

# WAGNER NEWS



NEWSLETTER OF THE  
RICHARD WAGNER SOCIETY  
OF VICTORIA INC.

JULY 2015

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am writing from Vienna having experienced a fantastically sung and well-directed *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle for the Vienna Ring. Along with music, the arts are prominent in Vienna and the Museum Quarter requires a full day. My visit has prompted me to look forward to our next member event at 2pm on Sunday 26 July in the Music Department MCM Southbank with a focus on Wagner-related art. Please check our website for full details.

In Dessau, along with the Ring, I attended the International Wagner Conference and Delegates Assembly where the proposed plan for proxy voting was passed so this will be in operation for the 2016 Conference in Strasbourg. A new RWVI President was elected which may be a very positive sign for the return of ticket allocations as Horst Eggers has very close connections with Bayreuth. Watch this space and our website.

Congratulations to Trevor and The RWS team for all the planning and hard work that led to a successful Wagner Lunch. I have heard it was excellent and a wonderful celebration. Please pass on your comments, for it appears this could be a

Wagner Lunch venue to visit again in 2016.

In Leipzig Wagner's birthday was also celebrated in style in the Richard Wagner Platz by President Thomas Krakow and the members there and by John Meyer, President of Western Australia WS. You can just see Wagner waving in the background, keen to be in the photo.



Other committee and members are also travelling to many places for Wagner, as we do. Irene and Peter Stevenson have been in Dessau, Susan in Vienna; I have been in Leipzig and Wels and will end up in Longborough. I know of several others who will be in Budapest for the Wagner Days there and more who are going to Bayreuth in

August. All these experiences will make the start of an excellent member event on Sunday afternoon, September 20 when members and friends are invited to share 'Our Worldwide Wagner Experiences' at an informal gathering at MLC. More details will be available closer to the date.

Although I am having a wonderful time overseas I am anxious about the Ring news from home, for the official announcement of our 2016 Melbourne Ring seems to be never coming. Rings are being announced all over the world from 2016 and beyond and we are missing out. I hope by the time we are reading this newsletter the dates, cast, associated events and Ring Leader details are well known so we can settle and plan our activities. [See Stop Press, Page 5]

We intend to have some RWS Ring-related events as we did in 2013 but our plans are on hold and we must wait for the official confirmation before finalising events and releasing more details.

—Shirley Breese  
President



## EDITORIAL COMMENT

While *Tristan* can be read as the resolution of the tension between sublime passion/subconscious night and reality/religion, by immersion into the former, *Tannhäuser* never quite got there. Wagner said, not long before he died, that he wanted to revise *Tannhäuser* yet again. His last revision brought into *Tannhäuser* some incredibly rich, post-*Tristan* music. But Wagner never quite came to terms with the dynamic between passion and death. The entreaty at the beginning of *Tannhäuser* is a reversal of the standard desire; to escape the constraints of mortality and join the beloved, but is an entreaty to the beloved to allow the hero to return to a mortal life of pain and challenge and 'freedom'. Venus represents the aesthetic/sexual, while Elizabeth represents the religious/sacred. *Tannhäuser* makes a choice between the two females, between the profane and the sacred. My theory is that Wagner, after *Tristan* and *Parsifal*, may have wanted Venus and Elizabeth to be the same woman, as Wolfram suggested when he farewelled Elizabeth with the song to the evening star (Venus). Wagner never wrote about what he might do to *Tannhäuser*, but he clearly had something in mind.

—Stan  
O'Loughlin



### WAGNER SOCIETY FUNCTIONS FOR THE REST OF 2015

**Sunday 26 July 2015**  
2:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Wagner and the Visual Arts  
Melbourne Conservatorium of  
Music Southbank Campus,  
234 St Kilda Road, Southbank,  
Theatre room 216. Further details  
to be advised.

~  
**Sunday 20 September 2015**

Worldwide Wagner Experiences  
Discussion, MLC, Kew. Further  
details to be advised.

~  
**Monday 23 November 2015**

Annual General Meeting, MLC,  
Kew. Further details to be advised.

## HEATH LEES ON THE TRISTAN CHORD: MARCH LECTURE

Heath Lees, whose pre-performance talks were such a highlight at the Melbourne Ring, presented a related musical lecture on *Tristan and Isolde* at our March meeting: 'The Tristan Chord: *Tristan*, Wagner and Bryan Magee'.

