

WAGNER NEWS



NEWSLETTER OF THE
RICHARD WAGNER SOCIETY
OF VICTORIA INC.

MARCH 2015

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our year and *The Flying Dutchman* events got off to an excellent start in January as an audience of more than 80 people were fascinated by presentations from Richard Mills and Kim Vincs. Richard indicated this Victorian Opera production would be 'work true' and he also expressed the hope that they would present more Wagner with this team and in the Palais Theatre. Kim explained the digital scenographic elements in a very clear manner as the majority of the audience were unfamiliar with 3D imaging and gaming. The afternoon increased our anticipation for the opera in February and the reviews after opening night confirm this was justified.

Several members and some of the committee attended the Melbourne Public Consultation session for the National Opera Review at the end of January. The panel was there to listen, not present information, so familiar comments came from general audience members and representatives of a diverse range of independent opera companies in Melbourne. Common themes were a desire to have the National Company extend risk-taking in programming; present operas, - not musicals; support and use Australian artists; and provide a

platform for developing singers. The panel was given examples of local companies doing all these things. A discussion paper will follow and the final report will be presented to the Federal Minister for the Arts by 30 June 2015.

In early February it was exciting to be able to join several members in Melba Hall for an orchestral reading of parts of *The Flying Dutchman* by the Australian Youth Orchestra. These young players brought vibrancy to the overture that belied their lack of experience with Wagner's music and in playing for opera in general. When I attended the opera on opening night they were superb and fully deserved the comment from one critic that, "One of the clear stars of the night was the Australian Youth Orchestra." Many members were able to join the musicians, Warwick and the cast and the production team at the opening night party to celebrate and offer congratulations all round.

One day I hope we will have a published history of the society for it is over 30 years old but in the meantime I must correct an error in my 2014 President's Report and my last President's Message. Dr David Gale, who is our only Life Member, was the

Founding President of The Richard Wagner Society.

It is a pleasure to welcome our new committee member, Colin Pyman, and I hope you will make yourself known to him at a members' meeting.

The next event, on Thursday 12 March, provides a link to the last newsletter for it will feature *Tristan and Isolde* and the work of Bryan Magee, although familiarity with both is not a pre-requisite. Heath Lees will present 'The Tristan Chord: Wagner, Tristan and Bryan Magee', in Flockart Hall, MLC Kew.

Those going to Sydney in June to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra concert performances of *Tristan and Isolde* may wish to attend the reception for Wagnerites hosted by the NSW Wagner Society at 3 pm on Sunday 21 June. Full details are on our website.

Please RSVP to wagner_nsw@optus-net.com.au. I look forward to meeting some of you there.

—Shirley Breese
President



EDITORIAL COMMENT

As we are to be educated by Heath Lees when he presents 'The Tristan Chord: Wagner, Tristan, and Bryan Magee' on March 12th, here is a small simple outline of what the 'Tristan Chord' is.

The Tristan chord is a chord made up of the notes F, B, D sharp and G sharp.

More generally, it can be any chord that consists of these same intervals: augmented fourth, augmented sixth, and augmented ninth above a bass note. It is so named as it is heard in the opening phrase of Richard Wagner's opera Tristan und Isolde as part of the leitmotif relating to Tristan.

The notes of the Tristan chord are not unusual; they could be rearranged to form a common half-diminished seventh chord. What distinguishes the chord is its unusual relationship to the implied key of its surroundings.



It contains within itself not one but two dissonances, thus creating within the listener a double desire, agonising in its intensity, for resolution. The chord to which it then moves resolves one of these dissonances but not the other, thus providing resolution-but-not-resolution

The Tristan chord's significance is in its move away from traditional tonal harmony, and even towards atonality. With this chord, Wagner actually provoked the sound or structure of musical harmony to become more predominant than its function, a notion which was soon explored by Debussy and others.

With this tool, Wagner was able in *Tristan* to create the most erotic music, which rose and partially subsided throughout the whole work without musical resolution until the last chord of the 'Liebestod'.

—Stan O'Loughlin



LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Dear Stan,

I was extremely interested in your column, in the November 2014 Edition of the *Wagner News*.

