

# WAGNER NEWS

Wagner News is published by the TORONTOWAGNER SOCIETY

## TWS CALENDAR

TWS web site: [www.torontowagner.org](http://www.torontowagner.org)  
E-mail: [torontowagner@yahoo.com](mailto:torontowagner@yahoo.com)

Monday, January 20; 8.00 p.m.  
**Lee Milliken**, Production Manager  
of the COC and their new  
Technical Director, will discuss:  
*"Behind the Scenes at the COC"*

Monday, February 24; 8.00 p.m.  
**Adrienne Pieczonka** talks about  
her opera singing career and  
Wagner.

Monday, March, **TBA**  
Monday, April, **TBA**

All meetings at  
**ARTS AND LETTERS CLUB**  
**14 ELM STREET**



Yannick Nézet-Séguin does Wagner; see page 4  
Photo: The Guardian

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Toronto Wagner Society  
needs to update its membership  
list. Please provide the following  
information:  
name, address, **e-mail**, telephone  
number.

**E-mail this information to:**  
[torontowagner@yahoo.com](mailto:torontowagner@yahoo.com),

or, **send by mail to:**  
TORONTOWAGNER SOCIETY  
P.O.Box 5, Station F.  
Toronto, ON M4Y 2L8

## REMINDER

Members who still have not paid their  
membership fee for the 2013-14 season  
receive this issue with a prominent  
**RED DOT** on the label.

Please send your cheque to:  
TORONTOWAGNER SOCIETY  
**Richard Horner, Treasurer**  
**197 Northwood Drive**  
**North York, ON M2M 2J5**

The Society depends on your fees.

# Some New Perspectives on the Castorf Directed Ring at Bayreuth, 2013.

Frances Henry

Frank Castorf is a man of the theatre. His *Ring of the Nibelung* performed this year at Bayreuth looks, moves and tells its story like a play - the only difference is that the performers are singers (attempting to act, some more successfully than others). From the time the curtain opens we are in a theatrical setting complete with enormous stage sets built on a revolving turntable stage. All the sets used in this production (designed artfully by Aleksandar Denic) are massive, containing high towers, many wood or metal staircases as the action requires, and numerous compartments which often serve as setting for specific scenes. The Mt. Rushmore set containing the socialist and communist ideologues and heads of state is huge as is the Reichstag – shown here totally draped in white cloth a la artist Christo who is known for wrapping famous sites and buildings. There is also much intricate detail in some of the sets reminiscent of another *avant garde* director Christian Schlingensiefel who created the famous *Parsifal* of some years ago. The turntable stage allows for constant change perhaps telling us that the world is in a constant state of flux.

The costumes are a mix of Western styled trousers, hats and boots along with more modern punk style attire and for the women mainly very glitzy gowns, wraps and furs.

The video projections are varied, provocative and mainly very interesting. Filming the action of stage and then projecting it onto white sheets which are conveniently dropped from the flies as the action requires, allows the audience to see and hear the singers but also see them in close-up videos. This creates an almost intimate effect despite the size of the stage - we almost become part of the action as the modern "theatre in the round" usually aims for. When the videos show something else happening, their meaning is often unclear to the viewer. However, it seems to me that this unclarity is intended because the forces and dynamics of living are often unclear to us - things happen, random acts which we cannot always explain. There seems to be an underlying theme of the precariousness of human life and for me this *Ring* is all about human life, its highs,

lows, foibles, transgressions, etc. It is realistic *verismo* theatre with a touch of "theatre of the absurd" thrown in.

During my stay in Bayreuth, I was able to speak privately with three *Ring* performers and all of them described the rehearsal process as somewhat difficult because it was different to what they were used to. They all agreed, and in fact, Castorf mentioned it himself in one of his interviews, that this director did not come to rehearsals with a set of ideas or a grand interpretation. He asked them to 'just do it' and improvise along the way.

