



## FLYING START TO 2013



To mark the bi-centenary of Wagner's 1813 birth NBR New Zealand Opera will present the Master's first great opera *Der Fliegende Holländer* (*The Flying Dutchman*) in Wellington during September and in the following month in Auckland.

General Director of NBR New Zealand Opera, Aidan Lang, is excited to be presenting *The Flying Dutchman*. "This is a fantastic, big opera," he says, "with an incredibly challenging score, strong and enigmatic characters, brooding tension and boundless emotion.

"To do the work justice," he says, "it needs an outstanding director, and we have that in dynamic young Australian Matthew Lutton who is known for his intense theatricality."

"It also needs superb singers who are also compelling actors. And to that end, we have a line-up including electrifying Irish soprano Orla Boylan (top right) as Senta, top New Zealand bass Paul Whelan (top left) as Daland, British tenor Peter Auty as Erik (an impressive Turiddu in last year's *Cav & Pag*), and returning after a star turn as Enrico in 2007's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Welsh baritone Jason Howard (top centre) as *The Dutchman*."

This new production of *The Flying Dutchman* signifies the first Wagner opera to be presented by NBR New Zealand Opera, and the first step in an important new series of collaborations with Opera Queensland. The Wellington season also sees a departure from the norm, with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra accompanying.

### DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER

Richard Wagner

*Sung in German with English surtitles*

Conductor ..... Wyn Davies  
Director ..... Matthew Lutton  
Production Designer ..... Zoe Atkinson  
Lighting Designer ..... Jon Buswell  
*The Dutchman* ..... Jason Howard  
Senta ..... Orla Boylan  
Daland ..... Paul Whelan  
Erik ..... Peter Auty  
Steersman ..... Shaun Dixon  
Mary ..... Wendy Doyle

NEW ZEALAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
AUCKLAND PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA  
CHAPMAN TRIPP OPERA CHORUS

WELLINGTON –

ST JAMES THEATRE

14, 19, 21 September – 7.30pm,  
17 September – 6.00pm

AUCKLAND –

ASB THEATRE, AOTEA CENTRE

5, 10, 12 October – 7.30pm,  
8 October – 6.30pm

BOOKINGS:

NZ Opera Box Office:

Tel 0800 NZOPERA (0800 696 737)  
or [bookings@nzopera.co.nz](mailto:bookings@nzopera.co.nz)

Auckland: The Edge,  
Tel 0800 BUYTICKETS (0800 289 842) or  
[www.buytickets.co.nz](http://www.buytickets.co.nz)

Wellington: Ticketek,  
Tel 0800 TICKETEK (0800 842 538)  
or [www.ticketek.co.nz](http://www.ticketek.co.nz)

Christchurch: Ticketek,  
Tel 0800 TICKETEK (0800 842 538)  
or [www.ticketek.co.nz](http://www.ticketek.co.nz)

\*Booking fees apply

### END OF THE YEAR

With this, the sixth newsletter for 2012 we mark the end of another year. In all our branches we will celebrate this year's activities with social events and the opportunity to catch up and have a jolly good natter with fellow members. It will then be Christmas and before we know it we will be back together in 2013. I hardly need to remind you that 2013 is particularly special for opera-lovers as the year marks the 200th anniversaries of the birth of both Richard Wagner and Giuseppe Verdi. Appropriately we will start next year with Peter Bassett presenting a talk about these two great nineteenth century composers. Something to which we can look forward.

In the meantime on behalf of the WSNZ committee I wish you a wonderful Christmas and a relaxing break.

### MORE SAD NEWS

This year has been bitter sweet. Sweet for the wonderful concert performance of the *Die Walküre* and the visit of Christine Brewer to Auckland but these wonderful occasions have been offset by the loss of some very dear members. In September we reported on the death of John Morrison and, just as I was starting to collect material for this newsletter, the very sad news came, within minutes, of the deaths of Patricia Holborow and Noelle Brownlie. Both Patricia and Noelle were at the heart of the Wellington and Christchurch branches and will be a huge loss to those groups. All members of the WSNZ send Les Holborow and Bert Brownlie and their respective families our deepest sympathy.

*Leb wohl, du kühnes, herrliches Kind*



American Wagner devotee Rich Fackenthal has created an app for the iPhone, iPod & iPad that is just what every tech-savvy

Wagnerian needs for their Apple i-device - Wagner Ring. The app has a database of over 150 important leitmotifs in the *Ring* along with a piano rendition of each.