Heath spends as much time at the lectern as he does at the keyboard. Listening to him play his incisive arrangements of Wagner for solo piano is like watching Rembrandt condensing a complex painting into a fine copper etching.

Heath begins with an anecdote from an earlier New Zealand lecture. At the end, an elderly gentleman sitting at the back of the room expressed agreement on Wagner's influence over 19th century French culture, and Heath recommended him the best source, still 50 years on, as Bryan Magee's *Aspects of Wagner*, Chapter 4. The elderly gentleman then introduced himself as none other than Bryan Magee.

Bryan Magee is a former politician, media presenter and advocate of the Kantian school of philosophy which includes Arthur Schopenhauer. He is better known to us as a Wagnerian scholar, most recently for his highly successful book *The Tristan Chord—Wagner and Philosophy*.

While acknowledging an intellectual debt to Bryan Magee, Heath sets out to challenge Magee's famous assertion in *The Tristan Chord* that the German idealist philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer was the prime motivator of Wagner's revolutionary music in *Tristan*.

Heath's aim was to demonstrate, aurally from the keyboard, that Wagner the musician had already found his way to the music of *Tristan* well before Wagner the philosopher ever encountered Schopenhauer.

In other words, he seeks to reassure us that Wagner's musical progression towards *Tristan* sits on the natural trajectory of Wagner's development as a musician.

Heath takes a light-hearted excursion into heavy German classical philosophy from Kant, through Schopenhauer, Hegel and Feuerbach, who all contributed to Wagner's philosophical thought.

In his Scottish lilt he narrates a whimsical passage from Aldous Huxley's novel *Point Counter Point* to explain the crucial philosophical distinction in *Tristan and Isolde* between the 'phenomenal' world of external human sensory experience [our practice] and the 'noumenal' world of internal human conceptual thought [our

mind]. This is the great Kantian divide.

"...The scraping of the anonymous fiddlers had shaken the air in the great hall... The shaking air rattled Lord Edwards' membrana typani; the interlocked malleus, incus, and stirrup bones were set in motion so as to agitate the membrane of the oval window and raise an infinitesimal storm in the fluid of the labyrinth. The hairy endings of the auditory nerve shuddered like weeds in a rough sea; a vast number of obscure miracles were performed in the brain, and Lord Edwards ecstatically whispered 'Bach!'"

Only Huxley's final clause in bold is noumenal (*Tristan's* night) while the rest is phenomenal (*Tristan's* day). This is close enough, for Heath's purpose, to clarify how Wagner also saw it. Except that, unlike flip-pant Huxley, Wagner is philosophically and musically serious.

Heath then moves on with limpid pianism to reveal that the musical seeds of *Tristan* were sown in the score of *Walküre* by analysing representative portions of the *Walküre* score into their key musical elements, and synthesising representative portions of the *Tristan* score out of these same key *Walküre* elements. Wagner's natural continuity could not be made more blindingly obvious.

Not resting at this aural demonstration, Heath goes on to explore Wagner's repertoire of mutations upon the famous *Tristan* chord in the opera and in the *Wesendonck* Lieder. Heath takes us with him into the mind of the musical thinker at work, as we experience Wagner's creations unfolding out of each other, and ultimately out of the *Tristan* chord.

Wagner's unprecedented advance seems to have been driven almost entirely by the musical problems that arose in the process of composing his ambitious music dramas. Ironically, his extraordinary noumenal music boils down to the prosaic product of the phenomenal world of practical musical experience.

The problems he faced were musical from top to bottom. How could his solution be otherwise?

Heath has mortally wounded Bryan Magee's philosophically-conceived thesis about Schopenhauer's decisive influence upon the music of *Tristan*.

Mercifully, when Heath delivered his verdict, the elderly gentleman was not sitting at the back of the room.

