



## THE MERRY MONTH OF MAY... AGM - 25 MAY

*The Wagner Society AGM is to be held on Sunday 25 May 2014 at the School of Music, 6 Symonds Street, Auckland at 7.30pm.*

So far, Committee and Office-Bearer nominations have been received as follows:

President ..... Chris Brodrick  
Vice President ..... Ken Tomkins  
Secretary ..... Peter Rowe  
Treasurer ..... Jeanette Miller  
PR/Liaison ..... Gloria Streat  
Committee ..... Lesley Kendall  
..... Bob O'Hara  
..... John Davidson  
..... Juliet Rowe

If you wish to make a nomination:

Phone: Peter at 09-520 4690

Email: [info@wagnersociety.org.nz](mailto:info@wagnersociety.org.nz).

to be sent a form. Nominations can also be made from the floor at the meeting.

### PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO SOCIETY RULES

The Annual General Meeting will be asked to consider a straightforward amendment to the Society's rules which currently state that notice of the AGM has to be 'posted' out to members. The committee will be seeking the membership's approval to send notices of future AGMs by email as well as by post. Please note that the notice of the 2014 AGM is being sent by post.

### CHANGE OF BALANCE DATE

The WSNZ relies heavily on a number of individuals who freely give their time to help run the Society. One such member is John Hambling who over the years has accepted the task of auditing the Society's financial accounts. In order to make his job a little bit easier by removing our end of financial year away from the 'popular' 31 March, the committee has opted to run the accounts on a 1 Jan to 31 Dec year. Membership will still come up for renewal on 1 April and be accrued accordingly.

### WHAT'S ON

As we head into winter the number of WSNZ meetings ramp up. In May the membership from each centre will meet to hear a wide range of topics. It all starts in Dunedin on Sunday 11 May when Professor John Drummond will present his second talk to the society: *Wagner and Hotels*, the sequel to *Wagner and Trains*. *Wagner and Hotels* looks at two life-changing moments for Wagner which took place in hotels, one in Chemnitz in 1849 and one in Stuttgart in 1864. John will repeat his talk the following Friday (16 May) in Christchurch.

A couple of weeks later, on Sunday 25 May, Wellington members will be able to hear Margaret Medlyn present an illustrated talk: *Embodying Kundry: From Metempsychosis to Metamorphosis*.

**Please note that there has been a change of date for this meeting from that previously published.**

On the same evening in Auckland the WSNZ AGM will take place and be followed by the third in Chris Brodrick's series of *The View from the Stage*: a look at the famous and not so famous who attended the Bayreuth festivals. The period covering the third talk is perhaps the darkest in the history of the Festival,



Wide World Photos

### NEW BANK ACCOUNT

At the end of 2013 the WSNZ switched its banking from the BNZ to Kiwibank. As with any change there is an awkward transition, particularly when it comes to paying membership fees on-line. If you are using the internet to pay your subscription could you please double check to see that the WSNZ is set up correctly.

The new account number is:

Kiwi Bank: **38-9015-0531788-00**  
under the account name **The Wagner Society of New Zealand.**

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

2014/15 membership subscriptions are now due. Thanks to everyone who has already paid and a friendly reminder to those who have still to renew. If you are one of these you can pay either by cheque to 11 Dunkerron Avenue, Epsom, Auckland 1071 or by direct credit as outlined in the renewal form that was sent last month.

1924-1944: a time when the festival was commandeered by the Nazi party and in turn has led to the incorrect perception that Richard Wagner was somehow associated with the atrocities of World War 2.

### BAYREUTH FESTIVAL 1937.

*Winifred Wagner talking to German Chancellor, Adolf Hitler in the garden of the Wahnfried Villa. L to R Hitler's adjutant, Wolfgang Wagner, Winifred Wagner, SA-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Brückner, Adolf Hitler, and Wieland Wagner.*

New Address: 11 Dunkerron Avenue, Epsom, Auckland 1071 • Ph: (09) 520 4690

63 Speight Road, St Heliers, Auckland 1071 • Ph: (09) 575 5206

• Web site: [www.wagnersociety.org.nz](http://www.wagnersociety.org.nz)

## TRISTAN & ISOLDE PREVIEW



The first *Tristan & Isolde*: Ludwig and Malvina Schnorr von Carolsfeld. Is it possible they warmed up to 19th century punk or techno?



