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LEITMOTIVE

THE JOURNAL OF THE WAGNER SOCIETY OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

GLYNN ROSS: I

A Most Remarkable Man and Ringmeister Extraordinaire

The man whose Seattle seismic event created a tsunami of interest in Wagner's *Ring* cycle in America—unseen since Anton Seidl introduced the *Ring* to America a century earlier—is hanging up his spear. Glynn Ross is retiring as Arizona Opera's general director after this June's *Ring* cycle. When I was asked to interview Ross and write this article, I jumped at the chance to speak with one of my real-life heroes. As I read and researched while preparing to write this article, I was constantly amazed at his many achievements. A Nebraska dirt farmer and Golden Gloves boxer who has been knighted by the Italian government, he is quite an unusual impresario and a most remarkable man—even more remarkable than I had realized.

My first opera was the 1978 Seattle *Ring*, so I'm a relative neophyte compared to many of my friends and, thus, the significance of what he had done was at that time lost on me. I had been grateful to Ross for bringing me the opportunity to experience a *Ring* and for instructing the less knowledgeable participants in the proper etiquette. (Silly me, for when I dragged my amiable but bored boyfriend along and was aching to whisper explanations to him, I just instinctively knew that it was not okay to talk during the operas. Unfortunately many seem to lack common sense and courtesy.) Prior to the English *Valkyrie* of 1979, after some patrons had been chatty and had applauded the "arias" and scenery the previous evening, Ross began to gently educate them to the specialness of what they were going to be experiencing. It became a beloved ritual. Before each opera for the next six years, Ross would come out to tell the audience not to make a sound during the performance and not to clap until the last note of music had faded away—"and even then, wait five seconds to make sure". He told women to take off their noisy bracelets. It was heaven.

What I had not realized at the time, though, was that this experience was not only special because it was the *Ring* cycle—produced as Wagner conceived it—but also because Ross had created the first Wagner Festival in America. For only the second time ever in this country, he produced an uncut *Ring* performed over a week's period. And not only that, he did it in German and in English. And to top it off, he did it annually for ten years! He reached out and brought in people who might not otherwise have come. He created a culture of *Ring*-goers.

I don't know if my experience was typical of a budding Wagnerian or not, but I do know that had the Seattle *Ring* not been so tantalizingly exotic, yet so accessible, I might never have gone to check out what this *Ring*-thing was all about. My first awareness of it was in 1977 in an article on the Pacific Northwest Festival in *Sunset Magazine*. There was a photo of a group of '20- and 30-Somethings' like me sitting around the grassy mound surrounding the Seattle Center fountain. They were having a between-acts snack and wore T-shirts that said "I Survived the Wagner Orgy". It looked so egalitarian and, dare I say, fun! I loved my two-LP set of Wagner overtures; it struck a place inside me that no other music had ever reached. I had just picked up a Solti *Rheingold* at a garage sale for $4 and thought, "Why not?" and headed for Seattle the following summer. Familiarity with the "Overture to *Rienzi*", and Side 6 of *Rheingold* (I don't know why, but that's where I started—but then, I always read the end of a book first, too.) didn't help much and it was fifteen hours of heavy going, but hearing the Donner "He-da! He-da! He-do!" thunder and "Ride of the Valkyries" live were instant highs! Bitten by the Bug, I listened and studied the Porter and went back the next two seasons before I ever tried opera in my own home town of San Francisco. And, of course, I went back to Seattle for even more Ross *Rings*.

While reading about past Met and San Francisco Opera *Rings*, I learned that the previous uncut *Ring* performed in a week's period was given by the Met in 1939.[1] I knew that the SFO had done a *Ring* in 1972, its first since 1935, and I knew that they had both been heavily cut.[2] But I had naturally assumed that they were done over the period of a week or so—*because that was what Glynn Ross had taught me to expect as the norm.* Needless to say, I was shocked—shocked!—to learn that

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Glynn Ross, of Seattle and Arizona Opera fame, has perhaps done more than any other person to champion interest and production of Wagner's works in America. We present a two-part article on this exceptional man. We continue with Professor Roller's careful assessment of Wagner's use of ancient Greek culture and we continue with the rare Heckel letters. Finally, an essay on the circumstances of the first production of Tristan *in Munich, 1865.*

LETTERS OF RICHARD WAGNER TO EMIL HECKEL

Continuing Our Account of the Creation of the Bayreuth Festival

Through a letter of Pohl's I knew that Baden-Baden, too, had tried to get the Festival-house erected there, but Wagner was determined to hold fast to Bayreuth. On a map of the town, which he had brought with him, he shewed us the site proposed for the theatre, and told us that the activity of the Mannheim Verein and its public announcement of the concert as for the benefit of a *National theatre at Bayreuth*, had done much to reassure the trust of people there in the undertaking.

Upon his arrival at Mannheim, Wagner had already informed me that he had written something special for me, to wit a "Report to the German Wagner-Verein." This essay has been embodied in the *Gesammelte Schriften* (vol. vi. 367 *et seq.* and vol. ix. 371 *et seq.*), with exception of the closing paragraph.[1]

On the evening of December 21, Wagner started for home.

The success of the Mannheim concert had set the enemy on the alert, and led to the circulation of venous rumours, one of which was most emphatic, viz. that Wagner had fallen dangerously ill of typhus at Bâle on his journey back. Upon inquiring of Professor Nietzsche, I received the following telegram:—

Rumour absolutely unfounded; best news from Tribschen. Heartiest New Year's wishes to Wagnerverein.

PROFESSOR NIETZCHE

In his next few letters, Wagner sends repeated greetings to the "five righteous." In the concert-days he had employed the term to denote the executive of the Mannheim Wagnerverein. Beyond this collective term, he had bestowed a distinctive name on each of us. Dr. Zeroni, whose eloquence in the address after the concert had much delighted him, was called "the Speaker"; Ferdinand Langer, who had been affected in his position at the Mannham Court-theatre by his Wagnerism, he christened "the Reprimanded"; Hänlein, whom he had already seen at Tribschen, "the Tribschener"; Koch "the Master of Ceremonies," and myself "the Strategos." Just as in every serious discussion, so in the unconstraint of private life, his purely artistic mode of view rebelled against the dogmatism of abstract terms. With the most delicious humour and keenest sense of the situation he would scare away all pedantry, and make straight for people's hearts.—

For the new year, as "the year of the foundationstone of the National theatre at Bayreuth," we telegraphed the good wishes of the Wagnerverein, having already conveyed our heartiest thanks for the concert by letter. To my request that he would name a suitable person to give lectures on his works and aims, Wagner replied in his next letter:—

To the Five Righteous, greeting and blessing!

Have thanks, dear friends, for your loyal zeal! Everything was splendid,—only, my old friend R. Pohl should have known to express himself better. "Selfintelligible"[2] proves that he hasn't read " German Art and German Policy" attentively enough.—There our Herr "Speaker" had the best of him.—By now you will have received my "Report etc." But you will be more expressly concerned with what I am saving in a "Communication to the W.-Vereins"—in the 2nd number of the Musik. Wochenblatt. I fancy it will be of help to you—and consequently to us.

Glad am I to hear of the "massive" state of things. I'm building on it, there at Bayreuth, and don't know if we shan't be left in a hole at the last. Everybody must be prepared to commit the common purse in May to my excellent banker Feustel at Bayreuth. For that matter, I see that I shall have to begin to put in a word myself, to give the thing a centre. I imagine the "Righteous" will agree with me.—Naturally the admirable Loen could only be conductor for the first stage.

Lectures?—My God!—Very good! But who's to lecture? In any case he would need a finer voice than X of W.,—he might also be less tedious. That's a terrible person (between our six selves)!

