



## EVA WAGNER-PASQUIER STEPS DOWN



Source: Getty Images

Wagner's great grand daughter, Eva Wagner-Pasquier who, with her half sister Katharina Wagner, has run the Bayreuth Festival for the last five years, announced she is to step down at the end of the 2015 season. While it is usual for all kinds of conspiracy theories to be proposed whenever news of the Wagners and the Bayreuth festival is released the general consensus amongst the commentators is that Eva's decision is not unexpected. In 2015 she turns 70 and most believe she wants to reduce her workload. Their joint appointment to run the festival was initially met with some scorn. "How will they ever work together?" most asked as they come from different sides of a warring clan. Their father Wolfgang Wagner left Eva's mother Ellen for his secretary Gudrun and from that union Katharina was born.

In one report about her decision, it was noted that Eva had given no reason for stepping down but she wanted to stay on with the festival as some form of advisor concentrating on the Wagner Societies. If this is indeed true let's hope that a few bridges can be rebuilt.

*Did they see eye to eye? Katharina Wagner (left) and Eva Wagner-Pasquier (right) at the Bayreuth festival*

## IRIS WAGNER DIES

The death of Iris Wagner, Richard Wagner's great-granddaughter was announced last month after a lengthy illness at the age of 71.

Born in Bayreuth in 1942 Iris was the daughter of Wieland Wagner (first cousin to Eva and Katharina). She was a painter, photographer, filmmaker and translator. She was also a member of the Richard Wagner Foundation's steering committee. As the Foundation's most important decision-making body, its responsibilities include determining who leads the annual celebration of Richard Wagner's work and legacy at Bayreuth. In reporting her death *Deutsche Welle* commented that "In the years leading up to her death, Iris Wagner repeatedly denounced moves involving her family home and the

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Yes. It's that time of the year again! Included with this newsletter is a membership renewal form for the 2014-15 year. Needless to say we sincerely hope you will be continuing your membership of the Society because without members we don't have a Society.

Remember also, we continually need new members as sadly none of us is getting any younger. If you know of anyone who would be interested in joining us please do encourage them. We do, after all, offer wide ranging programmes in all four of the main centres of New Zealand. Programmes that, in their sheer diversity, must be the envy of many other societies.

As you complete your application please also consider a donation to the charitable arm of the Society, the Foundation.



*Iris Wagner (right) with sister Nike (left)*

Bayreuth Festival, which is currently co-headed by her cousins Katharina Wagner and Eva Wagner-Pasquier. In a 2012 interview with German newsmagazine *Focus*, she questioned whether the Wagner family needed to be involved with running the festival at all."

Iris Wagner is survived by her three siblings Wolf Siegfried, Daphne and Nike Wagner.

## WHAT'S ON!

With the year now almost three months old the WSNZ programmes are in full swing. Although it will have probably taken place before this newsletter is received it's worth noting that Terence Dennis will present a *Chéreau Wagner Commemorative* in Dunedin on 16 March presenting another opportunity to see scenes from the wonderful French (Chéreau/Boulez) centenary *Ring*.

A week later, in Christchurch, Sid Kennedy will continue his look at Parsifal with *The Good, the Bad and the Ravishingly Beautiful*. 'Symphony' Sid, for those who don't know him, would describe himself as the Society eccentric. For many years he stage managed the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, hence the nickname, where he developed a real knack for lifting piano lids!! His presentation style is no different. Only Sid could state, when discussing the Parsifal bells, that Wagner really wanted a 'big donger'!

Sid continues his *Parsifal* talk concentrating on Act 2 which will be shown in its entirety in the 1980 Wolfgang Wagner production.

As we move into April both Wellington and Auckland are holding meetings on Sunday the 6th. In Wellington John Davidson has managed to secure the services of NZSO's Music Director, Pietari Inkinen, for a question and answer session. This discussion will be of particular interest to those members who saw him conduct his first 'full' *Ring* in Melbourne at the end of last year. Please note that this meeting will take place in St Andrew's Church Hall not in the church itself.

On the same evening in Auckland Ken Tomkins will present different interpretations of the infamous *Tannhäuser* Bacchanale followed by a complete showing of Act 1. The thought of 'imaginative' displays of Eros reminds one of a story about Georg Solti.

In June 1965 Solti conducted the British premiere of Schoenberg's *Moses and Aron* at Covent Garden. The production was directed by the 35 year-old Peter Hall who stretched the Royal Opera by not only importing live animals, including an incontinent camel from Chessington Zoo, but a collection of Soho strippers for the orgy around the Golden Calf. While the curious swamped the box-office for seats, Solti, who had never conducted twelve-tone music of such complexity before and was in the best viewing position in the house, complained bitterly that he was unable to take in the scene as he had to keep his eyes firmly fixed on the score!



