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New Year's Message 2017

The Final Solution to the German Problem

Dear Friends,

The unholy war against the Germanic peoples continues unabated. Again we have witnessed unprecedented numbers of immigrants arriving throughout Europe, bringing their foreign religions, cultures and more importantly their foreign DNA. Simple demographic studies and basic mathematics shows that in the coming decades the indigenous populations of Europe will become minorities in their own countries.

Remarkably, this revolution in immigration began throughout all the West at the same time - around the years 1962 to 1973, and did not reflect the attitude of the majority of citizens, yet these policies were imposed by the ruling elites, and supported and co-ordinated by ever compliant media.

Why have the peoples allowed this to happen? A clue can be found in the colourful writings of Ernst Jünger. His novel, *Auf den Marmorklippen - On the Marble Cliffs*, describes the upheaval and ruin of a serene agricultural society that feels increasing pressure from the unscrupulous followers of the dreaded head ranger. His actions are thus described:

There were other signs wherein the decline expressed itself. It is like a rash that appears, disappears and returns. In between there were also joyous days where everything seemed as before. This was the head ranger's brilliant strategy; he injected fear in small doses, then increased them with the aim of paralysing any resistance.

So, the current state of affairs with mass immigration, Multikulti and political correctness, did not and could not have been thrust upon us in one fell swoop.

The *Talmud*-inspired Jewish intellectual movements, which are the impulse and driving force behind these completely undemocratic changes, have been patiently working away behind the scenes for many decades.

One such group, the Pan-European Union was founded around 1920 and would later become the preliminary ideological foundation of the European Union. It had numerous well known persons as members, Aristide Briand, Konrad Adenauer, Thomas Mann, Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud, to name a few. The founding

President for 49 years, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, in his 1925 book, *Practical Idealism*, gave the direction of the Union. A brief quote from the book serves as an introduction to their ideology:

The man of the future will be of mixed race. The races and classes of today will gradually disappear due to the elimination of space, time, and prejudice. The Eurasian-negroid race of the future, similar in appearance to the Ancient Egyptians, will replace the diversity of peoples and the diversity of individuals. Instead of destroying European Judaism, Europe, against her will, refined and educated this people, driving them to their future status as a leading nation through this artificial evolutionary process. It's not surprising that the people that escaped from the Ghetto-Prison, became the spiritual nobility of Europe. Thus, the compassionate care given by Europe created a new breed of aristocrats.

Europeans are to breed into a Eurasian-Negroid mongrel breed, ruled over by Judaism.

Coudenhove-Kalergi's ideas are the guiding principles of the European Union. The Coudenhove-Kalergi European Prize is awarded every two years to Europeans who have excelled in promoting this criminal plan. Among those awarded with this prize are Helmut Kohl, Angela Merkel, Herman Van Rompuy and Jean-Claude Juncker - an unsavoury den of heinous goons who think nothing of destroying their own peoples, their racial communities. For them, several decades in a Gulag would be more appropriate.

Ironically, it was the great German statesman and Freedom Fighter, Adolf Hitler, who by his actions enabled such groups as the Pan-European Union to flourish after the war. Just as a man who gathers a sackful of vipers and throws the sack over his neighbour's fence, some of the vipers later slither back home, the rest then take root where they are and multiply.

Thus, the Pan-European Union was banned by the Nazis soon after they came to power and migrated to America during the war. In 1946 after the end of World War Two, they slithered back to Germany and founded The European Parliamentary Union, the results of which we are witnessing today.

The *Frankfurt School* contained a similar brood of Vipers who left Germany in 1934 after Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist German Workers Party – NSDAP, came to power. Its members' destination was America and they were soon re-established in New York City.

The Frankfurt School's studies program combined Marxist analysis with Freudian psychoanalysis to form the basis of what became known as *Cultural Marxism* and *Political Correctness*. The No. 1 goal of this group since its creation has been the destruction of Western culture and the Christian religion. It has seen a large degree of success.

The biggest problem obstructing the success of nationalistic opponents to mass immigration, who regularly protest in large numbers on the streets of German cities, is that they have little idea of who or what the enemy is. Most have never even heard of the *Pan European Union* or the *Frankfurt School* and know nothing of their murderous ideologies. Without an enemy

there is no meaningful fight. The protesters are waving their swords at the invisible. Without fight they have doomed themselves to extermination.

Therefore, our main thrust of action must be to educate. The ideologies, which guide the Godless trinity of Democracy, Capitalism and cultural Marxism, must be exposed as the frauds that they are and hounded out of existence. Every schoolchild must know what evil actually lies behind the seemingly good and beautiful ideals of *Multiculturalism* and *Political Correctness*.

The smokescreen behind which the enemies of mankind operate largely unhindered is, of course, the *Holocaust* the greatest delusion ever known to mankind, a fantasy which became its own reality. However, the smoke will eventually blow away. The snake will have its head cut off and the World may once again become a Paradise.

Best wishes

Peter Hartung

Director, Adelaide Institute



Arno Brecker – *The Avenger* 1940

RICHARD WAGNER ÜBER ALLES



Fredrick Töben reviews the Third Cycle... and some more - about LOVE

Where to begin without becoming repetitive or merely plagiaristic? Let's resist, if possible, what [one reviewer](#) did, almost as if he could not help himself, mention "**Hitler ... and Inkenen has the Melbourne Ring Orchestra play the funeral march with an elegiac intensity that has such sonority it sounds the death of the very idea of Germany.**"

Before, during intervals and after each performance it was to be expected that some conversations would also raise other issues, which since the end of World War Two are a staple diet for those who opened themselves to post-war propaganda as propagated by [Sefton Delmer](#), former British chief of "black propaganda". After the German surrender in 1945, in a conversation with the German Professor of International Law, Dr Friedrich Grimm, Delmer stated:

Atrocity propaganda is how we won the war and we are only really beginning with it now! We will continue this atrocity propaganda, we will escalate it until nobody will accept even a good word from the Germans until all the sympathy they may still have abroad will have been destroyed and they themselves will be so confused that they will no longer know what they are doing. Once that has been achieved, once they begin to run down their own country and their own people, not reluctantly but with eagerness to please the victors, only then will our victory be complete. It will never be final. Re-education needs careful tending, like an English lawn. Even one moment of negligence, and the weeds crop up again – those indestructible weeds of historical truth.

Philosopher Martin Heidegger's insight clarifies one other impulse: *The Jews, with their marked gift for calculating, live,*

already for the longest time, according to the principle of race, which is why they are resisting its consistent application with utmost violence.

Walt Disney's 1943 cartoon, [Education for Death: The making of the Nazi](#), further reinforces Delmer's aims, and even after the war, and to this day, a 1957 film, [What's Opera, Doc?](#), produced by Warner Brothers could not resist using Wagnerian music to make its propaganda point.

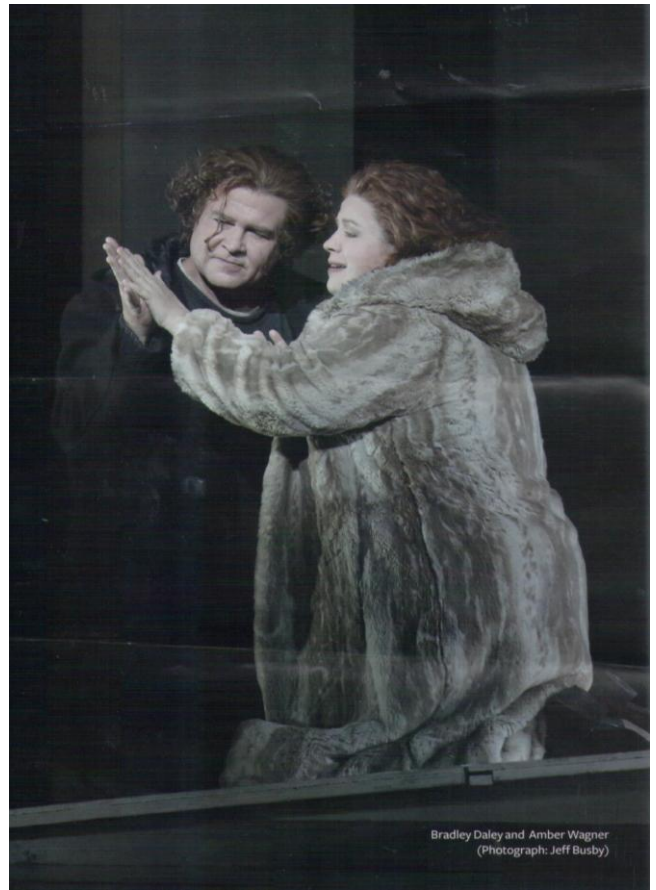
Back to *The Ring*. One lady remarked to me that Warwick Fyfe's Alberich was "too cerebral", and another said he was "a typical Jew". I could partially agree with the former but I firmly rebutted the latter's comment by pointing out "Jews do not have a monopoly on any form of human behaviour" and it is thus a nonsense to read into any of Wagner's characters specific characteristics, then locate them within certain groups. She did not seem to understand that if we had to give Alberich an ethnic/racist identity, then he would belong to the Nordic Trolls.

My response stifled her **self-referential/projectionism** mechanism, with which she was ready to let fly had I agreed with her that Fyfe's demeanour was "typical Jewish". When we met again during interval for dining, her friend, who had taken the seat beside me, implied there was a Jewish urge within her, desiring to pull out the anti-Semitic label against those who agreed with her "Jewish" Alberich comment.