The soul and intellect for such a thing might be found in H. Porges of Munich. Possibly he might be persuaded. You'd better write and tell him that I've recommended him. I fancy he's somewhere in Augsburg just now. Franz Mrazeck, 3 Wittelsbacher Platz (my Munich address)

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Robert S. Fisher, Editor

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GLYNN ROSS

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they had been incorporated into regular seasons, with a week or more between operas.[3] In 1972, while you were killing time between *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, you could go and catch *L'Africaine* for a bit of compare-and-contrast. How's that for Wagnerian irony? (I suspect that Herr Wagner rolled in his grave a bit that season!) In other words, Glynn Ross created an entire generation of demanding, educated Wagnerites who expect no less than a full, unmutilated *Ring* presented in Festival format. And they expect their cycles *frequently*. That American opera houses are able to mount *Rings* relatively often, knowing that the subscribership is out there, is a testimony to Glynn Ross and his vision.

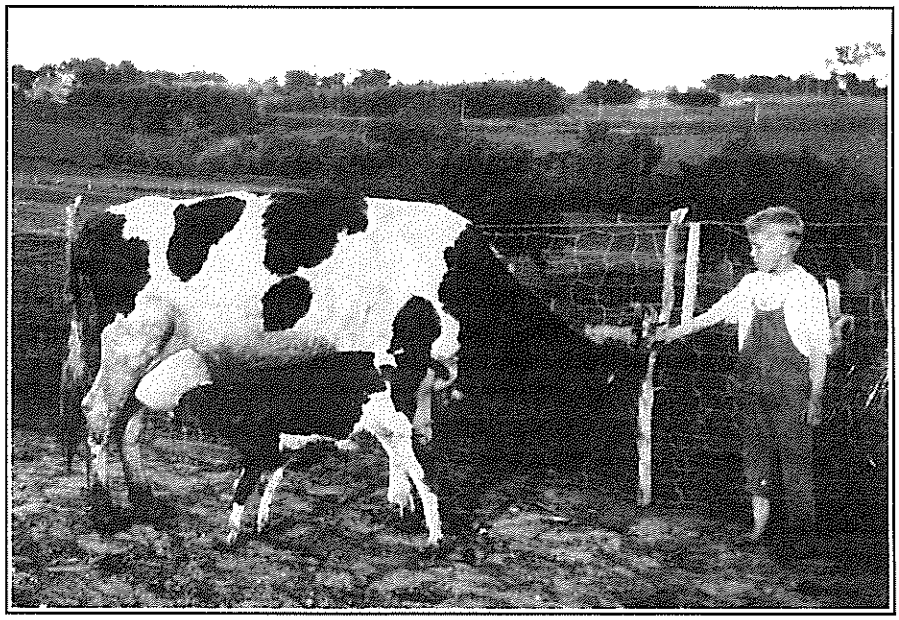
If I thought it was going to be an easy interview to write up—I ask a question and get a neat sound-bite response—I was in for a surprise. Despite his deceptively easy-going manner, Glynn Ross' mind is as wiry as his physique—like a springboard, it's always leaping to tangential thoughts. Occasionally unfocused (in a Honolulu newspaper interview he claimed to be lazy, comparing himself to a surfer who just sits and waits for the next wave, using its energy for his propulsion[4]), he seems to thrive on distractions and interruptions and he loves to change the subject. His father called him a scatter-brain. "I always thought that was my Achilles heel, and then I found it turns out to be my virtue. I like to keep 20 balls in the air at one time."[5] This is evident when one looks at his life.

He grew up on a 10-acre Nebraska farm, nearly dying in infancy. He was considered too small and weak to do the heavy chores, but he persevered and built up his strength so that he could perform the demanding tasks like hitching a team to plow a field and working with the threshing machine. In high school Ross showed talent as an actor, performing in high school plays and the community playhouse; after graduation he landed a job doing commercials on a local radio station. His high school drama teacher recommended him to a drama school in Boston, but his father's lingering illness delayed his departure for four years. After his father's death, he worked five jobs to pay off the medical bills and the farm's mortgage in a year. It was this sort of determination to achieve more than was expected of him that was to become his hallmark; hard work, audacity and an obsession with operating in the black were his backbone. Leaving the farm, he hitched rides and hopped freights to Boston. It was there that he first became exposed to a variety of performing arts, including the Boston Symphony under Koussevitzky's baton and the old Boston Opera, where he worked as a super, his first opera being *Lohengrin*. His great love at that time, though, was Shakespeare.

Dreaming of becoming a Shakespearean actor, in 1938 he sailed for England to spend the first of three summers in Stratford. He financed his trips and drama school by a myriad of odd jobs, including waiting tables, working in meat markets, janitorial jobs, running a snack-bar concession, writing publicity for the Salvation Army, working on the steamships as a cargo supervisor and coal-stoker. In Stratford he lived in a loft near Anne Hathaway's cottage, cycling to the theatre, which at the time was under the direction of B. Iden Payne. He worked as a "go-fer", enjoying the privilege of just being in the theatre, absorbing the culture and inner-workings but hoping to land a job. The war in Europe was escalating, however, and he was recalled to the U.S. along with a shipful of evacuees that included the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Arthur Rubenstein, Paul Robeson, and other luminaries and future stars of the performing arts.

Also aboard was Russian tenor Vladimir Rosing, friend and mentor to Ross. In England Rosing had introduced Ross to Albert Coates. Coates was already in California conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Rosing was planning to join him to start an opera studio; Ross was invited to assist, giving him his first real experience with opera production. With help from the WPA they put on *Faust* in the LA Philharmonic Auditorium. When Coates accepted an offer to go to Johannesburg, Ross declined to accompany him, and headed back to Boston where he was asked to create some operatic acting classes at the New England Conservatory of Music.

In 1942 Ross joined the Army, thinking his artistic career was over. It turned out to be "the luckiest thing that ever happened to me". He was sent to North Africa, where his high school French and acting and mime lessons came in handy, enabling him to bargain with the Arabs for supplies and fresh produce. He also learned Italian from a prisoner-of-war. Suffering a non-healing war wound that



Young Ross on the Nebraska farm. Does he already seem to be directing? All photos courtesy Arizona Opera.

had developed osteomyelitis, he was shipped to Walter Reed Hospital for treatment—receiving a trial of an experimental drug called penicillin. Wound healed, he rejoined his outfit in Naples, where he was put in charge of resurrecting an old hotel on the nearby British-occupied island of Ischia, and turning it into an R&R facility. There he blossomed as an organizer and an entrepreneur. He procured "civvies" for everyone to wear, making it impossible to distinguish rank. He wheeled-and-dealed to obtain lobster and the best wines to feed the soldiers and he served them breakfast in bed. His hotel became famous and he was eventually put in charge of seven hotels in Naples that served as temporary housing for military personnel. "It was great discipline. I had to get all the financial books completed and send them over to the adjutant general. I had to order food and wine and keep the waiters and room-service personnel on their toes."[6] During his time in Ischia, Ross met his future wife Angelamaria ("Gio"). Her father was an exiled anti-fascist.

Ross' full-scale involvement in opera began under the unlikely command of the U.S. Army. After the war, Naples was a major port for soldiers returning Stateside and the Allies began putting on opera at the venerable Teatro di San Carlo to keep the GIs entertained. A man in his outfit knew the prompter and Ross became stage director. They put on three performances a day, recycling the same scenery for several operas. Many of the greatest Italian singers performed there: Tancredi Pasero, Gigli, Lauri-Volpi, Gobbi, di Stefano, Italo Tajo. And he was running seven hotels.

