

WAGNER NEWS

Wagner News is published by the TORONTOWAGNER SOCIETY

TWS CALENDAR

Monday, September 20
8.00 p.m.

Joel Katz, Royal Conservatory
of Music: On the Training and
Coaching of Opera Singers

Monday, October 4,
8.00 p.m.

Sandra Radvanovsky,
Current Aida at COC

Wednesday, October 13,
8.00 p.m.

**Tim Albery and Michael
Levine:**

On the directing and designing
of their new *Tannhäuser* at the
Royal Opera

Monday, November 1,
8.00 p.m.

Video Presentation:
Valencia Ring

TWS web site: www.torontowagner.org
E-mail: torontowagner@yahoo.com

Notes for this Season:

We are happy to welcome our members to another season of the Toronto Wagner Society. We have another interesting program to look forward to this September, beginning with vocal trainer and coach Joel Katz, a member of the Royal Conservatory. Joel assures us that he has much to say on the subject of opera coaching. Sandra Radvanovsky, internationally acclaimed soprano, here for our *Aida*, needs no introduction. We also look forward to another evening with the director and designer of the Royal Opera's new production of *Tannhäuser*. Rounding off our Fall season, will be a presentation of video highlights from the Valencia *Ring*.

UNPAID MEMBERSHIPS – IMPORTANT!

Our records show that we have not received membership fees from some members. A red dot has been attached to the right side of the mailing label for those members. Please check your records. If appropriate, please complete the renewal form and forward your remittance to bring your membership up to date.

**ALL MEETINGS AT THE
ARTS AND LETTERS CLUB
14 ELM STREET**

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Die Walküre; photo San Francisco Opera

Joseph So // San Francisco Opera - *Die Walküre*

San Francisco Opera finally unveiled the second instalment of its upcoming *Ring Cycle* in June, two years after its *Das Rheingold*. Heading the cast of this *Die Walküre* was Swedish soprano Nina Stemme making her role debut as Brünnhilde. Stemme, a celebrated Sieglinde, had previously sung only the *Siegfried* Brünnhilde. The Walsung twins were Dutch soprano Eva Maria Westbroek and British tenor Christopher Ventris. American baritone Mark Delavan was Wotan. Compared to the controversial *Ring* staged by its neighbour to the south, the LA Opera, the SFO production and casting, at least based on this *Walküre*, was stronger. (Interestingly, the LA Opera Sieglinde, Anja Kampe, withdrew and will instead take on the role in SFO next June) At the helm was former long-time SFO music director Donald Runnicles. Francesca Zambello promised an “American Ring”, finding thematic parallels in Wagner with the American experience. Based on the performance I saw on June 22, this *Die Walküre* by and large lived up to the advance hype.

Before the performance began, someone came onstage with a piece of paper, a bad sign that elicited a collective groan from the full house. It appeared that Stemme was suffering from a bronchial infection but consented to sing and asked the audience's indulgence. Whatever was ailing her, she showed no ill effects. Her singing was strong and assured, with her customary dark-hued tone. Her Brünnhilde was spunky and full of youthful energy, her ‘Ho-jo-to-ho’ playful and girlishly engaging. Later in the opera, her characterization darkened into one full of melancholia and heart-felt expression. To my eyes and ears, Stemme is now the great new Brünnhilde of our generation. Others

like Jennifer Wilson, Christine Brewer and Linda Watson, may have the voice but not the *physique du rôle*. American baritone Mark Delavan possesses the voice and the musical intelligence for Wotan. He sang and acted well on June 22, with exceptionally secure high notes. It was unfortunate that his voice is a size too small for the cavernous War Memorial Opera House, swarmed by the orchestra at various climactic moments. Christopher Ventris' lyric tenor was stretched by the demands of Siegmund. He sang well in Act 1, except for a disastrously raspy high A near the end when he put too much pressure on the cords. However, he was perfect in Act 2. German mezzo Janina Baechele cut a matronly figure as Fricka. Dramatically, her Fricka was a slightly hysterical figure bordering on the caricature. A highlight of the evening was the Sieglinde of Eva Maria Westbroek, whose high notes were firm and powerful, the quieter moments exquisite. Bass Raymond Aceto was a suitably menacing Hunding - too bad physically he's a bit small for the large-framed Westbroek, making his manhandling of her less than believable. The Valkyries were a feisty bunch, with kudos to Tamara Wapinsky for her laser-beam high C's as Helmwige.

