



WAGNER AND THE NORTH

Edited by Anne Kauppala and Martin Knust



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Finnish Wagner Society



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Wagner and the North: Editor's Preface

The history of Wagner and the North is about two centuries old. After having lived in and travelled in the European North during the late 1830s most of his own dramas written and composed after *Rienzi* play out in a distinct Nordic milieu starting with *Der fliegende Holländer*; its first version was completed 1840/41 in Paris. While *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* play in a Northern continental environment, the action of *Tristan und Isolde* is situated in Ireland and England and the four dramas of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, even though placed in an ancient German context, lean on Nordic mythology as does his last drama *Parsifal*, which was inspired by the King Arthur legends mediated through the epic *Parzival* of Wolfram von Eschenbach.

Despite his fascination for the North in literature, however, Wagner himself never felt very comfortable in this part of Europe and avoided travelling there again after his flight from Riga in 1839. The only Northern excursion he undertook after this was his 1863 tour through Russia. Wagner never visited Denmark, Sweden or Finland¹ but his works conquered this part of Europe during his lifetime, as they did with the rest of the musical world.

This volume focuses on Wagner's impact on music performers, composers, writers and stage directors in the European North, and considers his championing of Nordic mythology beyond often-discussed sources. Given the fact that the subjects of his dramatic works are taken from sources like the Icelandic sagas, the *Nibelungenlied*, and, as Pentti Paavolainen argues, from contemporary German literature

¹ See for instance Hannu Salmi, "Hat Wagner Finnland besucht?", accessible at <http://users.utu.fi/hansalmi/imatra.html> (accessed 10 June 2020).

about Nordic myths – perhaps even the Finnish *Kalevala*, the Estonian *Kalevipoeg* and the Baltic St John festivities have shaped his dramas² – it is not surprising that his works were met with particular enthusiasm in the Nordic countries. “Wagner and the North” is of course a multi-faceted topic and we have tried to include many different approaches, both thematically, theoretically and methodologically. This volume puts forward critical arguments and documentation about Wagner in the context of the “Nordic” in its broadest meaning. It engages with reception history as well as with practical artistic aspects of performing his works and it is the first anthology addressing this topic.

The essays collected in this volume focus on two main geographic areas – Sweden and Finland – but include examples from other Northern countries as well. In addition, “Nordic” features in Wagner’s dramas became an issue in the French reception history of his works, as Mauro Fosco Bertola explains in his contribution to the present volume. Therein, Bertola touches upon the racist tendencies in the reception history of Wagner’s works, as they were shaped in Nazi Germany. This strand of reception goes back to deep-rooted anti-Semitic traditions within early reception communities which Barry Millington takes up in his critical re-evaluation of Wagner’s own anti-Semitism that continues to pose a challenge for performers and scholars alike. As Henrik Rosengren shows in his article, such anti-Semitic features in the Wagner reception can also be found in Sweden, a country that became the sanctuary for many German Jews during World War II.

How the Swedish reception of Wagner began in the middle of the nineteenth century is the topic of Owe Ander’s article. In it, the first encounters of Swedish musicians and composers with Wagner’s work as well as the first Swedish Wagner productions are presented. Joakim Tillman continues this overview with the documentation of the first

2 Elmar Arro proposed this influence in 1965 (Richard Wagners Rigaer Wanderjahre. Über einige baltische Züge im Schaffen Wagners, *Musik des Ostens. Sammelbände der Johann-Gottfried-Herder-Forschungsstelle* 3, Elmar Arro & Fritz Feldmann (eds.), Bärenreiter: Kassel, 123–168, here 156–166); his hypothesis has not been pursued ever since.

performances of Wagner's music dramas in Sweden after the turn of the twentieth century.

The Finnish reception of Wagner's works is presented from a variety of angles. Jukka von Boehm writes about the impact of Wagner on Finnish belles-lettres symbolism, in this case the influence of *Parsifal* on the writer Volter Kilpi. Riikka Siltanen gives a detailed encounter of the beginning of Finnish Wagnerism as embodied by the practical and organizing work of Richard Faltin. His role as a Wagner champion in Finland was eclipsed by his contemporary Martin Wegelius but turns out to have been at least equally important in many respects. Contrary to Faltin, Feruccio Busoni was no champion of Wagner at all, a fact that is well known. In 1892, a couple years after his stay at the Helsinki Music Institute he wrote a caricature of Wagner's *Ring* that has been mentioned often in the research literature about him and Finnish music history. But this has never been published, until now. In it, Busoni not only ridicules the *Ring* libretti and the self-glorifying habit of the Bayreuth "Meister" but gives a humorous and at times scathing account of notable figures in Helsinki's musical life in the early 1890s. Christine Fischer, who transcribed Busoni's manuscript together with Martin Knust, analyses this document in her essay in the context of Busoni's uncomfortable relation with Wagner and in the context of his experiences of Helsinki. According to some Sibelius biographers Busoni's most famous pupil, Jean Sibelius, allegedly shared his teacher's critical standpoint towards Wagner. This is not entirely true, explains Ulrich Wilker in his analysis of Sibelius's only opera which shows some Wagnerian traces, under the surface level. For dramatic composers around 1900 the Wagnerian concept of music drama became a challenging task that could not be ignored by performers and dramaturgs. Since it was common to sing operas translated into the local vernacular in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Wagner's libretti had to be translated into Finnish which is, for some reasons, phonetically quite similar to German but otherwise completely different as a language in terms of grammar and semantics. That the Finnish translators of Wagner thus had to be especially inventive is exhibited in Jenni Lättiläs's essay. In an article about the early Finnish reception

history of Wagner, Vesa Kurkela emphasizes that Wagner's works did not only have an impact when performed on stage but that these costly enterprises were flanked and prepared by a large array of amateur and popular concert activities before the actual first production took place.

Not only the historic but also the present reception of Wagner in the North is addressed in this volume. Kristina Selén draws on her own artistic experiences with Wagner's stage directions and Hannu Salmi, like Barry Millington, takes a look at recent productions of Wagner's works, namely those designed and led by stage directors from the North. Salmi includes the Baltic Provinces in his study of the reception of Wagner, as does Martin Knust in his overview about the first Wagner productions and the impact they had on other composers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This overview focuses on the North and is an attempt to place the arrival of Wagner's works in Sweden and Finland within a global context. Finally, Eero Tarasti's essay in this volume presents a more recent twist in the Finnish encounter with Wagner by applying his concept of existential semiotics for interpreting Wagner's life and work, including aspects of its reception.

Wagner's relationship with the North, albeit mediated through art and literature rather than his own experiences, has been dealt with extensively in Wagner research. This does not apply when looking in the opposite direction. The impact of his works in Northern Europe has not been looked at as much and only recently more systematically³ compared to other parts of Europe. This volume collects research contributions about the North's relationship with Wagner from the beginning and how it has developed, how it has distinguished itself from other parts of the world and how the introduction and impact of Wagner's works have differed within the European North.

The idea to publish such a volume was born during the international symposium "Richard Wagner and the North" which took place

3 Among others, Hannu Salmi's *Wagner and Wagnerism in Nineteenth-Century Sweden, Finland, and the Baltic Provinces. Reception, Enthusiasm, Cult*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2005 is a pioneering monograph about the subject of Wagner's reception in the Northern Baltic Sea area.

at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki in November 2013, marking the 200th anniversary of Wagner's birth. The articles in this anthology have been written by many experts in this area, some of which were present during the conference. We hope that it will contribute not only to understanding the particularities of the reception history of Wagner in Northern Europe but also to understanding the ramifications of the impact which his works have had in general on various cultural levels and institutions. In this respect, the present collection serves to further valuable research into the nuances of cultural transfer and cultural exchange, while revealing what Nordic experiences of Wagner may share in common with other parts of the world.

We are grateful for many persons near and far who have contributed to the publication of this volume and Glenda Dawn Goss for helping us with improving the texts enclosed in many respects. We would like to single out especially two institutions, namely the Sibelius Academy (University of the Arts, Helsinki) and the Finnish Wagner Society, to whom we express our deep gratitude for the generous economic support for this volume as well as for the conference marking Wagner's 200th anniversary in Helsinki in 2013.

Martin Knust

Understanding Wagner in the Bicentenary Year

BARRY MILLINGTON

Under the heading “It ought to be true, if it is not”, the English journal *The Musical World* reported the following anecdote in January 1870:

According to the *Patrie*¹ Richard Wagner lately sent a copy of his *Judaism in Music* to Offenbach. After reading what the “Musician of the Future” had to say about Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, and other Jewish composers, Offenbach wrote as follows: – “My dear Wagner, I think you would do better to stick to music.” On receiving this laconic epistle, Wagner forwarded Offenbach the score of *Die Meistersinger*. Two days later, Wagner received a second letter which ran thus: “My dear Wagner, after mature reflection, I feel convinced that the best thing you can do is to confine yourself to writing books.”²

As the heading strongly implies, there is almost certainly no truth in the story whatsoever, but it neatly illustrates a scepticism, indeed a latent hostility, towards Wagner in his own lifetime. And since it refers not only to Wagner’s musical works but also to his theoretical writings, his anti-Semitism, his perceived lack of sensitivity towards others and his running battle with the French, it serves as an ideal point from which to launch this investigation of Wagner in his bicentenary year. Let’s begin by asking ourselves the following questions: To what extent does the all-embracing, comprehensive nature of Wagner’s works militate against a true understanding of them? How close are we, in the

1 A daily newspaper published in Paris, founded in 1841 and loyal to the values of the Second Empire.

2 *The Musical World* 15 January 1870.

bicentenary year, to an understanding that does them justice? What opportunities are there, in the present day, to promote a better understanding?

During the course of the bicentenary year, discussion of a vast range of Wagner studies took place. The following are just some examples: narration, song, the Romantic tradition and legacy, reception around World Wars I and II (*Die Meistersinger* looming large here), national identity (*Die Meistersinger* again), anti-Semitism, psychoanalysis (specifically relating to incest), Wagner's impact on Israel, on Nordic and on Russian culture, gender, Wagner and Greek drama, Wagner and Shakespeare, Wagner and cinema, the French reception, Wagner and melody, Wagner and late style, Bayreuth and much more besides. It is an impressive roster. But this is what one would expect, while one would not expect such a range of issues to be explored if the subject were, say, Giovanni Gabrieli or Louis Vierne.

The nature of Wagner's works clearly invites approaches from a variety of perspectives: philosophical, historical, political, philological – not to mention musicological – a discipline which is, by the way, often alarmingly sidelined. And occasionally studies along these lines seem, it has to be said, several million miles away from what most people would regard as the centre of gravity of Wagner's works. But that centre of gravity is itself disputed. If you ask many a passionate Wagnerian what means most to them, they will say “the music”. They would be content to banish all visual and theatrical distractions, the better to immerse themselves in the warm bath of voluptuous sonorities. Stage production is at best an irrelevance for such people, at worst an irritating distraction. Wagner himself would have been appalled by such self-indulgence. For him, the music drama was a vehicle to make a statement about the world around him and about how it could be improved. The music acted as the fuel to fire the engine. I will be returning to this hierarchy of priorities a little later. Here I am more concerned to make the point that a plethora of disciplines is *de rigueur* for Wagner, and, provided a certain amount of self-control is exercised, there is no inherent problem with that. But where is that centre of gravity to be located? And how important is it to patrol that territory?

And here is a not unrelated question: How concerned should we be about popular preconceptions of Wagner? I am thinking here not primarily of his reputation as a cheerleader for the Third Reich, as though Wagner had choreographed the Nuremberg rallies himself, although this is a part of the problem. I am thinking of the stereotypical view of Wagner, churned out in countless magazines, television programmes and doubtless other more up-to-date media of whose horrors I prefer to remain ignorant. How would I summarize that stereotype? Perhaps along these lines: An inveterate scrounger and irredeemable philanderer who, not content with fleecing his friends, also helped himself to their wives; a man who was thoroughly loathsome and untrustworthy in his personal dealings. In sum, an utterly monstrous human being: the Behemoth of Bayreuth. There is, of course, a grain of truth in this image, but actually it is so risible that you wonder how it has held sway for so long. The reality is more complex and far more interesting. It was to confront that stereotypical image and to explore the more complex reality that I wrote my book *Richard Wagner: The Sorcerer of Bayreuth* (2012). What I tried to show in *The Sorcerer* was that the stereotype was ludicrously and dangerously misleading. Wagner was an incorrigible egomaniac, we are told. But who has not been exposed to a bore at the supper table or in the pub or on television, who can drone on only about himself? We all know people, some of them distinguished artists or even academics, who have an almost impressive and certainly inextinguishable sense of self-worth, who are less than trustworthy in their personal dealings, who help themselves to other people's wives. Wagner is entirely typical in this respect, just as his anti-Semitic tendencies were shared by most intellectuals of his generation: Hegel, Kant, Schopenhauer, Marx, Beethoven, Schumann are just some of the names one could mention. Similarly, George Orwell, T.S. Eliot, J.B. Priestley and Graham Greene are just four writers of a different generation whose work or conversation was littered with anti-Semitic observations. If we were to ban all cultural figures whose work was tainted by anti-Semitism, we would have little left to read or listen to.

In one of the chapters of my book, I balance this perception of Wagner as the world's worst egomaniac with the masses of evidence

that he could be kind, generous, encouraging (to the young Hans von Bülow, for example, or the young Brahms, to whom he enthused about his piano playing), charismatic, humorous and generally the life and soul of the party. In another chapter I place his reputation as a scrounger in the context of the rising bourgeois musical culture of the nineteenth century and the absence of a German copyright law until 1870 (the effect of which was that most of the profits of a newly-composed opera would normally be shared between the publisher and the theatre, with the composer receiving a single, flat fee). I also argue that the avaricious acquisition of wealth and casino speculation were not vices in which Wagner indulged. Money for him was only a means to improve the existence of himself and others – and of course to improve the world by endowing it with the artwork of the future.

In a further chapter I examine Wagner's relationships with women and conclude that for a nineteenth-century Romantic artist his sexual appetites were hardly exceptional. The relationship with Mathilde Wesendonck was almost certainly not consummated: Mathilde was far too adroit an operator for that, as Chris Walton's book *Richard Wagner's Zurich* of 2007 made clear.³ Cosima's marriage to Hans von Bülow, as charted by Oliver Hilmes⁴ and Alan Walker⁵ in recent years, was a disaster from day one, and Bülow was the first to admit that Wagner was a better husband for her. Far from Wagner stealing Cosima from her husband, the decision was made jointly by Wagner and Cosima and ratified by Bülow. Nor do other dalliances at other points in Wagner's life – generally when he was unattached – amount to much in either nineteenth-century or contemporary terms.

The stereotypical view of Wagner is well entrenched, however. More than one review of my book opened with a recycling of the traditional clichés: sexual philanderer, egomaniac, sponger, monster. One had to wonder if the reviewers had even read the book, but there is no stop-

3 Walton 2007.

4 Hilmes 2010.

5 Walker 2010.

ping a tide of prejudice that has been flowing for well over a century.

Women in Wagner's works and in his life

A related aspect of Wagner and his works that has received a good deal of attention in recent years is his characterisation of women. How far do his female characters conform to stereotypical nineteenth-century norms and how far do they break the mould? Is the self-sacrificing tendency of his heroines, from Senta to Brünnhilde and on to Kundry, exemplary of the Romantic paradigm, or can it be shown to contain the seeds of a progressive view of gender relations?

Certainly, if we seek clues for the motivation and behaviour of Wagner's female characters in biographical evidence – that is to say, in terms of Wagner's attitude towards the women in his own life – then we first need, as I have already suggested, to sweep away some of the absurd clichés in that area: Wagner as the stealer of other men's wives, as though women such as Mathilde Wesendonck and Cosima von Bülow had no say in how those affairs were conducted.

So without necessarily congratulating Wagner on his handling of marital matters, I think we may reasonably conclude that his behaviour in personal matters was no better and no worse than that of a typical man of his time – or let us say a typical creative artist of his time. If we turn to his music dramas, we see a similarly nuanced picture. Two recent studies of the subject, Eva Rieger's *Leuchtende Liebe, lachender Tod: Richard Wagners Bild der Frau im Spiegel seiner Musik* [= Shining Love, Laughing Death: Richard Wagner's Image of Woman through the Mirror of his Music] (2009),⁶ and Nila Parly's *Vocal Victories* (2011),⁷ offer contrasting views. Rieger asks in her final chapter whether Wagner's women characters are strong and answers her own question in the negative. Whereas the male hero in *Parsifal*, she says, “stands as a mediator between god and mankind and has access to religion, even a reformed

6 Translated into English by Chris Walton as *Richard Wagner's Women* (Rieger 2011).

7 Parly 2011.

Kundry can do nothing other than serve men.”⁸ Brünnhilde, she admits, “is ascribed courage and inner strength, as is demonstrated above all in her vocality, which bursts all hitherto accepted norms”.⁹ But according to Rieger, she pays a high price: her loss of identity as a Valkyrie. “The strength that she possessed as a virgin and as a Valkyrie is lost after she meets Siegfried.”¹⁰

Parly takes a more positive view of Wagner’s female characters. In the case of Senta, she points out how both musically and conceptually the character is crucial – contrary to the superficial view that it is the Dutchman himself around which everything revolves. Senta’s Ballad may tell of the Dutchman’s destiny, but it is primarily “an expression of her psyche, her longing”.¹¹ And given that the Ballad reverberates through the entire opera, there are good grounds for arguing, as Parly does, that Senta effectively “takes the lead role in the opera” in purely musical terms.¹²

Parly is also thought-provoking on *Tannhäuser*, whose real sin may be, she suggests, that he loves only himself. Understanding the needs of others is a vital part of the process of self-enlightenment, and the redemption effected by Elisabeth is in essence a turning away from this self-absorption towards a selfless, empathetic love.¹³

With Brünnhilde it seems to me that we have a redemptive heroine who outstrips anyone else in the *Ring* cycle. Siegmund is a dusky, fugitive figure, while Siegfried has a lot of growing up to do. Brünnhilde, on the other hand, breathes the spirit of Feuerbachian compassion, just as it was breathed into her heart by Siegmund. She may temporarily become a jealous termagant in Act 2 of *Götterdämmerung*, but by the end of the cycle she has emerged as the embodiment of hope for the future.

8 Rieger 2011, 216.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Parly 2011, 46.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., 81.

Wagner and anti-Semitism

Perpetually hanging over Wagner and his music – and indeed over Wagner studies – is, of course, the dark cloud of anti-Semitism. This is the one aspect of Wagner that will never go away. Like the curse of the Flying Dutchman, the controversy will pursue Wagner to the crack of doom. And serve him right, some might say. Just as the Dutchman did not have to swear that he would round the Cape if it took him to eternity, so Wagner did not have to publish an essay, “Das Judenthum in der Musik”, articulating all the petty little prejudices and obsessions about Jews that had been germinating inside him since his humiliating failure in Paris. Even less did he have to reprint the brochure in 1869, no longer anonymously but under his own name, thus attracting opprobrium from all sectors of German society that did not happen to share his prejudices.

What is the state of play on Wagner’s anti-Semitism in the bicentenary year? Has the argument progressed? Are we any closer to an understanding of these difficult issues? I think that in twenty years we have come a long way. Before 1990 the only scholar systematically to address Wagner’s anti-Semitism was Hartmut Zelinsky, who was reviled for his pains in his native Germany, but who prepared the ground for future investigations. Robert Gutman,¹⁴ Mark Weiner¹⁵ and Paul Lawrence Rose¹⁶ are three of the most prominent tillers of this fertile soil, to which I have added my own pennyworth of manure.¹⁷

It is not my purpose here to elaborate the argument one way or the other, but one can usefully extrapolate certain trends and perhaps provisional conclusions. One of the best summaries of the arguments was provided by Thomas Grey in his *Cambridge Companion to Wagner*.¹⁸ Grey tackles head-on the objection that there are no overtly Jewish

14 Gutman 1968.

15 Weiner 1995.

16 Rose 1992.

17 See for example Millington 1991, 247–60, and Millington 1992.

18 Grey 2008, 203–218.

characters in Wagner's works. Nor would one expect them, he argues, since Wagner's music dramas are idealistic, not realistic: the presence of Jewish characters would have compromised their timeless, mythological quality. Why is there little or no reference either in Wagner's writings or in recorded conversations or in the literature associated with Bayreuth up to and including the Nazi period to the presence of anti-Semitic characterization in the works if that was intended? "A conspiracy of silence"¹⁹ is Grey's suggestion: to compromise the universality of the music dramas with controversial ideological prejudices would have been undesirable and, to those who understood, it was not necessary. Incidentally, a lot of nonsense has been talked and written about the putative lack of comment. It is there if you look. Goebbels, Rosenberg and other luminaries of the Third Reich were explicit about what they regarded as the anti-Semitic content of the *Ring* and *Die Meistersinger*. It has also become fashionable to state that there are no anti-Semitic interpretations of these works in the *Bayreuther Blätter*. That is just not true. Look at Hermann Seeliger's 1921 article on Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West*, with its reference to the notorious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Seeliger here ascribes an aggressively anti-Semitic meaning to the *Ring*. Or look at the 1920 article by Ernst Anders, also in the *Bayreuther Blätter*, in which the writer asserts that Alberich is synonymous with "the spirit of self-interest and greed, the enemy of ideals, the friend of the common good and of corrupt lust, the spirit of Judaism". These examples, by the way, are cited by Udo Bermbach in his book *Richard Wagner in Deutschland*,²⁰ which is certainly not intent on proving that Wagner's works lent themselves to Nazi interpretations. On the contrary, Bermbach bends over backwards to demonstrate how, in general, the Nazis preferred to keep Wagner's works free from ideological contamination.

Thomas Grey also cites Mahler's famous statement with regard to Mime: "I am convinced that this figure is the true embodiment of a Jew,

¹⁹ Ibid., 214.

²⁰ Bermbach 2011, 391, 393. An extended extract from this book appears in English translation in Bermbach 2012, 37–59.

intended by Wagner in the spirit of persiflage (in every trait with which he has imbued him: the petty cleverness, the greed, the whole *Jargon* so perfectly suggested by both music and text).²¹ And Grey concludes that “one would have to be culturally tone-deaf not to see how Siegfried’s attitude toward Mime reflects a great deal of Wagner’s attitude towards the Jews, whether in the guise of friends or enemies”.²²

John Deathridge, in his paper “Strange Love, Or, How We Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Wagner’s *Parsifal*”, first published in 2007 and reprinted in *Wagner Beyond Good and Evil*,²³ takes issue with Zelinsky’s over-simplified thesis that Kundry “is the representative of everything that Wagner associated with Judaism” but concludes that race plays a crucial role in *Parsifal*, an argument he formulates as follows:

Parsifal may have been intended as an admonition to the German nation, an imploring cry for self-examination of identity and belief, together with an awakening of “divine compassion streaming throughout the whole of the human race”. But it was premised on the conviction that the failure of the “noble” races to submit themselves to this arduous process would result in their collapse and a consequent invasion by the Jewish antirace, which was supposed to be eagerly waiting in the wings for the negative outcome of the Germans’ painful confrontation with their racial past.²⁴

With contributions along similar lines by such scholars as Lawrence Kramer, Hans Rudolf Vaaget, David Levin, Barry Emslie, Leon Botstein and Daniel Foster, among others, one could be forgiven for thinking that something of a consensus has been attained among the scholarly community that anti-Semitism is to be found in the works themselves.

21 Grey 2008, 214.

22 Ibid., 215.

23 Deathridge 2008, 175.

24 Ibid., 176.

This is not a universally held view, however. Mark Berry, a Wagner scholar for whom I have the greatest respect, maintains that this is not the case. His argument can be read on *The Wagner Journal* website, in a high-calibre yet entertaining online debate on the subject with Barry Emslie.²⁵

Stage production and primacy of the drama

On the question of whether putative anti-Semitism in the works has any relevance to their performance on stage, I would reply in the affirmative. If we believe, as I do, that anti-Semitism is woven into the fabric of *Die Meistersinger*, then clearly it is problematic if a stage production ignores that aspect. But that is precisely what recent productions of the work, by Richard Jones for Welsh National Opera and David McVicar at Glyndebourne, have done. In fact, given that the 1993 Graham Vick production for Covent Garden, revived several times, also studiously avoided any of the work's darker undercurrents, we can, I believe, say that no production of the work in the UK has yet tackled this aspect. Interviewed in advance of the opening of his production at Glyndebourne in 2011, McVicar acknowledged the work's clear anti-Semitic undertow,²⁶ but his promise to explore this aspect was not kept. His Beckmesser remained onstage, sobbing, after his humiliation at the song contest, thereby attracting perhaps a smidgen of sympathy, while a mood of non-triumphal bonhomie was suggested in this carnival-like setting by the Masters linking arms in a kind of Bavarian *Auld Lang Syne*. But a bit of circus juggling and a knees-up hardly constitute a radical reappraisal of the work.

Just as McVicar balked at wrestling with the central issues of nation, race and culture in *Die Meistersinger*, so too did Richard Jones, normally one of the most fearless and iconoclastic of directors, in his 2010 production for the Welsh National Opera. Greeting the audience

²⁵ Berry & Emslie.

²⁶ *The Guardian* 19 May 2011.

at the beginning of his staging was a dropcloth with cameos of German creative artists and intellectuals – from Büchner to Brecht and Freud to Fassbinder. Like Walther, these are representatives of German culture, often regarded as radical in their time but eventually absorbed into the mainstream. These cameos returned at the end, displayed by the crowd as portraits representative of their artistic heritage as Sachs delivered his homily, “Honour your German masters”. The message is clear: Sachs is merely saying, “Respect our cultural tradition and all will be well”. But is it that simple? Does the celebration of that tradition, in Wagner’s terms, not involve a resistance to a foreign (cultural) invasion, a perceived need to preserve the German spirit from pollution, a persecution of outsiders? Unsavoury though they may seem to modern sensibilities, Wagner’s ideas about German nationhood and alien outsiders (who, like Beckmesser, are artistically sterile and can only mangle the language), expressed forcefully in essays of the *Meistersinger* period, clearly inform the dramatic argument of the opera. Jones’s avoidance of the problematic issue at the heart of the work may recommend his production to those for whom it is exclusively about art, love and the joys of spring, but for others it will lack a rather crucial dimension.

McVicar’s production attempted to address different layers of comedy in the work, while Jones brought his own brand of surreal theatricality to his staging. Both productions were very popular with audiences and critics alike – and opera house managements too. So there is clearly a need for productions that either obviate or subvert the central issues of the work even in the twenty-first century.

How are we to confront the more insidious ideologies immanent in the works, however? There is, I believe, more than one way. Katharina Wagner, in her Bayreuth production of *Die Meistersinger* in 2007, courageously engaged head-on with the work’s baleful legacy and its appropriation by the Nazis. Her icons of German culture were represented initially by busts in an institute of fine arts, but later by giant puppet figures, seen as degenerate perversions of the great tradition, which has become trivialized, sensationalized and commodified in contemporary society. Stefan Herheim’s Bayreuth production of *Parsifal* was no less radical than Katharina Wagner’s *Meistersinger*, yet it attracted far less

opprobrium. The reason may lie in the vision of redemption it offers. Unlike Katharina Wagner's riotous, outrageous presentation, with its kamikaze denial of *Die Meistersinger's* cherishable moments, Herheim's production interrogates the problematic history of *Parsifal*, and indeed of German idealism, but emerges with something to celebrate. Rather than evading the difficult issues, as some would like to do, he confronts and triumphs over them. Paradoxically, the agent of redemption turns out to be the Wagnerian work of art itself. For Herheim's concept is a brilliant interweaving of the production history of *Parsifal* from 1882 with the path of German history over the same period.

Something similar was attempted by Keith Warner in his 2012 production of *Parsifal* in Copenhagen, on which I was privileged to act as dramaturg. One could perhaps crudely define the problem areas in *Parsifal* as sex, religion and race. On the face of it the work presents an insidiously patriarchal society in the community of Grail knights. Kundry, the sole representative of womankind among the principal characters, embodies the female sex in terms of the stereotypically misogynist dichotomy of Madonna/whore. The fact that *Parsifal* makes use of Christian symbols and rituals such as the Eucharist has led some to the erroneous belief that it is a religious drama as opposed to a drama about religion, among other things. Finally, the work embodies the racist ideology of Wagner's later years, whereby he held that the superior, Aryan, race was corrupted by the inferior ones (chiefly the Jews) but that a process of regeneration, through the agency of Christ's blood, could "redeem" all.

But the closer we look, the more it becomes evident that the work actually stages its own critique of these problematic ideologies, and this is what Warner also strove to demonstrate. Love is not merely a matter of sex but also of *Mitleid* or compassion. But with Wagner we have to understand compassion as the other side of the coin of racial hatred. The compassionate principle in *Parsifal* acquires its force precisely as the polar opposite of Wagner's exclusionist world view. The redemptive love would not be what it is without the complementary malevolence. It is the grit in the oyster.

Second, the male patriarchal structures of *Parsifal* are unmistakably

bly challenged. The Grail community is seen to be degenerate and ripe for dissolution, while Kundry is not the servile cipher she might seem: it is through her agency that Parsifal is able to achieve redemption, a process we may regard as self-enlightenment, whereby primitive male instincts are transformed into something more humane.

Third, for all his lifelong ambivalence about religion, Wagner is explicit (in the contemporary essay *Religion and Art*, for example) that it is the symbols of religion that he finds illuminating, not the dogma; by moving those symbols to the artistic sphere, he maintains, one can far more readily harness their potential. Keith Warner brilliantly located the Grail, whatever that might be, inside a box, which was itself inside a larger box, and so on and so on. In the final Grail scene, he hilariously showed the knights frantically ripping open one box after another in search of the elusive Grail. The final tiny box turns out to be empty. There is no basis for faith in this supernatural crutch after all. Thus the problematic issues of sex, religion and race in *Parsifal* are deconstructed in this production: there is perhaps a dialectical tension between Wagner's known views and his legacy on the one hand and more positive, even progressive tendencies in the work itself on the other.

The present paper is not intended to be merely an exegesis of recent productions. I am more interested in trying to identify trends. And as Edward and Paula Bortnichak have been suggesting in a series of important articles in *The Wagner Journal*, recent productions at Bayreuth have been in the forefront of anatomizing the moral, bioethical, global and environmental aspects of Wagner's works. In addition to the productions of *Die Meistersinger* and *Parsifal* I have already mentioned, they have discussed Hans Neuenfels's *Lohengrin*²⁷ with its social evolutionary experiment on the nature of humanity, Jan Philipp Gloger's *Der fliegende Holländer*²⁸ production and Sebastian Baumgarten's *Tannhäuser*,²⁹ reviled in most quarters as an incomprehensible mish-mash, but praised

27 Bortnichak & Bortnichak 2010.

28 Bortnichak & Bortnichak 2011.

29 Bortnichak & Bortnichak 2012.

by the Bortnichaks as a “futuristic vision of a sterile world completely controlled by its scientific and technologic capabilities”. For them, the key to Baumgarten’s *Tannhäuser* is its “integrative dramaturgical concept based on Wagner’s critiques of science, technology and medical experimentation” in the nineteenth century. Wagner’s warning, according to them, is that “the technological and biomedical ‘progress’ made by his contemporaries might endanger the complete human organism in time to come, if they did not temper these advances with attention to individual human and animal rights”.³⁰

Behind all these issues and their representation onstage, however, stands an even greater question, namely: To what extent is knowledge of the ideologies underpinning these works crucial anyway? Might we not be content, as some would wish, to regard them simply as works of art that give aesthetic pleasure? I am inclined to think this is an infantile fantasy that appeals primarily to those who are disturbed by what they think Wagner’s works are about. In any case, Wagner would have had nothing to do with the idea. As Keith Warner, in an illuminating lecture to the Wagner Society in April 2013, made clear, the most important element in the *Gesamtkunstwerk* for Wagner was not the music but the drama. Quoting passage after passage from Wagner’s own theoretical essays, Warner drove the final nails in the coffin of the idea that these works exist only on some pure aesthetic level, remote from the issues and traumas that confront ordinary men and women in every age. The kind of experience Wagner dreamt of, according to Warner, was a “theatre of social engagement and civic renewal”.³¹ In other words, Wagner is offering glimpses of a better world: he is asking how we can achieve that better world and, in particular, how we can achieve it through the medium of art. In order to penetrate to the core of that idealistic vision, a new relationship is necessary, Warner tells us, between audience and performer. This relationship takes work, on the part of both sides: on the part of the performer, by examining in

³⁰ Bortnichak & Bortnichak 2011.

³¹ Warner 2009, 51.

rehearsal the minutiae of the way every “line is sung, the colour, the shading, the truth and the lie”.³² But audiences too must be encouraged to engage with the text: every line, every word, should be charged with meaning; the expressive nuances and emotional impact of the text as conveyed through the musical line should keep audiences on the edge of their seats.

The paramountcy of the text, the dramatic element, in Wagner’s works is so central to their understanding that it is extraordinary that this idea has never been fully considered. It is a principle that Wagner repeats over and over again in his theoretical works, not least in *The Artwork of the Future*. Emma Warner’s new translation of the latter³³ is the first since William Ashton Ellis’s notoriously impenetrable one of 1895, and the clarity of her prose enables one to follow the steps of Wagner’s argument as he lays it out. His undeniable prolixity remains daunting, perhaps, to all but serious Wagnerians, but I would argue that this principle of the supremacy of text over music – and its corollary that it is the ideas in the music dramas that ultimately count – is so important that no one interested in the subject can ignore it.

I would also like to explore briefly how that principle of textual supremacy might affect Wagner’s works as we experience them in the theatre. How many productions of Wagner’s works really evince the kind of detailed *Personenregie* – by which I mean a line-by-line response on the part of the singer in conjunction with the director – that Wagner so clearly demanded? To achieve this fusion of text, music, gesture, mime and stage choreography requires an intensive period of rehearsal over many weeks and months by singers and directors committed to the project. It is not likely to happen when jet-setting international divas fly in expecting to draw on their stock of conventional gestures. Nor is it likely to happen in the two or three weeks commonly allocated to revivals. Rather it is the result of painstaking work in the rehearsal studio by a team of people dedicated to capturing the textual nuances,

³² Ibid., 54.

³³ Siddiqui 2013.

psychological depth and socio-political context of Wagner's texts.

In the best cases I have witnessed, the director first outlines his or her vision of the work to the entire company – singers, orchestra, conductor, lighting and technical crew. Then, breaking the work down into scenes and parts of scenes, they engage in a collegial process of interrogation of every line of text and music, seeking the most convincing way of expressing its meaning through tonal colouring, physical gesture and character interaction.

I have already alluded to *The Artwork of the Future* as a key text for the primacy of text over music. Here is a typical quotation:

For there is one thing alone which the art forms here united must desire if they are to become free to be what they can be, and that is drama: what counts is the fulfilment of the drama's intention.³⁴

Nor is this a preoccupation solely of Wagner's Zurich years, the time of the theoretical writings leading up to the *Ring*: the later theoretical essays too bear witness to Wagner's passionate concern to emphasize the distinction between opera and music drama. Opera has held its traditional appeal, he constantly argues, because it presents music, i.e. melody, in its pure form, whereas the predominant feature of music drama is its dramatic and realistic characterization, which occasionally has to take precedence over the music. As Egon Voss pointed out in an important article in 1976, "[a]ccording to Richard Wagner [and] his successors, Cosima and Siegfried, the characteristic feature of opera was the unjustifiable primacy of music."³⁵ In the so-called "Bayreuth style", established by Wagner himself, "the drama was always accorded pre-eminence".³⁶ Felix Mottl, reporting on the 1876 rehearsals, recorded that "that which happens on the stage is and remains the most important thing [...] the music is to be subordinated to the drama in a

³⁴ Siddiqui 2013, 76.

³⁵ Voss 1976, 30.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

higher sense and at the same time to promote the poetic purpose.”³⁷ Cosima herself put it equally directly: “I can’t help it: a good orchestra and good choruses are all very well, but if the action on the stage does not make one forget everything else, then the performance is a failure, even if they sing and play like the angels in heaven!”³⁸

According to Voss, “the ideal was a performance where, on account of the dramatic intensity and power of conviction, the onlooker forgot that he heard the music.”³⁹ That conclusion is supported by the testimony of Heinrich Porges, the official recorder of the 1876 rehearsals, as well as by the testimonies of Mottl and Cosima Wagner. And of course it was precisely to encourage spectators to forget about the orchestra and concentrate on the stage action that Wagner introduced the so-called “invisible orchestra” in its covered pit, and forbade the tuning of instruments inside the opera house.