Despite numerous hurdles, bureaucratic obstacles and much red tape (many felt he was too valuable to be allowed to leave), Ross married Gio and returned to the States with her in 1947. He ultimately rejoined Vladimir Rosing in Los Angeles, forming an operatic workshop and producing several operas. In 1948 Neapolitan Gaetano Merola invited him to join the San Francisco Opera, where he spent four months a year for the next thirteen. He also worked at San Francisco's Cosmopolitan Opera, produced opera in Los Angeles and elsewhere and co-founded the Guild Opera, a southern California touring company.

In 1954, Ross was sent to Bayreuth by Austrian conductor Richard Lert, with whom he had worked in Los Angeles. Lert, without Ross' knowledge, had already sent a letter of introduction to Hans Knappertsbusch and had to convince Ross that he *must* experience Bayreuth. Ross was unaware that he was intended to be the buffer between the feuding Kna and Wieland Wagner. Wieland was busy stripping his grandfather's productions down to their essentials (or reinterpreting them, many of the old school complained) and Kna was quite upset, threatening to quit if Wieland didn't "put back what he'd taken out and take out what he'd put in".

First Lieutenant Ross directing Boris *at Teatro di San Carlo, Naples.*

Wieland, unrepentant, made some changes (some believe for the worse), Kna quit[7] and Ross spent two seasons immersed in the subtleties of staging Wagner with many of the giants of Bayreuth's renaissance. And, more importantly, he became a Wagner devotee.

He and Gio and their four children returned to Naples for three years, returning in 1963 when he was invited to Seattle to start an opera company. It meant a substantial cut in pay, but the opportunities and possibilities were endless. He not only had to create a company, but he also had to create an interest in opera in a town with little prior exposure to it. Cement trucks were adorned with signs that read "Get Mixed Up with Opera". For *Salome* signs proclaimed "Get Ahead with Salome", for *Bohème* "Six Old-time Hippies in Paris". He utilized skywriting, bumper stickers, created the acronym WITCO (What Is this Thing Called Opera?), whatever it took to attract the audience, acquiring him the sobriquet "The Hip Huckster of Grand Opera". He pulled off coup after coup by enticing great singers to this little company to try out new roles in a smaller venue. He convinced Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonynge to come for *Lakmé*, pointing out that there was no good recording of it. (She, indeed, recorded it the next year); he brought in Beverly Sills in 1965, the year before she created a sensation with *Julius Caesar* in New York. Later he would bring in Simon Estes for his first-ever Wagner role, replacing William Wildermann as Hagen. He had 25 young resident singers, unusual for a company of this size. After getting the interest and attendance up (Seattleites[8] had become one of the highest per capita opera-going publics in the United States), in 1972 Ross began to attack the improbable and work on persuading the board of trustees to let him mount a *Ring* cycle.

Armed with a Gramma Fisher Foundation grant and the support of a group of small opera companies,[9] Ross was able to sell the idea to the skeptical board. One member made the comment, "Won't Ross have a wonderful time sitting in the audience all by himself?".[10] But on the other side of the coin, when he made his public announcement, John Voorhees wrote in his Seattle *Times* column, "Glynn Ross was dreaming big again yesterday—and you know what that means: it will probably come true."[11] Beginning in 1973 with a *Walküre*, Ross intended to work up to a full *Ring* cycle for the summer of 1976, but additional federal, private and corporate monies came in on the heels of the success of the first installment, enabling the first Pacific Northwest Wagner Festival to take place a year ahead of schedule.

The first *Ring* was directed by George London, whom Ross had known since 1939. Henry Holt and John Naccarato, Seattle Opera's resident conductor and designer respectively, rounded out the creative team. London was assisted by Lincoln Clark, whom Ross had brought to Seattle in 1974 to stage *Rosenkavalier*.

Both Ross and London were interested in keeping the *Ring* free of clutter and giving it a mythical, romantic, yet timeless and placeless setting. Indeed, London was a literalist. Where Wagner's stage directions called for "a rocky crag", there was a rocky crag. When Wagner called for Siegfried and Brünnhilde to swear oaths on the spear by placing two fingers on the tip, that's what they did. It was not considered fashionable by some critics but it was enthusiastically received by Wagnerians fed up with post-modern productions.

Unfortunately, London suffered health problems that forced him to withdraw after the first year. The capable Lincoln Clark stepped in and took over the reins for the next nine seasons, making minor dramatic changes (some had complained that London's direction was too static; Clark made it more fluid) but keeping the essence of London's (or should we say Wagner's?) concept. When asked why he hadn't redesigned it, Clark said, "I believe I did it out of love for George and the love of a great challenge. It was clear to me that my efforts would always be defined and limited by the original concept, but I took the challenge and have not regretted it."[12] Clark's ideas on conceptual *Rings* also resonated with Ross'. In an interview with Michael Mitchell in which he discusses the jarring effect that placing the *Ring* in a specific time-and-place concept can have (as when the text does not mesh with the setting) Clark quotes Mahler's comment on modish productions, "It's easy to be interesting, but hard to be good".

Not being satisfied with his accomplishments, Ross also had big ideas about a "Festival in the Forest", creating a year-round venue for the performing arts. Those who attended the Seattle *Ring* in the late '70s probably remember the architect's model on display in the outer lobby and the excitement over the thought of a permanent Festspielhaus. The planning was so far along that it seemed like a *fait accompli.* It all blew up, however, due to a schism on the Seattle Opera's board. In 1981 there were concerns that Reagan would cut federal funding for the arts, there were shortfalls and financial problems and attendance was down in opera companies throughout the country. A few short-sighted members felt that drastic cutbacks were needed and that it was more important to concentrate on the regular season and de-emphasize the Wagner Festival. They also down-sized Henry Holt's favorite project, the Outreach/Education department, which introduced opera to young people and created the future subscribers.[13] The net result was that Ross' contract was cut short by two years. Following the 1983 *Ring* cycle he accepted an offer to take over the financially ailing Arizona Opera. He was later joined by Lloyd Yunker, Seattle Opera's financial director. Holt also looked to other venues, including West Bay Opera in the San Francisco Bay Area. (Maestro Holt died last year, following a long struggle with cancer. Mr. Ross offered these thoughts: "It was a long, long battle. He was really a fighter. He fought all the way for the last five years. I want to dedicate this summer's *Ring* to him.")

Ross with Beverly Sills in Seattle, 1974 when she sang La Traviata. *He brought many world-class singers to Seattle.*

If the Arizonans expected that this would be a semi-retirement job for Ross, that he would just come in and help them out of their fiscal hole and spruce up the attendance a bit, they were in for a surprise. For as Ross was flying to Arizona in 1983 for his first meeting with the Arizona Opera directors and he looked out the window as his plane crossed over the Grand Canyon, well, he started "thinking big again".

So while gimmickry, over-intellectualizing, and concept *Rings* abound, Glynn Ross continues to bring Wagner devotees the Real Thing. We can only hope that the trend will continue after his departure and that his ambitious and audacious "Grand Canyon *Ring*", will survive. But we must also be aware that Arizona Opera's next general director will have his or her own ideas, which may or may not include Wagner. I would urge everyone who has never experienced the purity, beauty and excitement of a Glynn Ross *Ring*, as well as those who want one last dose, not to miss it.

Coming in the next issue: my interview with Glynn Ross, in which he discusses his thoughts on his *Ring* productions ("I was recently writing a letter and talking about the impact of the acoustics in Flagstaff. It was just incredible. Having worked in Bayreuth for two years, and everyone saying it was perfect, this was better. You heard every instrument."), his comments on the importance of getting "out of the way...of the communication between the person in the house and the composer", his "instinctive approach to Wagner", the ill-fated "Festival of Tragic Heights", Bayreuth reminiscences and his immediate plans for the future.

