



HAPPY 2015 & HAPPY BIRTHDAY

With another Christmas and New Year disappearing rapidly into the past we can look forward to another WSNZ-filled year.

But first things first. On 22 October 2014 our Patron, Sir Donald McIntyre, (below) celebrated his 80th birthday. Sadly we missed offering our birthday wishes to him in the last newsletter, so... 'Sir Donald: on behalf of all the members of the WSNZ many many happy returns on your 4 score years and our apologies for the lateness of our message!'

In 2015 the WSNZ is once again able to offer members a wonderfully diverse programme that we hope you will find stimulating. In addition we have the NZSO *Wagner Gala* with Simon O'Neill and Christine Goerke which will feature scenes from the last two *Ring* operas *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, including the *Siegfried Funeral March* and the great *Immolation scene* from the end of the cycle. Those who heard Christine Goerke sing Brünnhilde in the NZSO's *Die Walküre* performance in 2012 (was it really that long ago?) know that she is destined to be one of the great Wagner sopranos of our time. Joining her is our own Simon O'Neill who also has forged a huge career as a heldentenor and as a consequence has engagements booked years in advance.

The charitable arm of the WSNZ, the Wagner New Zealand Foundation, has agreed to support the production of surtitles for the Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch concerts.

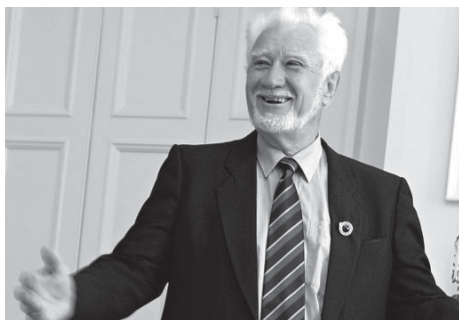


Photo: The Arts Foundation

DERRICK KNIGHT COLLECTION

At the end of 2014 we received the sad news that Auckland WSNZ member Derrick Knight had died. His widow, Agnes, has sent us a list of Wagner books and DVDs that Derrick had in his collection and wondered if any members would like to give one, some, or all of them, a home. In her letter she wrote "I am enclosing a list of both (books and DVDs) in the hope that you will find some people who would be interested in them. I do not want money but would ask that they just pay postage and if you ask for a small donation to the Society in Derrick's memory that would be wonderful."

The following are available:

WAGNER BOOKS

<i>Richard Wagner. His Life His Work, His Century.</i>	Martin Gregor-Dellin
<i>Richard Wagner. The Sorcerer of Bayreuth.</i>	Barry Millington
<i>Verdi and/or Wagner</i>	Peter Conrad
<i>The Perfect Wagnerite</i>	George Bernard Shaw
<i>Wagner Without Fear</i>	William Berger
<i>Twilight of the Wagners</i>	Gottfried Wagner
<i>New Guide to Wagner and his Operas</i>	Barry Millington
<i>Wagner Remembered</i>	Stewart Spencer
<i>Wagner The terrible man & his truthful Art</i>	M. Owen Lee
<i>Wagner & the wonder of Art (Introduction to Die Meistersinger)</i>	M. Owen Lee
<i>Wagner's Ring-Turning the Sky Around (Introduction to The Ring)</i> ..	Owen M. Lee
<i>The Wagner Clan</i>	Jonathan Carr
<i>Wagner & The Erotic Impulse</i>	Laurence Dreyfus
<i>Decoding Wagner - An invitation to his world of Music Drama</i>	Thomas May
<i>My Life vol 1 - 1911</i>	Richard Wagner
<i>My Life vol 2 - 1911</i>	Richard Wagner
<i>Oper Und Drama (German)</i>	Richard Wagner
<i>Opera & Drama (English)</i>	Richard Wagner
<i>The Wagners</i>	Nike Wagner
<i>Mallarme & Wagner</i>	Heath Lees
<i>Wagner Compendium</i>	Barry Millington

