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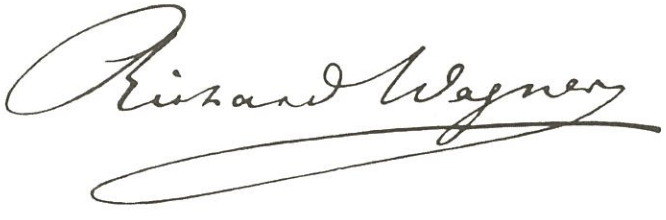
Leitmotive

The Wagner Quarterly



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Cyrus Hamlin 1936–2011

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The Editor's Thoughts

Every work of art has many different aspects, but ultimately what counts is our reaction to what we are experiencing during an aesthetic event, whether it be listening to a recitation of poetry, looking at a painting, or of course, listening to and watching a performance of a Wagner opera.

For many of us, *understanding* what is happening and why is conducive to a more intense aesthetic experience, thereby increasing our pleasure and excitement. All of our readers know the overwhelming potential that Wagner's works contain, even if that potential is only occasionally realized. When it is, we enjoy a unique and wonderful experience.

Steven Goldberg, returns to our pages in this issue with his study of three key events in *Die Walküre*. Dr. Goldberg is a professor at the University of California medical school in San Francisco as well as a practicing psychoanalyst. As such, he is thoroughly familiar with the works of Siegmund Freud whose over-arching theories of human experience, emotion and behavior were so often and extraordinarily anticipated by Wagner, many years before Freud even began to uncover his path-breaking findings.

The understanding Wagner seems to have had of these deepest reaches of the human psyche are remarkable and his skill at portraying these elusive elements of human nature explain, perhaps more than one might initially think, the unusually powerful impression that his works can have on us when they are well presented.

This issue marks the completion of twenty years of my being the editor. It has been an exciting and rewarding experience for me; I wish to thank the Wagner Society for their enormous support and encouragement over these many years. I hope to continue a good while longer.

LEITMOTIVE–*THE WAGNER QUARTERLY*

Robert S. Fisher, Editor
Lisa Burkett, Associate Editor
Typography: Francisco Moreno

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LEITMOTIVE–*THE WAGNER QUARTERLY* is a journal intended for all persons interested in the works, life, and influence of Richard Wagner (1813–1883). Although many of our authors and readers are scholars affiliated with academic institutions, many are informed lay persons with a keen interest in Wagner studies.

LEITMOTIVE–*THE WAGNER QUARTERLY* is published four times a year as Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter issues. Actual publication dates can vary, but all annual subscriptions to this journal are for four issues. There are no "double" issues. Views expressed are those of the authors of the specific articles in this journal, and are not necessarily the views of the Editor or the Publisher.

We invite all interested persons to submit articles for publication: please see the back cover.

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The Publisher of LEITMOTIVE–*THE WAGNER QUARTERLY* is the Wagner Society of Northern California, PO Box 590990, San Francisco, California 94159.

David Dalto, Founding Editor (1985–1989)

Paul Schofield, Editor (1990)