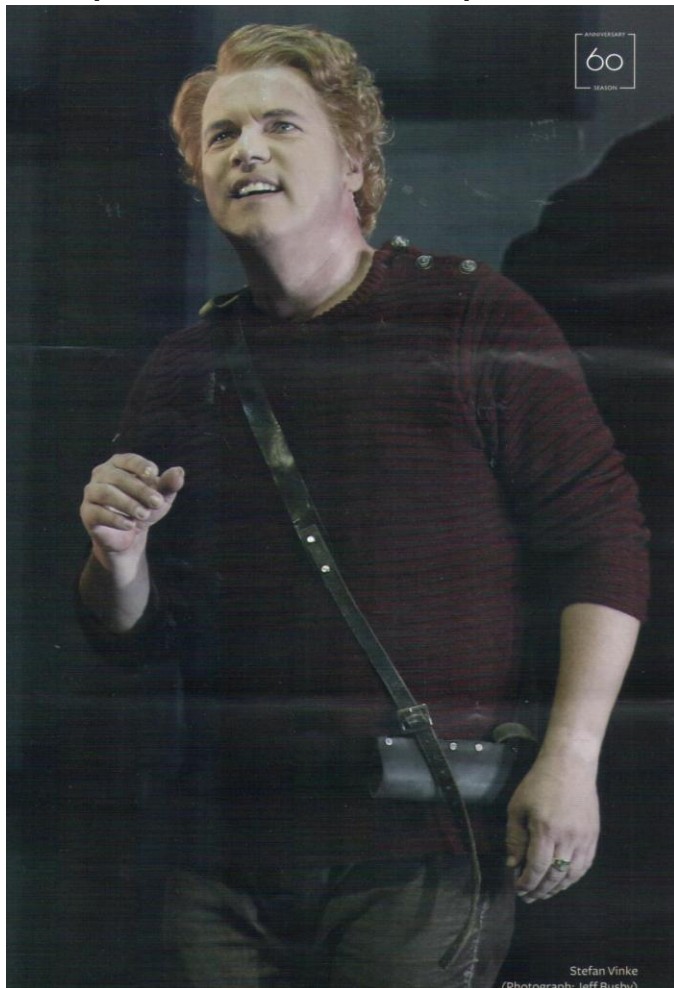
James Johnson
(Photograph: Jeff Busby)

**Vorspiel – Prelude - Das Rheingold:
Composed November 1853 – September 1854**



Bradley Daley and Amber Wagner
(Photograph: Jeff Busby)

Die Walküre: Composed June 1854 – March 1856



Stefan Vinke
(Photograph: Jeff Busby)

Siegfried: Composed November 1852-1871



Lise Lindstrom
(Photograph: Jeff Busby)

Götterdämmerung: Composed 1874

The cast will be signing programs in the foyer after this performance of *Das Rheingold*

Der Ring des Nibelungen

Arts Centre Melbourne
Friday 9 December 2016 at 7.00pm

Das Rheingold

Preliminary evening, music drama in one act
by Richard Wagner
Libretto by the composer
Sung in German with English surtitles

Conductor **Pietari Inkinen**
Director **Neil Armfield**
Set Designer **Robert Cousins**
Costume Designer **Alice Babidge**
Lighting Designer **Damien Cooper**
Sound Designer **Jim Atkins**
Associate Conductor **Anthony Legge**
Assistant Conductor **Tahu Matheson**
Associate Directors **Kate Champion, Roger Press**
Assistant Directors **Greg Eldridge, Tama Matheson**
Assistant to the Lighting Designer **James Lipari**
Movement Revival Assistant **Frankie Snowdon**

Cast, in order of appearance

Woglinde **Lorina Gore**
Wellgunde **Jane Ede**
Flosshilde **Dominica Matthews**
Alberich **Warwick Fyfe**
Wotan **James Johnson**
Fricka **Jacqueline Dark**
Freia **Hyeseoung Kwon**
Fasolt **Daniel Sumegi**
Fafner **Jud Arthur**
Froh **James Egglestone**
Donner **Michael Honeyman**
Loge **Andreas Conrad**
Mime **Graeme Macfarlane**
Erda **Liane Keegan**

Musical Preparation **Tahu Matheson, Siro Battaglin,
Paul Fitzsimon, Tom Griffiths**
German Language Coach **Tanja Binggeli**
Surtitles **Barry Millington**
Production Manager **Chris Potter**
Stage Manager **Eugenia Farrell**
Lighting Supervisor **David Parsons**

Melbourne Ring Orchestra
Concertmaster **Roger Jonsson**

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Chief Executive **Craig Hassall AM**

Artistic Director **Lyndon Terracini AM**

Chief Operating Officer **Joe Martorana**

Associate Music Director **Anthony Legge**

Synopsis

In the depths of the Rhine, the three Rhinemaidens guard the Rhinegold, a treasure of immeasurable value. The Nibelung dwarf Alberich is dazzled first by the maidens and then by their treasure. Wellgunde reveals that whoever can forge the gold into a ring will gain mastery over the world. The required magic can be attained only by renouncing love. Alberich curses love vehemently and steals the gold. Wotan, lord of the gods, dreams of eternal power and a fortress for the gods. He is reproached by his wife Fricka: he has promised to give Freia, keeper of the golden apples of eternal youth, to the giant brothers Fasolt and Fafner in return for their building the fortress. The giants demand their reward with Fafner proposing to abduct Freia by force. Loge, the god of fire, suggests an alternative payment: the mighty ring Alberich has forged from the Rhinegold. Wotan and Loge leave for the Nibelungs' underground home, Nibelheim, to take possession of the gold. Wotan wrests the ring from his finger. Shattered, Alberich curses the ring: no one who possesses the ring will escape death. The giants return and agree to accept the gold but Wotan refuses to part with the ring. Erda, goddess of the earth, appears and warns him that possession of it will bring about the end of the gods. Wotan reluctantly gives the ring to the giants and Freia is freed. The gods witness the first effects of the cursed ring as it claims its first victim – the killing of Fasolt by Fafner in the ensuing struggle over the treasure. The voices of the Rhinemaidens are heard, lamenting the loss of their gold as the gods walk toward their new home, Valhalla.

The performance lasts approximately two hours and thirty minutes.

There is no interval.

Casting correct at time of publication but subject to amendment.

Don't forget to pick up one of our beautiful souvenir programs. It contains notes from the Conductor and Director, several articles on various aspects of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, production images, and photos and biographies of the artists performing. On sale right now in the foyer.

Melbourne Ring Cycle Principal Supporters
Maureen Wheeler AO and Tony Wheeler AO

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mazda



Der Ring des Nibelungen

Arts Centre Melbourne
Monday 12 December 2016 at 5.00pm

Die Walküre

First day, music drama in three acts
by Richard Wagner
Libretto by the composer
Sung in German with English surtitles

Conductor Pietari Inkinen
Director Neil Armfield
Set Designer Robert Cousins
Costume Designer Alice Babidge
Lighting Designer Damien Cooper
Sound Designer Jim Atkins
Associate Conductor Anthony Legge
Assistant Conductor Tahu Matheson
Associate Directors Kate Champion, Roger Press
Assistant Directors Greg Eldridge, Tama Matheson
Assistant to the Lighting Designer James Lipari
Movement Revival Assistant Frankie Snowdon

Cast, in order of appearance

Sigmund Bradley Daley
Sieglinde Amber Wagner
Hunding Jud Arthur
Wotan James Johnson
Brünnhilde Lise Lindstrom
Fricka Jacqueline Dark
Gerhilde Anna-Louise Cole
Schwertleite Dominica Matthews
Ortlinde Olivia Cranwell
Waltraute Sian Pendry
Helmwige Hyeseoung Kwon
Siegfrune Amanda Atlas
Grimgerde Nicole Youl
Rossweisse Roxane Hislop

Musical Preparation Tahu Matheson,
Stephen Walter, Michael Clark
German Language Coach Tanja Biggeli
Surtitles Barry Millington
Production Manager James Wheeler
Stage Manager Ben Lynch
Lighting Supervisor Catherine Alexander

Melbourne Ring Orchestra
Concertmaster Jun Yi Ma

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opera.org.au

Chief Executive Craig Hassall AM
Artistic Director Lyndon Terracini AM
Chief Operating Officer Joe Martorana
Associate Music Director Anthony Legge

Synopsis

ACT I

As a storm rages, Siegmund the Walsung, exhausted from pursuit by enemies in the forest, stumbles into a house for shelter. Sieglinde finds the stranger lying by the hearth, and the two feel an immediate attraction. But they are soon interrupted by Sieglinde's husband, Hunding. Hunding challenges the stranger to combat the next day. Sieglinde shows Siegmund a sword buried in a tree by a stranger. She tells him that he is her twin brother and Siegmund draws the sword from the tree.

ACT II

Brünnhilde, the daughter of Wotan, prepares on his orders to fight for Siegmund against Hunding. Fricka, Wotan's wife, argues that Wotan must destroy his son because of Siegmund's incest. Bound by his own promises to honor the laws, Wotan countermands his order to Brünnhilde. However, when she meets Siegmund and Sieglinde, Brünnhilde decides to defy Wotan. Wotan appears to give Hunding the victory over Siegmund, shattering Siegmund's sword during the battle. Gathering up the fragments of Siegmund's sword, Brünnhilde helps Sieglinde escape.

ACT III

The Valkyries, preparing slain heroes destined for Valhalla, are surprised at the arrival of their sister, Brünnhilde, with Sieglinde. When they hear she is fleeing Wotan's wrath, they refuse to protect her. Brünnhilde tells Sieglinde that she bears Siegmund's child. She receives the pieces of the sword from Brünnhilde and thanks her rescuer. When the god appears, he sentences Brünnhilde to become a mortal woman. Brünnhilde pleads that in disobeying his orders she was really doing what he wished. Wotan will not relent: she must lie in sleep, vulnerable to the first man who finds her. But as his anger abates she asks the favour of being surrounded in sleep by a wall of fire that only the bravest hero can penetrate. Wotan kisses Brünnhilde's eyes with sleep and mortality before summoning Loge, the spirit of fire, to encircle the rock.

The performance lasts approximately five hours and forty-five minutes including two intervals.

The first interval is one hour and fifteen minutes, the second interval is forty minutes.