Unequivocally, then, Wagner was concerned at all periods of his life that the drama, and specifically the text, should be projected with maximum clarity, if necessary at the expense of the music. Nowhere was this prescription fulfilled more emphatically and more thrillingly than in Keith Warner’s *Ring* for Covent Garden, first seen complete in 2007, revived in 2012 and revived once again (with four cycles) in 2018. Whatever one thought about the production, in terms of its ideological thrust or its complex network of visual leitmotifs, what brought the drama alive in the theatre was the quality of the *Personenregie*. Singers such as Bryn Terfel, John Tomlinson, Susan Bullock, Simon O’Neill were all utterly committed to the project. Even Plácido Domingo, when he joined the production for a few performances of *Die Walküre* in 2005, was apparently no less eager to join in. There were, as a result, countless examples of psychological truthfulness and emotional intensity rendered through meticulous attention to diction – John Tomlinson was perhaps the prime exemplar here – visual expression or dramatic gesture.

37 Ibid., 29.

38 Ibid., 30.

39 Ibid.

This article began with recent scholarship on stereotypical views of Wagner, on his anti-Semitism and on his female heroines. It moved on to aspects of the theory and practice of *Gesamtkunstwerk* to make a case for the primacy of the drama in Wagner's works and the consequent necessity for a rigorous approach to stage production based on meticulous attention to the text and keenly observed character interaction. If the bicentenary acts as a watershed after which a true understanding of the principles behind the artwork of the future begins to take root, then it will have been a very worthwhile anniversary indeed.

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Nordic Myths in Drama Prior to Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* with a Special Look at *Sigurd der Schlangentöter* by de la Motte Fouqué¹

PENTTI PAAVOLAINEN

For a theatre scholar, one of the most striking features of Richard Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* is the dramaturgical conciseness and tension that elevate some moments above those that rely more on repetitive narratives.

The Ring with its complicated mythological plot, historical background and complex network of medieval literary material as well as its multiple sets of characters provides a magnificent example of how, despite its complicated literary background, Wagner managed to simplify and create fluency in his large-scale dramaturgical structure. There are explanations for this. In addition to the ingredients of genius and the great amount of work that went into his creations, we can also find clear dramatic predecessors. It must have been no later than the end of the 1820s, a time when Wagner was living with his fraternal uncle Adolph Wagner (1774–1835),² that the schoolboy became acquainted with the events related in the *Nibelungenlied*, the *Völsunga saga* and the *Poetic Edda*, and also with something else: a popular writer who had created the first extensive drama on the topic.

1 This article is an elaborated version of a presentation given in Helsinki on 8 November 2013 in the conference on Richard Wagner and the North. I am indebted to generous suggestions made by Barry Millington and Jukka von Boehm. All translations are by the author unless otherwise indicated.

2 Gottlob Heinrich Adolph Wagner.

Enter Nordic mythology

Medieval theatre in Europe developed an epic form of drama in which Christian eschatology could be presented. This tradition is still visible in Shakespearean and Spanish dramas, like those of Lope de Vega, while clear paradigm shifts took place during the Renaissance in Italy and during the Baroque era in France, when the ideals of more concise dramatic structures gained in popularity. For the next 200 years biblical topics and stories of the saints were displaced by Greek and Roman mythologies and histories.³ When the Enlightenment and early Romantics brought about the next paradigm shift, Mediterranean mythology was gradually replaced by Nordic and Germanic myths and national histories (for which Shakespeare was the admired model). The exploitation of these topics became patriotic actions addressing domestic issues, yet often took the form of protest against the hegemony of French classicism in a culture and/or Napoleonic troops on the battlefield. In a word, the new stage dramas helped to develop the identities of Germanic and Nordic countries.⁴

Characters based on Nordic myths were introduced during the years 1780–1830, but in effect these new “national figures” were appearing on stage, in drama and opera, in modified approaches in Sweden and Finland throughout the nineteenth century and even as late as the 1920s. The early reception of these figures aroused considerable interest, yet we must remember that the stories and dramas were read only by a small group of the elite.⁵ And even though actual performances were not numerous, the texts became cornerstones for the later edifices of Romanticism and nationalism in these countries.

In the regions where German dialects were spoken, oral traditions of ancient poems and heroic epics had obtained written form already in medieval times. This is true as well of the early phases of those lan-

3 For these general remarks some standard works can be consulted, such as Wickham 1985, Russel Brown (ed.) 1995 and Zarilli et al. (eds.) 2006.

4 Discussed in Haymes 2012, 25–28 and Eichner 2012, 41–46.

5 Eichner 2012, 45–46.

guages, which became Norwegian, Danish and Swedish. But such is not the case with oral poetry in the Finnish language, which was collected much later, in the 1830s and 1840s. Some of these sources provided the ingredients for the compendium of epic poetry called *Kalevala* (1835, 1848).

The Icelandic *Prose Edda* by Snorri Sturluson dates from the thirteenth century, and so were the written versions of *Völsunga saga* and the *Poetic Edda*. The written version of the *Nibelungenlied* also dates from ca 1200. Many of these stories were turned into Latin versions between 1665 and 1737, with the result that they also became part of national history writing. The same practice went on in Sweden during the years it was a Baltic Sea Empire (1611–1721). The next phase – in the eighteenth century – involved academic philological activity. Scholars began to arrange and compare manuscript variants, which led to the publication of a scholarly version of the *Nibelungenlied* in 1782. In 1808 articles published in Germany introduced some of the Nordic versions of the tales related to the Nibelungs, which were yet not available in German.⁶

Gods old and new: Whose land is it?

The earliest dramas dealing with the supreme god Odin were created close to Scandinavian royal courts. The Dane Johannes Ewald (1743–1781) wrote *Balders død, Ett heroisk syngespell i tre handlingar* [Baldur's Death, A Heroic Musical Play in Three Acts] (1775), which was identified as an apology. The play is a lengthy series of poetic tableaux dealing with Balder, the “good son” of Frigga and Odin. This blond, enlightened boy, the “hope of the world”, is killed by a misled and envious brother, and dies an innocent. Some elements of Baldur / Balder were transferred to the different layers of the figure Sigurd/Siegfried.

6 A classic review of Austrian and German theatres is Kindermann 1962. For this introductory chapter several standard works and encyclopedias have been consulted. Most of the specific Wikipedia articles published on these topics in their respective languages refer to updated scholarship.

An opera *Baldurs Tod* was composed only in 1891 by Cyrill Kistler, one of the Wagner epigones.

A more famous Danish author, Adam Oehlenschläger (1779–1850), also wrote a play on Baldur, *Balder hin Gode* [Baldur the Good] in 1807; it was described as “ett mythologisk sörgespel”, a mythological Trauerspiel, although it is not a tragedy as its protagonist is not tragic. The play was closer to a drama with action than Ewald’s Baldur play had been, although it was also more successful in a reading than when presented on stage. “Reading Drama” (*Lesedrama*) or “Poetic Drama” was an admired genre of the time; plays and poems were read aloud in upper-class parlours, with the action taking place in the vivid imaginations of the listeners. Oehlenschläger published poetry on the Scandinavian gods, thus defining specific figures for decades to come. The high quality of his production was immediately recognized in Germany, and the texts were translated and appreciated there; Oehlenschläger was even considered a “Danish-German author”. He had contacts in Leipzig, one of whom was Adolph Wagner. And, as it is well known that Richard Wagner spent his formative years (from the age of 14) in Adolph Wagner’s home, the background strongly suggests that the boy must have known the works of Oehlenschläger.

In connection with the literary use of the Nordic gods the most highly charged question of the time was why should a Christian state or monarch acknowledge pagan figures, especially if these figures were supposed to be honoured or presented with dignity? The problem was essentially the same in all monarchies: how does a historical dynasty enacted on stage relate to the actual dynasty in power? And how delicate are dramatic conflicts in disputes between the dynasties, their branches or the different pretenders to the thrones? These questions were all current in the post-Napoleonic era when the great royal families in Europe negotiated a new balance of power at the Conference of Vienna (1815). In Russia, for instance, impersonations of the Romanov family were forbidden on stage (a policy that applied to Finland during its years as part of the Russian Empire). The central conflict in the Nordic countries was the collision of pagan antiquity with Christianity, something about which no author could avoid commenting on. This is

what we see in Oehlenschläger's drama *Palnatoke* (1809), which presents a complicated series of events and battles among the old powers vis-à-vis Christianity.

The ancient pagan royalties were used as guarantors of the present power, which needed reinforcement through the legitimacy of supposed primeval rulers. In the fictive world of the Scandinavian plays, it is the old gods or rulers who explicitly either bestow or abdicate their power to their Christian children or successors. Thus, the Christian dynasties should not be accused of being later "invaders" or "usurpers", but rather were legitimate heirs to ancient rule.

The legitimacy of the dynasty was a theme in Carl Gustav af Leopold's (1756–1829) play *Oden eller Asarnas Utvandring* [Odin or the Exodus of the Gods] (1790). Af Leopold was a favourite of Gustav III and wrote in support of the king's party during a period of deep mistrust, a time that culminated in a demonstration of disloyalty by a group of officers (*Anjala-förbundet*) during Gustav's Russian war of 1788–1790. Odin was accustomed to evoking the nation through ancient Sweden, and represented a ruler who deserved loyalty because of his contributions to the fatherland and the state.

The same question of to whom Sweden belongs was repeated – in a new political situation – by C.G. Brakel (1782–1853) in his drama *Odin i Svithjod* [Odin in Sweden] (1826). By means of his military power Odin acquired the land from the legendary King Gylfe. At the drama's end a marriage takes place between Yngve, the son of Odin, and Freja, the daughter of Gylfe, who inherit the country, and the two dynasties are legitimately joined in harmony. The play was successful in Stockholm's Royal Dramatic Theatre. And no wonder: it fitted the Sweden of its time, a country filled with tension between the new dynasty of Bernadotte and the deposed dynasty of Holstein-Gottorp, which could be traced as far back as the Vasa dynasty in the Renaissance.⁷

C.G. Brakel deserves special attention in Finland. He was born in

7 This dynastic union took place only in 1881 when the crown prince, Gustav (V) Bernadotte, married Princess Victoria of Baden, whose grandmother was the daughter of Gustav IV Adolf (Holstein-Gottorp/Vasa).

the old mansion of Wiik, located in the present-day town of Nokia, called Pirkkala / Birkala in ancient times. After Finland was ceded to Russia by Sweden in 1809, Brakel moved to Stockholm, where in the 1820s a Finland-born colony of officers and upper-class society were active. After his play on Odin Brakel turned to a topic from the area of his previous home with *Väinämöinen, lyriskt försök* [Väinämöinen, a Lyric Experiment] (1829). This is the first drama in which the mythical Finnish elder Väinämöinen appears on stage. The ancient community is at war with the intruding Christian (Swedish) occupants. Over many episodes it is revealed that Väinämöinen's son, Soini, had been taken hostage a decade before⁸ and now is returning as Father Anton, the right hand to Bishop Henry. Henry, later sainted and the legendary baptizer of the Finns, will appoint Anton as his successor. The people of Pirkkala are baptized, and Väinämöinen withdraws to a mountain cave, but he leaves his kantele, a type of wooden zither, on a hilltop illuminated by radiant light, its strings vibrating with music. Brakel was evidently inspired by a local mountain (Seuri), with its tradition as an ancient stronghold at the crossroads of important water routes. Brakel's drama on Väinämöinen creates a legitimate continuum with the primeval power of the country. This highly interesting but completely unknown play did not appear on stage in Stockholm or anywhere else. It appeared two years prior to Elias Lönnrot's dissertation *De Väinämöine* (1831), and six years prior to Lönnrot's signing of his preface to the *Kalevala* (1835). Lönnrot also finished the *Kalevala* with Väinämöinen yielding to Christianity and departing from Finland with a promise to return.

Nibelung topics in German drama

With regard to the birth of Wagner's *Ring* there was, among the acquaintances of Adolph Wagner, an even more interesting figure than Oehlenschläger: Baron (Freiherr) Friedrich Heinrich Karl de la Motte

⁸ Elias Lönnrot (1802–1884), who collected verses of oral poetry and compiled the epos called the *Kalevala* (1835, 1848) does not give Väinämöinen a son.

Fouqué (1777–1843), a highly popular and productive representative of early German Romanticism. Along with his trilogy *Der Held des Nordens* [The Hero of the North] (1810), de la Motte Fouqué will have a major role in this essay. In 1803 de la Motte Fouqué, a soldier by profession, composed a poem entitled *Siegfried in der Schmiede* [Siegfried at the Forge]. The author August Wilhelm Schlegel had encouraged the young writer to learn the many extensions of these Nordic sagas, and de la Motte Fouqué set about so doing with alacrity. He studied Nordic languages and became acquainted at least with the *Poetic Edda* and the *Völsunga saga*. Relying on them, he wrote the three large poetic dramas that make up the trilogy *Der Held des Nordens*. The first was called *Sigurd der Schlagentöter* [Sigurd the Dragon Slayer] (1808). The continuation, *Sigurds Rache* [Sigurd's Revenge] (1809) describes a visit to the Huns, which becomes a massacre and largely follows events described in the *Nibelungenlied*. The third, *Aslauga* (1810), gets its title from the earthly daughter of Sigurd and Brynhildur.⁹ The entire trilogy soon became extraordinarily popular with readers, but apparently because of its large proportions, it has never been staged. We must assume that these three plays were the schoolboy Richard Wagner's first direct and inspiring encounter with the cycles of the *Nibelungen saga*.¹⁰

In the following decades the Nibelungen cycles were taken up by Ernst Raupach (1784–1852), whose work has been doomed in the literary canon to the status of “Trivalliteratur”. Raupach's great ambition was to transform medieval German history into dramas, just as Shakespeare had done with the English kings. Raupach wrote a series of large dramas on the medieval dynasty of Hohenstaufen, whose founder was the Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa (b. 1122, r. 1155–90). These dramas are known to have inspired Wagner, who in 1832 composed an overture for Raupach's drama *König Enzo* (King Enzo).

9 For the variants of all the names that appear in the following, the spelling adopted in the particular work being discussed or quoted is used also in this article.

10 A recent literary study on de la Motte Fouqué's trilogy is by Wolf Gerhard Schmidt (2000a), which has been consulted. His specific article (2000b) on the relationship of the trilogy and *The Ring*, however, has unfortunately not been available for this author, but he devotes pages 139–150 on this topic also in 2000a.

Ernst Raupach wrote his own drama *Der Nibelungen-Hort, Tragödie in fünf Aufzügen, mit einem Vorspiel* [The Nibelungen Treasure: Tragedy in Five Acts with a Prologue] in 1834. It opens with Siegfried carrying Chriemhild (Kriemhild, the sister of Gunther, in the *Nibelungen sagas*; in some versions the same figure is known as Kudrun or Gudrun) away from a mountain of fire. The story later follows the events of Gunther's wooing of Brunhild, the Icelandic queen. There is more fighting towards the end of the play, with the castle being occupied, sword play and many battle scenes, but it does not include the wedding of Attila and Chriemhild. Raupach's play is an important source for the opera *Die Nibelungen* by Heinrich Dorn (1854), which was highly successful – to Wagner's great annoyance.¹¹

The abundance of battle scenes makes the *Nibelungenlied* itself less interesting towards the end. This may be one reason that none of the dramas which follow its structure have been very appealing and are seldom mentioned except in literary encyclopaedias. Wagner's idea to end the saga with Siegfried's death was rather reasonable. But Ernst Raupach must also be remembered because his *Nibelungen-Hort* is the only drama Wagner later mentioned in public as among those he knew dealing with the *Nibelungenlied*. Friedrich I Barbarossa was also a figure around whom, for a time, this industrious young poet-composer made his plans. Wagner created a script based on legends around Barbarossa, which he called the *Wibelungen* (1849) and in which he combined ancient storytelling with historical events and current political trends.

By 1848 the Nibelungen motif had been used by several dramatists: F.R. Herrmann in a trilogy *Die Nibelungen* (1819), J.W. Müller in the play *Chriemhilds Rache* [Chriemhild's Revenge] and C. Wurm with his play *Die Nibelungen* (1839). Wagner set to work on his own *Nibelungen saga* in the spirit of the Dresden and other European revolutions of 1848. With *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* Wagner had given sufficient praise and attention to an imagined, pious medieval Germany. The first versions

¹¹ Eichner 2012, 51.

of the libretto for the *Ring* were prose narratives, *Nibelungen Mythos* (1848), which in most places come close to the *Ring* we know. His first drama written in alliterative verse ("Stabreim") was *Siegfrieds Tod* (1848), which ended with Brünnhilde approaching Siegfried's funeral pyre and the people kneeling in homage to Wotan.

The next *Nibelungen* version by Wagner was *Der junge Siegfried* [The Young Siegfried], which he completed in 1849 in exile in Switzerland. Eventually, the various versions grew to a four-part tetralogy in 1852. The *Poetic Edda* had been translated into German by Karl Simrock only the previous year. The new texts in Wagner's tetralogy were *Die Walküre* and *Das Rheingold*. The title of the fourth part had been modified to become *Götterdämmerung*. Wagner's Wotan had grown into the third main character of the work, while the composer's scepticism had increased to the point that he could no longer believe that a revolutionary hero of Siegfried's stature could unite or revitalize a nation. Resignation and pessimism had modified Wagner's thinking as well as his work.

Prior to Wagner's completion of the *Ring*, the conductor and composer Heinrich Dorn (1804–1892) completed his opera *Die Nibelungen* in Berlin in 1854. By comparison to other versions of the saga, the biggest change was that Brünnhilde and Gunther were made into a couple who finally learnt to love each other.¹² Dorn's opera was rather successful in its time but was forgotten and ignored when Wagner's masterwork appeared in 1876. During the long years Wagner worked on his project, the famous German author Friedrich Hebbel (1813–1863) published his own trilogy (1861), which consists of *Der gehörnte Siegfried*, *Siegfrieds Tod* and *Kriemhilds Rache*. Hebbel is usually considered a writer who gave his characters a modern psychological touch.

Hebbel, Dorn and Wagner were thus contemporaries who brought the interest in Nordic mythology and sagas to a high point. After Wagner's death, Nordic tales continued to appear on stages where Germanic and Scandinavian languages were spoken right up until the

¹² Eichner 2012, 49–64.

Second World War. The later resonances were also alive in Finland where the *Kalevala* was a rich field for dramas from the 1890s until the 1920s.¹⁸

Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué (1777–1843):

A productive writer of the Romantic era

The family de la Motte originally came from France. They were Huguenots, which made them welcome in Lutheran Prussia. Living in a mansion close to Berlin, family members had served the Hohenzollern dynasty for a century: the author's grandfather had been a general in the service of Friedrich II, as had his father, who served in the Prussian army. Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué had a mother who inspired him to love literature, but when the wars following the French Revolution began, he interrupted his studies in Halle and embarked on a military career. De la Motte Fouqué fought in the Rhineland offensives, including the first campaigns against the French Republic and its general Napoleon. After five years as an officer (1794–1799), de la Motte Fouqué returned home and took up the life of an author alongside his second wife Caroline (1774–1831), who also became a popular writer. He was an active young man, who loved riding and hunting, an outdoors person *par excellence*. It is therefore little wonder that he was inspired by Germanic heroes and all the things that would appeal to an adventurer's mind. After completing his poem *Siegfried in der Schmiede* (1803), he studied Icelandic, Norwegian and Danish before completing the first part of a trilogy entitled *Sigurd der Schlangentöter* (1807). Once he completed the trilogy *Der Held des Nordens* (1810), he regularly published his writings – a large production including novels and plays. The most famous is *Undine* (1811), a sweeping story of love between a man and a river maiden, and the novel *Der Zauberring* [The Magic Ring] (1813). In the years 1813–1815 Fouqué returned to Prussian military service, and fought in the great battle (“Völkerschlacht”) near Leipzig in which

18 Fewster (2006) gives a record of the uses of these cultural elements in the service of nationalism.

Napoleon was chased out of Germany. Returning home, de la Motte Fouqué continued writing, producing a novel a year on chivalric topics and mythological heroes. His protagonists are active male heroes who easily conquer the women they meet during their romantic adventures.

These were the books Wagner was reading in his teenage years and became inspired by them. Considering the works of the adult Wagner, other works by de la Motte Fouqué, such as *Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg*, should also awaken interest today along with *Eginhart und Emma*, which tells about a presumed author of the *Nibelungenlied*. In his youth Wagner's Uncle Adolph had directed this play for friends, and he himself played the role of Charlemagne.¹⁴ As a writer, de la Motte Fouqué was very popular, but he was subject to the change of epochs, and the spirit of 1848 definitely left him outdated. In the eyes of the literary group Young Germany, Baron de la Motte Fouqué was all too Biedermeyer and a man of the Holy Alliance. To mention his name was not a recommendation for a young revolutionary intellectual of that age. Except for popularity his literary works had already received much scorn and harsh criticism.¹⁵

Sigurd der Schlangentöter and Wagner's Siegfried operas

In his play *Sigurd der Schlangentöter* (1808) de la Motte Fouqué largely followed the events in the *Völsunga saga*. Yet a closer look at the text and the structure will convince us that it is the most important basic dramaturgical and structural subtext for the two last parts of the *Ring* tetralogy. The *Sigurd* play consists of a Prologue ("Vorspiel") and six adventures ("Abenteueren") or acts. Each of the six acts is divided into three or four scenes or tableaux according to the set changes, so that the total play consists of 19 episodes in all. The most recent scholar to my knowledge who has taken up the play is Edward Haymes (2012),

14 Koch 1907, 97. I am also indebted to Koch *et passim* for general information on young Wagner.

15 Schmidt 2000a, 117-139.

who published a detailed narration of the plot in English. Table 1 offers an overview of the structure with a list of the episodes (scenes, tableaux) in *Sigurd der Schlagentöter*, the locations of the sets, the characters who appear in each scene and the main features of each event. The scheme is completed by references to the most important episodes that correspond to the *Poetic Edda*, the *Nibelungenlied* and the *Völsunga saga*, together with the designated acts and scenes in Wagner's *Ring*.

Table 1. *Sigurd der Schlagentöter*: Structure and correspondence of scenes in the *Poetic Edda*, *Völsunga saga* and *Nibelungenlied*.

Column 1: The epic sources: *Poetic Edda*, the titles of the poems; *Völsunga saga*, numbers of relevant episodes; the number of the poem in the *Nibelungenlied*.

Column 2: *Sigurd der Schlagentöter*, adventures, scenes, sets, pages in the facsimile edition (de la Motte Fouqué 1908 / 1973).

Column 3: Characters in the scene.

Column 4: Synopsis of events.

Column 5: Correspondence with scenes in the *Ring*, specifically *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*.

N.B.: The spelling of names follows the source.

SOURCE	FOUQUÉ	CHARACTERS	SYNOPSIS	WAGNER
<i>Edda</i> : Reginismál	Prologue (19–31). Hall in the castle of king Hialprek.	Sigurd Hiordisa, his mother Reigen, his master of weapons	Reigen forges a sword, which breaks when Sigurd tries it. Mother gives the pieces to Gramur and tells Sigurd that he is a Wolsung; his father, Siegmund, had drawn the sword from a tree trunk. Reigen reforges the sword, Sigurd splits the anvil and goes after the dragon Faffner at Gnitnaheide.	<i>SIEG-FRIED</i> , Act 1
<i>Edda</i> : Fafnismál (Fafnir)	First Adventure (33–45). Desolate space near Gnitnaheide.	Sigurd Reigen Old Man (= Odin) Faffner in the shape of a dragon	Reigen leads Sigurd to the cave, hoping that he will kill Faffner and win the gold for him (Reigen). The Old (Odin) retells Sigurd's previous adventures and gives him advice on defeating the dragon. Faffner appears, Sigurd thrusts his sword in Faffner's heart, Faffner dies. Reigen returns and, as the brother of Faffner, demands half of the gold. Sigurd eats the dragon's heart. He understands the two swallows' advice to distrust Reigen. Sigurd delivers a death blow to Reigen, who reveals the secrets of the treasure and the prehistory of the cursed ring, Reigen dies. Sigurd takes the gold and the ring; he leaves to find Brynhildur on the mountain of fire.	<i>SIEG-FRIED</i> , Act 2

<i>Edda</i> : Sigrdrífamál <i>Völsungas</i> : 20	Second Adventure (45–60). [i.] The castle of Brynhildur on the mountain Hindarfjall.	Three Norns: Wurdur, Werdandi and Skuld Brynhildur sleeps, Sigurd arrives.	Three Norns relate the history of Brynhildur, her defiance of Odin, her punishment and the arrival of Sigurd, who comes with Grani through the flames. Sigurd believes the armed Brynhildur to be a boy; she calls herself Sigurdrifa and offers mead and gives the runes to Sigurd. They go to the marriage chamber.	<i>GÖTTER-DÄMMERUNG</i> , Prologue 1 <i>SIEGFRIED</i> , Act 3
	[ii.] (51) Garden in the castle of King Giuke. Night.	Grimhildur (wife of Giuke) her maid Gunnar (their 1st son) Högne (their 3rd son)	The Niflung family. Grimhildur picks herbs. Her sons Gunnar and Högne tell about the dragon killer who has found a treasure. Sigurd would be a perfect match for their sister Gudruna.	[before <i>GÖTTER-DÄMMERUNG</i> , Act 1, scene 1]
	[iii.] (54) Opens near the castle of King Helmer. In the background a mighty tower.	Sigurd people on the meadow Alswin (Helmer's son)	Sigurd hunts with his hawk. As Sigurd climbs the tower, Alswin reports what Sigurd sees from the window: Brynhildur inside the tower. Sigurd enters. Alswin says that Brynhildur mostly stays on her mountain.	
	[iv.] (56) Gorgeous room inside the tower.	Brynhildur her chambermaids Sigurd	Brynhildur works on a tapestry showing Sigurd's feats. Sigurd arrives. Brynhildur offers him wine and says that it has been foretold that Sigurd will marry the Niflung daughter Gudruna. Sigurd promises to love Brynhildur. They kiss, and he departs.	
<i>Edda</i> : "Gripir's prophesy" (Gripisspá) relates in detail what will happen to Sigurd. Haymes (2012, 31) points out that as such this scene and some of the	Third Adventure (60–72) [i] (60) Hill by the castle of King Giuke on the bank of the Rhine.	Giuke Grimhildur Sigurd Gunnar Högne	Giuke and Grimhildur hear that Sigurd is approaching their castle. The royal couple receives him. The sons Gunnar and Högne arrive, and after playing some games, which they lose, they recognize Sigurd as the Dragon Slayer. They swear fraternal oaths not to harm each other. Grimhildur offers Sigurd a drink to make him forget Brynhildur. Sigurd identifies with his new brothers and wants to marry their sister Gudruna, a famous beauty. He joins his new "brothers in arms", and Grimhildur reveals the secret of the potion to her husband.	<i>GÖTTER-DÄMMERUNG</i> , Act 1, scene 1
following have no equivalent in the original sources and originate from Fouqué.				

	[ii] (67) Castle of Brynhildur on Hindarfiall.	Brynhildur	Brynhildur alone, armed. She retires to her mountain, knowing she cannot have Sigurd, who will marry Gudruna.	<i>GÖTTER-DÄMMERUNG</i> , Act 1, scene 2
	[iii] (68) Festive meal in Giuke's castle.	Giuke, Grimhildur, Gunnar, Högne, Sigurd and Gudruna	Giuke, Grimhildur, Gunnar, Högne, Sigurd and heroes at table. Gudruna arrives and greets the Dragon Slayer. Sigurd is ready to marry Gudruna, who kisses Sigurd. Sigurd's kingdom is called Niderland, and after winning Faffner's gold, all these lands now become part of the Niflung lands and heritage.	<i>GÖTTER-DÄMMERUNG</i> , Act 1, scene 1
	Fourth Adventure (72–88) [i] Open space before Giuke's castle.	Sigurd, Gunnar, Högne; Grimhildur; Giuke	Sigurd and his brothers-in-law have been victorious in battle. Grimhildur meets with news of Gudruna's baby. To ensure dynastic succession she urges her first-born, Gunnar, to woo Brynhildur on the mountain surrounded by fire. Sigurd would like to stay with his child. Giuke wants to calm Grimhildur's initiatives, retire to the old castle and abdicate the throne.	<i>GÖTTER-DÄMMERUNG</i> , Act 1, scene 1
<i>Edda:</i> Fire ride, <i>Völsungas:</i> 29	[ii.] (77) Night. Open land in front of Hindarfiall. In the background the castle is surrounded by flames.	Sigurd, Högne; Gunnar; later Sigurd dressed as Gunnar, Gunnar dressed as Sigurd	Gunnar's horse is afraid of the flames. Gunnar asks Sigurd to borrow Grani but does not succeed. Högne remembers his mother's spell for how to change his shape. Sigurd and Gunnar exit at opposite sides of the stage. Högne reads the spells. Gunnar and Sigurd enter in their changed forms. Sigurd rides off through the flames towards the castle.	
	[iii.] (82) Inside Hindarfiall castle.	Brynhildur; Sigurd dressed as Gunnar	Brynhildur in her armour. "False Gunnar" (=Sigurd) has ridden through the Wafurloga fire. She now yields to this "False Gunnar"	<i>GÖTTER-DÄMMERUNG</i> , Act 1, scene 2

	[iv.] (84) Large hall in Giuke's castle.	Gudruna and her baby son Grimhildur; Sigurd; servants, guardians; Gunnar, Brynhildur, Högne; attendants	Gudruna has borne a son to Sigurd. Sigurd returns, takes his son in his arms. He tells of Gunnar's ride through fire. (Sigurd is unaware of Grimhildur's ambition for her first-born Gunnar.) Gunnar's wedding is celebrated. A guard calls the people together. In the background Gunnar is bringing in Brynhildur as his bride. Sigurd, whose memory has returned, recognizes Brynhildur. Sigurd is outraged. He would like to use his sword against Gunnar but does not because Gunnar is his sworn brother. Sigurd wants to get the "fog" out of his head; embarrassed, he joins the wedding celebration.	<i>GÖTTER-DÄMMERUNG</i> , Act 2
<i>Edda</i> : Gudrun and Brynhildur argue [<i>Völsunga</i> : 30]	Fifth Adventure (88-103) [i] On the bank of the Rhine	Gudruna, Brynhildur; Sigurd	Gudruna and Brynhildur wash their hair in the Rhine, and Brynhildur demonstrates her superiority. When she reports that Gunnar rode through the fire, Gudruna says that it was Sigurd who obtained a cursed ring from Brynhildur, which he now has given to Gudruna. Brynhildur realizes that she has been betrayed and withdraws to her chamber. Sigurd and Gudruna talk about her, and Sigurd asks whether Brynhildur has ever said that she would not have wanted Gunnar. Sigurd goes hunting. Gudruna regrets having revealed the secret.	
	[ii] (91) The ante room of Brynhildur's chamber.	Högne, Gunnar; Grimhildur; Sigurd; Gudruna	Gunnar complains to Högne that Brynhildur is only sleeping, as if dead. The brothers blame their mother's sorcery for the problems. Gudruna defends her mother and sends Sigurd to speak to Brynhildur.	

<p><i>Edda</i>: Sigurd tries to calm Brynhildr (<i>Völsungas</i>: 31) <i>Edda</i>: Old Sigurd's song</p>	<p>[iii.] (95) Door opens at the back of the stage. Brynhildur lies on her bed.</p>	<p>Brynhildur, Sigurd; Gunnar; servants and maids; Högne; Guttorm, the 2nd brother and his elaborate entourage</p>	<p>Brynhildur lies on her bed in full armour. Sigurd awakes her. Brynhildur reproaches Sigurd, who tries to speak for Gunnar. Sigurd tells of the magic potion that made him forget Brynhildur. He offers to leave Gudruna for Brynhildur. But she has sworn to marry the man who rides through fire and thus she is now sworn to Gunnar; there is no other way out but the death of one or the other. Brynhildur falls asleep wanting to die. Gunnar tries to calm her, but one of the three of them must die. Guttorm the 2nd brother arrives from war; because he is free of all oaths to protect Sigurd, he can carry out the killing. Brynhildur reveals to Guttorm that she is a Valkyrie. She invites him to a dinner and urges him to the murder of Sigurd and his son. Faffner's gold is to be Guttorm's reward.</p>	<p><i>GÖTTER-DÄMMERUNG</i>, Act 2</p>
<p>Sigurd's death comes from different sources, which deal differently with his vulnerable point and how the murder finally takes place.</p>	<p>Sixth Adventure (103–117) [i] Sigurd's chamber.</p>	<p>Gudruna, Sigurd; Guttorm; maid</p>	<p>Gudruna sings and praises her fair Sigurd, who sleeps on her lap. Then she sleeps, too. Guttorm comes and strikes Sigurd, who, awakened, throws his sword Gramur to Guttorm who dies at the door. Sigurd falls into Gudruna's arms. The maid enters to report the killing of the son. Gudruna hopes that father and son will meet in Valhalla.</p>	<p><i>GÖTTER-DÄMMERUNG</i>, Act 3, scene 1</p>

<p><i>Edda:</i> Gudrun leaves for the forest. <i>Völsungas:</i> 32</p>	<p>[ii.] (108) Brynhildur's chamber:</p>	<p>Brynhildur, Gunnar; Gudruna, Högne</p>	<p>Brynhildur is lavishly dressed on her day of revenge. Gunnar reports that Sigurd is dead, but Guttorm refuses to deliver the message. Gudruna, deprived of her husband and child, wants to depart for the forest to begin a new life in nature as a settler. Högne and Gunnar wish to divide the gold. Brynhildur prophesies that the Niflungs will be destroyed for their shameful actions and broken oaths. Brynhildur invites in the servants and shares her own riches with them. She then wounds herself with the sword Gramur and gives instructions for Sigurd's funeral pyre on which is to be burned Faffner's gold, weapons and some servants.</p>	
<p><i>Edda:</i> Sigurd's short song.</p>	<p>[iii.] (226) When the curtain rises, the funeral pyre is burning at the back of the stage.</p>	<p>Brynhildur, Gunnar, Högne and 3 Norns: Wurdur, Werdandi and Skuld</p>	<p>Brynhildur is wounded in the final scene during a grand monologue. When the curtain rises, the pyre commanded by Brynhildur becomes visible. She walks to the fire supported by her handmaids. She orders the sword to be placed between her and Sigurd, as it had once been on the mountain of fire. She leaps into the fire, and the three Norns emerge from the smoke and sing.</p>	<p><i>GÖTTER- DÄMMER- RUNG,</i> Act 3, scene 2</p>

Elements of de la Motte Fouqué's *Sigurd* play in the *Ring*

Even a superficial look at de la Motte Fouqué's *Sigurd der Schlangentöter* shows what an elaborately developed dramaturgical structure Wagner had ready at hand and how much of it appears in all the pivotal episodes in the latter half of the *Ring*. There are, however, important differences: in the *Ring* Siegfried's mother dies giving birth; the world of Gunther, Gutrune and Hagen – the Gibichungen – receive much less attention than the court of Giuke in *Sigurd der Schlangentöter*. Although the episodes prior to Sigurd's birth are missing in de la Motte Fouqué, several

early episodes are referred to in the longer narrations of various characters. As a dramaturge, Wagner was not interested in palace plotting as a subject for operas. Not even the famous prestige conflict of the two sister-in-law queens is included in the *Ring* except as a short exchange in the final scene, when Brünnhilde, approaching Guttrune, announces that she has been the first true bride of Siegfried. The brother, Guttorm, who carries out Siegfried's death, is missing in the *Ring*, which also follows the *Nibelungenlied* in having the murder take place outdoors in a hunting party; Siegfried dies by a pond in forest, while he takes a drink. Siegfried's murder becomes part of Wagner's cosmological system of relationships among humans, the gods and nature. The *Ring* is much more of an open-air work than *Sigurd der Schlagentöter*, which despite its many outdoor events mostly uses contemporary theatrical indoor scenery with conventionally planned backdrops and open backspaces.

In her elegant study *Richard Wagner and the Nibelungs* (1990) Elisabeth Magee has examined the books Wagner read, the annotations in his correspondence and the library volumes he combed through. Magee states that, by October 1848 and his writing of the first text, *Nibelungen-Mythus*, Wagner had become acquainted with the *Völsunga saga*, mostly through the dramatic composition of de la Motte Fouqué. Magee identifies the common traits Wagner shares with de la Motte Fouqué, which are numerous and profound.¹⁶

Essential traits in Fouqué's *Sigurd* which appear in Wagner's *Ring*.

1. The structure of the acts, scenes and episodes in any situations taken directly from the *Poetic Edda*.
2. Alliteration and other linguistic similarities (having their roots in the original poetry).
3. The forger Reigen; Wotan as an Old Man when he meets Sigurd.
4. The three Norns; Brynhildur's disobedience and the Wafurloga fire as punishment.
5. Sigurd has to leave Brynhildur to pursue his heroic tasks.
6. A magic potion that causes memory loss (or restores it again).

¹⁶ Magee 1990, 48–49 et passim. Schmidt 2000a, 145–150 completes Magee's discussion but from the literary and language point of view.