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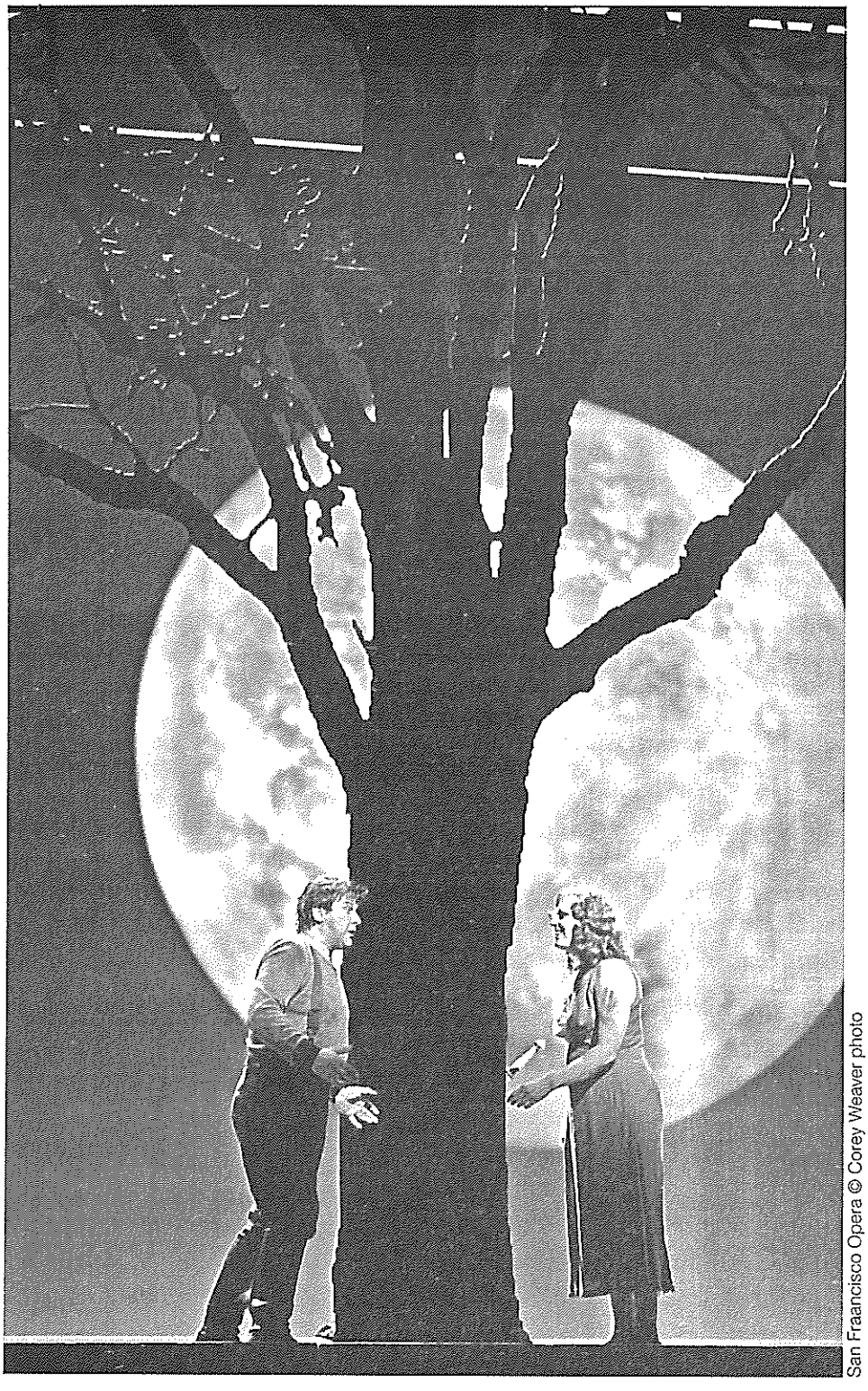
Verna Parino ("Another View on the Recent Los Angeles *Ring*") has travelled world-wide to many performances of the Ring. She writes regularly for the Finnish Wagner Society's journal, *Wagneriaani*. She was President of the Wagner Society of Northern California for years, as well as a member of its Board of Directors. Ms. Parino has been active in the San Francisco Opera Guild for a very long time. For 28 years she was Preview Chairman with the responsibility of locating and engaging scholars to speak about each opera in the San Francisco season at each of the several chapters of the Guild. She selected over 200 such speakers from all over the United States and Europe. She has published many articles including a number in LEITMOTIVE–*THE WAGNER QUARTERLY*. Ms. Parino is 94 years of age and exhibits no signs of slowing.



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Siegmund and Sieglinde just before they consummate their love in Act I (Christopher Ventris and Eva Marie Westbroek in the 2010 production).

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Siegmund and Sieglinde just before they consummate their love in Act I (Christopher Ventris and Eva Marie Westbroek in the 2010 production).

Love, Loss, and Transformation in Wagner's *Die Walküre*[1]

[Below the author recounts those elements of the story that he examines -Ed.]

Die Walküre *is the second of four operas in Wagner's dramatic cycle,* The Ring of the Nibelung. *In Act I, Siegmund and Sieglinde, twins separated in early childhood after the murder of their mortal mother, meet each other after years of struggle and deprivation, and almost immediately fall passionately in love. Their father, Wotan, the ruler of the gods, has arranged this meeting as part of his larger plan to secure his dominion over the world. At the end of this act, after consummating their love for each other, Sieglinde leaves Hunding, the domineering husband she had earlier been forced to marry, and flees with Siegmund. Unbeknownst to either of them, Sieglinde is pregnant with Siegmund's child.*