WAGNER DVD'S

<i>Die Meistersinger Von Nürnberg</i> - Metropolitan Opera cond. James Levine
<i>Die Meistersinger Von Nürnberg</i> - Opera Australia cond. Charles Mackerras (VHS)
<i>Die Meistersinger Von Nürnberg</i> - Opera Australia cond. Charles Mackerras
<i>Rienzi</i> - Deutsche Oper Berlin
<i>Der Fliegende Holländer</i> - Bayerischer Staatsopernchor with Donald McIntyre
<i>Tristan und Isolde</i> - Bayreuther Festspiele
<i>Parsifal</i> - Bayreuther Festspiele
<i>Lohengrin</i> - Vienna State Opera
<i>Tannhäuser</i> - Met Opera cond. James Levine
<i>The Golden Ring</i> - (1965 BBC film on Solti's recording of <i>Der Ring des Nibelungen</i>)
<i>Der Ring des Nibelungen (Copenhagen Ring)</i> - Royal Danish Opera
<i>Der Ring des Nibelungen</i> - Bayreuther Festspiele
<i>Wagner</i> - The Complete Epic - Richard Burton & Vanessa Redgrave.
<i>Wagner's Ring</i> - Heath Lees

Any member who is interested in taking up this offer, or has any questions, should contact Chris Brodrick - wsnznews@xtra.co.nz. We'll distribute on the basis of first come first served and once we know the dispatch address we can work out the cost and process.

WAGNER: UNDER THE INFLUENCE

In an article in the *New York Times* in December 2007 entitled Sex'n'Drugs'n'Wagner, Peter Bloch, editor of *Penthouse Magazine*, wrote: "The Ring, now being performed at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, violates just about every modern taboo imaginable. Moreover, history proves it dangerous. Consider a warning label that was once proposed: **Warning: Contains lyrics or matter which describes or advocates one or more of the following: suicide; explicit sexual acts including but not limited to rape; sodomy; incest; bestiality and sadomasochism; murder; morbid violence; or the use of illegal drugs.**" Wagner's epic manages to include almost all of these offences, often cloaked in seductive, heart-pounding music whose rhythms all too often can move an incautious listener to be carried away by - even identify with - the evils being acted out on stage."

John Pattinson's innate sense of delicacy precludes public investigation of most of the above; instead, his lecture will restrict itself to consideration of *Wagner & the Operatic Drug Scene*.

Potions, elixirs, philtres, drugs, mind-altering substances, have long been mainstays of literature and drama. Inevitably, opera composers have had frequent recourse to these handy household items, and Wagner is by no means an exception. Not only the *Ring* but also almost the entire Wagnerian oeuvre (*Parsifal* included) is carried along on a wave of drug dependency. Furthermore, it's a sobering thought (for the rest of us) that, from the moment he slays Fafner, Siegfried is continually under the influence of drink. On the other hand, the most famous love potion in history could quite possibly turn out to have been nothing more than a glass of water...



Aubrey Beardsley - another under the influence?

METROPOLITAN OPERA SEASON

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Season: Thursday 19th March to Wednesday 1 April 2015

James Levine conducts Wagner's only 'comedy' with Johan Reuter (Hans Sachs), Johan Botha (Walter), Annette Dasch (Eva) and Johannes Martin Kränzle (Beckmesser). For details including dates and screening times go to www.nzmetopera.com or the entertainment section of your local newspaper

Photo: Ken Howard



TRISTAN & ISOLDE IN SYDNEY

There are currently 16 people booked for the WSNZ trip to Sydney in June to attend the concert performance of *Tristan & Isolde*. While this is enough to go ahead with the tour there is a slight issue with the hotel in that they need 10 rooms to guarantee the group rate they quoted. 16 people equates to 9 rooms so Michael Sinclair is chasing everyone who was previously interested to see if they still want to go.

We could only hold the tickets until 16 January when the unsold ones had to be returned. If anyone is still interested in joining the tour it would have to be on a 'request' basis. This also applies for the accommodation. The Monday concert is by no means sold out so it should be possible to get a ticket.

Those keen to attend, who are not already booked, should contact Michael Sinclair (09 336 1742 or michael@theoperacritic.com) so that he can follow up with Renaissance to see if they can do anything.

WAGNER SOCIETY 2015 PROGRAM

Please note that both the Wellington and Christchurch programmes are still being finalized. The full programmes for each centre will appear in future newsletters.