—Trevor Clarke

Seen at the Heath Lees presentation



Heath Lees at work



Heath and Shirley Breese



Maureen Wheeler and Hans Henkell  
with president Shirley



Gidia Timmerman and Lindsay Moore

## THE DUTCHMAN IN 3D

We were summoned by Wagnerian fanfare, and given 3D glasses. The Palais is one of those 3000-seat art deco theatres, built in a beachfront amusement complex of a bygone era, that one had every reason to assume had vanished. It stands, quite congruously, alongside Luna Park, a 'pleasure dome' modelled on New York's Coney Island, yet still functioning a century later—even attracting 1920s lady detective Miss Fisher, who would feel quite at home today.

The Palais has been reprieved from demolition by sentimental protest of a community that couldn't imagine the St Kilda foreshore without it, and Victorian Opera has adopted it as a performance base. In February, three thousand patrons nightly endorsed Victorian Opera's move by donning polarised spectacles to witness the premiere season of *The Flying Dutchman* in 3D.

The overture and Act II entr'acte were played, traditionally, with the curtain closed, as Wagner intended. Then it was time to don our 3D glasses.

Act I opens upon a bleak windswept Norwegian coast. Daland's and the Dutchman's boats seek refuge from the stormy blast, and berth either side, striking their white sails and blood-red shrouds within inches of our noses.

The gale subsides, and the ships set sail for Daland's home port, and we travel in their wake, voyaging down a photo-realistic fiord. Possibilities for Siegfried's Rhine journey leap to mind.

When the crew sings below decks, the decking juts atop our heads, effectively admitting us on board. When the phantom sailors work the riggings, we pick their ghostly forms from out of the eerie gloom by the St Elmo's fire that dances over them.

During the opera's climactic scene, we experience a solution to one of staging's impossibly elusive challenges—how to realise Wagnerian redemption.

Senta's sacrificial death lifts the curse from the fleeing Dutchman, and the wild ocean turns unnaturally calm. As the music mounts in sublimity, the departing ship is swallowed by the deep, and we glimpse an ethereal vision of an embracing couple, rising heavenwards, against the brilliant Northern Lights in a superb night sky. The lovers are finally united in death.

Richard Wagner would have applauded.

For once, the audience could rationally accept the illusion as a totally natural progression of the omnipresent staging elements that had already established themselves throughout the performance. This was no hybridised staging solution like the familiar special-effort finale extravaganza.

The 3D dénouement was so subtly crafted that many in the audience, schooled in familiar staging, failed to register what staging marvels had just transpired before their eyes, and afterwards, on explanation, invariably defended their oversight on the [spurious] grounds of preferring one's personal imagination to 3D.

But Victorian Opera's production of the *Dutchman* successfully demonstrated, in performance where it matters, that 3D glasses and personal imagination do not preclude each other.

At our January Society meeting, Professor Kim Vincs of the Deakin Motion Labs, implementors of the 3D scenography, and conductor Richard Mills, who inspired it, outlined their intention to portray the untamed, but finally tamed, natural elements that pervade Wagner's opera—especially the turbulent ocean, and man's magnificent, yet ultimately puny, vessels that ply it.

In February, at the Palais, they realised their ambitious goal, and thereby established the current milestone in opera staging.

Digital technology is well-suited to a cash-strapped operatic world. Sets become evanescent. Change software parameters, and the set for the Palais *Dutchman* adapts to different venues, or transforms into variants for different operas, e.g. *Tristan*, *Billy Budd*, etc. Storage of sets trivialises into storage of software. Will Wagner audiences embrace 3D staging? Yes, so long as it is done with restraint and sticks to the composer's directions.

The *Ring* cries out for 3D scenography. If donning 3D polarised glasses is the price we have to pay for experiencing Wagner's staging as he intended, then that 'inconvenience' is a mere trifle in the Wagnerian scheme of things.

—Trevor Clarke

# Der Ring des Nibelungen, Dessau Opera May 13 to 17, 2015—and Lyonel Feininger

Dessau, with a 150-year Wagner tradition, has been called the 'Bayreuth of the north', perhaps because they seek to provide innovative productions. This new 'Bauhaus Ring' is no exception, for it uses Bauhaus aesthetics of black and white, primary colours and the three basic shapes of circle, triangle and square, consistently throughout the tetralogy.

Vasily Kandinsky is the source for much of this production but I also noted some reference to another Bauhaus artist, Lyonel Feininger, in some of the sets and costumes.

