



2013 – WAGNER200

While 1813 can be marked down as the year of the founding of the Philharmonic Society in London, of the publication of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and of the first performance of Beethoven's 7th *Symphony*, it was also the birth year of both Wagner and Verdi.

If we add to these 200th birthdays the 100th of Benjamin Britten it looks like it will be a year-long music celebration.

The WSNZ will start the year off with a double celebration when we welcome back Peter Bassett to discuss the subjects of his new book *Wagner & Verdi*. Peter will look between the lines of his book to reveal 'other' stories and questions.

As a writer, speaker and broadcaster on opera, particularly the works of Richard Wagner, Peter was closely involved with the 1998 production of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in Adelaide and the 2001 Australian premiere of *Parsifal*. He was also a consultant for West Australian Opera's 2006 *Tristan und Isolde* and the State Opera of South Australia's 2009 *Der fliegende Holländer*.

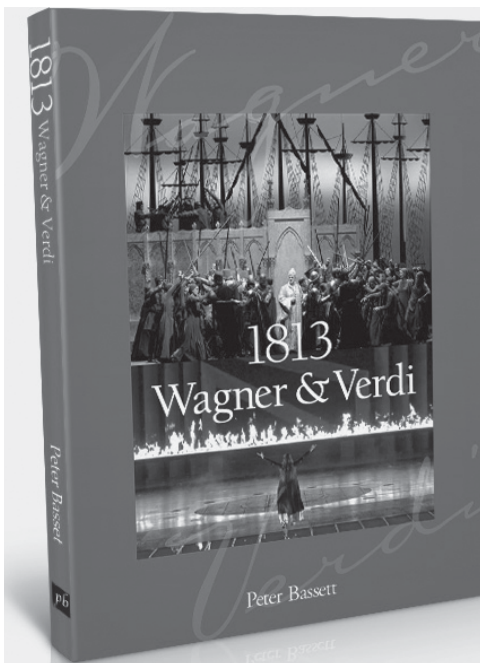
A lawyer and diplomat by training, Peter served for twenty years in the Australian Diplomatic Service in embassies in East and West Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and was Deputy Legal Adviser in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra until 1992. He was, for a further decade, chief of staff to two Governors of South Australia.

Since retiring Peter has led 25 tours for Renaissance Tours and the Patrons and Friends of Opera Australia.

While Peter's talk will set the tone for the year, WSNZ members have a very large programme to look forward to. Not only do we have our regular events which include presentations by Heath Lees, John Pattinson, Terence Dennis, Aidan Lang, Michael Sinclair and Sid Kennedy but also staged productions of *Der fliegende Holländer* (Auckland and Wellington) and the *Ring Cycle* in Melbourne at the end of the year.



Peter Bassett and his book on Wagner & Verdi.



With the large number of worldwide Wagner events during 2013 it will be impossible to mention them all but we will do our best to highlight what we can.

For instance there is WWW2013, which stands for Wagner World Wide 2013 and which is being organised by the

University of Bayreuth and includes a symposium *Wagner and Us* which will be held during the Melbourne Ring (6-8 Dec 2013). <http://wagnerandus.com.au>

For those wanting a comprehensive list of Wagner performances our sister society in Sydney has a list that can be downloaded. As the URL is long I suggest you Google 'Ravens Reporting' and look for '**Ravens Reporting - The Wagner Society**' which will lead you to the page where you can download a PDF file.

So 2013 will be a year filled with Wagner, indeed it was hardly two days old before one of the respected British newspapers published what could only be described as a pointless and silly article under the title *Wagner or Verdi?*, in which opera experts from Philip Hensher to Mark Elder were asked who is the better composer.

"As for which I admire more, with the best will in the world I couldn't say. They both enrich us and make us more human." - Peter Konwitschny (Director)

"In Verdi there's a certain simplicity and purity in each dramatic or emotional situation... Whereas with Wagner many things happen at the same time, which I love because it mirrors life's complexity." - John Tomlinson (Bass)

"For me Wagner is one of the great symphonic composers of the 19th century, and it allows him to capture infinite fine shades of feeling, but on an epic scale. Whereas Verdi catches a feeling in one pithy phrase... I couldn't live without either of these two colossi." - Mark Elder (Conductor)

With comments like these there was no answer, so the question was pointless. But all was not lost because we did find out a very interesting piece of information from Mark Elder:

"For a conductor they're utterly different. Verdi is very physical – you get sweaty conducting his music – whereas Wagner needs small movements. *Traviata* is a three-shirt opera, *Parsifal* I can do in one."