Auckland

Sunday, 22 February at 7.30pm

Venue: Music Theatre, School of Music, University of Auckland, 6 Symonds St
Wagner & the Operatic Drug Scene:

John Pattinson will present an illustrated talk on the potions, elixirs, philtres, drugs and mind-altering substances that Wagner included in his operas

Sunday, 12 April at 3.30pm (NB Early start)

Venue: Music Theatre, School of Music, University of Auckland, 6 Symonds St
Die Walküre: complete opera from La Scala Milan: A magnificent production featuring our own Simon O'Neill with Waltraud Meier as Sieglinde

Sunday, 24 May at 7.30pm

Venue: Music Theatre, School of Music, University of Auckland, 6 Symonds St
AGM & Wagner in Exile: Chris

Brodrick introduces a documentary by Antoine Wagner in which he heads to Switzerland on the trail of his great, great-grandfather Richard Wagner who spent several years in political exile amongst the Alps

Sunday, 12 July at 7.30pm

Venue: Music Theatre, School of Music, University of Auckland, 6 Symonds St
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, 6 September 7.30pm

Venue: Music Theatre, School of Music, University of Auckland, 6 Symonds St
VIP evening: with Simon O'Neill and Heath Lees

Sunday 6 December 7.30pm

Venue: Music Theatre, School of Music, University of Auckland, 6 Symonds St
Christmas Function: Featuring a Pot-pourri of Wagneriana plus our famous cake and wine

Christchurch

Friday, 20 March at 7.30pm

Venue: Lecture Theatre A6, University of Canterbury

Introduction to Die Meistersinger: John Pattinson presents an introduction to Wagner's comic opera ahead of the New York MetLive screening at the Academy Cinema

OF NEW ZEALAND WAGNER GALA DETAILS

NZSO WAGNER GALA

Wellington

Friday, 12 June at 6.30pm

Venue: Michael Fowler Centre

Christchurch

Wednesday, 17 June at 7.00pm

Venue: Horncastle Arena

Auckland

Friday, 19 June at 7.00pm

Venue: Auckland Town Hall

Christine Goerke & Simon O'Neill with the NZSO under conductor Pietari Inkinen present a Wagner Gala concert that includes highlights from Act 3 *Siegfried* as well as the Funeral Music and Immolation Scene from *Götterdämmerung*



Simon O'Neill & Christine Goerke

Wellington

Sunday, 1 March at 4.00pm

Venue: St Andrew's on the Terrace Hall

Speaker (and date) yet to be finalized

Sunday, 12 April at 4.00pm

Venue: St Andrew's on the Terrace Hall

Singers of the Era of Cosima Wagner:

Professor Terence Dennis features some rare Wagner recordings.

Sunday 14 June at 4.00pm

Venue: St Andrew's on the Terrace Hall

Speaker to be confirmed

Monday 22 June at 7.00 pm

Venue: The Bergman Theatre, Paramount Cinemas, Courtenay Place

Joint meeting with the Opera Society.

Screening of the Chéreau *Das Rheingold* with Sir Donald McIntyre

Sunday 2 August at 4.00pm

Venue: St Andrew's on the Terrace Hall

Speaker (and date) yet to be finalized

Sunday 13 September at 4.00pm

Venue: St Andrew's on the Terrace Hall

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 29 November

Time and venue to be confirmed

Christmas Party. Details later

Dunedin

Sunday, 15 March at 2.00pm

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

Winifred's Tenors: Franz Völker and

Max Lorenz

Terence Dennis presents two of the greatest tenors that regularly appeared during Winifred Wagner's directorship of the Bayreuth Festival: Franz Völker and Max Lorenz. This seminar also features a 53 minute film documentary on Lorenz, with much fascinating period photography, and interviews with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau.

Sunday, 24 May at 1.00pm

Venue: Barclay Theatre, Otago Museum

Operatic Perspectives: Rossini's

William Tell

Rossini's crowning masterpiece, the grandiose *Guillaume Tell* influenced Wagner as a composer for the dramatic stage. This superlative performance from La Scala, Milan is conducted by Riccardo Muti, with Giorgio Zancanaro in the title role, along with soprano Cheryl Studer and tenor Chris Merritt.

Sunday, 19 July at 12.30pm

Venue: Te Rangi Hiroa College Viewing

Lounge, 192 Castle Street

Wagner: Lohengrin

A magnificent performance from the Vienna State Opera, conducted by Claudio Abbado with Plácido Domingo in the title role, Cheryl Studer as Elsa, Robert Lloyd as King Heinrich, Hartmut Welker as Telramund and Dunja Vejzovic as Ortrud.