### MELBOURNE *Ring* 2013

It would be a pity to let the achievement of the Australian Opera *Ring* late last year, which was enjoyed by so many of our members, go unrecorded in any detail in the pages of the WSNZ newsletter. At this remove it is best to contribute a series of impressions rather than a comprehensive review, as the internet carries several very good general critiques and analyses.

Suffice it to say in general that the production was fresh and innovative without descending into that extreme avant-garde territory where the universal themes and humanity of the work are so frequently compromised. There were some appealing and amusing Australian references such as the hilarious blonde-coiffeured bridesmaids clad in shocking pink gowns and tottering on ridiculously high heels in the *Götterdämmerung* wedding scene and the depiction of the chorus as a crowd which could have come from Bondi beach (on a bad day?) Some of the other staging decisions were apparently inspired by the workshop technique used by the distinguished Australian director Neil Armfield. A leading example was the decision to have the immolation take place with the dead but vertical Siegfried and Brünnhilde holding hands by the large bonfire in the wedding marquee. Not all sets were as impressive as this – I found the use of stuffed animals distracting and wondered why the budget could not stretch to a slightly better bed for the rock scene.

The musical values were very well realised. The expensively extended pit ameliorated what I had remembered as a rather dry acoustic in this venue. The conducting of our own Pietari Inkinen so totally convinced the



*Siegfried and the Rhinemaidens (top)*  
*Judd Arthur as Fafner (below)*

predominately Australian audience that he received a warm ovation whenever he appeared. The orchestra responded consistently and with great stamina and the singers ranged from the almost unbelievably good (Stefan Vinke as Siegfried and the Alberich of Warwick Fyfe) to the consistently reliable and sometimes very moving (Susan Bullock as Brünnhilde and Terje Stensvold as Wotan). Stuart Skelton as Siegmund and Jud Arthur as Fafner/Hunding stood out - the latter not just because his well-muscled body made his naked, redblood-soaked appearance as the dying dragon an utterly staggering apparition. Mention must also be made of the attractive showgirl-costumed Rhinemaidens and the very aerial Valkyries in their military fatigues.

The venue's facilities, its location in the heart of the Melbourne riverside area and the adjacent accommodation contributed to a most enjoyable eight day visit. The performance-day lectures by our Emeritus President Heath Lees found fresh insights even for those of us who had heard him before, while still forming an appropriate introduction for those attending their first *Ring*. If the plan to repeat this production in three or four years time can be achieved members can be assured that it represents a most worthwhile investment of time (and dollars).

*Les Holborow*

# WAGNER SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND

## 2014 PROGRAMME DETAILS

### Auckland

**Sunday, 6 April at 7.30pm**

*Venue: Music Theatre, School of Music, University of Auckland, 6 Symonds St*

**Tannhäuser:** A look at some of the imaginative interpretations of the energetic Bacchanale embedded in the overture of Wagner's controversial opera, followed by a showing of Act 1 complete

**Sunday, 25 May at 7.30pm**

*Venue: Music Theatre, School of Music, University of Auckland, 6 Symonds St*

**AGM & The View from the Stage - Part 3 (1924 -1944):** Chris Brodrick continues his series on the Bayreuth Festival visitors

**Sunday, 6 July at 3.30pm (NOTE TIME)**

*Venue: Music Theatre, School of Music, University of Auckland, 6 Symonds St*

**DVD Screening: Die Walküre** complete opera from La Scala Milan, A magnificent production featuring our own Simon O'Neill with Waltraud Meier as Sieglinde

**Sunday, 31 August at 7.30pm**

*Venue: Music Theatre, School of Music, University of Auckland, 6 Symonds St*

**To be announced**

**Sunday, 7 December at 7.30pm**

*Venue: Music Theatre, School of Music, University of Auckland, 6 Symonds St*

**Christmas Function:**

Featuring a presentation by Professor Heath Lees on the Ups and Downs of Wagner on Film.

### Wellington

**Sunday, 6 April at 4.00pm**

*Venue: St Andrew's on the Terrace (note that the venue for this meeting is the church hall, not the church itself).*

**NZSO Music Director Pietari Inkinen:**

In a Question and Answer session, Pietari will talk about his experiences in conducting Wagner

**Sunday, 18 May at 4.00pm**

*Venue: Adam Concert Room, NZ School of Music, Victoria University of Wellington*

**Embodying Kundry: From Metempsychosis to Metamorphosis** An illustrated talk by Margaret Medlyn

**Sunday, 29 June**

*[time and venue to be confirmed]*  
Joint meeting with the Opera Society.  
DVD screening of the Hans Jürgen Syberberg film of *Parsifal*

### Christchurch

**Friday, 28 March at 7.30pm**

*Venue: Lecture Theatre A6, University of Canterbury*

**The Good, the Bad and the Ravishingly Beautiful - Parsifal Act 2:** Sid Kennedy continues his DVD screening of *Parsifal*, filmed in Bayreuth with conductor Horst Stein.