BRÜNNHILDE, NINA STEMME, and
WOTAN, MARC DELAVAN
photo San Francisco Opera

American stage director Francesca Zambello has some very interesting ideas, particularly for the women in this opera, with a strong feminist flavour to her interpretation. In Act 3, the Valkyries donned aviatrix gear, looking like a bunch of Amelia Earharts, with a few of them – well, their doubles anyway – coming down by parachute! There was also a strong “American college football cheerleader” quality to the staging of the Ride of the Valkyries, with some unintentionally funny moments. I get the feeling that if the singers weren't so hefty, Zambello probably would have them forming a human pyramid. The set design by Michael Yeargan is traditional with abstract elements. Hunding's cabin, with animal heads and hunting trophies galore, wouldn't look out of place in the great outdoors of the American West. One of the most enjoyable aspects of this production is its heavy reliance on video projections, cleverly used to introduce the story at the beginning of each act. The *Ring Cycle*, surely a fantasy to end all fantasies, can greatly benefit from today's video technologies in its story telling. Donald Runnicles conducted a beautifully paced, sensitive, and lyrical performance, holding down the orchestra as much as he could to allow the singers to be heard. It bodes well for the complete *Ring* in June 2011.



Richard Rosenman // Letter from Berlin

June being almost the end of the season, there was a limited choice in Berlin's opera houses and no Wagner at all. However, two singers we can claim as our own, filled important roles in two different houses. Robert Künzli, the recent Eric in the COC *Dutchman*, (and erstwhile Mime in the COC *Ring*), sang a leading role in the *Tales of Hoffman* at the Komische Oper, and Adrienne Pieczonka, filled the title role in Richard Strauss's *Arabella* at the Deutsche Oper.

The text of *Arabella* tells us of the impoverished Count Waldner's family- the gambler and card playing father (Stephen Bronk), mother Adelaide (Liane Keegan), the older of two sisters Arabella, and the younger Zdenka (Julia Kleiner) disguised as a brother Zdenko in order not to compete with Arabella in the count's search for a rich husband for her who would save the family from bankruptcy. They are stranded in a Viennese hotel, with no way to pay their debts and no money for him to keep gambling.

This production strays far from the original in this version of the director, Alexander von Pfeil.

Arabella, perhaps the least loved of the early works of Strauss, may be a favourite in Vienna but certainly not in Berlin. The short run of this revival of a 2006 production did not make any difference- it still did not fill the seats. The third and last night, the one I attended, emptied even more for the Act 2. The opening night was half full and gave credence to the judgment that *Arabella* is not a *Publikumsliebling*, as they say here, but still the fine singing was met with warm and sustained applause.

Perhaps what stopped this production from being a success, though, was the unconventional, to put it mildly, stage setting. However, among the often wild excesses of Regietheater, this one was relatively tame. The static, one element set, was a broad brushed suggestion of a vast baroque space, converted into a modern age garage, with an ornate high vaulted ceiling and no lack of cars coming and going, in and out, throughout the action. The dimmed headlights periodically swept across the stage and even Fiakermili came in a car and not in a *fiaker*. It is cold in the garage- both Madryka and Arabella are wrapped in full length furs, most of the time.

The director responsible for this is Bernd Damovsky.

On the positive side, his stage setting did away with the stuffy, stifling, *fin de siecle* Viennese interiors and its many distractions, but while it beneficially rid itself of the distractions it did not add to understanding by this metaphor. It took away but not added in return. Well, not quite! The impoverished Graf Waldner and Adelaide, came on stage in a cheap, small van

(more so, the suggestion was that they lived in it); Zdenka passed the crucial night with Matteo in a car parked further down the stage; Mandryka came and went in a long, black limousine, flanked by two thugs/retainers. In your face inversion of class distinction, shades of a similar relationship in *Rosenkavalier*.

Arabella, Adrienne Pieczonka, the sometime Wagnerian heroine, here metamorphosed into a romantic Strauss heroine, a kin to her other similar characterization, that of Marschallin. She is no novice to this role having sang it already in Glyndebourne 14 years ago. It counts as just one of her numerous other Strauss roles, the Ariadne, the Marschallin, and now the Empress in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. And, regardless of the setting, here perhaps too cold and impersonal, it suits her to perfection. Thus, this "dramatic comedy", here a farce in making, turned out to be strangely moving and sentimental, in a good, life affirming way. Not least in making it so was the "persona" of Arabella, bittersweet and full of dignity, facing the self centered father and the not so timid here Mandryka, Michael Volle. While we know the latter as an unpolished, rich country bumpkin, here he is more like a mafia don, arriving in a limousine to, what is meant to be a joyful, Fiakerball and abusing physically the unfortunate Fiakermili. Zdenka/Zdenko, matched Arabella in the beauty of her voice and the two gave us a marvelous Act 1 duet. Mandryka's stentorian voice easily handled the swells of the music.