Born and raised in New York, Lyonel Feininger (1871-1956)

moved at the age of 16 to Germany, where he became one of the leading practitioners of German Expressionism and the Bauhaus. In the late 1930s the Nazi campaign against modern art forced him to flee back to New York. There he also worked as a caricaturist and comic strip artist creating pioneering Chicago *Sunday Tribune* comic strips.

This provides another link for the Nibelungs in *Das Rheingold* were animators reproducing cartoon transparencies under the severe guidance of Alberich.

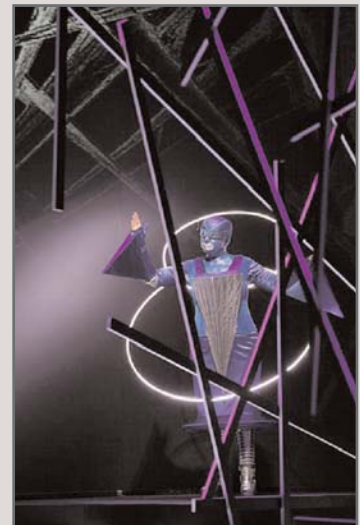
—Shirley Breese



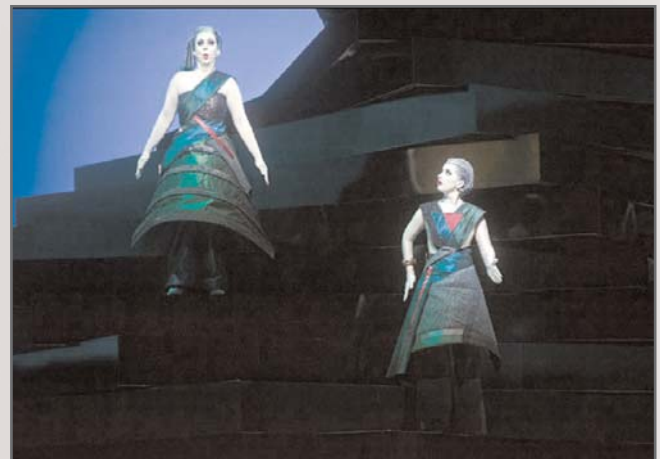
Colour, shape and line show the influence of Vasily Kandinsky in the costumes for *Die Walküre*.



The Woodbird in *Siegfried* negotiates a forest similar to the Lyonel Feininger painting 'Road of Trees'.



Cubist element and colour palette in 'Norman Village I' by Lyonel Feininger is reflected in the costumes worn by Waltraute and Brünnhilde in *Götterdämmerung*.





## A creative 'werktreue': Tristan and Isolde in Wels

Tristan and Isolde was the last performance of the 26-year old Wagner Festival in Wels on 28 May so there were extended curtain calls and post-performance presentations. Although this Festival will not continue, the productions from Wels will, for there are plans already for 2016 in Lodz and Muscat.

A highlight for me was the Gesamtkunstwerk because all aspects combined, balancing out some inconsistent singing to make a very satisfying whole. It was a thoughtful production with all the expected elements, no annoying distractions and very creative use of sets, visuals and lighting. Conductor Ralf Weikert led a sensitive reading from the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra which reproduced the

tension and emotion and supported the singers. Production and staging by Herbert Adler and setting/lighting by Dietmar Solt created an excellent sense of location and time throughout the opera. The stepped stage was the deck of the ship, the garden with tall trees and finally the headland in Kareol with video projections of a rippling sea, land and cloudy sky, as appropriate, transforming to create a sense of mood and the passage of time. Tristan came to Isolde in darkness and they were dramatically discovered in morning light.

Tristan (Stig Andersen), King Marke (Andreas Hörl), Isolde (Lioba Braun), Kurwenal (Michael Kupfer), Melot (Marco Di Sapia) and Brangäne (Hermine May) were all well directed

with effective acting and use of props. They all looked the part in costumes that suggested status and character without being identified with any specific era. Christian Sturm sang well as both the young sailor on the deck taunting Isolde and the shepherd playing the mournful refrain.

In the final scene Isolde held the lifeless Tristan and their silhouette rose to centre stage as the backdrop of sea and sky morphed into an image of the starry heavens. Our vision soared deeper into space along with her Liebestod and their union.

