to it, rather than just paying no heed to it as if it were something secondary or collateral.

Indeed, one cannot avoid reflecting on how *Der Ring des Nibelungen* as a spectacle generates a certain musical immorality, to put it that way. The professional musician looks for musical beauties in this work, and he certainly does find them—albeit in excess, rather than in due proportion. It is like Demyan's Fish-soup applied to music, that is a dish which very soon leaves you with a feeling of satiety. Be that as it may, the musician judges the music on the basis of musical impressions, whereas the non-musician has plenty to admire in the decorations, the great fires, the various transformations, the appearance of dwarves and dragons on the stage, swimming maidens, etc. Since the non-specialist is quite incapable, so I am fully convinced, of obtaining any musical pleasure from this storm of sounds, though at the same time he takes delight in the magnificent scenery, the upshot is that he confuses the latter with musical impressions proper and tries to persuade both himself and others that he has fully grasped the magic of Wagner's music.

I made the acquaintance of a Russian merchant's son who assured me that in music no one else existed for him apart from Wagner. "But do you really know all the other music there is?" I asked him. It turned out that my dear fellow-countryman did not have the slightest clue about music as such. But then, you see, he is fortunate to be personally acquainted with the famous maestro himself, he attends his evening-parties, he has been kindly received by the composer's wife, and so it is quite natural that, feeling immensely flattered by this acquaintance, he regards it as his duty to reject everything that Wagner himself will not recognize. Unfortunately, there are very many such Wagnerians, and this is indeed a most saddening phenomenon.

Of course, Wagner has a huge number of enthusiastic and utterly sincere admirers amongst professional musicians. The point is that the latter have attained this conscious enthusiasm by means of studying his works, and if there is anything at all that could serve as a moral support for Wagner in his striving after his ideal, then that is surely the ardent devotion of these people. However, it would be interesting to know if he is able to tell them apart from the legion of false Wagnerians and especially Wagnériennes, who are as ignorant as they are intolerant of opinions that differ from theirs.

I repeat: in Bayreuth I had the opportunity to meet lots of outstanding artists, who are unconditionally devoted to Wagner's music, and whose sincerity I have no reason to doubt. Rather, I am willing to grant that it is my own fault that I have not yet come to appreciate fully this music, and that, once I have got down to studying it diligently, I too may eventually join the wide circle of genuine admirers of Wagner's music. At present all I can say in full honesty is that *Der Ring des Nibelungen* produced an overwhelming impression on me not so much by virtue of its musical beauties, which are perhaps strewn far too liberally in the pages of its score, as, rather, by virtue of its length, its gigantic proportions.

This gigantic opera really does require gigantic talents, too, for its performance. In order to sing a role like that of Wotan or Siegfried, one must actually be a titan, and since no such titanic singers were to be found anywhere, no one in the cast, maybe apart from the Viennese soprano Materna in the role of Brünnhilde, was equal to his or her task. By the way, this applies only to the roles of the gods and giants. For the roles of the dwarves, which do not require such extraordinary vocal power, or the Rhinemaidens—indeed, almost all of the minor roles for that matter were performed admirably. A particularly fine performance was that of Mime, both as a singer and as an actor. The orchestra was beyond all praise, and one cannot fail to be amazed by the perfection of its playing when one thinks about the score's incredibly complicated instrumentation. The men's chorus, which appears episodically in the final opera, was so outstanding that, despite being numerically so small, it almost managed to drown the orchestra.

And so, by way of conclusion, I should like to say something about the overall impression which this performance of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* has left me with. Firstly, it has left me with a vague recollection of many strikingly beautiful musical features, especially of a symphonic kind, which is very strange, given that Wagner least of all intended to write operas in a symphonic style. Secondly, it has left me with respectful admiration for the author's tremendous talent and his incredibly rich technique. Thirdly, it has left me with misgivings as to whether Wagner's view of opera is correct. Fourthly, it has left me greatly exhausted, but at the same time it has also left me with the wish to continue my study of this most complicated work of music ever written.

Even if *Der Ring des Nibelungen* seems boring in places; even if there is a lot in it which remains unclear and incomprehensible when listening to it for the first time; even if Wagner's harmony is sometimes marred by excessive intricacy and refinement; even if Wagner's theory is mistaken; even if there is quite a large dose of aimless quixotry [28] behind this theory; even if his huge work is condemned to rest in eternal sleep in the deserted vault of the Bayreuth Festival Theatre, leaving nothing else behind other than legendary memories of a gigantic endeavour which for a while became the focus of the whole world's attention—even if that were to happen, it is still the case that *Der Ring des Nibelungen* will always constitute one of the most significant phenomena in the history of art. Whatever one thinks of Wagner's titanic work as such, nobody can deny the greatness of the task he has carried out or the strength of his spirit, which impelled him to complete what he had once begun and to realise one of the most tremendous artistic projects ever conceived by the human mind.

After the final chord of the closing scene in the last opera of the cycle had died away, the audience called for Wagner. He walked onstage and made a small speech, which concluded with the following words: "You have seen what we can do—now it's up to you to want. And if you want, then we shall have an art!"