NEW OFFICERS

As reported in the last newsletter, Michael Sinclair has stepped down as Secretary of the WSNZ and Auckland organiser. In his place two Auckland members have agreed to take over the roles; WSNZ Vice President Ken Tomkin will now oversee the Auckland activities while Barry Littlewood is our new National Secretary. The Society is very grateful to Barry and Ken for agreeing to take on these roles.

As a result of the change members should be aware that the contact information on the front page of the print version of the newsletter is now out of date. This will be corrected when we reprint the newsletter shells. Until then we will include Barry's contact details just above the incorrect information.

BAYREUTH TICKETS

The Bayreuth ticket saga continues. In November we reported that a solution had been found and that the world-wide family of Wagner Societies would once again be allocated tickets. This was premature, I'm afraid, as the German Government, who provides funding to the Festival, insists that all tickets be freely available rather than be allocated to special interest groups.

On a positive note we have received a small allocation of tickets for 2013 through the Friends of Bayreuth and it would appear that, for now, this will be our only source, although not guaranteed. It is recommended that members who want Bayreuth tickets in the future but have not already registered an interest contact Barry to have their name put on the list.



Photo: Jane Dawber, ODT

BY APPOINTMENT?

Last year we reported Terence Dennis' dash to the UK to accompany Kiri te Kanawa at a small function that Prince Philip was hosting for the Outward Bound Trust in Frogmore House near Windsor Castle. Last November the royal summons went out again but this time it was closer to home. During the recent visit to New Zealand of Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall, Dame Kiri and Terence were asked to perform at a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Trust dinner in Auckland. No reports of Wagner being on the programme for the dinner but Terence will present a great deal of Wagner to our Dunedin members during 2013.

WAGNER SOCIETY 2013 – WAGNER200 P

Auckland

Sunday, 24 February 7.30pm

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

Wagner & Verdi: Peter Bassett's new book celebrates the achievements of these two great contemporaries. However, behind the book's pages lie other stories and questions which Peter will address with an engaging mix of argument, image and music. *NB A \$10 door fee will apply for this meeting*

Sunday, 7 April 7.30pm

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

Richard Wagner – Before, During and After: Heath Lees takes a panoramic view of Wagner's 200-year-long impact

Sunday, 19 May 7.30pm

Venue: Kenneth Myers Centre, 74 Shortland Street, Auckland

Wagner's 200th birthday celebrations In addition to our AGM we take the opportunity to celebrate Wagner's 200th birthday.

Sunday, 14 July 4.00pm (NOTE TIME)

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

DVD Screening: Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg. A screening of the recent Glyndebourne production of Wagner's only comedy, starring Gerald Finley, Marco Jentzsch and Anna Gabler

Sunday, 8 September 7.30pm

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

An introduction to Der fliegende Holländer: In anticipation of New Zealand Opera's new production of Wagner's early work we look at various aspects of the work with musical and visual excerpts

Sunday 8 December 7.30pm

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

Rounding off the Wagner Bicentenary:

Michael Sinclair takes us through the Wagner year with images, music and video from around the world celebrating Wagner's 200th birthday, including a round up from the Melbourne Ring

Plus our usual Christmas festivities!

Wellington

Tuesday, 26 February 7.30pm

Venue: St Andrew's on the Terrace
Wagner & Verdi: Peter Bassett's new book celebrates the achievements of these two great contemporaries. However, behind the book's pages lie other stories and questions which Peter Bassett will address with an engaging mix of argument, image and music

Sunday 23 June at 7.30pm TBC

Venue: TBC

Birthday Party: A belated celebration of the Master's birthday, taking the form of a dinner with light-hearted entertainment.

Sunday 14 July at 11.00am

Venue: Bergman Theatre, Paramount Cinemas

Joint meeting with the Opera Society. DVD screening of **Die Meistersinger:** (Opera Australia 1988) directed by Michael Hampe, conducted by Charles Mackerras with Donald McIntyre, Chris Doig, Helena Doese, Paul Frey and John Pringle.