7. Horse scenes on stage, arrival on horseback, a horse eating grass on the periphery of the stage.
8. Guttorm describes the gaze of a Valkyrie he saw on the battlefield.
9. Brynhildur's final monologue.

The original poetic sources provided de la Motte Fouqué and, later on, Wagner many of the dramatic moments that culminate in the *Ring*. One of these is the awakening of Brynhildur (or Sigrdrifa) / Brünnhilde, and her first greetings and prayers combined with the question of who awakened her. The strophes in the *Edda* have remained the same in de la Motte Fouqué. Wagner left the prayers and condensed the question in order to fuse Siegfried's musical motifs with the awakening motifs, resulting in one of the most brilliant moments in the entire *Ring*. Table 2, which compares the *Edda* with Karl Simrock's translated version of 1851 (1874), shows how close to the *Edda* both de la Motte Fouqué and Wagner remained.

Table 2. Comparison of awakening greetings in the *Edda*, de la Motte Fouqué and Wagner.

Poetic <i>Edda</i> : SIGRDRIFUMÁL	English version by Henry Adams Bellow in www.sacred-texts.com/neu/poe/index.htm
"Hvat beit brynju? Hví brá ek svefni? Hverr felldi af mér fólvar nauðir?" Hann svaraði: "Sigmundar burr, - sleit fyr skómmu hrafn hrælundir, - hjörr Sigurðar!" Hon kvað: "Lengi ek svaf, lengi ek sofnuð var, löng eru lýða læ; Óðinn því veldr, er ek eigi máttak bregða blundstöfum." Sigurðr settist niðr ok spyrr hana nafns. Hon tók þá horn fullt mjaðar ok gaf honum minnisveig:	"What bit through the byrnie? How was broken my sleep? Who made me free Of the fetters pale?" He answered: "Sigmund's son, with Sigurth's sword, That late with flesh Hath fed the ravens." She said: "Long did I sleep, my slumber was long, And long are the grieves of life; Othin decreed that I could not break The heavy spells of sleep." Sigurth sat beside her and asked her name. She took a horn full of mead and gave him a memory-draught.

<p>“Heill dagr! Heilir dags synir! Heil nótt ok nift! Óreiðum augum lítið okkr þinig ok gefið sitjöldum sigr!</p> <p>Heilir æsir! Heilar ásynjur! Heil sjá in fjölnýta fold! Mál ok mannvit gefið okkr mærum tveim ok læknishendr, meðan lifum.”</p>	<p>“Hail, day! Hail, sons of day! And night and her daughter now! Look on us here with loving eyes, That waiting we victory win.</p> <p>Hail to the gods! Ye goddesses, hail, And all the generous earth! Give to us wisdom and goodly speech, And healing hands, life-long.”</p>
Simrock (1851, checked in 1874 printing)	
<p>Heil dir Tag, Heil euch Tagessöhnen, Heil dir Nacht und nährende Erde: Mit unzorngen Augen schaut auf Uns Und gebt uns Sitzenden Sieg.</p> <p>Heil euch Asen, Heil euch Asinnen, Heil dir, fruchtbares Feld! Wort und Weisheit gewährt uns edeln Zwein Und immer heilende Hände!</p>	
<i>Sigurd der Schlagentöter</i> / de la Motte Fouqué (49–50)	English translations by the author
<p>Gruss dem Tage, Gruss den Tagestunden, Gruss der Tagesdämmerung! Günstigen Auges Beschaut uns, ihr alle, Spendet uns Schmausenden Sieg!</p>	<p>Greeting to the day, Greeting to the hours of the day, Greeting to the twilight of the day! With a prosperous eye look at us, you all Endow us an exuberant victory!</p>
<p>Gruss den Asen, Gruss der Asynien, Gruss der vielnutzenden Erde! Beredsamkeit, Weisheit, Spendet uns beiden, Heilkräft'ge Händ' auf Lebenslang!</p>	<p>Greeting to Aesir, Greeting to Asynjur, Greeting to the abundant earth! Vigilance, wisdom, endow us both, heal-powered hands For all lifetime!</p>

Zweiter Tag: <i>Siegfried</i> by Wagner	English by H. & F. Corder in Wagner 1880. ¹⁷
Heil dir, Sonne ! Heil dir, Licht ! Heil dir, leuchtender Tag! Lang' war mein Schlaf; Ich bin erwacht; wer ist der Held, der mich erweckt'?	Hail, thou sunshine! Hail, thou light! Hail, thou loveliest day! Long was my rest. I rise from sleep. Say, who is he that wakes my sense?
Heil euch, Götter! Heil dir, Welt! Heil dir, prangende Erde! Zu End' ist nun mein Schlaf; erwacht seh' ich: Siegfried ist es, der mich erweckt!	Hail, ye gods all! Hail, thou world! Hail, ye glories of nature! Unknit is now my sleep, Awake stand I: Siegfried 'tis who unwinds the spell.

The editor of de la Motte Fouqué's works (1908/1973) observed that the text of *Sigurd der Schlangentöter* appears to have been planned to be as impressive as an opera can be. The forging scene in the Prologue ("Vorspiel") begins with the song of the blacksmith Reigen. It has a short verse, an energetic rhythm and strong alliterations.¹⁸

Table 3. Reigen's forging song in de la Motte Fouqué.

Wer scharfe Schwerter Schmieden und schleifen will, Scheue das Zischen der Flamme nicht. Wer scharfe Schwerter Schwingen in Schlachten will, Scheue das Rauschen der Speere nicht.	Who will forge a sharp sword to sharpen and shine it, Shouldn't fear the fizz of the flames. Who will swing the sharp sword in battle with fiery force Shouldn't fear the rattle of shining spears.
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The use of the German "Konjunktiv" reminds of many passages in the *Ring*, which merge the meanings of threat, spell, prophecy, order and rule: "Wer meine Speeres Spitze fürchtet, durchschreite das Feuer nie!" ("Whosoever fears the tip of my spear shall never pass through the fire!") The Prologue to *Sigurd der Schlangentöter* ends (p. 31) when Sigurd says a brisk farewell to his mother and heads out into the wide

17 An alternative translation is given by Frederick Jameson in http://www.murashev.com/opera/Siegfried_libretto_German_English

18 de la Motte Fouqué 1973 (1908), 19. All excerpts from de la Motte Fouqué's drama given here have been translated by the author. Schmidt (2000a, 145-148) also gives comparative examples between de la Motte Fouqué and Wagner.

world. We cannot miss the atmosphere, energetic rhythm and dynamic alliteration. The same idea and even a development of its form have become the joyful ending of *Siegfried's* Act 1, scene 1, celebrating the freedom and strength of a young man.

Table 4. Siegfried's farewell to his mother.

de la Motte Fouqué, p. 31	English translation by the author
Leb' wohl du, liebe Mutter, Den Burgwall hinab Wandelt, erwacht, in den Wald Singend der Siegmunds Sohn. Schiffe schwanken bereits am Strand, Lustig schwellen Wellen und Wolken, Weit fort winket die Welt! (geht mit Reigen ab.)	Farewell, beloved Mother! Down the castle hill wanders the man awakened in the forest The singing son of Siegmund. The ships are already swaying on the beach Joyfully swell the waves and the clouds Far far away, the world beckons! (exits with Reigen.)

The song of departure in *Siegfried* (Act 1, scene 1) sounds therefore very familiar: the same defiance, the same enthralling but cutting rhythm – and of course the alliteration, one of the strongest devices in Wagner's poetry.

Table 5. Siegfried's farewell to Mime in *Siegfried*, Act 1, scene 1.

Wagner	English by H. & F. Corder in Wagner 1880 ¹⁹
Aus dem Wald fort in die Welt ziehn: nimmer keh'r ich zurück! Wie ich froh bin, dass ich frei ward, nichts mich bindet und zwingt! Mein Vater bist du nicht; in der Ferne bin ich heim; dein Herd ist nicht mein Haus, meine Decke nicht dein Dach. Wie der Fisch froh in der Flut schwimmt, wie der Fink frei sich davon schwingt: flieg' ich von hier, flute davon, wie der Wind übern Wald weh' ich dahin, - dich, Mime, nie wieder zu sehn!	From the wild wood will I wander, nevermore to return! What a full joy to have freedom! Nothing anchors me here. My father art thou not. I shall find another home; thy hearth is not my house, ne'er I'll rest beneath thy roof. as the fish fain thro the flood shoots, as the finch flies to a free shore far hence I flee, flow like a stream, with the wind o'er the woods wafting away, then Mimi, ne'er will I return!

19 An alternative translation by Frederick Jameson in <http://www.murashev.com/opera/Siegfried>

A counter-argument would be that the *Völsunga saga* and the *Poetic Edda* encompass such effective, dramatic and poetically fine solutions in themselves that Wagner could well have taken them directly, without de la Motte Fouqué as mediator.²⁰ Yet de la Motte Fouqué came up with many practical solutions in combining the episodes in the different poems. And then there are the Norns and the memory-wiping magic potion, which is a “fairytale type” of theatrical solution, a purely melodramatic effect, which does not appear in the sources as far as is known.²¹ And why would Wagner not have drawn on an author whose fantasy for “sword and robe play” and for melodrama was well developed, who was skilled at composing active and usable stage intrigues and whose works had such an influence on his youthful imagination?²²

The rhetoric of genius

The absence of the name Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué in almost all the Wagner literature consulted for this article is striking.²³ It appears that the first dramaturge in history to use this material has not been allowed to dim the brightness of the Wagnerian cult of genius. I will illustrate this observation with a few examples.

For obvious reasons Wagner himself did not mention de la Motte Fouqué. The furious revolutionary of Dresden 1848 would hardly have talked about de la Motte Fouqué; nor would his friends in the circle *Junges Deutschland* (Young Germany) have praised Wagner if he had publicly admitted his fascination with an aristocratic romantic author and his medieval play, one which provided both material and ideas for his works. So *Mein Leben* (1870–1880) completely ignored de la Motte Fouqué, as did Chamberlain's biography (1904). Nor is de la Motte

20 Schmidt 2000a, 141; he discusses this argument through his chapter on the comparison.

21 Noted by Haymes 2012, 31.

22 De la Motte Fouqué's *Undine* was one of the last books Wagner and Cosima read aloud before his death (Schmidt 2000a, 140, referring to Cosima's *Tagebücher* 11 February 1883).

23 The title of Schmidt 2000b is “The Unnamed Source Text”.

Fouqué found in Henderson's (1902) index.²⁴

When Wagner was asked which plays based on the *Nibelungenlied* he was acquainted with, he answered that he actually knew only Raupach's *Der Nibelungen-Hort*. Here Elisabeth Magee points out that Wagner actually did not lie:

As for stage works prior to the appearance of his *Ring* text, Wagner writes that he was aware of only one "theatre piece" based on the *Nibelungenlied*, Ernst Raupach's *Der Nibelungen-Hort*, which had been performed in Berlin. There is no need to doubt the veracity of Wagner's statement; it does, however, require some qualification. Fouqué's *Der Held des Nordens*, for instance, was almost certainly known to Wagner, but it was based on the *Völsunga saga*, not the *Nibelungenlied*.²⁵

In his extensive Wagner biography published in 1907, 1913 and 1918, with comprehensive citation of sources, Max Koch mentions de la Motte Fouqué several times, the first having to do with Adolph Wagner's amateur stagings:

In these circumstances it was self evident that Richard was reading most of the poetry by the Danish-German romantic writer [Oehlenschläger], and especially his renewed version of the Old Nordic saga on the Twilight of the Gods, which he had read in upper secondary school [Gymnasium], just as he had become acquainted with the dramatic appearance of the Walhalla gods in Fouqué's "heroic plays".²⁶

24 Schmidt (2000a, 140) mentions numerous German works since the death of Wagner debating the relationship of Wagner and de la Motte Fouqué. Although the similarities on many levels were carefully observed, the conclusion may have been controversial: Wagner's complete silence on de la Motte Fouqué could not be understood (*ibid.*, 149).

25 Magee (1990, 14–15) refers to Wagner's *Schriften*, VI, 262. See also Schmidt (2000a, 144) whose sources do not include Magee 1990.

26 "Es ist unter diesen Umständen selbstverständlich, dass Richard die meisten Dichtungen des dänisch-deutschen Romantikers [Oehlenschläger] und besonderes seine Erneuerung der altnordischen Sage von der Götterdämmerung noch als Gymnasiast gelesen hat, wie er dramatisches Auftreten der Walhall-Götter in Fouqués 'Heldenspielen' kennengelernt hatte." Koch 1907, 65.

In the second volume (1913) Koch described the evolution of the text of the *Ring*, and he mentions de la Motte Fouqué again, presenting him as responsible for providing Wagner's first impulses.

Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's trilogy and especially the first part, the heroic play "Sigurd the Dragon Slayer", is in more than one respect very important to Wagner's work on the Nibelungs. [...] with highest probability, the most knowledge the young Richard had in general about the Siegfried saga was connected with Fouqué's name. [...] he concludes that Fouqué was the first [author of] the Nordic Völsunga saga, which became an important source for Wagner.²⁷

For Koch, it was obvious why the adventures of an adolescent hero had appealed to young Wagner, and he pointed out key episodes that Wagner and de la Motte Fouqué had in common. But given that borrowing is an unsavoury idea or at least improper in connection with geniuses, Koch hastened to explain that this extensive drama must have caught Wagner's fancy in his youth and emerged from his subconscious in the 1850s. Any possible similarities must have been merely subconscious reminiscences.

The alliterative song by Regin [Reigen], who forges a sword for the wild boy hero, Sigurd's disappointment in its weak sound and his own forging of a sword from the fragments of his father's weapon elevate Fouqué's heroic play, which then fades away after Brynhildis's leap into Sigurd's funeral pyre with the singing of the three Norns. Although the word borrowing can hardly be used, we can speak of the unconscious survival of the earliest impressions of the Fouquéan "Dragon Slayer" in Wagner's *Ring* poem.²⁸

27 "Friedrich de la Motte Fouqués Trilogie und vor allem ihr erster Theil, das Heldenspiel 'Sigurd der Schlangentöter', ist für die Vorgeschichte von Wagners Nibelungenwerk in mehr als einer Hinsicht von besonderer Wichtigkeit. [...] höchst wahrscheinlich, dass die erste Kunde, die der Knabe Richard überhaupt von einer Siegfriedsage vernahm, mit Fouqués Namen verbunden war. [...] bedient er sich] als erster der nordischen Wolsungasaga, die ja auch für Wagner die wichtigste Quelle werden sollte." Koch 1913, 353.

28 "Mit einem alliterierenden Liede des für das wilde Heldenkind ein Schwert schmie-

Koch used the sources and documents in a systematic way, but he was in thrall to the Romantics' concept of genius, which is echoed in the title of the series, *Geisteshelden* [Spiritual Heroes]. The Great Man, a Giant of the Spirit, produces out of "his own head", and all creativity is derived from the subconscious. Therefore, any borrowings are not in response to another creative genius; any possible similarities to other artworks are a result of random subconscious thought.

Koch's explanation was disputed by Arthur Drews (1865–1935), a German theologian and philosopher, who had become a controversial figure for his efforts to deny the historical existence of even Jesus. In his youth Drews had written a study on the ideal contents of Wagner's *Ring* (1898), which he completed with the coolness of a biblical scholar, philologist and historian. Drews saw immediately that de la Motte Fouqué's drama was not just one source among many for Wagner, which even Haymes (2012) believes. Drews formulated his position in opposition to Koch's mystification, saying that Wagner had had *Sigurd* directly in front of him while he was writing the *Ring*.

The first deeper impression of the topic he received as a boy was in the trilogy by Motte Fouqué, "The Hero of the North", from 1810. The first part, a heroic play called "Sigurd the Dragon Slayer", deals with the subjects of the "Ring". Fouqué was a friend of his uncle Adolph, so it is clear that, when Wagner started to work on the Nibelungen topic, he remembered this poem and took it up again. As a matter of fact, the congruences between Wagner's and Fouqué's dramatic poems are so many and so obvious that it is hardly possible to talk about mere "unconscious further life [...]" as Koch [II, 353] presumes in his Wagner biography.²⁹

denden Regin [Reigen], Sigurds Unmut über die schwache Klinge und seinem eigenen Schmieden aus des Vaters Schwertrümmern hebt Fouqués Heldenspiel an, das nach Brynhildis Sturz in Sigurds Scheiterhaufen im Gesange der drei Nornen ausklingt. So wenig das Wort Entlehnung am Platze wäre, so sicher dürften wir von dem unbewussten Fortleben frühester Eindrücke des Fouquéschen 'Schlangentöter' in der Wagnerschen Ringdichtung sprechen." Koch 1913, 353.

29 "Den ersten tieferen Eindruck wird er von dem Stoff als Knabe durch Motte Fouqués Trilogie 'Der Held des Norden' aus dem Jahre 1810 erhalten haben. Ihr erster Teil, das

Drews continued his argument:

While preparing his own dramatic poem, Wagner had Fouqué's trilogy in front of him, and its author had not only pre-worked the subject matter and, together with the Greeks, given him the idea of a trilogy, but also had transmitted the division of the scenes of the poem as well as some wordings, thoughts and further actions. This is especially true for the "Young Siegfried". The first scene in the smithy, the next in Faffner's forest and the one on Brünnhilde's rock, coincide perfectly with Fouqué; and in "Siegfried's Death" there are so many scenes that correspond to "Sigurd the Dragon Slayer" that one can hardly speak of arbitrary reminiscences only.³⁰

In counting the similarities Drews confronted the traditional question of the literary scholar: the quality of the writing. For a Wagner scholar it is of course Wagner's poetry that overshadows the "conventional clichés" and "clumsy poetry" of de la Motte Fouqué:

It looks as though Wagner in general adopted the use of alliteration from Fouqué. This appears in many ways in the "Hero of the North" where, for instance, the blacksmith Reigen, Wagner's Mime, sings in alliterative verses in Fouqué. It is obvious that these wooden, helplessly stammering, often even chattering, incoherent poems by Fouqué, with

Heldenspiel 'Sigurd der Schlangentöter', behandelt den Gegenstand des 'Ringes'. Fouqué war ein Freund seines Oheims Adolph, und es ist selbstverständlich, dass Wagner, als er an die Bearbeitung des Nibelungenstoffes ging, sich jener Dichtung erinnerte und sie von neuem vornahm. In der Tat sind denn auch die Übereinstimmungen zwischen Wagners Dichtung und derjenigen Fouqués so gross und auffallend, dass von einem blossen 'unbewussten Fortleben [...]', wie Koch in seiner Wagnerbiographie es annimmt (Koch II, 353), nicht wohl die Rede sein kann." Drews 1931, 101.

30 "Wagner hat Fouqués Trilogie bei der Ausarbeitung seiner Dichtung unmittelbar vor Augen gehabt, und ihr Verfasser hat ihm nicht bloss in stofflichen Hinsicht vorgearbeitet und ihm neben den Griechen den Gedanken der 'Trilogie' eingegeben, sondern ihm auch die Szeneneinteilung seiner Dichtung sowie gewisse Redewendungen, Gedanken und Zutaten geliefert. Das gilt besonders vom 'Jungen Siegfried'. Hier stimmen die ersten Szenen in der Schmiede, im Fafnerswalde und auf dem Brünnhildenfelsen vollkommen mit Fouqué überein, und auch in 'Siegfrieds Tod' gemahnt zu vieles an die entsprechenden Vorgänge in 'Sigurd der Schlangentöter', also dass dies auf blosser zufälliger Erinnerung beruhen könnte." Drews 1931, 101-102.

their clattering verses and trite expressions can in no way compete with the “Ring”.³¹

And yet Fouqué has his merits:

Only because the poetic power has such visible distance, we should not overlook nor keep quiet about the great influence Fouqué had on Wagner. Yet a not inconsiderable part of the rightly admired Wagner’s “condensation” of the Nibelungen material is already in place in the account of the old Romantic author.³²

Among later scholars neither Hans Meyer (1959) nor Robert Gutman (1967) was familiar with de la Motte Fouqué. Dieter Borchmeyer’s extensive study of Wagner’s theatre and theatricality (1982) made no observation of Fouqué’s dramaturgy. Martin Knust’s dissertation (2007) on acting and stage expression in Wagner understandably limits discussion of the dramaturgical questions. The authoritative biography by Martin Gregor-Dellin (1980) did not ignore de la Motte Fouqué, but only the minimum is said. Yet he does not hesitate to categorize the two authors:

After the discovery of the Nordic sagas and the German *Nibelungenlied*, it should have been the mission of the national Romantic movement to renew and dramatize the material. This task remained unaddressed at first – until the new composition of the Siegfried-Brünnhilde saga by Fouqué. Wagner followed him in many aspects, though not in decisive

31 “Scheint doch Wagner übrigens auch durch Fouqué zur Anwendung des Stabreims veranlasst worden zu sein. Dieser findet sich ja nämlich vielfach auch im ‘Held des Nordens’, wie denn z.B. der Schmied Reigen, Wagners Mime, bei Fouqué in stabgereimten Versen singt. Selbstverständlich kann die hölzerne, unbeholfen stammelnde, nicht selten geradezu ins Läppische verfallende Dichtung Fouqués mit ihren klappligen Versen und ihrer platten Ausdrucksweise sich in keiner Weise mit dem ‘Ring’ vergleichen.” Drews 1931, 102.

32 “Allein bei dem offensichtlichen Abstand in der dichterischen Kraft sollte man doch auch nicht übersehen und verschweigen, einen wie grossen Einfluss Fouqué auf Wagner ausgeübt hat. Ist doch ein nicht geringer Teil der mit Recht bewunderten ‘Verdichtung’ des verwickelten Nibelungenstoffes bei Wagner bereits auf die Rechnung des alten Romantikers zu setzen.” Drews 1931, 102.

matters. He went back to the beginnings of the narrated myth and what he added – the experience of his own time – makes the modernity, contemporariness and clarity of his design superior to all comparable reworkings.³³

Gregor-Dellin's eloquent formulation tended to identify what Wagner had used from Fouqué, but he repeated the rhetoric on Great Men: look ye and admire what Wagner has done. To some degree we can agree: Wagner understood that it would be more interesting to go back to the complexity of the stories and concentrate on Brünnhilde's and Wotan's relationship, on Siegmund's and Sieglinde's story, draw on the primeval forest rather than the chivalric courts and explore Wotan's relationship to the giants and dwarfs, gods and nature. Wotan suddenly became a contemporary prince, who by exploiting the natural resources of his land could elevate his own prestige, while recognizing that independent individuals with their feelings and strong wills would never be persuaded to serve another. Those who do not serve will create a new world but it is not a replica of the old but will create a world of their own.

Brynhildur's final monologue

Without making an exhaustive analysis I will close this article with a look at the final monologue composed by de la Motte Fouqué. Brynhildur orders a funeral pyre to be erected, then stabs herself with Gramur prior to having herself placed on the pyre beside Sigurd. Because of the familiarity of the scene as well as for reasons of space, Wagner's "Starke Scheite" from Brünnhilde's Immolation Scene is not

33 "Nach der Wiederentdeckung der nordischen Sagen und des deutschen Nibelungenlieds hätte es eine Aufgabe der nationalromantischen Bewegung im 19. Jahrhundert sein können, den Stoff zu erneuern und zu dramatisieren. Diese Aufgabe blieb zunächst ungelöst – bis auf die Neugestaltung der Siegfried-Brünnhilde-Sage durch Fouqué. Wagner ist ihm in vielem gefolgt, in Entscheidendem nicht. Er stieg tiefer hinab bis zu den Anfängen des erzählbaren Mythos, und er fügte etwas hinzu, was die Modernität, Gegenwartsnähe und Ausdeutbarkeit seines Entwurfs gegenüber allen vergleichbaren Bearbeitungen ausmacht: die Erfahrung seiner Zeit." Gregor-Dellin 1980, 248.

included here.³⁴

In the “Short Poem about Sigurd” from the *Poetic Edda* and in chapter 32 of the *Völsunga saga* Brynhild stabs herself and gives instructions for the building of Sigurd’s pyre; she bequeaths her gold to the maids and other attendants, meanwhile ordering that Sigurd’s three-year-old son, her servants and other men should be placed on the funeral pyre. Brynhild bleeds to death; the pyre is erected after her death, with the sword placed between her and Sigurd.

De la Motte Fouqué’s finale (Act 6, scene 2) follows the *Edda* and *Völsunga saga*. Brynhildur calls for the people to assemble, distributes her possessions and decides who must join her and Sigurd on this “bridal pyre”, directing even where they should be placed. She stabs herself and bleeds. And here Fouqué the dramatist takes over: Brynhildur wants to see the fire and flames. These are shown to her, a curtain at the back is raised, and everything has been arranged according to her orders. Bleeding, she approaches the “bridal-funeral pyre” and rushes onto it. In the poetic sources Brynhildur first dies and then is placed on the pyre, but in the theatre it is more effective to let her walk and talk while bleeding – a theatrical device that guarantees a melodramatic effect.

The actress who plays the role has to meet the challenges of how to act credibly like someone who is bleeding to death, how to see a vision and how to talk to the audience while simultaneously approaching the pyre in the back. The actresses of de la Motte Fouqué’s time were used to and capable of presenting suicidal monologues in the grand style. In the following text there are many elements which Wagnerians will recognize, such as the description of the handsome, deceased Sigurd and the return of the treasure to the Rhine. The lines which appear in the *Ring* almost untouched are italicized in Table 6. A particularly beautiful moment of fairytale-like unreality takes place with the reappearance of the three Norns – Wurdur, Werdandi and Skuld. These seers of the past, present and future emerge from the smoke to sing their final song.

34 The German – English libretto may be found at <http://www.murashv.com/opera/Götterdämmerung>

Table 6. de la Motte Fouqué's (1808) version of the Immolation Scene.

Brynhildur: (VI.ii.) <i>italics</i> indicate lines closest to those in the <i>Ring</i> bold indicates de la Motte Fouqué's dramatic instructions	Translation by the author
<p><i>Lass einen Scheiterhaufen hoch erbaun</i> <i>Auf nächt'ger Ebne, mein und Sigurds Bett,</i> Umher der Teppiche vielreiche Zier, Gefärbt von frisch vergossnem Menschenblut. Zu meiner Seiten lagert ihn, den Herrn Von Niederland, zu seiner Seiten die, So mit ihm fielen; sein dreijähr'ges Kind,</p> <p>Das zarte Knäblein Siegmund, dem zunächst Guttorm der Mörder; – dann zu seinem Haupt Zwei meiner Dienerschaft, zwei zu den Füßen</p> <p>Noch ausserdem der besten Falken zwei – O lieber Held, mit deinem Falkenaug'! O holder Jäger, ziehst nicht mehr zur Jagd! – Auch Gramur lieg' zweischneidig zwischen uns,</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Wie, als auf Hinderfall gemeinschaftlich Das Brautbett und vereinigt und getrennt. –</p> <p>Wenn arme Leut' aus Fürstentüren gehen, Schlägt hinter ihrem Tritt die Türe zu, Denn kein Gefolg geht nach – das treff'uns nicht.</p> <p>Nur klein ist unser Totenhochzeit Pracht</p> <p>Wenn acht der Zofen, acht der Diener auch, Die mir, der Braut, mein Vater einst geschenkt, Mit brennen in des Scheiterhaufens Glut, Zusamt den andern, die mit Sigurd fielen. –</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Hohl braust der Rhein durch dieser Nacht Ergraun.</p> <p>Schleuss auf den Wasserwall, zu tiefer Rhein,</p> <p><i>Denn teure Gabe wird dir bald zu eigen:</i> <i>Das Faffnersgold, versenkt durch diese zwei,</i> <i>Vorsichtig tief auf deinen Grund versenkt,</i> Doch ihnen nie Genuß, und nie der Nachwelt, Die, blöd erstaunend, nicht einmal vom Hort Der wundervollen Mär vertrauen wird. – Fluess, Herzensblut, doch fleuss nicht allzusnell! –</p>	<p><i>Let them build a high log pyre</i> <i>on the nightly earth, bed for me and Sigurd,</i> ornaments all around richly with mats, Coloured with newly shed human blood. On my side lay him, the Lord of the Netherland, and beside him all that with him shall pass away; his three-year son,</p> <p>the fair infant Siegmund; next to him Guttorm the murderer; then at his head two of my servants, two at his feet.</p> <p>In addition to these the two best falcons – O dearest Hero, with your falcon's eye! O fairest hunter, who no more goes to hunt! Lay also the two-edged Glamur between us,</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>like it was on Hinderfall, on the bridal bed When it united us, and separated us. –</p> <p>As the poor go through the princes' doors after their pace, do close the doors, Then none shall follow – this will not happen to us.</p> <p>Only small is the splendour of our death- wedding</p> <p>When eight of the maids, eight of the boys, those my father gave to me, as bride, shall burn in the fire and glow of the pyre With others, who fell with Sigurd. –</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Hollow rumbles the Rhine through gray night.</p> <p>From the water bank let flow to the deep Rhine <i>for the expensive gift shall soon be thy own:</i> <i>the Faffner-gold will sink through these two,</i> <i>carefully buried deep in thy depths,</i> Never enjoyment to you, never to posterity, who stupid stares, and never will believe The wonderful Tale about the Treasure. Flow, heart's blood, flow, but do not haste! –</p>

<p><i>Ich muß noch erst den Scheiterhaufen sehn, Drauf suchen meinen Liebbling. Brennt's noch nicht, das hochzeitliche Feuer? – Du stummer Gunnar, in deines Kleides Falten trüb verhüllt, Dich frag ich – ist mein Wille nicht geschehn? [VI.iii.] (Gunnar winkt. Ein großer Vorhang im Grunde rollt auf. Man sieht auf der nächtlichen Ebene den Scheiterhaufen brennend. Sigurds Leichnam darauf. Alles nach Brynhildis Worten geordnet.)</i></p> <p>Willkommen! – Auf der bleichen Lippe bebt Mir noch für euch, ihr Menschen, manch ein Wort – Die Wunde, strömend heiß, strömt es mit weg, Lässt mir die Seel' heraus vom dunkeln Wohnort, Und was auch zögern, wo mein Liebeslicht Hell lieblich dunkelt durch die finstre Nacht?</p> <p>(sich aus den Armen ihrer Frauen aufrichtend, und nach dem Scheiterhaufen zugehend.)</p> <p>Lasst nur; ich wanke nicht. Die Flamme leuchtet Mir zu dem letzten Pfade klar genug. Glühte nicht lockend deinem edlen Mut, O lieber Sigurd, Wafurlogas Flamme? Das ist der Brautgang, für uns zwei bestimmt: Durch drohende Glut zur süßen Liebesglut. Du kamst zu mir erst, nun komm' ich zu dir – <i>Lächelt, mein holder Bräut'gam? Wie lichtherrlich Die Funken fliegen, kränzend dir das Haupt!</i> Hinein! Dem glühnden Herzen tut's nicht weh!</p> <p>(stürzt sich in die Flamme. Gunnar lehnt sich in Högnes Arme, die anderen sinken erschreckt in die Knie.)</p> <p>(Aus den Rauchwolken des Scheiterhaufens gestalten sich die drei Nornen. Sie singen...)</p>	<p><i>Before I must first see the pyre, And seek my beloved there. Does it not yet burn, the marital fire? – You mute Gunnar, who grimly hide yourself in the skirt of your coat, – I ask you, has not my will been fulfilled? [VI.iii.] (Gunnar gives a sign. A large curtain in the back is raised. A pyre is seen burning on the ground, Sigurd's body upon it. All is arranged according to Brynhildis's words.)</i></p> <p>Welcome! – On my pale lips still quivers To you, people, each one of you a word. – The wound, warmly flowing, flows from me, loses free my soul from its dark habitation, and what still hesitates, where my love-light Gleaming will darken through the black night?</p> <p>(She rises from the arms of her handmaidens and approaches the pyre.)</p> <p>Just let me go, I stagger not. The flame lights up For me my last path, bright enough. Was it not an enthralling light for your noble heart, beloved Sigurd, the Wafurloga flame? This is the bridal procession, seen for us two: the haunting flare became a fire of love, once you came to me, now I come to you – <i>Do you smile, my beauteous groom? The sparks fly light and bright, as garland round your head!</i> In there! The glowing heart feels no pain!</p> <p>(She rushes into the flames. Gunnar leans on Högne's arm; the others kneel, horrified)</p> <p>(Out of the clouds of smoke from the pyre the three Norns emerge. They sing...)</p>
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The epoch of the soldier-poet de la Motte Fouqué

The observations made in this essay remind us of the strategies used to construct myths of Great Men: any fact that is expected to “diminish the glory” or appear shameful is hidden and no true follower should unveil them. But not even the works of genius come from an empty head; such persons have a background in strong experience (“Erlebnis”) and

a clear reason to return to that experience and draw on it. And it is interesting that often some authors of “popular works” have a great ability to affect an “open and naïve soul”, that is, a young and emotionally lively person. And it may be just at that moment that art intervenes and makes its impact. This overview has brought us closer to the schoolboy Richard Wagner, who according to his memoirs became fully excited about contemporary melodramas. It is the same Richard Wagner who became far more deeply enthralled with de la Motte Fouqué's works than he later admitted in public.

Little wonder that de la Motte Fouqué's world was relevant to his contemporaries: Europe had just lived through the Napoleonic wars, a time when life was unstable and unpredictable; even the nobility had to re-orientate itself to many new situations, and men had to show unprecedented courage and dynastic loyalties, sometimes against their will. Noblewomen lived through many “dangerous moments”, but in exceptional circumstances they could also use alternative strategies, such as dressing like men in order to do the unconventional. Turbulence was part of all lives and social relations. De la Motte Fouqué had no difficulty in recognizing his own experiences within the worlds of the Nordic sagas.

De la Motte Fouqué deserves his place in Wagner's narrative, and not only for poetic or metrical reasons,³⁵ but also as the one who provided the macro-dramaturgy for the second half of the *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, whose source list must permanently include *Sigurd der Schlagentöter*. A close look at its dramatic situations reveals the adventurous freedom of young upper-class officers for whom ladies wait in mountain castles and horses ride through fires large and small. The men compete whenever possible, but they also cool off under shade trees and let their stories flow. They are spurred on by their mothers' ambitions, like Gunnar whose mother Grimhildis wants to ensure

35 See Schmidt 2000a. The Wikipedia article on *Nibelungenlied* states the following: “Wichtiger als das Werk selbst ist aus heutiger Sicht seine Wirkung auf Richard Wagner, der im *Ring des Nibelungen* viel von Fouqué übernommen hat, ja sogar bezüglich des Versbaus und des Sprachrhythmus als Fouqué's Schüler betrachtet werden kann.”

that the crown passes to him and not to the talented brother-in-law. Brotherly ties and oaths preserve the honorary rules that were still in operation in the early nineteenth century; well-born women were conscious of rank, which was determined by the valour of their spouses. But young embarrassed husbands (like Gunnar, Högne and Sigurd) also had to keep council and encourage each other, whenever someone's wife remained immobile, mute and sleeping on the bed in her armour, like Brynhildr.

The innocent princess Gudruna, who has lost her son and husband, withdraws to the forest; but the other princess, the one who has given herself to the most valiant warrior, was forced to marry a less honourable man, and she wants revenge. In *Sigurd* the two female characters fit two different types: one is a tragic young mother and the other is a fierce, but noble Fury. Such figures certainly appeared in Europe during the Napoleonic wars, although they also fit the female stereotypes on stage. De la Motte Fouqué showed considerable compassion for Brynhildur's character and, as Wagner did later, fantasized about a woman who loves the author's fictive alter ego so much that she will sacrifice herself for him.

The moment in Wagner's life when he turned to the adventurous fiction of the *Völsunga saga* in 1848 was the moment when the "first round" of his life was over: everything around him and his career had collapsed; he was a revolutionary in exile and he needed a new beginning. It was a good moment to return to his favourite childhood stories to renew the early sources of his boyhood energy. We are the beneficiaries of his capacity for doing so.

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Wagnerism as Participatory Culture: Nordic Perspectives

HANNU SALMI

Richard Wagner's oeuvre and its cultural ramifications comprise a unique case in the cultural history of Europe. Wagner's music dramas were discussed all over the continent, while his ideas and plans became objects of heated debate and remained threshold issues in cultural circles until the First World War. The question of Wagner's legacy has been discussed in numerous publications in recent decades, but still there are many unsolved or only partly illuminated problems. This essay continues the discussion I initiated in my *Wagner and Wagnerism in Nineteenth-Century Sweden, Finland, and the Baltic Provinces: Reception, Enthusiasm, Cult* (2005), which concentrated on Wagnerism and Wagner activity in the Baltic Sea region during the nineteenth century. With any composer, it is intriguing to consider not only the composition of his/her audience, but also the role of the audience as part of the music-making process. This is particularly interesting in the case of Wagnerism, since Wagner fans were often described as an especially devoted group of listeners. Who really listened to Wagner's music and experienced his music dramas? Who were the audience members and where did they come from?