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Der Ring des Nibelungen

Arts Centre Melbourne
Wednesday 14 December 2016 at 5.00pm

Siegfried

Second day, music drama in three acts
by Richard Wagner
Libretto by the composer
Sung in German with English surtitles

Conductor **Pietari Inkinen**
Director **Neil Armfield**
Set Designer **Robert Cousins**
Costume Designer **Alice Babidge**
Lighting Designer **Damien Cooper**
Sound Designer **Jim Atkins**
Associate Conductor **Anthony Legge**
Assistant Conductor **Tahu Matheson**
Associate Directors **Kate Champion, Roger Press**
Assistant Directors **Greg Eldridge, Tama Matheson**
Assistant to the Lighting Designer **James Lipari**
Movement Revival Assistant **Frankie Snowdon**

Cast, in order of appearance

Mime **Graeme Macfarlane**
Siegfried **Stefan Vinke**
Wanderer **James Johnson**
Fafner **Jud Arthur**
Alberich **Warwick Fyfe**
Woodbird **Julie Lea Goodwin**
Erda **Liane Keegan**
Brünnhilde **Lise Lindstrom**

Musical Preparation **Tahu Matheson,
Siro Battaglin, Paul Fitzsimon, Michael Clark**

German Language Coach **Tanja Binggeli**
Surtitles **Peter Kreiss**

Production Manager **Chris Potter**
Stage Manager **Eugenia Farrell**
Lighting Supervisor **David Parsons**

Melbourne Ring Orchestra
Concertmaster **Roger Jonsson**

The performance lasts approximately five hours and fifty minutes including two intervals.
The first interval is one hour and fifteen minutes, the second interval is thirty minutes.
Casting correct at time of publication but subject to amendment.

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Chief Operating Officer **Joe Martorana**
Associate Music Director **Anthony Legge**

Synopsis

ACT I

Siegfried, the son of Siegmund and Sieglinde, has been raised by Mime, brother of Alberich. Siegfried forces from Mime the story of Sieglinde and of how she also entrusted Mime with the fragments of a shattered sword. Siegfried takes the pieces of his father's sword, Nothung, from Mime to create a new sword for himself. Mime has tried to do this and failed. Wotan, in the guise of the Wanderer, enters and tells Mime that the sword can only be reforged by someone 'who has never known fear'. Siegfried, who is fearless, succeeds in forging a new sword.

ACT II

Alberich is keeping watch outside Fafner's cave by night when the Wanderer enters. He tells of a young hero being brought to that spot by Mime, in order to win the treasure. The dragon is killed by Siegfried. Withdrawing his sword from the body he burns himself with the dragon's blood. In putting his fingers to his mouth, he immediately understands the voices of nature, especially that of the woodbird, who tells him of the ring, Tarnhelm and treasure. He enters the cave and the two brothers, Alberich and Mime, immediately quarrel over the expected spoils but slip away when Siegfried reappears. He can now also understand Mime's real meaning behind his flattering words and comprehends his plot to kill him. Siegfried contemptuously strikes him dead and leaves in search of a bride, described by the woodbird, who lies asleep on a mountain top surrounded by fire.

ACT III

Siegfried enters, following the woodbird. He confronts 'the Wanderer'. Pressing events to a climax, Wotan bars the way to Brünnhilde with his spear, which Siegfried shatters with his sword. Wotan disappears leaving Siegfried to continue on his way. He plunges through the fire which dies down to reveal Brünnhilde asleep. He kisses Brünnhilde to wake her. Opening her eyes, Brünnhilde greets the sun and the hero who has freed her from her sleep. Their mutual happiness is clouded when Brünnhilde grieves for the loss of her godhead but she then gives herself to Siegfried and happily consigns the gods to oblivion in the all-consuming exultation of their love.

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Der Ring des Nibelungen

Arts Centre Melbourne
Friday 16 December 2016 at 4.00pm

Götterdämmerung

Third day, music drama in a prologue and
three acts by Richard Wagner
Libretto by the composer

Sung in German with English surtitles

Conductor **Pietari Inkinen**
Director **Neil Armfield**
Set Designer **Robert Cousins**
Costume Designer **Alice Babidge**
Lighting Designer **Damien Cooper**
Sound Designer **Jim Atkins**
Associate Conductor **Anthony Legge**
Assistant Conductor **Tahu Matheson**
Associate Directors **Kate Champion, Roger Press**
Assistant Directors **Greg Eldridge, Tama Matheson**
Assistant to the Lighting Designer **James Lipari**
Movement Revival Assistant **Frankie Snowdon**

Cast, in order of appearance

First Norn **Tania Ferris**
Second Norn **Jacqueline Dark**
Third Norn **Anna-Louise Cole**
Brünnhilde **Lise Lindstrom**
Siegfried **Stefan Vinke**
Gunther **Luke Gabbedy**
Hagen **Daniel Sumegi**
Gutrune **Taryn Fiebig**
Waltraute **Sian Pëndry**
Alberich **Warwick Fyfe**
Woglinde **Lorina Gore**
Wellgunde **Jane Ede**
Flosshilde **Dominica Matthews**

Musical Preparation **Tahu Matheson, Stephen Walter,
Michael Clark, Paul Fitzsimon, Tom Griffiths**
German Language Coach **Tanja Binggeli**
Surtitles **Peter Kreiss**
Production Manager **James Wheeler**
Stage Manager **Phillip Serjeant**
Lighting Supervisor **Catherine Alexander**

Opera Australia Chorus

Chorus Master **Anthony Hunt**
Assistant **Michael Curtain**

Melbourne Ring Orchestra

Concertmaster **Jun Yi Ma**

The performance lasts approximately six hours and forty minutes including
two intervals. The first interval is one hour and thirty minutes, the second
interval is thirty-five minutes.

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Associate Music Director **Anthony Legge**

Synopsis

PROLOGUE

On the Valkyries' rock, three Norns spin the rope of
Fate, recalling Wotan's days of power and predicting
Valhalla's imminent fall. When the rope breaks they
descend in terror to their mother, Erda, goddess of the
earth. Though fearful that she may lose the hero,
Brünnhilde sends him forth to deeds of valour. To
remind her of his love, Siegfried gives Brünnhilde the
magic ring of the Nibelung.

ACT I

Gunther, king of the Gibichungs, and his sister Gutrune,
both unwed, ask counsel of their half brother, Hagen.
Plotting to secure the ring, Hagen advises Gunther to
consolidate his power by marrying Brünnhilde: by means
of a magic potion Siegfried can be induced to forget his
bride and win her for Gunther in return for Gutrune's
hand. Dusk falls as Siegfried appears disguised, via the
Tarnhelm, as Gunther; wresting the ring from the
terrified Brünnhilde, he claims her as Gunther's bride.

ACT II

At night, before the Gibichung hall, Alberich urges the
sleeping Hagen (his son) to swear he will regain the ring.
Siegfried returns with cheerful greetings for Hagen
and Gutrune: he has won Brünnhilde for Gunther, who
follows shortly. When Gunther leads in Brünnhilde, she
sees Siegfried and recoils; spying the ring on his finger,
she decries his treachery and proclaims Siegfried her
true husband. The dazed Brünnhilde, bent on revenge,
reveals to Hagen the hero's one vulnerable spot: a
blade in the back will kill him.

ACT III

Siegfried describes his boyhood with Mime, his slaying
of the dragon Fafner and finally – after Hagen gives
him a potion to restore his memory – his wooing of
Brünnhilde. Pretending indignation, Hagen plunges a
spear into the hero's back and stalks off. Hailing
Brünnhilde with his last breath, Siegfried dies.
Brünnhilde orders a funeral pyre built for Siegfried.
Musing on the gods' responsibility for his death, she
takes the ring and promises it to the Rhinemaidens.
Placing it on her finger, she throws a torch onto the
pyre and throws herself into the flames. As the river
overflows its banks and the Gibichung hall is consumed,
the Rhinemaidens, dragging Hagen to a watery grave,
regain their gold. Flames engulf Valhalla, leaving a
human world redeemed by love.

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The above concise summary information, detailing each opera's vital statistics, is from the cast sheets that opera goers found placed on their seats. The brief synopses of the four operas enables me to skip dealing with the basic story outline, save when emphasising Wagner's expressed thematic universality and how, all too often, these have been visually – and ideologically – translated on to the stage in a most unsatisfactory way.

Der Ring des Nibelungen **The Ring of the Nibelung**

Jeff Busby's photographic record of Richard Wagner's Melbourne Ring production is itself a helpful and magnificent visual resource, of which various Ring reviewers, as I did, made good use. Click on Photogallery for [Das Rheingold](#), [Die Walküre](#), [Siegfried](#), [Götterdämmerung](#) to enjoy his artistic contribution to *The Ring*.



[Maestro Pietari Inkinen](#)



Conductor [Pietari Inkinen](#) did splendidly, directing 92 musicians, including the four French Horn players who also played the WAGNER TUBAS, which have a mellow but richer and heavier sound than the horns. Sometimes, though, when particular voices faded a little, he did not hold back the orchestra, as did, for example Asher Fisch at the Adelaide Ring in 2004. Still, considering he is only a young 36 years old, he proved to be a master of the musical score. He spoke of his own addiction to Wagner's works thus:

'It's more like – after you've heard it, at least for a while, you can't listen to anything else. You are so soaked in this world. It's not in your head, it's in your whole body. You're covered with it.'

*

'Wagner's music has this dark side that's like nothing else, and such heavenly moments too, for contrast. Performing it is a pleasure, it has such rewards. There's such a scale of expression and emotion and colour in the orchestra. How did he do it?'

*

'We have a good saying in Finnish, like you have to rise above it all. You have to become like a pilot and see the whole big art of the thing. The first time you open these scores, it's like jumping out of a plane, and it's so big and overwhelming. But you just have to float above it all and see the millions of details.'



And how did Director [Neil Armfield](#) respond to the challenge of staging [The Ring?](#)

'I want to produce the best—by which I mean the deepest and richest—communication of the work that has ever been realised on the stage.'