The thunderous applause at curtain time belied the numerous empty seats; the overall excellent singing of all deserved it, with the lone exception of the unfocused Matteo, Martin Homrich.

Ulf Schirmer conducted.

In conversation, Adrienne Pieczonka answered a few questions:

Q. What Wagner roles have you already sung and which do you expect or hope for in the future?

A. TO DATE I HAVE SUNG, IN THE ORDER OF PERFORMANCE...FREIA, EVA, ELSA, ELISABETH, SIEGLINDE AND IN THE FALL I'LL SING MY FIRST SENTA. ISOLDE INTERESTS ME BUT I AM STILL WARY OF THE VOCAL DEMANDS OF THIS ROLE. WHAT A MARATHON!! ONCE YOU SING ISOLDE THERE IS NO GOING BACK AND I FEEL IT'S A REAL STEP TO THE MORE DRAMATIC PARTS.

Q. What roles do you prefer in Strauss? Which have you done and where? Plans for future?

A. MY FAVOURITE STRAUSS ROLES ARE THE MARSCHALLIN AND ARIADNE. I LOVED SINGING THE KAISERIN IN 'FROSCH' AND



photo Deutsche Oper Berlin

HAVE PLANS TO SING THIS IN A NEW PRODUCTION IN MUNICH IN A FEW YEARS. I LOVE ARABELLA TOO BUT I FEEL MY DAYS AS THE YOUNG ARABELLA ARE PROBABLY NUMBERED. AT COVENT GARDEN IN 2013 I'LL SING MY FIRST RATHER OVERDUE CHRYSOTHEMIS IN ELEKTRA. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I'LL EVER SING SALOME. I HAVE RECORDED THE FINAL MONOLOGUE OF THE COUNTESS IN CAPRICCIO BUT NEVER SANG THE ROLE ON STAGE WHICH IS A PITY.

Q. Who are your favourite composers, at least at this stage of your career?

A. I'D HAVE TO SAY VERDI, WAGNER AND STRAUSS. MOZART AND PUCCINI FOLLOW RIGHT AFTER THESE GUYS!

Q. How far ahead are you contracted and in what?

A. I AM CONTRACTED TO 2014 AT PRESENT. I AM NOT ABLE TO DISCLOSE THE DETAILS OF MANY OF THE ENGAGEMENTS BECAUSE THE OPERA HOUSES HAVE NOT ANNOUNCED THEIR OWN SEASONS. BUT I WILL BE PERFORMING AT COVENT GARDEN, THE CANADIAN OPERA COMPANY, THE METROPOLITAN OPERA, THE MUNICH STATE OPERA, VIENNA STATE OPERA ETC. NEW ROLES FOR ME ARE AIDA, AMELIA IN UN BALLO IN MASCHERA, MADAME LIDOINE IN DIALOGUES OF THE CARMELITES ETC.

Q. If you could have your wish...

A. CONTINUED HEALTH AND HAPPINESS FOR ME AND MY FAMILY! ITS GREAT TO HAVE A GOOD BALANCE BETWEEN SINGING AND FAMILY LIFE.

Wagner in Barcelona; in Robert Hughes's own words

Robert Hughes, known principally as a long-time art critic for Time Magazine, but also as a social historian, wrote several books, of which *Barcelona* is a glowing historical account of that city through its fifteen hundred years of civic existence. His narrative of how Wagnerism took Barcelona by a storm and how it influenced all arts in Catalonia merits our attention alongside the similar stories of Paris, Vienna and other cities, with which we are more familiar.

This excerpt from *BARCELONA* by Robert Hughes, copyright © 1992 by Robert Hughes, is used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House Inc.

