

WAGNER NEWS

Wagner News is published by the TORONTOWAGNER SOCIETY

TWS CALENDAR

Thursday, April 21
8.00 p.m.

Marc Bernstein,
on historic recordings, with
vocal examples from his
collection;

Tuesday, May 17
7.00 p.m.

Annual General Meeting
(members only)

followed by
8.00 p.m.

Scholarship Recital
Aviva Wilks
scholarship winner

ALL MEETINGS AT ARTS AND
LETTERS CLUB,
14 ELM STREET

INSIDE

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Wagner on Stage

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

Greetings from the Chairs

Now that Spring is officially here, we are especially happy to welcome you to our last three meetings of the Toronto Wagner Society. Of special interest, please note that our scholarship winner, Aviva Wilks, a young soprano will be presenting a concert at our Annual General Meeting to be held on April 21 at the Arts and Letters Club.

As a special reminder, please also note that this is an election year and the terms of all elected members of our executive have expired. Please let me know if you would be willing to stand for office in the society, as soon as possible. In any case, come to the AGM at 7 o'clock and voice your opinions.

Frances Henry and Lorne Albaum

The sleep of Brünnhilde.

Arthur Rackham's illustration for
"The Ring of the Niblung".

Compare this traditional vision with
the Barenboim's La Scala version
(see page 7).



UNPAID MEMBERSHIPS - PLEASE READ

Our records show that we have still not received past or present membership fees from some members.

As a gentle reminder, a RED dot on your label signifies owing past dues; a YELLOW dot is to remind those who owe only for the present 2010-2011 season.

If your records show one of these, please complete the renewal form and forward the remittance. This will bring your membership up to date.

John E. Rutherford // Hans Richter in England

By good fortune I have come into possession of two items that brought the Victorian (and Wagnerian) Age a little closer.

The smaller of the two items is a hand bill advertising a Richter concert at St. James Hall in London, England, to take place at 8:30 pm, on July 14, 1890.

The Richter concerts were arranged by Dr. Hans Richter, the musician who conducted the first Ring cycle in Bayreuth, in 1876. He toured England regularly from 1879 to 1899 with an orchestra, choir and soloists. His concerts were mostly devoted to the works of Wagner and Beethoven, and the handbill for the above mentioned concert bears this out.

The concert began with *The Kaiser March*, by Wagner, followed by Pogner's Address, sung by Max Heinrich. These were followed by Lohengrin's *Herkunft und Abschied*, sung by Edward Lloyd, Britain's favourite tenor of the time. The Richter concert continued with Sach's address to Walther, sung by Max Heinrich, followed by the closing chorus of *Die Meistersinger*. After an intermission, Beethoven's Choral Symphony was performed with four soloists, listed as Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Max Heinrich, Miss Fillunger and Miss Lena Little – plus the Richter choir.

When Edward Lloyd was 60 years old of age (some say 62), he recorded The Prize Song from *Meistersinger*. That was in the early years of recording (1905), but the result, poor by modern standards, shows enough of a voice for us to realize that, as a tenor at Covent Garden 20 years before, he was one of the glories of the British musical world.

Max Heinrich had a successful career in music, becoming recognized as a superb lieder singer, often accompanying himself at the piano during his recitals. Of Lena Little I know nothing, but Marie Fillunger gained a small measure of notoriety by

falling in love with Eugenie Schumann, Clara and Robert Schumann's daughter.

The second item is a sepia studio photo of Hans Richter taken in 1888 at the Barraud Photographic Studio in London.

Henry Barraud was the head of the London studio while his brother Francis was the head of the Liverpool branch. Francis was also a painter who gained fame for a painting called His Master's Voice, later bought by the Victor Record Company and used as their trademark for over one hundred years.

ST. JAMES'S HALL.
SUMMER SEASON, 1890.

RICHTER CONCERTS
Under the Direction of Mr. N. VERT.

Conductor:
DR. HANS RICHTER.

Leader: Mr. ERNST SCHIEVER. Choir Director: Mr. THEODOR FRANTZEN.

NINTH AND LAST CONCERT,
Monday, July 14, at 8.30.