Act II opens as Wotan and Brünnhilde, his daughter by the intuitive earth goddess Erda, are anticipating the upcoming duel between Siegmund and Hunding. It is clear that they have a special and intense relationship, with Brünnhilde the dutiful and beloved daughter who brings slain heroes to defend Wotan's palace, Valhalla, against any potential enemies. Brünnhilde understands that Wotan favors his son Siegmund in the upcoming battle, and she plans to protect him. But Wotan is beholden to his wife, who is the goddess of the sanctity of marriage, and to the laws that he himself must uphold by virtue of various treaties. He commands Brünnhilde to allow Hunding to prevail and kill Siegmund. Brünnhilde conveys to Wotan that she is the

1. A similar version of this article will be found in the Spring 2011 issue of Fort/Da, a publication of the Northern California Society for Psychoanalytic Therapy, the main difference being that the above version does not use technical psychoanalytic terms, but attempts to substitute reasonably accurate descriptions for lay readers.

agent of his unacknowledged will, that she knows what he secretly still desires and cannot acknowledge, and that she will intervene on Siegmund's behalf. He sternly forbids her from defying his decision to destroy Siegmund, and threatens grievous punishment should she disobey. When the duel begins, Brünnhilde is profoundly moved by her love for Siegmund and especially by Siegmund's love for Sieglinde. Initially obeying her father, Brünnhilde summons Siegmund to Valhalla, but he declines to go unless Sieglinde can go with him, which Brünnhilde tells him cannot happen. In a powerful moment of doubt and inner conflict, Brünnhilde finally decides to defy her father and to save Siegmund. At that point, Wotan intervenes, and Siegmund is killed by Hunding.

In the final act, Wotan arrives in a rage and is determined to mete out harsh punishment to Brünnhilde. She is to see him no more, to be stripped of her godhood, and to be put to sleep until she is claimed by the first mortal man who happens to find her. Devastated by this punishment and heartbroken at the rupture of her relationship with her father, Brünnhilde pleads with him to relent. Following a heart-rending confrontation and eventual partial reconciliation, Wotan agrees to mitigate the punishment somewhat, and promises to place a ring of fire around the sleeping Brünnhilde so that only the bravest of heroes will be able to find and to claim her as his wife. In the final moments, just before the ring of fire is ignited, Wotan and Brünnhilde say good-bye to each other forever.

Introduction

In this essay, I concentrate on Wagner's exploration of the nature of love, and its inevitable counterpart, loss. Love and loss are inseparable in this opera. So, too, are the polarities of merger[2] and separateness[3] as universal dimensions of loving relationships. I explore these themes initially through the prism of three moments of extraordinary power and depth, one in each act of the opera. The first is the falling in love of Siegmund and Sieglinde in Act I; the second is Brünnhilde's decision to intervene on Siegmund's behalf and thus to defy Wotan, her father, in Act II; and the third is the conflict and partial rapprochement between Wotan and Brünnhilde in Act III. I then make some psychoanalytic observations on Wagner's compositional technique in this opera and on the particular ways in which the music contributes to Wagner's engagement with these emotional experiences.

2. The very early childhood blissful feelings connected with being almost as one with mother (i.e."merged"). Freud found that adults long for such feelings to be restored.

3. The opposite of merger, recognizing one's essential differences from another person. Also "autonomous."

Siegmund and Sieglinde

On one level, the love between Siegmund and Sieglinde is incestuous love between brother and sister, who also happen to be twins. This has a great deal of significance in the overall story line of the Ring, and it would be possible to undertake a psychoanalytic discussion of the temptations and dangers of incest, but that is not the path that I want to pursue. Rather, I want to suggest that Wagner is trying to make a more general, and rather profound, statement about the nature of romantic love. I think he is saying that romantic love is first, in some way transgressive (i.e. a kind of transgression), and that it is, second, in some ways not so much a "finding" as a "re-finding."[4] Romantic love is transgressive in that by nature it is somewhat outside of both social and even personal control. It has a life and power of its own, and it breaks the bonds of the family as a new family unit is constituted. That is, it initiates the cycling of the generations and institutes something new, symbolized and actualized in the baby and the new family unit that is created.

The relationship between Siegmund and Sieglinde involves an experience of recognition at first sight, a "re-finding" in which each feels instantly and almost fully known and understood by the other. ("As soon as I saw you, I knew you were mine.") Symbolically the twinship suggests at least the illusion of a deep knowing and sharing in romantic love, in which one feels one is known in a way that only a parent or sibling or perhaps a twin could know one. There is a suggestion that this re-finding compensates for the twins' early loss of their mother (and to some extent their father, who had very little actual presence in their lives), and in some way re-establishes the bliss of early merger experiences with mother in which one feels almost completely understood, loved, and cared for. In these early merger states, there is little or no sense of separateness, and the twins' seeing the images of themselves in the other suggests the re-finding of this early state of mind. As Siegmund poignantly puts it, "In you, I have found all that I longed-for... Love lay hidden deep in our hearts."