"The first performance of any Wagnerian piece in Barcelona had been given not for the posh audience of the Liceu, but in one of the Clavé's summer concerts for workers in the "gardens of Euterpe" beside Passeig de Gràcia in 1862: it was the march from act 2 of *Tannhäuser*. "We have to give all of Wagner to the public," he enthused later. "How they'll rave about him!" He was right. By 1870 Barcelona had a Wagnerian society and from then on musical Catalanists saw the future, as one of them put it, in "Wagnerism, considered as an instrument and a sign of national culture." Discussion of Wagner in Barcelona became increasingly heated, especially as it became clear that first Paris, and then Italy, had been conquered by *wagnerisme*. The most enthusiastic Catalan promoter of Wagner was a young music critic and medical student named Marsillach I Lleonart (1859-83), who at the age of seventeen had actually attended the opening of the *Festspielhaus* at Bayreuth in 1876 and heard the whole *Ring*. He was the only Catalan who had. Things came later to Catalunya, and it was not until 1882 that Barcelona saw a full Wagner production – *Lohengrin*, in Italian. But the tide of Wagner mania rose after 1888, when the Catalan tenor Francesc Vinyas sang excerpts from *Lohengrin* at the opening night of the Universal Exposition, before Queen María Cristina. This clinched Wagner's reputation among the Catalans as the supreme European musician, and from 1903 on most of his operas were translated into Catalan – an honour previously reserved for Verdi alone.

Why did the Barcelonans make such a cult of Wagner? Because they saw in him their own desire to create a myth of national identity. Wagner had never been to Catalunya, but his heroes had: Titurel and his band of Christian knights established their bulwark of Christendom against the Moors, the castle built around the hiding place of the Holy Grail from which Christ had drunk at the Last Supper, on the forested heights of Montsalvat. "My name is Parsifal, and I come from Montsalvat" – Catalunya was Wagnerian Spain.

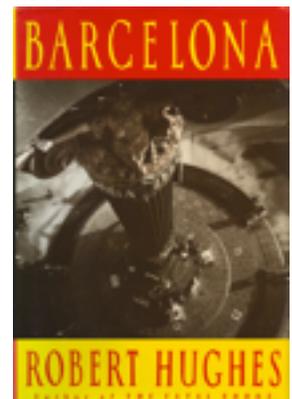
But there was a more general reason. Richard Wagner framed primitive heroic legends in very advanced terms. There was an extreme contrast between the primal antiquity of his subject and characters and the daring modernity of his

musical forms – a strain marvellously resolved at the higher conscious levels of his art, and skirting absurdity on the lower. This accorded perfectly with the spirit, born in the Catalan Renaixença, that now pervaded the city's most advanced architecture. Wagner meant the *Ring* cycle to be the founding epic of Bavaria, as the *Mahabharata* was of India, the *Iliad* of Greece, or the *Aeneid* of Rome. Its central theme was the identity of the German race. Likewise, the Renaixença was obsessed with establishing the mystical uniqueness, the special character, or the *raca Catalana*. It wanted to bring back an idealized, mythical past, but do it in terms that were recognizably modern. True, this past was grounded in historic time, the Middle Ages, and it would be hard to imagine any vision of the past that was less historic, more absolutely mythic, than Wagner's grandiose fable of tragic incestuous heroes, animated swords, dying gods, magic rings, warrior virgins, dragons, dwarfs, and Rhine maidens.

But the difference was merely one of degree. The very core of the Renaixença was its mixture of fable and archaisms with an exacerbated sense of modernity. Its tissue of romanticized history – the Catalan language itself, waiting for the new poetic release like Siegmund's bright sword in the tree; the patriarchal values of the peasant in his *casa pairal*; the chivalry of the Catalan counts; the warrior kings and scholar monks; the four bars of Wilfred the Hairy's blood on the yellow shield; the whole stew of armorial bearings and troubadour love and elaborately self-conscious folklore – almost begged for Wagner to do justice. The figure of Saint George melted into that of Siegfried and Parsifal, and dragons were dragons, in Catalunya as in Bavaria. Montsalvat was cousin to Montserrat, Montseny, and Montjuic, the holy mountains of the Renaixença.

It was not surprising, therefore, that Wagner's opera appealed to Catalans as a rallying point, an example of how to combine the myths of a legendary past with the supreme myth of the capitalist middle class, that of progress and innovation. He represented Germany – the industrial north, but also a culture identified with yearning and unattainable idealism. Wagner's example encouraged them to push their romantic medievalism beyond the relatively genteel levels attained by the Pre-Raphaelite movement