Congratulations to Festival Director Renate Doppler and her entire team for this was certainly a memorable production.

—Shirley Breese



### STOP PRESS WAGNER'S RING CYCLE RETURNS TO MELBOURNE IN 2016

Wagner's Ring Cycle, directed by Neil Armfield and conducted by Pietari Inkinen, will be performed three times at Arts Centre Melbourne between 21 November and 16 December 2016.

Lise Lindstrom will sing her first full Ring Cycle as Brünnhilde and some wonderful Australian singers make their role debuts, including Cheryl Barker as Sieglinde and Bradley Daley as Siegmund.

Stefan Vinke returns with his performance as Siegfried and Daniel Sumegi, Jacqueline Dark and Warwick Fyfe reprise their outstanding interpretations.

#### CYCLE 1

*Das Rheingold*  
Monday 21 November 2016, 7pm  
*Die Walküre*  
Wednesday 23 November 2016, 5pm  
*Siegfried*

Friday 25 November 2016, 5pm  
*Götterdämmerung*  
Monday 28 November 2016, 4pm

#### CYCLE 2

*Das Rheingold*  
Wednesday 30 November 2016, 7pm  
*Die Walküre*  
Friday 2 December 2016, 5pm

#### *Siegfried*

Monday 5 December 2016, 5pm  
*Götterdämmerung*  
Wednesday 7 December 2016, 4pm

#### CYCLE 3

*Das Rheingold*  
Friday 9 December 2016, 7pm  
*Die Walküre*  
Monday 12 December 2016, 5pm  
*Siegfried*  
Wednesday 14 December 2016, 5pm  
*Götterdämmerung*  
Friday 16 December 2016, 4pm

# RICHARD WAGNER BIRTHDAY LUNCH ON 24 MAY 2015

Approximately 50 members of our society gathered at Domenic's Restaurant in Balwyn North on Sunday 24th May to celebrate Wagner's 202nd birthday. It was a very pleasant and convivial occasion. Almost everyone commented on the quality and variety of the excellent menu.

Deborah Joy Cheetham, AO, an Aboriginal Australian soprano, actor, composer and playwright, was the guest

speaker. She gave a wonderful speech comparing Wagner and her own people, in their respective endeavours, to meld art and culture. She then led the assembled company singing 'Happy Birthday' to Richard, in beautiful voice.

Our thanks go to Trevor Clarke who organised the event superbly.

—Stan O'Loughlin



Trevor Clarke (organiser) and Deborah Cheetham (guest speaker)

## *AN INVITATION FOR THOSE GOING TO BAYREUTH THIS YEAR*

### *WAGNER SOCIETY OF NEW YORK*

*invites all Bayreuth Festival guests to attend*

*A Lecture on Tristan und Isolde*

*followed by a Reception*

*Monday, August 17, 2015, 5:00 p.m.*

*in recognition of the new production of*

*Tristan und Isolde*

*PROFESSOR JOHN J. H. MULLER, LECTURER*

*Venue: Arvena Kongress Hotel*

*Eduard Bayerlein-Strasse 5A, Bayreuth*

*Cost: \$40 (covers lecture and reception) (If paying at door: Eur40)*

*Reservations are requested by August 9*

*RSVP to WSNY with credit card details (AmEx, Visa, MC or Discover): wagnerring@aol.com*

Professor Muller, who presented WSNY's 2010-2012 Bayreuth lecture series and who also lectured there in 2013, has been a member of The Juilliard School music history faculty for over 30 years. He has lectured for many organisations, including the Metropolitan Opera Guild and the Wagner Society of New York.

## GREEN ROOM ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES FOUR SPECIAL AWARDS



The Green Room Association has announced the recipients of four special awards to be presented at the annual Green Room Awards. These four awards will be presented along with more than 50 other awards acknowledging the outstanding work and performances we have seen on Melbourne stages in 2014.

The 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to renowned opera singer and teacher, and member of our society, **Nance Grant**.

Alongside famous names such as Dame Nellie Melba, Florence Austral,

Marjorie Lawrence and Dame Joan Sutherland, Nance Grant stands as one of Australia's great sopranos.