It is difficult for a psychoanalyst to experience this aspect of the drama without hearing not only the voice of Freud, but also the voice of Hans Loewald, in whose work the co-existence of merger experiences and experiences of separateness is an ever-present leitmotif. Ever sensitive to the more archaic core of human experience, Loewald wrote about a striving for and longing for nonseparateness alongside the universal human quest for autono-

4. Freud, S. "Three Essays on Sexuality." In Strachey, S. *Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, Volume 7. (London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953), pp 135–243.

San Fraancisco Opera © Corey Weaver photo

Brünnhilde delivers the Announcement of Death to Siegmund while Sieglinde sleeps in Act II (Nina Stemme, Christopher Ventri and Eva Marie Westbroek).

my.[5] Loewald points out that even in mature adult romantic passion, the underpinning of longed-for merger experience provides some of the motivating force. One has the sense that Wagner, too, understood this deeply.

Siegmund and Brünnhilde

The second moment I want to discuss is when, in Act II, Siegmund declines to go to Valhalla if Sieglinde cannot come with him, which eventuates in Brünnhilde's decision to protect Siegmund, in defiance of her father. Brünnhilde witnesses something she has not seen before—the intense romantic love of two mortals, who must also face the realities of separation and loss. It is reminiscent of the story of the Buddha when he left the palace for the first time and was confronted with the reality of human suffering. Brünnhilde's experience represents a loss of innocence, and it opens a new realm for her – one of love, longing, loss, and compassion—enlarging her understanding considerably. Perhaps for the first time, she feels torn by internal conflict, torn between doing what her father tells her to do, and doing what she believes she must do, though in this case the latter corresponds with

5. Loewald, Hans, "The Waning of the Oedipus Complex," Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, Volume 27, 1979, pp 751–775.

what she takes to be her father's hidden, mostly unconscious will. Earlier in the act, Brünnhilde asks, "What am I if not your will?" But in this moment of confrontation, things become more complicated. She now experiences both internal conflict and a degree of separation from her father and from his desire. In a sense, a whole new world is born in that moment, as she becomes a subject in her own right, making decisions and living by their consequences. She begins to leave the world of her parents/gods, and chooses mortal life and the romantic love which ensures its continuity. Leaving the somewhat narrow confines of her love of her father, she embraces the world and her own place in it. The quality of her love is changed in some deep way as she more fully becomes a person who reflects and chooses.

One might imagine that the protective love Brünnhilde feels for Siegmund and Sieglinde also evokes whatever connection she feels with her mother, Erda, about whom we know very little, except that she is the intuitive and wise earth-goddess. While normally it is the relationship with the father that assists the child in emerging from the mother child merger, here it may be the pull of Brünnhilde's identification with her mother that helps her to differentiate herself from the intensity and exclusivity of her bond with her father, also contributing to her emergence as an autonomous individual with her own feelings, opinions and attitudes.

Wotan's Transformation

Some of these inner movements within Brünnhilde's soul set up perhaps the most poignant and powerful scene in the opera, the confrontation between Brünnhilde and Wotan in Act III. If the transformational moment for Brünnhilde is in Act II, the transformational moment for Wotan is in this final act. In order to understand what is at stake here, we must try to understand the nature and depth of Wotan's rage at his daughter. After all, Brünnhilde asks, what has she done that is so shameful, that would merit the extent of his rage and the harshness of his punishment? It seems to me that the essence of the "crime" is that she has begun to separate from Wotan, to become a person in her own right. Wotan rages: "From now on, be what you will." With Brünnhilde's decision to defy him, Wotan has to face, not for the first time, but surely for the first time with his daughter, the limitations of his power and his control over what he has created. "I made you what you were; now you are what you have made yourself." Rather than embracing her growing into adulthood, he fights it; rather than accepting and even embracing the cycling of the generations and the transfer of power that this represents, he balks.

He is unable to face the vulnerability we assume when becoming parents. In Lear-like fashion, he repudiates his daughter. Since she has left him, he says, he is now leaving her. Since she has a will of her own, she can no longer be the agent of his will. Moreover, whereas he thought he was at least in control of his own thoughts, if not of all realms of the world, he now has to accept that she can see what he cannot, that she has her own intuition, her own power, her own agenda.