—Trisha Benedict

NOTES

1. Seattle Opera web page: http://www.seattleopera.org/The_Company/ (Click on: ***In the Beginning***)

2. Even Anton Seidl, who had been Wagner's assistant in Bayreuth for the 1876 *Ring*, and his personal secretary for the last six years of the composer's life, had severely cut the *Rings* that he introduced to the American public. "In 1888–89, Seidl & Co. gave the first *Ring* cycle in America and took it on tour for two months, [Lilli] Lehmann singing three Brünnhildes every week. All Seidl's Wagner was cut, however, and sometimes rather drastically." Martin Mayer, *The Met: One Hundred Years of Grand Opera,* 1983 Simon and Schuster, New York p. 63.

3. Actually, they ran three overlapping "cycles" that season September 26–November 4, 1972. Arthur Bloomfield, *The San Francisco Opera: 1922–1978,* 1978, Comstock Editions, Sausalito, California pp. 487–480

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WAGNER AND THE CLASSICS: II

A Definitive Analysis Of Wagner's Familiarity With Ancient Greek Culture

There is little in Wagner's Hellenism of interest to the classicist. Wagner's ideas were in many ways typical of the era, and went back to Winckelmann and Goethe.[62] Much of what Wagner said about Greek tragedy would have been available in his library: the remarks about Rome and Christianity probably came from Gibbon. Yet his obsession with things Greek was growing, and was elaborated in his next essay, *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1849):[63]

> Nature has done all that she could do,—she has given birth to the Hellenic people, has fed it at her breast and formed it by her mother-wisdom; she sets it now before our gaze with all a mother's pride, and cries to wide mankind with mother-love: "This I have done for you; now, of your love for one another, do ye that which ye can !"

This concept was continued in *Kunst und Klima* (1850),[64] an interesting essay on the effects of climate on artistic creativity, which, not unexpectedly, concluded that it was "on the naked sea-splashed rocks of Hellas", that the birth of art took place. Despite the lack of originality of much of this thought, it is clear that Wagner was acquiring a reputation as a person knowledgable about classical antiquity. In 1847 Johann Nordmann (1820–1887) visited him and wrote: "He talked about the Greek dramatists with a sympathy and understanding that one would seek in vain among some university professors."[65] In an opposing view, however, Eugene Delacroix (1792–1863), the painter, wrote in his journal on 27 September 1855 that Wagner "writes books... that are absurd," probably an allusion to *Die Kunst und die Revolution*.[66]

Wagner's Dresden world came abruptly to an end in May of 1849. Revolution had come to Dresden, not the artistic revolution he had envisioned, but a more conventional political upheaval.[67] Wagner's vivid description in *Mein Leben* of the events diminishes his exceedingly active role: as early as 8 April he had written an anonymous newspaper article which began:

> The old world is in ruins from which a new world will arise; for the sublime goddess REVOLUTION comes rushing and roaring on the wings of the storm, her august head rayed round with lightnings, a sword in her right hand, a torch in her left, her eyes so sullen, so punitive, so cold: and yet what warmth of purest love, what fulness of happiness radiate from it towards him who dares to look steadfastly into that sombre eye ![68]

Wagner, whose cries for reform in the opera and theater had already made his position in Dresden questionable, and who was actively involved in the revolution itself on 6–7 May, soon fled, barely avoiding arrest. By the end of May he was in Zürich. Many of his friends were not as lucky and were imprisoned for years; those who escaped often made their way to Zürich, where there was a recreating of the intellectual circle of Dresden. Among those ending up in Switzerland was Hermann Köchly.[69] He and Wagner continued their association: Wagner may have assisted in securing Köchly the chair of classical philology at Zürich in 1851.[70]

When Wagner fled Dresden he left his library. How much he soon missed it is made clear by his delight in finding a copy of the *Odyssey* when he was in Thun, Switzerland, in late June 1850.[71] It has been cogently suggested that the loss of his library was a crucial factor in the development of Wagner's ideas toward Greek thought. Without texts available he was able to conceive his own ideas about Greek drama that were best suited to the development of his art, an operatic conception, with the orchestra serving in the role of the Greek chorus, that would have been unlikely if the Greek authors had actually been available.[72]

Nevertheless it was this time that Wagner began to see relationships between his own music and Greek literature and myth. In his essay *Eine Mittheilung an meine Freunde*,[73] published at the end of 1851, he wrote:

> the main feature of the mythos of the *Flying Dutchman*, may be clearly traced to an earlier setting in the Hellenic Odyssey; just as this same Ulysses in his wrench from the arms of Calypso, in his flight from the charms of Circe, and in his yearning for the earthly wife of cherished home, embodied the Hellenic prototype of a longing such as we find in *Tannhäuser* immeasurably enhanced and widened in its meaning: so do we already meet in the Grecian mythos— nor is even this by any means its oldest form— the outlines of the myth of *Lohengrin*. Who does not know the story of *Zeus and Semele*?

In his lengthy work *Oper und Drama*,[74] written at the same time, he continued his conception that genuine drama was only possible from a Greek world view: Greek tragedy embodied the Greek *mythos* (a word he was now applying to the subject matter of his own operas), which was eternally true. The poet's task was to expound the *mythos*. Hence, Wagner was now saying, he was doing with his operas exactly what a Greek tragedian had done with his plays: taking the material of the *mythos*, which was the center of the poet's art, and expounding it.

From this period—the early 1850's—until today there has been a great deal of discussion on the amount of Greek source material existing in Wagner's operas. As already noted, Wagner himself was responsible for initial comparison between his earlier operas and Greek subject matter, and this attitude was prevalent in Zürich intellectual circles in the early 1850's. In 1854, one of the first critical works on Wagner appeared, Joachim Raff's *Die Wagnerfrage*. Raff (1822–1882)[75] was a composer and (from 1850 to 1856) Liszt's associate at Weimar, where Wagner's *Lohengrin* had its *première* in the summer of 1850. Raff was

thus familiar with the latest of Wagner's music. In *Die Wagnerfrage* Raff ranked Wagner as a literary artist equal to Aeschylus.[76] This association of Wagner with Aeschylus was repeated from that time on by Wagner's adherents and became a standard part of the Wagner mythology.[77]

Whatever the affinities that now began to be seen between Wagner and Greek tragedians, scholarship has long found numerous parallels between the material of Wagnerian operas and Greek literature. A recent study by Michael Ewans is a careful analysis of the Aischylean influence on Wagner's *Ring*, much of whose text was drafted in the Dresden and Zürich years. The parallels are numerous and complex. It is clear, however, that Wagner's concept of Aeschylus' views was based on Droysen's translation and that Wagner used Droysen's interpretation even where it was not generally accepted by others.[78]

That the *Ring* became a version of the *Oresteia* is the most complex (and most thoroughly researched) aspect of Wagner's classicism. Parallels with other classical sources are also numerous, not only in the *Ring* but in all Wagner's operas.[79] Many of these parallels are superficial and represent an extreme form of literary criticism. More valid are the numerous instances where Wagner used actual wording or phraseology from Greek sources. Many examples have been identified by Wolfgang Schadewalt.[80] In these parallels, Wagner's text is usually close to the German translation of a classical work which Wagner had in his Dresden library, such as Voss' Homer or Droysen's Aeschylus.