*

*'It obviously has to deliver great moments of spectacle, but they have to be absolutely earned. It is important they don't overshadow the humanity of Wagner's tale. The inner child will get to enjoy the fairytale of *The Ring*, but the mythical beings that populate this tale are masks for real human emotions and real human stories. It is the job of the director to draw those connections for the audience. We need to understand them as creatures of mythology.*

There is a giant, who puts on the Tarn Helmet and transforms into a dragon. Wotan is a God in trouble, who has a deep, deep consciousness of love and beauty but is also touched by greed and a desire for control. But we also need to be able to see ourselves in them. Wagner himself wrote that it is essential that everyone can see themselves in Wotan. He is in a sense the everyman, he is the creator, he is Wagner, he is any sentient being that watches the work. To identify the humanity of these characters, in spite of the mask of God or giant or dwarf, is fundamental to the work.

*

'In order to make money, we are destroying the Earth. In order to do that, you have to renounce love, because if you love the world, if you love people, if you truly love yourself, even, you can't be doing what human beings are doing.'

*

*'This is a work that starts with renouncing love and stealing the *Rheingold*, and then 16 hours later the rivers rise and fire rains down, and the whole thing is destroyed. There is a sense both musically and dramatically that this is a new dawning. Wagner himself saw his revolutionary work as a kind of social gesture that would help to clear away greed from which the human race might start again.'*

*

*'The work is extremely intimate. Most of the time in *The Ring* is taken up with scenes between two or three characters. It's a family story about dealing with destiny. About responsibility. About consequences. Big things are being negotiated but if you don't get those moments intimate and true, that's when it becomes boring and declamatory.'*

*

'It's a basic principle that you have to tell the story as though you were telling it for the very first time. It's my job to reach into the work and help it to come to life.'

Although the surtitles gave non-German speakers a clear translation, some of Barry Millington's work did not convey the exact meaning, for example, his use of the now defamatory concept "race", does not correspond to the German "Geschlecht", but it fits into the politically correct mindset of defaming the Germans once again as RACISTS!

Also, muffled singing reflected possibly on too lax an attitude towards the German language coaching.

For those pressed for time and patience here are two links that offer you *The Ring* in 2.5 minutes:

*[Wagner's 15-hour Ring Cycle...in two and a half minutes](#)

*[The Ring in 2.5 minutes -- with leitmotifs!](#)

Prelude:

Das Rheingold

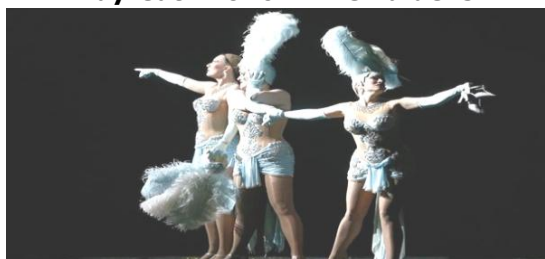
The curtain rises on possibly one of the most famous and longest E-flat droning sounds ever produced – just over 4 minutes. And what do we see on stage? A writhing mass "of humanity", men, women and children clad for the beach and lying on a rotating disc at centre stage – is it the beach at Bondi or Bronte? Their untold number is multiplied countless times through the use of a ceiling mirror!



This is supposed to signify the subconscious pristine natural world untouched by humans, except for the beautiful and free-spirited playful three innocent Rhine-daughters who will soon meet up with reflective consciousness in the form of ugly Alberich.



Bayreuth 2016 Rhinemaidens



Melbourne 2016 Rhinemaidens



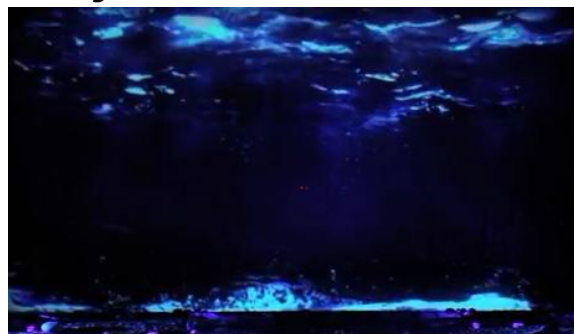
Valencia 2007 Rhinemaidens



Beijing, 19 September 2016 Rhinemaidens with Alberich

Thanks to Hollywood, now the Beautiful is debased and Ugliness glorified and romanticised, and rationally justified. I think that is what the Deconstructionists do so well because they fail to understand that human nature is essentially a constant and that long-valued traditions cannot all be subjected to the whims of a rational and ideologically flawed construct, a death dialectic that aims to destroy the universal impulses found in Wagner's *Ring*.

In such productions, surmises [Matthew Rye](#), the aim is to superimpose *layers of irony – pricking the pomposity of the music and its stage history. ... but one can't help feeling the loss of the grander emotions and natural scene-setting that is there in the music.*



It is well worth while watching this clip of a traditional production of [Das Rheingold](#), by the China National Opera House of 19 September 2016.



The conductor is a lady – Zhu Man!

Traditional stagings of the opening usually show an all pervasive stillness in the form of a mist slowly rising from the Rhine River signifying the appearance of daylight, and with that the ugly and rational side of human nature, as embodied by lustful Alberich. He overcomes his failure to win over innocence because of his hedonistic world view – seeking sense gratification only without reflecting on generational thinking. The Rhine daughters are for him mere objects of pleasure, to be selfishly used, and just for having fun.

Wagner could be describing today's hedonistic consumer society where media focus is just on the here and now, where the only freedom we have is the freedom to go shopping. Banish the thought of generational thinking – there is no transcendence, no heaven or hell, only the certainty of death – so have fun, enjoy life!



The conflict between brothers Alberich and Mime is clearly portrayed and comes over well.



But I could not see the sense of Alberich with clenched fist lording it over his Nibelungen. How would an open-handed gesture be interpreted?



Loge out-tricks/out-smarts Alberich, and Loge's singing voice is one that remains consistently in top form.

Wagner clearly shows how these two shifty individuals share universal character traits found in all cultures, in any society, where the battle-of-the-will is both physically and mentally settled, and individuals overcome their rejectional hurt through rational means – and additionally, possibly through a consumption of some other stimulants.

Alberich realizes/rationalizes that the hurt and disappointment caused by a rejection of Love can be compensated for through an embrace of Power and Wealth, the latter lying idly in the Rhine in the form of Gold. So, much like Nietzsche, Bruckner, and in parts

Bach, Alberich suffers from a rejection of Love and compensates by thinking his way out of this hurt.

The naïve and playful innocent Rhine daughters wouldn't know what to do with the Gold. They just love its beauty but they are also aware of its terrible power. Is this why they haven't to date touched it and instead left it alone?

Director Armfield interprets this whole issue unconvincingly when he states, above, it is his intention to illustrate this through the "sea of humanity", as well as in the Rainbow Bridge, which concludes *Das Rheingold*.



This sketch, so reminiscent of a Paris Moulin Rouge show of the 1930s, again fails because it does not bring the visuals and the music into harmony. The only option for a Wagner connoisseur is to close one's eyes and listen to the music. The visuals distract from the impending seriousness of the situation, and this feathery stuff also reminds me of Franz Lehàr's *The Merry Widow*.



This is the "Rainbow Bridge" from the 2010 Met Opera's production, directed by Robert Lepage

Wagner aims to go deeper into the human condition than mere "bread and circus", or, indeed, he does not aim for popularity by writing trivial entertainment, such as that produced by, for example, an Andrew Lloyd Webber and his musical theatre productions. This is the feel-good moment driven to perfection – but it does not generate any serious uplifting reflections.

And those reflections that are generated within such a populist and materialistic mindset attempt to degrade, often fallaciously, that Wagner's works are too difficult to understand by the ordinary person. Pietari Inkinen's expressed view, above, contradicts such a view. If individuals cannot understand Wagner, then something is going wrong in our schools and universities.

It was Andrew Gray, translator of Wagner's autobiography, *Mein Leben*, who bemoaned the fact that critics of Wagner's works focus on everything else except on his stage directions, for example, Wagner's alleged

"antisemitism" and "racism" and his being a precursor of "National Socialism".

So, in a *Rheingold* production, Gray wants to see the ray of sunlight illuminate the Rhine Gold and not have the opera staged as a symbol of 19th century capitalism. Or as is the case in the current 2016 Bayreuth Festspiel's offering of the *Ring*, Castorf's alleged "provocations" and "challenges" that really don't go anywhere. Interestingly, the 2016 Beijing production of *Rheingold*, remains true to Wagner's instructions!

Interestingly, Castorf's inability to come to terms with female sexuality is also reflected in Armfield's production of the *Ring*, of which more later.

For example, dressing up Erda, a large woman, in some underwear is crude, unflattering and tasteless for a wise and distinguished woman, who later with Wotan becomes the mother of the Walkyries. But her significant act in the whole *Ring* is that she informs Wotan of his demise – **Alles was ist, endet. Ein düsterer Tag dämmert den Göttern.** Musically this rise and decline of Nature and of Humanity is so delicately and beautifully conveyed through Erda's voice, and through the developing **Götterdämmerung** motive; and Wagner speaks of having to learn how to die. In the 2013 production Armfield had Erda sitting in a wheelchair! Why did Opera Australia's [website](#) not have a picture of Erda?



Wotan and Erda in *Siegfried* - 2016 Bayreuth Ring



Wotan and Erda in Beijing 2016



Donner's clearing of the oppressive atmosphere, after Fafner kills his brother Fasol, is pathetic and devoid of any depth because his hammer has been turned into a pistol. In *Götterdämmerung* the pistols reappears! The stuffed animals in the Melbourne production also seem to become an imposition, if not a distraction, or an

attraction for those who have lost their concentration on the musical score. For example, a meandering mind would spy out the details of those stuffed animals and perhaps link it with Climate Change/Global Warming, or any of the current fashionable ideologies doing the rounds amongst the "deplorables", and ask: Is that animal, lower right, a Tasmanian Tiger?