KAISER-MARSCH WAGNER.
POGNER'S ADDRESS, from Act I. of
"Die Meistersinger" ... WAGNER.
Pogner—Mr. MAX HEINRICH.
LOHENGRIIN'S HERKUNFT und ABSCHIED,
from Act III. of "Lohengrin" WAGNER
Heinrich
Lohengrin—Mr. E. LLOYD.
SACHS'S ADDRESS TO WALTHER, and
CLOSING CHORUS, from "Die Meistersinger" WAGNER.
Mr. MAX HEINRICH and the RICHTER CHOIR.
SYMPHONY, No. 9, in D minor ("Choral") BEETHOVEN.
Vocalists:—
Miss FILLUNGER, Miss LENA LITTLE,
Mr. LLOYD, Mr. MAX HEINRICH,
AND
THE RICHTER CHOIR.

Sofa Stalls, 15/- Stalls or Balcony Stalls, 10/6.
Balcony (Unreserved), 5/- Area or Gallery, 2/6.
Tickets to be obtained of the usual Agents, and at Basil Tree's
Ticket Office, St. James's Hall.
N. VERT, 6, Cork Street, Burlington Gardens, W.
NOVELLA EBER & Co., PRINTERS, LONDON.

The Richter photo comes from an 1888 folio of photos bound together and each one separated by a four-page article about the personage illustrated. All photos are in sepia and printed on photographic paper, mounted on thick cardboard and stamped with the name "Barraud". Together, the photos form a cross section of the later Victorian age. The Barraud family must have been well regarded by the Victorians, for their clientele included such personalities as Lord Tennyson, Joseph Chamberlain, Clara Schumann, W.S. Gilbert, and Winston Churchill's mother-Lady Randolph Churchill, then a beautiful, dark eyed socialite. Unfortunately, when these photos are reprinted in later books and articles, the name of Barraud seldom appears. For example, in a book published in 1989 on the life of Winston Churchill, the exquisite Barraud photo of Churchill's mother is said to have been provided by the "Mansell Collection". No mention of Barraud.

But back to Richter. Not only did England like Hans Richter but Hans Richter liked England. Two years after his visit to England with Wagner in 1877, Richter started his series of concerts. As conductor, he introduced Elgar's "*Dream of Gerontius*" and later Elgar's First Symphony which was dedicated to Richter. He introduced *Meistersinger* and *Tristan und Isolde* to London audiences and in 1909 he directed the first *Ring* in English.

In 1897, he accepted the post of principal conductor of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester, where he lived from 1897 to 1911.

And now his kindly face looks down upon us. He's not just a name anymore but a human being. Just think, had I been born just two decades earlier, I could have met him. I know I could have liked him.

Hans Richter by Barraud; Collection of John E. Rutherford



Why Stephen Fry loves Wagner

I grew up in a Jewish household. My mother is certainly not religiously Jewish, but a lot of her family, and therefore my family, were destroyed by Nazism, and Wagner became associated for her with Germanic horror. So, when I started playing Wagner loudly, her eyes would close and she'd say, "I know you like it and that's fine, but really you know, what's wrong with Mozart?" It was always an issue. Something to confront.

We all recognize that loving Wagner is not the same as loving almost any other artist.

We can try to pretend it is, and would that it were so. But we also know there is something profoundly important about this artist: something that shaped the 20th century in benign ways. Look at the influence he has had on music. Look at Korngold and Schoenberg, look at the entire secessionist movement in Austria. Mahler said: "There is only Ludwig and Richard". And it's not only music. Two of the great modernist works in our literature, *Ulysses* and *The Wasteland*, are suffused with Wagner. "*Frisch weht der wind / Der Heimat zu. / Mein Irisch Kind, / Wo weilest du?*" the opening lines of *Tristan und Isolde* are quoted by Eliot in *The Wasteland*. And there's a great deal of it in *Ulysses*, too.

You can't allow the perverted views of pseudo-intellectual Nazis to define how the world should look at Wagner. He's bigger than that, and we're not going to give them the credit, the joy of stealing him from us.

The older you get the more you realize that the complexities and ambiguities of art will always allow one person to run a magnet over its iron filings and make them all point one way. But

that's doing a disservice to art. Art isn't like that. Art is ornery and shaped by the sense of people and events, not by an overarching ideology.