After winning the Mobil Quest in 1957 and singing for Queen Elizabeth II at the 1973 opening of the Sydney Opera House, Nance went on to have a career spanning four decades that saw her work with some of the great conductors including Sir Malcolm Sargent, Sir Edward Downes, Sir John Pritchard, Sir Charles Mackerras, Richard Bonyngne and Georges Tzipine.

In 1975, Nance received the Bayreuth Opera Award, allowing her to study in Germany with Professor Clemens Kaiser-Breme and the following year she was awarded an MBE for her services to opera.

In addition to this, she taught singing at the Victorian College of the Arts with Dame Joan Hammond, was a Director of the Melba Conservatorium of Music and Opera Foundation Victoria and served as Chair of the Music Board of the Australian International Opera Awards. In 2013, Nance Grant was made a Member of the Order of Australia.

## Leipzig Ring 5-8 May 2016



Richard Wagner's birthplace Leipzig will present one *Ring* cycle next year on four consecutive days. We have not heard of any opera house attempting to present the 15-plus hours of the *Ring* operas in only four days.

The Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, one of the great orchestras of the world, will be in the pit, conducted by Oper Leipzig's intendant and general music director Ulf Schirmer.

This will be the Oper Leipzig's first *Ring* in several decades. Tickets may be purchased online or by telephone. Log on to <http://www.oper-leipzig.de/en/service> has instructions.

*Das Rheingold* tickets for 5 May 2016 are online at <http://www.operleipzig.de/en/programm/das-rheingold/57130> and you can move to the other dates on the calendar at the top to purchase tickets for the other operas.

The Wagner Museum in Wahnfried has now closed, but to announce a new addition—a fairly early photo of Richard Wagner.

This early Wagner photo of 1860-61 is now part of the inventory of the Bayreuth Wagner Museum.

Template: Bayreuth/National Archive of the Richard Wagner Foundation.



## Snippets from the past

NOTES COMPILED BY SOCIETY MEMBER  
**JOHN FAWCETT, FROM A NOTEBOOK OF  
SVIATOSLAV RICHTER**

'*A Ring*, conducted by Wilhelm Furtwangler... It's very difficult for me to write about this, as this constitutes one of the most striking impressions of my entire life as a musician and the culmination of my relationship with Wagner. I've finally heard this work in the full force of its brilliant inspiration. Here I can put my finger on the gulf that separates Wagner from all other great musicians, writers and so on. Why? Because the interpretation is on a par with the work itself. Everything is subordinate to Furtwangler, and Furtwangler is connected to Wagner by a direct link. I'm convinced that it is impossible to wish for anything better. This is true happiness. I can understand why Wagner is so inaccessible to the vast majority of listeners—they fail to lift themselves up to the same height. Between Wagner and them there lies a gigantic gulf... What can you say about this music? You can only throw yourself on your knees and offer up thanks. For me personally, this is the supreme masterpiece.'

**1940—Turmoil after Wagner played:**

'A tumultuous demonstration at the Châtelet Theater between partisans and foes of the Master of Bayreuth.

'The attempt of the well-known Colonne-Lamoureux Orchestra to play Wagner for the first time since the outbreak of the war led to a tumultuous demonstration at the Châtelet Theater between partisans and foes of the Master of Bayreuth. Three Wagnerian numbers were originally listed on the program, namely, the *Lohengrin* overture, the prelude from *Tristan and Isolde*, together with Isolde's love-death and the overture to *Tannhäuser*. The same morning, however, without any reason being given, the first two items were suppressed in favor of Debussy's *Petite Suite* and Ravel's *Ma Mère l'Oye*.

'More than half the audience went to the concert with a sense of grievance, and when the conductor mounted the rostrum the storm burst loose.'

—New York Herald Tribune,  
European Edition, March 11, 1940



## Opera director faces criminal charges

A theatre director in the Russian city of Novosibirsk is under investigation for allegedly offending religious believers with his staging of *Tannhäuser*, art news site Colta.ru has reported.

Prosecutors are checking director Timofei Kulyabin's staging of the opera *Tannhäuser*, which transposes the action in the classic story of the struggle between sacred and profane love into the modern day, with the main character portrayed as a filmmaker.

The rendition features a scene where the goddess Venus promises eternal love to Jesus Christ if he will stay with her in a grotto. But he doesn't take the offer and destroys the grotto with the help of the Virgin Mary, according to a summary on the theatre's website.