**Friday, 16 May at 7.30pm**

*Venue: Lecture Theatre A6, University of Canterbury*

**Wagner and Hotels:** Professor John Drummond presents two life-changing moments for Wagner which took place in hotels: one in Chemnitz in 1849 and one in Stuttgart in 1864

**Friday, 15 August at 7.30pm**

*Venue: Lecture Theatre A6, University of Canterbury*

**Wagner in Exile:** Chris Brodrick introduces this DVD - *Wagner in Exile* in which Antoine Wagner heads to Switzerland on the trail of his great, great-grandfather Richard Wagner who spent several years in political exile amongst the Alps

**Friday, 31 October at 7.30pm**

*Venue: Lecture Theatre A6, University of Canterbury*

**Rounding off the Wagner bicentenary year:** Michael Sinclair, former secretary of the WSNZ, takes us through the Wagner year of 2013 with images, music and video from around the world including a round-up of the Melbourne *Ring*

**Sunday, 13 July at 4.00 pm**

*[venue to be confirmed]*  
***Tristan and Isolde* – The Classical and Medieval Background:** An illustrated talk by John Davidson

**August/September.**

**Meeting not yet finalized.**

**Sunday, 16 November at 4 pm**

*[venue to be confirmed]*  
**The Ups and Downs of Wagner on Film:** Professor Heath Lees will talk about Wagner in film, and the making of the film *Wagner's Ring – A Tale Told In Music*

**December**

**Christmas Party.** Details later

### Dunedin

**Sunday, 16 March at 2.00pm**

*Venue: Black-Sale House, Department of Music, The University of Otago*  
**Chéreau Wagner Commemorative:** With the death of Patrice Chéreau Professor Terence Dennis presents a commemorative tribute, drawn from the 1979 filming of his *Ring* at Bayreuth

**Sunday, 11 May at 2.00pm**

*Venue: Black-Sale House, Department of Music, The University of Otago*  
**Wagner and Hotels:** Professor John Drummond presents two life-changing moments for Wagner which took place in hotels, one in Chemnitz in 1849 and one in Stuttgart in 1864

**Sunday, 8 June at 2.00pm**

*Venue: Black-Sale House, Department of Music, The University of Otago*  
**The Golden Age Part 3 (Singers of the Cosima Era):** In this third historical retrospective of famed Wagner singers of the past, Professor Terence Dennis features some of the rarest recordings of Wagner preserved for posterity. It is astounding to hear the voice of the first Parsifal, Hermann Winkelmann, Ternina, the Kundry of the 1899 Bayreuth *Parsifal*, and Lilli Lehmann, the Woglinde, Ortlinde and Woodbird in the original 1876 *Ring!*

**Sunday, October at 2.00pm (Date TBC)**

*Venue: Black-Sale House, Department of Music, The University of Otago*  
**The View from the Stage - Part 3 (1924 -1944):** Chris Brodrick continues his series on the Bayreuth Festival visitors

**Sunday, 7 December at 12.00 noon**

*Venue: TBC*

**Christmas Luncheon followed by Historical Perspectives:** Winifred Wagner, wife of Wagner's son Siegfried, was the director of the Bayreuth Festival through the momentous period of 1930-1945. In 1975 she was interviewed, by German director Syberberg. This presentation will cover excerpts from the original five hour interview. German, with English subtitles

### NEW MEMBERS

A big Wagnerian welcome to:

Edith Tripp .....Christchurch  
Helen Peate .....Christchurch  
Dave Reynolds ..... Wellington

# WAGNER PERFORMANCES IN 2014

For those members who may be travelling during 2014 we present, with thanks to the website The Wagnerian (www.the-wagnerian.com), a list of the performances of Wagner's Operas to be performed in 2014.