The transformational moment for Wotan comes when his love for his daughter partially mitigates his anger and allows him to see that, as much as he loves her, he cannot control her or what she will do with her life. The renunciation of control is only partial—he has agreed to protect Brünnhilde with a ring of fire and has essentially chosen a mate for her—but he has recognized that now she is mortal—and that the incestuous father/daughter bond must change. He begins to recognize her for who she is. "Farewell, you dauntless, glorious child." At the end of the final scene, he embraces his daughter with infinite love and with infinite sadness. The three repetitions of his "farewell" are both heartbreaking and somehow deeply affirming. And a moment later, in an act both of punishment and of deep love, "I remove your godliness with a kiss." What renders this scene so poignant and compelling is the way in which it evokes the experience of all fathers of daughters, all parents of children, all analysts of patients, all teachers of students, as they come into their own. We must allow them to live their own lives, outside of our control, and we must accept the cycling of the generations and the transfer of power, including the power to bestow life, and the power at times to know us better than we know ourselves. Brünnhilde now has a freedom that Wotan, like all parents, must give up. If not, we have tragedy and the perversion, if not the total rending, of the parent-child bond.

In this opera, love is treated as a fine balance between experiences of merger and of non-separateness, on the one hand, and experiences of increasing autonomy, on the other. This is true of the relationships between Siegmund and Sieglinde, and between Wotan and Brünnhilde. Merger lends depth and intensity to love, while separateness allows for the psychological birth of the person and the creative possibility of transferring that love to a new generation. And in both relationships, the final and inevitable experience of loss is part of what it means to love.

Psychological Themes Conveyed in the Music

I now turn to the music itself in order to develop a number of psycho-

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Brünnhilde pleads with Wotan near the end of Act III (Nina Stemme and Mark Delavan).

analytic ideas about the ways in which Wagner's compositional technique conveys the inner lives of the characters and perhaps says something more broadly about the nature of love and loss, of merger and autonomy. One aspect of Wagner's use of leitmotifs is the particular way that they unify thought and feeling, idea and emotion, articulating an ongoing and underlying emotional element to all experience that accounts for some of the richness and complexity we feel in our lives (and loves). While this unifying of idea and emotion must be present in a general way in all sung music, and even in some instrumental music without verbal text, there may be something particularly potent and accessible in Wagner's use of these recurring melodic themes, each associated both with an idea or experience and its emotional resonance. Wagner referred to leitmotifs as "melodic moments of feeling," though I think more accurately they are melodic moments of feeling/thinking. The way that we experience Wagner's music, with its ongoing tapestry of melodic themes, is then something like the way we experience the flow of our own lived experience, with feelings, both conscious and unconscious, as an ever-present guide to what is going on within and without. Whether or not we are aware of it, there is a constantly present collection of underlying emotional feelings (substrate), almost an "orchestral" register to all of our experience, even when we are not feeling particularly "emotional." Each time we hear the leitmotif of Brünnhilde's slumber, we associate not only to the idea of her being put to sleep by her father to awaken only at the arrival of the hero who will claim her, but with all of its mythical and symbolic meanings. We are also bound to associate to a world of emotional resonance related to Brünnhilde's relationship to her father, the combination of intense love and searing anger they feel for each other, and the heartbreaking separation they are about to experience, in which they will never see each other again. These currents are welded together in an experience of almost unbearable poignancy.

While leitmotifs convey a unity of thought and feeling, they also convey a unifying quality to several other polarities of experience, such as past/present and unconscious/conscious. Even if we are not fully conscious of this in responding to the music, each time we hear a leitmotif we associate to each time we have already heard it and, if we have experienced the *Ring* before, to all of the times that we anticipate hearing it again, with all of its psychological resonances. And especially when the music is in the orchestra, we associate to what the characters themselves don't know, that is, to unconscious dimensions of their experience. The latter is also conveyed in the way in which several motives can be present at the same moment, illustrating the complexity, depth, and often conflicted nature of lived experience.