I now wonder whether this, above, scene from the 2010 artistic and thrilling Met production will ever be surpassed. Donner, swinging his hammer, actually creating a lightning strike at the right moment – is absolutely and brilliantly synchronized with the musical score!



The giants were good, and it again reminded me of the Grollo Brothers, of the famed Melbourne construction company, who came on stage in cherry pickers. Freia's voice was good but she failed to radiate the necessary mood, character, etc. befitting Freia's character.



Comparing the generated emotional and visual intensity of Bayreuth, New York, Valencia and Melbourne, then the Beijing production remains a contender for setting new standards in an ideologically mutated *Ring* Cycle.

The dramatic intensity of Beijing's final Donner **Heda! Heda! Hedo!** scene is well synchronized with the musical score that it melts into one – no jarring or cluttering visuals, and I am beginning to think that those responsible for putting on this opera have successfully liberated themselves from the dialectic materialism – process thinking, which still afflicts the "free and democratic word" – and have drawn upon their own 7000-year-old Chinese history in order to understand what Richard Wagner was on about. It is a matter of timeless moral and intellectual values, not about dialectic gymnastics of the ideological kind. That the singers have

not completely integrated their voices with the orchestral instruments will require some more practice so as to eliminate Tielemann's admonition to his singers, "don't do arias".

At the close, Wotan realizes the limitations of his binding treaties, and he begins to think of genetic-generational matters – having children. Together with Loge he had tricked Alberich out of his Ring and Tarnhelm, then loses both to the Giants, who then come under the Ring's spell, and Fasner kills his brother Fasolt. Loge can see

through it all and refuses to join the Gods' journey to Valhalla because there: **'falsch und feig ist was dort oben sich freut – deceptive and cowardly are those who revel on high'**.

Certainly the conceptual prisons of "racism", "antisemitism", "Nazism", et al, that still afflict the "free and democratic world", have not penetrated the artistic minds of those who produced the 2016 Beijing *Das Rheingold*.



New innovative impulses from Beijing or just sticking to Wagner's instructions?



New but "old" innovative impulses coming from Beijing?

Compare the following scenes from Bayreuth's 1876 production:



Das Rheingold - Scene 3: Wotan and Loge capture Alberich



Scene 4: The entry of the Gods into Walhalla



Wagner approved Professor Carl E Doepler's costumes for Wotan, Alberich and Siegfried. Wagner was also the first to type-cast his singers, demanding he receive photographs of those auditioning for roles.

Die Walküre

After the *Rheingold* prelude sets the scene, the real epic story begins to unfold with *Die Walküre*, presented in three definitive acts. The cast sheet's three-paragraph *Walküre* synopsis sums up what is about to happen. The Siegmund-Sieglinde-Hunding love/hate triangle begins to raise issues with which all humans, who have loved and lost or have never loved at all, are familiar; followed by Siegmund's death, as enabled by Wotan because his wife, Fricka, deemed the act of incest to be punishable by death, and the Walküren appearance, with Brünnhilde's role in saving the progeny of that fatal incestuous union between Siegmund and Sieglinde.



Brilliant pianist and Wagner expert, [Stefan Mickisch](#), informs that in the *Ring* there are no happy marriages and love is found only in extra-marital relationships. And Wotan sets the example, having fathered Brünnhilde with a Goddess, Erda, then eight more Walkyries with other non-human women, and Siegmund and Sieglinde with a nameless human Walsung woman. No wonder Fricka is angry at her husband's philandering ways because she has remained childless, and even Walhalla will not quell that resentment she feels towards him – and no wonder then that in *Siegfried* he becomes *The Wanderer*, observing with a sharp eye what his progeny

is doing right and wrong. Of course, he never set an example to any of his offspring!

This matter of leaving fundamental matters up to the individual to decide may be regarded as an expression of Wagner's sense of freedom, i.e. each individual yearns to be free, and in *Die Walküre*, so Thielemann surmises, he creates a full-on "emotionales Gewitter - emotional thunderstorm", and incest, which then, as now, is certainly a risky topic to deal with. Some believe this taboo is man-made but those familiar with incestuous results know it is natural law, against Nature, to commit incest.

The Melbourne production was fortunate in that it had a strong Siegmund and Sieglinde whose voices were full of warmth and gentleness.



1876 Walküre Act 1:

Siegmund and Sieglinde with "Nothung"

Thielemann's expression is that in this opera Wagner wishes to realize '*ein crescendo aller machbaren Gefühle - a crescendo of all feasible feelings*'.

Definitions:

Wal=fallen heros; 9 Wal-küren; küren=select; Walküren = those who select the fallen heros on battlefields and transport them to Walhall = hall of fallen heros.



This beautiful Melbourne 2016 scene, of Siegmund, lower left, approaching Sieglinde sitting in her Hunding cabin with snow falling, succeeded in creating a desolate atmosphere, just ideal for Siegmund rescuing her from a loveless marriage. Both their voices were excellent, except Sieglinde's appearance is drab, quite unfitting for a young vibrant woman.



In this production near the end Siegmund loses his voice and the understudy-cover, Dean Bassett, sings for him off-stage, but Siegmund continues to act the part, which was quite successful.



Siegmund and Sieglinde – Melbourne 2016. There was no tree and *Nothing* was a miserable puny sword stuck in the front-stage floor! Compare this with the following:



Patrice Chereau's 1980 Bayreuth production



Harry Kupfer's 1992 Bayreuth production

The Siegmund-Hunding battle settles the Wotan-Fricka conflict between obeying the Law – Fricka, and expediently interpreting the law – Wotan. Initially, Wotan informs and requests Brünnhilde protect Siegmund against Hunding, but then Fricka arrives and

stresses what a pragmatist Wotan has become, firstly producing Siegmund with an earthly woman, then encouraging incest. She informs Wotan that Hunding has asked her, Fricka, the protector of marriage, for help.



Mickisch regards this developing conflict comparable to an Ibsen drama where two justifiable view-points clash – Promethian Wotan and traditional Fricka. [Two Ibsen quotes, per Google, fit the mood: *The strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone, & Never wear your best trousers when you go out to fight for freedom and truth.*]

Wotan's/Wagner's concept of LOVE is radical and unconditional because as soon as you restrain it legally or traditionally, it loses its freedom character. Still, Wotan asks Fricka: **'Was verlangst Du? – what do you demand?'** And in personal anguish he promises Fricka not to protect Siegmund. She, the guardian of contractual law must be obeyed!

Brünnhilde's serious conversation with Siegmund, where she advises on his imminent trip to Walhalla, is not emotionally convincing, but Siegmund's choice of rejecting the offer because for him his unconditional love for Sieglinde is more valued than what God Wotan has to offer – and Brünnhilde sides with them.

And it's on – Brünnhilde openly supports Siegmund against Hunding, and against Wotan's wishes, and both the latter kill Siegmund when Wotan shatters Notung, whose pieces Brünnhilde quickly collects, and then with Sieglinde Brünnhilde rides off on Grane. As stated earlier, Siegmund's performance is excellent while the other two lack the emotional depth required to illustrate the dramatic elements of this confrontation.



1876 - Act 2: Brünnhilde tells Siegmund he must go with her to Walhalla

Act 3 begins with the now famous Walküren ride, which Mickisch compares with Rossini's [Wilhelm Tell](#) overture, and with [Bonanza](#)! He also informs how within the introduction it is possible to count how many Walküren there are = 9.



As well, many know this ride tune through its use in the Vietnam War film, [Apocalypse Now](#).



The dramatic conflict between Wotan and Brünnhilde is almost lost in this scene, but then this generational problem is so effectively resolved within the musical score – so, close your eyes and listen to the music and hear the future emerge!



Visually, both the Wotan-Fricka and Wotan-Brünnhilde scenes are jarring because of the visual clutter on stage.



The maidens arrive on [lowering swings](#), which then also serve to uplift the fallen heroes.



The Valkyries have landed, and in their camouflage-like attire certainly resemble female warriors/soldiers who have little time for niceties that come with a loving relationship; except for each other and for serving their God, Wotan. Their combined vocal input often seems like hysterical screeching. And yet, it was a crowd pleaser at Melbourne, and I wonder why they had to high-five one another thereby reflecting behaviour of current popular gay culture.



This scene disturbs those individuals who maintain that directors ought to follow Richard Wagner's directions and not attempt to bring Wagner into the 21st century. Here the Walküre are in the process of scooping up and transporting fallen heroes to Walhalla, which reminds me more of an irreverent meat-hook exercise or the hanging of criminals rather than a transportation of gloriously fallen heroes from a battlefield.



But Wotan's punishment of Brünnhilde, his disobedient daughter is not absolute – Loge encircles the rock on which she is sleeping with fire, through which only a hero dares step to awaken her, which will be Siegmund and Sieglinde's child, and Wotan's grandson, Siegfried.

Siegfried

If I had to sum up *Siegfried* in a few words, then it is this: Metaphorically, *Siegfried* reflects the universality of the human maturation process, of identity politics: from innocent childhood to youthful exuberance; Siegfried wants to know who his parents are; with his successfully forging the inherited sword, he fearlessly challenges the adult world and slays the proverbial dragon; then, after this conquest, fearless Siegfried looks for the right wife,

and learns fear in the process. Mickisch delights in pointing out that the characters we find in *The Ring* are actually images of individuals we find within our own society – countless Mimes, Alberichs, Siegfrieds, even some Wotans, and Mickisch continues his thoughts:

Deswegen ist Wagner ja auch so toll weil er die komplette Charakter-struktur des Menschen im Grunde durch dekliniert. In diesen Ring sind 36 Figuren – That is why

Wagner is so great because he offers the whole range of humanity. In this ring there are 36 characters... at 47:50.

Mickisch goes on to say that Wagner's music cannot be improved upon, specifically in reference to Act 3's Prelude, there is no text, only arousing music so befitting of Wotan's visit to Erda, which gives expression to Wotan's entire dilemma – something big is about to happen, not some trivial incident. The battle between Love and Power is on.



Fear of the gods' downfall grieves me not...