I think the key to understanding this *Ring* is that it differs from most previous directors of the monumental *Ring* who in modern times have set the *Ring* within a visionary, thematic or interpretative frame. Think Chereau, Kupfer and all their followers who have developed an economic framework of "capitalism" and gold and greed. Or, the London *Ring* which Keith Warner set in a universal mythic spatial world or in a naturalistic 'Green' setting as did Seattle's director Stephen Wadsworth, or more recently both the Valencia *Ring* in Spain and the Lepage *Ring* at the Met in New York which relied on technological innovations. These innovative productions are very much in line with the post-modern concept of *Regietheater* which was made so popular in Germany. Frank Castorf, however, defies this tradition to a certain extent because he did not start with a vision or a thematic interpretation. At the most, there is a capitalism derived theme of greed and gold now transformed as oil. However, he did not come to rehearsal with a readymade set of ideas that defined and characterized each scene. Instead, as a very modern person of contemporary theatre, he relied on his usual technique of improvisation, that is, giving the performers some sense of what the show is all about and then relying on their creative ability to improvise appropriate actions, behaviours and physical movements as a key to understanding and projecting their characters and the various actions of the actual piece. His direction to the performers was probably something like this: 'in

this scene, two about-to-be lovers meet for the first time.... show me how you would do it", or "Alberich is about to steal the gold... how would he do it... show me how the Rhinemaidens react"; or the Valkyries listen to Wotan's rejection of Brünnhilde, what do they do?" Perhaps, scene by scene the director explored the performer's own sense of what they should do and if their actions looked good to him, he would tell them to 'keep it'. If not, the scene would be rehearsed again and they would be asked to "show me something else". In that way, the performers were able to use their own sense of how they thought their characters should behave and this improvisation could be massaged or changed somewhat by the director as the rehearsal process continued. The only difference here is that the performers sing rather than speak the words but the improvisation process can be used in much the same manner as in staged theatre. This approach provides a wide eclectic approach to the staging and that is exactly what we saw in this production.

Some performers are better able to work in this atmosphere than others depending on their training, inclinations and past performance experiences. Burkhard Ulrich who sang Mime described Castorf's method of working:

"With Castorf, improvisation is actually part of the program. So each rehearsal would begin with: 'How are we going to do it?', which was to say: 'How do you want to do it?'. Castorf asked us that so that he could tap into our strengths as actors... Castorf says exactly what he expects of the scenes and the final result. But he has the wonderful gift of being able to take what he needs and throw away the rest. And he does it all in such a way that you don't feel bossed around. He gives us a lot of freedom, but it must be nailed down eventually so that you can turn it into musical theater." (<http://www.dw.de/tenor-burkhard-ulrich-we-enjoyed-ourselves-tremendously/a-17036476>)

On the other hand, this method of working without an overall plan of action wastes a lot of time. If the improvises don't work, a day or so of valuable rehearsal time is wasted. Given the relatively short rehearsal time available - even at Bayreuth which offers more than most opera houses - time is often of the essence. This may explain to some extent the weaknesses of *Götterdämmerung* which often seemed vague, unwieldy and aimless perhaps because rehearsal time ran out. (Castorf himself complained about the shortness of rehearsal time.)

One result of this approach to opera direction is a certain lack of cohesion or integration between not only the four operas but also, and especially, between scenes. There is a certain randomness about the stage actions; things happen which are unpredictable and difficult to explain. There is nothing for example to prepare us for the Rio Carnival clothed Forest Bird or for her being eaten by crocodiles. Many of the critics' and substantial members' of the audience chief complaint seemed to be that it is impossible to know what is going on. Confusion, uncertainty and inexplicability reigned supreme. Some of these reactions may result from an improvisational approach to the stage direction precisely because no individual performer could possibly have an overall sense of direction and in this production, neither did the director whose job that customarily is.

My own opinion of this new production is that it contains many fascinating and provocative insights into the characterization of the *Ring* enhanced by the massive and outstanding stage sets, some superb singing and, as always, the outstanding orchestral playing of the carefully selected musicians of the famed Bayreuth orchestra. I would also add that relative newcomer Kirill Petrenko is a huge and very important addition to the world of Wagnerian conducting.