All of us who love Wagner are familiar with another argument, where people will say: "It's too powerful, there's something wrong with music that can have that much effect." Is it earned? Is it too much? Is it manipulative? Is it unfair for music to have this unbelievable ability to make one shake in quite that way? There are those who disapprove of Wagner purely on that aesthetic ground.

If anyone asks me, "How do I listen to Wagner? How do I get into it?" I say: "Just go to the first act of one of them and follow it." Nobody sings on top of each other, it's all nice and straightforward. It's a drama. It's a story. It's fantastic.

I used to think when I was young that if I was ever asked to produce or direct Wagner, I would like to do the *Meistersingers* because of its comic shape and unity of action. Then I thought I would like to do the *Ring*, and what I would do if I had the budget for it would be to commission the best artists and do an animated *Ring*. Not a cheesy cartoon, but a truly serious animated *Ring*. Because – let's face it – in the last five minutes you got a Valkyrie getting on a horse, galloping into a flaming funeral pyre then being covered by the river Rhine, while the palace of the gods crumbles into dust in the background. All in five minutes. You can do it on stage – and it's wonderful to see some of the solutions that have been devised for portraying that extraordinary last five minutes of *Götterdämmerung* – but think what you could do with beautifully and properly presented animation. So my ambition is to one

day meet a Russian oligarch billionaire who has a passion, because it would cost a huge amount of money. But wouldn't it be fantastic.

This is an edited transcript based on a Q & A session Stephen Fry held at the London Wagner Society's screening of the film "Wagner and Me", produced by Waveleventh Films, in association with the BBC. It was screened internationally (last year at the Vancouver International Film Festival, to full houses). The film may screen again, at the Toronto Jewish Film Festival, in May.

To find out more about the film or to arrange a screening, visit www.wagnerandme.com, or find Wagner and Me on Facebook.

Stephen Fry is an English actor, screenwriter, author, playwright, film director, poet, comedian, among other things.

My Hero...Fry with Wagner's bust



NEWS

THE RING

The New York Times writes that the Met *Siegfried*, next season, will include a first, – 3-D projections, using a technology developed by a Montreal company for Robert Lepage. This particular technique will not require the use of 3-D glasses. The effects will be used only in the forest scenes and, so far, there is no intention to use it in the last installment, *Götterdämmerung*.

Ben Heppner, who was to sing Siegfried in the Met production, recently withdrew from the cycle. The role will be taken over by Gary Lehman in *Siegfried* and by Lehman and Stephen Gould in *Götterdämmerung*. Deborah Voigt and Katarina Dalaymen will share the role of Brünnhilde.

MET Live in HD will broadcast *Siegfried* on November 5, 2011, and *Götterdämmerung* on February 11, 2012.

GALLERY MET, a space at the Met opera in New York, dedicated to showing art allusive to music, exhibits now a show of a NY painter, Elisabeth Peyton, titled “Wagner”, based on characters from the *Ring* cycle. Her works leave the confines of the original exhibition space and invades all levels of the house. This is the second show connected to the Lepage *Ring*. It follows the last fall’s exhibition “Notations after the *Ring*”, by Julie Mehretu, timed to coincide with the *Rheingold* performances. Free – by appointment only. Check at Peytontours@metopera.org.

Hamburg State Opera begins the first of two

Opéra National de Paris continues with its new *Ring* cycle, directed by Gunter Krämer, with a premiere of *Siegfried*. Siegfried is Torsten Kerl, Wanderer is Juha Uusitalo, Alberich is Peter Sidhom, Fafner is Stephen Milling and Brünnhilde is Katarina Dalayman.



Photo:
Opéra National
Paris

PARSIFAL

As mentioned in the last issue of WN, 2011 will feature fourteen different productions of *Parsifal*. Here are some notes on the first four.

One of the most notable is the revived Nicolaus Lehnhoff’s **ENO** production, which is given with an English libretto. The translation was criticized as “clunky and awkward”, adding that “the transcendent music triumphed over even this adversity” (Colin Clarke). The brightest star turned out to be John Tomlinson, Gurnemanz, (so often written off, these days, as a has-been), backed by unmatched experience (eighteen consecutive seasons at Bayreuth). He was accompanied by Stuart Skelton’s Parsifal, a youth innocent and arrogant, but not stupid. Tom Fox was Klingsor and Jane Dutton, Kundry.