The Familiar and The Unfamiliar

Another aspect of this music is the constant tension between what is familiar and what is unfamiliar, as the music weaves back and forth among familiar leitmotifs, interspersed with musical material that we have not heard, or have only subliminally heard, which itself now becomes familiar, in some cases becoming new leitmotifs. We are engaged in a constant dialectic of finding and re-finding, the former confronting us with new experience and the latter bringing us home to what we already know. An additional dimension of this tension between familiar and unfamiliar is the almost constant variation and development of themes that are already familiar and loaded with emotional/psychological resonances, constantly adding new shadings of meaning and of feeling. Another way of putting this is that the familiar leitmotif is constantly contextualizing and contributing meaning and shape to the unfamiliar, while the unfamiliar is adding meaning, intensity, and complexity to the musically familiar, reminiscent of the interpenetration of the unconscious and conscious in mental life. A relatively limited number of musical themes, in their various reiterations and transformations into new themes, take on the ability to convey both the continuities and the discontinuities of human experience. In fact, this balance between stasis (what remains the same) and transformation, between merger and separation, is powerfully conveyed in the fact that the notes of the first leitmotif in the opera, a simple E flat chord associated with the act of creation, have been shown to be the derivation of all of the leitmotifs to come.[6]

The sword motif, for example, which is associated with Wotan's power and with his rage toward Brünnhilde, becomes beautifully transformed into Brünnhilde's aching plea for forgiveness and reconciliation. In this musical and emotional transformation, the inexorable progression of downward pitches in the sword theme is interrupted by a rising series of notes sung by Brünnhilde which suggest a question, a plea, a turning of Wotan's rage and authority back on itself in an invitation to father-daughter atonement. In this motion, the music is poised somewhere between loss and reconciliation.

Music and the Multilayered Quality of Experience

This bringing-together of what is old and of what is new, what is past and what is present, and what is conscious and what is unconscious, is a fundamental quality of experience, rendered powerfully in Wagner's music. Mar-

6. Lee, M. Owen, *Wagner's Ring: Turning the Sky Round*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990). p 36.

cel Proust observed that man is "one of those amphibious creatures who are plunged simultaneously in the past and in the reality of the moment."[7] New experience is created out of the recombination and transformation of the old, while itself reshaping and conferring new meanings and vitality to the old. Love is a paradigm example. In a further development of this idea, Wagner adds a dimension of the future as well. He uses musical material that hints at themes that will later be more fully developed into more full-fledged and recognizable leitmotifs—for example, in strains of the love duet melody that prefigure the full development of this material as Siegmund and Sieglinde begin to fall in love, but don't yet quite know it. And later, the same music takes on a more melancholy tinge as it comes to evoke the history of their love even at the moment of impending loss. The texture of the music is always in the process of becoming. Embedded within the present moment are intimations of the future and echoes of the past.

Wagner profoundly captures this multi-layered quality of our experience.

—Steven H. Goldberg, MD

7. Proust, M. *Remembrance of Things Past*, Volume 6, "The Fugitive." Trans. by C.F.Scott Moncrieff, Terence Kilmartin, Andreas Meyer. (New York: Random House, 1981). p 544.

Cyrus Hamlin 1936–2011

Professor Hamlin was an active member of this journal's Editorial Advisory Board from the time of its inception. He authored an extensive article on *Das Rheingold* that was published in the Winter 2009-2010 issue. After receiving his doctorate from Yale, he taught for 12 years at the University of Toronto, returning to Yale where he taught until 2006. His primary focus was Goethe, but he also was an avid Wagnerian and taught courses and lectured on Wagner. He was a visiting professor at Oxford, Harvard, Boston University, the Free University in Berlin, Heidelberg and Bologna during his most distinguished career. At Yale, he served as chair of both the German and Comparative Literature departments. Professor Hamlin was a personal friend and we mourn his loss.

Winter and Spring Imagery in *Die Walküre* and *Die Meistersinger*

At the quiet hearth in winter time,
when castle and courtyard were snowedup,
I often read in an old book
left to me by my ancestor
how once Spring so sweetly laughed,
and how it then soon awoke anew.
Walther von der Vogelweide
he was my master.

Walther von Stolzing in Die Meistersinger

Winter and Spring as armed combatants

In the first Acts of both *Die Walküre* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Wagner depicts Winter and Spring as armed warriors locked in combat, with Spring defeating his frosty adversary before succumbing to the higher power of Love.

Siegmund in his rhapsodic *'Wintersturme wichen dem Wonnemond'* describes an armed Spring conquering the world and breaching Winter's defences. Walther von Stolzing in his trial song *'So rief der Lenz in den Wald'* describes Winter 'grimly armed' sheltering in a thorn-hedge and planning his tactics to defeat Spring. Both images echo the lyric poetry of the twelfth century Minnesinger Walther von der Vogelweide, whom Walther von Stolzing acknowledges as his master. He seems to have been Wagner's 'master' too.

