

Josef Hoffmann (1831-1904) painting of the end of *Das Rheingold*, 1876.



**MICHAEL DAY on
WAGNER'S PAINTER
CONTEMPORARIES**

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A Wagner Society in NSW Inc event

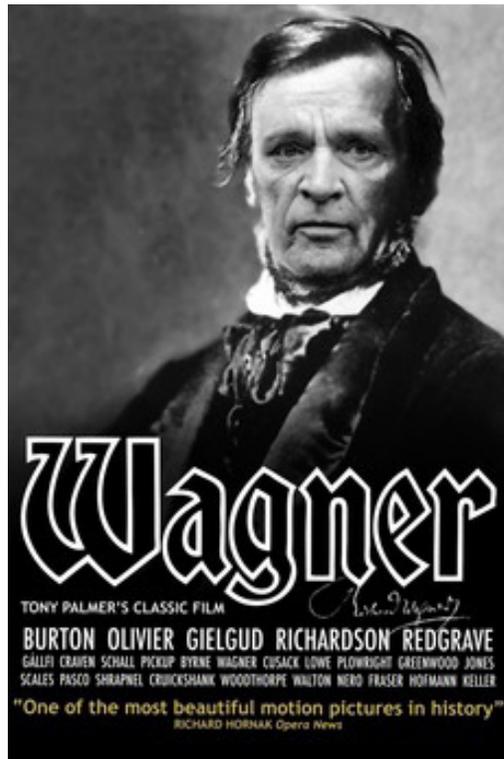
2.00pm Sunday 1 March 2026

Goethe Institut

90 Ocean Street (corner of Jersey Road), Woollahra

PROGRAMME

12.00 noon
DVD **TONY PALMER'S WAGNER**
PART 1 EPISODES 1 AND 2



2.00pm
MICHAEL DAY
WAGNER'S PAINTER CONTEMPORARIES

3.00pm (approx) **REFRESHMENTS**

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

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WHAT'S COMING UP IN 2026

Sunday 29 March, Willoughby Uniting Church

12.00 noon: DVD – **Tony Palmer's Wagner Part 2 (ep3)**

2.00pm: Talk by conductor **TOBY WONG** on *Shaumet Das Rheingold*

Sunday 19 April, Goethe Institut

1.00pm: **AGM**

2.00pm: Talk by TBA

Wednesday 22 April, via zoom

12.00 noon: Talk by **F. PETER PHILLIPS**, President of the Wagner Society of New York

Wednesday 6 May, via zoom

12.00 noon: Talk by Belgian Bass **TIJL FAVEYTS**

Sunday 17 May, Mosman Art Gallery

2.00pm: **Wagner's Birthday concert**, with heldenbaritone **WARWICK FYFE** & soprano **LEE ABRAHMSEN** with **GLENN AMER** at the piano

Sunday 21 June, Goethe Institut

12.00p noon: DVD – **Tony Palmer's Wagner Part 3 (ep4)**

2.00pm: Talk by **CHRIS SORRELL** about early Wagner recordings

Sunday 19 July, Goethe Institut

12.00 noon: DVD – **Tony Palmer's Wagner Part 4 (ep5)**

2.00pm: Talk by TBA

Sunday 16 August, Goethe Institut

12.00 noon: DVD – **Tony Palmer's Wagner Part 5 (ep6)**

2.00pm: Talk by conductor **SARAH PENICKA-SMITH**

Sunday 13 September, Goethe Institut

12.00 noon: DVD – TBA

2.00pm: Talk by Associate Professor **ROSS ANDERSON** on his book **The Appian Way**

Sunday 11 October, St Columba Community Centre

2.00pm: Concert with mezzo-soprano **DEBORAH HUMBLE** and **SHAROLYN KIMMORLEY** at the piano

Saturday 21 November, Goethe Institut

10.30 am – 4.00pm: **SYMPOSIUM** on **GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG**

Sunday 13 December, St Columba Community Centre

2.00pm: **CHRISTMAS CONCERT** and party

MICHAEL DAY

Mike Day is Vice President of WSNSW and the editor of the Quarterly. He has been practising as a registered architect for over 50 years and obtained a Masters of Illumination from the University of Sydney in 2004. He taught architectural lighting design and theatre design at UTS Architecture 2003 – 2020. He was a founding designer for Sydney's *Vivid Light Festival* in 2009. He has worked as a set designer in several countries, including designing a *Don Giovanni* with Sir Roger Norrington in London in 1972.