in England. Wagnerian ideas and motifs moved rapidly into architecture. His vision of the *totalgesamtkunstwerk*, the "global work of art," which would subsume all other art forms in its reach, had its allure for architects who were working out of a strong craft base and wanted to give full rein to painters, ceramists, bronze casters, ironsmiths, sculptors, joiners, glassmakers, mosaicists, and masons. It is likely that Wagner's power of spectacle helped to promote a taste for the relentless congestion of surface and imagery in *modernista* buildings and contributed to their expressive range. Because the anarchists burned Gaudí's archive during the civil war, Wagner's effect on Gaudí (who was fond of opera and often went to the Liceu) cannot be documented. But Gaudí's love of extremes, his belief that architecture should deal in ambiguity and gloom, exaltation and anxiety, and theatrically primal spaces – the peak and the cavern – is entirely Wagnerian. It is hard not to see his subterranean stables in the Palau Güell as a transcription, into massive squat columns and thick pads of brick, of Alberich's cavern. In general, Wagnerianism led architects and decorators to develop a pervasive imagery in which the Christian symbolism of medieval revival and the chivalric emblems of the Middle Ages were made secular and given a thick overlay of dramatic gesture, a brooding half-repressed sexuality. Generic figures influenced by characters from Wagner's operas appeared on buildings, in painting, sculpture, and every decorative art, in all materials from marble to faience, from gold to morocco leather. Rather as Loie Fuller, the American dancer with her floating, whipping veils, was a prototype of Art Nouveau woman, so Siegfried and Parsifal merged with Saint George to provide a model of *modernista* man."



Richard Rosenman // “Wagner and Venice”, by John W. Barker. U of Rochester Press, 2008

Richard Wagner spent a large portion of his life beyond Germany’s borders. While in the first half of his life this would be a forced exile, caused either by his political or financial troubles, i.e. to escape the police or his creditors, the second half saw him traveling more for reasons of health, principally to escape the cold Bayreuth winters.

Of all these travels, Italy, and Venice in particular, was his favorite destination. Venice was not only a respite from the chills, mists and all pervasive humidity of his home, but also appreciated for its relative quiet- an absence of clatter of carriages on cobblestones and the dust they raised. What replaced it, to his delight, were the gondoliers’ songs and the afternoon band concerts on the Piazza San Marco.

Wagner has visited Venice in all five times, of which the longest sojourns were the one on his own, for eight months early in 1858-9, and the final one, with his family, for five months, culminating in his demise. Although covering an important portion of Wagner’s life, the Venice days were relatively under-reported and under-analyzed in the extensive literature covering his life. This book remedies this, with vengeance. With its 390 pages, it covers, often with numbing detail, his and his family’s day to day life.

In one sense it is an unusual book and it owes its bulk to it. John W. Barker is neither a specialist in Wagneriana, nor in the late Veneziana (and this makes it doubly attractive to a layman), though he is a music critic. He brings into the account the dispassionate view of a professor of history (U of Wisconsin, Madison) and a specialist in medieval and Venetian history. Instead of relying on second or third hand information, digested and edited by others, he gives us entire pages of quotes, bleeding chunks of contemporary accounts, many by actual eyewitnesses. These are the diaries of the Wagners, two books published around the time of his death, local newspapers’ accounts and those written by friends or at-arms-length observers. Additionally, as Barker says, his own translations of the sources, either from Italian or German, strive to reflect and

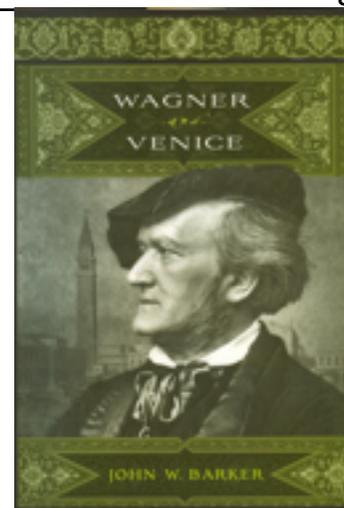
maintain the styles of their authors or reporters. It cannot, thus, get any closer to what could be considered the “truth”. Many of the same incidents repeat in the multiple accounts given, and it is a sobering look at the unreliability of “witnesses” – often there are glaring differences in eyewitness descriptions of the same events.

It is my guess that Barker used this method, faced with general unavailability of the out-of-print books. At least that was the case until a short time ago; today the situation is rapidly changing – at least one of the sources, a combined effort of Wagner’s German physician in Venice, Dr. Friedrich Keppler, and his *confidante*, the German Henriette Perl, is available again in a low priced digital reprint, and others should follow.

The simple and consequent structure of the book boils down to accounts/chapters of: how the Wagners – Richard, Cosima and members of immediate family – viewed Venice and how Venice viewed the Wagner clan and the composer central to it. Apart from the principals’ diaries, the main sources are the 1883 opportunistic short book by Henriette Perl, and one published shortly after by an Italian Wagnerite, Giuseppe Norlenghi. They are scrutinized in separate chapters. Others are the reports of the two principal Venetian newspapers.