### **In Memory...**

It is with regret that we report the recent death of Rene Graziani, who along with his wife Dorothy, was one of the founders of the Toronto Wagner Society some thirty years ago. Rene was a Professor of English at the University of Toronto and together with some colleagues was the first to organize a formal society dedicated to the love of Wagner's music. From its small organizational beginnings, the TWS has maintained itself over these many years and grew to a membership of close to 200 people.

## Yannick Nézet-Séguin : A young Wagner conductor in the making

Pierre Couture

On the 12<sup>th</sup> August the Lanaudière Festival, just outside Montréal, chose to present Yannick Nézet-Séguin's first full Wagner opera – *Lohengrin* - as its final concert. Presented live in front of nearly 6,000 people, some seated and others picnicking on the grass in the Glyndebourne style. This Quebec première of that music drama in a concert performance, according to Arthur Kaptainis of the Montreal Gazette, “ranks among the greatest things ever heard in the Fernand Lindsay Amphitheater. A Wagnerian is born! ” Friends who attended referred to the experience as an almost spiritual journey. He delivered a brilliant and masterful account of this very lyrical early Wagner opera, and had chosen this work precisely for that purpose. “There’s not another context in which I’d rather lose my Wagner virginity,” were the words he declared just before the concert.

Unfortunately, this was not sufficient to convince Radio-Canada's *Espace Musique*, nor the CBC Radio 2's microphones to broadcast this performance. But ten days later, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August, BBC Radio 3 and the cameras of BBC Four were at the Royal Albert Hall ( Proms 53 ) to catch in full definition the sold out concert of Nézet-Séguin conducting his own Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra in a programme including Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*. Now, Anna Caterina Antonacci, legendary in her portrayal of dramatic French and Italian heroines, may not be the ideal Wagner interpreter, but our young maestro was, in the words of the English critics, “a singer's conductor very supportive of our Italian diva suggesting sensuality and maturity.”

A few weeks later, in Rotterdam and two days after that at the *Théâtre des Champs Elysées*, Nézet-Séguin conducted this Orchestra (which he has led for the last five years, following Valery Gergiev's long directorship), in a full concert version of *Der Fliegende Holländer*. Once again, with the full orchestra, a chorus of 60 men and 18 women, he proved that he has the potential to unite and blend all the existing forces into an inspiring Wagner performance. Some of the tempos chosen were in full support of his singers and some theatrically eloquent silences were tremendously

inspiring, with the most dramatic moments achieved with all the orchestral tension required to convey Wagner's genius.

The synergy with his musicians was always noticeable and the sound achieved reminded me of some of the classic and memorable performances of Daniel Barenboim. At that venue, and having heard about his comments on Facebook that he is totally in love with Wagner, I could not help dreaming that he could be the one conductor in charge of reviving the eminently musical and successful Francois Girard MET production of *Parsifal* in a few years! Unlike the lack of interest shown by the CBC, the Champs Elysee concert was recorded and broadcast on *Radio-France / France Musique*.

Needless to say, at the age of 38, Nézet-Séguin is still in charge of his first *Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal*, maestro of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, chief guest conductor of The London Philharmonic and, as if this were not enough, in his second year leading the legendary Philadelphia Orchestra. Gifted with a volcanic energy and appealing charisma, he has been conducting operas in Salzburg, London and New York where Peter Gelb, being a great admirer of our young prodigy, has managed to include a full opera conducted at the MET every season. Personally, I value him as one of the four most promising and inspiring young conductors of our generation, the others being Andris Nelsons, Vladimir Jurowski, and Gustavo Dudamel.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> November, he will conduct his *Orchestre Métropolitain* at the Maison Symphonique in Montréal in a programme that includes the *Wesendonck Lieder* sung by our own Marie-Nicole Lemieux; he will also conduct Wagner's Prelude and *Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde*.