Just touch a leitmotif name in the list and it plays. The leitmotifs are presented in a list sorted by opera (*Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried and Gotterdammerung*) and then by first occurrence. Each opera heading can be expanded to show the complete list of leitmotifs first presented in that opera.

Study of *the Ring* is literally at hand! Search for Wagner Ring in the App Store.

### JOHN MORRISON &

### ROA MORRISSEY ESTATES

The executors of the Late John Morrison have written to the Trustees of the Wagner New Zealand Foundation to inform them that John had left a \$10,000 bequest in his will.

Meanwhile Roa Morrissey's executors have found additional assets and, under the terms of her will, have forwarded a further \$42,000 to the Society.

### BAYREUTH TICKETS

After a year of frustration and a sense of being ignored, it appears there may be a breakthrough in the Bayreuth ticket saga.

A recent email from the Friends of Bayreuth indicates that the Festival Board has decided to reinstate a ticket allocation to the Wagner Societies. The change of heart may well have been brought about by economics because, while this year's festival sold out, the reduced number of Wagner Society members meant less business for hotels, guest houses and restaurants. Typically our fellow Wagnerites travel from afar and, in doing so, oil the wheels of the Bayreuth economy.

N.B. Michael has already applied for our usual ticket allocation for 2013.



Amanda Atlas and her husband Ravil

### FOUNDATION PROVIDES SUPPORT

The Wagner New Zealand Foundation is delighted to be able to provide financial assistance to soprano Amanada Atlas to enable her to attend the Lisa Gasteen Opera School in Brisbane during Nov-Dec 2012. Amanda was one of the Valkiwis in the NZSO concert performances of *Die Walküre* and, as she is now specialising in the German repertoire, particularly Wagner, she felt it was important that she took the opportunity to study with two of the great Wagner singers of recent years, Lisa Gasteen and Siegfried Jerusalem, who will both be teaching at the school. Amanda says that *"having the chance to work and coach with the two of them will be invaluable to my development as I learn these roles. The coaches on the staff, notably John Fisher, are all expert in this repertoire and work with singers at the highest level, so there is so much I can learn from them. Wagnerian works are not performed often in New Zealand, so it is also important for me to make contacts in Australia. Having artistic staff from Opera Queensland and Opera Australia, as well as agents from Europe and Australia, attend could be very advantageous."*

Amanda will report back to us on her return. In the meantime we wish her the very best of times.

Meanwhile another New Zealand singer, London based Rhonda Browne, has won a place in the [London] Wagner Society's Bayreuth bursary competition final which takes place on 1 December at 2.30pm at the London Welsh Centre in Grays Inn Road, London. The prize is to spend a couple of weeks in Bayreuth next summer to see operas, do some workshops and meet singers, conductors and agents.

We wish Rhonda every success in the final.

Left : Rhonda Browne as the Witch in *Hansel & Gretel*

## MICHAEL SINCLAIR

### STEPS DOWN

It is with particular sadness that we have to report that Michael Sinclair has decided to step down from his roles as WSNZ Secretary and Auckland organiser. He plans to spend extended periods out of New Zealand over the next few years and felt he would be unable to fulfil his WSNZ role.

The Society is extremely grateful for all the work that Michael has taken on since he took up the position and he will be missed by all of us. We are also grateful that he has agreed to not only continue to look after the Melbourne *Ring* bookings but to update the society web site.

At the recent meeting of the national committee it was decided that we would separate the position of national Secretary and Auckland organiser and seek two Auckland based people to fill the roles.

#### ROLE DESCRIPTIONS:

##### National Secretary

- Look after and update the membership database that is run on a standard PC.
- Send out membership renewals and reminders in coordination with the Treasurer
- Handle all the incoming and outgoing correspondence
- Apply for Bayreuth tickets and arrange their allocation and payment
- Be a member of the National Committee

##### Auckland Organiser

- Plan, in conjunction with the other NZ centres, the Auckland programme each year (2013 has already been organised)
- Organise bookings with the School of Music
- Make the necessary arrangements for speakers including flights and accommodation
- Introduce the Auckland meetings
- Be a member of the National Committee

By splitting Michael's current role in half we have created two positions that, we believe, will be more manageable. We encourage all our Auckland members to seriously consider taking on one of these roles and help to ensure that the WSNZ not only continues to run smoothly but continues to flourish.