If those attending the concert performance of *Tristan & Isolde* in Auckland on 19 July encounter some strange, non-operatic sounds emanating from backstage prior to the performance, fear not. You will be in the right place. The sounds will be no more than our Tristan and Isolde getting 'in the mood!' Maybe 'warming up' would be a more accurate description!

Our lovers, who both hail from Sweden, are not only world-class opera singers but are also involved in rock music and use the genre to prepare themselves for their singing roles.

Lars Cleveman (top right) who will sing Tristan lives a musical double-life as opera singer and performer in Sweden's first electronic underground group, Dom Dummaste which he founded in 1980 with fellow musician Martin Rössel. As an opera singer Lars has performed at Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm, made his debut at Covent Garden in 2009 as Tristan, replacing an indisposed Ben Heppner, and subsequently sang at Bayreuther Festspiele in 2011. In May 2013, Cleveman made his debut at the Metropolitan Opera singing the role of Siegfried in the third of three performances of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*.

His Isolde, Annalena Persson (bottom right), according to Ed Vulliamy in the Observer "will probably pump herself up with either the Rolling Stones, Bruce Springsteen or a favourite band from her native Sweden, Ebba Grön. 'It's how I get myself ready,' she explains. 'Some people at the Royal Opera in Stockholm used to ask me to turn the music down,

but we're not all like that. There are people in opera who know exactly what Britney Spears is doing.' Persson is as relaxed and casual as her Isolde is intense and overpowering. She likes to talk about the 'muscularity' of the tenors singing opposite her." This opinion is backed up by Rian Evans in the Guardian "As for Persson, everything about her suggests a Wagner singer to be reckoned with. She has an almost animal presence, vital and impetuous, and her voice has a luxurious velvet tone. In Persson, Isolde's awareness of her power of sexual healing was implicit, reflected in a glowing intensity of sound and sustained right through to her ultimate transfiguration."

Phew! Could be a warm winter's night in Auckland.

For the record Persson won the 2003 International Vocal Competition for young Wagner voices in Bayreuth and has gone on to sing Senta, Isolde, Eva, Sieglinde, Brünnhilde and Kundry as well as Butterfly, Tatiana, Salome and Elizabeth in Verdi's *Don Carlos*.

For the curious, clips of the electronic/drum and bass/dance Dom Dummaste and the punk Ebba Grön can be found on Youtube.

*Tristan & Isolde* with Eckehard Stier conducting the Auckland Philharmonia will be performed on Saturday 19 July 2014 starting at 4pm in the Auckland Town Hall. According to the Ticketmaster web site tickets are still available (<http://www.ticketmaster.co.nz>).

*Tristan & Isolde* is supported by the Wagner New Zealand Foundation

### SKY'S THE LIMIT!

Heath Lees' films *Wagner's Ring - A Tale Told in Music* have been bought by Sky TV's Arts Channel, and will be shown periodically, starting from May 2nd at 7pm. Check your Skywatch for timings.

It should also be noted that Heath Lees has an article in the latest edition (Vol 8 No 1) of the *Wagner Journal*. Titled *Transformation at Trieschen: How a French Literary Trio Became a Wagnerian Musical Trio* Heath looks at the two visits to Wagner's Villa on Lake Lucerne that were made by Judith Gautier, her then husband Catulle Mendès, and Villiers de l'Isle-Adam.

### NEW MEMBERS

A big Wagnerian welcome to:

Pat Pilkington..... Christchurch  
Heather Kinsey ..... Paraparaumu  
Diane Hill ..... Auckland  
Elizabeth McLeay ..... Wellington

### IT WAS TWENTY YEARS AGO ....

In all the excitement of last year's bi-centenary of Richard Wagner's birth it's easy to overlook our very own landmark. In 2014 the Wagner Society of New Zealand celebrates the 20th birthday of its foundation!