John Tomlinson / Gurnemanz
Photo: Richard Hubert Smith



Photo: Antonio Boffil

Barcelona’s version, directed by Claus Guth, will travel to Zurich later this year. Klaus Florian Vogt is Parsifal, Hans-Peter Koenig is Gurnemanz, Anja Kempe is Kundry and Alan Held, Amfortas. As it is more and more common these days, in defiance of Wagner, both of these productions let Kundry live at the end. In Lehnhoff’s vision Amfortas dies and Parsifal and Kundry go off into the future. Guth, in turn, has Kundry pack a suitcase and leave.

Teatro Regio in Torino, led by Bertrand De Billy, saw a production from Naples’ Teatro San Carlo. Parsifal is Christopher Ventris, Kundry is Christine Goerke, Mark S.Doss is Klingsor and Kwangchul Youn, Gurnemanz.

Klingsor / Mark S. Doss; Kundry / Christine Goerke
Photo: Ramella & Giannese



NEWS continued

At **La Monnaie, in Brussels**, the production of Romeo Castellucci, known for his radical work in theater does not disappoint in this his first excursion into opera. There is no Grail, no spear; Klingsor is a conductor; there is army camouflage and a large albino python and a live German Shepherd on stage. Parsifal digs out a skeleton of a swan and witnesses substantially more than just a kiss between Amfortas and Kundry in a wedding dress, an interpretation of their relationship that had to occur sooner or later. Parsifal is Andrew Richards, Kundry is Anna Larsson and Gurnemanz is Jan-Hendrik Rootering.

Photo: Bernd Uhlig



Hamburg State Opera gave a Robert Wilson directed *Parsifal* with Klaus Florian Vogt as Parsifal. Simone Young led the orchestra. Wilson gives us the usual stylized poses.

Tallin, Estonia, is preparing for a four-night *Parsifal* extravaganza in August. The event will take place in Noblessner Foundry, a unique venue by the sea, an old shipyard built by Alfred Nobel's brother. The orchestra and chorus of 300 will make it the grandest project ever attempted by Estonia. For information go to parsifal@reisiexpert.ee.



Photo: Staatsoper Hamburg

BAYREUTH

On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Richard Wagner's birth, the Bavarian Government is planning a renovation and expansion of the Bayreuth Museum at Haus Wahnfried in time for 2013, at a total cost of 12 million euros. When it reopens, it will house expanded storage areas, cafe, and a museum shop where finally we will be able to buy marzipan busts of the composer.

DIED

Peter Hofmann, remembered chiefly as the tenor who assumed the role of Siegmund in the convention breaking Chéreau *Ring* in Bayreuth. He was a tenor who divided his time among opera, pop, and musical theater. His Wagnerian repertory included Parsifal, Lohengrin, Tristan and Walther. Plagued by Parkinson's Disease and later dementia, he succumbed on November 29, 2010, at an early age of 66.

Hank Neugarten, in January 2011, at 79. Hank had been the president of the Dutch Wagner Society (Wagner genootschap) for seven years. His many friends at the TWS would receive his postcards from most of the *Rings* he travelled to.

Alan Aberbach passed away on August 1, 2010. A professor of history at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Alan was also a major Wagner scholar and author of several books on the composer. He will be fondly remembered for his stimulating lectures to our Society.



Peter Hofmann
Los Angeles Times

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

A new HD venue?

Though we are happy with the easy availability of the HD opera broadcasts from the Met, most of us are unaware of similar treat that has passed largely unperceived. The movie theater at Dundas Square has shown to date two direct broadcasts from La Scala in Milan, the last one in the past December, the opening night of the Berlin production of *Die Walküre*, under Barenboim.

It was not advertised beyond giveaway notice in a popular giveaway daily of a "free" popular soft drink "with the purchase a ticket". The man in charge in the theater confessed that he does not receive any advance schedule of future events and thus was unable to tell us the date or the identity of the possible future showing. Consequently, there were only a handful of attendees in the empty theater, present largely because of a word-of-mouth information and this will not change in the future.