As has been shown, the circle of Wagner's intimate friends generally included classicists. He was brought into particularly close contact with classicists and their world through his association with Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900).[81] Nietzsche had graduated in 1864 from Schulpforta, an illustrious institution which produced many German classicists of the century.[82] In his graduation dissertation he wrote on Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos*, making a comparison between Greek tragedy and Wagner, whom he did not yet know.[83] He then went to Bonn, but left after a year because of a feud between Otto Jahn (1813–1869, also a Schulpforta graduate) [84] and Friedrich Ritschl (1806–1876),[85] who had originally invited Jahn to Bonn. First Nietzsche and then Ritschl moved to Leipzig, and there Nietzsche published his first major works, largely on Greek lyric, although there was also material on Greek science and philosophy. [86] At Leipzig he became close friends with another young classicist, Erwin Rohde (1845–1898),[87] and became an ardent follower of Wagner's music.

Duane W. Roller

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Professor Roller is the author of four books, 44 articles and a number of book reviews. His most recent publication is The Building Program of Herod the Great *(University of California Press, Berkeley, 1998).*

He has directed archaeological field projects in Greece, Italy, Turkey, Israel and Jordan. He was a Fulbright Scholar in 1994.

And, as might be guessed, he has great interest in Richard Wagner and his works.

In 1868 Wagner visited his in-laws, the Brockhaus family, in Leipzig. Hermann Brockhaus was an academic colleague of Ritschl, and it was through Frau Ritschl that Nietzsche managed a brief visit with Wagner, on 9 November.[88] Two months later, Nietzsche, through Ritschl's intervention, was offered the professorship of classical philology at the University of Basel: he accepted in the latter part of April 1869. Within a month he went, uninvited, to visit Wagner at his villa, Tribschen, near Lucerne.[89] Thus began the companionship between the two, whose most intense phase lasted until April 1872, when Wagner moved to Bayreuth. Nietzsche visited Tribschen over 20 times. Soon Erwin Rohde was drawn into the circle as well.[90] The two young classicists made quite an impression on Wagner and his companion Cosima Lizst von Bülow: she called Nietzsche "a well-formed and pleasant human being", but had a feeling that Rohde was the more impressive scholar.[91]

The complex relationship between Wagner and Nietzsche, resulting in Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (Leipzig, 1872) has been examined in great detail.[92] Nietzsche obtained his professorship at exactly the same time he began to have regular contact with Wagner. It is thus understandable that such a powerful personality as Wagner would play a major role in the development of Nietzsche's emerging scholarship. Correlation between Niezsche's visits to Tribschen and the books he subsequently used in the Basel University library demonstrates that Wagner, like a thesis advisor, was directing his path of research.[93] Soon after his first visit to Tribschen, Nietzsche wrote Rohde "Aeschylus and Pindar are still alive,"[94] and by early 1870 Nietzsche was bringing his lectures to Tribschen and reading them to Wagner, who was writing critical replies, exhorting Nietzsche "to prove the utility of philology."[95] There is little doubt that Wagner was instrumental in Nietzsche's decision to write a book on the origins of tragedy.[96]

Die Geburt der Tragödie was published early in 1872.[97] In November 1871, Nietzsche had perceptively written Rohde, "the philologists won't read it because of the music, the musicians because of the philology, the philosophers because of the music and philology," and the philologists would be particularly offended "at anything not published by Teubner and without the paraphernalia of critical notes."[98] Wagner received his copy at the beginning of January: Nietzsche, in the covering letter, wrote, "May this work, in some slight degree, repay the extraordinary interest you have shown in its genesis." He also added, "May God have mercy on your souls, my philologians, if you are still determined to learn nothing."

Wagner was ecstatic in his praise, writing "I have never read anything more beautiful than your book."[99]

—Duane W. Roller

NOTES

62. See RONALD GRAY, "The German Intellectual Background," in *The Wagner Companion* (ed. Peter Burbidge and Richard Sutton, New York, 1979), 34–59, and MICHAEL BLACK, "The Literary Background" in the same work, pp. 60–84.

63. *PW* 1.69–213, especially p. 90.

64. *PW* 1.249–265, especially p. 253.

65. WESTERNHAGEN, *Wagner* 100; LLOYD-JONES, *BG* 129. Nordmann, an Austrian poet and journalist, was Dresden correspondent for the Leipzig *Illustrierte Zeitung*. See E. LEBENSAFT in *Oesterreichisches Biographisches Lexicon 1815–1950* (Vienna, 1957), 7.150–151.

66. *The Journal of Eugene Delacroix* (tr. Walter Pach, New York, 1972), 492.

67. *ML* 389–417; NEWMAN, 2.34–103; WESTERNHAGEN, Wagner 137–141.

68. NEWMAN 2.54–56. The sentiments are remindful of the ending of *Siegfrieds Tod*—eventually to evolve into *Götterdämmerung*—which Wagner was drafting at the time. As late as 1911 this article was considered inflammatory enough to be confiscated when published in Berlin and Vienna.

69. HUG (*supra* note 46), 410–414.

70. NEWMAN 2.165. Also in Zürich during these years were Otto Jahn (1813–1869), whom Wagner may have already encountered, and Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903). Both these men had been in Leipzig and like Wagner came to be exiled from Saxony; Mommsen gained a professorship at Zürich in 1852 (SANDYS 3.197–198, 220–221). Wagner did not mention meeting either at this time.

71. *ML* 446.

72. EWANS 48. On the orchestra as chorus, see Wagner's essay *Zukunftsmusik* (1860), *PW* 3.338–339.

73. *PW* 1.269–392, especially p. 334. Late in life he was to equate Siegfried and Hercules (in his essay *Heldenthum und Christenthum* [1881], *PW* 6.277–278).

74. *PW* vol. 2. See also his *Ueber Staat und Religion* (1864, *PW* 4.6).

75. See HORST LEUCHTMANN, "(Joseph) Joachim Raff," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980), 15.534–536

76. NEWMAN 2.228.

77. See, for example, *CWD* for 4 October 1869. Public perception is demonstrated by a cartoon published in Berlin in 1876, showing Aeschylus bowing to Wagner. See ERNST KREOWSKI and EDWARD FUCHS, *Richard Wagner in der Karikatur* (Berlin, 190), no. 82 (p.73). In the early 1860's, young Nietzsche, well before his contact with Wagner, referred to him in his undergraduate dissertation on Sophocles, *Primum Oedipodis regis carmen choricum* (in *Werke und Briefe. Werke,* Zweiter Band (Munich, 1934), 376.

78. EWANS 29–31, 232: examples include Droysen's translation of *hybris* as *Schuld* and *dike* as *Recht*.

79. SCHADEWALT 389–398; LLOYD-JONES, *BG* 130–131. Some examples, taken almost at random from Schadewalt's long list, include Aristophanes' *Frogs* and Plato's *Symposium* in *Meistersinger;* and Sophocles' *Philoktetes (perhaps* via Wagner's never-finished *Achilleus)* in *Parsifal*. In addition, Westernhagen has drawn attention to parallels from Sophocles' *Antigone (DB* 40) in the ending of *Götterdämmerung* and the Aeschylean choruses in *Lohengrin (Wagner* 110).

80. Examples noted by Schadewalt (pp.366–398) include *Rheingold* scene 2 from *Iliad* 14.347–350 (Voss); *Rheingold* scene 4 from *Clouds* 263ff. (Droysen); *Walküre* Act 2 from *Iliad* 16.431–457; *Walküre* Act 3 from *Prometheus* 127ff.; *Tristan* Act 2 from *Hippolytos* 176ff.