I shall leave it up to the reader to interpret these words as he or she pleases. All I would like to observe is that they caused a certain bewilderment amongst the audience. For a few moments there was complete silence. Only then did the cheering start again, but far less enthusiastically than was the case when Wagner was being called onstage. I think that the members of the Parlement of Paris behaved exactly like that when Louis XIV uttered his famous words to them: "L'état c'est moi". At first, they marvelled in silence at the greatness of the task undertaken by him, but then they remembered that he was the King, and shouted: "Vive le roi!"

P. Tchaikovsky

https://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/The_Bayreuth_Music_Festival

R
Renaissance
Tours



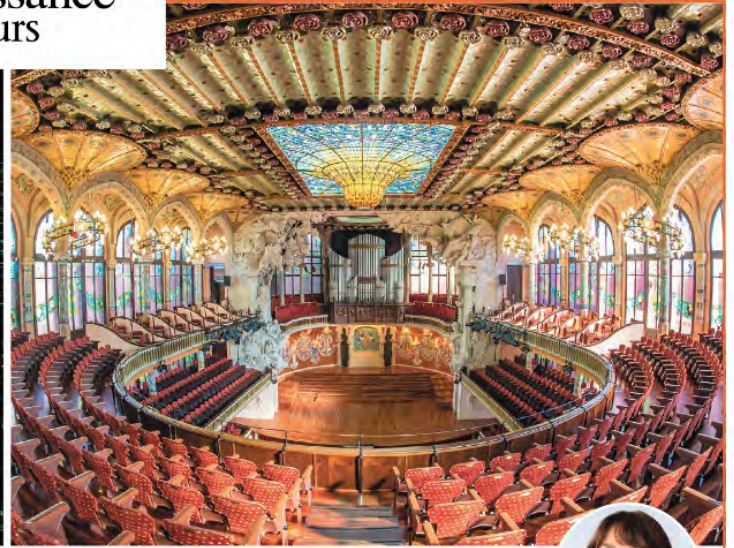
The Ring Cycle in Berlin

Deutsche Oper Berlin

with Scott Curry

20 – 27 May 2024 (8 days)

Witness veteran conductor Sir Donald Runnicles conduct Wagner's iconic *Ring* cycle at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, directed by Norwegian director Stefan Herheim.



¡Opera Olé!

Bilbao, Madrid and Barcelona

with Mairi Nicolson

20 May – 01 June 2024 (13 days)

Journey from Bilbao to Barcelona with opera aficionado Mairi Nicolson to uncover the best of opera, art and cuisine that Spain has to offer.



English Country House Opera

Glyndebourne and Garsington

with Phillip Sametz

09 – 20 July 2024 (12 days)

Enjoy a leisurely summertime journey through the beautiful English countryside, famous for its gardens, stately homes – and 'country house opera'.



Opera Bellissima

Parma, Milan and Naples

with Mairi Nicolson

01 – 12 October 2024 (12 days)

Travel to the birthplace of opera to be captivated by fine performances of the Italian masters and delight in the musical, art and culinary treasures of Italy.



Australia's finest collection of cultural and special interest tours.

For detailed information visit renaissancetours.com.au,
call 1300 727 095 or contact your travel agent.

ADDRESS

Please note our permanent address for all correspondence:
The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc | PO Box 6111 Alexandria NSW 2015
Telephone: 0412 282 070 (Esteban Insausti, President)
Website: www.wagner.org.au | Website enquiries: contact@wagner.org.au

[All website addresses used in this Newsletter are reproduced in the PDF version of the Quarterly on the Wagner Society's website in the relevant article – For Members Only, members will need to log in]

COMPUTER GENERATED DESIGNS BY WOUTER DE MOOR USING MICROSOFT BING AND ADOBE PHOTOSHOP

Music comes with images. A record comes with a cover. To listen to an opera is to look with your ears. Music can unlock a world in the mind waiting to be made visible. And an AI-image generator can be a handy tool for that. Music from my adult life staged with the toys of my early childhood. It's a versatile toy, you can make all sorts of things with it, which perhaps because of its limitation is still so popular. It's like building something in low resolution with 3D pixels where the Lego bricks, even if they only exist virtually, add a decidedly tactile dimension (indispensable in a digital world). The more you try to make something look realistic, the more you see that it is fake. To be appealing and believable, a certain degree of abstraction is indispensable. Wagner was notoriously unhappy with the 'natural' staging of the first Ring production in Bayreuth in 1876. He let it be known after that premiere that next time it would all have to be different. How it should be done then was an answer that remained unanswered at the time of his death. We now know that definitive answers to the staging questions posed by the Ring do not exist, nor is it desirable to look for them.



Wouter de Moor | 30 Dec 2023 | www.wagner-heavy-metal.com/blog/wagner-heavy-metal-goes-to-legoland



ADDRESS FOR SUNDAY FUNCTIONS

[unless otherwise advised in Coming Events]
Goethe Institut, 90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)

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