In music histories the audience has often remained in the shadows, as an anonymous collective. As a first research strategy, the audience might be approached by studying the availability of music and music dramas. This viewpoint emphasizes the conditions for the possibility of musical consumption rather than what was in fact heard and listened to. It stresses the question of what kind of music was avail-

able.¹ Following this idea, one can trace arrangements for domestic use by studying music library collections, salon music catalogues and sheet music, repertoires of military bands and soirée orchestras and, of course, the programmes of theatres and opera houses. But what happened on these occasions or in moments of musical consumption? As a second strategy, it is possible to locate newspaper columns and reviews and try to assess critically what can be concluded on the basis of reports written by special music recipients, the critics. This strategy can be enriched by trying to find ordinary music lovers who have commented on their experiences in their diaries, letters and memoirs. The further back in history the historian delves, the more difficult it is to retrieve this information. My previous assessment of Wagnerism was based on both of these strategies. This essay develops these points of departure further and concentrates on the very idea of participation, namely the role of the audience in the case of Wagner's oeuvre. In what ways did audiences of the past participate in the process of music-making and/or in what ways did they participate in creating music culture outside concert halls and opera houses? The question itself is broad, but I will draw particularly on Nordic examples.

This essay has been inspired by recent studies on social media, especially by the works of the media theorist Henry Jenkins. In his *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006) and *Fans, Bloggers and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture* (2006), Jenkins has pointed out the paradigmatic change to understanding an audience as interactive spectators. Instead of being passive recipients, audiences are able to "archive, annotate, appropriate and recirculate media content".² It is obvious, of course, that this idea has particular relevance in the age of the internet, but I argue that it has historical currency as well, especially considering that, in the nineteenth century, the media world was in tremendous flux, which also meant that the audience could have a more active role than before.

1 On the role of the possible in historical analysis, see Salmi 2011, 171–187.

2 Jenkins 2006a, 1; Jenkins 2006b, 3.

Since Jenkins's studies, the notion of participatory culture has been developed in several books, including *The Participatory Cultures Handbook* (2012), edited by Aaron Delwiche and Jennifer Jacobs Henderson. In their introduction, the editors identify four phases of participatory culture and place the first one, "Emergence", in the period 1985–1993, arguing that the "global communication landscape was already beginning to manifest signs of impending transformation".³ The culture of computer networks lowered "barriers for artistic expression and civic engagement". Members of a participatory culture "believe their contributions matter".⁴ It can be argued, however, that global communication networks started their explosive rise already in the first half of the nineteenth century when high-speed presses made the printing of newspapers both quick and inexpensive. This happened in parallel with the rise of a bourgeois music culture. Electric overland telegraphs and underwater cables accelerated the speed of communication during the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s.⁵ These decades were decisive for Richard Wagner's European-wide, and in fact global, fame. The expansion of the public sphere also made it possible for his supporters to express themselves and possibly even influence the transformation of music culture.

In light of these thoughts, it is intriguing to focus on the "Wagner audience", which has often been described as a special case among concertgoers: there seems to be a persistent representation of the audience that listens to Wagner.⁶ First of all, Wagner listeners are often depicted as Wagnerians – fans or devotees who are somewhat different as compared, for example, to those who listen to Johann Sebastian Bach or Felix Mendelssohn. This interpretation seems to insinuate that Wagner is a cult figure and, hence, his audience is especially active. Opera productions too have referred to this discourse. It was referred

3 Delwiche & Jacobs Henderson 2012, 4.

4 Ibid., 3.

5 Osterhammel 2014, 31–37.

6 See, for example, Daniel 2015, 153.

to by the Danish director Kasper Holten in his production of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in Copenhagen in 2006. *Götterdämmerung* starts with the three Norns weaving the rope of destiny and singing of the past, present and future. In Holten's interpretation the Norns are Wagnerians who not only listen to *Götterdämmerung*, but also try to understand the complex plot; they cite previous Wagner books and read the handout of the Copenhagen performance. One of the Wagnerians even shows an image of the original set of the Bayreuth performance in 1876, almost as if to anticipate the conservative criticism that the performance of 2006 might arouse. It is almost as if Holten had the idea of incorporating criticism of his own work into his interpretation at a meta-level.⁷ At the same time, Holten's *Götterdämmerung* leaves room for the idea that Wagnerians are particularly eager to participate in the performances of the works.

It is obvious that there is a gendered layer in Kasper Holten's interpretation: the Norns, and the Wagnerians, are women. This may allude to the role women have played in the history of Wagnerism since the nineteenth century. Furthermore, what seems to be the argument is that Wagnerians do not take anything for granted, but rather actively debate possible interpretations. They are participating in the process of meaning-making. In this sense, as audience members they *create* culture since culture needs to be interpreted. Culture involves interpretative work. To me, it seems that Kasper Holten is arguing that Wagnerism is a participatory culture by nature, and also that, in its essence, culture is communicative and has to involve participation.

Infectious Wagner and the Wagnerian party

This aspect of activity, emphasized by Holten's view, is interesting if we look at the accounts of Wagner's work in his own time. There was a nineteenth-century discourse that stressed the infectious side of Wagner's music and worldview. Wagner was often personified as

⁷ See the DVD release of the production, *The Copenhagen Ring: The Complete DVD Set*. Decca 2008.

a contagion. In the nineteenth-century press, especially in humorous magazines, his music was described as an assault, a physical invasion of the body of the listener, as in the famous caricature (Figure 1).

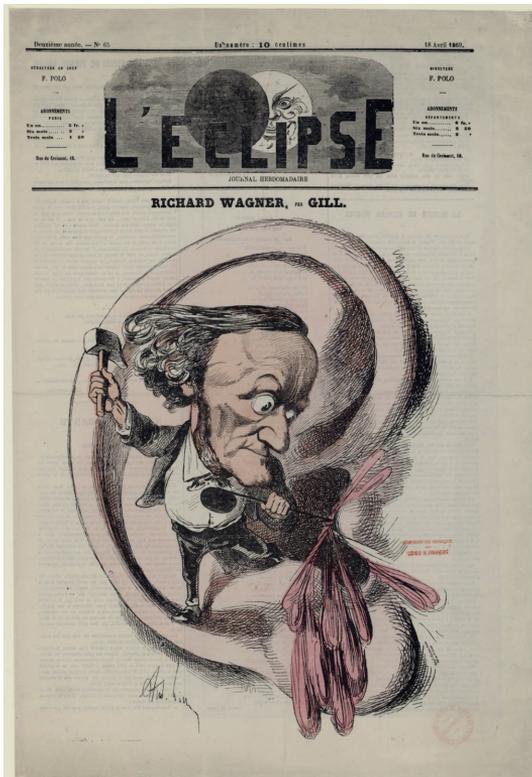


Figure 1. André Gill's (1840–1885) caricature of Richard Wagner in the French magazine *L'Éclipse* 18 April 1869. Source: gallica.bnf.fr/ Bibliothèque nationale de France.

This image is probably one of the most famous of the Wagner caricatures. In contrast to Wagner's own emphasis on drama, here it is his music that is presented as violent and harmful to the ear of the listener. In this conception the listener is by no means an active participant, but rather a passive victim who has to withstand the overwhelming waves of music. There were also other discourses about Wagner's music in the nineteenth century. One of these was a representation of total incomprehension. In his review of *Tannhäuser* in the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* in 1876, the critic Wilhelm Bauck likened Wagner's

sonic works to Chinese music.⁸ Modern music was so incomprehensible to him that it was like a product of an unknown culture, or at least this is what he argued. Four years earlier, the premiere of *Der fliegende Holländer* had left the impression that the singers were shouting. *Aftonbladet* claimed that the music was “ett kaos af skrik och signaler”, a chaos of shrieks and signals.⁹ These descriptions refer to some kind of involuntary audience membership whereby the audience is by no means active and would like to become a non-audience.

These strong emotions can be seen against a wider backdrop given that, at the same time, very active, even hysterical audiences were seen. Franz Liszt was famous for his almost supernatural magnetism that drew people into the auditorium. Heinrich Heine coined the term *Lisztomania* to describe the fanatical audiences who participated in the performances and were ready to express their emotions openly.¹⁰ Fervent admirers fought over locks of Liszt’s hair and even collected his spent cigars from the street.¹¹

The examples given above of Wagner audiences and responses to his music differ from this, however. These highly stereotypical images are part of the cultural struggle around Wagner, which was visible, and loud, from the late 1840s onwards. The later Finnish music teacher and music historian Martin Wegelius described this struggle in his unpublished Wagner biography, which was probably written in the 1880s and 1890s. Wegelius wrote:

From *Tannhäuser* onwards, one can speak of a Wagnerian party, and of an organized opposition, albeit this opposition did not become fashionable until the Year of Revolutions in 1848, and only in the fifties, following the publication of *Das Judenthum in der Musik*, did it take on the character of a spiteful and merciless persecution.¹²

8 *Dagens Nyheter* 23 August 1876.

9 *Aftonbladet* 25 January 1872.

10 Martens 1922, 458–459; Gooley 2009, 203.

11 Walker 1987, 371–372.

12 Martin Wegelius’s “Wagner-biografi” (s.a.), 52–53. An unpublished manuscript in the

Wegelius speaks of a “Wagnerian party”. It is important to note that the idea of a “party” is very typical of the nineteenth century. The “party”, a devoted group of people working for particular political goals, has its own history. The period after the French Revolution was a time of flourishing party politics in general. Thus, during the nineteenth century, it was customary to found a party or a society if there were particular political or social goals to be forwarded and advanced.

The view of a particular “Wagnerian party” needs, of course, certain goals that the party is seen to support and aims for the future that it tries to realize. If these goals were to be achieved, there was obviously a need for active participation and active party members. The struggle and fight over Wagner’s music was a contemporary cultural representation, but it can be argued that Wagner himself was happy to support this kind of activity. As we know, in the end Wagner did not get support for his Bayreuth project from the state and had to resort to the industry of his fans. In this sense, Wagner himself was in favour of participatory culture and wanted to lower the barrier to participating in his artistic endeavour.

Already in the 1840s, Wagner became known as an artist of the future. He himself contributed substantially to this interpretation with the writing of *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*, which appeared in 1849, a year after Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had published their Communist Manifesto. While Karl Marx set out a vision for the future of society, Wagner aimed at sketching the future of art. They both shared a particular utopian emphasis. It seems reasonable to argue that already in the 1840s Wagner had begun to compose his works for ensembles, stages and circumstances that did not exist. To be able to realize his plans, he needed a theatre of his own, and for this he needed active supporters. Wagner forged his works for the future, which, at the same time, restricted the mobility of his art. We know that when his works were performed in the 1850s, local opera houses took the liberty of arranging them for existing resources; otherwise, it would not have been possible

to perform them in the first place. When the Riga German Theatre performed *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* in the 1850s, they employed an ensemble of just over 20 musicians.¹³ Of course, there were extra hands hired from the local military band; nonetheless, there must have been a rather chamber music-like quality to the sound. On the other hand, this particular circumstance meant that Wagner's works were by no means ready-made but required a great deal of local creative participation.

Wagner's music was soon described as *Zukunftsmusik*. This irritated him because he wanted to stress drama, not music as such. But the idea of *Zukunftsmusik*, or *framtidsmusik* as it was called in Sweden, *tulevaisuusmusiikki* in Finland, became persistently associated with Wagner's work. In the 1990s, when I was preparing my book on Wagnerism, I read numerous Swedish, Finnish, Estonian and Latvian newspapers, and was amazed to find how many news items appeared on Richard Wagner's future plans. In the 1850s in particular, Wagner's activities were under constant scrutiny. In Riga, the capital of Livonia, present-day Latvia, *Rigasche Stadtblätter* announced as early as January 1856 that Wagner's new opera would be entitled *Die Walkyren*.¹⁴ This news is astonishingly early given that the opera's premiere came fourteen years later – in 1870. *Rigasche Zeitung* printed the following notice on 20 February 1857:

Richard Wagner is even now assembling in Zurich suitable singers and musicians in order to put on his great tetralogy *Die Nibelungen* in a theatre especially constructed for the purpose. This great composition will not be complete until the summer of 1859.¹⁵

This news item is even more illuminating than the previous one. In 1857, it was common knowledge that Wagner was preparing an opera tetralogy and that he wanted to build a theatre for its performance.

¹³ See, for example, *Rigaer Theater-Almanach für das Jahr 1853* (1852).

¹⁴ *Rigasche Stadtblätter* 12 January 1856. For further details, see Salmi 2005, 78.

¹⁵ *Rigasche Zeitung* 20 February 1857. The English translation is quoted from Salmi 2005, 78.

The theatre was scheduled for completion in 1859, yet, as we know, it was finished only in 1876. All this confirms, of course, that Wagner had formulated long-term plans. It is obvious that at a time when there was no international copyright law to regulate press journalism, news items were copied from other newspapers. The editors of *Rigasche Zeitung* had clearly read German newspapers and copied information from there. It is probable too that Wagner understood how to use press publicity for his own purposes. He was living in a time of huge expansion in printing technology, and the transformation of the public sphere had already been efficiently used by virtuosi like Niccolò Paganini and Franz Liszt, whose spectacular concerts and various private escapades were reported everywhere, including Mexico and Australia, New Zealand and India. Today, with access to digital newspaper archives on every continent, this cornucopia of publicity is easy to find.¹⁶ Newspapers were indeed essential proponents of music culture, and they participated in generating emotional attachment to celebrities like Paganini, Liszt and Wagner, whose deeds were regularly reported by the press.

Wagner and his friends

Wagner consciously used publicity to promote his project, to stimulate those who were interested and to find supporters. Through the press, his plans became known to the general public. In his *Richard Wagner: Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand* (2010), Nicholas Vazsonyi argues that Wagner marketed himself quite efficiently and describes how Wagner made himself a celebrity, using every available means of self promotion: autobiography, journal articles, short stories, newspaper announcements, letters, even his operas themselves.¹⁷ The use of the concept of “brand” sounds a bit too modern for the nineteenth-century context, but we know that cattle had been branded for centuries and that the mass market of industrial products made it necessary to

16 For further details on Paganini’s and Liszt’s press publicity, see Salmi 2016, 135–153.

17 Vazsonyi 2010.

burn or brand products with the logo of the producer. The rise of mass culture in the age of industrialization made it necessary to stress individuality and try to mark differences in comparison to others. Perhaps Wagner had a similar feeling as he tried to make a career in a society which was in continuous flux, under constant change.

Vazsonyi also has an interesting interpretation of Wagner's views on the audience, which is valuable from the perspective of participation. According to Vazsonyi, Wagner did not use the term "Wagnerianer", but called his supporters his friends, *Meine Freunde*: "Wagner describes these people as independent minded men and women who display an aristocracy of taste that separates them from the mainstream."¹⁸ This mainstream was, for Wagner, "the faceless body that comprises contemporary audiences". Vazsonyi points out that, in these instances, Wagner referred to them with the word *Publikum*, but he also employed a more pejorative word – "rabble" (*Pöbel*).¹⁹ It is often noted that the rise of the "rabble" took place during the French Revolution and meant the lower classes in particular. It seems, however, that Wagner referred to a middle class that was somewhat acquainted with the arts and whose members looked for relaxation after a working day. Vazsonyi concludes: "While they possess the education and the means to attend opera, and the social urge to see and be seen, they have no independent taste. Wagner understood that this public is a product of modernity and is sensitive to the new dynamics of the public sphere, dominated by print media, and the developing phenomenon of the popular consumer."²⁰ I would like to stress that in addition to these "consumers", Wagner wanted to find active "friends" who would be participants in musical life and energetically promote his cause.

Wagner appears to have been particularly keen to increase the number of his devoted supporters, his friends. During the years of the German *Reichsgründung*, Wagner cherished the hope of associating the

18 Ibid., 129.

19 Ibid., 130.

20 Ibid.



Figure 2. Richard Wagner among his friends in Bayreuth. In front, from left to right: Siegfried and Cosima Wagner, Amalie Materna, Richard Wagner; behind, from left to right: Franz von Lenbach, Emil Scaria, Franz Fischer, Fritz Brand, Hermann Levi. From the centre to the right: Franz Liszt (at the piano), Hans Richter, Franz Betz, Albert Niemann, Countess Schleinitz, Countess Usedom and Paul Joukowsky. This reproduction is based on a painting by Georg Papperitz (1846–1918). Source: gallica.bnf.fr/ Bibliothèque nationale de France.

destiny of his own project with that of Germany, and he made contacts with Otto von Bismarck, albeit without tangible results. Having met the Iron Chancellor on 3 May 1871, only to leave Berlin empty-handed, Wagner immediately embarked on soliciting popular support in concrete terms. By 12 May, he had written a letter for circulation, *Ankündigung der Festspiele*, in which he publicly presented his Bayreuth plan. The purpose was to build a large Festspielhaus in Bayreuth before the summer of 1873.²¹

After 1871, it was more and more important for Wagner to obtain support from his friends. Thus, the founding of Wagner societies can be interpreted as setting a standard for participatory culture among Wagner fans. As no support from the state was available, this network

21 For further details on the relationship between Wagner and Bismarck, see Salmi 1999, 159–165.

of societies seems to have been the only means by which the future of the whole festival could be guaranteed. The collection of aid for the Festival Theatre in Bayreuth began through the Wagner societies in 1871. Wagner's supporters, his friends, could thus participate in the creation of the *Kunstwerk der Zukunft*.

In 1877, soon after the first Bayreuth festival, a general *Patronat-Verein* was founded to serve as the parent organization of the societies. According to the first paragraph of its by-laws, the societies' central task was to work for the arrangement and fulfilment of the festival by following Richard Wagner's vision. The second paragraph stated that the societies should work in two areas; on the one hand, they had to manage the financing so that an annual festival could be assured; on the other hand, their task was to disseminate knowledge about Wagner's art. It became important to increase awareness and educate festival audiences. This proved to be important for the activities of regional societies. The third paragraph defined the basics of the societies' economies, particularly annual membership fees and ticket prices of the Bayreuth festival. It was decided that the annual membership fee should be 100 German marks and the price of a ticket 100 marks. According to an additional clause, the societies were allowed to sell festival tickets to their members at a lower price than to non-members.²²

The interest in Wagner now spread rapidly through the activities of this internationally organized society. This machinery also reached the Baltic world, above all Finland and the Baltic provinces, but the *Patronat-Verein* apparently failed to find an agent in Sweden. However, in Sweden there was an active supporter of the Bayreuth circle in the person of Fredrik Vult von Steijern, who devoted himself to spreading the message of Wagnerism and who supported Wagnerian activities with personal donations. The role of the advocates and agents was accentuated in the late 1870s and 1880s. Every district had a leading person to represent the Bayreuth project: Vult von Steijern in Sweden, Richard Faltin and Martin Wegelius in Finland and Carl Friedrich

²² Veltzke 1987, 136–138.

Glasenapp in Livonia. These figures embodied Wagnerism in the Baltic world and were ready to spread the idea of Wagnerism as a participatory activity.²³

“Wagner’s iron will made it possible to realize the idea”, wrote Marie zu Hohenlohe later in her memoirs.²⁴ Without Wagner’s insistent vision the Bayreuth project would never have come into existence. During its opening in 1876, the Bayreuth Festival was a unique cultural event, and even the Emperor of Germany, Wilhelm I, honoured it with his presence. A surprise guest at the festival was the Emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro II, who was touring Europe at that time. Only Bismarck refused to attend. Of course, the most enthusiastic supporters of Wagner also came to the festival, including Friedrich Nietzsche, Wilhelm Tappert, Ludwig Nohl, Richard Pohl, Gottfried Semper and Karl Klindworth. Professional musicians came from all over the world. The most famous were the Norwegian Edvard Grieg and the Russian Pyotr Tchaikovsky. Grieg wrote a cycle of articles for the Norwegian paper *Bergensposten* and attended not only the events, but also the rehearsals.²⁵

In 1876 the Bayreuth Festival was widely noted in newspapers throughout Europe. The atmosphere of the festival was thus portrayed to those who could not make the journey to Germany. Almost all major newspapers on the shores of the Baltic Sea either sent reporters to Bayreuth, used their own local correspondents or cited German newspapers. For example, on 24 August 1876, the *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* in Stockholm published a translation of a feuilleton by Karl Frenzel, which had originally appeared in the Berlin *National-Zeitung* but with an introduction added to the text. The paper presented a very sarcastic picture of Wagner in which the Bayreuth Festival was principally seen as an event only for high society. According to Frenzel’s article, the festival was a significant cultural event on which the attention of the whole civilized world was focused. Frenzel’s article contains long

23 For more on the “agents” of Wagnerism, see Salmi 2005, 197–224.

24 Hohenlohe 1938, 172.

25 For more details, see Hartford 1980, 61.

lists of the celebrities seen at the event, including artists, writers, musicians, singers, scientists and politicians. Following the fashion pursued by the society diarists, he also called attention to those who were not present. “Where were Verdi, Gounod, Brahms and Joachim?” Instead, noticeably present were “the well-known aristocratic society ladies of Berlin, Vienna and St. Petersburg who constitute the essential moving force in Wagnerism”.²⁶ The presence of women was also noted by other contemporaries. I have previously conducted a quantitative analysis of Bayreuth tourism in the nineteenth century on the basis of visitors’ lists. Among the guests from Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Livonia and Courland, the proportion of women was notably high, 43 per cent.²⁷

Participatory Wagnerism

In Bayreuth the audience was not encouraged to be particularly interactive. However, the sheer amount of pilgrimage is evidence of participatory culture, typical of Wagner fandom. Wagner was able to arouse devotion among his audiences. In addition, it is important to note that Wagner was clever at giving his supporters a sense of participation. An illuminating example was the way the composer “orchestrated” the success of his *Kaisermarsch* in 1871. When Germany was unified under Prussian leadership, Wagner composed this march and completed it in March 1871. He had hoped that the piece could be selected as the national anthem of Germany. The *Kaisermarsch* was officially premiered in Berlin on 5 May 1871, Wagner himself conducting, in the presence of the Emperor and the Empress. In composing the work, Wagner had added to the score an instruction to be followed in the premiere: the work ended with a choral finale, but the chorus should not be placed onstage, but rather among the audience, thereby giving the work a spontaneous character and allowing the audience to join in the singing.

²⁶ *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 24 August 1876.

²⁷ Salmi 2005, 189.

Wagner understood the potential of a sing-a-long.²⁸ The performance was a success, but its final aims were not fulfilled. It was not given the status of an anthem, and Wagner did not receive any official financial support for his Bayreuth project. At this point, he again relied on the participation of his fans.

Already by the 1850s, Richard Wagner was known as a figure who aroused exceptional interest, devotion and passion among his audiences. There were also very strong representations of his work and of his supporters, and ultimately, it is difficult to tell how much the image of the audience was dominated by its individual members and the powerful representatives of the time. Still, the rising numbers of travellers to Bayreuth from different corners of the world, including from the Nordic countries, indicate the growth of Wagner's fame and the increase in the number of his supporters. Compared to the present day, of course, the participation in societal and tourist activities are rather mild manifestations of participatory culture if this notion is understood in the light of Henry Jenkins's thoughts. Still, as this essay has endeavoured to point out, it is important to pay attention to the modes of participation and the changing conditions of possibility for participation that were available and were consciously made available to audiences. Obviously, Wagner did not have social media at his disposal, but he used all other possible means to attract people's attention and increase social cohesion among his supporters. Through this organized Wagnerism, and through the participatory culture that it involved, Wagner succeeded not only in transforming nineteenth-century European culture into something new, but also in creating a culture of his own.

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Wagnerisms: An Overview of the European Wagner Reception with a Focus on the North

MARTIN KNUST

In 1842 Richard Wagner made his national breakthrough with the premiere of *Rienzi* in Dresden. He went from being hardly known, a composer with little experience and a *Kapellmeister* in a German backwater, to a prominent figure in Saxon, and consequently German, musical life. More national acclaim followed in 1868 when *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* had its premiere in Munich. Wagner became widely appreciated and considered as a national icon, including outside the small circles of musicians and music worshippers. These events predated his international breakthrough by some years, which took place at different times in different countries. During the 1860s and 1870s, the earthquake of Wagnerism, which had its epicentre in Germany, sent waves in all directions towards neighbouring countries and even more distant regions of the European continent.

Wagner's reception in Europe was multi-faceted. Of course, in the first instance it was the musicians, music critics and composers who discussed and used his works for their own purposes. But the dissemination of Wagner's music also became an issue across many other disciplines, including artists and philosophers, writers and psychologists, historians and theologians. Many artistic and theoretical disciplines became involved in and were influenced by his idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* and its underlying concept. Moreover, Wagner's works succeeded in conquering not only the experts, but also amateur audiences everywhere in Europe. Around 1900 his music dramas were performed virtually all over the continent; these included his middle and late works,

whose staging was a challenging, time-consuming and costly enterprise.

In this essay, I would like to give an overview of this pan-European dissemination process from a macro perspective. I will focus on the introduction of Wagner's works into the respective operatic repertoires,¹ consider the impact of his music on composers in different parts of Europe² and examine the Wagnerian reception among larger audiences. Geographically, the focus will be on the musical reception of Wagner's works in Sweden, Finland and the Baltic region. In addition, the Wagner reception in central, eastern, southern and western Europe will be outlined briefly.

The time of Wagner's international breakthrough was a period of fervent nationalism. Each country and each national group within a larger multinational state, such as Austria-Hungary, began honing its national identity through chauvinism or with historical constructions of "glorious pasts".³ Surprisingly, while Wagner himself was identified as a distinct representative of German nationalism, his works were considered nationalistic *per se*, yet not exclusively German. The political element in the Wagner reception cannot be overlooked, and to outline the nexus between it and German politics is inevitable in dealing with this topic. Over the past decades, many researchers have written about the Wagner reception in individual national contexts across Europe. An overview shows that the reception of his works differed in each context, based on the interpretation of a work's content and also on the particular audience, which is one of the most interesting dimensions of this topic. In France, for instance, Wagner influenced many writers

1 In all countries Wagner's music was played in concerts and salons well before an entire music drama was premiered. However, there is little empirical information about these early performances. Wagner himself regarded concerts as a necessary evil for disseminating his music, a means of raising interest in a complete theatrical production. In his view, without a stage, large parts of his music were incomprehensible as they did not convey his whole concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*. See Knust 2014, 12–15. This is why this essay will only consider complete stage productions. The Wagner reception in the mass media can only be touched on superficially here, as it would exceed the scope of this essay.

2 For more details on Wagner's reception among composers see Knust 2009, 27–52.

3 Hobsbawm 1990; on Finland, see Fewster 2006.

when his music was first introduced, starting with Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867) and continuing with the Symbolists. In Spain painters were inspired by his works, while in Germany and a number of other countries, dramatists were drawn to his productions. There were numerous discussions about what exactly was the most innovative and relevant aspects of his theoretical and practical work. For this reason, this essay challenges the existence of a single homogeneous “Wagnerism”. Instead, the different European Wagnerisms – by which I mean some of the central figures and features in a musical context – will be compared and the map of the European Wagner reception roughly outlined for the first time. Thereafter, the Swedish and Finnish Wagner receptions will be positioned on this map. The focus will be on the reception among composers with some brief looks at other artistic disciplines such as literature and the fine arts. The dates of first performances of Wagner’s dramas and the founding of Wagner societies in the respective countries will be presented as well as the intensity of the Wagner reception among the broader public. Chronologically, the focus will be on the beginning of the Wagner reception, that is, the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. In some cases, the later twentieth century will also be included.

The German-speaking countries

During Wagner’s lifetime, the musical world in Germany split between the *Wagnerianer* and the *Brahminen* or, in other words, between the New German school (the progressives) and those particularly associated with the “Brahmsian” tradition (the conservatives). Composers and intellectuals, who embraced Wagner’s works and ideas from the 1860s, deliberately sided with one or the other group and its inherent ideology. The German *Wagnerianertum* of this period was personified by Hans von Wolzogen (1848–1938), the founder of the *Bayreuther Blätter*. He was a controversial figure abroad because of his chauvinistic and

arrogant Teutonic attitudes, which showed in his texts;⁴ even the fatal introduction of racist thinking into the Wagner reception came from one of von Wolzogen's essays. Von Wolzogen declared Wagner to be the regenerator of German art and of art itself. He constructed an historical cultural model that culminated in Wagner's musical works and theoretical texts. It appears, however, that Wagner himself was not well pleased with von Wolzogen's provocations.⁵ After Wagner's death, von Wolzogen's journal became a forum for racist ideology, and his activities were taken up by Wagner's widow, Cosima (1837–1930). This branch of the German Wagner reception, which had its centre in the Wagner family, is embodied in such dubious figures as the racists Ludwig Schemann (1852–1938) and Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855–1927) and leads directly to the darkest chapter of German history. Even though this kind of pre-fascist *Wagnerianertum* was a kind of radical cell in the beginning, it cannot be denied that it had a certain influence on both the German and the international Wagner reception.

There were many composers in the German-speaking countries who followed Wagner's concept of drama and his compositional innovations. In this as in other respects his work proved to transcend the borders of the most varied musical genres and styles. The most prominent composers in the Wagnerian mould are, among many others, the symphonists Anton Bruckner (1824–1896) and Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), the Lied composer Hugo Wolf (1860–1903), Engelbert Humperdinck (1854–1921) with his fairytale operas, Felix Draeseke (1835–1913) with his monumental oratorio *Christus*, the New German Richard Strauss (1864–1949), the conservative Hans Pfitzner (1869–1949), the progressive Franz Schreker (1878–1934), as well as the avant-garde composers of

4 Schwartz 1999, 11.

5 On several occasions he expressed the hope that the *Bayreuther Blätter* might soon die; see, for instance, the entries on 25 January 1881, 10 and 22 February 1882 in Wagner 1977, vol. 2, 675, 900, 1110. On 7 April 1882 Wagner scoffed at one of von Wolzogen's essays and said that the text appeared to have been written while von Wolzogen was "intoxicated with hashish" (ibid., 926). Wagner distanced himself from late nineteenth-century anti-Semitism, for instance, in a letter to Angelo Neumann, written 23 February 1881 (quoted in ibid., 1234), and refused to sign an anti-Semitic petition of Bernhard Förster on 6 July 1880 (ibid., 564).

the Second Viennese School, Arnold Schönberg (1874–1951), Alban Berg (1885–1935) and Anton Webern (1883–1945). It is impossible to reduce all these personalities and their works to a common denominator. As a matter of fact, Wagner's declamatory settings of vocal lines were not imitated abroad, but the style was consistently heard in Germany, where people intuitively understood that his *Sprechgesang* was closely related to the declamation of dramatic actors.⁶ In addition, his theoretical texts, which were written in German, were read and discussed more extensively in the German-speaking areas than in other parts of Europe; that both Wagner's manner of composing and his at times long-winded way of expressing himself as a writer caused comprehension problems for people whose native language was not German is beyond question. However, in Northern Europe this language barrier was perhaps not as impenetrable as one might think because German was – and still is – widely spoken in Europe's north and east and has been since the time of the Hanseatic League. When the first volumes of Wagner's *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen* were published in the 1870s, they were ordered and read in the North as quickly as in Germany.⁷

The West: *wagnérisme*, Wagnerismo and Wagnerites – Crossing the Atlantic Ocean

Of the different Wagner receptions perhaps the French *wagnérisme* is the best-known. It has primarily been seen as a phenomenon of French literature, culture, social and theatre history rather than as part of France's music history. Wagner himself had strong contacts in France, and his works were embraced by a large number of French writers, such as Charles Baudelaire and Catulle Mendès (1841–1909), as well as by composers.⁸ Among the latter, César Franck (1822–1890)

6 About this connection see Knust 2007.

7 Salmi 2005, 148.

8 A short survey on compositional *wagnérisme* is given in Döhring 1997, 282–293.

and Camille Saint-Saëns (1834–1921) are the most well-known today, even though Vincent d’Indy (1851–1931) is a central figure in French music history because of his work as a composition teacher at the Schola cantorum in Paris. In his day d’Indy was the most influential of all French Wagner adepts. Wagner’s *Parsifal* inspired d’Indy’s opera *Fervaal*, based on the poem “Axel” by the Swedish writer Esaias Tegnér (1782–1846). Originally, its action takes place in Scandinavia, but d’Indy, who copied Wagner in being his own librettist, relocated the story to southern France in the eighth century.⁹ D’Indy was a fervent nationalist and anti-Semite. He emphasized his use of Wagner’s compositional methods by publishing tables with the leitmotifs of his opera.¹⁰ Despite d’Indy’s nationalistic attitude, his contemporaries understood the title role of his *Fervaal* as a universal, transnational hero.¹¹ Around the turn of the century, numerous Wagnerian-type operas were composed in France, including Ernest Chausson’s (1855–1899) *Le roi Arthus*, Emmanuel Chabrier’s (1841–1894) *Gwendoline* and *Briseïs*, Franck’s *Hulda*, Paul Dukas’s (1865–1935) *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* and Gabriel Fauré’s (1845–1924) *Pénélope*.

The first work of Wagner performed internationally outside the German-speaking areas was *Tannhäuser*. Already during the second half of the 1850s, *Tannhäuser* had various national premieres in Belgium, the Netherlands and, most remarkable, even as far away as the United States.¹² These performances, however, were not seen as

9 On the genesis and content of *Fervaal*, see Schwartz 1999.

10 Ross 2003, 209–213.

11 Suschitzky 2001/02, 256.

12 See the table at the end of this essay; this geographical leap is remarkable in several respects. One is that no Wagner opera had been produced at any of the neighboring larger opera houses outside the German-speaking area, such as Paris, Milan or Budapest. Moreover, the first Wagner productions outside the German-speaking area (including Paris 1861) relied on the resources of the German productions, including not only singers, orchestral players and conductors but also stage sets and decor. There was no such transfer of staff and stage elements to the United States. Like a grand opera, *Tannhäuser* needs significant financial resources. For that reason the Swiss premiere of *Tannhäuser* in Zurich 1853 became a festival. And finally, these performances are remarkable because Wagner was not yet a big name in the 1850s, not even in Germany.

marking an international breakthrough and have been largely ignored, even by Wagner researchers. The beginning of the Wagner performance history outside the European German-language area is linked instead to the infamous Paris premiere of *Tannhäuser* in 1861. This event came about because Countess Pauline von Metternich wanted a French premiere of a complete Wagner opera. It was Napoleon III who sponsored the performance. Wagner was thus admired by members of the aristocracy and not only in Europe, but also overseas. The Brazilian emperor Dom Pedro II was a member of the Bayreuth *Patronat-Verein* and attended the premiere of the *Ring* cycle in 1876. In France as well as in South America Wagner made his entrée through the high nobility (*Hochadel*), which might well have shaped his image in these countries.¹³ In France this connection curbed the Wagner enthusiasm, as did the hostilities between France and Germany. Among the first Wagner texts translated into French was his malicious *Eine Kapitulation*, a farce in which he mocked the French theatre after the German military victory over France in 1871. It was thus not only during the *Tannhäuser* premiere in 1861 that performances of his work met resistance in France. In 1887 *Lohengrin* was premiered in Paris, and the performance resulted in further scandal as it did again in 1891.¹⁴ However, between 1900 and 1914, his music dramas gained a foothold on the French operatic stage.¹⁵ The important role of politics in the French Wagner reception cannot be overlooked, given the military conflicts between France and its neighbour; wars and the links between Wagner and the French aristocracy were decisive for the course of events in the initial phase of the French Wagner reception.

This situation does not apply to the beginning of the Wagner reception on the Iberian Peninsula. Here, the composer's theoretical texts and music dramas were introduced into the public discussion during the 1860s, after the Paris premiere of *Tannhäuser*. Yet some decades

13 As Schwartz (1999, 4) states for France.

14 *Ibid.*, 1, 11–12.