Walther von der Vogelweide's poetry often uses 'May' as a synonym for 'Spring', and the following lines are to be found in two of his poems:

WINTER	WINTER
Uns hat der Winter überall Schaden zugefügt.	Winter has wrought us harm everywhere:
Heide und Wald, wo manch Stimme gar süß erklang, sind beide nun fahl……..	Forest and field are dreary and bare Where sweet voices of summer once were…
Könnte ich den Winter nur verschlafen!	Ah, could I slumber the winter away!
Solange ich wach bleibe, grolle ich ihm,	Awaken at last, in anger at him
dass seine Macht so groß und so weit ist.	Whom far and wide all must obey;
Wahrlich, einmal muss auch er dem Maien weichen.	Yet truly in time he'll be vanquished by May.
Dann pflücke ich dort Blumen, wo jetzt Reif liegt.[1]	Then I'll pluck flowers where frost lies today.
FRÜHLING UND FRAUEN	SPRINGTIME AND WOMEN
Nun wohlan, wollt ihr die Wahrheit schauen,	Then come, if you would want to test the truth,
Geh'n wir zu des Maien Jubelfeste,	To May's high festival let us go forth,
Der jetzt ins Land mit allen Kräften kam!	Who into the field is come with all his forces!

Thus Winter is depicted as a tyrant laying waste to the countryside before being challenged and vanquished by Spring. The second poem reinforces the imagery of the seasons as adversaries engaged in medieval trial by combat. As one writer has observed: 'The month of May, which we have been accustomed to picture to ourselves as a maiden, robed in gossamer and garlanded with flowers, we are surprised to find represented as a man, with something even martial in his aspect, coming, as he does, to his high festival as to a tournament, with all his forces and wearing his floral splendours somewhat after the manner of heraldic blazon.' [2]

Siegmund's words offer similarly martial sentiments:

SIEGMUND	SIEGMUND
Mit zarter Waffen Zier	Armed with fragile weapons
bezwingt er die Welt;	he [Spring] conquers the world.
Winter und Sturm wichen	Winter and storms yield
der starken Wehr:	their stout defence.
wohl musste den tapfren Streichen	At these valiant blows
die strenge Türe auch weichen,	the sturdy doors yield too,
die trotzig und starr	for defiant and firm
uns trennte von ihm.	they kept us from him.

In *Die Meistersinger,* Walther von Stolzing describes a jealous and fully armed

1. Walther's medieval German is incomprehensible to most readers today and is here rendered into modern German.

2. Walter Alison Phillips in Selected Poems of Walther von der Vogelweide, the Minnesinger, London, Smith, Elder & Co, 1896. The English translations are chiefly those by Phillips, with some modernizing of archaic words and expressions. Translations not attributed to others are by the author.

Winter taking refuge in a thorn-hedge, his last stronghold of fading frost and melting snow, planning ways to resist the joyous Spring.

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Hört doch, zu meiner Frauen Preis
gelang' ich jetzt erst mit der Weis'.

But listen! My lady's praises
I am just coming to with my melody.

Siegmund on the other hand, describes Love decoying Spring. Sieglinde recognizes this to be true, proclaiming that Siegmund is 'the Spring' and now also her Love.

SIEGMUND
Zu seiner Schwester
schwang er sich her;
die Liebe lockte den Lenz:
in unsrem Busen
barg sie sich tief;
nun lacht sie selig dem Licht.
Die bräutliche Schwester
befreite der Bruder;
zertrümmert liegt,
was je sie getrennt:
jauchzend grüsst sich
das junge Paar:
vereint sind Liebe und Lenz!

SIEGMUND
To its sister here
it flew.
Love decoyed the spring.
In our hearts
it was hidden deep;
now it smiles joyfully at the light.
The sister as bride
is freed by her brother.
In ruins lies
all that kept them apart.
Joyfully the young couple
greet one another.
Love and Spring are united.

SIEGLINDE
Du bist der Lenz,
nach dem ich verlangte
in frostigen Winters Frist.
...
was im Busen ich barg,
was ich bin,
hell wie der Tag
taucht' es mir auf,
wie tönender Schall
schlug's an mein Ohr,
als in frostig öder Fremde
zuerst ich den Freund ersah.

SIEGLINDE
You are the spring
for which I longed
in the frosty winter time.
...
What I hid in my heart,
what I am,
bright as day
it came to me,
like a resounding echo
it fell upon my ear,
when in frosty lonely strangeness
I saw my friend.

Other parallels between Walther and Wagner

The links between Walther von der Vogelweide's poetry and Wagner's text are not confined to the symbolism of Winter and Spring, as we can see from a comparison of further excerpts from Walther's poems and passages from *Die Meistersinger*:

UNMANNERED CHATTERS
Sensible talk always
Should meet with honest praise:
But when a donkey brays –
Enough! I'll say no more!