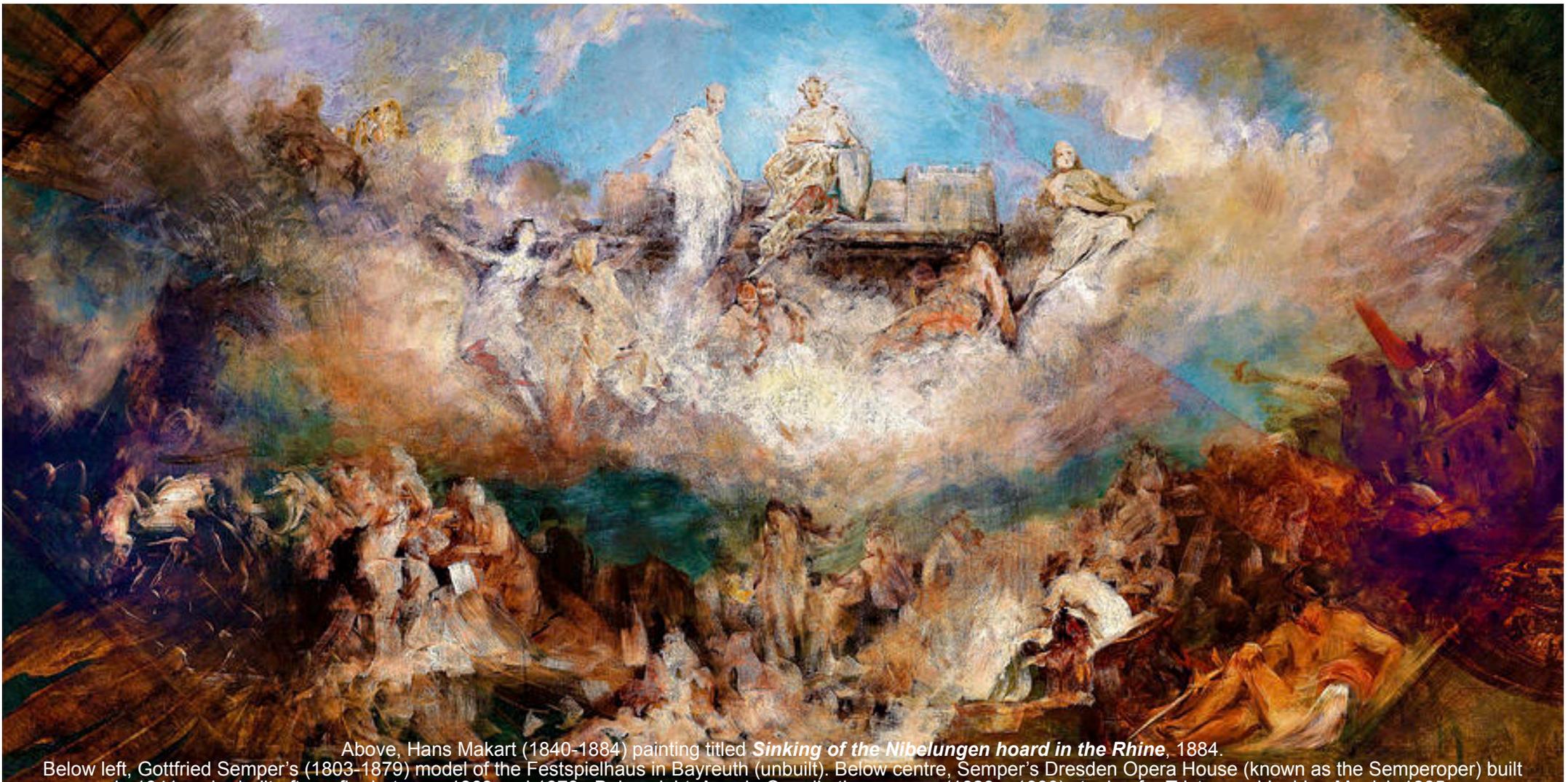
He decided to become an architect after his father showed him Utzon's winning entry for the SOH competition in 1956. Around the same time, he was infected with the Wagner virus when a friend's mother played him the finale of *Die Walküre* Act I on an old 78rpm record. He first visited Bayreuth in 1970 and has attended 3 festivals since then. He considers himself very fortunate to have seen some wonderful Wagner performances in the 70's with Sir Colin Davis, Karl Böhm, Sir Georg Solti and Sir Reginald Goodall.

ABOUT MIKE'S TALK

Wagner had enormous influence on a wide range of composers, thinkers, writers and artists during, and long after, his lifetime. His gatherings at Wahnfried attracted many of the most influential people of the age. Performances of his works generated great interest across Europe and his writings (and scandalous life) ensured his newsworthiness. He acknowledged the influence that great composers and philosophers such as Beethoven and Schopenhauer had on his life and work. What he seldom mentions is which contemporary visual artists were of interest to him. He surrounded himself with luxurious furnishings and sensuous textiles but admitted to Mathilde Wesendonck that he was lacking in visual sensitivity. He was often disappointed with the look of the stage settings for his operas.

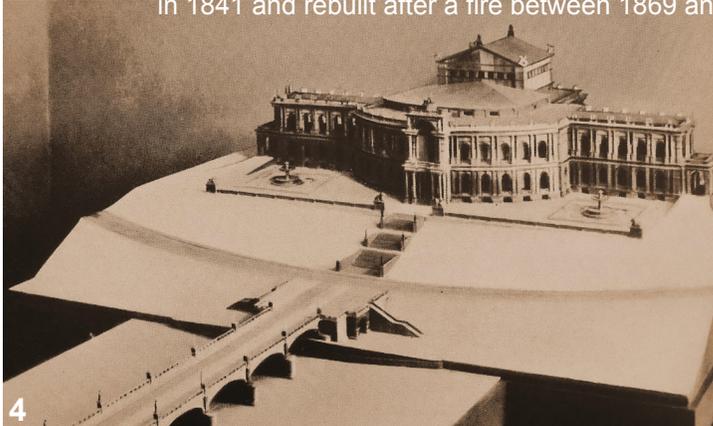
What were his artistic influences? What was the artistic environment Wagner was born into? Who were the Nazarenes? What was Romantic Neoclassicism? How did he get access to contemporary art? Who were his artist friends and acquaintances? What did they think of him? These are some questions I have been exploring and will share with you.





Above, Hans Makart (1840-1884) painting titled *Sinking of the Nibelungen hoard in the Rhine*, 1884.

Below left, Gottfried Semper's (1803-1879) model of the Festspielhaus in Bayreuth (unbuilt). Below centre, Semper's Dresden Opera House (known as the Semperoper) built in 1841 and rebuilt after a fire between 1869 and 1878. Below right, Angelo Quaglio the younger (1829 – 1890) staging for *Tristan und Isolde* Munich 1865.



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