It's a scary thought that at the end of this year it will have been a decade since the 2004 Adelaide *Ring!* Doesn't time fly when you're having fun!

# WAGNER SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND 2014 PROGRAMME DETAILS

## Auckland

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, 25 May at 4.00pm

(PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE)

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 at 11.00am

Venue: Film School Theatre, 86 Vivian Street

Joint meeting with the Opera Society.

DVD screening of the Hans Jürgen

Syberberg film of *Parsifal*

Sunday, 13 July at 4.00pm

Venue: St Andrew's on the Terrace, Church Hall

**Tristan and Isolde – The Classical and**

**Medieval Background:** An illustrated talk by John Davidson

Sunday, 21 September at 4.00pm

[venue to be confirmed]

John Pattinson will give an illustrated talk entitled *Wagner and the Operatic Drug Scene*

Sunday, 16 November at 4.00pm

[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

## Christchurch

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*

## RICHARD WAGNER

### VERBAND INTERNATIONAL

The Wagner Society of New Zealand has resigned from the Richard Wagner Verband International (the international association of Wagner societies) as the committee cannot justify the cost of membership. A couple of years ago the cost of the Verband membership was increased to 2 Euros per WSNZ member which immediately doubled our annual subscription. For the past couple of years we managed to renegotiate a smaller levy and at the same time we looked into the benefits the WSNZ actually received for its membership. The answer was quite simple: Nothing!

We had no representation, received no financial information and had virtually no opportunity to participate in the Verband's activities as they were all Eurocentric.

Interestingly we are not alone in our decision as the famous Associació Wagneriana de Barcelona has also thrown in the towel over its dissatisfaction at the types of projects the Verband supports.

## Dunedin

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, 5 October at 2.00pm

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

### BARENBOIM'S WAGNER *Ring* cycle NOW AVAILABLE ON A USB

Warner Records has issued the 1991 Bayreuth *Ring* cycle conducted by Daniel Barenboim and featuring John Tomlinson, Anne Evans and Siegfried Jerusalem, on a single (USB) flash drive. The USB also includes two films, a BBC documentary *Great Composers - Wagner*, and *The making of the Ring*. There's also a feature explaining and exploring 65 of the major leitmotifs in the opera, showing them marked out in scores.

Available from Amazon.co.uk - search for Barenboim Ring - £47.16

It once again gives me great pleasure to present the President's Report to the membership of the Wagner Society of New Zealand. The 2013/14 year was another special year for us, in particular the marking of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Wilhelm Richard Wagner and the culmination of those celebrations in the production of the *Ring* in Melbourne at the end of the year. In addition let's not forget New Zealand Opera's production of *Der Fliegende Holländer* in the middle of the year. Before we get too far ahead let's in the words of Dylan Thomas, "...begin at the beginning..."

Overall 2013 was dominated by the Melbourne *Ring* and it is Michael Sinclair that we should thank for co-ordinating members, tickets, accommodation and travel. Despite being domiciled outside of New Zealand for much of the year he ensured that he saw the project through and, judging from reports, everyone had a great time.

The other major Wagner production of the bicentenary year was *Der Fliegende Holländer* which was performed in both Wellington and Auckland. The Society through its Charitable Trust, the Wagner New Zealand Foundation, was delighted to financially support the production and in particular to have the season dedicated to the memory of the late Roa Morrissey whose generous bequest has made it possible for the Society to provide support for Wagner events and activities. The forthcoming concert performance of *Tristan & Isolde* is another Wagner project to be granted support.

To coincide with the Melbourne *Ring* our President Emeritus Heath Lees produced, with an Australian production company, 4 DVDs on the tetralogy, *A Tale Told in Music*. Those of us who know Heath and have listened to his talks know what a wonderful communicator he is and if anyone can sell *the Ring* to 'non believers' it is Heath. After sending the DVDs to my brother-in-law, who was putting his toe in the water so to speak, I received a most enthusiastic email back wanting recommendations about which recording to buy! We all know the power of Heath's presentation skills so it was particularly nice that the WSNZ was able to support the venture and allow those outside the WSNZ to experience his passion for Wagner.