Photo Pierre Couture

# Tannhäuser, Frankfurt Opera House

Hans-Jürgen Lötzerich,

The current production of *Tannhäuser* at the Frankfurt Opera is a revival of their 2007 production directed by Vera Nemirova but featuring a new cast including Canadian heldentenor Lance Ryan in the title role.

It opens with young pilgrims dressed in modern colourful clothes carrying back packs, sleeping bags and a cross going to a Christian meeting. As the Venusberg music begins, they drop their bags, undress down to their underwear and indulge in group orgiastic sex. As the Pilgrim theme re-emerges, they stop these activities and somewhat regretfully gather under the cross. This scene is meant to demonstrate the basic theme of *Tannhäuser*, the dualism between spiritual and physical love and the guilt feelings that the physical acts inspire. Tannhäuser is presented as a kind of old time rocker dressed in a leather jacket while Venus is seductive all in black. The singers' contest in the second act takes place as part of a TV show with singers dressed like a famous German *a capella* band famous in the twenties and thirties. There is a beer advertisement on the wall and the singers are drinking beer. The dropout Tannhäuser arrives in the commercialized TV-world of the song contests and talent shows, where he – as one can imagine - scandalizes as a rock n'roller. In the third act there is now a wall with sky and clouds in the background of the streetlamp. After Elizabeth has been singing her prayer, she is strangled by Wolfram. When Tannhäuser has sung the Rome-narration, Venus appears with some scantily clad women and erotic creatures who ensnare him as she tries to win him back. In Wolfram's mention of the name of Elisabeth the shepherd boy appears and leads Tannhäuser by a door in the wall into the light, so to speak, into an unknown more hopeful future.

While one had the feeling in the first act that the great Museums-Orchestra under guest conductor Constantin Trinks was conducted rather carelessly and more could have been brought to the playing, the emotional intensity increased noticeably in the following acts. This was certainly very important for the outstanding singers, led by Annette Dasch (Elsa in Bayreuth since 2010), who made her role-debut here and sang a very emotional, intimate and touching Elisabeth. One has the feeling that she was becoming a safer Wagner singer in recent years. Lance Ryan was completely convincing in his role debut as Tannhäuser he was in my opinion a better Tannhäuser than Siegfried which he sang in Bayreuth this year. He started with a rather narrow vocal tenor in the first act, but he managed effortlessly the "*Erbarm Dich mein*" in the second act, and then sang a deeply

moving Rome-Narrative in the third act. His acting is, as always, a pleasure. Tuija Knihtilä embodied a passable Venus, had a nice timbre, but unfortunately too much vibrato. The third role-debutant Daniel Schmutzhard had as Wolfram, the most difficult task to follow in the footsteps of Christian Gerhaher who sung it in 2007. However, he was also one of the highlights of the evening, as he fulfilled all expectations with his noble vocal timbre. His "*Lied an den Abendstern*" was simply fantastic. Andreas Bauer, a member of the Frankfurt Ensemble since this season, embodied the Landgraf with classy bass. Among the minstrels stood out clearly the Walther, excellent sung by Jun Ho You. The choir, very well rehearsed by Matthias Köhler, mastered in all shades and excellent quality (as usual) the bravura of the pilgrims - choirs and the entry of the guests. Unfortunately the choir is not onstage as the opera ends.

The audience at the sold-out house, as in all other performances of this series, applauded enthusiastically and gave the excellent singers many bravos. I left the Opera House with the impression that after so many bad *Tannhäuser* productions (i.e. Baumgarten in Bayreuth and Fioroni in Kassel) I have finally experienced an all-round satisfactory one.



*Tannhäuser and Elisabeth*; Frankfurt Opera

# News and Comments

## The Struggle for Influence behind the Scene of Bayreuth

11. November 2013

DPA: German News Agency

There is discord among the partners of the Bayreuth Festival Foundation. The town of Bayreuth will not accept a new constitution for the Foundation because they would lose influence in comparison to the other co-owners: state, federal, and the Society of Friends of Bayreuth. The city could be outvoted by the others. The City Council is now calling for renegotiations.