Sunday, 6 September at 2.00pm

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

Historical Perspectives: The First

Recorded Ring

Terence Dennis presents a guided tour of the highlights of HMV's *Ring* recordings made between 1926-1932, including such singers as Frida Leider, Florence Austral, Lauritz Melchior, Walter Widdop, Friedrich Schorr and Ivar Andresen

Sunday, 29 November at 12.00pm

Venue: To be confirmed

Christmas Luncheon followed by

Wagner In Exile - DVD

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.

At the conclusion of the above and as a bonus, Terence Dennis will give a piano recital of works from Wagner's Swiss period.



COOL!

The Dunedin branch of the WSNZ believes in being well planned. So was it a coincidence that with the Te Rangi Hiroa College Hall already booked to show the Vienna State Opera's production of *Lohengrin* in July 2015, the members sat down to their Christmas dinner in December to find a swan gracing the centre of the table?

We are informed that the chef who prepared their buffet has a background in ice carving and thought a swan would be ideal to decorate the table. In short he was right as it provided a real point of interest!

An ice swan also conjures up a hybrid opera: Ice Princess who is not supposed to ask the question, but does, meets ice swan... *Lohandot* or *Turengrin*?



WOTAN RETIRES

Terje Stensvold, the Norwegian baritone who sang Wotan in the Melbourne *Ring*, has retired at the age of 71. He regularly appeared at leading opera houses around the world, including the Hamburg, Munich, Berlin, Vienna, Royal Opera in Stockholm, La Scala Milan, Covent Garden and the Salzburg Festival, singing around eighty roles. These ranged from Professor Higgins in *My Fair Lady* through Mozart's *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni* to heavier roles such as Iago (*Otello*), Klingsor (*Parsifal*) and Wotan. His performances in the Melbourne *Ring* resulted in Terje Stensvold being awarded the Helpmann Award for Best Male Opera Singer in a production in Australia.

EXPERIENCE WAGNER THROUGH NEW BOOK

The number of books written on or about Richard Wagner and his work would fill metres of shelving in any library. Most, unfortunately, fall below the radar but every now and again a publication comes along that causes great excitement. One such book was released at the end of 2014 with the enthusiastic support of Dame Gwyneth Jones and our own Sir Donald McIntyre.

At 800 pages with 100 illustrations *The Wagner Experience* is a monumental work and the culmination of a lifetime's work for author Paul Dawson Bowling.

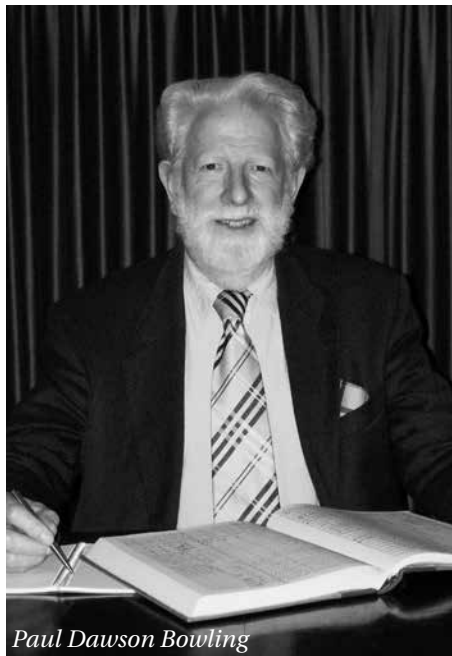
He studied classics at school and classics and philosophy at Oxford, and joined the Civil Service for five years before beginning, aged 29, to train as a Doctor of Medicine. For thirty years he was consequently a family doctor at Faversham in East Kent, where he still lives.

His love affair with Wagner began in 1958 when, still a school-boy, he bicycled across Europe to Bayreuth for the *Ring* and those other great works of Wagner's maturity, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Die Meistersinger*, and *Parsifal*.

For twenty-five years he has been a principal reviewer for *Wagner News*, and has published numerous articles on Wagner in the UK and America; he is also well known as a lecturer.

In his review of the *The Wagner Experience* Barry Millington editor of the *Wagner Journal* picks up the book's different approach to Wagner: 'Paul Dawson Bowling's book draws on a deep knowledge of medical and psychological matters to offer valuable insights into Wagner's inner life and thus into the works themselves.'