Sunday 25 August at 4.00pm

Venue: St Andrew's on the Terrace
Aidan Lang on *Der fliegende Holländer* which opens on 14 September

Sunday 20 October at 4.00pm

Venue: St Andrew's on the Terrace
Richard Wagner – Before, During and After: Heath Lees takes a panoramic view of Wagner's 200-year-long impact

Other Wellington events for 2013 will be announced in due course.

OTHER DATES:

NBR NZ OPERA

Der fliegende Holländer

WELLINGTON	14, 19, 21 Sept - 7.30pm, 17 Sept - 6.00pm
AUCKLAND	5, 10, 12 Oct - 7.30pm, 8 Oct - 6.30pm

MELBOURNE RING

	CYCLE 1	CYCLE 2	CYCLE 3
<i>Das Rheingold</i>	7pm Mon 18 Nov	7pm Wed 27 Nov	7pm Fri 6 Dec
<i>Die Walküre</i>	5pm Wed 20 Nov	5pm Fri 29 Nov	5pm Mon 9 Dec
<i>Siegfried</i>	5pm Fri 22 Nov	5pm Mon 2 Dec	5pm Wed 11 Dec
<i>G'dämmerung</i>	4pm Mon 25 Nov	4pm Wed 4 Dec	4pm Fri 13 Dec

OF NEW ZEALAND PROGRAMME DETAILS

Christchurch

Friday 22 February 7.30pm

Venue: Lecture Theatre A6, University of Canterbury

Wagner & Verdi: Peter Bassett's new book celebrates the achievements of these two great contemporaries. However, behind the book's pages lie other stories and questions which Peter Bassett will address with an engaging mix of argument, image and music

Friday 12 April 7.30pm

Venue: Lecture Theatre A6, University of Canterbury

Parsifal Act 1: To mark Wagner's 200th birthday Sid Kennedy presents a Bayreuth *Parsifal* produced by Wagner's grandson Wolfgang, with a brief introduction of 3 leitmotifs and an overview of temple bells. There will be a DVD screening of Act 1, with a cast including Siegfried Jerusalem, Hans Sotin, Eva Randova, and conductor Horst Stein

Friday 24 May TBA

Venue: TBA

Bi-centenary dinner to celebrate RW's 200th birthday.

Friday 16 August 7.30pm &

Friday 13 September 7.30pm

Venue: Lecture Theatre A6, University of Canterbury

Singing in the Rhine: a Beginner's Guide to Wagner's *Ring*. John Pattinson presents an illustrated two-part series which, as the Melbourne *Ring* approaches, aims to dispel any trepidations for newcomers and to provide a timely refresher for gnarled old veterans. The crucial threads of the complex plot are clarified, the principle of leitmotive demonstrated and the essential motifs are introduced. A light-hearted but loving encounter which may change your life forever...!

The rest of the year's programme has still to be finalised.

Dunedin

Saturday, 23 February 2.00pm

Venue: Carrington College, 57 Heriot Row, (Turn right at top of Pitt Street)

Wagner & Verdi: Peter Bassett's new book celebrates the achievements of these two great contemporaries. However, behind the book's pages lie other stories and questions which Peter Bassett will address with an engaging mix of argument, image and music

NB A \$10 door fee will apply for this meeting

Sunday, 21 April 2.00pm

Venue: Black-Sale House, Department of Music, The University of Otago

The Golden Age Part 1 (1900 -1914):

An absorbing travel back in time in which Terence Dennis brings to life the great, pre-war, Wagner singers who were caught in sound recording

Sunday, 16 June 10.00 or 10.30 (TBC)

Venue: Barclay Theatre, Otago Museum

Tristan und Isolde – DVD Screening:

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's Bayreuth staging which was considered one of the most beautiful and poetic ever and was filmed in 1983

With Johanna Meier (Isolde), René Kollo (Tristan), Matti Salminen (King Mark), Hanna Schwarz (Brangäne)

Sunday, 8 September 2.00pm

Venue: Black-Sale House, Department of Music, The University of Otago

The Golden Age Part 2 (The

inter-war years): Terence Dennis continues his fascinating journey with live performances from Bayreuth and Covent Garden. The era of Furtwängler, Beecham, Leider, Flagstad and Melchior

Sunday, 6 October 2.00pm

Venue: Black-Sale House, Department of Music, The University of Otago

Contrasts and Compliments:

Terence Dennis discusses how great composers such as Verdi and Chausson drew from Wagner to renew their own traditions

Sunday, 1 December 12.00 noon

Venue: Marama Hall, University of Otago

Christmas Luncheon: Special Wagner concert to conclude the Wagner200 Year as well as celebrating Christmas and our sixth birthday



MINTED WAGNER

The following report appeared on The Wagnerian website (<http://www.the-wagnerian.com>).