I attended the Bayreuth *Ring*, last year, as well as a performance of *Tannhauser*. I was not pleased at what I saw, and agreed wholeheartedly with the comment of the *Berlin Zeitung's* reviewer that the performance was perfectly bearable, so long as one had one's eyes closed. As usual the music was great, but, unfortunately, some of the viewing was not.

It seemed to me that, if the presentations of future *Ring* Cycles are to employ the use of one or more portable cameras following the characters around the stage, and then showing the televised pictures on a white sheet, we may as well ask the producers to just televise the entire production, and arrange to beam it directly into our homes, without the need to travel to Bayreuth.

To my mind the current production was terrible. I can sympathise with those members of the audience who expressed, very forcibly, their dislike of the production; and there were many in the productions I attended.

Whilst I did not enjoy the producer's current view of the ancient Norse mythology, neverthe-

less I could understand his view that we are currently reliving what was happening in that ancient world, in the present day happenings of the superpower struggle between capitalism and communism.

From the opening Act of *Das Rheingold*, we were confronted with the producer's view of the West. The opening scenes of *Rheingold*, set in a sleazy motel on Route 66, with an above-ground pool used as the habitat of the Rhine Maidens, and a number of prostitutes hanging around, set the basis for the producer's view of a decadent capitalistic system; a view which was maintained throughout the following nights.

To me Mount Rushmore's re-invention was merely the producer's way of saying: communism is superior to the decadent West. And while I did not agree with it, I could understand his point.

If I found the *Ring* disappointing, (with the exception of the music), I found *Tannhauser* to be even more so. I thought the producer of this production had gone too far. It was an insult to the audience. The production I attended was being televised and at least the television audience could turn off their TV sets. I believe I detected quite a change in Bayreuth last year, with reference to the acceptance of the role Bayreuth played during the Nazi era.

There were some very interesting displays, at the Festival House, Villa Wahnfried (although the villa is closed during major renovations) and at the Schloss in Maxilian Strasse.

—Ralph Edwards

DEBOW

A concert version of Richard Wagner's great *Tristan und Isolde* will be presented by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, conducted by David Robertson, with Christine Brewer and Stuart Skelton in the lead roles, on Saturday 20 June 2015 and Monday 22 June 2015.

To mark this occasion the Wagner Society in NSW would like to invite members and friends from other Wagner Societies to join members of the NSW Society to a social occasion at 3pm, Sunday 21 June at Goethe Institut, 90 Ocean St Woolahra, on the corner of Jersey Road.

Take this opportunity to meet other Wagner enthusiasts, to exchange news and possibly meet some of those taking part in the performance.

For catering purposes, please rsvp to: wagner_nsw@optusnet.com.au

Seen at The Flying Dutchman presentation

Richard Mills, Musical Director of the Victorian State Opera gave a presentation at the Federation Hall, attended by many members of our society.



Richard Mills and Kim Vincs



Nance Grant and Liz Oley



President Shirley Breese with Warwick Fyfe

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

Saturday 14 February 2015

The Victorian State Opera production of Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* had its first performance at the Palais Theatre on 14 February. Director Roger Hodgman visually enhanced the backstage with 3D digital imaging, which was very effective, especially with the sinister entrance of the Dutchman's ship with blood red sails, and the final scenes of the ghostly crew. Special 3D glasses were available for this.

The production overall was traditional, which was a welcome relief after so much 'regietheater' in recent Wagner works. To me the outstanding musical feature was the Australian Youth Orchestra's handling of the score, producing a rich and moving sound under Richard Mills' direction. The chorus, beautifully costumed, was in very good voice, as was their movement.

Oskar Hillebrandt, an experienced German baritone, was a good Dutchman, although I felt he was a bit static and unmoving, and began rather weakly. He did warm up as the opera evolved. American soprano Lori Phillips was a top Senta, with a powerful and rich voice. Her aria at beginning of Scene 2 and her part in the later love duet were excellent. Warwick Fyfe shone again as Daland, giving yet another superb performance all round. Bradley Daley as Erik has a powerful voice, which I think will get better as he matures.

Overall, this was a promising and well-constructed *Dutchman*, and we Wagnerians only hope there will be more from both the Victorian State Opera and Opera Australia.

—Stan O'Loughlin



A sculpture by Metung metal artist Doug Hadaway

Plans for Chicago *Ring* production 2016-2020



Director David Pountney recently discussed the production of the Lyric Opera's future Ring Cycle at the Civic Opera House.