Although it is by now ancient history, here are some irreverent comments on the cast, a mixture of well known veterans and some relative newcomers. Thus it was a pleasure to see again Waltraut Meier, here Sieglinde, her voice still permeated by an affecting vulnerability, her looks still oddly attractive and not at all diminished by the constant extreme close-ups, so deadly to some.

Not so was John Tomlinson, the past master Wotan, now reduced to lesser roles not taxing the remains of his once glorious voice. His Hunding, dressed for a banker in a stock American Western, failed to project the evil. Rather a lovable grandfatherly figure, angry but harmless.

Wotan to be, Rene Pape, cancelled and was replaced by one Vitaliy Kowaliow, his face an absurd combination of Charles Bronson and the Mexican, Cantinflas. He acted a cartoon bad guy with his face, his body language largely mute. Simon O'Neill, the ubiquitous New Zealander, here Siegmund, a tenor lyrical, but perhaps not yet heroic, was well matched with his sister for a romantic and believable take of the first act.

Nina Stemme, Brünnhilde, in the hands of the director gave us an unfortunate image of an otherwise heartbreaking moment in the opera. Put to sleep in a circle of fire, she looked like an immense side of rare beef under a cluster of infrared lamps.

Photo: Teatro alla Scala; Wotan puts Brünnhilde to sleep



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

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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
 Richard Horner, Treasurer
 197 Northwood Drive
 North York, ON M2M 2K5

WAGNER ONSTAGE

Die Feen

Frankfurt; 3-6 May

Der Fliegende Holländer

Duisburg; 7 May
Riga; 11 June
Stuttgart; 7-25 July

Tannhäuser

Altenburg; 1 May
Eisenach; 7 May
Dresden; 5 June
Berlin (Deutsche); 9 July
Erl; 29 July
Bayreuth; 25 July-25 Aug. **NP**

Lohengrin

Mannheim; 22 May
Budapest; 9-18 June
Munich; 2-6 July
Savonlinna; 2-20 July **NP**
Bayreuth; 27 July-26 Aug. **NP**

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Glyndenborne; 21 May-26 June
NP
Berlin (Komische); 2-17 July
Erl; 15-23 July
Bayreuth; 26 July-24 Aug. **NP**

Das Rheingold

Darmstadt; 4 June **NP**
Dresden (fest); 28 May-5 June
Heilbronn; 11-15 May **NP**
Gelsenkirchen; 8 May-1 July
Leeds; 18 June-8 Sept. **Concert.**
Venice (Fenice); 24 June-2 July

Die Walküre

New York/Met; 2-14 May **NP**
Oldenburg; 15 May-15 June
Vienna (SO); 5-12 June
Leipzig; 19-25 June
Darmstadt; 26 June **NP**

May - September 2011

Listings correct to April 2011. For further information check with opera companies via: www.operabase.com

Siegfried

Longborough; 25-30 July

Götterdämmerung

Paris (Opera); 3-30 June

The Ring

Karlstad; 6 May-17 July
Hannover; 11 May-3 July
Lubeck; 20-29 May
Weimar; 8 June-10 July
San Francisco; 14 June-3 July
Essen; 22 June-24 July

Tristan und Isolde

Augsburg; 14-27 May
Wels; 2-5 June
Northington; 3 June-3 July
Lyon; 4-22 June **NP**
Budapest (SO); 10-13 June
Munich; 27-31 July
Bayreuth; 29 July-28 Aug. **NP**
La Plata; 14-28 Aug.

Parsifal

Hamburg; 1 May
Basel; 6 May-19 June
Catania; 10-19 May **NP**
Prague (Narodni); 15-28 May
Würzburg; 21 May-24 July
Dusseldorf; 22 May-11 June
Wroclaw; 4-10 June
Zurich (Oper); 26 June-10 July
NP
Erl; 22-31 July
Bayreuth; 28 July-27 Aug. **NP**
Tallin; 25-28 Aug.

NP - new production

Concert - concert performance

TWS 2010-2011

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Books



John J. Pohanka: *Wagner the Mystic*; published by The Wagner Society of Washington, DC; 2010; 114 pages. PO Box 58213, Washington, DC. www.wagner-dc.org; Exploring the Mystical Experience of Music, with emphasis on Wagner's work.