For more details or expressions of interest please contact:

##### Michael Sinclair:

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

Phone: 09 528 0776 or

##### Chris Brodrick:

Email [cbrodrick@extra.co.nz](mailto:cbrodrick@extra.co.nz)

Phone: 03 343 0353

# WSNZ 2012 PROGRAMME DETAILS

## Auckland

**Sunday 9 December 7.30pm**

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

### Wagner's Early Operas:

Terence Dennis presents *Die Feen* (The Fairies) and *Das Liebesverbot* (The Ban on Love) – plus Christmas festivities!

## Wellington

**Sunday, 25 November 6.00pm**

(Note slightly later time)

Venue: 27 Wade Street, Wadestown

### Christmas Cocktails

End-of-year Christmas celebration at the home of Tibby and Adrian Simcock. RSVP to email: manda4@xtra.co.nz or phone: 472 7029

## Christchurch

**Friday 26 October 7.30pm**

Venue: A6, University of Canterbury

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

**Sunday 25 November 6.00pm**

Venue: TBA Christmas Barbecue

## Dunedin

**Sunday, 4 November 2.00pm**

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

**Women in Wagner's Life and Art:** Some of Wagner's most intriguing operatic characters are women – often appearing as part-angel, part-demon — Elisabeth, Venus, Kundry . . . Heath Lees investigates.

**Sunday, 2 December 12.00 noon**

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

**Christmas Luncheon:** followed by *The Golden Ring* documentary.

## NEW MEMBERS

A big Wagnerian welcome to:

Peter Raudkivi.....Auckland  
Kevin Cloonan.....Auckland  
Grant Moffat.....Auckland  
Mark Ebery.....Auckland  
Vivien Chisholm.....Christchurch  
Paul Moreham.....Christchurch  
Alison Grimshaw.....Christchurch  
Tony Reeve.....Dunedin  
Garth Ireland.....Wellington  
Allison Kirkman.....Wellington

# RING FOR CHRISTMAS?

For those of you who are looking for that 'special' Christmas present to yourself, may we suggest a Deluxe limited edition of the Solti *Ring* described by BBC Music Magazine in January 2012 as "The greatest recording of all time!"

Solti's recording of Wagner's epic music-drama *Der Ring des Nibelungen* was a recording project on a scale without precedent and the first-ever studio recording of Wagner's masterpiece. Recorded between September 1958 and November 1965, it was masterminded by legendary producer John Culshaw and his

1967 and long out of print – it is an integral element in this special edition

- Blu-ray disc: The complete *Ring* on one disc presented as lossless 24-bit files
- *The Ride of the Valkyries*: Special facsimile of one of Sir Georg Solti's working scores with his markings explained and commentary by Charles Kaye
- Art prints: 5 high-quality art prints of recording session photos



technical team under the direction of chief engineer Gordon Parry. This massive undertaking set new standards in both opera recording and the possibilities of the effective and imaginative use of stereo. For the first time ever DECCA presents the most comprehensive *Ring* edition ever assembled.

This luxury edition of the famous recording has been newly-remastered and includes:-

- The complete *Ring* cycle presented on 14 CDs:
- 2 CDs: An introduction to *Der Ring des Nibelungen* by Wagner scholar Deryck Cooke + book with spoken text and music examples
- DVD: *The Golden Ring*. The acclaimed BBC documentary directed by Humphrey Burton and filmed during *Götterdämmerung* sessions
- CD: Wagner Overtures + *Siegfried Idyll* + *Kinderkatchechismus* recordings made in Vienna during the years when the *Ring* was in progress

And exclusive to this edition:

- *Ring Resounding* John Culshaw's fascinating account of the entire *Ring* project from inception to completion – first published in

- Gramophone Special 40 page brochure with facsimiles of original DECCA advertisements and reviews

This edition can be pre-ordered from MDT in the UK (<http://www.mdt.co.uk>) by going to their home page and searching for 'Solti Der Ring'. Scroll down the page and on the left hand side you will see a panel headed *Der Ring des Nibelungen* - Solti. Clicking on the panel will lead you into the limited edition web page from which you can place your order.



Also just released on DVD and Blu-ray the recent Metropolitan *Ring* directed by Robert Lepage. Included in the set is the documentary *Wagner's Dream* that looks at the making of this *Ring* production. Both formats are available at Amazon.