15 *Ibid.*, 12–18.

passed before the first performances of his works took place. Two conditions in particular were crucial for the Spanish and Portuguese *Wagnerismo*. First, the musical infrastructure was not as developed as it was in central Europe; there were few large orchestras and few opera houses capable of performing the late-romantic repertoire. Second, German was a language that was little spoken or understood. Instead, French was the foreign language most generally learned, and the French influence on Spanish culture is evident in how Wagner was received. Newspapers and journals dealt with French translations of his works, not with the German originals, and with French discussions about Wagner. In other words, French *wagnérisme* became the model – or the filter – for the Spanish and Portuguese receptions. It should not be overlooked that the Catalanian Wagner adherents in particular became very active after the turn of the century. Plans circulated to build a festival theatre for Wagner performances. This would have been the first purpose-built theatre for *Parsifal* after the exclusive performance rights of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus expired. These plans came to nothing; nevertheless, Barcelona became the very first theatre to perform *Parsifal* legally in the hours immediately after the expiration of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus rights.¹⁶

British Wagnerism was a relatively late and relatively little polarized phenomenon, different from the ardent discussions that took place in France and Germany. Around the time of Wagner's third visit to England, in 1877, his side in Germany's artistic schism had been victorious, and during the decades between 1890 and the First World War some one hundred volumes on Wagner's work were published in English and thousands of tickets for the Bayreuth Festival were sold in England.¹⁷ Even though a certain political variety among Wagner enthusiasts existed at the turn of the century – from a socialist reading of the *Ring* by George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) to the pseudo-religious texts of David Irvine (active 1897–1912) – the English attitude towards

16 Ortiz-de-Urbina 2013.

17 Blissett 1959, 312–314, 322.

Wagner's music was somewhat moderate. The most productive and skilled English writer on Wagner during the first half of the twentieth century, Ernest Newman (1868–1959), represents this attitude, which blended admiration with criticism of Wagner as a man and an artist.¹⁸

At the same time as Wagner was conquering England, his works entered the repertoire of the United States. A complete performance of a Wagner opera had taken place as early as 1859, but more continuous performance activity began only in the 1870s. Wagner's works and texts were discussed in the United States during the 1880s, and from 1884 to 1891 his works even dominated the repertoire at the Metropolitan Opera in New York.¹⁹ As in other parts of the world, his works were considered manifestations of German nationalism, especially by German emigrants to the United States.²⁰ At the same time Wagner's music appealed generally to Americans' patriotic spirit. Some American Wagner adepts even went so far as to claim that his works embodied the spirit of their young nation better than the spirit of old Europe, and by the end of the century the idea of creating a Wagner festival theatre in New York was being discussed.²¹ What is interesting about the arrival of Wagner's works in the New World was the deliberation over whether or not his art was democratic. In the US the image of the late Wagner was prevalent – the one who sought Maecenas among the richest people of the country to support Bayreuth and who composed his *Großer Festmarsch zur Eröffnung der hundertjährigen Gedenkfeier der Unabhängigkeitserklärung der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika* (WWV 110, 1876) for the impressive amount of 5,000 dollars – hardly the image of the young democratic revolutionary Wagner of the March Revolution and the Dresden Insurrection of 1848–1849.²² This bourgeois image might, however, have been congruent with the early Wagner image in South America.

18 Ibid., 317–322.

19 Peretti 1989, 28–32.

20 Albo & Gimber 2013.

21 Peretti 1989, 33.

22 Ibid., 34.

The South: Conquering the homeland of opera

Wagner's works met with hesitation in Italy. The well-known example of Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901), who showed resentment of Wagner's opulent orchestration and the structural complexity of his music, spoke for many. In Verdi's time opera was considered a genuine Italian genre, and Wagner's way of composing vocal lines as well as his orchestration and (pseudo-) polyphonic structures were not seen as appropriate models for Italian composers. Wagner was aware of this image and had distanced himself from it as a young composer.²³ For him, it was not only a personal triumph, but also a national success when the first Italian performance of one of his operas, *Lohengrin*, took place in Bologna in 1871. Two of Wagner's letters published in his *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen* show him expressing gratitude to the Italians for this premiere.²⁴ In both he emphasized the differences between his opera and the Italian tradition.

Wagner's works eventually became a model for two Italian composers born during the second half of the nineteenth century: Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924) and Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936). Both blended veristic opera plots with relatively dense and at times leitmotivic accompaniment. Puccini visited Bayreuth in 1888 and 1889,²⁵ where Cosima Wagner tried faithfully to conserve – or reconstruct – the performances of her late husband. Wagner's characteristic approach to the creation of his works embraced not only the writing of the libretto and score, but also their realization on stage. It was known that he instructed his singers in detail about how to dramatize their parts;²⁶ this led composers like Hans Pfitzner in Strasbourg to justify a demand for total control of their Wagner rehearsals, including the scenic parts.²⁷ Similarly,

23 Richard Wagner, Die deutsche Oper, *Zeitung für die elegante Welt* 10 (June 1834); reprinted in Wagner [1912], vol. 12, 1–4.

24 Wagner, Brief an einen italienischen Freund über die Aufführung des *Lohengrin* in Bologna and Schreiben an den Bürgermeister von Bologna, Wagner 1907, vol. 9, 287–294.

25 Budden 2005, 64.

26 For more details, see Knust 2007, chapter III.

27 I have Dr. Jeroen van Gessel, Groningen, to thank for this insight.

Puccini attended the rehearsals of his operas to supervise their scenic presentation. Along with the strong influence of Wagner's music in Italy through these two composers, his aesthetics were disseminated in Italian literature by Gabriele d'Annunzio (1863–1938). The establishment of Wagner's works in the cultural life of Italy thus took place at the turn of the century and, in the case of d'Annunzio, had an elitist and politically right-wing overtone.

The East: Wagner in Russia and national Romanticism in Austria-Hungary

The Russian Wagner reception²⁸ affected musicians, painters, writers and stage directors. It had a restrained beginning, starting as early as the 1840s when Wagner's essay "Über die Ouvertüre" was translated and published in Russian. During the 1850s and 1860s enthusiasts in Russia read his texts, and his music was played occasionally in concerts, but not in opera houses. Wagner visited St Petersburg and Moscow in 1863 where he conducted concerts of his music. It took five more years before one of his operas, *Lohengrin*, was performed in Russia for the first time, in St Petersburg. The authorities were reluctant to put this work on stage because of its politically charged content.²⁹ The reactions in the press were strong, and not entirely positive; thus the breakthrough of Wagner's music dramas in Russia did not take place before the late 1890s. During the years between the turn of the century and the outbreak of the First World War, after which Wagner's music was banished completely in Russia, the Russian Wagner reception reached its culmination. In these years painters like Mikhail Vrubel (1856–1910) and men of letters like the Russian symbolists Alexander Blok (1880–1921), Andrei Bely (1880–1934) and Vyacheslav Ivanov (1866–1949) admired and derived inspiration from Wagner's works. Even composers like Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov

28 The following paragraph is a summary of Bartlett 1995 (see the following footnotes).

29 Ibid., 36.

(1844–1908) and Alexander Borodin (1833–1887), who belonged to “The Mighty Handful”, a group of composers vehemently opposed to Wagner, acknowledged his music later in their careers as did Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840–1893). After the turn of the century all Wagner’s operas and music dramas were staged in St Petersburg, and thespians like Sergei Diaghilev (1872–1929), Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874–1940) and Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948) became interested in him.

Bartlett states that a distinct Russian variant of Wagnerism came into being during this period: *Wagnerovshchina*.³⁰ His works were seen as a source of religious-mythic spirituality, a dimension that, according to his Russian adepts, Russians were predestined to explore.³¹ In the first years of the Soviet Union Wagner’s music dramas became a playground for futuristic and avant-garde productions on stage, embodying the spirit of optimism of the post-revolutionary era. He was construed as a revolutionary socialist in this time.³² Under Stalin, the production of Wagner’s dramas declined and eventually stopped entirely when Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941. After the Second World War his works were performed only rarely until the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. In the last half of the twentieth century no more than three Wagner productions were staged in Moscow and St Petersburg, although there have been performances by visiting troupes from the GDR and West Germany.³³ Because of the Soviet Union’s identification of Wagner with the German aggressor, the *Wagnerovshchina* chapter in the decades before and after the Bolshevik Revolution was closed during the Stalin era. Today, Wagner is again played frequently in the Mariinsky and Bolshoi theatres; however, the productions after the dissolution of the Soviet Union had no living tradition on which to build.

During the last decades of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the different ethnic groups in this multinational amalgamation began em-

30 Ibid., 103.

31 Ibid., 111.

32 Ibid., 221–259.

33 Ibid., 287–292; see the detailed study by von Boehm 2014.

phasizing their national identities. Their goal was either to weaken or to strengthen the cohesion among the different parts of the empire. It is astounding to find that each of these groups employed Wagner's music to glorify their national identities. In the case of the German part of the population, performances of works such as *Lohengrin* became manifestations of the allegedly superior German culture; generally, Germans living in the diaspora had the habit of identifying themselves individually with characters from his operas.³⁴ But this did not inhibit Hungarians, Slovaks and other non-German language groups from using both Wagner's music and even his libretti for their own nationalistic purposes. For instance, Ján Levoslav Bella (1843–1936) chose Wagner's libretto for *Wieland der Schmied* (WWV 82), which Wagner left without music, as the basis for composing a Slovak national opera.³⁵ *Wieland* is similar to the *Siegfried* project and also resembles in many respects some unfinished dramatic projects, such as *Achill* (WWV 81) and *Friedrich I* (WWV 76). All were conceived around 1848–1849, meaning during and after the March Revolution, in which Wagner took an active part. All these projects, including the *Ring des Nibelungen* tetralogy (WWV 86), which grew from the single drama *Siegfried's Tod*, are about the revolution and national awakening in Germany during the first half of the nineteenth century.³⁶ As such, they were read and employed for their own purposes, even by non-German artists. Bella was not the only composer to set Wagner's *Wieland* libretto to music: the Hungarian Ödön von Mihalovich (1842–1929) did likewise. Von Mihalovich was an important organizer of Hungarian music life and a productive composer, even though he and his works are forgotten today.³⁷

34 One example is the Swedish queen Victoria who was born and raised in Germany; see Anders Jarlert, "Wagners Gestalten und Situationen als Identifikationen. Königin Victoria von Schweden als Beispiel", in Jarlert 2014, 182–188, here 184–187.

35 Jana Lengová, Wagner und die Slowakei, in Loos 2013, 446–447.

36 Knust 2014, 21–22.

37 In the first edition of *MGG*, edited by Friedrich Blume, a three-column article is dedicated to Mihalovich (József Ujfalussy, article "Mihalovich, Ödön", in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 9, Kassel: Bärenreiter 1961, cols. 284–286). In the second edition, edited by Ludwig Finscher, Mihalovich's name appears only in passing, in the

In Bohemia two prominent composers, both of whom are considered to be the national composer of the Czech Republic, had strong Wagnerian sympathies: Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904), who had two Wagnerian phases in his long career, namely at the beginning and at the end,³⁸ and especially Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884), who not only followed the New German model of composing, but also was well-informed about Wagner’s aesthetics. The motto of his first opera, *Braniboři v Čechách* (*The Brandenburgers in Bohemia*), composed in 1862–1863, makes a clear reference to Wagner’s reflections in *Oper und Drama*: “Music – the language of feeling, Words – the language of thinking.” Smetana had plans to found an opera school whose tasks would have been not only musical education, but also the training of dramatic delivery. This idea was inspired by Wagner’s texts on theatrical reform,³⁹ for instance, his *Bericht an Seine Majestät Ludwig II. von Bayern über eine in München zu errichtende deutsche Musikschule* (1865). There are other documents, such as Smetana’s letter to Adolf Čech from January 1881, which reveal that the composer was well acquainted with Wagner’s remarks about the physical performance of operatic roles.⁴⁰

Wagner’s reception in this part of Europe was helped by the fact that German was the language which most of the inhabitants understood. Dvořák and Smetana spoke German fluently as did many non-German composers in the Baltic region and Northern Europe, for instance, Jean Sibelius, Andréas Hallén and Hugo Alfvén.

The North I: German minorities in Baltic cities

The Baltic Sea region has always been characterized by cultural and mercantile exchange between its different areas and ethnic groups.

article on Hungary (Éva Pinér and Hartmut Lück, article “Ungarn”, section VI.1 in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Zweite Ausgabe*, Sachteil 9, Kassel and Stuttgart: Bärenreiter and Metzler 1998, cols. 1144–1145).

38 Honolka 2004, 40, 100.

39 For details see Knust 2007, chapter II, sections 5 and 7–9.

40 Séquardtová 1985, 92, 127, 187.

German minorities were found in the Baltic region's larger cities, such as Riga, Reval/Tallinn, Vyborg/Viipuri, Åbo/Turku, and these populations contributed a substantial part to or even dominated the cultural life of these cities. Riga became the most important Wagner centre in the North. This is not only because of Wagner's stay there from 1837 to 1839, but also thanks to a Baltic-German champion whom Wagner wrongly represented in his memoirs as an enemy: Heinrich Dorn (1804–1892).⁴¹ A music organizer, conductor and composer, Dorn had been the first to conduct Wagner's earliest orchestral compositions when Dorn was *Kapellmeister* in Leipzig in 1830. Dorn may have helped the younger man obtain the conducting position with Riga's theatre orchestra. After Wagner's flight from Livonia, which might have been motivated by his enormous debts and even mistakes in his work as a music director, Dorn himself replaced Wagner in Riga and seems to have still been fond of his former protégé. Just a few weeks after its world premiere, Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer* was performed outside Dresden (for the first time) when Dorn conducted it in Riga. The date was Wagner's thirtieth birthday – according to the Julian calendar, which was then followed in Livonia – and started a long and continuous tradition of performing his works in that city.⁴² Aside from the first and only performance of *Das Liebesverbot* in Magdeburg, which had no critical response at all, Riga was the second theatre to stage a Wagner opera. Moreover, the first Wagner biography was written in Riga by Carl Friedrich Glasenapp (1847–1915).

In neighbouring Estonia the first performance of a Wagner opera was *Tannhäuser*, which took place in the capital Tallinn (then known as Reval) in 1853, the same year as its Livonian premiere. The event was remarkable, not only because the music was new and unconventional for Estonian audiences, but also because the orchestra had no more than 18 musicians.⁴³ Even further north was another large city with a German

41 On their relationship, see Knust 2012, 170–171.

42 For more information, see Knust 2014, 24–26.

43 Pappel 1996, 46–47.

minority and a lively musical culture: Vyborg (also known as Viipuri), Finland, a land which at that time was an Autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. At present, research on the Vyborg Wagner reception and the first Wagner performances is in its infancy,⁴⁴ hampered by the fact that many documents may have been destroyed there during the Second World War. Yet there is some reason to believe that Wagner's music may have come to Finland via Vyborg, where an early Wagner enthusiast and composer, the German Richard Faltin, was an active musical figure.⁴⁵

The North II: The Wagner reception in Sweden

In the concluding sections I will evaluate and compare the Wagner reception in Sweden and Finland more closely than has been done in the previous sections.⁴⁶ The view of Wagner in these two neighbouring countries differs in many respects. One can even go so far as to claim that they mark opposing poles on the spectrum of Wagnerisms.

In Sweden the works of Fritz Arlberg (1830–1896) and August Söderman (1832–1876) mark the point at which Wagner's music entered the country's compositional history, namely the 1850s and 1860s.⁴⁷ It was, however, the “Swedish Wagner”, Andréas Hallén (1846–1925), who composed Sweden's first Wagnerian-type opera: *Harald der Wiking* (1878 to 1880). In the 1870s the music critic Adolf Lindgren (1846–1905) published a number of Wagner essays in Swedish.⁴⁸ The first performance of a Wagner opera, *Rienzi*, had taken place in Stockholm in 1865, followed by the Swedish premieres of Wagner's three mature romantic

44 For a beginning, see Riikka Siltanen's article in this volume.

45 Ibid. The author cites a passage from the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 13 May 1864, 173, in which an anonymous reviewer gives Richard Faltin credit for disseminating Wagner's music in Vyborg.

46 For more details on the Swedish and Finnish Wagner reception, see Knust 2013a, 87–114 as well as Ander's, Siltanen's and Tillman's articles in this volume.

47 Sörensen 2014; Hallgren 2016.

48 Stenkvist 1982.

operas in the 1870s.⁴⁹ Hallén was both a composer and a music organizer and showed strong sympathies towards Germany where he had tried to establish himself as a composer, although without success. His music in the New German tradition – meaning his symphonic poems and operas – imitates Wagner’s very closely. In this respect Hallén’s position as a Wagner epigone in music history is similar to that of composers like Felix Draeseke, August Bungert (1845–1915) and Hans von Bülow (1830–1894), men who were born in the generation after Wagner. For us, Hallén’s works are too imitative to be of interest for the orchestral and operatic repertoire, and his project to serve as a promoter of Wagner’s works, which was not as altruistic as it may sound, seems in retrospect to have been both opportunistic and questionable. However, one has to keep in mind that Wagner was not a canonic figure when Hallén began shaping his imitative idiom, which took place shortly after what is known as the Franco-Prussian war.⁵⁰ Even though many passages in his operas have to be classified as plagiarised, there is one feature of Hallén’s music which became characteristic of other non-German composers in the Wagner tradition: the transfer of his style to another national environment, in Hallén’s case, a distinctly Nordic or Swedish context. The action in his three operas takes place in ancient or medieval Norse settings, and his version of the orchestral rhapsody, which Liszt had established as a patriotic genre, became a model for the next two generations of composers in Sweden. Hallén also tried to establish Wagner’s works by conducting them in Sweden. Like other Nordic composers in the Wagner tradition, such as the Norwegian Christian Sinding (1856–1941), Hallén’s profile as a Wagnerian was very similar to that of the German *Wagnerianer*; for instance, he was both an anti-Semite and an enemy of the French.⁵¹ This may be due to the fact that he, like Sinding, tried to settle down in Germany.

49 Salmi 2005, 126; Tillman 2012, 195–196.

50 For more details about Hallén’s Wagnerism, his work and his contacts in Germany, see Knust 2011a, 33–76.

51 Knust 2011a, 61.

The next cohort of composers in Sweden is called the 1890s generation because their national breakthrough took place during the 1890s. Three composers during this time appear to have been promising candidates for the vacant “position” of Swedish national composer, a position that was never filled.⁵² Despite their different characteristics all three had one thing in common: all were Wagnerians. Below, I outline briefly their relationship to Wagner and his music.

Hugo Alfvén’s (1872–1960) connection to Wagner’s works seems to have remained relatively constant after he decided to change his aesthetic views about music. His initial works, his first two symphonies, show influences of the “conservatory” or the Brahmsian tradition rather than that of the New German school. After 1900 Alfvén began writing symphonic poems, among them the Swedish rhapsody *Midsommarvaka*, the most popular Swedish composition for orchestra – and his music sounded more like that of the young Richard Strauss whom he admired. Alfvén’s favourite Wagner music dramas were among the late works: *Die Meistersinger* and *Götterdämmerung*. In this Swede’s Fourth Symphony, which is a programmatic work in one movement, a sunrise passage follows closely the sunrise that leads from the Prelude to the first act of *Götterdämmerung*.⁵³ Alfvén seems to have had no qualms about following the continental examples of Richard Strauss and Wagner relatively carefully and constantly, a practice that remained unchanged to the end of his life.

Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871–1927) started his compositional career with works that showed a strong Wagnerian impact, namely the ballad *Florez and Blanzefflor* and the opera *Tirfing*. Neither of these became a success, and he seems to have realized that he needed to develop a more original idiom to be successful. However, his desire to establish himself as a composer seems to have waned significantly during his lifetime. After he embarked on a career as a pianist and conductor,

52 Sweden is one of the very few countries in Europe which lacks a national composer; see Knust 2011b, 32–61.

53 As Joakim Tillman pointed out in his presentation at the Hugo Alfvén Symposium, the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, Stockholm, 13 October 2010.

which took almost all of his time, his work for orchestra and theatre remained relatively small. Stenhammar was less conservative than Alfvén and tried to develop his compositional skills when he was already fully acknowledged as a musician and composer in Sweden. As Wagner had done before creating *Die Meistersinger*, Stenhammar studied counterpoint intensively. This interest in early composition techniques characterizes his late works, especially his Second Symphony. He withdrew his First Symphony because he considered it to be too close to the New German style. Nevertheless, Stenhammar's later compositions for orchestra still show Wagner's influence in terms of orchestration and expressivity.

Wilhelm Peterson-Berger (1867–1942) was a champion of Wagner in Sweden who used his various professions to promote the German's work. Peterson-Berger was a music critic and writer as well as a composer. He was the first to translate Wagner's and Nietzsche's texts into Swedish, and like Wagner, he wrote the libretti for his own operas. Moreover, his Wagnerian expertise served him well in his role as a stage director in Stockholm. What is interesting about Peterson-Berger is that he was not uncritical of Wagner's music. In his book *Richard Wagner som kulturföreteelse* (Richard Wagner as a Cultural Phenomenon, 1913), published in both Swedish and German on the centenary of Wagner's birth, his criticism had a nationalistic twist: Wagner's music, he wrote, was too complicated and dense for a Nordic audience; while Germans preferred long and elaborate works, Nordic listeners favoured clear and straightforward forms and content. He further claimed that Germany lacked any kind of folk music that could be useful for the composition of art music.⁵⁴ Even though as a composer Peterson-Berger did many things which the music critic Peterson-Berger would have despised, these two points – striving for simplicity and creating folk-like melodies – seem to be congruent in his theoretical and practical output. His music sounds strikingly un-Wagnerian. It is neither lavishly orchestrated nor very difficult to understand.

54 Peterson-Berger 1913, 163.

Peterson-Berger's symphonies and operas are short and have no long, suggestive climaxes or spectacular endings like Wagner's. His texture is not as polyphonic as that of the later Wagner. Peterson-Berger had a predilection for symmetrical periods; this might be a reflection of his desire for structural simplicity. However, the question remains whether those characteristics of Peterson-Berger's music are really due to some kind of aesthetic programme or simply to his lack of experience in conducting and composing large scores.

After the 1890s generation another group of composers dominated Sweden's musical life until the end of the Second World War. This group consisted of four men who formed a circle called "Spillran" (The Splinter). In their works the influence of German late romanticism, including that of Wagner, is obvious; for instance, Natanael Berg's (1879–1957) First Symphony bears the title *Alles endet was entstehet*, a programmatic work about the sinking of the *Titanic*. The most prominent person in this circle was Kurt Atterberg (1887–1974), whose operas and symphonies combined Swedish folk tunes with ponderous late romantic orchestration. He became the most often played Swedish composer in Nazi Germany, collaborating with the regime and remaining loyal to it. For this reason, his works have been practically banned from concert and opera programmes in Sweden since the end of the Second World War.

The impact of Wagner's works on Swedish compositional history was thus profound. All renowned composers who were active in the country between the 1870s and the end of the Second World War were Wagnerians. Cultural contacts and exchanges between Sweden and Germany were numerous and intense.⁵⁵ After the war Swedish musical life went through a phase of stern self-criticism and was shaped by avant-garde modernism in West Germany and France. In the course of making a critical inventory of Sweden's music history, many of

⁵⁵ One aspect that cannot be elaborated on here is the exchange of Wagner singers between Sweden and Germany; many famous Wagner singers were Swedish, and before and after the Second World War several singers in the Royal Opera in Stockholm were guest performers at the Bayreuth Festival; see Stefan Johansson, "Wagner the Swedish Way. 150 Years on Stage at the Royal Opera", in *Jarlert* 2014, 91–108, here 94–99.

the works and composers mentioned above were eliminated from the Swedish repertoire. With the exception of Wilhelm Stenhammar, none of them has gained renewed attention since that time, although Alfvén's works have remained on concert programmes on a modest level. Along with the Swedish composers in the Wagnerian tradition, Wagner's own works have been regarded as politically dubious in Sweden. This became clear during the Wagner bicentenary in 2013 when no large, official celebration took place. With the exception of one interdisciplinary Wagner symposium at the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities⁵⁶ and a new *Parsifal* staging at the Royal Opera, the Wagner jubilee passed in Sweden without any spectacular event. In this respect Wagner's public image in Sweden has not changed substantially since the post-war period.⁵⁷

The North III: The Wagner reception in Finland

The Finnish Wagner reception was in many ways different from and perhaps even contrary to the Swedish. Finland had no national opera institution like the Royal Opera in Stockholm until 1911. After some unsuccessful attempts,⁵⁸ the first performance of an entire Wagner opera on Finnish soil, *Tannhäuser*, was staged in 1904 in Helsinki.⁵⁹ Despite this relatively late premiere the Finnish Wagner reception became one of the most enthusiastic in history. Wagner's works dominated the Finnish operatic repertoire until the Second World War⁶⁰

56 The papers have been collected in Jarlert 2014.

57 One recent example of this public image is the criticism by the Swedish opera singer Malena Ernman of the design of the new 500-krona banknote which shows Birgit Nilsson as Brünnhilde. The core of Ernman's critique is that this reveres the work of an infamous anti-Semite; see http://www.svd.se/kultur/ernman-kritiserar-ny-sedel_4267507.svd accessed 6 March 2018.

58 For an overview of the various houses and theatre companies active in Helsinki during the nineteenth century, see Paavolainen 2012, 125–154; on the unsuccessful attempts to perform a Wagner opera there, see *ibid.*, 150–151.

59 Salmi 2005, 103.

60 Haapakoski et al. 2002, 427.

and even afterwards, and Finnish audiences have remained faithful to this composer up until the present time. Finland still has only one opera house, but currently, there are two Wagner societies (founded in 1991 and 1999 respectively), which even edit their own Wagner periodicals.

The entry of Wagner's works into Finnish concert life was facilitated by two musicians and music organizers, the German Richard Faltin (1835–1918), who was the music director of the Imperial Alexander University in Finland (later renamed the University of Helsinki) – at that time the only position in Finland for a professional musician outside the Lutheran Church – and Martin Wegelius (1846–1906), who was a founder of and teacher at the Helsinki Music Institute (which later came to be called the Sibelius Academy). Both men were ardent Wagnerians. Faltin attended the first Bayreuth Festival in 1876 and even had an audience (the word is used advisedly) with Wagner. Wegelius founded the first Wagner society in Finland in the winter of 1898–1899.⁶¹ He was the teacher of three famous musicians – Jean Sibelius (1865–1957), Armas Järnefelt (1869–1958) and Erkki Melartin (1875–1937) – and tried to make them champions of the New German school. Wegelius's strong influence on musical life in Finland and his great relevance for music in the country were the results not of his work as a composer, which is marginal, but rather as a music theorist and historian. His textbook for higher music education, written from a New German perspective on music history, became a standard for more than half a century.⁶² He began a biography of Wagner,⁶³ and he encouraged his students to complete their music studies in Germany. Moreover, he wanted them to travel to Bayreuth, which in Sibelius's case had profound consequences for him as a composer.

61 It lasted only one year: see Siltanen's article in this volume.

62 Nils-Eric Ringbom, article "Martin Wegelius", in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 14, Friedrich Blume (ed.), Kassel: Bärenreiter 1968, cols. 363–364; Picard (ed.) 2010, 658.

63 It remained unfinished; the 250-page manuscript is preserved in The University of the Arts Helsinki Library, Sibelius Academy; accessible at <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe2019111839002>.

Sibelius's relationship to Wagner's art was ambivalent, and owing to his habit of remaining silent about his own compositional issues,⁶⁴ any statement of his on this relationship must be regarded with caution. What we know is that he studied Wagner's works and theoretical texts thoroughly in 1894. That year he travelled to Bayreuth, following the advice of his teacher Wegelius, and attended a *Tristan* performance in Munich, a city that boasted of having an authentic Wagner tradition. These intensive studies led to a compositional crisis that plagued him for several years. He abandoned his own opera project, "Veneen luominen" (The Building of the Boat), and his compositional output dropped. After this crisis, he concentrated on symphonic poems and symphonies, seemingly abandoning operas. This decision had lasting consequences for Finnish musical life in the twentieth century in which the symphony became the genre of highest national prestige.⁶⁵ But was the decision an expression of his antipathy for Wagner or a sign of intimidation in the face of Wagner's outstanding achievements? The question remains open. Perhaps it can be even regarded as irrelevant for Sibelius's music because, with the exception of *Tuonelan joutsen* (The Swan of Tuonela), which begins like a negative image of the *Lohengrin* prelude,⁶⁶ no direct Wagner allusions can be identified in his oeuvre; some scholars have suggested that his symphonies may well contain more indirect quotations from Sibelius's favourite music

64 Dahlström 2016, 165.

65 Rautavaara 1998a, 173.

66 Consider, for example, the beginning and the dramaturgy of the *Lohengrin* prelude: A major (pure chord at the opening), in a high register on the strings, expanding into the middle register, tutti, orchestral overlappings (the technique known in German as *orchestraler Rest*), leading to a harmonically, but not sonic static structure (a kind of *Klangfarbenmelodie*). Furthermore, the absence of a distinct pulse in the beginning; bright, enchanting, and diatonic falling melodic lines, with a tapestry of string sound all the way through and leading melodies in woodwinds. The beginning and dramaturgy of *Swan of Tuonela*: A minor (pure chord at the opening), in the low register on the strings, expanding into middle and high register before the tutti, orchestral overlappings (*orchestraler Rest*) leading to a *Klangfarbenmelodie*. Likewise, the absence of a distinct pulse at the outset; melancholy, diatonic, ascending melodic lines, a tapestry of string sound all the way through with leading melodies in the woodwinds.

dramas, *Tristan and Parsifal*.⁶⁷ In two biographies of Sibelius published in his lifetime – written by Bengt de [von] Törne and Karl Ekman – he was represented as an anti-Wagnerian.⁶⁸ Perhaps this has to do with the anti-German agenda of one of the biographers, Bengt von Törne (1891–1967), who along with writers in England created an image of Sibelius that was counter to the “decadent” Teutonic art of its time.⁶⁹ The other author, Karl Ekman (1895–1962), maintained in his biography that Sibelius was anything but fond of Wagner.⁷⁰ However, in the sources from Sibelius’s own hand, there is no clear statement that he had turned his back on Wagner. In my opinion, despite the fundamental formal and structural differences between Sibelius’s and Wagner’s music, on a meta-level some parallels or aesthetic resonances can be identified. One of these is the uninterrupted musical process in the middle and late compositions of both Sibelius and Wagner, who postulated and realized the well-known *unendliche Melodie*, a way of composing that avoids clear, cadential incisions in the musical texture. Interpreting Sibelius’s and Wagner’s works requires flexible handling and flexible modification of tempos. Both composers, like the first Finnish composers in general, had a predilection for dark and rich orchestral sounds, which has a completely different personal manifestation in each case, and both worked with distinctive themes and motifs rather than with the sophisticated variation of themes and motifs, as was the practice among the conservatives who were products of the Leipzig Conservatory tradition. After his Bayreuth experience Sibelius decided to follow the model of Liszt’s symphonic poems, which

67 For instance, Erik Tawaststjerna heard parts of the first movement of Sibelius’s Fourth Symphony as having been inspired by the beginning of *Tristan* Act 1, scene 5 (Tawaststjerna 1991, 238); more examples for structural similarities between Wagner’s and Sibelius’s music in: Johnson 1959, 54, 71, 79 and 92; Simpson 1965, 14–15, 28; Goss 2009, 181–192. I am preparing a more elaborate essay on Sibelius and Germany that will take up his relation to Wagner. The working title is “Sibelius and Germany: Germany and Sibelius or The Story of a Triple Failure”.

68 de Törne 1937, 36 and 58–59.

69 Adams 2011, 145–147.

70 Ekman 1956, 56, 149; this is a revised version of Ekman 1935.

belonged to the core repertoire of the New Germans. He was also interested in the works of such Wagnerian followers as Richard Strauss and Arnold Schönberg. Moreover, the pathos of Wagnerian compositions and Sibelius's larger works seems to be at least relatable, perhaps because of Sibelius's early enthusiasm for the symphonies of the Wagner admirer Anton Bruckner, which had an impact on Sibelius's *Kullervo* and his first and second numbered symphonies.

Armas Järnefelt, a composer and conductor and Sibelius's brother-in-law, became a true Wagnerian like his teacher Martin Wegelius. As a conductor, Järnefelt was a faithful champion of Wagner's works throughout his career, even staging some of the music dramas. The majority of Järnefelt's orchestral compositions date from before he began his career as a conductor. They show strong influences of Wagner's music in terms of expression, harmony and instrumentation.⁷¹ However, Järnefelt never wrote an opera and seems to have put his ambitions as a composer last when in 1905 he became the conductor at the Royal Opera in Stockholm. Järnefelt also translated some of Wagner's opera libretti into Finnish for performance use, for instance *Tristan und Isolde*.⁷² Even though a certain New German tone remained traceable in his music, his works became structurally simpler, and he specialized in writing short pieces and composing on commission.⁷³

Erkki Melartin acquired the nickname "the Finnish Wagner" with good reason. In 1901 he attended the Bayreuth Festival and, like Sibelius, was especially impressed with *Parsifal*. Unlike Sibelius, he succeeded in integrating singular features of Wagner's compositional style and technique into his own music. Melartin composed only one opera, *Aino*, which shows the strong influence of *Parsifal*. Its action is static, more like that of an oratorio, and the musical texture is Wagnerian. Melartin also made use of the leitmotif technique; he even added a leit-

71 Salmi (ed.) 2009.

72 See Lättilä's article in this volume.

73 Knust 2016.

motif table to his opera, which premiered in 1909.⁷⁴

Although Melartin composed only one opera, he incorporated leit-motivic structures into the “absolute” genre of the symphony. For instance, his Second Symphony contains several motifs with descriptive names, such as “Fight motif”, “Cry for help motif”, “Threatening motif with a fifth”. When the symphony was premiered, Melartin published a motivic analysis in the Finnish music journal *Finsk musikrevy* (1905).⁷⁵ This “misappropriation” of a programmatic device in an “absolute” musical context has a parallel in Alfvén’s Fourth Symphony, which is entitled “Från havsbandet” (From the outermost skerries). In his autobiography Alfvén included an analysis in which he gave certain motifs or orchestral effects picturesque names, for instance, “sun glittering over the sea” or “water reflections”.⁷⁶

Wagner’s impact on musical composition in Finland can be traced back several generations. Fredrik Pacius (1809–1891), a German who settled in Helsinki in 1835, was opposed to Wagner at first. Eventually, however, he adopted a Wagnerian idiom by infusing elements from the early works (that is, Wagner’s music composed before the *Ring*) into his third and last opera, *Die Loreley* (completed only in 1887). Because of its long incubation time – two and half decades – and its outdated musical style, this work has become a document of the early Finnish Wagner reception more than a repertoire piece.

Robert Kajanus (1856–1933), a composer as well as a conductor, wrote symphonic poems in the New German idiom, among them the first Finnish rhapsody.⁷⁷ Pacius and Kajanus did not imitate Wagner as closely as did composers like Bungert and Hallén. For instance, the unison male choir in Kajanus’s symphonic poem *Aino* (1885) shows only superficial similarities to the choirs of the knights in *Parsifal*. Ultimately, neither Kajanus nor Pacius were very prolific composers, leaving only

74 The leitmotif table is available in Murtomäki 2000.

75 According to Rähälä [2000], 14.

76 Alfvén 1953, 276.

77 Hillila & Hong 1997, 458–459.

a handful of works for orchestra. In this respect there is no imitative phase in the compositional Wagner reception in Finland as there was in other countries, yet prominent professional composers in the country like Sibelius and Melartin demonstrated a rather personal style from the beginning of their careers, even if some allusions to Wagner and techniques borrowed from him appear in their music.

The beginning of the Wagner reception among Finland's composers, which took place about a decade before his works started to be performed there, can be briefly summarized: aside from Pacius, who was of German birth, among Finnish composers none seems to have been anti-Wagnerian. All important figures in Finnish musical life were more or less clearly interested in Wagner; even the composer of popular songs, Oskar Merikanto (1868–1924), who wrote operas despite his more conventional melodic style, may be counted among the Wagner admirers.⁷⁸

Summary and outlook: European Wagnerisms

Even a superficial overview like this essay on Wagner's impact on compositional history and concert audiences in various European countries reveals many differences in how professionals and amateurs approached this composer. Responses to Wagner even in neighbouring countries like Finland and Sweden, of whose empire Finland had been part for centuries until 1808–1809, show more contrasts than similarities. Wagner was performed on the operatic stage and imitated compositionally some decades earlier in Sweden than in Finland. In Finland, as in most places, composers were fascinated first and foremost by *Parsifal* or by other works composed after *Siegfried*. In both countries Wagner-like operas were composed with their actions taking place in distinct national environments. With regard to actions,

78 In a programme book for the opera festival in Savonlinna, Finland, for the year 1913 a short article entitled "The musical structure of [Oskar Merikanto's] *Elinan surma* [Elina's Murder]" lists musical themes linked to characters and dramatic situations (*Savonlinnan oopperajuhlanäytännöt* 1913), which places them close to Wagner's leitmotif technique. I thank Professor Anne Kauppala, Helsinki, for this information.

this nationalistic modification was less noticeable in Sweden because Wagner had used the Norse mythology of the *Edda* in his own works.⁷⁹ Swedish composers and librettists could thus claim to be carrying on Wagner's heritage. This branch of the Swedish Wagner reception was later dismissively referred to as "Viking opera", a genre to which both of Hallén's operas, Stenhammar's *Tirfing* and even some of Peterson-Berger's operas belong. All across Europe a common musical strategy used to assimilate Wagner's music into different national contexts was to integrate folk tunes or other folk music elements into the scores, as is heard, for instance, in Peterson-Berger's symmetrical periods in his operas or Melartin's use of a kantele in *Aino*. This procedure is more obvious in Sweden than in Finland. Perhaps Wagner was even more popular among composers in Sweden during the first half of the twentieth century than in Finland; at least the influence of the density of motives and the pseudo-polyphonic structure which is characteristic for the middle and late Wagner can be distinguished more clearly in Swedish works for orchestra composed after the turn of the century than in those composed in Finland. Swedish Wagnerism was, as far as I can see, closer to the German *Wagnerianertum* than to Finnish *wagnerismi*, including the right-wing political elements and the anti-Semitism of its proponents, features also characteristic of the late nineteenth-century French *wagnérisme*, but not as striking in Finland – or perhaps just not yet problematized. After the Second World War the Swedish attitude towards Wagner became and still remains much more critical than in Finland, where the composer is considered a model for post-modernist composition.⁸⁰ During Wagner's bicentenary in 2013 no official celebrations were held in Sweden, whereas in Finland, Wagner was honoured with a ceremony in the festival hall of the University of Helsinki⁸¹ and a

79 Elmar Arro long ago raised the interesting question of whether Wagner perhaps was referring to the *Kalevala* in his works (Arro 1965, 156–160). This hypothesis has not been discussed further.