Siegfried - Bayreuth 1980

In Siegfried, Erda asks Wotan: **Does he who taught defiance punish defiance? Is he who is responsible for the deed wrathful when it is done? Does he who defends the right and preserves the vows banish right and rule by perjury?**

Unfortunately, Opera Australia's [Siegfried trailer](#) features the rousing music so well performed by conductor and orchestra but, again no image of Erda. Why not?

For those who treat this natural process as a mere materialistic-consumer exercise where making money or exercising absolute power, or whatever, is all there is to life, fail to appreciate the delicacy with which Wagner's music expresses this generational problem. For example, Mime, who is incapable of loving, raises Siegfried for purely selfish ends in that he hopes through him he will obtain Fafner's wealth. In German such individuals may be called "Erbschleicher-gold digger".

In this life-death cycle, Wagner also presents us with the universal question of transcendence – the religious argument of an afterlife, which he leaves unresolved. Those who gleefully claim these Northern, Germanic Gods, are mortal and the Middle Eastern, Semitic Gods, are immortal, fail to realize at what expense the "one God" and "chosen people" dogma is maintained.

In his basic instinctual and childish way, Siegfried asks Mime all the wrong questions, for example, he asks Mime: **Wo hast du nun, Mime, dein minniges Weibchen, daß ich es Mutter nenne? – Where is your wife, whom I can call mother?**

In Wagner's liberated world, where the ideal of freedom is factored into any maturation process, there are no right and wrong questions to ask because he demands answers to all questions, which during his time, and even today, is such politically incorrect view upheld by dogmatists and tyrants alike. There are individuals who wish us to believe that not all questions are legitimate, that one has to ask the right questions! This is, of course, a veiled control mechanism used to hide uncomfortable but vital truths without which it is impossible to gain a full understanding of what life is all about.

In Siegfried, Wagner is perhaps autobiographical because until his early teens he was known as Geyer, his adoptive father's name. Children want to know where they came from and whose DNA they are carrying because such basic maturation musings are essential for an individual's moral and intellectual wellbeing.

For example, all too often children, who find themselves in a family unit where they have to cope with having, say, two mothers or two fathers, will be stifled into polite silence, especially if they demand answers about their genetic heritage.

This kind of questioning is ruthlessly suppressed through the current PC and multicultural lobby, which has an interest to *push, for example, the ["Out of Africa"](#) hypothesis. The charge of "racism", legally enforced, stifles such musings quite effectively, especially among the Whites who dare disagree with any of the prevailing politically correct dogmas.

Mime answers Siegfried: **Was ist dir, Tor? – What's with you, fool? Ach, bist du dumm! – Oh, you're stupid!**

And now Wagner's genial attack against the liars begins, and against those who hate the truth and instead demand that individuals simply believe. I was surprised to see that a couple of years ago my old Melbourne University had as one of its mottos: BELIEVE!



At this point in Stefan Mickisch's narration, at [07:40](#), he reveals the fundamentals of Wagner's criticism of individuals and organisations that do not tell the truth, i.e. those that fall back on what Wagner puts into Mime's mouth, who says:

Glauben sollst du, was ich dir sage. Ich bin dir Vater und Mutter zugleich – Believe what I tell you. I am both your father and mother.

Mickisch succinctly elaborates on this technique of silencing an enquiring mind by demanding blind belief so that uncomfortable questions do not arise. Why? Mickisch correctly surmises that all those who enact a prohibition of questioning matters have something to hide:

Der Glaube wird dann verlangt wenn man keine Fragen hören will, und immer wer Fragenverbote erläßt und Glauben fordert hat was zu verbergen, sonst würde er das nicht machen. Deshalb ist jede Forderung von Glauben grundsätzlich schon mal amoralisch. Das ist nicht OK.-

Belief is demanded, if one does not want to hear any questions, and those who prohibit the asking of questions and demand that one believes, have something to hide, otherwise they would not do it. Therefore every demand to believe is always amoral. This is not OK.



Siegfried cannot accept such lying and hypocrisy, especially since he had seen his own reflection in a stream/creek and beheld he did not at all visually resemble Mime; and somewhat twistedly he replies that Mime must have made him without a mother. Wagner brilliantly reveals Mime's double-speak after Siegfried kills Fafner, when Mime reveals his innermost thoughts

and intentions to kill Siegfried so he can get at Fafner's loot.



Wotan, now the Wanderer, visits Mime, and in their question-answer dialogue Wotan advises that only a fearless individual can forge the pieces into a sword. Under duress, Mime retrieves for Siegfried his father's broken sword, which Brünnhilde had gathered up as she fled with Sieglinde from the battlefield, after Hunding had killed Siegmund.



Siegfried successfully forges the pieces into his Nothung – and is off to conquer the world, which he does in Act 2, by slaying the dragon/giant Fafner.

The Melbourne production of the Siegfried-Mime scene is good visually and vocally. Siegfried comes over well as the youngster that he is and not as a prototype of "hypermasculinity" as some would interpret him to be. Anyone who has had children or has watched children mature from innocence to experience, from instinctive to self-reflective behaviour, can see Wagner capturing this process so well.

In Siegfried there is the sensitivity and awareness of the natural world. He has no problem communicating with animals and birds, bringing home a bear, whom he asks to ask Mime what is happening to his sword. Mime cannot cope with such youthful innocence because his whole reason why he has raised Siegfried is to get Nothung fixed with which he then hopes Siegfried will kill Fafner so that he, Mime, can get to the Ring and to the Tarnhelm.



The Woodbird's performance is also a delight when she advises Siegfried where to find a woman

The Fafner cave scene is, as in 2013, again visually controversial in that the projection of a man painting his face does partially suggest a grotesqueness, which could with some imagination, resemble bad old giant Fafner as

a dragon sitting on his Ring and Tarnhelm guarding his gold loot!



But why then, after Siegfried kills him inside the cave, would Fafner then emerge stark naked? I cannot accept the explanation offered during dining break by one lady: *It shows how vulnerable Fafner really is!*



Alberich, who has all this time been sitting outside the cave watching Fafner, again meets Wotan. What happens to Alberich remains a mystery. He is one of the ten, of 36, individuals who survive the *Untergang*. The others are the Nature Forces = 3 Norns & 3 Rhinemaidens, and who are the other three that survived?.



Siegfried enters Fafner's cave



Mortally wounded Fafner emerges from the cave



"Sporty, youthful and dynamic" Siegfried has successfully slain both his enemies, Fafner and Mime. Streamers depict Fafner's loss of blood, and Siegfried only collects

the cursed Ring and Tarnhelm, and leaves the gold behind. The road is now clear for him to find a woman.

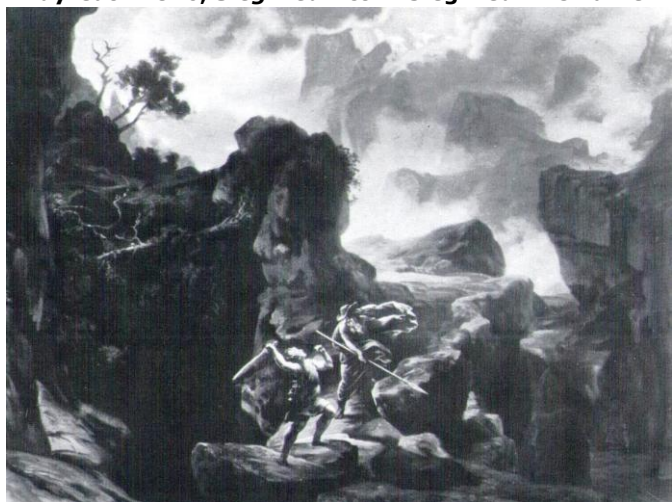


Bayreuth 1876, *Siegfried* Act 2: Siegfried kills Fafner



Here is a good life lesson for grandfathers –

As Siegfried's Notung snaps Wotan's staff, on which all legal contracts are carved, Wotan has to let him go to awaken Brünnhilde. Wotan acknowledges that a generational change is occurring by stating: *Siegfried, I can't hold you any longer*. All those contracts that bound Wotan to an order of things do not transfer to Siegfried who is now free to forge ahead with his life.



Bayreuth 1876 *Siegfried* Act 3: The Wanderer tries to stop Siegfried reaching Brünnhilde on her rock



The disappointment of the night, Brünnhilde arrives in a plastic covered box, which Siegfried quickly strips off but then learns how to fear. Their expressed love is idealized and not erotic because she comes from eternity and he from the present – how will they find the middle path?



Brünnhilde: *Götterdämm' rung, dunkle herauf!*
Siegfried & Brünnhilde: *Sie ist mir ewig, ist mir immer - Erb' und Eigen, ein und all!*
Leuchtende Liebe – Lachender Tod!

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG



This Prologue scene from the 2016 Melbourne production pleased both visually and musically – voices and orchestra.

When the *Rope of Fate* breaks in the Norns' hands, the scene is set for the Untergang of Walhalla, but this does not yet include Siegfried because he incorporates the absolute Freedom ideal; and yet, Brünnhilde is uneasy about his going forth from the rock where he awoke her with a kiss, and now is going into the world to do heroic deeds. Mickisch muses about the house-husbands of today, with whom no real woman could be happy, and so fully understands why Siegfried needs to leave Brünnhilde to look for adventures in the wider world. In any case, Siegfried gives her his Ring, which she gladly accepts.

Siegfried is introduced into the real world of politics by meeting Alberich's descendant, his son, Hagen, who has a role of "advisor" at the Gibichung court of his half-brother and half-sister, Gunther and Gutrune, both of whom are still single and both are seeking a mate – a "partner"!

Here we have Hagen, son of Alberich who made the ring, and nephew of Mime, who made the Tarnhelm – so it's quite logical Hagen will be into corruption, which occurs when he makes a magic potion for Siegfried.