The WSNZ is extraordinarily fortunate to have such a large number of presenters who are able to cover such wide ranging topics. In 2013/4 we thank Michael Sinclair, Aidan Lang, Heath Lees, John Pattinson, Sid Kennedy, Terence Dennis and Ken Tomkins for their contributions.

We also thank those members in each centre who organised these meetings including a number of social events. In Auckland Ken Tomkins was ably supported by Helen Kirkman, Juliet Rowe, Bob O'Hara and David Colemore-Williams.

In Wellington Les Holborow handed over the reins to John Davidson who, with Tibby Warmington, Ann Mallinson and Michael Ashdown, arranged the meetings, and co-ordinated with the New Zealand Opera Society for a screening of *Die Meistersinger*. Thanks also to Tibby Warmington and Adrian Simcock for once again opening up their home for Wagner's birthday celebration.

In the South Island Christchurch continued to be led by Gloria Streat who, along with Elizabeth Cooch, Jenny Lee and John Pattinson, ensured that everything ran smoothly. Lesley Kendall and Terence Dennis continued their wonderful work in Dunedin. Take a quick glance at the topics on the Dunedin programme and you will see the diverse and interesting subjects they have assembled.

In last year's President's report we noted that Barry Littlewood had taken on the role of WSNZ Secretary after Michael Sinclair stepped down. Barry agreed to undertake the role until a more permanent appointment could be made. As you will be aware Peter Rowe agreed to take over the position of Secretary on a permanent basis at the end of 2013. We are all grateful to Barry for the 10 months work he did on behalf of the Society.

We also need to thank Peter for his other roles, namely our honorary solicitor and Chairman of the Wagner New Zealand Foundation in which he works with Heather Simpson, Sir Michael Hardie Boys and Terence Dennis. To those Foundation members we give our thanks.

John Hambling continues as our honorary auditor and, once again, our grateful thanks for keeping an eye on the books. We hope that the change in balance date to 31 December will ease some of the pressure and make the audit a less onerous task.

The 'National' committee convenes at least four times a year thanks to the conference call facilities provided by Minter Ellison. There was another change in committee membership during the year when Les Holborow stood down and was replaced by John Davidson. Wellington members and those of us on the committee would like to thank Les for his valuable input over the last few years and to also extend a warm welcome to John.

Committee members during 2013/14 were Christopher Brodrick (President), Ken Tomkins (Vice President), Barry Littlewood/Peter Rowe (Secretary), Jeanette Miller (Treasurer), Juliet Rowe (Minute Secretary), Bob O'Hara (Auckland), Les Holborow/John Davidson (Wellington), Gloria Streat (Christchurch), Lesley Kendall (Dunedin). My thanks to the committee for all the time you spend on ensuring that we have a smoothly run society. Without people being prepared to help out we would not have a society!

Final thanks to all those who contributed to the 6 editions of the newsletter that were produced during the year. The task of writing a newsletter on average once every eight weeks is somewhat daunting and can take a considerable amount of time and effort. So those who are prepared to contribute articles, however long or short, are blessed. My involvement with the newsletter goes back nearly ten years and I sometimes wonder if, like writing this President's Report, I am not just repeating myself and boring everyone silly! So please keep the articles coming and if anyone would like to help out with the newsletter by researching and writing please do contact me.

My final comment is a plea to every member to encourage their friends and acquaintances to join up, particularly the young. The Wagner Society of New Zealand offers a huge range of interesting and stimulating talks. While it is difficult to move the perception that Wagner is only '*The Ride of the Valkyries*' it is by showing them the other facets of Wagner that we, as WSNZ members experience at each meeting, can break down the narrow-minded view of Wagner. There is nothing wrong with what we offer. We just have to make sure that we continue to attract new and younger members!

**CHRISTOPHER BRODRICK, PRESIDENT**