From these different accounts emerges a detailed picture of the Wagner family’s everyday life while in Venice. It is hardly modest, even though Perl characterizes it so, for an individual owing money to many and often escaping persecution by creditors.

To mention but few examples: on arrival, Wagner has leased a large portion of the Vendramin-Calergi palace, a great Renaissance structure on the Grand Canal. For an annual fee of 6000 francs, then a considerable sum, he leased a suite of fifteen ornate rooms on the mezzanine floor, to house the children, guests and the large retinue and staff. He has redecorated some of the rooms, with silks and his favourite velour. The retinue included the pianist Rubinstein, governess for the two girls, and a tutor for young Siegfried. The staff included



two longtime servants from Bayreuth - valet and chambermaid- augmented by a cook and at least one more servant. The building had a porter and two gondoliers were engaged to be ready with their services. There was a barber coming every day at noon; there was an afternoon hot chocolate or tea and/or a cognac at Lavena, a fashionable café on the north side of Piazza San Marco, still there today, and “preserving the little table on which he was served and the chair the great man used every day”, as reported by Norlenghi in his time.

Wagner habitually drew inspiration from his own experiences. A sea voyage off Norway inspired *The Flying Dutchman*; a quick visit to Nürnberg was partly responsible for *Die Meistersinger*. Italy had its share of influences: the garden of Villa Rufolo in Ravello sparked the Klingsor’s garden, and the Siena Cathedral the Grail Temple, both in *Parsifal*. In Venice, particularly, as he was labouring on the Act II of *Tristan*, the mournful song of a gondolier allegedly inspired the Shepherd’s tune in Act III.

Richard Wagner suffered for years from cardiac problems. Reading his doctor’s reports one is struck by the inability of medicine of the time to help him. Today, Wagner’s health could be easily controlled and he could have lived many more years and surely produced more music. He died in Venice, in 1883. To quote John W. Barker: “No other city seems to have meant so much to Wagner, historically, artistically and nostalgically...”

Venice – the second Wagnerian city, after Bayreuth – must be given its due in Wagner’s history. His mind and his body may repose in and belong to Bayreuth, to be sure. But his heart and a part of his soul remained in Venice”.

Barry Hood // the COC's *Flying Dutchman*: a retrospective

During the overture Senta views a projection of the Dutchman's portrait in the form of Munch's image of neurosis, "The Scream", which is her *idée fixe*; the portrait is the link between her fantasy and the Dutchman's reality. The end of life is in the natural order of things but not so for the Dutchman.

Christopher Alden and Allen Moyer set Wagner's story on a tilted world/stage like a spinning top about to run out of spin – a rectangular box of totalitarian grey serves for all scenes. The box acts as a sound shell and helps the singers manage their vocal challenges against the orchestra.

The Steersman/Adam Luther – overacts with his lurching and drinking; he is a rival of the Dutchman and Erik for the affection of Senta- the cavatina to his "maiden" is a love song to Senta. Daland/Mats Almgren – is a straightforward avaricious seafarer, even though he sang his set piece arias with a wide range of colour and expression, a lot of people did not care for him. The Dutchman/Evgeny Nikitin – his lurching entrance forgiven for his intelligent insight and verbal mastery of the Dutchman's monologue, somewhat lost by the size of the stage and the lighting effects, conveyed the anguish, defiance and sorrow of his existence to chilling effect; the images of horizontally striped prison garb did not resonate with his portrait.

Senta/Julie Makerov is a big woman with a big voice. The dress sense and Gustav Klimt red hair set her apart from the collective-like uniformity of the Spinning Chorus. The Ballad – an inversion of it's melody is the Dutchman's motive – is a popular superstition only believed by her; the Dutchman's salvation is her mission. Her encounter with the Dutchman is an intense psychological colloquy; they do not look at or touch each other; they speak to themselves first before addressing their respective portraits.

Mary/Barbara Dever – excellent as an imposing disciplinarian overseeing the industrial productivity of the superb pinning Chorus. She had had her own infatuation with the Dutchman in an earlier life.

Erik/Robert Künzli is excellent, very expressive of emotion and vocally eloquent. His infatuation with Senta is not reciprocated. Senta provokes Erik with the Dutchman's portrait and in a jealous rage he shoots her through the portrait, symbolically killing the Dutchman. Senta's taunting results in her murder/suicide and so she has been faithful unto Death; the Dutchman embraces Death by climbing the staircase, symbolically clutching her bridal veil – both transcend into that mystical consummation found in Love-Death, the Liebestod.