Also, media reports on the future direction of the festival - which had in the past been decided by the Richard Wagner Foundation - decided five years ago that Katharina Wagner and Eva Wagner-Pasquier lead the Festival. But their contract ends in 2015.

The Foundation is officially the owner of the *Festspielhaus*. There will be another lease in the future for this world-famous real estate. The contract made in 1990 was agreed to by Wolfgang Wagner but it ended when the longtime festival boss gave up his post in order to clear the way for his daughters Katharina and Eva. Nevertheless, the contract was believed to continue. The tenant is the festival corporation and will remain so. For what is it otherwise for? Toni Schmid, head of the festival corporation and Assistant Secretary in the Bavarian Ministry of Art, said in the previous week that they had agreed to a term of 30 years for the new lease. This long duration was important. "There is a lot of money from the public purse for the festival so we need a contemporary and long-term lease."

Behind the scenes the Bayreuth Festival is made up of an elaborate structure. Involved in the foundation are the federal government, the Free State, the town of Bayreuth, the patrons of the Society of Friends of

Bayreuth, the Bavarian State Foundation, the Oberfrankenstiftung, the government of Upper Franconia - and the Wagner family, whose tribes are not really green.

The Wieland line, the descendants of Wolfgang's brother Wieland, fear that the Foundation would be deposed, as their representative on the Foundation Board, Chris Thomale of the '*Nordbayerischen Kurier*' said recently. Meanwhile, the corporation also has other subsidiaries, and the mixture will always be confusing, criticized Thomale in the interview. 'And the Foundation is insidiously undermined, gutted, stripped of power.'

The Festival Corporation was founded by Wolfgang Wagner in the 1980s, to consolidate his position at the Green Hill. The company is host of the Festival. Little permeates to the outside.

Only so much is clear: there is much in turmoil in Bayreuth. In the autumn, there should be actually talks about the future direction of the Festival, as the contracts of the Wagner sisters end up in two years. But there is still no new Government and still no successor to Bernd Neumann (CDU) as Minister of State for culture in Berlin. What will be Federal position in the future on the subject of Bayreuth?

This much is now evident at the *Festspielhaus* in Bayreuth: The aging building is urgently in need of renovation. A financing agreement has been signed in September, just before the election, for 30 million euro. The State and the Federal Government take over ten million euros each, the rest will come from the Society of Friends of Bayreuth, from the city, the District of Upper Franconia and the upper Franconia Foundation.

(Edited and loosely translated by Frances Henry)

Further to this report, although the contract of the Wagner half-sisters was up for renewal in 2015, rumor has it that it has been already extended, to the chagrin of the many of the traditional Wagner lovers who see Katharina Wagner as "desecrating" rather than "deconstructing" or "reinterpreting" Wagner's masterpieces.

## More opera online

There is a promising trend in opera. More and more houses are already streaming live opera or are in the last phases of preparation to do so.

The Vienna State Opera has launched opera live stream of their productions. Richard Strauss's *Rosenkavalier* has debuted on October 27, with altogether close to 17 productions planned for this season. The catch is that unlike the Bavarian State Opera, it is not free - it will cost euros 14 per stream. The internet transmission will start half an hour before the performance, with impressions from the house, summaries of content and the like. The plan is to include also the score, synchronously shown. Of interest to us is the December 13 transmission of *Tristan und Isolde*.

[www.sonostream.tv](http://www.sonostream.tv)

Not to be outdone, Vienna's state opera *Theater an der Wien* is planning to start live streaming for free. It began with Iain Bell's *A Harlot's Progress* on October 24.

The *Bayerische Staatsoper* (Bavarian State Opera) is presenting its second season of selected performances as live streams free of charge online with

STAATSOPER.TV. The season's program includes six evenings of opera and two of ballet, in full HD. The first broadcast was on October 6, Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*. The next broadcast, Richard Strauss's *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* will be broadcast on December 1, too early for this issue of Wagner News.