Photo: Wellis Photography

## OPERA IN THE COTSWOLDS.

*For those looking for a Ring with a difference Christchurch member Ross Seagar has found the answer.*

What a funny old thing being a Wagner enthusiast is. I'm just a layman who has caught the Wagner bug and who recently found himself (improbably) immersed in a week of Wagner in the UK.

The trip was to spend a week at the Oxford University's Summer School based at Christ Church college. Each year over the summer, Oxford University offers a range of courses as part of what they call *The Oxford Experience*. I'd been told about the summer schools by a friend's father who had been last year and when I checked the web site for 2012 ([www.conted.ox.ac.uk](http://www.conted.ox.ac.uk)), discovered a course on Wagner's *Ring*.

What a tremendous experience. Firstly, just the opportunity to live in Christ Church a stunning college founded in 1524 by Cardinal Wolsey. Entering the main *Tom Gate* you are ushered into another world. I'd visited Oxford before and admired the beautiful colleges from the outside, but here is an opportunity to live in one of them for a week. Not the least of the experiences was taking each meal in the Hogwarts Dining Hall – Christ Church's dining hall being the backdrop for the Harry Potter movies.

The course was taken by Jonathan Darnborough, a pianist, composer and lecturer at Oxford University, and his wife, soprano Claire-Louise Lucas. It's been a while since I've been to school so I had forgotten (if I ever really appreciated it!) how wonderful it is to listen to someone who knows so much about their subject, and can convey their knowledge and enthusiasm so easily to the great unwashed. I highly recommend the Oxford Experience to you.

The real point of writing though, was that, on arrival in London, I had read a review of *Götterdämmerung* at the Longborough Festival Opera. I'd never heard of the Longborough Festival but



Photo: Clive Barda

did note that the final performance of the opera was to be during the week I was at Oxford. On the Tuesday morning I asked an assistant at the College to see if he could find out where Longborough was. If it was within, say, an hour of Oxford, could he contact them and see if there were any return tickets. As luck would have it Longborough is in Gloucestershire, 50 minutes from Oxford and yes, one ticket was available.

### WHAT A MAGIC NIGHT.

The Longborough Opera Festival is the brainchild of Martin and Lizzie Graham. Apparently they have made a lot of money from property and they are great opera fans. They have therefore done the next obvious thing and built an opera house in the garden of their beautiful home! This is really just a big tin shed, lined in plywood and filled with old movie theatre seats where the Graham's finance an opera season each year. The theatre holds only about 400 people and is up close and personal. What is also nice, is that they and their supporters provide all the funding.

This was Wagner in a quite different environment. I've seen the *Ring* a couple of times in the usual large theatre where the action takes place on a vast stage way off in the distance. This was right there in your face.

Photo: Clive Barda

Photo: Donald Cooper  
*The Sunday Times*



Clockwise from the left:-Martin & Lizzie Graham,  
*The Norns*, Rachel Nicholls as Brünnhilde,  
Stuart Pendred as Hagen

I guess I'd bought into the idea that Wagner is grand opera on a grand scale and that it needs a huge stage and resources to put it on – the logical conclusion being that New Zealand opera does not have the resources for a *Ring Cycle*. The Longborough Festival production puts a lie to this. The experience was at least equal to the Met, where I saw the *Ring* last. It can be done.

I'm not a reviewer, so will leave you to google the reviews on-line. Suffice it to say that they are very good. As an example, Michael Tanner in *The Spectator* begins with "If I said what I really thought about *Götterdämmerung* at the Longborough Festival ... anyone who wasn't there would think I was madly exaggerating...Raving doesn't make for enjoyable reading, I realise, so I'll try to be a bit more specific..."

Rachel Nicholls, the Brünnhilde, gets a standing ovation from the reviewers. The rest of the cast were no less impressive. And the conductor, Anthony Negus, is unanimously praised for the fantastic playing. He cobbles together an orchestra of 60 players each year, and the sound he got out of them was fantastic.

Sorry I can't give you a critic's run down. As I said, I am a layman who just loves Wagner. Next year the Longborough Festival Opera ([www.lfo.org.uk](http://www.lfo.org.uk)) is performing three complete *Ring Cycles*. What a great excuse to have a week in the Cotswolds! Now if only I can persuade my wife what a great idea this is...