<i>Der Fliegende Holländer</i>	<i>Lohengrin</i>	<i>Tristan und Isolde</i>
<b>DRESDEN</b> Semperoper Dresden 28 August 2013 to 2 July 2014	<b>WEIMAR</b> Nationaltheater Weimar* 7 September 2013 to 18 April 2014	<b>LÜBECK</b> Theater Lübeck* 6 October 2013 to 11 May 2014
<b>BREMEN</b> Theater Bremen* 15 September 2013 to 14 March 2014	<b>GRAZ</b> Opernhaus Graz* 28 September 2013 to 30 May 2014	<b>KIEL</b> Oper Kiel* 25 January to 13 June 2014
<b>BRNO</b> National Theatre Brno* 27 September 2013 to 2 May 2014	<b>BASEL</b> Theater Basel* 20 October 2013 to 15 June 2014	<b>PARIS</b> Opéra national de Paris 8 April to 4 May 2014
<b>SARASOTA</b> Sarasota Opera 1 to 23 March 2014	<b>DÜSSELDORF</b> Deutsche Oper am Rhein* 18 January to 15 June 2014	<b>FRANKFURT</b> Oper Frankfurt 18 April to 10 May 2014
<b>ZÜRICH</b> Opernhaus Zürich 11 to 23 March 2014	<b>VILNIUS</b> Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet 30 January to 21 May 2014	<b>CHEMNITZ</b> Theater Chemnitz 19 April 2014
<b>CHARLOTTE</b> Opera Carolina 22 to 30 March 2014	<b>MADRID</b> Teatro Real, Madrid* 3 to 27 April 2014	<b>BERLIN</b> Deutsche Oper Berlin 14 to 25 May 2014
<b>BUDAPEST</b> Hungarian State Opera 26 March to 5 April 2014	<b>WARSAW</b> Polish National Opera 11 to 17 April 2014	<b>AUCKLAND</b> Auckland Philharmonia Concert performance 19 July 2014
<b>OSLO</b> Den Norske Opera 16 May to 22 June 2014	<b>VIENNA</b> Vienna State Opera* 12 to 28 April 2014	<b>STUTTGART</b> Staatstheater Stuttgart* 20 to 27 July 2014
<b>MUNICH</b> Munich Opera Festival 8 to 11 July 2014	<b>BAYREUTH</b> Bayreuth Festival 31 July to 17 August 2014	<b>SALZBURG</b> Salzburg Festival Concert performance 21 August 2014
<i>Tannhäuser</i>	<i>Der Ring des Nibelungen</i>	<i>Parsifal</i>
<b>TALLINN</b> Estonian National Opera 14 November 2013 to 5 June 2014	<b>GENEVA</b> Grand Théâtre de Genève 13 to 25 May 2014 (Two cycles)	<b>BOLOGNA</b> Teatro Comunale di Bologna 14 to 25 January 2014
<b>DORTMUND</b> Opernhaus Dortmund* 1 December 2013 to 11 May 2014	<b>VIENNA</b> Vienna State Opera 30 May to 29 June 2014 (two cycles)	<b>BERLIN</b> Deutsche Oper Berlin 5 February to 21 April 2014
<b>PRAGUE</b> The State Opera, Prague* 11 January to 13 June 2014	<b>BUDAPEST</b> Palace of Arts Budapest June 12 - June 15 2014	<b>INNSBRUCK</b> Tiroler Landestheater* 16 February to 3 May 2014
<b>KARLSRUHE</b> Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe 9 February to 20 April 2014	<b>TYROL</b> Tiroler Festspiele Erl* 18 July - 3 August 2014	<b>LEIPZIG</b> Oper Leipzig 30 March to 18 April 2014
<b>FREIBURG</b> Theater Freiburg* 22 February to 23 March 2014	<b>SOFIA</b> National Theatre 23 July - 28 July 2014	<b>DARMSTADT</b> Staatstheater Darmstadt 13 to 18 April 2014
<b>BERLIN</b> Staatsoper Unter den Linden* 12 to 27 April 2014	<b>BAYREUTH</b> Bayreuth Festspielhaus 27 July - 27 August 2014	<b>BUDAPEST</b> Hungarian State Opera 16 to 21 April 2014
<b>STOCKHOLM</b> The Royal Swedish Opera 14 April to 2 May 2014	<b>BIRMINGHAM (UK)</b> Mariinsky Opera Birmingham Hippodrome 5 to 9 November 2014 (One Cycle)	<b>MUNICH</b> Bavarian State Opera 16 to 20 April 2014
<b>CHEMNITZ</b> Theater Chemnitz 18 April 2014	<b>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</b>	<b>VIENNA</b> Vienna State Opera 17 to 24 April 2014
<b>NORWICH</b> Theatre Royal Norwich Jul 27 - July 28	<b>HANNOVER</b> Staatsoper Hannover 13 October 2013 to 19 July 2014	<b>NORWICH</b> Theatre Royal Norwich July 23 - July 25 2014
<b>BAYREUTH</b> Bayreuth Festival 25 July to 28 August 2014	<b>KARLSRUHE</b> Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe* 27 April to 12 July 2014	

\* denotes a new production