France offers a catalogue of operas on demand or to rent. [www.medicivt.com](http://www.medicivt.com)

A selection of Royal Opera House productions are now available to view online via the online streaming website DigitalTheater. Users can rent or buy access to *Le Nozze de Figaro*, *La Bohème*, *La Traviata* and *Evgeny Onegin*, with prices starting at £3.99 for 40 hour access over 30 days. [www.digitaltheatre.com](http://www.digitaltheatre.com).

The Royal Opera House plans an HD cinema transmission of *Parsifal* on December 18. However, although it will be seen on 500 US screens it will not be available in Canada.

Additionally, British cinemas have access to transmissions from other European countries. Go to [www.emergingpictures.com/opera](http://www.emergingpictures.com/opera) to see their program.

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## Short versions of the Ring

Despite the tradition of respecting the inviolability of the text and music of the *Ring*, there are numerous examples of a rather relaxed attitude to it and so successful to boot that these abridged versions repeatedly play to delighted audiences of young and old first-time Wagnerites, or Wagnerites in the making.

While the Wagner sisters did not allow Frank Castorf any leeway with regard to the text and music, Katharina Wagner herself had no qualms when preparing for the infamous Colon *Ring*. Her plans saw the *Ring* reduced to seven hours, and starting with *Die Walküre*, out of the established order. Although, for reasons only known to herself, she retired early and not amicably, the director who took over maintained the timing although we do not know if also the *Walküre* bit.

For those who think this was an anomaly and an exception, there might be surprise to learn of other instances of this breach of a taboo and of such success that these are repeated annually to an ever growing audiences. It is accepted by now that they serve a function of bloodlessly preparing a new audience for the real thing.

One such radical abridgment goes by the name of *Der Ring an 1 Abend* (A *Ring* for One Evening) and it runs for 3 hrs and 20 minutes, with an intermission. It was originally developed for the Mannheim National Theater in 1992, and it has been seen repeatedly since then. There is an AudioCD and it can be seen in an excerpt on YouTube. This August it has been presented in Bayreuth under the direction of Phillip Artaud, and in different versions in Linz and Erfurt in September and October, and it will be repeated in March 2014 in Duisburg and Düsseldorf. In the past it has been seen in Vienna, and there was even a concert version of it by Minnesota Concert Opera with Jay Hunter Morris.

An even more compact abridgment is known as *Der Ring für Kinder* (A *Ring* for Children). It has been around for some time now and exists on AudioCD and on YouTube in an excerpt. Here the *Ring* was skillfully condensed to a little over 2 hrs, with an intermission of 20 minutes. With a reduced orchestra it maintains the essential story and its morals without seeming too rushed. It will be presented in Leipzig in February and March, 2014.

## NEW TRANSLATION OF *ARTWORK OF THE FUTURE*

A special issue of *The Wagner Journal* comprises, in its entirety, Emma Warner's new translation of Wagner's essay "The Artwork of the Future." It is eye-opening, even riveting, and as important a piece of writing on topics Wagnerian as I have read since Magee's *Tristan Chord*. My own past efforts at reading Wagner's prose have been frustrated by the impenetrable translations offered by William Ashton Ellis. One is encouraged to believe that Wagner's original writing style is equally turgid, but — as the excerpt below shows — this new translation proves the lie.

I have also relied upon the 1964 compendium, *Wagner on Music and Drama*, edited by Goldman and Sprinchorn, and despite its current clouded reputation I owe that volume a great deal of thanks for being there at all at a time when my appreciation of Wagner's theories was in early development. But Warner puts them all to the chase. One only wishes that all of the major essays were given such splendid treatment for English language readers.

Of the many compelling arguments in the essay, Wagner's *seriatim* history of the "three human art forms" — dance, music and poetry — is quite magnificent and especially convincing. He understands each of these arts to be divine in origin and serving the purpose of tribal affirmation. The development of each art from its primitive glories, however, was a history of decline, away from the sacred and into the realms of religion and ornamentation. At the time of this writing (1849) Wagner despairs that sacred gestures are now used a pretty artifice, and that the all-consuming absorption that was once given to communally received artwork had devolved into its use as mere background for social occasions. Theatre — to Wagner the ultimate communal worship — is now simply an occasion for parties and talk.