"Considering how much of his life he spent in poverty and certainly on the run from creditors (would The Dutchman be the same opera if not?) together with his political beliefs, one must wonder what Wagner would have thought if he had known that he would one day feature on a 10 Euro coin.

Well, whatever his thoughts, in 2013 a [silver] ten Euro coin [designed by Erich Ott] will be issued in Germany featuring his prominent profile.

Well at least it is silver - and not gold"

RHONDA BROWN WINS

London based New Zealand mezzo, Rhonda Brown, has won first place and the Audience prize at the (London) Wagner Society's Bayreuth Bursary competition. The prize allows her to spend two weeks in Bayreuth this northern summer to see operas, undertake workshops and to meet singers, conductors and agents. Her success has already borne fruit as she has been engaged to sing Erda (*Siegfried*) for Fulham Opera and to cover the roles of Erda and Schwertleite for Longborough Festival Opera's *Ring Cycle*.

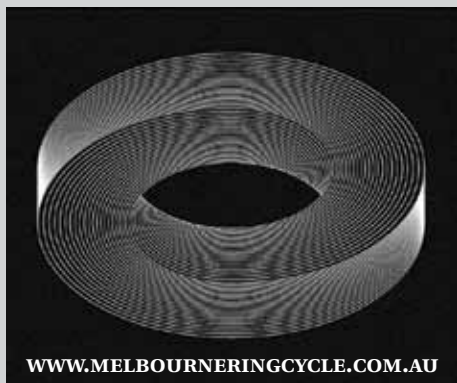
BBC BROADCASTS

To celebrate the anniversaries of Wagner, Verdi and Britten the BBC will broadcast, this year, every one of these composers' operas - 140 hours of music.

Transmissions of Wagner's operas include *Parsifal*, (March 2), *Das Rheingold* (April 6), *Die Walküre* (April 13), *Siegfried* (April 20) and *Götterdämmerung* (May 11), as well as *Lohengrin*, broadcast live from Welsh National Opera (May 26).

Each opera broadcast will be introduced by a BBC Radio 3 Opera Guide, which will be available to download for free from the station's website after the performance.

Listen on-line at: – <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/>



WWW.MELBOURNERINGCYCLE.COM.AU

THE KAPLAN DAGUERRETYPE OF 'WAGNER': A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY

Just before Christmas the www (wonderful world of Wagner) was buzzing with the image of a young man purporting to be Richard Wagner. Without the need for DNA, Peter Bassett solved the mystery. Here's his analysis:

The prospect of finding a previously unrecognised image of Richard Wagner is a tantalising one for students of the composer's life and works, and potentially a valuable one for the owner of such an image. Albert Kaplan, an American collector of daguerreotypes and ambrotypes of illustrious 19th century personalities, claims to possess such an image and is offering it on this basis. It is very small - less than one and a half inches or four centimetres in width (1/16 plate size in technical terms) - and is set in an oval card mount and a time-worn case. On the reverse is a printed text indicating that the image was prepared in the studio of Rudolph Turnau & Co of Hamburg.

In my view the Kaplan daguerreotype is not an image of Richard Wagner, and there is persuasive evidence to support this conclusion.

Daguerreotypes, employing the first commercially successful photographic processes, were invented by Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre (1787 - 1851). They utilise a direct positive (and therefore a reverse or mirror image) made in the camera on a silver or silvered-copper plate. Such images are inherently fragile and cumbersome to prepare. The process was formally recognized by the French Academy of Sciences in 1839. In the same year William Fox Talbot announced his silver chloride 'sensitive paper' process. In 1839 Richard Wagner was 26 years old.