80 Rautavaara 1998b, 78, 80–81.

81 An event announced on the homepage of the German Embassy in Helsinki in the summer of 2013.

musicological conference at the Sibelius Academy. The Wagner societies in Finland are also more active than those in Sweden. In these respects Finnish *wagnerismi* today clearly differs from Swedish Wagnerism. To work out the profiles of these two European Wagnerisms is a task for further research.

Despite the many differences in the respective national approaches to Wagner, including the way in which his works were discussed, introduced, imitated, exploited and worshipped, all countries had one feature in common: Wagner was seen as a representative of the young German nation and thus as a model for all nationalist artists. Although this fact is so obvious it seems not to have been questioned, one can argue if this was really Wagner's intention. As a matter of fact, he spent one-third of his life outside Germany, and he did not agree with German politics, either before or after the March Revolution or with those of the united German nation under Prussian hegemony. He was anything but pro-Prussian, as can be shown from his letters written during 1866, the year of the Austro-Prussian War.⁸² This antipathy might go back to the time of the Dresden Insurrection when the Prussian army invaded the Saxon capital where Wagner was among the insurgents. His participation in this revolution and many statements of the older Wagner demonstrate that he sympathized with the extreme political left.⁸³ In other words, it can be argued whether or not Wagner was a German nationalist at all. His political ideas were formed during the March Revolution and were not congruent with the jingoism of the young German Reich. The strong and evident link between his works and his person and the German nation may perhaps be a result of the fact that he was one of the most prominent Germans when the Franco-Prussian War took place and more or less automatically became a rep-

82 Wagner > François Wille, Lucerne 20 June 1866; Wagner > Ludwig II, Lucerne 24 July 1866; Wagner > August Röckel, Lucerne 23 June 1866 (see Wagner 2008, 185, 199, 186–187); Hans Sachs's so-called Wahn Monologue, which was composed during this time, can be read as a commentary on this bloody event (Knust 2013b, 132–135).

83 See the articles by Udo Bermbach, “Die Revolution and Revolutionsschriften”, in Brandenburg et al. 2012, 565–566 and 566–568; Rudolf Wellingsbach (aka Udo Bermbach), “Wagner und die Revolution”, in Lütteken 2012, 80–84, here 83–84.

representative of the new German empire. Or it could result from the fact that the late nineteenth century was so deeply steeped in nationalistic ideology that everything was contextualized in terms of nation, tribe and ultimately race.⁸⁴ Either way, the fact that Wagnerian sounds became synonymous with nationalism all over Europe, despite Wagner's intention of addressing his works to the "Purely Human",⁸⁵ which may be understood as something transcendental beyond history, time and space, bears witness to the contemporary view of Wagner's work while denying its very essence. The Wagnerian resonance in different countries was nationally modified, biased, filtered, fractured and contradicted as politics intruded. The enthusiastic reception of his works has shaped his image, as well as the perspectives and attitudes towards him among both professionals and amateurs up to this day. In effect, the late nineteenth-century interpretations of Wagner still matter.

* * *

Appendix:

The introduction of Wagner's works into the
repertoires and musical life of Europe and the
Americas in chronological order

This table is incomplete. With the exception of the dates of the first Wagner performances in each of these countries I have not always been able to find reliable data for the other three categories, namely a) the beginning of the discussion about Wagner in the mass media, b) the first dramatic composers who explicitly followed his model and c) the founding of the first Wagner societies in each country. If not indicated otherwise, information in this table has been taken from Schreiber 2000, Salmi 2005, Loos (ed.) 2013, and <http://opera.stanford.edu/Wagner>, accessed 6 March 2018.

84 Hobsbawm 1990, 101–122.

85 Even this category in Wagner's world of thought has a leftist political thrust; see Daniel Lettgren, "Das Reinmenschliche", in Brandenburg et al. 2012, 556–558.

European areas with German-speaking minorities are marked with an asterisk in the first column.

Country or region	First complete Wagner production	First discussions in the media	First dramatic composers inspired by Wagner	Founding of the first Wagner societies
German Confederation	<i>Liebesverbot</i> 1836 Magdeburg (only one performance during Wagner's lifetime); 1842 <i>Rienzi</i> , Dresden	1840s	August Bungert, Engelbert Humperdinck, Felix Draeseke	1871 Mannheim
Livonia* (today Latvia)	1843 <i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Riga	1840s		
Switzerland	1852 <i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Zurich	1840s		
Estonia*	1853 <i>Tannhäuser</i> , Tallinn	1840s		
Austria	1854 <i>Tannhäuser</i> , Graz	1840s		
Bohemia*	1854 <i>Tannhäuser</i> , Prague	1840s	Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák	
Belgium*	1855 <i>Tannhäuser</i> , Antwerp			
The Netherlands	1858 <i>Tannhäuser</i> , Amsterdam			
USA	1859 <i>Tannhäuser</i> , New York	1880s		
France	1861 <i>Tannhäuser</i> , Paris	1850s	César Franck, Ernest Chausson, Gabriel Fauré, Emmanuel Chabrier, Ernest Reyer, Vincent d'Indy, Claude Debussy (in the beginning of his career)	
Hungary*	1862 <i>Tannhäuser</i> , Budapest	1840s	Ödön von Mihalovich	
Sweden	1865 <i>Rienzi</i> , Stockholm	1850s	Andreas Hallén, Hugo Alfvén, Wilhelm Peterson-Berger, Wilhelm Stenhammar, the composer group "Spillran"	
Slovakia*	1865 <i>Lohengrin</i> , Bratislava		Ján Levoslav Bella	

Poland*	1865 <i>Tannhäuser</i> , Lviv		Mieczysław Karłowicz	
Russia*	1868 <i>Lohengrin</i> , St Petersburg ⁸⁶	1840s	Pyotr Tchaikovsky and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (late in their careers)	
Great Britain	1870 <i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> (in Italian), London ⁸⁷	1870s	Edward Elgar, Havergal Brian	1873 London ⁸⁸
Denmark	1870 <i>Lohengrin</i> , Copenhagen ⁸⁹			
Italy*	1871 <i>Lohengrin</i> , Bologna		Giacomo Puccini, Ottorino Respighi	
Spain	1876 <i>Rienzi</i> , Madrid; 1885 <i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Barcelona ⁹⁰	1860s		1901 Barcelona; 1911 Madrid
Portugal	1883 <i>Lohengrin</i> , Lisbon ⁹¹	1860s		
Brazil	1883 <i>Lohengrin</i> , Rio de Janeiro			
Argentina	1883 <i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , Buenos Aires			
Mexico	1890 <i>Lohengrin</i> , Mexico City			
Finland*	1904 <i>Tannhäuser</i> , Helsinki	1850s	Fredrik Pacius (at the end of his career), Robert Kajanus, Jean Sibelius (in the beginning of his career), Armas Järnefelt, Erkki Melartin	1898–99 Helsinki
Rumania*	1921 <i>Tannhäuser</i> , Klausenburg			1884 Bucharest
Lithuania*	1926 <i>Lohengrin</i> , Vilnius		Jurgis Karnavičius	

86 Malkijel 1996, 10.

87 David Breckbill, “*Der fliegende Holländer* in performance”, in Grey 2000, 131.

88 Blissett 1959, 311–312.

89 See <http://danskforfatterleksikon.dk/1850t/t1850ta.htm> accessed 6 March 2018.

90 Ortiz-de-Urbina 2013.

91 Artagia & Cymbron 2012.

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The Swedish Reception of Wagner 1840–1865

OWE ANDER

The Royal Opera in Stockholm has one of the longest continuous Wagner traditions in the world outside the German-speaking lands. It began with the premiere of *Rienzi* in Stockholm in June 1865. Yet the history of Swedish Wagner reception reaches even further back in time. The first known public performance in Sweden of a Wagner work took place in February 1856 (the *Tannhäuser* overture), yet Swedish musicians, singers and composers had encountered the music and the writings of Wagner much earlier, both in print and in travels on the continent. Swedes' earliest recorded personal contact with Wagner was in the year 1844, when Jacob Josephson and Jenny Lind met the composer in Dresden. This article investigates the first twenty-five years of the Swedish Wagner reception, mainly from the early 1840s up to the production of *Rienzi* in Stockholm in 1865.

The article is part of a more wide-ranging research project, “Opera on the Move”, whose purpose is to examine opera as cultural practice in the Nordic countries in the long nineteenth century. The case of the early Wagner reception in Sweden and Stockholm is a good example of the mobility and complex interaction of ideas, aesthetics, musical works, performers, performance practices, vocal and instrumental techniques and new instruments, but also of the conducting, acting, direction, production and scene techniques, decor and the like during the period. A preliminary investigation of the Wagner material in Stockholm was very promising. The results have so far been presented in three articles.¹ Together with the present text, these articles are meant to be

1 Ander 2014; Ander 2015a; Ander 2015b.

complementary and provide broad documentation of the material, even if some overlapping is unavoidable. The first article gives a preliminary review of the performance material, a discussion of the orchestra and the instruments used in Stockholm, and a list of the manuscript sources. The second article is a critical evaluation of the sources, especially the score brought to Sweden by Joseph Tichatscheck, while the third article deals with the reception of *Rienzi* in Stockholm up to 1905. While the first three texts mainly deal with the performance material from 1865 and the reception of *Rienzi*, this fourth article deals with the reception of Wagner before 1865, including a presentation of the most important artists, singers and conductors, as well as the publishers and stage directors who were involved in introducing Wagner's music to Sweden; it describes their mobility, their international contacts and their networks.

Earlier research in the area of early Swedish Wagner reception has been scarce. The main study is Percy's unpublished "Basic features of the Wagner movement in Sweden..." (1936), which mainly focuses on the Wagnerian influence on Swedish composers, especially on August Söderman. A later short general study of Wagner reception in Sweden is Percy 1973. The later Wagner reception in Sweden, namely after 1870, has been investigated by Gademan 1996, Salmi 2005 and Tillman 2012.

Background

At the time Wagner was born in Leipzig in 1813, the city was occupied by allied French forces. Only some weeks later the great battle of Leipzig took place. The Swedish Crown Prince, Carl Johan Bernadotte, one of the allies' leading generals, entered Leipzig at the head of his army through the Grimmaischen Gate on 19 October 1813.² One of those who fought in this battle was the Swede Anders Lindeberg, who would later translate the libretto of Halévy's *La Juive* into Swedish.³

2 Gregor-Dellin 1980, 18.

3 Dahlgren 1866, 649.

The Napoleonic age was a period of great turmoil in Sweden and the Nordic countries as well as in the German countries. At the time Wagner was born, Sweden had recently lost its Finnish provinces to Russia, 1809, and would soon negotiate with its new ally Prussia to exchange its last north-German provinces, northern Pomerania, for Norway. Denmark, like Saxony, was on the losing side in the last phase of the ongoing Napoleonic wars, and only international intervention prevented Sweden from annexing the whole of Denmark to create one large (“unified”) Nordic country. A similar situation would later take place in both Italy and Germany.

This was a time of national revival and great interest in national myths and history. It was a time of collecting and publishing folksongs and folk dances and of editing Viking age and medieval Nordic (Norse) literature. It was a time of intense interest in Odin (Wotan), Thor and the Valkyries.

The early years of the nineteenth century were also a time of great interest in German culture, philosophy, literature and music in the Nordic countries. To the strong dominance of the French language and culture during the Enlightenment was now added a growing interest in German culture and language. The whole Baltic Sea area was fertile ground for cultural and musical exchange between major port cities: Stockholm, Åbo (Turku) and Helsingfors (Helsinki),⁴ St Petersburg, Reval (Tallinn), Riga,⁵ Königsberg (Kaliningrad), Danzig (Gdansk), Stralsund and Greifswald, Hamburg and Altona,⁶ Copenhagen and Christiania (Oslo).⁷ Typical of most of the cities was a great linguistic

4 Åbo/Turku had been the main town in Swedish Finland. The Russians turned the Swedish-speaking town of Helsinki/Helsingfors into the capital of the Russian Grand Duchy of Finland.

5 Riga, after Stockholm the largest town in the Swedish Empire during the seventeenth century, was lost to Russia in 1721. Its population was mixed, with a large German-speaking component. An offspring of Riga’s German-speaking culture was the first Wagner biographer, Carl Friedrich Glasenapp (1847–1915).

6 The German-speaking town of Altona, situated close to Hamburg, was, after Copenhagen, the largest town in Denmark.

7 The area was subject to often brutal ethnical cleansing in the twentieth century. For an excellent discussion on the subject on naming cities, see Davies & Moorhouse 2002, 9–26.

mix, with old and new populations, and personal networks and trade all over the Baltic region. Many towns in the area, such as Tallinn, Riga and Danzig, had large German-speaking populations, each with its own cultural life, including theatres in which German repertoire was performed. Performances of Wagner's early operas would be frequent in many of these towns.⁸

Wagner moved to this area, arriving in Königsberg in 1836, heading on to Riga 1837 and living there until 1839. The stay influenced his later works in different ways. In 1838 he began working on *Rienzi*. His flight from Riga, with its dangerous and stormy sea voyage along the Swedish-Norwegian coast, and its influence on the conception of *Der fliegende Holländer* is testimony to that time. In March of 1842, in Dresden, Wagner had plans for an opera, and wrote a prose draft called "Die Bergwerke zu Falun", based on a story by E.T.A. Hoffmann, which takes place in Sweden.⁹ Much later, during the *Kulturkampf* against the Catholics in the 1870s, Wagner repeatedly considered writing a play about the Swedish king Gustav II Adolf (1594–1632):¹⁰ the Swedish "Heldenkönig" as a Lutheran *Rienzi*.

Continental travels of Swedish musicians and their contacts with Wagner's musical and literary works

A large number of Swedish musicians travelled on the continent in the 1840s and 1850s, either in pursuit of formal education or on personal Grand Tours with the aim of broadening their cultural horizons. These journeys provided opportunities to encounter the newest trends and repertoires in the cultural centres of Europe, such as Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, Prague, Vienna, Paris and London. Some Swedes also travelled to Italy, although singers generally preferred Paris, while instrumentalists often went to Germany, where members

8 See Salmi 2005.

9 Gregor-Dellin 1980, 167.

10 *Ibid.*, 763–764.

of the nobility and the economic and cultural upper classes went in search of novelties.

During these travels, there were often opportunities to hear important works of composers not yet performed in Stockholm. Diaries and letters home reveal the reactions to these events. Some musicians wrote articles about the music they heard on the continent. The encounter with the music of Richard Wagner was often a great shock for the unprepared, with strong reactions of either wonder or rejection.

The cousins Berwald – the court Kapellmeister Johan Fredrik Berwald and the composer Franz Berwald – were frequent travellers. During a continental tour with his daughters in 1847, Johan Fredrik Berwald (1787–1861) visited Stettin, Berlin, Breslau, Dresden and Hamburg. He attended theatre performances, especially when grand operas (*Robert le diable*, *Les Huguenots*, *La Juive*) were being presented, and compared his impressions with the situation in Stockholm. In Dresden he met his younger colleague Carl Gottlieb Reißiger as well as Wagner himself. The latter greeted Berwald in a friendly way, and praised his daughters for their “beautiful and harmonious” (“sköna och harmoniska”) singing. In *Les Huguenots* Berwald heard “M:lle [Johanna] Wagner, niece to the Kapellmeister”, as Valentine, and Joseph Tichatscheck as Raoul.¹¹ Yet he did not seem to have had the opportunity to hear any music by Wagner.

There is no evidence that Franz Berwald (1796–1868) ever heard any performance of Wagner’s operas during his long stays on the continent in the 1840s. But he was certainly well informed about the heated discussions in the press and the antagonistic aesthetic positions. In the spring of 1858 Berwald made a long journey that took him to Weimar where Liszt was living, although Liszt was not at home, and to Berlin where he made friendly connections with Meyerbeer, who showed him his score of *L’Africaine* then in progress, and with Hans von Bülow. To his editor Julius Schuberth, Berwald wrote slightly later (on 14 July 1858): “I heard from Bülow that not only he but also Liszt, Tausig and

11 Lindgren 1882, 97–102; Rundberg 1952, 175.

many others are studying my works passionately. Even Richard Wagner let me send his admiring regards through Liszt.”¹² The aesthetic positions were far from clear, even on the continent. When von Bülow gave a performance in February 1858 of Berwald’s D-minor piano trio in Berlin, it was described in the German press as “a composition that in all parts adapts to the new strand in music as introduced by Wagner”.¹³ Berwald’s only known comment on Wagner’s music is found in his unpublished composition manual:

Wagner’s bizarre use of contrapunctus hyperbatus must be duly criticized, due to which he all too often is tempted to combinations that with crushing effect affects the cantus firmus, and with one hand destroys what the other hand has built up. With all this in mind, there is no reason to use the inappropriate term “Zukunftsmusik” for Wagner’s dramatic works. Wagner’s appearance was in two senses necessary for the musical art of today: 1) through intentions he could only indicate in an incomplete way, and 2) through the negative effect of being a warning example to his followers.¹⁴

In March 1844 *Rienzi* was performed in Hamburg, under Wagner’s direction. An anonymous Swedish reviewer later recorded his impres-

12 “[W]ie ich von Bülow hörte, [sollen] nicht allein er, sondern Liszt, Tausig, u: m. m. mit leidenschaftlicher Wut meine Arbeiten durchdreschen. Ja sogar Richard Wagner hat neulich durch Liszt mir seine Bewunderung zuschicken lassen”, quoted in Lomnäs 1979, 484.

13 “[...] eine Composition, die sich in allen Theilen der neuern, durch Wagner eingeführten Richtung anschließt”, *Neue Preussische Zeitung* 18 February 1858; signed “d.R.”, probably Gustav Bock; quoted in Lomnäs 1979, 481.

14 “Rätteligen måste Wagners bizarre användande av contrapunctus hyperbatus klandras och hvarigenom han allt ofta förledes till kombinationer, hvilka förkrossande återverka på sjelfva cantus firmus och såmedelst rifver ner med ena handen hvad den andra framskaffat. Med allt detta förefinnas ändå inga skäl för det oegentliga uttrycket ‘Zukunftsmusik’ hvilket blivit Wagners dramatiska verk bilagdt. Wagners uppträdande var uti 2ne hänseenden en nödvändighet för den nuvarande musikaliska konsten – 1° genom de intentioner han, visserligen endast ofullständigt förmådde antyda och 2° genom de negativa förtjenster att varnande kunna framhållas för sina efterföljare”, quoted in Lomnäs 1979, 674–675.

sions of a *Rienzi* performance in Hamburg.¹⁵ The critic was writing in 1856, over a decade after having experienced the opera. In 1844 grand opera had only recently been introduced to Stockholm (see below), and no Verdi operas had yet been performed.

As a representative of modernism – *Zukunftsmusik* – Wagner was connected with the idea of development and progress.¹⁶ Opera as a genre with its extroverted attitude and its openness to technical innovations was often severely criticised as vulgar by representatives of more conservative, idealistic and classicist aesthetics. Technical progress was seen as degeneration. As the Swedish composer Jacob Axel Josephson (1818–1880) wrote at the beginning of his doctoral thesis in 1842:

[A]nd since, after this recently achieved perfection [from Bach to Beethoven], the newer works of art in the world of Music have started threatening with disintegrating forms [...], as one begins to scrutinize the question of the degeneration of the modern Music from the older, classical.¹⁷

As a symphonist, Josephson, trained in Leipzig as composer, was a typical exponent of a classic-romantic aesthetic. In Dresden he attended a concert on 22 July 1844, during which Wagner as the Kapellmeister conducted the premiere of his *Faust Overture*, composed in 1840:

I learned from this overture only that Dresden has a good orchestra and first-class wind players, and that Mr Wagner actually writes for the winds, with the strings as a sort of appendix. This is a reversal

15 *Aftonbladet* 22 February 1856; the text and a German translation are reproduced in Ander 2015b.

16 The term *Zukunftsmusik* was introduced at the end of the 1850s; it is remarkable that Berwald (see above) knew and used the word.

17 “[...] och sedan efter denna vunna fulländning de nyare konstalstren inom Musikens värld börjat arbeta med en hotande formupplösning [...] då man till nogare skärskådning upptager frågan om den moderna Musikens degeneration från den äldre, klassiska”, Josephson 1842, 1.

of the classical practice, which from a musical point of view makes a rather bad effect.¹⁸

Josephson's negative judgement was to be shared by Wagner himself only some years later. Wagner had recently encountered modern music in Paris in the shape of the orchestral effects in Meyerbeer's grand operas. Wagner would later revise his early scores in order to achieve a better balance between winds and strings. The *Faust Overture* was reorchestrated in 1843/44, and revised, reorchestrated again and published in 1855. Some days after hearing the *Faust Overture* Josephson attended a performance of *Rienzi* in the company of his friends Jenny Lind and a Mademoiselle Lindskog. He described his impressions in a letter home to his family.¹⁹

Yet we cannot be sure that Josephson, Lind and Lindskog were the first Swedes to hear Wagner's *Rienzi*. Hermann Berens (1826–1880), a composer, pianist, teacher and conductor, was an influential musical personality in Stockholm at the time. He was active as a Kapellmeister at the Mindre teatern (The Small Theatre) in Stockholm from 1860. Born in Hamburg, Berens was trained in Dresden by Wagner's colleague at the Hoftheater, the first Court Kapellmeister Karl Reißiger (1798–1859) in the 1840s (it has not been possible to establish the exact years of these studies). Reißiger conducted the first performance of *Rienzi* in Dresden in 1842, and it is an intriguing thought that a person who possibly attended the first performance of *Rienzi* during his years of study with Reißiger actually worked at a Stockholm theatre and could have given eyewitness reports on Wagner's own performances.

A large number of Scandinavian musicians studied in Leipzig in the 1840s and 1850s. Of those musicians taking part in the Stockholm *Rienzi*

18 "Jag lärde af denna ouverture blott, att Dresden har ett utmärkt godt capell och deribland förträffliga blåsinstrumenter, samt att herr Wagner skrifver egentligen för blåsinstrumenter, med violininstrumenter som ett slags bihang. Detta är en omvändning af det klassiska bruket, som i musikaliskt hänseende gör en ganska dålig effect", cited in Ödman 1885, 140.

19 Ödman 1885, 141–142; the letter in Swedish and with a German translation is given in Ander 2016b.

production, Ludvig Norman, August Söderman and Fredrika Andréa had all studied in Leipzig in those years. Leipzig is situated approximately 90 kilometres west of the Saxonian capital Dresden. From 1839 the cities were connected by a railway. One Swedish musician who studied in Leipzig during Wagner's time as Court Kapellmeister in Dresden, 1843–1849, was Ludvig Norman (1831–1885). In May 1848 Norman left Stockholm in the midst of the revolutionary riots and shooting to arrive in Leipzig a few weeks later, where he studied for the next four years, 1848–1852. Norman visited Dresden several times during his stay in Leipzig,²⁰ but whether he personally had the opportunity to witness Wagner conduct his own works before the outbreak of the Dresden insurrection in May 1849 is not known. (Wagner's brother-in-arms during the May revolution, Mikhail Bakunin [1814–1876], spent some months in Stockholm in 1863 and 1864, just before the Swedish premiere of the revolutionary opera.²¹)

To what extent Norman, son of a publisher, frequented the publishing families in Leipzig, such as Barth, Brockhaus, Reclam, Tauchnitz, is not known.²² Wagner's sisters Louise (1805–1872) and Ottilie (1811–1883) were married to the Brockhaus brothers, Friedrich and Herrmann. Leipzig was also a leading centre of music publishing, with family companies such as Breitkopf & Härtel, Peters and Hoffmeister. Despite the proximity of established houses, Wagner persevered in his financially disastrous project to be his own publisher. (The Stockholm score is one of few examples of this enterprise to be preserved.)

Leipzig, where Wagner was born and where he spent a crucial part of his youth (1828–1832), was to become an important Wagner centre, even if the Gewandhausorchester never played any of his works during the time Norman was studying there.²³ In the second half of the nineteenth century the Leipzig opera was flourishing, attracting leading

20 Karle 2006, 112.

21 Karlsson 1990, 226; Helm & Ottovar 1979, 153.

22 Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* was published in Leipzig in English by Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1842.

23 Ander 2000, 195.

singers and conductors and producing new works. In the years 1847 to 1854 the opera orchestra was conducted by Norman's teacher Julius Rietz. The works of Wagner that were produced soon after their premieres, namely *Tannhäuser* in 1853 and *Lohengrin* in 1854,²⁴ were staged after Norman's departure but during Fredrika Andréé's stay in Leipzig.

Fredrika Andréé (1836–1880), who later married²⁵ the opera singer Oskar Fredrik Stenhammar, studied in Leipzig in 1851–1854. She was only 14 years old when she arrived. It is possible to follow Andréé's impressions through her letters to Sweden. She heard famous singers and met composers. She wrote home to her parents (on 22 November 1851):

Tuesday evening I went to hear *The Prophet*, or rather to see it, as there is more to see than to hear. A famous singer, Fräulein [Johanna] Wagner – the niece of Richard Wagner – was here and gave guest performances, and performed the part of Fides.²⁶

Andrée had been advised to be at the theatre by at five o'clock in order to have a good seat. The room was crowded and people were calling for help. The young Andréé, who was small in size, was nearly suffocated before two gentlemen saved her and carried her through the tumult:

But this is something I will never forget, because it was the most terrible thing I have experienced, this danger between life and death. However, now I got a good seat, and heard one of the greatest singers and actresses of our day. Singing and acting were competing for pri-

24 Härtwig 1992, 1135–1137.

25 Her husband (from 1863), Oskar Fredrik Stenhammar (1834–1884), was active for a short period (1862–1865) as a singer at the Stockholm Opera before he entered civil service, a year of study in Paris having destroyed his voice. In 1866 Fredrika gave birth to twins, whom she named Elsa and Sigfrid. No letters seem to have been preserved from the 1860s.

26 "Tisdags afton var jag och hörde 'Profeten' eller rättare sagt såg, ty det är mera att se än att höra. En berömd sångerska, Fräulein Wagner – Richard Wagners brorsdotter – var här och höll gästroller och uppträdde i Fides roll", Stenhammar 1958, 20.

ority. Her voice had a range from [small] f to [high] c or c sharp, and is beautiful, strong and metallic, and she has significant coloratura.²⁷

Johanna Wagner (1826–1894) had worked in Dresden since 1844, and in 1845 she sang the role of Elisabeth in the premiere of *Tannhäuser*. Wagner had also intended her to sing Elsa in the Dresden premiere of *Lohengrin*. By 1850 Johanna Wagner had left Dresden and was living in Berlin.²⁸ After study in Leipzig, Andrée was engaged in Dessau.²⁹ One year after her premiere in Stockholm, she left for Paris for further study (1857–58). Paris was not only the operatic centre in Europe: it was also very important as an educational centre for singing.

The Swedish composer and conductor August Söderman (1832–1876) also studied in Leipzig. During his short stay there, 1856–1857, he had several opportunities to hear Wagner’s music. Although Norman and Andrée had been very young during their Leipzig stays, Söderman was an experienced musician and conductor when he arrived (which was after the first public performance of Wagner in Sweden, in February 1856, discussed below). Söderman described his impressions of Wagner’s music in a letter to his friend Fritz Arlberg:

The most interesting novelty to appear recently is Wagner’s *Faust Overture* – up until now the most beautiful leaf in his laurel wreath,

27 “Men det glömmet jag aldrig, ty det var det rysligaste jag upplevt, denna fara mellan liv och död. Dock bekom jag nu en god plats och fick höra en av nutidens största sångerskor och skådespelerskor. Sång och spel tävlade med varandra om företrädet hos henne. Hennes röst hade ett omfång från ostrukna f till 3-strukna c eller ciss, är skön, stark och metallfull och har en betydande koloratur.” Stenhammar 1958, 20.

28 Forbes 1980, 145; Forbes 1992; Höjjer 1864, 535 dedicates quite a comprehensive article to Johanna Wagner in his dictionary. Mankell 1864, 126 also mentions Johanna Wagner in a list of contemporary virtuoso singers.

29 The engagement in Dessau was cancelled because of a great fire in the opera house: “Yesterday [7 March 1855] at 6.30 in the morning it was all destroyed by fire. Decor, scores, instruments, everything was turned to ashes. [...] The same evening ‘The Jewess’ by Halévy, in which I was to sing the princess [Eudoxie], should have been performed [...]”; “I går morse kl. halv sju blev den offer för en stor förödande eldflamma. Dekorationer, partiturer, instrument, allt blev till aska. [...] Samma afton skulle ‘Judinnan’ av Halévy, i vilken jag hade prinsessans roll, uppföras.” Stenhammar 1958, 44–45.

which is still not finished, but not even the musically skilled public in Leipzig seems to appreciate it. [...] But I would not feel sorry for a Wagner defeat, as I consider him to win more honour every time any of his compositions “fails” [*durchgefallen*]. Wagner is judged and dismissed by the great majority to be a distracted fantasist, but it is evident that persons who understand his music – they recognize it as the creation of a genius, and the large number of these persons are themselves recognized as geniuses (for example, Liszt, perhaps in every sense the *greatest of all* Wagner’s admirers). From this arises the question: Who is in the right, the great majority or the great geniuses?³⁰

Söderman had the chance to hear *Tannhäuser* during Liszt’s visit to Leipzig in March, and again in May, when Tichatscheck gave a guest performance of the opera.³¹ Söderman became an enthusiastic admirer of Wagner. His diary annotations are revealing:

Gohlis 10.30 pm. – Home at last after strolling around a whole day, filled with the most agreeable feelings, because I know that all greatness is not past – art is still alive. The Wagnerian masterpiece last night made an even deeper impression on me than the last time I heard it under the direction of Liszt [...] when it was much better than this time, but masterpieces – performed well or badly – are still masterpieces. When you hear this music, it is as if you are transported to another world – you sit holding your breath, as if afraid to fall back down to earth.³²

30 ”Den intressantaste nyhet, som förekommit, är Wagners Faustouverture – hittills det skönaste bladet i hans ännu ofulländade lagerkrans, men icke ens den förstasigpående Leipzigerpubliken tycktes vilja sentera den. [...] Men jag unnar Wagner gerna hvarje nederlag, ty jag anser honom vinna en ny ära för varje gång någon av hans kompositioner blir ‘durchgefallen’. Wagner bedömes och fördömes af den stora allmänheten såsom varandes en förryckt fantast, men det är dock i dagen lagt att gifvandes personer, som förstå hans musik – dessa erkänna den såsom skapelse af snille – och större delen af dessa personer äro dock sjelfva erkända snillen (t. ex. Liszt, kanske Wagners i *alla* afseenden *största* beundrare). Här af följer en fråga: Hvilken har rätt, den stora allmänheten eller de stora snillena?” Söderman > Arlberg 15 February 1857, cited in Jeanson 1926, 28–29.

31 Jeanson 1926, 22–30.

32 “Gohlis kl. 1/2 11. – Ändtligen är jag hemma efter en hel dags ströftåg, uppfylld af de

Even if Söderman was enthusiastic about Wagner's music, he could be very critical of the performers, the singing and the acting. In a letter he probably never sent to his girlfriend "Lilli" Söderman expressed his critical evaluation of the performance, and ended up – in high romantic fashion – enthusiastically addressing Wagner himself in his thoughts:

Tannhäuser is given with the Saxon Court singer Tichatscheck as "guest singer" [*Gast*] in the title part. [...] Tichatscheck is a good tenor with a strong but rather coarse theatre voice, his manners somewhat resembling those of Ander – though he does not have his figure or finesse. He was, of course, called back after the end of the act – this is the least that the good-natured Leipz[ig] audience can show their "guests". – As for his co-actors, they are rather so and so. The Landgraf growls like a bear, Venus sings through her nose, etc. The stage decor is disgusting. – Now our good Kapellmeister (Riccius) raps [to signal] the second act. He conducts, by the way, like a big nut. [...] I shed tears of happiness in my heart that this music has actually been composed. – Oh! Wagner, Wagner! I must exclaim.³³

Södermans comparison of the singing by Aloys Ander and Tichatscheck – both of whom would be guest singers at the Stockholm

angenämaste känslor, ty jag vet, att allt stort är ännu icke förgånget – ännu lefver konsten. Det wagnerska mästerstycket gjorde i afton ännu djupare intryck på mig än förra gången jag hörde det, då allt under Liszts anförande [...] gick mycket bättre än denna gång, men mästerverk – göras bra eller illa – är dock och förblir mästerverk. När man hör denna musik, så är det som man blefve förflyttad till en annan verld – man sitter med återhållen anda, liksom rädd att åter falla ned till jorden", cited in Jeanson 1926, 29.

33 "Tannhäuser af Wagner gifves med Sachsiska Hofsångaren Tichatscheck såsom 'Gast' uti titelrollen. [...] Tichatscheck är en god tenorist med stark ehuru något rå theatterröst, hans manér påminner något om Ander – dock har han inte dennes tournure o. finess. Han blef naturligtvis framropad efter aktens slut – det är det minsta den beskedliga Leipz. theaterpubliken kan visa sina 'gäster'. – Hvad de medspelande beträffar är det si o. så. Landgrafen brummar som en björn, Venus sjunger i näsan etc. Theaterarrangementen äro vedervärdiga. – Nu knackar vår goda kapellmästare (Riccius) till 2:dra akt. Han dirigerar för öfrigt som ett stort nöt. [...] Jag gråter glädjetårar i mitt hjerta att denna musik är skriven. – O! Wagner, Wagner! måste jag ropa", cited in Jeanson 1926, 29–30.

opera (see below) – is enlightening. Söderman was also interested in Wagner's own writings. He purchased both *Oper und Drama* (1851) and *Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1849) while in Leipzig.³⁴

Taken together, these mobile young Swedes – Berens, Norman, Andrée and Söderman – gathered substantial first-hand experiences and information on the continent by listening to Wagner's music, reading the debates in the newspapers and music journals, and talking with their student friends. In Leipzig and Dresden they saw Wagner, Liszt, Ander and Tichatscheck, and experienced new practices in conducting, acting, direction and scene techniques. They were thus reasonably well prepared to take the decisive step to stage and perform Wagner's works themselves.

Wagner in Swedish scholarly literature

More specialized literature, such as books or articles about Wagner in Sweden, appeared rather late. The first were Adolf Lindgren's *Richard Wagners sträfvanden i kritisk belysning* (1875) and *Om Wagnerismen* (1881), followed by Fritz Arlberg's *Parsifal* in 1882.³⁵ To find Swedish references to Wagner earlier than 1865 one must turn to general music dictionaries and general music histories (see the list at end of this section).

The earliest general music dictionaries in Sweden to mention Wagner are Jacob Niclas Ahlström's *Musikalisk fick-ordbok för tonkonstnärer och musikvänner* (1858)³⁶ and J. Leonard Höjjer's *Musik-lexikon* (1864/1867).³⁷ Ahlström's entry is short and very typical of the time:

Wagner, Richard, born 1816 [*sic*], has made a remarkable impact with his operas Cola Rienzi, Fliegende [*sic*] Holländer, Tannhäuser, but with

34 Jeanson 1926, 30. In his annotations Söderman also translated some of Wagner's ideas into Swedish.

35 Davidsson 1980, 138–139.

36 The third augmented edition; the first edition from 1843 has no entries for persons.

37 Bauck's *Musikaliskt real-lexikon* (1871) has no entries for persons.

these obtained mixed success. Since 1842, second Court Kapellmeister in Dresden.³⁸

The dictionary also has a short entry on Tichatscheck.³⁹

The Swedish lexicographer J. Leonard Höijer (1815–1885) had a substantial article on Wagner in his dictionary in 1864.⁴⁰ The article is up to date, and mentions the failure of *Tannhäuser* in Paris in 1861 (“kostade staten 250,000 fr.”), the composer’s amnesty and his residence in Munich with an annual salary of 1,200 Gulden from the king.⁴¹ Writing one year before the Stockholm performance of *Rienzi*, Höijer made an important observation: “His [Wagner’s] opera *Tristan und Isolde* has not yet been performed [this took place in Munich, in June 1865 and Stockholm in November 1909], but has been published in full score and in a piano score.”⁴² His comment is characteristic of the situation in Sweden, where many had heard of, and even studied, the later *Musikdramen*, well before the first staged performance of any Wagner opera in Stockholm.