LYRIC OPERA'S *RING* TO EMPHASISE THE STORY-TELLING AND THEATRICALITY OF WAGNER'S TETRALOGY

There will be no ladies in homed helmets. Nor will there be high-maintenance stage machinery like the 24 periodically balky planks that upstaged—and sometimes upended—the singers in the Metropolitan Opera's most recent, \$16 million production of Richard Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung*.

According to stage director David Pountney and his creative team, Lyric Opera's new production of Wagner's four-opera epic, to be unveiled one opera per year beginning in the 2016-17 season, will embrace the virtues of old-fashioned storytelling.

"We want the audience to sit down and enjoy a wonderful story," Pountney said during an informal session with critics recently in a Civic Opera House rehearsal room.

"We're focusing on the naïve element of 'Once upon a time three girls were frolicking in their watery playground...' There will be no fancy machinery, no high-tech this and that.

"My first image as I thought about this production," said Pountney, "was a person walking out onto an empty stage. He takes off his hat, and out of the hat comes the River Rhine. After the final opera, he comes back onto the empty stage and the Rhine River disappears."

That precise image may not turn up in final plans for the Lyric's *Ring*, he said, but the audience will always feel a sense of watching a story unfold in an onstage theatre.

"The primary image is an act of theatrical narration. You'll be able to see

that. We will have a scenic evocation of a theatre."

"If something needs to be flying," added choreographer Denni Sayers, "you'll see the person holding the apparatus."

Wagner wrote *The Ring* over a period of nearly 25 years, and his musical style and dramatic focus changed over those years, said Pountney.

The director sees elements of a fast-paced action cartoon in the first opera, *Das Rheingold*, and the intense domestic turmoil of *Die Walküre* reminds him of an Ibsen play, *Siegfried*, which Pountney calls "the scherzo in this dramatic symphony", offers a child's view of the world, and the cycle concludes with the grandly operatic angst of *Götterdämmerung*. Sets, costumes, lighting and stage action will highlight the differences in each opera's atmosphere.

Pountney and Sayers, along with associate director Rob Kearley, costume designer Marie-Jeanne Lecca and model maker Matthew Rees were in Chicago for several days to go over plans for *The Ring* with Lyric staff. Though excited by their work so far, they were still reeling from the sudden death last month of one of their colleagues, the respected South African-born set designer Johan Engels. Engels, who worked closely over the years with Pountney and with Lyric's general director Anthony Freud, died of a heart attack at age 62.

Engels completed the set designs for Lyric's *Ring* before his death, and Rees created three-dimensional models of his designs for all four operas for this week's

meetings at Lyric. Pountney praised Engels' very complete, intricately detailed designs but acknowledged that more work needs to be done over the next five years. After presenting one opera per year, Lyric wraps up its new production in 2020 with three week-long cycles of all four *Ring* operas.

"We can't go five years in a project without a set designer," said Pountney. "The theatre and I need someone who can take control. What we're really keen to do is to preserve Johan's ideas, but it's not in his service to preserve the designs like something set in aspic."

Staging and set designs change as a project, especially such a monumental undertaking as *The Ring*, develops and rehearsals and performances begin. "Johan was always good at responding to the element of change," said Kearley. "After you see *Rheingold*, for example, you might want to re-think the lighting scheme for Act II of *Walküre*."

Engels' funeral was November 26, and Pountney and his team are not yet ready to think about how to replace him.

But clearly they have not lost their zest for approaching *The Ring* as a spell-binding yarn about fascinating individuals.

"You want to tell a brilliant story in the most brilliant way possible," said Pountney.

"It's like watching *House of Cards*," said Sayers, referring to the Netflix TV series about greed, lust and corruption in modern-day Washington.

"You want to know how it's going to work out. You want to watch the boxed set."



Barrie Kosky to direct new production of *Die Meistersinger* at Bayreuth in 2017

Katharina Wagner has announced that Barrie Kosky will direct a new production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* for Bayreuth in 2017.

Philippe Jordan will conduct. The following singers are planned at present: Michael Volle (Hans Sachs), Johannes Martin Kränzle (Sixtus Beckmesser), Klaus Florian Vogt (Stolzinger), Krassimira Stoyanova (Eva).