Albert Kaplan's daguerreotype was drawn to my attention on 1 November 2012 by Shirley Breese, then Secretary and now President of the Richard Wagner Society in Victoria. It was identified on the Kaplan Collection website <http://www.kaplancollection.com> as being of Richard Wagner, and dated 'Possibly 1855'. I sent an email to Mr Kaplan to say that if the image had been prepared in Hamburg in 1855 it could not be of Richard Wagner since he was in exile in Switzerland at that time and was unable to return to German lands until the partial amnesty of 1860 and full amnesty of 1862. He had visited Hamburg in 1844 to conduct *Rienzi*, arriving on 14 or 15 March, conducted performances on the 21st and 24th and returned to Dresden in April. After the revolution of 1849 he could not have been there again before 1860 at the earliest. I also noted that from



Richard Wagner – Not! KAPLAN COLLECTION

a purely visual point of view, the image was not convincing to anyone familiar with authenticated representations of the composer from the 1840s and 50s. Mr Kaplan then replied as follows: 'The "Possibly 1855" date is coming down from the website. It is wrong. The date is almost certainly 1844.' The date was then amended to read 'March or April 1844'.

In my opinion this date cannot be supported by the evidence, and an attempt to identify the sitter as Richard Wagner is mistaken on both historical and visual grounds. However I shall confine my analysis on this occasion to historical considerations since they obviate the need for further comparisons of dimples, noses, ears and other anatomical features.

The authoritative work on the daguerreotype studios in Hamburg in the 19th century is *Die Daguerreotypie In Hamburg 1839-1860, Ein Beitrag Zur Geschichte Der Photographie Von Professor Wilhelm Weimar*, published in Hamburg in 1915. This study includes an alphabetical index of photographers in Hamburg between 1839 and 1860 and so covers precisely the period during which the Kaplan daguerreotype was prepared. Professor Weimar's index includes the following entry relating to Rudolph Turnau:

Turnau, Rudolph & Co. First notice 9 May 1855. Photographic establishment, Neuerwall 27. Stereoscopic portraits.

I believe that Mr Kaplan's original date of 'probably 1855' is closer to the truth than his amended date of 1844, and that the daguerreotype of the unknown young man was made in or after 1855. It is numbered 705 on the back of its case and might well have been made a year or two later, assuming that the numbering reflects a cumulative list of

jobs undertaken by Turnau & Co after May 1855.

Professor Weimar's entry is significant on two counts. Firstly, it records that Turnau's studio was known only to have operated from 9 May 1855. Secondly, it specifies the provision of stereoscopic portraits, that is, portraits made up of two images slightly offset horizontally, which are then combined with the help of a special viewer to trick the eyes into seeing a three dimensional representation. Of necessity, each individual portrait is relatively small.

If Turnau & Co had been in operation prior to 1855, this fact would have been included in the Weimar index. We know from that record that 90 'photographers' using various techniques set up operations in Hamburg in the years between 1839 and May 1855. They are listed by name, address, type of services offered and subsequent developments. Turnau is listed only as commencing operations on 9 May 1855. While it is possible that he learnt his craft in another studio, the daguerreotype of the young man is specifically attributed to Rudolph Turnau & Co, not to anyone else.

Many photographers in the Weimar index are listed as making daguerreotypes in Hamburg before May 1855, but Turnau is one of only two who offered stereoscopic services, the other being Hermann Lorenzen who registered his services a day earlier than Turnau, on 8 May 1855. They were joined by a third stereographer one month later. It is no coincidence that stereoscopic images were made in Hamburg for the first time in 1855. The technique originated with Sir Charles Wheatstone, an English inventor but was not given its first practical advance until 1849 by Sir David Brewster who took it to Paris. An improvement by Jules Dubosq attracted much interest at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851 and over the next few years several different instruments were patented. They found their way to Hamburg by 1855 and Turnau was one of the first to set up a business there using them. The portrait of the young man might not itself have been one of a pair of stereoscopic daguerreotypes. However, the important point is that on the back of the Kaplan daguerreotype there is a printed text that says quite plainly that amongst the services offered by Rudolph Turnau & Co was the preparation of stereoscopic pictures.

This means that the image of the young man cannot be dated earlier than May 1855 when the new technique was introduced to Hamburg and when Richard Wagner was in exile. It cannot be dated to 1844 and therefore cannot depict the composer. – *Peter Bassett (Game, set and match - Ed.)*