Again, Mickisch explains how Wagner's music captures this corrupt world by producing appropriate music that suggests this is what Gunther's and Hagen's politics is all

about. The music is imitating nature, for example, in the re-appearing *Rheingold* motif there is a prevailing false natural sound, which reinforces/mirrors the prevailing hypocrisy as reflected in Gunther's and Hagen's characters and their politics - *falscher Klang der Natürlichkeit vorspiegelt*, at: [17:10](#), i.e. a false sound that pretends to be true-natural. And again at [29:21](#), he points to the contractual theme where two texts intertwine, on top the false political text and beneath it the subtext that tells the truth. This is Wagner at his most revolutionary, because he dares to use the truth concept as a pillar of his musical creation.

For Wagner there is not only the process, of thinking dialectically, disembodied thinking, if you like. But there is also a natural world, of NATURE, of which we are a part, and which is beyond the control of human power. just as he postulates that MAN alone is only half a MENSCH, and the other half is WOMAN, and only together Man and Woman become a complete MENSCH.

It reminds me how Wagner attempted to encourage Nietzsche to find himself a woman so that Nietzsche would grow up and move out of his hedonistic inversion life-style. This aspect of Siegfried's behaviour was clearly shown in the Melbourne production, where it became a feature that Siegfried reveal his infantile behaviour towards the Rhinemaidens and towards himself!

And so Wagner's story-line is also multi-layered, which is then reflected in his musical innovations, e.g. in contrast to Italian opera.

In the 2008 Valencia production, directed by La Fura Dels Baus and conducted by Zubin Mehta, Siegfried's arrival in Gibichung territory is visually quite rich and startling, but not disturbing because it flows well into the foreboding atmosphere created by the music, which was not the case in the Melbourne visuals.



The above images are from the 2008 Valencia production, which with its moving background visually enmeshes itself splendidly with the musical score. Contrary to expectations, the almost psychedelic background does not draw one's attention from the music and developing drama on stage.



In contrast, though voices were good, in the Melbourne production the swearing of a blood oath is somewhat unconvincing.



The wedding scene, though elaborate, also remained somewhat flat and it seemed too overloaded. But, then again, anyone bored with the music could feast their eyes on a spectacularly detailed setting – and drown in a sea of particulars...



The Melbourne production had Siegfried "doing a Trump" on the Rhinemaidens, and then on himself, which indicated to me that there is a lack of depth of understanding in what moved Siegfried. It reflects the moral and intellectual values within today's hedonistic-nihilistic "free and democratic consumer society", which surely is on its way into a politically correct mental prison where normal human impulses are punished. Recall how Mime attempts to silence Siegfried who wishes to know who his parents are! Mime hates anyone who asks fundamental questions that expose Mime's own fraudulent and corrupt life-style. Liars protect their web of deceit through legal sanctions.



Swearing an oath on Hagen's pistol!



The Gibichung men came over very well



The Melbourne production has Siegfried shot by Hagen at a shooting gallery! Didn't a recent Bayreuth production see Siegfried gunned down with a submachine gun?



After he dies, and during the funeral march, Siegfried is embalmed, giving all the extras something to do, but which visually distracts from self-reflective moments. That Siegfried has to stand still with painted face while Brünnhilde ends it all, is too demanding and not deserving of someone who has carried the role almost to perfection. The funeral pyre should be on the banks of the Rhine River – not in a festive tent! At least the two Ravens fly off home, detouring via Brunnhilde's rock to let Loge know that she advises him to go to Walhalla.



This funeral scene is a busy scene where the music carries the visual needs, not poor Siegfried who has to stand still for well on half an hour. This is the first funeral pyre where the dead are standing upright.



No one has commented on the fact that Brünnhilde actually betrays Siegfried by revealing to Hagen where on his back he can be killed. This is an "eye-for-an-eye" revenge act because a real woman who loves her husband – no matter what he does in a deranged state – will not betray her love/trust.

But then Brünnhilde, having been a Walküre, is not a complete woman, and then only became a woman as punishment for her disobeying her father, Wotan. This is heavy stuff, which all pre-dates Freud, who still today baffles scientists with his nonsense sexual stuff. To date no-one has found the physiological source of the Oedipus Complex!



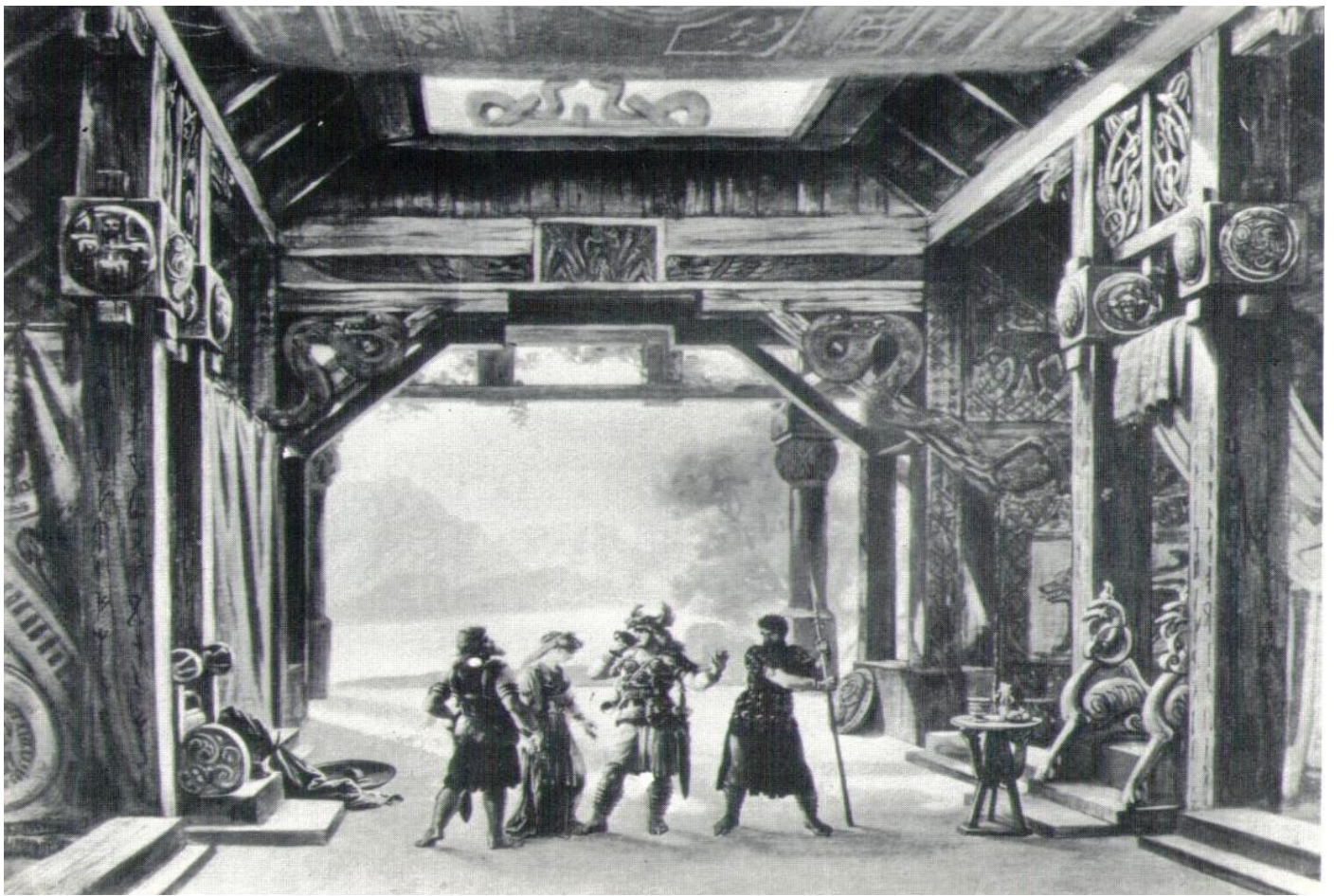
Bayreuth 1991 Harry Kupfer's production captures the dramatic moment of Brünnhilde following Siegfried into the flames.



Brilliant pianist Stefan Mickisch says: Wagner bringt was positives - Thema Zukunftshoffnung Wagner offers something positive – hope for the future – [01:22:53](#).

He regards Loge as Lügner-Liar, and some surmise the name is a reference to the Masonic Lodge – in German Freimaurer Loge. This fuels those speculators who dabble in Kabbalah to claim this is Wagner's inspirational source, which is pure sophistry.





**1876 - Götterdämmerung Act 1:
Gutrune gives Siegfried the "draught of oblivion" watched by Gunther and Hagen**



**Götterdämmerung Act 3:
After the destruction of the Gibichung hall the Rhinemaidens reclaim their gold, while Walhalla burns**



Stefan Mickisch ends his commentary by pointing out how positive the final scene is. The beautiful musical ending in *Dur*, and not in *Moll*, conveys to us that Wotan's work has not failed, and that this is a positive ending.

The whole *Ring* serves as an example for us – a Vorbild – that we should not repeat the errors that Wotan undoubtedly made, and also his nephew, Siegfried, made; but the energy and strength – Kraft – emanating from both, is inspirational for us all. So, Wagner reveals

how individuals fail in life – scheitern – but also how they courageously succeed in other areas.

Ref.: **Der Ring #1 - Das Rheingold**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0yBURu6WdM>

Der Ring #2 - Die Walküre

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmilUEf6jCc>

Der Ring #3 - Siegfried

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vo1VFb4-RRU>

Der Ring #4 - Götterdämmerung

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zR9I1YYtJI>

The Universality of Wagner's Genius





Steckbrief.