The investigation was launched following a complaint earlier this month by the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in the region, Metropolitan Tikhon, the report said.

The new staging of the opera, which has been performed at Novosibirsk State Opera and Ballet Theater since December, is "an affront to the feelings of religious believers, an offence to the Orthodox Church and an incitement to religious hatred", Tikhon was cited as saying. But the main cause of religious furore resulted from an advertising poster showing a crucifix between a woman's legs. This was regarded as sacrilege.

Russia made insulting the feelings of religious believers a crime in 2013 after shock-rock band Pussy Riot sang a scandalous 'punk prayer' in Moscow's main cathedral calling for the Virgin Mary to banish President Vladimir Putin.

However, the Novosibirsk court dismissed the case on March 10. On March 30 the overall theatre director Boris Mezdrich had his contract terminated.

It is interesting to note the similarities between the outrages of the establishment in present-day Novosibirsk and the pilgrims in Wagner's Wartburg setting. Wagner hated the conservative establishment, and most likely would have been happy at the outcome of the Russian court case.

## Two cousins



**Nike Wagner** became Intendant of the Beethovenfest in Bonn last year, after running the Kunstfest Weimer for nine years, which honoured the piano works of her great-great-grandfather Franz Liszt.

Her heritage was melded through Liszt and Wagner, who she looked up to more than any other. Family politics ensured that she has never worked at Bayreuth, and is never likely to, probably, because she had ideas to open up Bayreuth to all of Wagner's operas, and possibly introduce other related composers to Bayreuth at other times of the year. She also had much more admiration for Liszt than the other branch of the family, and felt that he had been treated rather shabbily.



**Katharina Wagner**, who is to direct a new *Tristan* at Bayreuth this year, and was to direct *Parsifal* at the Teatro Colon, has been dumped by the Buenos Aires theatre "on quality grounds".

Colon's new Intendant, Dario Loperfido, said he wanted something artistically stronger, and of higher standard, and has replaced Katharina with Marcelo Lombardero.

## More Bayreuth news

An uneasy seven-year peace at Germany's famously unruly Bayreuth Music Festival has come to a dramatic end worthy of a Wagner opera amid revelations that one of the composer's great-granddaughters had been secretly forbidden to direct the event, and banned forthwith from its premises.

Peace was finally brokered in 2008 when Bayreuth's festival board ruled that Katharina Wagner, 37, and Eva Wagner-Pasquier, 70, the composer's great-granddaughters from different marriages, should run the event following the resignation of their now deceased father, Wolfgang, the grandson of the composer.

Now, however, it appears that the allegedly harmonious working relationship between the two Wagner sisters/directors has come to an abrupt and acrimonious end. Peter Raue, a lawyer representing Ms Wagner-Pasquier, said he had received a letter from the festival board informing him that his client was "no longer responsible" for decisions concerning the festival's future.

The disclosures have shocked Germany's cultural establishment. Daniel Barenboim, the internationally renowned Berlin conductor, leapt to Ms Wagner-Pasquier's defence, calling her treatment "degrading and inhuman". Her cousin Nike Wagner, 70, a longstanding critic of the Wagner clan's intrigues, said: "We are considering legal action."

The Bayreuth festival board has so far refused to comment on the document allegedly

banning Ms Wagner-Pasquier from the festival. But there was intense speculation that the decision had been instigated by the renowned German conductor Christian Thielemann.

What next???

—Stan O'Loughlin

## ~ VALE ~



**JANIS MARTIN**  
(August 16, 1939  
- December 13,  
2014) was an  
American opera  
singer who sang  
leading roles first  
as a mezzo-  
soprano and  
later as a

soprano in opera houses throughout Europe and the United States.

She was particularly known for her performances in the operas of Richard Wagner and sang at the Bayreuth Festival from 1968 to 1997, and at the Met.

She was well remembered as Brünnhilde in the *Adelaide Ring* in 1998, and in the wonderful *Die Frau ohne Schatten* as Barak's wife, the centrepiece of the Melbourne Festival in 1996.

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Note that there are two vacancies on the committee. Any interested member should contact president Shirley Breese. New blood and new ideas will be most welcome.