SACHS
You do right to remind me;
but is it fitting, Masters, tell me,
that, if I make a little verse
for even the donkey-driver's soles,

I should write nothing on those
of our highly learned town clerk?

A DREAM'S INTERPRETATION
Gladly had I slumbered on,
When the crows, with a curse
Woke me from my dreaming
With their cursed screaming.

UNMANNERED CHATTERS
We're troubled by a certain set:
If these but forth were cast.
A man of worth and honest grit
At court might raise his head.
He ne'er had chance to speak as yet.
They wag their jaws so fast
That, were he blest with finest wit.
'Twould serve him not a shred:

WALTHER VON STOLZING
From a dark thorn-hedge
the owl sped forth,
awoke all around with its screeching
the hoarse chorus of ravens.
In vast nocturnal horde
how they all begin to croak
with their hollow voices
Magpies, crows and jackdaws!
.....
upwards then climbs
though Master-Crows are unfriendly to it
the proud love-song.
Farewell, you Masters here below!

The most celebrated of Walther von der Vogelweide's lyric poems is *Unter der Linden* (Under the Linden Tree), a love poem in which a 'noble lady' recalls the delights of meeting her lover on a bed of flowers under a linden tree, and of their liaison witnessed only by a little bird on whose discretion they can rely. The connection with the young Siegfried's experience lying under his linden tree and listening to the forest bird may be slight in terms of the kind of love expressed, but it is not entirely coincidental. Neither is a reference in yet another of Walther's poems, which might equally apply to Siegfried on the threshold of manhood, his awakening to the true nature of his life and his momentous discovery of fear — and love:

'Has my life been just a dream, or is it real? And all those things I used to think stood for something. Did they really stand for anything? It seems as though I have been asleep without knowing it. Now I have woken up....' [3]

—Peter Bassett

3. Trans. Leonard Forster.

Another View on the Recent Los Angeles Ring

A Ring *Veteran Speaks Up*

When a "nice-little-old-lady," age 93, has to stop at a nearby sports bar for a double cognac to recover from attending a performance of *Das Rheingold*, you know something is wrong, either with her or the performance. When an opera director so misconstrues Wagner's term *Gesamtkunstwerk* that he takes the drama out of a music-drama, ignoring Wagner's explicit directions, his name should be substituted for the composer's. Perhaps the Los Angeles *Ring* should be called "An Achim Freyer Spectacle About a Mythological Story Accompanied by Richard Wagner's Music."

If a director so controls every aspect of a production, listing his name in conjunction with each production designer, and insists on such a controversial concept, one wonders if it is an ego trip. Is he trying to make a name for himself in America? Controversy for the sake of publicity?

The glitzy "Star Wars" costumes and staging, puppetry, doppelgangers and startling lighting effects in Los Angeles did attract attention. But it was not Wagner.

This is not to say that the intent of the Los Angeles *Ring* was not to be "timeless, to be historic, daring with a new approach." But the static lack of interaction of characters, the lack of role identity, the confusion of double characters, extra interpretative characters, the lack of lighting on the person singing, and the constant distracting neon lights on the stage floor and laser beams flashing around the stage, made it difficult to follow the action, even though one was very familiar with the operas and the orchestral music describing what was supposed to be happening. Hunding's henchmen used light sabers as weapons as did Fafner when he killed Fasolt.

With Wagner, the audience must relate to the action on the stage at an emotional level. If in the *Ring* the audience does not shed tears with Wotan in the *Abschied*, the director is not doing his job. In the Los Angeles production Brünnhilde just took her sleeping position without any interaction with Wotan.

It is difficult for me to be negative about something that has been for many years such a sustaining part of my life. Being negative does not come easily. Wagner makes one think as well as feel. Great producers who have received boos for their creations often have said they don't mind boos, for it shows that the audience is receiving, thinking and feeling. I hope that something good will come out of this mess in Los Angeles.

Will it attract new audiences to the opera or drive away those of us who love and think we know Wagner?

—Verna Parino

AUTHORS' SUBMISSIONS

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There is no compensation for published articles, however, up to one dozen copies of the published issue will be made available without charge to authors, if requested before printing.

It is recommended that prior to spending significant time writing an article for this journal that prospective authors contact the editor to discuss the proposed article, determining thereby the probability of publication, desirable length, and similar issues. All inquiries will receive a prompt reply.

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