In the appendix to Höijer’s dictionary, which seems to be from 1867, he gives an interesting characterization of Wagner at the time of the first performance of *Rienzi* in Stockholm:

[Wagner] lived in 1865 in Munich as the favourite of the twenty-year-old King Ludwig II [1845–1886; reigned from 1864]. Owing to Wagner’s great influence at court, and his exaggerated plans to establish a large music conservatory, expensive building-projects, etc. – a waste that

38 “Wagner, Richard, född 1816, har gjort uppseende genom sina Operor: Cola Rienzi, Fliegende [*sic*] Holländer, Tannhäuser, men kunde derigenom blott förvärfva sig deladt bifall. Sedan 1842 andre hofkapellmästare i Dresden”, Ahlström 1858, 247.

39 “Tichatscheck, Jos. Aloys, född 1707 [*sic*] i Weckelsdorf, en berömd tenor vid Kongl. operan i Dresden”, Ahlström 1858, 233.

40 Höijer 1864, 534–535.

41 “[...] der han af konungens handkassa erhåller en årlig pension af 1200 Gulden”, Höijer 1864, 535.

42 “Hans opera Tristan och Isolde har ännu inte blivit uppförd, men utkommit i partitur och claverutdrag”, Höijer 1864, 535.

threatened the finances of the state and that finally aroused the ire of the people – the king was forced by his ministers to expel the composer temporarily from the country. Of Wagner’s operas, only *Rienzi* has been performed in Stockholm.⁴³

An interesting comparison is the description of the same phase of Wagner’s life given in Tobias Norlind’s *Allmänt musiklexikon* in 1916:

Just as he was having grave doubts about the success of his cause, he [Wagner] received on 4 May 1864 an invitation to visit King Ludwig II in Munich. He was now again able to dedicate himself to his works. With the strong support of the king it was possible to perform his latest dramas at the court theatre in Munich. Bülow, who already in Zurich had enjoyed W[agner]’s instructions in conducting, was now invited to become court Kapellmeister, and *Tristan* was performed under his direction [on 10 June] 1865. Many were envious of W. though, and to evade the storm, he left the Bavarian capital on 10 December 1865.⁴⁴

At the time Norlind wrote his entry, all of Wagner’s operas except *Parsifal* had been premiered at the Stockholm opera. Wagner’s operas, along with those of Mozart, were the most often performed of all opera composers in Stockholm.

The first general music histories in Sweden which mention Wagner are to be regarded as adapted translations from foreign literature rath-

43 “Uppehöll sig 1865 i München, der han blev gunstling hos den 20-årige Konung Ludwig II. Till följd af Wagners egenmäktighet vid Hofvet och hans exalterade planer till grundandet af ett stort musikconservatorium, dyrbara byggnader m. m. – ett slöseri, som hotade att undergräfvat rikets finanser, och som slutligen väckte folkets rättmätiga harm, – nödgades Konungen af sina ministrar, att för en tid förvisa honom ur landet. Af W.s operor har endast ‘Rienzi’ gifvits i Stockholm”, Höjer 1864, 67–68.

44 “Just då han som värst tviflade på sin saks framgång, möttes han 4. 5. 1864 af kallelsen att komma till konung Ludvig II i München. Han kunde nu åter arbeta för sina verk. Med kungens starka bistånd skred man till uppförande av hans sista dramer på hofscenen i München. Bülow, som redan i Zürich åtnjutit W:s undervisning i dirigering, kallades till hofkapellmästare och med honom som ledare uppföredes nu ‘Tristan’ där 1865. W. hade dock vid hofvet fått många afundsmän och för att afvärja stormen, lämnade W. den bayerska hufvudstaden 10. 12. 1865”, Norlind 1916, 980.

er than original Swedish contributions, for example Bauck's *Handbok i musikens historia* (1862, 1867, 1888)⁴⁵ and Mankell's *Musikens historia* (1864). Abraham Mankell (1802–1868) mentioned Wagner many times in his popular music history. Mankell's technique, especially in the third volume, was to collect quotations from famous authors and composers about other composers. The tendency to use sceptical, ironic or negative statements was strong.

A chronological list of books dealing with the early Wagner reception in Sweden is as follows :

- 1842 Josephson, Jacob Axel: *Några momenter till en Karakteristik af den nyaste Musiken*, (PhD Diss.) Uppsala.
- 1858 Ahlström, Jacob Niclas: *Musikalisk fick-ordbok för tonkonstnärer och musikvänner*, 3rd ed. Stockholm: J.L. Brudin.
- 1864 Mankell, Abraham: *Musikens historia, i korta berättelser lättfattligt framställd*, Örebro: N.M. Lindh.
- 1864 Höjjer, J. Leonard: *Musik-lexicon*, Stockholm: Abraham Lundquist.
- 1866 Dahlgren, Fredrik August: *Förteckning öfver svenska skådespel uppförda på Stockholms teatrar 1737–1863*, Stockholm: Norstedt.
- 1866 Wijkander, Oscar (ed.): *Thalia. Theater-kalender för 1867*, Stockholm: Oscar L. Lamm.
- 1882 Lindgren, Adolf: *Svenske hofkapellmästare 1782–1882. Ett bidrag till operahusets hundraårsminne*, Stockholm: Centraltryckeriet.
- 1885 Hedberg, Frans: *Svenska operasångare. Karakteristiker och porträtter*, Stockholm: C.E. Fritze.
- 1885 Ödman, Nils Petrus: *Ur en svensk tonsättares lif. En minnesanteckning öfver Jakob Axel Josephson*, Stockholm: Z. Hægström.
- 1889 Behrens, Conrad: *Vor und hinter den Coulissen. Erinnerungen aus meinem Künstlerleben*, Rotterdam: George W. van Biene.
- 1908 Lundqvist, Carl Fredrik: *Minnen och anteckningar. En blick tillbaka på mitt lif*, Stockholm: Hugo Geber.
- 1916 Norlind, Tobias: *Allmänt musiklexikon*, Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand.

45 Lönn 1975.

Participants in the Stockholm *Rienzi* premiere

In the 1860s a new generation of well-educated and often articulate musicians took control of the musical life of Stockholm and the Royal Opera. All were born around 1830 and consequently were young men and women in their thirties in the 1860s: von Stedingk, Arlberg, Norman, Söderman, Fredrika Andrée Stenhammar, Behrens, Willman and Ludvig Josephson.

The direction of the Stockholm Opera seems to have been open to staging new works and styles, including Wagner's, without being outspoken adherents of any modern school. The first director in the period 1861–1866 was baron [*friherre*] Eugène von Stedingk (1825–1871). The baron came from a naturalized, originally Pomeranian noble family of military men and ambassadors in the Swedish service.⁴⁶ He was musically well orientated, and was an experienced ambassador assigned to St Petersburg (1857) and Paris (1859–1860). In both cities he had ample opportunity to follow the repertoire at two of the leading opera theatres in Europe. (Wagner came to Paris at about the same time as von Stedingk left the city; von Stedingk apparently missed the French *Tannhäuser* premiere.)

The management of the Royal Opera in Stockholm was open to initiatives by artists such as Arlberg and Fredrika Andrée Stenhammar:

At her [Stenhammar's] side, during the performances of Wagner's works stood at first Fritz Arlberg [...], the one of our singers who most clearly understood the composer's reformative ambitions and their motivation, and one can without exaggeration say that the enthusiasm of these two was the reason for the rather limited resistance to the introduction of Wagner's music on our scene. Happily, the management at the time was not partial, either for or against the supporters and opponents, but stood, as it ought to do, above the parties, and did only what it regarded as its duty to the audience, which was permitted to make the acquaintance of the greatest of contemporary composers [...]

⁴⁶ Hofsten 1979, 454; Lenander 2007, 188.

it is generally known that the main opposition was found within the theatre institution.⁴⁷

Fritz Arlberg (1830–1896) must be regarded as perhaps the most important agent in the introduction of Wagner to Sweden and early Wagner reception. He translated the texts of both *Rienzi* and *Der fliegende Holländer* for the Stockholm Opera. He directed the performance of *Rienzi*, and was later to sing the role of the flying Dutchman (1872) and Telramund (*Lohengrin* 1874) in the Swedish premieres of these works. Arlberg was involved in many activities – as singer (baritone), singing teacher, composer, stage director and translator. He was brother-in-law to Norman, and married one of the famous Neruda sisters, the violinist Maria Neruda (1840–1920). Coming from a more upper bourgeois background than either Norman or Söderman, Arlberg had studied at the University of Uppsala before embarking upon an artistic career in 1854. Employed as a singer at the Royal Opera in 1858, he was active as director (*Regissör för sångscenen*) in the years 1861–65.⁴⁸ Unlike many of his colleagues, he seems never to have studied abroad for a long period.

Ludvig Norman (1831–1885) had been appointed Court Kapellmeister in 1861, a post he retained until his death.⁴⁹ He conducted more first performances of important operas in Stockholm than probably any other Swedish conductor. Besides the premieres of *Rienzi*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*, he introduced a large number

47 “Vid hennes [Stenhammars] återgifvande af dessa Wagners uppgifter stod värdigt vid hennes sida först Fritz Arlberg, som [...] var den af våra sångare hvilken bäst stod att uppfatta kompositörens reformatistiska sträfvanden och deras berättigande, och man kan utan öfverdrift saga att dessa tvås entusiasm hade man att tacka för att icke något starkare motstånd restes mot Wagner-musikens inträde på vår scen. Lyckligtvis var directionen den tiden icke med någondera partiet, hvarken anhängarnes eller motståndarnes, utan stod som den borde göra, öfver partierna och gjorde endast hvad den ansåg vara sin skyldighet mot publiken, då den lät henne forma bekantskap med nutidens störste kompositör [...] lika allmänt känt torde vara att den egentliga oppositionen fans inom sjelfva teatermurarne”, Hedberg 1885, 152.

48 He left the opera in 1874, after a public disagreement with Norman during a rehearsal.

49 In later years Norman left more and more of the opera conducting to his assistants and concentrated on orchestral concerts.

of works by Gounod, Verdi, Meyerbeer and Bizet.⁵⁰ August Söderman (1832–1876), after having directed the orchestra of Mindre teatern from 1854, was appointed choirmaster of the Royal Opera in 1860 and assistant Kapellmeister in 1862. As a composer, Söderman was much more influenced by Wagner’s music than the more classically and symphonically inclined Norman.⁵¹

The balletmaster in Stockholm was the Frenchman Théodor Martin (1814–1870), who was engaged in 1862. Martin had choreographed the ballet for music especially composed by Conrad Nordqvist to replace Wagner’s ballet music. Conrad Nordqvist (1840–1929), who evidently also conducted the ballet during the performance of *Rienzi*, had been a viola player in the court orchestra since 1859, and was conductor of the ballet music from 1862.

The engagement of an international star, the tenor Joseph Aloys Tischatscheck (1807–1886), who created the title role of *Rienzi* in 1842, was part of a tradition. All operas in Stockholm were performed in Swedish, but in order to stay in contact with the newest continental trends in singing techniques and performance practice, leading stars and specialists were sometimes engaged. These exceptional and occasional imports were often connected with the introduction or establishment of new styles or traditions in opera. For the “modern” Italian style, with composers like Donizetti and the early Verdi, the Italian baritone Luigi della Santa (1822–1860) was engaged to sing the parts of Macbeth, Alfonso and Carlo V in the Swedish premieres. Another important visiting singer was the Bohemian tenor Aloys Ander (1826–1864),⁵² whom Wagner had intended to sing Tristan.⁵³ Ander was engaged in Stockholm in 1855–56 before he met Wagner.

Tichatscheck’s singing and acting was described by several visitors

50 The principal modern studies of Norman are Sanner 1955, Ander 2000 and Karle 2006.

51 Percy 1936.

52 Ander gave 50 performances in Stockholm, in such grand opera roles as Jean de Leyde in *Le Prophète*, Raoul in *Les Huguenots*, Arnold Melchthal in *Wilhelm Tell*, as well as other more lyric roles (Dahlgren 1864, 583).

53 Gregor-Dellin 1980, 470–471, 475–476, 498, 506.

to the Hofoper in Dresden.⁵⁴ The Swedish court Kapellmeister Johan Fredrik Berwald recorded his impressions of Tichatscheck in Dresden in 1847:

Mr [Raoul] Tichatscheck, one of the leading tenors in Germany, has a first class and strong voice, and did sing the duet in the fourth act, as well as that in the third, with much power and feeling. It is said that he cannot do *roulader*, but that is not of any importance to me; I always think of him as an excellent singer.⁵⁵

The Swedish stage director Ludvig Josephson had several opportunities during his continental travels in the 1850s and 1860s to see and hear Tichatscheck in Dresden, performing *Rienzi* as well as *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*. He writes in his memoirs that nowhere had *Rienzi* been better performed than in Dresden. Still in the 1890s, Josephson regarded the guest performance of Tichatscheck in Stockholm as the best. Josephson and Tichatscheck continued to be in personal contact up until the singer's death in 1886.⁵⁶ Tichatscheck performed the great tenor parts in the grand operas of Auber, Meyerbeer, Halévy and Wagner. The roles he sang and how often he performed them during the years 1838–1863 is written in Fürstenau.⁵⁷

Auber	<i>La Muette de Portici</i>	Masaniello	92
Meyerbeer	<i>Robert le diable</i>	Robert	73
	<i>Les Huguenots</i>	Raoul	107
	<i>Le Prophète</i>	Jean de Leyde	72
Wagner	<i>Rienzi</i>	Rienzi	65

54 Seedorf 2006; Warrack 1992.

55 “(Raoul) hr Tichatscheck, för närvarande en av Tysklands första tenorer, har en förträfflig och stark röst och sjöng isynnerhet duetten i 4:de akten, liksom i den 3:dje, med mycken styrka och känsla. Man säger att han ej skall kunna göra mycket roulader, men detta qvittar mig lika; för mig blir han alltid en utmärkt sångare”, Lindgren 1882, 100.

56 Rosenberg 1993, 57–58.

57 Fürstenau 1868, 45–47.

	<i>Tannhäuser</i>	Tannhäuser	50
	<i>Lohengrin</i>	Lohengrin	19
Weber	<i>Der Freischütz</i>	Max	108

Tichatscheck was in his fifties when he came to Stockholm and had recently – 1861 – retired from his position in Dresden.⁵⁸ He was greeted as a star in Stockholm, as Franz Berwald wrote in an exuberant letter to his friend Julius Rietz on 28 April 1863.⁵⁹ Tichatscheck participated in 29 performances in 1863, 1865 and 1866 in Stockholm. He was singing mainly grand opera roles such as Masaniello in *La Muette de Portici*, Jean de Leyde in *Le Prophète*, and in 1866 Eléazar in *La Juive* in its first performance in Stockholm.

The performance of *Rienzi*, together with those of *La Juive* and *L'Africaine*, marked the establishment of a new generation of Swedish singers, several of whom would become internationally renowned Wagner interpreters.

The soprano part of Irene was sung by Fredrika Stenhammar (1836–1880)⁶⁰ (on her studies, see above). Fredrika Stenhammar was the first in a long and prestigious line of Swedish Wagner sopranos. She sang in the Stockholm premieres of several Wagner operas, performing such roles as Irene (1865), Senta (1872), Elsa (1874) and Elisabeth (1878).

Stefano Colonna, a bass role in *Rienzi*, was sung by the German-born Conrad Behrens (1835–1898). As a young man, Behrens heard both Ander and Tichatscheck in Hamburg, experiences which led him to study singing. While working in Stockholm as a trade assistant, Behrens took lessons with Dannström, Günther and Berg, leaving the

58 Tichatscheck made his Dresden debut in 1837 in the title role of Auber's *Gustavus III*, and the following year was engaged by the Dresden Hofoper. He created the title roles in *Rienzi* in 1842 and *Tannhäuser* in 1845.

59 Julius Rietz (1812–1877) was Reißiger's successor as Hofkapellmeister in Dresden from 1860; Rietz was the teacher of Ludvig Norman (Göthel 1963, 499–500). Berwald kept in touch with Tichatscheck as shown by a letter to him from 1865 (Lomnäs 1979, 603). The letter date is given in Lomnäs 1979, 571.

60 Hedberg 1885, 146–158.

trade business for engagements at the Stockholm Opera in 1862. He left Stockholm in 1870 for an international career, later performing important Wagner bass parts, for example at the Metropolitan Opera in New York (1889–91), and singing with such legendary Wagner performers as Lilli Lehman, Albert Niemann and Marianne Brandt.⁶¹

Adriano, a breeches role in *Rienzi*, was sung by Agnes Jacobsson (1837–1913). Studying in Prague in 1857, Jacobsson returned to Sweden in 1862, and was engaged at the Opera from 1863 to 1878.⁶² In 1871 she appeared as Mary in *Der fliegende Holländer*.

The early career of the bass Gustaf Sandström (1826–1875), who sang Paolo Orsini, is a typical example of “opera on the move”: he was touring as an actor with the Wallinska theatergruppen in the years 1845–1851, studied voice with Henrik Rung (1807–1871) in Copenhagen in 1851–1852, toured Norway (Christiania) with a Danish opera company in 1852–1853. In 1853 he was a member of O. Andersson’s actors’ group in Stockholm and the same year was engaged at the Royal Opera, where he performed for twenty years. Besides singing in *Rienzi*, he also sang the part of Telramund in *Lohengrin*, but tragically killed himself in 1875 soon after that performance.⁶³ Friedrich Weiss (1822–1893), a German bass who sang the role of Raimondo in *Rienzi* had come to Stockholm with a German opera company and performed at Djurgården during the summer of 1863. The same year he was engaged at the Stockholm Opera.⁶⁴ In 1867 he premiered as the Grand Inquisitor in *L’Africaine*. The tenor Robert Ohlsson (1841–1888), who sang Baroncelli, was the youngest soloist in the cast. After having acted as a teenager in different theatre companies, he was engaged at the Royal Opera in 1861. He sang minor parts in a number of Wagner premieres in Stockholm: der Steuermann (1872), ein Edelmann in *Lohengrin* (1874), and Heinrich der

61 Dahlgren 1866, 508; Percy 1975, 383; Johanson 2002, 6; Behrens published his memoirs in 1889.

62 Höjjer 1864, 210, and Norlind 1916, 428. Jacobsson belonged to a Jewish family of music publishers; her sister-in law, Jeanette, née Davidson, was also active as an opera singer.

63 Norlind 1916, 864; Dahlgren 1866, 496; Höjjer 1864, 423; Hedberg 1885, 119–127.

64 Dahlgren 1866, 570, but not mentioned in either Höjjer 1864 or Norlind 1916.

Schreiber (1878), culminating with the role of Beckmesser in 1887, the year before his early death. Cecco del Vecchio, a bass part, was sung by Anders Willman (1834–1898). He was a dominating singer for many years in Stockholm, appearing in several first performances of Wagner operas there, including as Daland (1872) and Hermann, Landgraf von Thüringen in *Tannhäuser* (1878).

The orchestra had, according to the *Thalia Theater-kalender* (1866), 68 musicians (including 17 “extras”).⁶⁵ Concertmasters were E. d’Aubert and J. Meyer.⁶⁶ The choir was directed by August Söderman (*Kormästare*), R. Walin (*Biträdande Kormästare*) and C.J. Almgren (*Underlärare*). According to the *Theater-kalender* (1866), the members included 24 men and 26 women.⁶⁷ The choir was probably augmented for the production.

Notable too is that the tenor/baritone Carl Fredrik Lundqvist (“Lunkan”, 1841–1920), who later became quite famous, was recruited by August Söderman for the choir in the *Rienzi* production.⁶⁸ Lundqvist would become the second *Rienzi* in Stockholm, in the year 1870, and later performed a large number of leading parts in different Wagner operas.

Another future star, who probably sang in the *Rienzi* choir, was Leonard Labatt (1838–1897). In 1867, he sang Vasco da Gama in the premiere of *L’Africaine*. Labatt was the first Swedish international Wagner tenor, performing in Dresden in 1868–1869 and Vienna in 1869–1883. He studied the parts of *Tannhäuser* and *Siegfried* with the composer himself.⁶⁹

As for the ballet company, according to the *Theater-kalender* (1866), it comprised a total of 39 dancers, 15 male and 24 female, divided into

65 For a more detailed discussion of the orchestra in Stockholm and the instruments used see Ander 2014.

66 Wijkander 1866, 4–6.

67 *Ibid.*, 8–9.

68 Johansson 2002, 25.

69 *Ibid.*, 7; Hofsten 1977, 240.

classes (*Premiär-dansör, Sekund-dansör, Figurant*).⁷⁰

Epilogue (or overture)

The first mention of *Rienzi* in the Royal Opera material is an annotation made in early March of 1865.⁷¹ This would probably indicate manual preparations of vocal and instrumental parts,⁷² and the start of individual preparations. The partbooks were copied from the printed revised score.⁷³ The Stockholm score had belonged to Joseph Tichatscheck. The path to the first performance was long and tortuous, with extra rehearsals called for, and the premiere had to be postponed several times. The total time period for the rehearsals was well over two months. Simultaneously, the various opera departments were preparing the stage decor, the costumes and other matters.⁷⁴

Wagner's grand opera *Rienzi, der Letzte der Tribunen* finally premiered in Stockholm on 8 June 1865. The opera poster gave the performance time as starting at 7 pm and ending around 11 pm.⁷⁵ The participation of Tichatscheck – “Kongl. Sachsiske Opera- och Kammar-sångaren Herr TICHATSCHECK” – is particularly mentioned. The poster also announced that there would be two 15- minute intervals after the second and fourth acts. The prices were elevated, owing to “the extraordinary costs of the production”.⁷⁶ All the important Stockholm newspapers had advertisements or information in the days before the

70 Wijkander 1866, 6–7. About the ballet in the Stockholm *Rienzi* performance, see Ander 2015a and Ander 2015b

71 The planning of the rehearsals can be followed in its entirety in “Repertoarlistor för representationer och repetitioner” (shelfmark D 7 AB).

72 Regarding the orchestra actually used in Stockholm see Ander 2014.

73 On the history, composition, different scores and revisions of *Rienzi*, see Deathridge 1977; Strohm 1976; Millington 1992; Strohm & Voss 1974–1991. The Stockholm score is not mentioned in these sources; see Ander 2015, Ander 2015a, Ander 2015b.

74 The preserved source material is presented in Ander 2014 and Ander 2015a.

75 About the cuts in the score see Ander 2015a and Ander 2015b.

76 Kungliga teaterns äldre affischsamling, L1 A.

premiere and printed reviews of the performance afterwards.⁷⁷

The premiere was followed by four further performances in June.⁷⁸ In all, the opera was presented 11 times in the two seasons 1865–1866 and 1866–1867, all with Tichatscheck singing the title role. In the 1866 performances Lovisa Michaeli replaced Fredrika Andrée Stenhammar as Irene; otherwise, the same singers appeared in all the performances. *Rienzi* was performed five times in the season 1870–1871, which initiated the great breakthrough of Wagner in Stockholm in the 1870s. It was followed by *Der fliegende Holländer* in 1872, *Lohengrin* in 1874 and *Tannhäuser* in 1878.⁷⁹ The singers in all these premieres were almost the same as those in the *Rienzi* premiere.⁸⁰ Even the premiere of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1887) featured several of the singers from *Rienzi*'s premiere in 1865. Thereafter, *Rienzi* was only performed occasionally in Stockholm.⁸¹ Since the season of 1870–1871, Wagner's operas have been performed in Stockholm almost every season with few exceptions. A long and important tradition, and at the top level internationally, had begun.

The Stockholm *Rienzi* was the first outside German-speaking areas. In the Baltic sea area it was only preceded by Königsberg (1845). Later, it was performed in Riga (1878) and St Petersburg (1879). Outside the Baltic sea area *Rienzi* had its premieres in Rotterdam 1868, in Paris 1869, in Ghent 1872, in Venice 1874, in Budapest 1874, in Madrid 1876, in New York 1878, and in London 1879. This means that the Royal Opera in Stockholm has one of the longest, continuous Wagner traditions in the world outside German-speaking areas.⁸² A number of earlier Wagner

77 The five leading Stockholm newspapers – *Aftonbladet* (AB), *Dagens Nyheter* (DN), *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, *Stockholms Dagblad* and *Post- och inrikes tidningar* – were examined for the period 6–13 June 1865 in search of advertisements, announcements, comments and critical reviews. On the reception of *Rienzi* see Ander 2015b.

78 10, 13, 16, and 19 June 1865.

79 Performance statistics for the Stockholm opera are found in Strömbeck, Hofsten & Ralf 1974.

80 *Ibid.*, 31–35.

81 Performed once in 1885 and three times in 1904–1905.

82 Salmi 2005 does not seem to realize this (see 41, 119 and 124), but regards the Stockholm

performances took place in cities with large and culturally important German-speaking minorities, cities which since the Second World War are no longer in Germany,⁸³ for example Breslau (Wrocław), Stettin (Szczecin), Riga, Reval (Tallinn), and Prague.⁸⁴ The Hamburg performance of *Rienzi* in 1844, under Wagner's own direction,⁸⁵ was the first one near the Baltic region.

Rienzi is an example of a revolutionary age, an age of social, economic and political turmoil. Two court theatres – Dresden and Stockholm – became the experimental scene for the most modern of trends and techniques. And two Hofkapellmeisters – Wagner and Norman – were working for the theatre as a sacred temple of the arts and a new developing conception of time and space, a new historical and social consciousness and new conceptions of sound and timing. The members of its choirs could be seen as representing a sociological and ethnological analysis of fourteenth-century society, as described in *Rienzi's* dramatis personae:

Gesandte der lombardischen Städte, Neapels, Bayerns, Böhmens usw. Römische Nobili, Bürger, und Bürgerinnen Roms, Friedensboten, Priester und Mönche aller Orden, römische Trabanten (Ambassadors of the cities of Lombardy, Naples, Bavaria, Bohemia, etc., Roman nobles, citizens of Rome, messengers of peace, priests and monks of all orders, Roman bodyguards).

The text of *Rienzi* illustrates “opera on the move” in both space and time, as well as drastically changing hermeneutic horizons of understanding during the nineteenth century: An English statesman writing a dramatic, political novel in 1835, treating (or inventing) an historical event in fourteenth-century Rome, which was then translated into

performance as a “late” production.

83 Performed in the “German theatre” and/or by touring German opera companies.

84 On early Wagner performances in the Baltic area see Salmi 2005.

85 See above for comments in the Swedish press.

German and from German into French, and performed in the dynamic pre-revolutionary age of the 1840s; the work was translated again into Swedish in the mid-1860s, at a time when the Italian Risorgimento had entered a completely different phase, after unification and the legendary people's "Tribune" when Garibaldi had "liberated" southern Italy.⁸⁶ On the personal level of the composer the same changes can be seen in Wagner's life and circumstances during the same years: an economic refugee from Latvia, living a miserable life in Paris, making a tremendous success with *Rienzi* in Dresden, which led to the appointment of Royal Hofkapellmeister, followed by a political revolutionary phase in 1849, exile and the composition of *Tristan und Isolde* and the *Ring* while a political refugee, all of which influenced the international understanding and interpretation of his works.

Wagner was nominated for membership in the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm in 1865 by Crown Prince Oscar, but he was not accepted. Instead, Gounod and Verdi were elected. Wagner's name was proposed again in 1875, during the heyday of Wagner performances in Stockholm and Sweden, yet he was elected only the following year.

The case of the early Wagner reception in Sweden and Stockholm is a good example of the mobility and complex interaction of ideas, aesthetics and musical works. The Stockholm source material is itself also "on the move", reflecting revisions, adaptations during rehearsals and subsequent performances over the decades. The material shows the mobility, contacts and networks that existed among Swedish singers, conductors and other artists travelling abroad and foreign artists working in Sweden, but it also reveals developments or changes in conducting, acting, direction, production and stage techniques during the period. In this case it marked the beginning of a still vital and important Wagner performance tradition.

86 On Italian stylistic influences on *Rienzi*, and Wagner's admiration of Spontini's and especially Bellini's works at the time of its composition see Voss 1983, 77.

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The Introduction of Richard Wagner's Music Dramas in Stockholm: The Critical Reception from *Das Rheingold* (1901) to *Parsifal* (1917)

JOAKIM TILLMAN

In the Swedish reception of Wagner, including the influence of Wagner on Swedish composers, the music writer Gösta Percy has distinguished three periods.¹ The first was roughly between 1857 and 1884.² It began with concert performances of the *Tannhäuser* overture, and continued with the introduction of Wagner's operas at the Royal Swedish Opera (Kungliga Operan): *Rienzi* (1865), *Der fliegende Holländer* (1872), *Lohengrin* (1874) and *Tannhäuser* (in 1876 in a special performance at Mindre Teatern [The Smaller Theatre], and in 1878 at the Royal Swedish Opera). The second period began in 1884 with *Harald Viking* at the Royal Swedish Opera (a Swedish translation of *Harald der Wiking*) by Andréas Hallén (1846–1925), the first opera by a Swedish composer significantly influenced by Wagner.³ This work was followed by the first

1 Percy 1936, 2. As Owe Ander points out (2015a, 85–86), Wagner reception is a complex phenomenon that may concern many different aspects. When considering some of these aspects – Swedes attending Wagner performances in Germany, and short reports about Wagner's work in the Swedish press – the Swedish reception of Wagner started already in the 1840s, that is, before Percy's first period. However, as regards the reception of public performances of Wagner's works in Sweden, Percy's periodisation is on the whole valid. Percy himself stresses that the boundaries between the periods are flexible and approximate.

2 This period is described in Percy 1936, Gademan 1996, Salmi 2005 as well as Ander 2015a and 2015b.

3 *Harald der Wiking*, with a libretto by the German writer Hans Herrig (1845–1892), was

of Wagner's music dramas in Stockholm: *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1887) and *Die Walküre* (1895). The third period started at the turn of the century and is characterized by the introduction of the remaining music dramas: *Das Rheingold* (1901), *Siegfried* (1905), *Götterdämmerung* (1907, also the year of the first complete *Ring* cycle at the Royal Opera), *Tristan und Isolde* (1909) and finally *Parsifal* (1917) a few years after its copyright protection had expired, making the work available for theatres other than the Bayreuth Festival Theatre (Festspielhaus). According to Percy, this third period marked a definitive victory for Wagner on Swedish soil.⁴

The aim of this article is to study the above-mentioned third period in the Swedish reception of Wagner by investigating the critical reaction to Swedish premieres of the works from *Das Rheingold* in 1901 to *Parsifal* in 1917. Thus, the article is a continuation of my 2012 study of the reception of the second period.⁵ The Royal Opera in Stockholm was the only opera institution in Sweden during this time, and therefore the Swedish reception of Wagner's music dramas was to a large extent a Stockholm reception. However, two major newspapers outside the capital regularly reviewed the Wagner premieres at the Royal Opera, *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* in Gothenburg and *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* in Malmö. The article focuses on the most prominent and frequently discussed topics in the reviews, and it is divided into six main parts: the works, the stagings, cuts and longueurs, language confusion and translations, the performances, and the audience reactions.⁶

premiered in Leipzig in 1881, staged by Angelo Neumann (1838–1910) and conducted by Arthur Nikisch (1855–1922). Hallén's first name is usually rendered Andreas, but I will adopt the spelling, Andréas, used by the composer himself.

4 Percy 1936, 2.

5 Tillman 2012.

6 The investigation is based on all reviews listed in *Svenskt Pressregister* 1998, vol. 6, 1901–1902 (*Das Rheingold*), and *Svenskt Pressregister* 2015, vol. 7, 1903–1911 [electronic resource] (*Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung*, and *Tristan und Isolde*). Volume 7 of *Svenskt Pressregister* is less complete than the earlier printed volumes, and a search has been made by the author for reviews in newspapers not listed and instalments of reviews that are obviously missing in this resource. As *Parsifal* in 1917 is not covered by *Svenskt Pressregister*, the

Wagner's breakthrough in Sweden

Towards the end of his review of *Siegfried* after its first Swedish performance (1905), the Wagnerian critic and composer Wilhelm Peterson-Berger (1867–1942) wrote:

Well, but what about the work then, asks the reader, who naturally expected the undersigned to read the usual big Wagner Mass because of the premiere. Well, does anything really need to be said about the work? Wagner is nowadays a classic [...].⁷

In contrast to *Die Meistersinger* in 1887 and *Die Walküre* in 1895, the music dramas premiered after 1900 did not elicit substantial negative opinions. Many critics did not evaluate the works at all, but only the staging and the performers. For many younger critics, heated disputes for and against Wagner were a thing of the past. When Andréas Hallén's *Harald Viking* was revived at the Royal Opera in 1911, the composer and critic Olallo Morales (1874–1957) wrote:

The opera emerged during a time when the Wagner battle was still raging, and because of its clear connection to Wagner's music dramatic principles, it was of course implicated in the battle. The reviews were contradictory, depending on whether the critics were Wagnerians or anti-Wagnerians; sharp blows were exchanged, and Harald Viking certainly needed his armour for protection against the attacks. The bitter Wagner feuds have nowadays been fought to their end, and we can ignore the exaggerations on both sides, and dispassionately consider this post-Wagnerian product.⁸

author has searched the same newspapers that reviewed the earlier music dramas, but also added *Afton-Tidningen*. Maria Evertsson's bachelor's thesis (2000) on the Swedish reception of Wagner's *Ring* is based on a more limited selection of reviews.

7 *Dagens Nyheter* 12 December 1905: "Nå, men verket då, spørjer läsaren, som naturligtvis väntat att få se undertecknad läsa den sedvanliga, stora Wagnermässan med anledning av premiären. Ja, behöver verkligen något sägas om verket? Wagner är numera klassisk [...].” The review is reprinted in Peterson-Berger 1923, vol. 1, 217–221.

8 *Svenska Dagbladet* 29 December 1911. "Operan framträdde under en tid, då

Besides this general change in the climate of Wagner reception, other circumstances contributed to establishing Wagner's music at the Royal Opera in Stockholm during the first decades of the twentieth century. *Die Meistersinger* in 1887 was premiered in the old Gustavian opera house, and *Die Walküre* in 1895 was staged in Svenska Teatern (the Swedish Theatre) on Blasieholmen, the site of the Royal Opera in 1891–1898 during the construction of the new opera building. Thus, both works were played in venues completely unsuitable for Wagnerian music drama. The new Oscarian opera house, inaugurated in 1898, provided Stockholm with a stage and an orchestra pit that were more suited to the demands of Wagner's works. Still, conditions were not perfect. After the premiere of *Siegfried*, B. Haglund complained that, as usual when Wagner was performed in Stockholm, the strings were too weak in comparison with the brass. The problem was especially noticeable in Act 3 with its complex polyphony in the style of *Götterdämmerung*, where the singers were constantly under threat of being drowned in the orchestral swell.⁹ Eugène Fahlstedt praised the conductor, Richard Henneberg (1853–1925), but requested that he be more careful with the dynamics in the Wanderer scenes and in the whole final scene. Otherwise, the audience would be deprived of too much of the beauty and meaning of the text.¹⁰ In his *Götterdämmerung* review, Harald André stated that complaints about the orchestra being too loud were often heard, but it would be more appropriate to blame this problem on the construction of the orchestra pit, which lacked a cover. In *Götterdämmerung* the wind instruments had been placed on a lower level, but according to André, this was not enough. And

Wagnerstriden ännu ej utkämpats, och genom dess tydliga anslutning till Wagners musikdramatiska principer blef den naturligtvis indragen i striden. Omdömena blefvo motsatta allt efter som kritikerna voro wagnerianer eller antiwagnerianer, skarpa hugg skiftades och Harald Viking behöfde väl sitt pansar till skydd mot angreppen. De förbittrade Wagnerfejderna äro i våra dagar slutkämpade, och vi kunna nu lämna öfverdrifterna å ömse håll åt sitt värde och lidelsefritt betrakta denna efterwagnerska produkt.”

9 *Stockholms Dagblad* 12 December 1905.