After working as the artistic director of the Adelaide Festival in Australia in 1996 and overseeing productions for

Opera Australia, the Sydney Theatre Company, the Melbourne Theatre Company and various festivals, Barrie Kosky was director of the Vienna Schauspielhaus from 2001 to 2005.

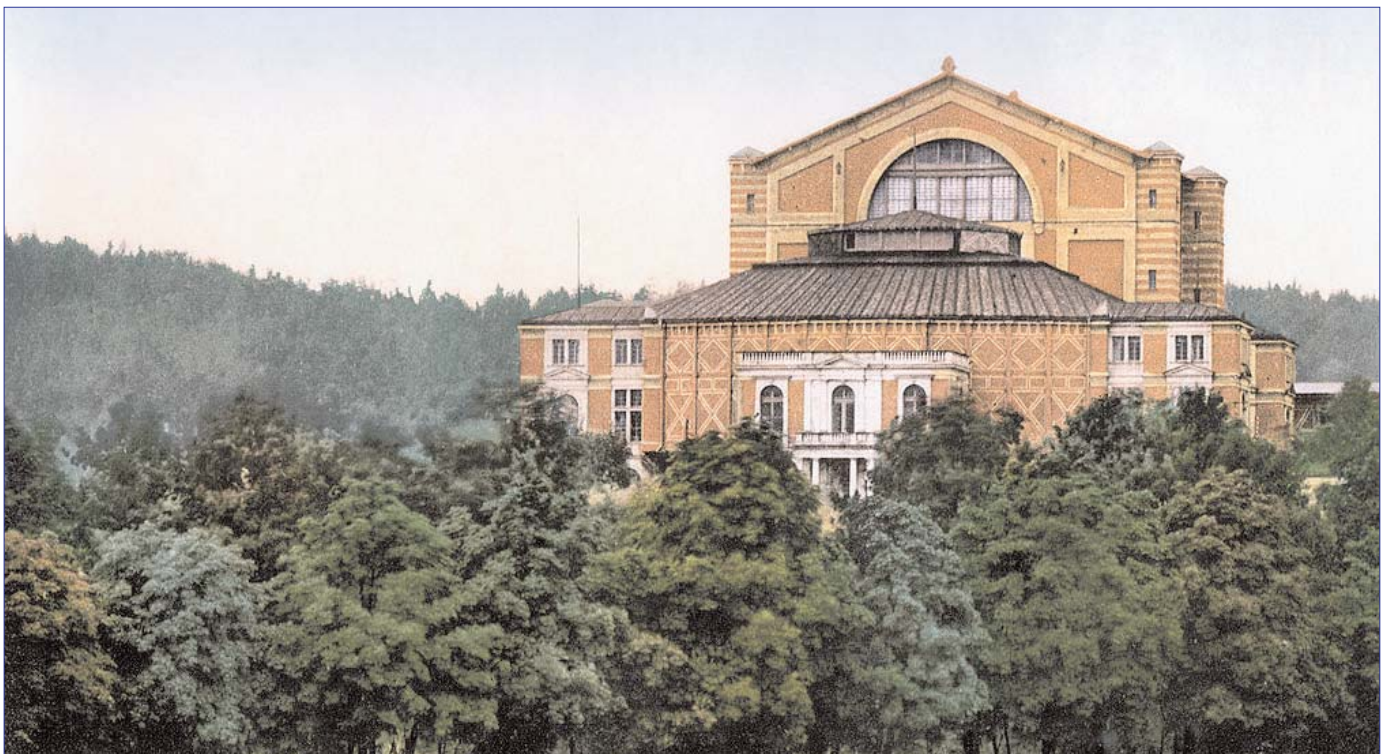
In 2005, he produced *Lohengrin* at the Vienna Staatsoper, and *Der Fliegende Holländer* and *Tristan und Isolde* at the Aalto Theater in Essen.

Beginning in 2009, he worked on a *Ring* cycle in Hanover. This was followed in 2010 by Richard Strauss's *Die Schweigsame Frau* at the Bayerische Staatsoper and *Dido and Aeneas* and

Bluebeard at the Frankfurt Opera.

Kosky's production of Jean-Philippe Rameau's *Castor et Pollux* at the English National Opera in London received the Laurence Olivier Award.