81. On Nietzsche, see RONALD HAYMAN, *Nietzsche: A Critical Life,* London, 1980 [hereinafter HAYMAN]; also HUGH LLOYD-JONES, "Nietzsche," *BG* 165–181. On Nietzsche and Wagner see also SILK-STERN; *DS;* NEWMAN, vol. 4; WESTERNHAGEN, *Wagner,* 410ff.; DIETRICH FISCHER-DIESKAU *Wagner und Nietzsche,* Stuttgart, 1974; ROGER HOLLINRAKE, *Nietzsche, Wagner, and the Philosophy of Pessimism,* London, 1982. On the controversy that erupted over the publication of *Die Geburt der Tragödie,* see WILLIAM M. CALDER III, "The Wilamowitz-Nietzsche Struggle: New Documents and a Reappraisal," *Nietzsche-Studien* 12, 1983, 214–254; reprinted in CALDER'S *Studies in the Modern History of Classical Scholarship, Antiqua* 27, 1984, 183–223. This work is excruciatingly detailed in its documentation, although perhaps somewhat unnecessarily polemical. See also ULRICH K. GOLDSMITH, "Wilamowitz and the *Georgekreis:* New Documents," in *Wilamowitz Nach 50 Jahren (ea.* William M. Calder III *et al.),* Darmstadt, 1985, 583–612, especially pp. 583–587.

82. WILAMOWITZ, *HCS* 113–114.

83. *Supra* note 77.

84. Jahn had been educated at Kiel, Leipzig, and Berlin, and held professorships at Greifswald (1842–1847), Leipzig (1847–1851), and Bonn (1855–1869). He was director of the archaeological museum in Leipzig when he was forced to leave because of the revolution in Saxony; he became one of the German refugees in Zürich. He was another example of the close relationship between classics and music: as a musicologist he published a definitive life of Mozart (1856–1859), and as a classicist the catalogue of the Munich Pinakothek (1854) and other works on Greek pottery, as well as editions of Persius (1843) and Juvenal (1851): see SANDYS 3.220–221 and ALEC HYATT KING, "Otto Jahn," in *The New Grove (supra* note 75), 9.464–465. Wagner may have had indirect contact with Jahn as early as 1853, when Wagner had attempted to sell the performing rights of *Lohengrin* to Breitkopf and Härtel, which had already published the score. But the publishers refused, largely under pressure from Jahn, who was intensely opposed to Wagner's musical innovation (NEWMAN 2.399–400; SILK-STERN 27; WESTERNHAGEN, *Wagner* 81). In 1856 Breitkopf and Härtel also refused the *Ring*, and Jahn may have been involved in this as well, although it is quite likely that the publishers simply were nervous about such a lengthy, revolutionary, and as yet incompleted work (NEWMAN 2.506).

85. He was educated at Erfurt, Wittenberg and Leipzig, and held professorships at Halle (1829–1833), Breslau (1833–1839), Bonn (1839–1865), and Leipzig (1865–1876). He wrote on Plautus (his *Parerga* [1845] was read by Wagner: see *CWD* for 8 April 1880) and the history of the Latin alphabet. SANDYS 3.139–142.

86. CALDER, *Antiqua* 27 (*supra* note 81), 203–204; SILK-STERN 16.

87. Rohde had been educated at Jena and Hamburg. He and Nietzsche were "sworn foes of every form of pedantry" (SANDYS 3.186–187). He assumed a professorship at Kiel in 1872. His work on the Greek novel was followed by his definitive *Psyche*. Not unexpectedly, neither he nor Nietzsche is mentioned in Wilamowitz's history of Classical scholarship.

(Continued on page 12)

GLYNN ROSS

(Continued from page 5)

4. Pierre Bowman, *The Honolulu Advertiser*, Feb 22, 1980 "Glynn Ross—having a Valhalla of a time"

5. *Ibid.*

6. Winthrop Sargeant, *The New Yorker, Profiles* "The Ring's the Thing" 1979 (June 26, 1978). This lengthy and highly detailed article was the source for much of the biographical information I provide. Mr. Ross assured me that the article is "terribly correct". (Other biographical sources include the 5th anniversary program, the Seattle Opera program notes, the biography of Glynn Ross in the Arizona Opera publicity packet—and, of course, Mr. Ross himself.)

7. Frederic Spotts, *Bayreuth: A History of the Wagner Festival*, Yale University Press, New York and London, pp. 230, 234

8. If this spelling looks as awkward to you as it does to me, apparently there is no consensus among Seattleites themselves. I had originally used the "Seattlite" version, which I'd seen in a newspaper article, but my capable and meticulous proofreader, Lisa Burkett, thought otherwise, researched it and tells me that while both forms are used, there seems to be a slight favoring of "Seattleite". I yield to her excellent judgment

9. If creating an opera company wasn't enough to keep any mere mortal busy, in 1970, Ross founded what was to become OPERA America by sending invitations to the general directors of 25 opera companies, essentially all of the companies in North America. They assembled in Seattle to discuss the mutual difficulties of producing opera and to find ways to work together to share resources and knowledge. (Rudolph Bing was invited but didn't respond. Later, Ross sent him a telegram saying, "Remember, in three thousand years nobody has named a son Goliath." Although Bing again failed to respond, the Met's assistant manager was present at the next meeting.) Initially, it was the heads of smaller companies who joined, but Ross persuaded Kurt Herbert Adler to attend. Adler brought in Chicago Lyric's Carol Fox and later Ardis Krainik followed. Beverly Sills joined the board when she took over the helm of the New York City Opera, as did Bruce Crawford when he became the Met's board president. With offices in Washington, D.C. and a full-time staff of over a dozen, their main functions are to share information and resources among the members, to help young singers get pointed in the right direction, and in community education. (from Martin Mayer's, "OPERA America Turns 25", *Opera News*, Feb 4, 1995)

10. Again, Winthrop Sargeant in *The New Yorker.*

11. 1979 Pacific Northwest Wagner Festival's 5th anniversary souvenir program

12. 1983 Pacific Northwest Wagner Festival program "Lincoln Clark, *Ring* Director *Emeritus:* An Interview with Michael Mitchell"

13. Roger Downey, "Seattle Opera: Hard Times in Valhalla", *The Weekly*, May 13, 1981

HECKEL

(Continued from page 2)

would know where a letter would find him.—

For the rest, I'm living on the handsome expectations of the German National spirit to which I am referred on every hand.—

What gives me joy, is people like yourselves, honoured friends: you know what—and why. The rest may go hang, like the pious speech of Herr Km. Lachner!

A thousand thanks for all the friendly tokens of your kindness and affection; I have received them with much emotion!

Once more, the heartiest greetings of

Yours faithfully

RICHARD WAGNER.

(formerly ward of the "European Court.")

LUCERNE, 3rd *January*, 1872.

P.S.—If I do not greet the Righteous in the explicit name of my wife, it is on the supposition that they know—by experience—I do nothing whatever without her,—so that she is everywhere in all I utter.

R. W.

The above allusion to "Lachner's pious speech "refers to a personal remark of Lachner's that, in presenting the orchestra, he had lost the thread of his discourse and forgotten several " small points."

It was with great delight that we found in his "Communication to the German Wagnervereins" that Wagner had most cordially mentioned "the pre-eminently active friends of his art at Mannheim."[3] His warning against the Vereins being ever "confused with an association for carrying on a speculative business" was chiefly prompted by Nietzsche, who feared lest the ideality of the great undertaking, so strictly maintained by the master himself, might be obscured in the eyes of the public by any semblance of a monetary propaganda.[4]

I wrote begging Wagner to present me with the manuscript of either this "Communication" or the "Report to the German Wagnerverein." I was as able at the same time to give him news of fresh connections in various towns.

Frau Wagner answered my petition:—

"Dear Herr Heckel, I will send you one of the manuscripts, albeit with a heavy heart, for I am collecting every morsel of my husband's papers for our son.

—If I say that it is with a heavy heart I send it, you must not misunderstand me; I know no one to whom I would so gladly make it away, as yourself, who have rendered such good service to the cause."—

A few days later, Frau Wagner sent me the manuscript "Eine Mittheilung an die deutschen Wagner-Vereine." It comprises six closely-written quarto pages, and various alterations prove it to be the first draft.