I was struck anew at Wagner's passionate convictions about the existence of the divine, and the urgent need to worship and pay deference to the spirit that surrounds us. His distinction between the genuinely spiritual and the decadently religious is of course a precursor of the discourse of the 1960s and 1970s in which I framed my own spiritual and social convictions, and during which I first heard and read Wagner's works.

The penultimate section, translated as "Basic Features of the Artwork of the Future," concentrates on the necessity for a new physical place in which to witness art — that is, a new theatre. It is remarkable how detailed

Wagner's concepts were, more than 20 years before Bayreuth. And in his own words the "mystical abyss" and other familiar clichés become entirely practical and compelled by the utility of the exercise itself: The requirements of art are twofold: those of the giver and those of the receiver, who mutually interact, permeating and determining each other. The stage's first task is to provide the appropriate space for communal dramatic performance: then it must solve the question of communication with the audience by relaying this dramatic action to the eye and ear in a comprehensible fashion. The design of the auditorium is determined by the need to see and hear the artwork, and this, along with the functionality of the space, must constitute the beauty of the design; for the public has joined together for the artwork alone, so to grasp it the eye must be drawn to it by everything it meets. By watching and listening the audience is transplanted onto the stage: the performer is an artist only if he merges with the public. All that breathes and moves on the stage is driven by a need to communicate, to be seen and heard in that space which, to however relative a degree, yet from the point of view of the set seems to the performer to contain the whole of humanity: and the audience, that representative of public life, vanishes from the auditorium, it lives and breathes in the artwork, which now seems to be life itself, and on the stage, which now seems to be the whole world.

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A 21<sup>st</sup> century reader examines these observations of 175 years ago with frank astonishment. Can we even imagine the nature of the tittering social events that Wagner's contemporaries contemplated as "theatre"? Is it not shockingly prescient that in 1849 a non-architect would postulate that the beauty of a building's design arises out of its functionality? And why do we "modern" audiences accept the legitimacy of theatre that is not a coherent narrative communication of a story that we recognize as our own?

Reprinted from: <http://thewagnerblog.com>

# WAGNER ONSTAGE

**Das Liebesverbot**  
Leipzig; Mar.1

**Die Feen**  
Regensburg; Jan.25 - Apr.17

**Rienzi**  
Monchengladbach; Dec.15 - 28, 2013

**The Flying Dutchman**  
Bremen; Dec.1 - 13, 2013  
Brescia; Dec.1, 2013  
Brno; Dec.6, 2013 - Apr.12  
St. Gallen; Dec.6, 2013 - Jan. 28  
Usti and Labem; Dec.8, 2013  
Giessen; Dec.8 - 25, 2013  
Pavia; Dec.9 - 11, 2013  
Ekaterinburg; Dec.10, 2013 - Jan.28  
Minsk; Dec.10 - 11, 2013  
Berlin (UDL); Dec.12 - 29, 2013  
Karlsruhe; Dec.18, 2013 - Jan.10  
Hildesheim; Dec.25, 2013 - Jan.29  
Vilnius; Jan.16  
Munich; Jan.17 - 23  
Essen; Jan.24 - Feb.21  
Copenhagen; Jan.26 - Feb.28  
Strasbourg; Jan.26 - Feb.8  
St.Petersburg; Jan.28  
Rouen; Jan.31 - Feb.2  
Calgary; Feb.1 - 7  
Sarasota; Mar.1 - 23  
Zurich; Mar.11 - 23  
Charlotte; Mar.22 - 30  
Budapest; Mar.26 - Apr.5