The villagers are simple folk who know nothing but a tradition of the sea. The sailors' chorus are an exuberant bunch lurching on board ship and on land, celebrating their return, wearing electric green armbands and just wanting to drink – their women, reminiscent of the ladies in the Kirschner's Berlin Street Scene paintings, in a mincing entrance to the feast with matching stoles and feathers just want to check out the sailors on the strange ship The Dutchman's crew sing offstage to an eerie hollow effect. This is an outstanding preparation by Sandra Horst.

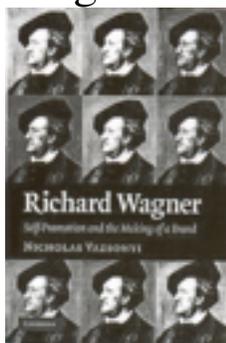
Johannes Debus – the *Dutchman* a first for him to conduct and for many in the orchestra to play, gives a fresh dramatic interpretation with concern for the melodic line and subtle support for his singers by reigning in the powerful brass – a sumptuous sound; the orchestral magic of Richard Bradshaw has been capably inherited. Anne Militello has improved on her lighting design with subtle, changing, expressionistic effects applied with an artist's paintbrush. The opera's foundation is a traditional Italian/number based format with Wagner's own points of departure which would evolve continuously and lead to *Parsifal* – he would become a legend in his own lifetime.

News

New Books, New Recordings

"*Richard Wagner; Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand*", by Nickolas Vazsonyi. Cambridge UP, 234 pages; US\$ 95.

The title says it all; an analysis of the success of the greatest self-promoting musician in history. History of music meets history of marketing.



CD's; From New Zealand, the country that gave us Frances Alda, Kiri Te Kanawa and Donald McIntyre, comes a heldentenor Simon O'Neill, the future Parsifal in 2011 Bayreuth. In his new CD, "*Father and Son*", he is joined by Susan Bullock and Sir John Tomlinson, in an all Wagner program. EMI Classics.



DVD's Decca; *Lohengrin*, Munich Staatsoper's 2009 production, with Jonas Kaufmann in title role and Anja Harteros as Elsa. Kaufmann sings the same role this season in Bayreuth.

CD's; *Parsifal*. Mariinski label (launched in June 2009 and so perhaps unfamiliar to most of us), will release in September a new recording of *Parsifal*, conducted by Valery Gergiev, with Violeta Urmana, Gary Lehman and René Pape. Super Audio CD.

CD's; *Götterdämmerung*, Hallé Orchestra, with Sir Mark Elder. Hallé is gearing up for a complete Ring, Nov.-Dec. 2011, though under a different conductor.

CD's; *Parsifal*, Richard Caniell, head of the Canadian based "*Immortal Performances Recorded Music Society*", has issued a historical recording of *Parsifal*, a composite of Teatro Colon (1946) Act I complete, and Act I and Act III (excerpts) from Covent Garden (1937) and Vienna State Opera (1949). There is no Act II but there is enough of Herbert Janssen's Amfortas, Torsten Ralf's Parsifal, Rose Bampton's Kundry and Ludwig Weber's Gurnemanz to satisfy. Kleiber and Reiner conducting the segments. For those in interested classical historical performances; www.immortalperformances.org.

Ring News

There are new *Rings* in progress in several cities of the world. Between now and early 2011, several *Rheingolds* or *Walküres* are to be presented.

Opera-National de Paris began with a *Rheingold* in March of this year, directed by Günter Krämer and conducted by Philippe Jordan. Wotan-Falk Struckmann; Loge- Kim Begley; Peter Sidhom - Alberich; Ann Petersen - Freia;

Oper Frankfurt is beginning a new Ring cycle, to be directed by Vera Nemirova and conducted by Sebastian Weigle;

La Scala in Milan- continues with *Walküre*, with Simon O'Neill-Siegmund; John Tomlinson-Hunding; Nina Stemme-Brünnhilde; Rene Papé- Wotan; Waltraut Meier-Sieglinde. Daniel Barenboim conducts.

Karlstad, Sweden, will produce five cycles of the *Ring*, starting in April 2011.

Halle-Ludwigshafen will present the four *Ring* operas throughout 12 months, starting in November 2010

In September, for the first time Shanghai will present two cycles of the *Ring*, with Cologne Opera. The venue is Shanghai Grand Opera.

Met *Rheingold*: in Sept. and Oct. 2010, with Bryn Terfel- Wotan; Stephanie Blythe-Fricka; James Levine conducts; Robert Lepage directs.