The above excerpts are from William Ashton Ellis' 1898 translation. Spelling, punctuation and format are as in the original.

NOTES

1. Heckel here prints the paragraph whereof an English rendering will be found in a footnote to page 260 of the third volume of *Richard Wagner's Prose.*

2. In his review or the concert, Pohl had used the word "selbstverständlich", condemned by Wagner in the work above-named.

3. The "Mittheilung an die deutschen Wagner Vereine" appeared in the *Musikalisches Wochenblatt* for Jan. 5, 1872; it has not been embodied in Wagner's *Gesammelte Schriften.*—Tr.

4. See Karl Heckel, "Richard Wagner und Friedrich Nietzsche: Eine Betrachtung aus der Vogelschau" (Neue Deutesche Rundschau 1896, viii.).

"WITH HOPE, '*TRISTAN*' IN MAY!"

Preparations for the First Production of Tristan und Isolde, *Munich 1865*

In 1863, *Tristan und Isolde* was accepted for première at the Vienna Court Opera. After seventy-seven rehearsals, preparations were broken off and the opera was deemed "unperformable." Hounded by creditors and filled with doubts for his artistic future, Wagner departed Vienna early spring 1864 for Germany and Switzerland, seeking a safe haven from his troubles. After being tracked down in Stuttgart, Wagner was brought to Munich. On May 4, Wagner had his first audience before Ludwig II, the young and newly crowned King of Bavaria. Obsessed with works of Wagner, Ludwig was determined to assist the composer in realizing his artistic projects. The King immediately placed him under his royal protection and patronage and settled many of Wagner's debts. Thus began an intense relationship that would last until the composer's death in 1883. It was a unique association, documented in more than 600 letters and telegrams. This relationship was filled with joys and at times fraught with difficulties not only for Wagner, but also for Ludwig and his affairs of the Bavarian state. In the end, this relationship culminated with the construction of Wagner's Festival Theater in Bayreuth and the first complete performances of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in 1876, and *Parsifal* in 1881.

Immediately after Wagner's arrival, Ludwig put into motion the machinery to produce all of the composer's operas at the Royal Court Theater in Munich. The first was *Der fliegende Holländer* which received its successful première under Wagner's personal direction on December 4, 1864. At the command of the King, a private concert of Wagner's music was presented under the composer's direction one week later in the intimate and jewel-like Residenz Theater. Among the pieces performed were the opening prelude and the conclusion to *Tristan und Isolde*. Ludwig was entranced. With this music, wrote the King immediately after the dress rehearsal for the concert, "I was so moved, enraptured... that I must follow my soul to tell you that I, through this unnamable ecstasy, would be fulfilled through you... Oh how happy I am! In eternal love I am unto death your true, ablaze with joy, Ludwig."

Shortly thereafter, with Ludwig's support, Wagner began the formal preparations for *Tristan und Isolde*. Wagner gave much thought to the staging and casting as early as August, 1864 but it was not until the end of the year he was able to make firm plans for the actual production. He drew up the casting of the opera and wrote to the King that the rehearsals would take place in April, May, and June, 1865. The singers for the title role would be the great couple, Ludwig and Malvina Schnorr von Carolsfeld. At the same time, Wagner's concerns centered on the production of the opera. The pattern of the opera house and its performances settling into a predictable routine after a première greatly disturbed Wagner, for he believed that each performance of opera must be an exceptional artistic event. Otherwise the opera house becomes a place of satisfied mediocrity, a contentment Wagner loathed and fought against all his career. Wagner realized that to present a superior production of *Tristan und Isolde*, extraordinary efforts would be required of everyone in the Court Theater.

By the end of January, Wagner settled on the singers for the main roles. Ludwig personally wrote the King of Saxony to secure the services of the Schnorrs who were under contract at the Court Theater in Dresden. Filled with hope for the production of *Tristan*, Ludwig's enthusiasm (January 5, 1865) was boundless: "O blessed one! I adore you! With hope, 'Tristan' in May!" On January 21, Wagner reported that the Schnorrs agreed to sing the title roles. Thereafter followed a flurry of correspondence between Wagner and the King. The Schnorrs arrived at the end of February and began rehearsing not only *Tristan* but also for a performance of *Tannhäuser*, which took place March 5.

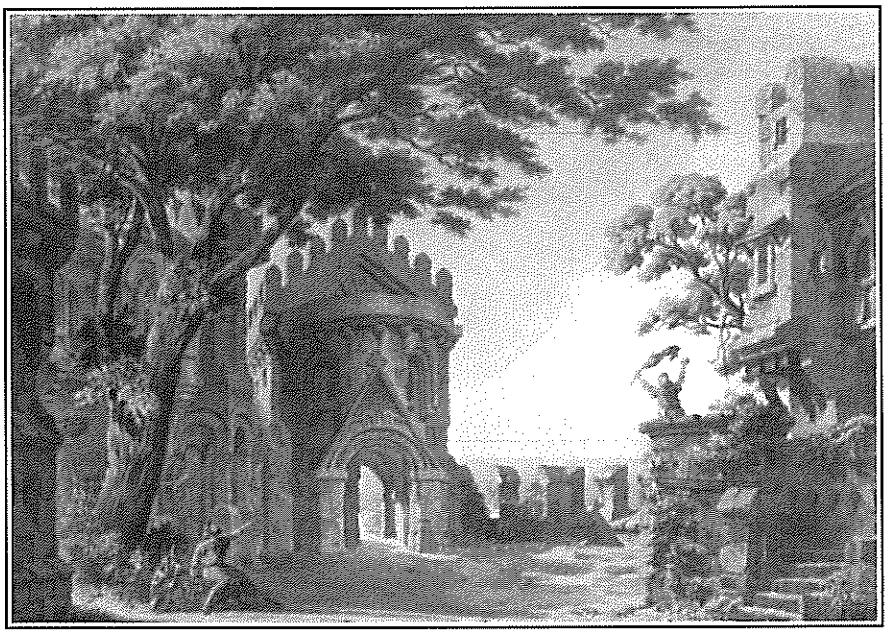
But during this period animosity between Wagner and the Court had risen nearly to the breaking point. A series of poorly judged remarks and apparent breaks in Court etiquette nearly brought the preparations for *Tristan* to a grinding halt. On February 6, Wagner was refused an audience with the King and was turned away from the doors of the Royal Court. Over the following weeks, newspapers gleefully reported Wagner's apparent disgrace with articles, editorials, and caricatures. Although Wagner defended himself with dignity in the press, Ludwig did not intercede. A flurry of correspondence between the King and Wagner followed. Many of the letters discussed the rehearsals for *Tristan* and for a performance of *Tannhäuser*, but between the lines Wagner was agitated. Tensions rose to a fever pitch. On March 9, Wagner wrote to Ludwig defending himself. Two days later he asked, "Should I leave? Should I remain?" Ludwig, himself under strain throughout the entire incident, immediately replied "remain, you must remain, everything will be as glorious as before. I am busy. Unto death, your Ludwig."

Nerves were calmed, and Wagner took the initiative. On March 12, Wagner informed the King that he would take complete control of all rehearsals, answerable only to him and not the theater authorities. At the same time, he requested the King to engage the conductor Hans von Bülow as "Royal Kappellmeister Extraordinaire" and accord him full authority over the theater orchestra. His requests granted, Wagner bypassed the regular theatrical chain of command and assumed complete control of the rehearsal and production process. Under these circumstances, the ideal theatrical conditions to produce *Tristan und Isolde* were achieved.