Since the 2012/13 season, Barrie Kosky has been director and chief producer at the Komische Oper in Berlin, where he has produced *Die Zauberflöte*, *Rusalka*, *Le Nozze die Figaro*, *Sieben Songs/Die sieben Todsünden* and *Le Grand Macabre* among other things.





WAGNER PERFORMANCES AROUND THE WORLD 2015 ONWARDS

BAYREUTH FESTIVAL THE NEXT FEW YEARS 2015

Tristan und Isolde

Katharina Wagner (stage director)

Cancelled: Eva-Maria Westbroek (Isolde)

Steven Gould (Tristan)

Christian Thielemann (conductor)

2016

Parsifal

Uwe Eric Laufenberg (stage director)

Andris Nelsons (conductor)

2017

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Barrie Kosky (stage director)

Philippe Jordan (conductor)

Michael Volle (Hans Sachs)

Johannes Martin Kränzle (Beckmesser)

Klaus Florian Vogt (Stolz)

Krassimira Stoyanova (Eva)

2018

Lohengrin

Alvis Hermanis (stage director)

Christian Thielemann (conductor)

MARCH 2015

BerlinStaatsoper



Parsifal

March 28, 31

April 3, 6, 12, 18

Conductor Daniel Barenboim

Director Dmitri Tcherniakov

Chorus Master Martin Wright

Dramaturg Jens Schroth

Amfortas Wolfgang Koch

Gurnemanz René Pape

Parsifal Andreas Schager

Klingsor Tómas Tómasson

Kundry Anja Kampe

Titirel Matthias Hölle

Tannhäuser

April 2, 5

Semperoper Dresden

Der fliegende Holländer

March 14

May 2, 8, 13

June 18, 21

Stage director: Florentine Klepper

Conductor: Contantin Trinks

Oslo, Norway

National Opera

Lohengrin

March 8, 11, 14, 22, 25, 28; April 7, 11

Stage director: Thorleifur Arnarsson

Conductor: John Helmer Fiore

Heinrich: Magne Fremmerlid

LoHengrin: Paul Groves

Elsa: Nina Gravrok

Telramund: Ole Jørgen Kristiansen

Ortrud: Elena Zhidkova

Heerrufer: Yngve Søberg

And: Thor Inge Falch, Svein Erik Sagbråten, Carsten Stabell, Jens-Erik Aasbø

Landestheater Linz / Musiktheater am Volksgarten

Der Ring des Nibelungen

Das Rheingold

13 February, 31 March, 8 May

Die Walküre

21 February, 2 April, 10 May

Siegfried

28 February, 5 April, 14 May

Götterdämmerung

7 March, 8 April, 17 May

Wuppertal

Parsifal

March 13, 15, 20

April 4, 6, 18

Musikalische Leitung Toshiyuki Kamioka

Inszenierung Thilo Reinhardt Bühne

Harald Thor Kostüme Katharina Gault

Chöre Jens Bingert Amfortas Thomas

Gazheli Titirel Greg Ryerson

Gurnemanz Thorsten Grümbel *Parsifal*

Tilmann Unger Klingsor Andreas Daum

Kundry Kathrin Göring

Anhaltisches Theater Dessau

Das Rheingold

April 5, May 13, June 23

Die Walküre

May 14, June 24

Siegfried

March 29, May 15, June 26

Götterdämmerung

April 18, May 17, June 28

Chicago

Tannhäuser

March 2, 6

Dessau

Siegfried

March 29

Linz

The Ring

February 12, 21, 28, March 7, 31, April 2, 5, 8

Munich

Das Rheingold

March 11

Die Walküre

March 6, 14

Siegfried

March 8, 16

Götterdämmerung

March 20

The Ring

March 22, 23, 26, 29

Poznan Teatr Wielki

Parsifal

March 14, 17

Washington, DC

Holländer

March 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 19, 21

APRIL 2015

Bayerische Staatsoper, München

Der Ring des Nibelungen

Conductor: Kirill Petrenko

Das Rheingold

March 11, 22

Die Walküre

March 6, 14, 23

Siegfried

March 8, 16, 26

Götterdämmerung

March 20, 29

Dessau

Das Rheingold

April 5

Götterdämmerung

April 18

Houston

Die Walküre

April 18, 22, 25, 30

Linz

The Ring

March 31, April 2, 5, 8

Munich

Götterdämmerung

April 2, 5

MAY 2015

Dessau

The Ring