The website the-wagnerian.com comments "Expounding in colourful style the stories, the sources and the lessons of Wagner's great dramas, he (Dawson Bowling) offers unusual insights into the man, his works and their meaning, while grappling with the music's almost occult power. Before taking us through the ten great dramas themselves, he discusses Wagner's formative experiences, his aspirations and his mentality; also his first wife Minna and her immense but unrecognised impact. This sets up lenses through which the reader may more accurately view not only Wagner the man and his less appealing aspects, but more importantly his stage works, since, as Dawson Bowling insists, the best encounter with Wagner's dramas is the direct one. Uniquely drawing on a lifetime's experience in General

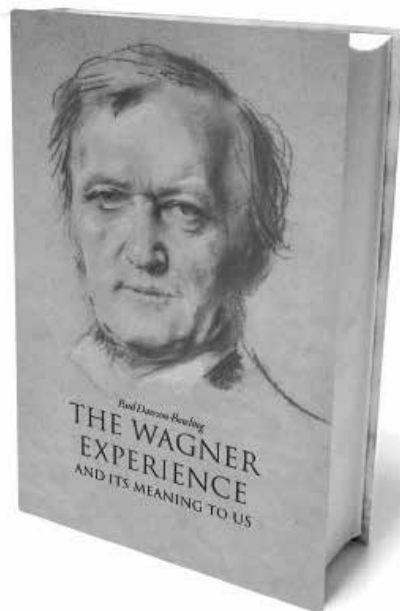


Paul Dawson Bowling

Medical Practice, the author brings a wisdom, humanity and psychological understanding to his study of the life and work of Wagner, with especial reference to the thought of Carl Jung. Above all, this book draws out the vital lessons which Wagner's extraordinary, didactic dramas can offer us. It reveals their lessons as life-enhancing: capable of transforming our society, our lives and ourselves. There is no other book about Wagner quite like it."

Dame Gwyneth Jones writes: "One feels that a very dear friend is guiding you through this journey of Wagner's life, with a desire to share his own love and admiration for the composer in order than you may also share his incredible Wagner experience.

He has done tremendous research and delves into every aspect of Wagner's life and his music dramas. One constantly discovers things that you may somehow have missed in the past, like the fact that Wagner had originally intended the scene in *Das*



Rheingold between Wotan and Erda to be with the three Norns. Also, his descriptions of the wildly intense, sensuous relationship with Minna is a revelation. They met when he was just 21 years old. She was three years older than him and was an extremely beautiful woman and a very talented actress. She went through heaven and hell with him on his various escapades, fleeing because of their debts, being shot at by border guards, causing their carriage to overturn resulting in Minna having a miscarriage which was probably the cause of her childlessness afterwards. Also the near shipwreck on the flight from Riga to London, which was the inspiration for *Der fliegende Holländer*. She was so terrified that she begged Richard to lash her to him, so that they could drown and perish together. No wonder that she became the source and inspiration for all the heroines in Wagner's dramas! She was his muse and in her he saw his archetype, his ideal, the perfect example for Elisabeth, Venus, Elsa, Sieglinde, Brünnhilde, Senta, Eva and Guttrune. Mathilde Wesendonck became his muse for Isolde when the love between Wagner and Minna began to fade, but he continued to hope and believe that each new attraction would bring him that same heightened state of mind and being which Minna had brought him."

In the book's preface Sir Donald McIntyre writes: "Read Paul's book! He has lots of convincing answers to many of these questions Wagner asks. And after reading this book, each of you will be better qualified to come up with your own personal ideas. Paul has challenged us all with his own findings: he has certainly challenged me. He has also provided us with many facts about Wagner as man and artist. 'Ask and you will find.'

Paul has already inspired me to write my autobiography, which I have now started, about my life as a singer, particularly of the works of Wagner. In so doing, I am in a constant state of excitement while exploring deeper. Therefore, what I am most intrigued by is Paul's assessment of Wagner as a man. I confess I didn't know enough about Wagner's life and had read unreliable assessments. However, what I've long been sure of is what I have studied in his works and tried to portray throughout my career: sheer genius!"

The Wagner Experience is available through Amazon.co.uk or directly from www.thewagnerexperience.co.uk website where you can purchase a signed copy for £30 plus p&p, £5 less than the RRP.