Meanwhile, the Court stage designers and painters Angelo Quaglio and Heinrich Döll were already at work on the designs for the settings. Quaglio was responsible for the ship in Act I as well as Tristan's

courtyard and castle in Act III. Döll occupied himself with the designs for Isolde's gardens in Act II. The sketches and stage models, with Wagner's full approval, were presented to Ludwig II on March 22. The King wrote to Wagner the next day, "Yesterday the designs for *Tristan* were presented to me, and I very much like them. What joy lies in the thoughts to see this work performed! If only I could have realized it sooner, then my greatest wishes could have been fulfilled sooner! O how happy I am!" The models, still in existence at the Ludwig II Museum in Herrnchiemsee, became the standard design for future productions throughout Europe, including those at Bayreuth in 1886.

The time of the staging rehearsals which began April 5, was one of the happiest periods in Wagner's life. The Schnorrs were eager for Wagner's direction and guidance, and he was pleased with the results. Their friendship grew and Wagner nicknamed the large couple his "plump lions" (*mollige Löwen*) and "humming bumblebees." (*Gesumm Hummeln*) The singers practiced their stage blocking during the day and continued with musical rehearsals in the evening. A superbly talented stage director and music coach, Wagner inspired the soloists to achieve what they previously had not thought possible.



Act III set from the first performance of Tristan und Isolde *designed by Angelo Quaglio II.*

It was a difficult time for Hans von Bülow during the rehearsals. Behind his back, Cosima, his wife, and Wagner were conducting an affair, seemingly known to all. The orchestra rehearsals began on April 10, and on that same day Cosima gave birth to Wagner's daughter, Isolde. Nonetheless, Bülow guided the players through twenty-one rehearsals before the première. He managed, with an intensity never before experienced by the orchestra, to coax superb playing from the musicians.

Rehearsals of a new opera are always difficult and often filled with enormous stress. Seemingly minor incidents become events of epic proportions and egos are bruised in the heat of a moment. Differing opinions, poor attitudes, and plain opposition needed to be overcome, as well as massaging delicate egos and judiciously spreading words of gratitude among the artistic and technical personnel. Things are said normally not meant for the ears of the public or even worse, the press. One utterance by Bülow, a highly strung musician distracted by Wagner's affair with Cosima and overwhelmed by the responsibilities of a new and enormous opera, caused a tumult. During a break at one of the orchestra rehearsals on May 2, the technical director of the Court Theater discussed with Bülow the necessity of removing the first two rows of auditorium seats (approximately thirty seats) to accommodate the enlarged orchestra of over 100 players. Bülow, nervous and exasperated, cracked "What does it matter to me if it concerns more or less than thirty sons of bitches [*Schweinehunde*]?" No doubt the gasps could be heard throughout the theater. The remark was reported in a Munich newspaper on May 7, resulting in an uproar and storms of public outrage. Two days later, Bülow published a defense stating that his remarks were made in private and never intended to insult the public. Despite the statements, the "Schweinehunde" episode did not fade, and it provided much lively discussion and gossip in the Munich shops and salons.

The final dress rehearsal took place before an invited public on May 11. One more extended private rehearsal followed two days later, and all was ready for the première on May 15. The King and his Court, Wagner's friends and enemies, and the press were all gathered for the great event. On that day, the King, impatient and excited, wrote to Wagner: "Joyous day!—Tristan. I look forward to the evening!—O would it come soon! When will the day change into night? When will the torch be snuffed out, when will it be night in the house?"

Then disaster struck. On the day of the première, Wagner's creditors swooped in and seized several of his possessions and demanded payment. Greatly embarrassed, Wagner had the Court treasury cover the debts. But this was inconsequential compared to an even greater disaster—a nightmare for any opera company—the Isolde and star soprano, Malvina Schnorr von Carolsfeld was hoarse and could not sing. Ludwig, her husband and the Tristan, appeared before Wagner "with tears in his eyes" to report the misfortune and the necessity of postponing the première indefinitely.

The whisperings gathered force, and the seeming curse of the "unperformability" of the opera loomed large. To recuperate with the hopes of recovering her voice, the Schnorrs departed for a

(Continued on page 12)

TRISTAN

(Continued from page 11)

cure in Bad Reichenall. The press had a field day with reports, caricatures, mocking satires, and dark references to the "Schweinehunde" episode were trotted out. The King remained calm and patient. Finally, a telegram from the Schnorrs arrived on June 2 with news of Malvina's recovery. Two days later another telegram landed in Wagner's hands, this time with only four words: "Heia Heiha!" and signed "Die Löwen." ("Heia Heiha" is Kurwenal's cry of joy upon seeing the Isolde's ship in the third act) Upon the return of the Schnorrs, the entire cast and personnel reassembled in the theater for several brushup rehearsals and the première was set for 10 June.

Finally the great day arrived. Ludwig, once more impatient, wrote "Today, finally! How will I bear the joy?" Everyone was tense, not only from anticipation of the sold-out première. Local police, with the "Schweinehunde" episode fresh in their minds, feared a public demonstration against Bülow. Because of this, a portion of the auditorium remained empty at the beginning of the opera. Promptly at 6 o'clock the King set foot in his box to fanfares and great applause. Moments later, Bülow entered the orchestra pit without incident and began to conduct the overture. Only then was the remainder of the public allowed to quietly take their places in the auditorium.

The première was a complete and total triumph. At the end of each act the soloists were greeted to great acclaim. Wagner, completely drained and with tears in his eyes, appeared at the end of the opera to overwhelming ovations from the King and the public. Immediately after the performance, the King wrote Wagner a short letter with "How joyous!—Perfect. So affected from enchantment!" He immediately concluded with the final lines of the opera "versinken—unbewußt—höchste Lust" and signed the letter without his signature, but writing: "Divine Work! Eternally true — until beyond death!"

—Evan Baker

WAGNER CLASSICS

(Continued from page 11)

See also CALDER, *Antiqua* 27 (*supra* note 81), 207–208.

88. ELIZABETH FOERSTER-NIETZSCHE *The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence* (tr. Caroline Kerr), New York, 1921 [hereinafter *NWC*), 5–9; HAYMAN 97–99. *NWC*, written by Nietzsche's sister, has been long noted for its unreliability, largely in its excerpting of material without any indication that such is being done (NEWMAN 4.498–539, *BG* 165–166). Nevertheless it is an easily accessible (and sometimes the only) source for its material.

89. *NWC* 10–15; HAYMAN 101–103, 107–108; WESTERNHAGEN, Wagner 410–411; NEWMAN 4.259–260.

90. Letter of Nietzsche to Rohde, 16 June 1869 (in *NWC* 15); WESTERNHAGEN, *Wagner* 424–425.

91. *CWD* for 31 July 1869; NEWMAN 4.325.

92. See the sources mentioned *supra*, notes 81 and 88.

93. WESTERNHAGEN, Wagner 411–413; CALDER, Antiqua 27 (supra note 81), 187.

94. Letter of 3 September 1869, cited by WESTERNHAGEN, *Wagner* 412.

95. *CWD* for 3 February, 4 February, and 11 June 1870; *NWC* 38–40; NEWMAN 4.26

96. SILK-STERN 40. Wagner's influence was not only in the classics: Nietzsche wrote music in the Wagnerian style (SILK-STERN 52) and began a drama, *Empedokles*, which may have been intended as an opera (HAYMAN 131),

97. SILK-STERN 58–60; NEWMAN 4.365–383; CALDER, *Antigua* 27 (*supra* note 81), 188.

98. Letter of Nietzsche to Rohde, 23 November 1871, quoted by SILK-STERN 60.

99. Letter of Nietzsche to Wagner, 2 January 1872, in *NWC* 93–94; *CWD* 3–7 January 1872; *SLRW* § 404.

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