May 13, 14, 15, 17

Houston

Die Walküre

May 3

Linz

The Ring

May 8, 10, 14, 17

JULY 2015

Bayreuth Festival 2015 Calendar

A new production of *Tristan und Isolde*

Stage director: Katharina Wagner

Conductor: Christian Thielemann

Tristan und Isolde

25 July, 2, 7, 13, 18, 23 August

Lohengrin

26 July, 4, 16, 20, 27 August

Das Rheingold

27 July, 9, 21 August

Die Walküre

28 July, 10, 22 August

Siegfried

30 July, 12, 24 August

Götterdämmerung

1, 14, 26 August

Der fliegende Holländer

31 July, 3, 8, 15, 19, 28 August

Bayerische Staatsoper, München

Tristan und Isolde

8, 12 July

Musikalische Leitung: Philippe Jordan

Inszenierung: Peter Konwitschny

Bühne und Kostüme: Johannes Leiacker

Licht: Michael Bauer

Produktionsdramaturgie Werner

Hintze

Chor Sören Eckhoff

Tristan: Peter Seiffert

König: Marke René Pape

Isolde: Waltraud Meier

Kurwenal: Alan Held

Melot: Francesco Petrozzi

Brangäne: Elisabeth Kulman

□□□

2015/16 SEASON

Nuremberg

Götterdämmerung [no dates]

March 2016

Salzburg Osterfestspiele

Lohengrin

March 19, 28, 2016

April 2016

Houston

Siegfried [no dates]

Tokyo

Siegfried

April 7, 10, 2016

May 2016

Dresden

Lohengrin

May 19, 22, 25, 29, 2016

Houston

Siegfried

May 8, 2016 [no other dates]

October 2016

Chicago

Das Rheingold

October 1, 2016 [no other dates]

Dresden

The Ring

October 15, 16, 18, 22, 2016

WAGNER IN THE US AND CANADA 2015

Washington National Opera



Der fliegende Holländer

3/7, 9, 11, 13, 15 (m), 19, 21/2015

Philippe Auguin/Eric Weimer (c):

Christiane Libor/Jennifer Root; Jay

Hunter Morris, Eric Owens/Alan Held,

Ain Anger/Peter Volpe

Stephen Lawless (p), Giles Cadel (d),

Ingeborg Bernerth (cost.), Joan Sullivan-

Genthe (l)

Lyric Opera of Chicago



Tannhäuser

2/9, 14, 18, 22 (m), 26; 3/2, 6/2015

Andrew Davis (c): Amber Wagner,

Michaela Schuster; Johan Botha, Gerald

Finley, John Relyea

Tim Albery (p); Michael Levine (d), Jon

Morrell (cost.), David Finn (l), Jasmin

Vardimon (choreo.)

Houston Grand Opera



Die Walküre

4/18, 22, 25, 30, 5/3 (m)/2015

Patrick Summers (c): Christine Goerke,

Karita Mattila, Jamie Barton; Simon

O'Neill, Iain Paterson, Ain Anger

Carlus Padrissa/La Fura Dels Baus (p),

Roland Olbeter (d), Chu Uroz (cost.),

Peter van Praet (l), Franc Aleu

(video)

Skylight Theatre, Milwaukee

The Skylight Ring

5/15, 16, 17 (m), 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

(m), 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 (m), 6/3, 4, 5,

6, 7; (m)/2015 (two-hour Ring)

Daniel J. Brilow (p)

Tristan at the Met with Stuart Skelton



Stuart Skelton

The inventive Polish director Mariusz Trelinski, whose eerie, film noir-influenced double bill of Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* and

Bartok's *Bluebeard's Castle* at the Metropolitan Opera is winning praise, has received an even bigger assignment from the company: a new production of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* that will open the Met's season in 2016.

The new *Tristan* will be conducted by Simon Rattle, the chief conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, in a rare Met appearance, and will star Nina Stemme, one of the world's most sought after Wagnerian sopranos, as *Isolde*, Met officials said. The Australian heldentenor Stuart Skelton will sing *Tristan*, and the bass René Pape will play *King Marke*.