Der unten etwas näher bezeichnete Königl. Capellmeister

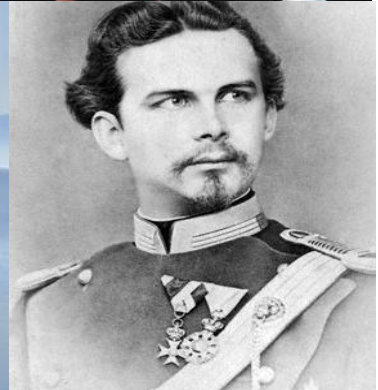
Richard Wagner von hier ist wegen wesentlicher Theilnahme an der in hiesiger Stadt stattgefundenen auführerischen Bewegung zur Untersuchung zu ziehen, zur Zeit aber nicht zu erlangen gewesen. Es werden daher alle Polizeibehörden auf denselben aufmerksam gemacht und ersucht, Wagnern im Betretungsfalle zu verhaften und davon uns schleunigst Nachricht zu ertheilen.

Dresden, den 16. Mai 1849.

Die Stadt-Polizei-Deputation.
von Dypell.

Wagner ist 37—38 Jahre alt, mittlerer Statur, hat braunes Haar und trägt eine Brille.





Gerhard Ittner's 1 Januar 2017 panoramic view of the Starnberger See, where on 13 June 1886, three years after Wagner's death, King Ludwig II, aged 41, allegedly drowned. The claim the King was insane is also being revised by those who are familiar with Realpolitik.

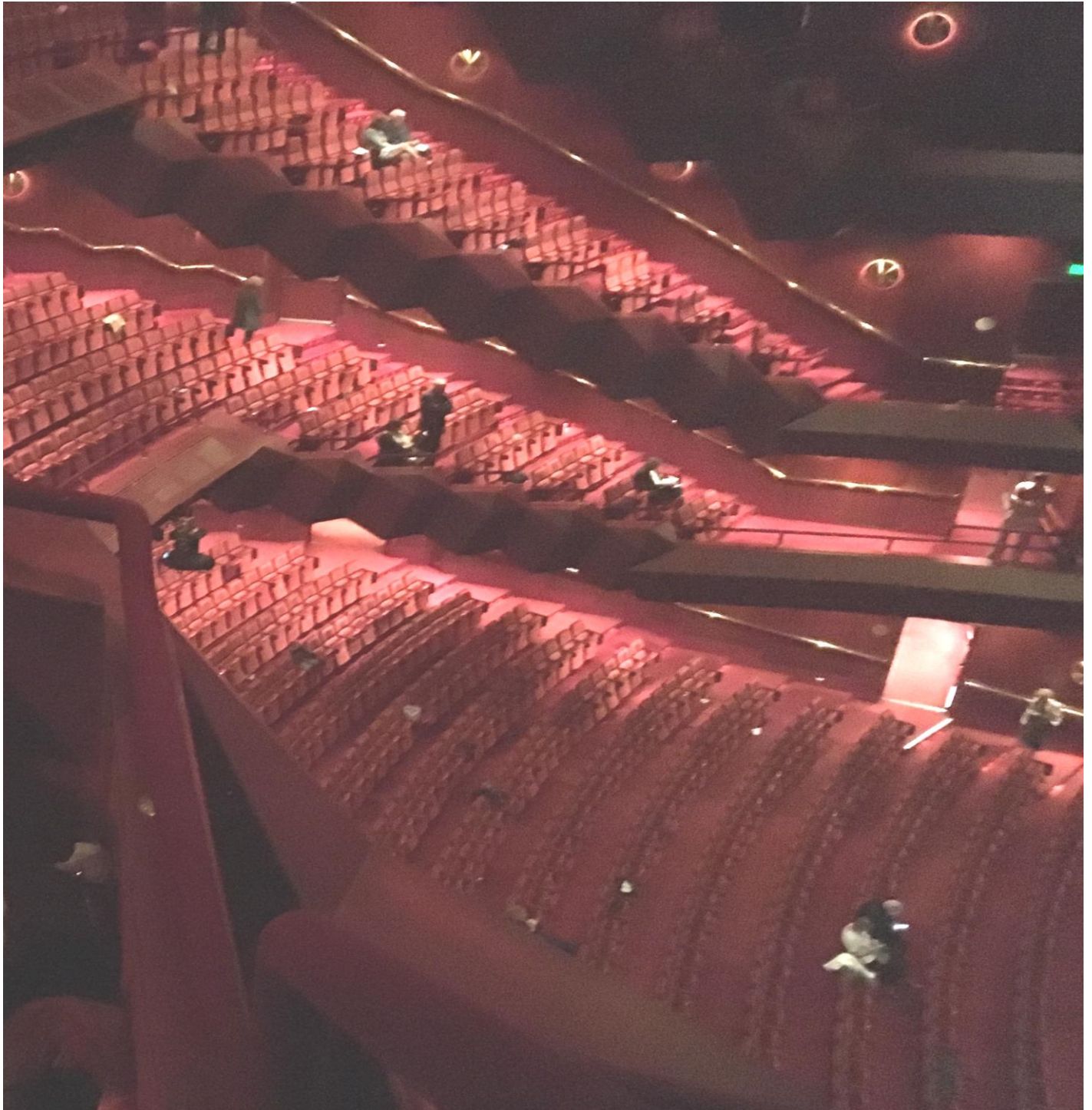




Bayreuth



Melbourne



A bird's-eye view from Box F before the Melbourne theatre filled to capacity



Melbourne could lose Ring cycle without state aid: Terracini



MATTHEW WESTWOOD,

Arts correspondent, Sydney, @matthewwestwood, The Australian, 12:00AM December 15, 2016

Opera Australia's Lyndon Terracini has called on the Victorian government to commit support for a future Melbourne *Ring* cycle or risk losing the opera festival to another city.

Tomorrow night the company gives the last performance of *Gotterdammerung*, the final part of Wagner's four-opera epic, in the production directed by Neil Armfield and conducted by Pietari Inkinen.

Audiences have been enthusiastic about the remounting of Armfield's production, which was first seen in 2013. "It's like a rock concert, with whooping and whistling, people on their feet cheering," Terracini says. "During the performance you can hear a pin drop; and at the end, it just explodes. It's been terrific."

The production is the first complete *Ring* cycle to be staged by OA, and the national company has ambitions to present the opera cycle in Melbourne every three years.

Visitors to Melbourne need to stay eight nights in the city if they are to see all four operas that comprise *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. The 2013 venture generated \$15.8 million for the state, according to an impact study.

The Victorian government contributed about \$500,000 to this year's cycle, Terracini says, but the state needs to make a "substantial" commitment if Melbourne is to present the opera festival in future. "We can't assume it's going to be in Melbourne," he says, adding that another city has expressed interest in staging the *Ring*.

"It's time for them (the Victorian government) to put their hand up now. They need to commit for 10 years ... so (the production) can be built and so a marketing campaign can take place." This year's production received about \$4m in philanthropic support led by

Maureen and Tony Wheeler and Hans and Petra Henkell, not including donors to the Ring Leaders program.

The cast features Australian and international singers, with Warwick Fyfe (as Alberich), James Johnson (Wotan), Jacqueline Dark (Fricka), Amber Wagner (Sieglinde), Bradley Daley (Siegmond), Lise Lindstrom (Brunnhilde), Stefan Vinke (Siegfried), Graeme Macfarlane (Mime) and Daniel Sumegi (Hagen). *The Australian's* Melbourne opera critic, Eamonn Kelly, praised the vocal and dramatic performances, and Inkinen's tighter and more nuanced reading of the score.

Terracini says OA will retain Robert Cousins's stage designs and Alice Babidge's costumes, but he wants the next *Ring* to be a new production. He would not confirm a rumour that Scottish director David McVicar would produce OA's next *Ring* cycle.

"I've spoken to a number of people," he says. "There's no one confirmed yet."

Comment:

Fredrick 16 December 2016

In whose interest would it be not to expose Australians to the wonders of Richard Wagner's Ring? Three years ago, after performing successfully in Melbourne's Ring, some opera singers contemplated moving to Europe where the opportunity of making a living was easier than in Australia. Then, in 2013, had the Wheelers not giving Opera Australia that proverbial \$5m shot in the arm, then this year's Ring cycle would never have happened, and would not have played to a full house. Surely that is enough evidence for our political bureaucrats to open up state and federal coffers to ensure all Australians have the opportunity of being exposed to the magic world of Wagner's Ring. The demand is there...

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/stage/melbourne/couldloseringcyclewithoutstateaiterracini/newsstory/17860f1f995d90d3b348445556e7d7e4>

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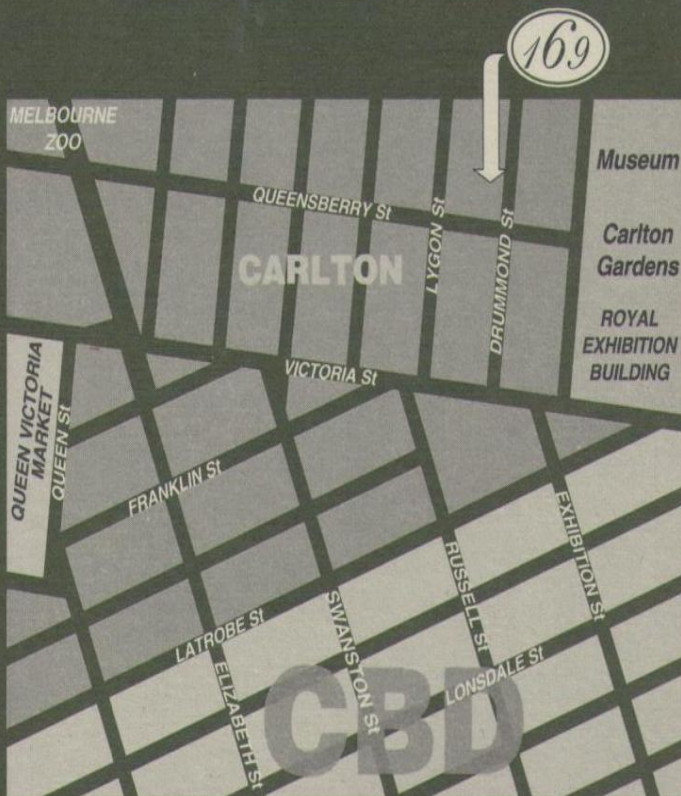
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