Lepage says: "The *Ring* is about change. I try to be extremely respectful of Wagner's storytelling, but in a very modern context. We're trying to see how in our day and age we can tell this classic story in the most complete way". And he adds: "The *Ring* is not just a story or a series of operas, it's a cosmos".

The *Walküre* in April 2011 will feature Deborah Voigt-Brünnhilde; Eva-Maria Westbroek-Sieglinde; Jonas Kaufmann-Siegmund; Hans Peter König-Hunding; Bryn Terfel-Wotan. James Levine conducts.

Other News

Paris *Flying Dutchman*: in Sept and Oct. 2010, with a heavyweight cast: James Morris-Dutchman; Adrienne Pieczonka-Senta; Matti Salminen-Daland; Klaus Florian Vogt-Eric. Peter Schneider conducts; Willy Decker directs.

* * *

We are saddened by the recent death of Dr. Alan Aberbach of Vancouver, former professor at Simon Fraser University and a prominent Wagner scholar. Members will recall the several provocative and absorbing lectures he presented to us. Alan published several books on the music and philosophy of Richard Wagner and broadcast extensively for the CBC. He both founded the Vancouver Opera Club and served as a board member of Vancouver Opera.

Bayreuth Application Process

Every year, the Society applies for tickets to the Bayreuth Festival on behalf of members.

To apply, you must have been a member of the Society for at least two years, and your membership must be in good standing at the time of application.

2011 will see a new production of *Tannhäuser* by Sebastian Baumgarten.

If you are interested in applying to Bayreuth for 2011, you are requested to fill out an application form. Application forms are available two ways:

1. Via regular mail.

Please send a written request for an application form as soon as possible, to:

Edward Brain,

1515 Lakeshore Road East, # 1610,

Mississauga, ON L5E 3E3

(Be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.)

2. Via e-mail at torontowagner@yahoo.com.

Once you receive an application form, please fill it out and return it with the deposit requested, by regular mail, to Edward by September 15th.

We will likely not hear from Bayreuth until early 2011, and will hold your deposit in trust until then.

WAGNER ONSTAGE

September - December 2010

Listings correct to December 2010. For further information check with opera companies via: www.operabase.com

Der Fliegende Holländer

Paris (Opera): 9 Sept. - 6 Oct. NP
Schwerin: 23 Sept.
Salzburg (LT): 14 Oct. NP
Dusseldorf: 23 Oct. - 12 Nov.

Lohengrin

Los Angeles (Opera): 20 - 28 Nov.

Tannhäuser

Vienna (SO): 5 - 15 Sept.
Mainz: 17 Sept. NP
Dresden (SSO): 14 - 21 Nov.

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Berlin (Komische): 12 Sept. - 27 Nov.
Linz (LT): 19 Sept. NP
Leipzig: 9 Oct. - 6 Nov.

Das Rheingold

New York (Met): 27 Sept. - 9 Oct. NP
Berlin (UDL): 17 - 31 Oct. NP

Lubeck: 10 Sept.

Die Walküre

Enschede: 26 Sept. - 12 Oct. NP
Frankfurt (Oper): 31 Oct. - 28 Nov. NP
Lubeck: 12 Sept.

Siegfried

Lubeck: 17 Sept.

Götterdämmerung

Lubeck: 5 Sept. NP
Essen: 10 Oct. NP
Hamburg (SO): 17 Oct. - 14 Nov. NP

Tristan und Isolde

Luzern (Fest.): 10 Sept.
London (SBC): 26 Sept.
Otsu: 10 - 16 Oct.
Copenhagen (KGL): 14 - 20 Nov.

Note: NP = New Production

TWS 2010-2011

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Renewal or New Membership Form

To join or renew membership in the TORONTO WAGNER SOCIETY, please complete this form where applicable and send it with your cheque, payable to TORONTO WAGNER SOCIETY, to the address shown below.

MEMBERSHIP RATES	Single	\$45.00	Out-of-Town	\$20.00*
	Family	\$55.00	Student	\$20.00

Out-of-Town members are those whose home Postal Code does **not** begin with L or M.

Membership runs from September 1, to the following August 31.

I INCLUDE: Membership fee _____
Donation to TWS Operating Fund* _____
Donation to TWS Scholarship Fund* _____
TOTAL _____

*Donations of \$10, or more, to the Operating Fund and Scholarship Fund will receive an income tax receipt. Unless you indicate otherwise, all donations will be allocated to the Operating Fund

Name: _____
Address: _____

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e-mail: _____
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If you are renewing your membership, please note only your name and changes, if any, in your address or other information.

Mail to: TORONTO WAGNER SOCIETY
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