FOR SALE

Two boxed sets of Wagner stereo records

One box is titled '**Klemperer conducts Wagner**'

Reinzi, Overture

The Flying Dutchman, Overture

Tannhäuser, Overture

Lohengrin, Preludes, Acts 1 and 3

Die Meistersinger, Overture

Die Meistersinger, Dance of the Apprentices and Entry of the Masters

Tristan und Isolde, Vorspiel und

Liebostod

Götterdämmerung, Siegfried's Funeral

March

The Philharmonic Orchestra

The box contains two records and

a book.

The second box is titled '**Wagner**

Der Fliegende Holländer'

Bailey, Martin, Kollo, Jones, Krenn,

Talvela. Chicago Symphony Chorus

and Orchestra—Solti. It contains

three records and a book.

Both books are in excellent condi-

tion; the boxes are in very good

condition.

Interested purchasers should contact

Dianne Lewis at this address:

d_mlewis@bigpond.com



Latvian Wagner coin wins international award

Just goes to prove there is no award Wagner cannot win.

At the World Coin News' Coin of the Year Award an international panel of judges bestowed Best Silver Coin honours to Latvia's 1 lats coin marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of composer Richard Wagner, KM-I40.

The coin, dedicated to Wagner, was issued in June 2013 to mark the 200th anniversary. It commemorates the active Riga period of the composer when he took to writing his first important opera *Rienzi*.

The authors of the coin are Aigars Ozolins (graphic design of the front), Ivo Grundulis (graphic design of reverse) and Ligita Franckevica (plaster model). The coin was struck by Koninklijke Nederlandse Munt (Netherlands).

Comments by Nina Stemme



Rupert Christiansen's recent discussion with Nina Stemme produced some interesting moments.

Discussing the relationship between Tristan and Isolde, for example, she told him, "I used to be preoccupied with conveying Isolde's status as a princess and



the reasons that she hated the love she felt for Tristan—issues that dominate the first act. Now I've become more fascinated with what she feels about death. Tristan has always been suicidal, because he can't believe he will ever be loved, but for her the idea of death as an escape is a new one."

And as to the work itself, "What some people don't realise is that *Tristan* is a chamber opera, delicately analysing the most intimate feelings. So I find more abstract productions difficult: it reads so much better if it seems human and specific."

And what of Brünnhilde? "For a long time, I thought Brünnhilde wasn't really for me, and I still think very carefully before I commit," she says. "I want to know who is conducting, who my colleagues will be, and what the production is like. But she's inside me now. I need to sing her more, and I shall."

While Kundry must wait, it would seem. "It will come, it's in the diary. But first I have to get Elektra under my belt."
—from *The Wagnerian*

Bonus for latecomers.

La Scala in Milan has relaxed its rule on punctuality, reflecting concern that latecomers are becoming increasingly aggressive when staff refuse late entry. The change is primarily for the wellbeing and safety of staff. Performances will now begin five minutes after the scheduled start, allowing opera fans a little more leeway. However, one would expect once the opera public becomes used to this, they will continue to arrive late and abuse the staff.

The Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, London advises patrons to arrive 30 minutes before performances begin, and alerts them 10, five and two minutes before the opera begins, which seems reasonable.

Those who have been to Bayreuth know that there are musical fanfares at intervals warning patrons of the impending start of performances, and in true German fashion the doors shut the second the action starts. One wonders if these venues will ever change.

Haus Wahnfried



There have been extensive restorations of certain contents of the Richard Wagner museum, and Villa Wahnfried is to be reopened in July 2015, so that the public will be able to see the restored deathbed sofa, numerous books from the library, a portrait of Cosima, and many repaired costumes. Also, the desk at which Wagner produced the first sketches for *Lohengrin* has undergone restoration.

—Stan O'Loughlin

RICHARD WAGNER SOCIETY OF VICTORIA OFFICE-BEARERS

President: Shirley Breese
0402 560 726
president@wagnermelb.org.au

Secretary: Lindsay Thorington
secretary@wagnermelb.org.au
The Richard Wagner Society
PO Box 7367
St Kilda Road, Vic. 8004

Treasurer: Tom O'Dea
treasurer@wagnermelb.org.au

Committee: Trevor Clarke
Susan Cumming
Nicky Nixon
Colin Pyman

Wagner News Editor: Stan O'Loughlin
5156 2636
solust2@bigpond.com

Newsletter layout: Dawn Volz

Website Manager: Tom O'Dea
wagnermelb.org.au

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.