**Lohengrin**  
Wurzburg; Dec.1, 2013 - Jan.31  
Bratislava; Dec.5, 2013  
Stralsund; Dec.7 - 28, 2013 NP  
Ostrava; Dec.12 - 18, 2013  
Szczecin; Dec.13, 2013 - Jan.11 NP  
Graz; Dec.13, 2013 - Jan.21  
Hamburg; Dec.22, 2013 - Jan.12  
Basel; Dec.22, 2013 - Feb.2  
Weimar; Dec.26, 2013 - Apr.18  
Düsseldorf; Jan.18 - Feb.16 NP  
Vilnius; Jan.30 - Mar.6  
Coburg; Feb.23 - Apr.21  
Madrid; Apr.3 - 27 NP  
Warsaw; Apr.11 - 17 NP  
Vienna; Apr.12 - 28 NP

**Tannhäuser**  
Dortmund; Dec.1, 2013 - Apr.5 NP  
Plauen; Dec.6, 2013 - Mar.30  
Tallinn; Dec.7, 2013 - Jan.31  
Moscow; Dec.15, 2013  
Prague; Jan.11 - Apr.11 NP  
Zwickau; Jan.22 - Apr.25 NP  
Karlsruhe; Feb.9 - Apr.20

## DECEMBER 2013 - APRIL 2014. Listings correct to November 2013. For further information check with opera companies via: [www.operabase.com](http://www.operabase.com)

Freiburg; Feb.22 - Mar.23 NP  
Bautzen; Mar.29 - Apr.4  
Berlin (UDL); Apr.12 - 27 NP

**Rheingold**  
Linz; Dec.1, 2013 - Feb.1  
Nürnberg; Dec.5, 2013 - Mar.2  
Sofia; Mar.6  
Houston; Apr.11 - 26

**Die Walküre**  
Leipzig; Dec.7, 2013 - Jan.11 NP  
Linz; Mar.22 - Apr.26  
Nuremberg; Apr.5 - 20  
Duisburg; Apr.19 - 26

**Siegfried**  
Saint-Etienne; Dec.7, 2013  
Besancon; Dec.11, 2013  
Bangkok; Dec.15, 2013  
Geneva; Jan.30 - Feb.8 NP  
Lubeck; Feb.23 - 25  
Nancy; Mar.21 - 30 NP  
Stuttgart; Mar.23 - Apr.27

**Götterdämmerung**  
Cottbus; Feb.2 - Mar.16  
Geneva; Apr.23 - 29

**The Ring**  
Melbourne; Nov. - Dec.4; Dec.6 - 13, 2013  
Berlin; Jan.8 - 12  
Amsterdam; Jan.29 - Feb.5; Feb.7 - 14  
Halle; Feb.14 - 23

**Der Ring an 1 Abend**  
Duisburg; Mar.26 - Apr.9  
Düsseldorf; Mar.29

**Der Ring fur Kinder**  
Leipzig; Feb.8 - Mar.9

Die **Meistersinger**  
Karlsruhe; Apr.27

**Tristan und Isolde**  
Lubeck; Dec.1, 2013 - Apr.27  
Meiningen; Dec.1, 2013 - Jan.9  
Vienna; Dec.8 - 21, 2013  
Dresden; Dec.8 - 14, 2013  
Oldenburg; Dec.14 - 29, 2013  
Madrid; Jan.12 - Feb.8 NP  
Darmstadt; Jan.25 NP  
Kiel; Jan.25 - Apr.18  
Paris; Apr.8 - 29  
Frankfurt; Apr.18 - 21  
Chemnitz; Apr.19

**Parsifal**  
Braunschweig; Dec.1, 2013 - Apr.18  
London (RO); Dec.2 - 18, 2013  
Bologna; Jan.14 - 25  
Innsbruck; Feb.16 - Apr.20  
Leipzig; Mar.30 - Apr.18  
Berlin (Deutsche); Apr.5 - 21  
Poznań; Apr.11 - 13  
Darmstadt; Apr.13 - 18  
Budapest; Apr.16 - 21  
Munich; Apr.16 - 20  
Wrocław; Apr.17  
Vienna; Apr.17 - 24

NP = New Production

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Frankfurt Opera *Tannhäuser*, photo: Monika Rittershaus



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