10 *Svenska Dagbladet* 12 December 1905.

continuously having to subdue the orchestra in Wagner's works with their demands for utmost expression was completely inappropriate.¹¹ In the *Parsifal* reviews in 1917 the composer Andréas Hallén wrote that a greater number of strings would have been desirable, but he supposed that the relatively small size of the orchestra pit made such an expansion impossible.¹² Olallo Morales shared this view, desiring both a larger number of strings as well as a lower placement of the orchestra.¹³

Another circumstance that contributed to a change in the Swedish Wagner reception at the beginning of the twentieth century was the new generation of music critics. *Das Rheingold* in 1901 was the last Wagner premiere in Stockholm to be reviewed by Adolf Lindgren (1846–1905), who, after the death of the rabidly anti-Wagnerian Wilhelm Bauck in 1877, became one of the most influential music critics in the Stockholm press. In his important study *Om Wagnerismen* (On Wagnerism, 1881), Lindgren expressed a positive attitude towards Wagner's operas, above all *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, but, influenced by Eduard Hanslick, he was highly critical of the later music dramas. Using the buzz words in Wagner reception, he criticized the “infinite melody”, i.e. what he perceived as the lack of periodic melody and form, the over-abundant repetition of “leitmotifs” with such far-fetched connotations that special guides had to be published to explain them, and the mix-up of the correct relationship between singers and orchestra.¹⁴

The most important new critic to emerge in the 1890s was Wilhelm Peterson-Berger, who, with brief interruptions, was a critic for *Dagens Nyheter* from 1896 to 1930. Peterson-Berger became an admirer of Wagner after hearing the Stockholm premiere of *Die Meistersinger* in 1887. In his *Minnen* (Memories) he writes that the music bewitched him, and for several days he drifted around the streets of Stockholm

11 *Svenska Dagbladet* 1 March 1907.

12 *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 22 April 1917.

13 *Svenska Dagbladet* 22 April 1917.

14 Tillman 2012, 197–199.

in a kind of “Trunkenheit ohne Wein” (drunkenness without wine).¹⁵ His knowledge of Wagner was broadened during his study in Dresden and by a *Tristan* performance in Vienna in 1891. After his audition review in the autumn of 1895, Peterson-Berger was asked by the editor of *Dagens Nyheter* for his view on Wagner; not knowing the expected answer, he diplomatically replied, “I accept him in all essentials”.¹⁶ He did not have to worry about the answer, as Fredrik Vult von Steijern (1851–1919), editor-in-chief of *Dagens Nyheter* 1889–1898, was one of the most devout Wagnerians in Sweden.¹⁷ Initially, Peterson-Berger was one of the most passionate Wagner champions in the Swedish press, yet Peterson-Berger, an admirer of Nietzsche, was no uncritical Wagner disciple, and he gradually became more sceptical.

Besides Lindgren and Peterson-Berger, there were others involved in the new generation of critics. *Das Rheingold* was the last Wagner premiere to be reviewed by Magnus Josephson (1866–death year unknown) and Henrik Victorin (1858–1902), two critics who can be characterized as ambivalent or moderate, but not one-sidedly negative in their opinion of the later Wagner works. However, Wagnerians like Eugène Fahlstedt and Karl Valentin also ceased their activities as critics (both after *Siegfried*), moving on to other assignments. Among the critics in the new generation, several were composers, like Olallo Morales (see above), Ture Rangström (1884–1947)¹⁸ and Sigurd von Koch (1879–1919), but also, for a short time, Harald André (1879–1975), a director at the Royal Opera in 1907–1908 and again from 1910 to 1924.¹⁹ The only critic

15 Peterson-Berger 1943, 56. As Henrik Karlsson points out (2013, 40) this is a reference to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *West-Östlicher Divan*, “Jugend ist Trunkenheit ohne Wein” (Youth is drunkenness without wine).

16 Karlsson 2013, 104. “Jag accepterar honom i allt väsentligt.”

17 See Salmi 2005, 197–203, for an account of Vult von Steijern's relationship with Wagner's music, Bayreuth and the Wahnfried circle.

18 For Rangström the revival of *Die Meistersinger* at the Royal Opera in 1900 was a strongly emotional and overwhelming experience, see Helmer 1998, 18.

19 Starting in the 1890s, opera reviews were largely signed, although most critics used a pseudonym, which often consisted of just one or two letters. It has been possible to identify many of the critics with the help above all of Hildebrand & Lundstedt 1910 (and some educated guesswork), but unfortunately many still remain unknown.

to review the *Meistersinger* premiere in 1887 who also wrote about the introduction of *Parsifal* in 1917 was Andréas Hallén (who returned to music criticism in 1907 and also covered the premiere of *Tristan und Isolde* in 1909). It is important to point out that a few of the critics involved in the reception of Wagner's music dramas played more than one role in this process. Hallén, for example, besides being the composer of *Harald der Viking*, and of other operas influenced by Wagner, also conducted the Stockholm premiere of *Die Walküre* in 1895. Peterson-Berger too was a composer influenced by Wagner in his operas, and as a director at the Royal Opera in 1908–1910 he staged *Tristan und Isolde* in 1909 (and made the Swedish translation of the libretto, published in 1908).²⁰ Harald André staged the first Stockholm performance of *Parsifal* in 1917.

The revival of *Die Meistersinger*:
Springtime for Wagner

A first indication of the definitive break-through for Wagner's later works in Stockholm was the return of *Die Meistersinger* in April 1900, a work which had not been performed at the Royal Opera since its less than successful first run in 1887. The reviews of the revival report that already after the first act a full house greeted the opera with vivid applause and three curtain calls, and the enthusiasm grew after each act. The audience certainly appeared to be entertained, wrote Adolf Lindgren, and he pointed out that there was no exodus after the second act as had been the case at the premiere in 1887.²¹ According to Peterson-Berger it was great to be a herald of victory, and he emphasized that the enthusiastic cheering for a music drama which earlier had been considered heavy and incomprehensible was an extraordinary event, and so was audience's untiring attention for four and a half

20 See Tillman 2006 and 2008 for two studies of Wagner's influence on Peterson-Berger's operas.

21 *Aftonbladet* 9 April 1900.

hours: “It is a celebration, a glorious feast, spring is here!”²² Reviews of later performances reveal that *Die Meistersinger* continued to be played for nearly full houses and greeted with lively applause.²³

With the exception of “-z-” in *Stockholm-Tidningen*,²⁴ all critics, even those who earlier had raised objections to Wagner’s music dramas, hailed the *Die Meistersinger* as a masterpiece. For instance, Adolf Lindgren had already changed his opinion of *Die Meistersinger* after attending the opera in Bayreuth in 1899. In his August “Letter from Bayreuth”, he admitted that he did not fully understand *Die Meistersinger* when it was premiered in Stockholm in 1887. But as performed in Bayreuth it was transformed into a completely different opera. Scenes that in Stockholm appeared dull were revealed to have a vivid dramatic effect in the Bayreuth staging, which also, through ingenious scenic arrangements, was able to neutralize passages in the work that indeed were tedious.²⁵ The revival of *Die Meistersinger* in Stockholm was directed by Johannes Elmblad (1853–1910), who was a director at the Royal Opera from 1897 to 1902. Elmblad was also an internationally successful opera singer (a bass), having made his stage debut in 1880, and he appeared in major opera houses all over the world. Between 1896 and 1904 he took part in the Bayreuth festival, singing Fafner in the *Ring* (and in 1896 also Hagen).²⁶ Almost all critics praised Elmblad and gave him full credit for the success of the staging, which

22 *Dagens Nyheter* 8 April 1900: “Det är fest, det är strålande helg, våren är här!”

23 *Dagens Nyheter* 15 May 1900; *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* 14 May 1900; *Svenska Dagbladet* 11 April 1900.

24 *Stockholms-Tidningen* 9 May 1900. According to “-z-” the unbearably tiring longueurs with their dry music of reason were not suitable for the open Nordic mind, which was more receptive to music’s real, natural beauty than to a pedant’s work with its dry teachings and hairsplitting dogma.

25 *Aftonbladet* 23 August 1899. However, Lindgren continued to have reservations about the other music dramas he attended in Bayreuth, the *Ring* and *Parsifal*.

26 Richard Wagner had wanted Elmblad to take the part of Donner in the 1876 *Ring*, but out of respect for his religious father, Elmblad declined the offer and did not make his stage debut until 1880, see Richard Wagner’s letters to Lilli Lehmann on 16 April 1876 and 11 May 1876, printed in *Richard Wagner an seine Künstler* (1908, 190–191 and 196–197 and Sigrid Elmblad 1924, 642).

in their opinion was almost as good as the Bayreuth production of *Die Meistersinger* that served as a model. The conductor Richard Henneberg was also singled out for praise, although many critics complained that the orchestra sometimes was too loud. Because of this the singers were forced to strain their voices, making it difficult to perceive the words. Even though this problem was more pronounced at the dress rehearsal than at the premiere, Henneberg was recommended to subdue the orchestra.²⁷ Reviews of later performances report that the balance between the orchestra and the singers had been corrected in a beneficial way.²⁸

The works

Despite Peterson-Berger's claim that nothing more needed to be said about the works, many critics, including Peterson-Berger himself, nevertheless did evaluate the music dramas after their Stockholm premieres. However, *Das Rheingold* in 1901 was the last work for which these evaluations constituted a major part of the Stockholm reviews, a fact that is reflected in the relative length of the *Rheingold* discussion in this section of the article.

Das Rheingold (1901)

As mentioned above, *Das Rheingold* was the last Wagner premiere in Stockholm to be reviewed by Adolf Lindgren.²⁹ Lindgren, who also made the most extensive evaluation of the work by any Swedish critic, was critical of many aspects. Yet, as in his review of *Die Walküre* in 1895, he was not as negative as he had been in *Om Wagnerismen*. Lindgren stated that the impression of *Das Rheingold* differed in several

27 For instance by Lindgren in *Aftonbladet* 9 April 1900 and Valentin in *Svenska Dagbladet* 8 April 1900.

28 For instance by Peterson-Berger in *Dagens Nyheter* 14 May 1900, and Valentin in *Svenska Dagbladet* 11 April 1900.

29 *Aftonbladet* 28 October 1901.

respects from that of *Die Walküre*. For one thing, *Das Rheingold* was really a prelude, one that preferably should be used to introduce the three following works; to a lesser degree than any of those, it was unsuitable for performance as a separate, complete drama. For another thing, the characters in *Das Rheingold* were less sympathetic than those in the rest of the tetralogy. According to Lindgren, this work spoke less to the heart than to the senses, and one did not warm to any of the characters in the same way as one was attracted to the noble Brünnhilde, the robustly healthy, but untried Siegfried and others.

Lindgren's main objection was that, despite Wagner's theory, the gap between words and music was larger than usual in *Das Rheingold*. According to theory, the text should be the end and the music merely the means, but then the music should not transform the text into something it was not *per se*. This, however, was exactly what had taken place in *Das Rheingold*. The theory Lindgren refers to is Wagner's claim in the first pages of *Oper und Drama* that the mistake in the genre of opera was that a means of expression (music) had been made into an end, while the end of the expression (drama) was made into a means.³⁰ However, Lindgren misread Wagner. As Carl Dahlhaus pointed out, it was a common misunderstanding that Wagner used the term "drama" to refer to the text, yet for Wagner the text was also a means, and not the same thing as the drama.³¹

Lindgren argued that if you read the libretto without preconceived notions, for the most part it left the impression of a satirical Aristophanic comedy. However, in composing the text, Wagner forgot that he needed to be a dramatist as well as a musician, and he did not succeed in translating the basic satirical character into the music. The exception was Loge, a new Mephistopheles, who became the most interesting character and was conceived in a fully original and brilliant way. Fortunately, there was another fundamental feature in the *Rheingold*

³⁰ Wagner 1903, vol. 3, 231.

³¹ Dahlhaus 1971, 11. At least Peterson-Berger was aware of this misunderstanding, as is shown by his criticism of writer Oscar Levertin's "lack of acquaintance with Wagner's artistic ideas" in "Ett litet Wagnerkollegium", *Dagens Nyheter* 30 June 1898.

libretto that was more suitable for musical interpretation than satire, especially given Wagner's talent, and that was a sense of the fantastic. Perhaps nowhere else, claimed Lindgren, had the master's gift for the picturesque been so richly revealed as here: "The passion-free primordial state in the life of the elementary spirits, the diligent forging of the Nibelungs, the clumsy character of the giants, the electric discharges of nature and its eternal youth – everything is painted in brilliant colours."³² But a result of this was that *Das Rheingold* was more concerned with tone painting than with expressing emotion. Therefore, Lindgren concluded, we are never as moved by this work as by the best parts of *Die Walküre*, "but we follow it with attention and delight as an entertaining fairy-tale play".³³

Many of the aspects discussed by Lindgren appeared in other reviews, too. The critic "n." in *Social-Demokraten* also referred to Wagner's reform theory, "the drama is the end, the music is only the means", which had been fully implemented in the *Ring* where Wagner tried to establish the principles of his new dramatic style with all its merits, but also its flaws. According to "n.", the flaws were obvious in *Das Rheingold*. Those not already familiar with Wagner's ability for formal organisation would have admired only the composer's mastery in the design of smaller sections, wrote "n.", his ability to paint individual situations in a few bars with the most inexhaustible richness of colour. Examples of such situations were the Rhinemaidens' trio in the first scene, Fricka's answer to Wotan ("Um des Gatten Treue besorgt") and Loge's narration about the treasure in the second scene, almost the complete third scene, and Erda's warning and the entry of the gods into Valhalla in the fourth scene.³⁴ Another critic, Hilder Sandström in *Stockholms Dagblad*, however, was of the opinion that in comparison with *Die Walküre*, with

32 *Aftonbladet* 28 October 1901: "Det passionsfria urtillståndet i elementarandarnas lif, nibelungarnas smidesflit, jättarnas klumpiga väsen, naturens elektriska urladdningar och dess eviga ungdom – allt är måladt med glänsande färger."

33 *Ibid.*: "men vi följa det med uppmärksamhet och tjusning såsom ett underhållande sagospel."

34 *Social-Demokraten* 28 October 1901.

its *Walkürenritt*, *Feuerzauber* and Spring Song, *Das Rheingold* had fewer such highlights. In fact, there was only the Rhinemaidens' trio and the entry of the gods, even though there were numerous other, purely musical, beauties.³⁵

Albert Andersson Edenberg and Henrik Victorin both addressed the risks of performing *Das Rheingold* separately.³⁶ According to Edenberg, it was a matter of no small importance that *Das Rheingold* was only a prologue to a great trilogy. To be able to understand and appreciate this prelude fully, one needed to be familiar with the content of the following dramas. Because of Wagner's ingenious characterization, the fairy-tale world of *Das Rheingold* appealed to and incited the imagination, but nothing more. It left the sense of reality unmoved, and appeared strange and fantastic if the experience was not connected with the trilogy as a whole. Henrik Victorin's chief argument against performing *Das Rheingold* separately was that the character of Wotan, who was the embodiment of spiritual content in the *Ring* cycle, appeared small and insignificant, given that the great, sympathetic features that make him tragic are not found until *Siegfried*. Viewed in its organic context, wrote Victorin, *Das Rheingold* becomes something far greater, deeper and more moving than a mere spectacular play with impressive effects.

Magnus Josephson in *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* was of the opposite opinion. As he saw it, *Das Rheingold* could be enjoyed on its own without the other *Ring* dramas as long as one viewed it as a fantastic fairy-tale opera on a subject from Old Norse mythology, and refrained from reading any deeper meanings or searching for more or less hazy symbolism in the work. Josephson also found *Das Rheingold* enjoyable because of its refreshing humour, which, with the exception of *Siegfried*, did not appear in the other *Ring* dramas. In contrast to the ancient Greek tragedians, though, Wagner placed the satyr play first in his *Ring* cycle. Thus, like Lindgren, Josephson considered *Das Rheingold*

³⁵ *Stockholms Dagblad* 27 October 1901.

³⁶ *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* 29 January 1901. In *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 28 January 1901 and *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* 29 January 1901, respectively.

to be a comedy, but in contrast to Lindgren he did not criticize, the relationship between text and music in the realization of this aspect of the work.³⁷

What then was Peterson-Berger's opinion of *Das Rheingold* in his first review of the Swedish premiere of a Wagner work?³⁸ He began by claiming that every Wagner drama has a specific fundamental mood, which the performance has to capture if the representation is to appear in any way moving or comprehensible. The characteristic mood of *Das Rheingold* is that of a prologue to a great musical-dramatic festival, which ought always to be celebrated during special circumstances that have a particular effect on the mood of the spectator.

Peterson-Berger pointed out that never before had he heard the work except as part of a complete *Ring* cycle.³⁹ Therefore, he had never realized so clearly as he did at the Stockholm premiere that the work acquires its fundamental mood from the dramas that follow and from the *Ring*'s character as a *Bühnenfestspiel*. When this fundamental mood is present, it can cover up many flaws in the staging (which involves many difficulties), and make the spectator so receptive and sensitive to the spirit and intention of the production that substantial weaknesses can be noticed without disrupting a favourable impression of the performance as a whole. But when this fundamental mood is missing, the conditions for *Das Rheingold* change. Then, above all, the weaknesses of the work itself come to light. This was one of the first times Peterson-Berger criticized Wagner, and he was obviously aware that, in doing so as a known pro-Wagner critic, he would be shocking Wagnerian readers. He thus exclaims: "Because – cross yourselves and pray, Wagner Catholics! – the work indeed has such [weaknesses]."⁴⁰

37 *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* 28 October 1901.

38 *Dagens Nyheter* 27 January 1901. The review is reprinted in Peterson-Berger 1923, vol. 1, 144–149.

39 For instance, Peterson-Berger had seen the complete *Ring* in Bayreuth in 1899. His report, "Festspelen i Bayreuth: Nibelungens ring", was published in *Dagens Nyheter* on 1 August 1899.

40 "Ty – korsen eder och åkallen, Wagner-katoliker! – stycket har verkligen sådana."

According to Peterson-Berger, *Das Rheingold* was dependent on a stage apparatus that continuously, and in an incredibly unconstrained way, appealed to the indulgent participation of the spectator's fantasy. But worse, he argued, every imperfection, every lack of comprehension in the performance of the individual roles, appears with merciless clarity. In both respects the Stockholm premiere, despite the efforts that had been invested in the production, left a sense of disappointment. As performed at the Royal Opera, the work mainly gave the impression of a childish, naïve, albeit spectacular play.

Siegfried (1905)

As mentioned above, Peterson-Berger did not find it necessary to evaluate the work itself after *Siegfried's* Swedish premiere, and neither did several other critics. Among those who did make comments, no-one was opposed to Wagner *per se* or to the aspects of Wagnerian music drama that had so annoyed many critics after *Die Meistersinger* in 1887 and *Die Walküre* in 1895. Now the new work was measured only against the other *Ring* dramas. Concerning the dramatic action, "O." in *Social-Demokraten* considered *Siegfried* the weakest in the cycle, more an enchanting idyll than a drama rich in action. However, if spectators found some scenes too diluted, they were fully compensated by the final scene, which featured the loftiest and most beautiful poetry to which audiences had ever been treated on the stage.⁴¹ "Ln." in *Vårt Land* also complained about the lack of dramatic vividness, and stated that the slow progression of the plot had a tiring effect. This explained why *Siegfried* was the least popular *Ring* drama when performed on its own. Wagner's brilliant music, though, covered up for many of the dramatic weaknesses.⁴²

Other critics were more positive. According to "n." in *Aftonbladet*, *Siegfried* was a magnificent and enchanting work, though it did not have

41 *Social-Demokraten* 11 December 1905.

42 *Vårt Land* 12 December 1905.

the tragic beauty or heroic pathos of *Die Walküre*.⁴³ Carl Lambère in *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* made a similar observation, but added that it was only for the unprepared spectator that the music of *Siegfried* did not have the same immediate appeal as *Die Walküre*. But, of course, the music Wagner had created in *Siegfried* was just as admirable as in the other parts of the tetralogy, and Lambère considered the *Ring* to be a giant creation wherein Wagner's ingenious talent as musician, poet and thinker shone with richer splendour than in any other of his many brilliant works. For the sympathetic listener who had studied *Siegfried*, the music, supported by the text, offered an abundance of beauty and poetry. Among the highlights Lambère mentioned Siegfried's "famous Forging Song, in all respects a brilliant finale" to Act 1; in Act 2, "the extraordinarily beautiful and solemn depiction of nature"; and in the final act the great love scene between Siegfried and Brünnhilde.⁴⁴ Knowledge of the earlier *Ring* dramas was necessary, however, because no other part of the cycle was less able to stand alone than *Siegfried*: "Not without reason has the work been characterized as a kind of musical torso."⁴⁵ This was also the opinion of Peterson-Berger, who claimed that only when performed in the context of the complete *Ring* did *Siegfried* appear to full advantage. When the work was performed separately, many scenes seemed tedious and unclear, and certain "educated" Wagner enthusiasts who pretended to be in raptures over these passages, had perhaps only been sitting and staring "as a cow on a hypotenuse".⁴⁶ In contrast to Peterson-Berger, the critic "M." in *Stockholms-Tidningen* was of the opinion that *Siegfried*, despite being isolated from

43 *Aftonbladet* 12 December 1905.

44 These are the same sections still today considered the highlights of *Siegfried*. For instance, these are the excerpts included on the Deutsche Grammophon CD with highlights from *Siegfried* conducted by James Levine (DGG 437 548-2, 1991).

45 *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* 12 December 1905: "ryktbara smidessång, en i alla afseenden glänsande final"; "den utomordentligt vackra och stämningsfulla naturskildringen"; "Man har också icke utan skäl betecknat verket som ett slags musikalisk torso." Most likely Carl Lambère was the critic under the pseudonym "L." According to Norlind 1916, vol. 2, 514, Lambère was a music critic for this paper between 1903 and 1909.

46 *Dagens Nyheter* 12 December 1905: "som en ko på en hypotenuså."

a tetralogy that constituted a firm and indissoluble whole, really made the deepest kind of impression. The performance revealed an infinite number of rich poetic beauties, and an audience absolutely had to be captivated and feel moved by this masterly conception of a drama.⁴⁷

The most positive voice of all was that of the devout Wagnerian Karl Valentin, who by 1905 had had a long career as a pro-Wagner critic:

There were storms of applause. And it could hardly be otherwise. For the strong inspiration, permeating the whole work, and the powerful composition, which Wagner has created here, could not possibly fail in its effect. A music with the most variegated voices, which interpreted the most disparate human emotions. [...] A music, finally, that with the originality, pregnancy and power of motivic invention unites the most ingenious combinations and the most charming colours with a harmonic, rhythmic richness, which even today appears new and interesting.⁴⁸

Götterdämmerung (1907)

After the *Götterdämmerung*'s premiere in 1907, even less was said about the work than had been the case with *Siegfried* two years earlier. It appears odd, claimed Peterson-Berger, to review a work as a novelty when it has been part of educated consciousness in all other countries in Europe, and perhaps even America, for a long time.⁴⁹ And in

47 *Stockholms-Tidningen* 12 December 1905.

48 *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* 12 December 1905: "Bifallet var intensivt. Och det kunde väl knappt annat vara. Ty den starka inspiration, som genomgår hela verket, och den mäktiga tonskapelse, som Wagner här frambragt, kunde ej gärna förfela sin verkan. En musik med de mest mångskiftande stämmor, som tolkade de mest olikartade mänskliga känslor [...]. En musik slutligen, som med den motiviska uppfinningens originalitet, pregnans och kraft förenar de snillrikaste kombinationer och de mest bedärande färger på samma gång som en harmonisk, rytmisk rikedom, vilken i dag ter sig lika ny som intressant."

49 *Dagens Nyheter* 1 March 1907. However, Peterson-Berger went to some length to object to what he considered to be contradictions and naïvetés in the story, especially the potion of forgetfulness, which in his opinion was neither dramatically nor symbolically motivated in a convincing way. The review is reprinted in Peterson-Berger 1923, vol. 1, 232–241.

Post- och Inrikes Tidningar, Carl Lambère did not find it necessary to undertake a musical analysis of the work: "Everyone well knows that it is the immense cornerstone in an ingeniously constructed and accomplished gigantic music-dramatic work, which occupies a very special position in the history of music."⁵⁰ As Peterson-Berger had pointed out in his *Siegfried* review, Wagner had become a classic whose place in music history was uncontested. The pseudonym "Vidi" in *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* was that of another critic, who stated that nowadays it was unnecessary to discuss the music, but added in passing that *Götterdämmerung's* characteristic feature was the simultaneous combination of voices in ensembles and choruses, something that occurred only rarely in the preceding parts of the *Ring*, an effect also mentioned by several other critics.⁵¹ Albert Andersson Edenberg was the only reviewer to evaluate the work, writing that *Götterdämmerung* was far more accomplished than the preceding *Ring* dramas in terms of grandiose conception and dramatic vividness. There were no dead spots, and the events followed each other quickly with an even, effective intensification, which culminated in the final catastrophe.⁵²

Tristan und Isolde (1909)

In *Om Wagnerismen* (1881), Adolf Lindgren considered *Tristan und Isolde* to be the work in which Wagner most consistently applied his theories.⁵³ For this reason, according to Lindgren, it was Wagner's least popular work. However, when *Tristan* had its premiere at the Royal Opera in 1909, almost 44 years after its first performance in Munich in 1865, it no longer appeared radically new. Carl Lambère in *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* pointed out that, on the one hand, several excerpts,

50 *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* 1 March 1907: "Alla veta för visso väl, att det är den väldiga slutstenen i ett till sin anläggning och sin genomföring genialt musik-dramatiskt jätteverk, som inom musikhistorien intager sin alldeles särskilda rangplats."

51 *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 1 March 1907.

52 *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* 4 March 1907.

53 Lindgren 1881, 44–45, 50.

both instrumental and vocal, had been played at symphony concerts and in other contexts; on the other hand, audiences had been accustomed to the “peculiar sounds” (“säregna klangerna”) through the unconstrained borrowings from the *Tristan* score by many young composers, both German and non-German.⁵⁴ Ture Rangström in *Svenska Dagbladet* also stressed the importance of *Tristan*’s influence on contemporary composers, and therefore *Tristan* harmonies, Wagner sequences and Wagner modulations were familiar concepts, even to those without immediate knowledge of this music drama. “The new and the bold in this music are no longer new”, wrote Rangström, “but, as the first time, we are always captivated by its power”.⁵⁵

Rangström pointed out that Wagner himself considered *Tristan* to be the work in which his music-dramatic principles found their most perfect expression. The view that this music drama held a unique place in Wagner’s output was shared by many critics. Sven Söderström wrote that, in the unity and expressive capacity of the style and the greatness of the musical characterization, *Tristan* was Wagner’s most perfect work. It was also his most intimate. In the whole history of opera, there had never been such a deep penetration of the spiritual life of mankind or a more introspectively unified plot.⁵⁶ In *Dagens Nyheter* Olallo Morales claimed that, from the perspective of compositional technique, *Tristan* marked a turning point in the master’s development. Wagner’s notorious *Worttonsprache* was nowhere so completely liberated from all traditional embellishments as here, while the music was the culmination of Wagner’s attempt to break with all classical principles of musical form. Yet unlike Lindgren in *Om Wagnerismen*, Morales did not consider the lack of traditional form to be a deficiency.⁵⁷

Only one critic had anything negative to say about the work: John Atterbom, who complained about the balance not being right between

⁵⁴ *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* 12 February 1909.

⁵⁵ *Svenska Dagbladet* 12 February 1909: “Det nya och djärfva i denna musik är oss alltså icke längre nytt, men vi fångas alltid som första gången af dess makt.”

⁵⁶ *Aftonbladet* 12 February 1909.

⁵⁷ *Dagens Nyheter* 12 February 1909.

the words on the stage and the sounds from the orchestra in the pit. He did praise the way the orchestra painted the different moods and depicted the rising and falling waves of passions, i.e. the inner drama which was fought in the hearts of the characters. But the orchestra was often so dominant that the words were reduced to a subordinate role. In *Tristan*, Wagner himself, who had criticized how the words were sacrificed in the older Italian operas as well as in Meyerbeer's operas, had to a large degree allowed the words to be overtaken by the orchestra's "tropically lush vegetation" ("tropiskt frodiga vegetation").⁵⁸

Parsifal (1917)

Like *Tristan und Isolde*, *Parsifal* was familiar to Stockholm audiences from concert performances. As early as 1888, Andréas Hallén had conducted three excerpts preceded by a lecture in which the writer Carl von Bergen presented the libretto. On 21 January 1912 Acts 1 and 3 had been performed at a concert in the Circus, a building in Djurgården whose suitability was cause for debate.⁵⁹ However, after *Parsifal*'s premiere at the Royal Opera in 1917, several critics pointed out that the work made a far stronger impression on the stage. For instance, Olallo Morales wrote that only as an onstage drama did the masterful construction, the proportions and the unity in the diversity of characterization achieve their full effect.⁶⁰

Only Sigurd von Koch provided a dissenting opinion; for him, hearing excerpts out of their scenic context in no way weakened the power and imaginative content of the purely musical ideas. On the contrary, on such occasions those ideas appeared in even clearer light. Yet von Koch was the only critic to express a negative view of the work. For several reasons he considered the drama and the actions of many of the

58 *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* 12 February 1909.

59 The most forcible objections were voiced by Fredrik Vult von Steijern, who was critical of many aspects other than the venue; see his "Ett vanhelgande. *Parsifal* på circus" (A Sacrilege: *Parsifal* at the Circus) in *Dagens Nyheter* 3 January 1912.

60 *Svenska Dagbladet* 22 April 1917.

characters to be rather unclear. Even though the notion of redemption was obvious, he missed a governing idea running through the work as a whole as well as a consistent story.⁶¹

However, the other critics who assessed the work were completely sympathetic to *Parsifal*, with Morales and Peterson-Berger being the most explicit. Morales claimed that the diction was smoother than in Wagner's other dramas, and the libretto used end rhyme rather than alliteration, which made it less artificial and "more suited for fusion with music" ("bättre lämpadt att sammansmälta med musik"). Therefore, no prior Wagner work exhibited the absorption of the poet into the musician as much as *Parsifal*. Finally, the leitmotif technique reached perfection as never before.⁶² Peterson-Berger was even more enthusiastic and considered *Parsifal* to be one of the most brilliant and profound works of art ever created –

so brilliant that it is blinding, making the searching intellect of reason uncertain and tentative, and so profound that its originator himself surely did not know how deep the bottom of reality lies, over which his artistic reflections and symbols soar, this great, beautiful, and mysterious mirage up into the blue, clear and sunny air, with eternity as the background.⁶³

Most of the critics considered *Parsifal* to be a Christian work. For instance, the reviewer in *Aftonbladet* concluded with the observation that the audience evidently was moved by the solemn magic of "this powerful, Christian work of art".⁶⁴ Given this general view, it is strange

61 *Stockholms-Tidningen* 22 April 1917.

62 *Svenska Dagbladet* 22 April 1917.

63 *Dagens Nyheter* 22 April 1917: "[...] så strålande till och med att den bländar och gör det forskande förståndets blick osäker och trevande, så djupsinnig att dess diktande och tonsättande upphovsman själv säkert icke visste hur långt ned i djupet den verklighetsbotten ligger över vilken hans konstnärliga speglingar och symboler sväva, denna stora, sköna och hemlighetsfulla hägring uppe i blå, solren luft med oändligheten som bakgrund."

64 *Aftonbladet* 22 April 1917: "[...] detta mäktiga kristna konstverk."

that Andréas Hallén found it necessary to offer a defence for a Christian reading of *Parsifal* in several articles (his review appeared in four instalments), and invoked sources to show that his reading was in agreement with Wagner's intentions.⁶⁵ Peterson-Berger was of a different opinion. *Parsifal* certainly was a religious work, he wrote, but he believed that this element, which appeared in the form of Christian and Buddhist-Schopenhauerian ideas, was more coincidental than essential. The essential thing in Wagner's religiosity, said Peterson-Berger, was the feeling that man needed to be improved, regenerated.⁶⁶

The stagings⁶⁷

Rheingold (1901)

As the revival of *Die Meistersinger* in 1900 (see above), *Das Rheingold* was directed by Johannes Elmblad. In staging the *Rheingold* in Stockholm, Elmblad secured the assistance of two key figures who had been involved in Cosima Wagner's production of the *Ring* in 1896: Friedrich Kranich Sr., the technical director at Bayreuth from 1886 to 1924, was responsible for the stage machinery; and Max Brückner, who had redesigned the *Ring* scenery in Bayreuth in 1896, was responsible for the scenery.⁶⁸

65 *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 16 and 20 April 1917. Further research is needed to answer the question of why Hallén found it necessary to argue this case so carefully. However, it may have been a polemic against Peterson-Berger, whose non-Christian interpretation of *Parsifal* was published in 1913; see Peterson-Berger 1913. Another possibility is that, as Hallén was familiar with the writings of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, it could have been an attempt to refute Chamberlain's assertion that *Parsifal* was not a Christian work. See Beckett 1981, 109–110, for a concise presentation of Chamberlain's opinion.

66 *Dagens Nyheter* 22 April 1917. Despite his use of the word "regenerated", Peterson-Berger was not influenced by Wagner's so-called regeneration writings. What follows in Peterson-Berger's review is a very personal reading of *Parsifal*. An account of this reading, however, is beyond the scope of this more general survey of the Swedish reception of Wagner's music dramas.

67 For more information about the stagings, see Rödin 1967/68a; 1967/68b; 1968/69; 1969/70 and Johansson 2006.

68 Together with his brother Gotthold, Max Brückner had also been involved in realizing the scenery for the *Ring* in Bayreuth in 1876; see Carnegie 2006, 80.

The staging was almost unanimously praised by the critics. Karl Valentin stated that under the local circumstances it was excellent,⁶⁹ and in the opinions of Adolf Lindgren and Magnus Josephson, it was almost as good as the staging at Bayreuth.⁷⁰ In particular, the first scene with the swimming Rhinemaidens was said to have made an extraordinary effect. Kranich had used the new swimming machines he had developed in 1896 for the *Ring* in Bayreuth.⁷¹ In *Stockholms-Tidningen* the critic "rt." claimed that the set for the first scene was the most remarkable ever staged in a Swedish theatre. The movements of the Rhinemaidens, hovering freely in the air, or water, appeared completely illusory, and it was difficult to know what to admire the most – the perfection of the machinery or the sangfroid of the singers, hovering between roof and floor.⁷²

Despite pronouncing the production successful, Henrik Victorin had some objections. In his view the movements of the Rhinemaidens were not always appropriate to the drama as reflected in the music; the use of steam during the scene changes was too loud (a point also made in other reviews), and the transformations of Alberich were still beyond the capacity of modern stage technique.⁷³ Like Victorin, Peterson-Berger criticized the manoeuvring of the Rhinemaidens. Above all, it was striking that they were completely still just before the sun began to shine on the Rhinegold instead of fleeing Alberich, as clearly indicated by the text and the music, or at least they could have been swimming around the cliff at a somewhat faster speed. If this is not done, Peterson-Berger pointed out, the whirling and bustling movements in the music appear pointless.⁷⁴

69 *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* 28 October 1901.

70 *Aftonbladet* 28 October 1901 and *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* 28 October 1901.

71 Rundberg 1952, 249 and Carnegy 2006, 151–152.

72 *Stockholms-Tidningen* 28 October 1901.

73 *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 28 October 1901.

74 *Dagens Nyheter* 27 October 1901.

Siegfried (1905)

Siegfried was directed by August Lindberg (1846–1916), who was director at the Royal Opera from 1903 to 1906, where he also staged the Swedish premieres of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* (1903) and Puccini's *Tosca* (1904). Lindberg's background was as an actor, and he was appreciated and known above all for his portrayal of Hamlet. Thorolf Jansson (1877–1931), scene painter at the Royal Opera from 1899 to 1927, was responsible for the scenery.

It was the direction and the scenery that came in for the harshest criticism after the premiere. For instance, the critic "n." in *Aftonbladet* claimed that it was to the scenery and the direction that the most serious objections could be made: he himself missed an artistic vision and, above all, poetic fantasy.⁷⁵ Eugene Fahlstedt and Peterson-Berger gave the most detailed accounts of the flaws.⁷⁶ According to Fahlstedt, the blacksmith's cave in Act 1 was unnecessarily complicated, both in the rock formations and in the many mineral colours with their disturbing effect. Furthermore, the rack for Mime's bellows was too solid and neat in its timber construction and the anvil too small, and the forest outside the cave looked more like a park than a primeval forest. The most disturbing element in Act 2 was the large lime tree with its bright reddish-brown trunk and impossibly white-green leaves in half of its crown.⁷⁷

Peterson-Berger criticized the same features. Mime's cave was indeed a failure: too large, without distinctive architecture, painted in colours that did not meld into a unified whole, and a strange forest outside, which appeared to consist of horse chestnuts in bloom. Half of the lime tree in the second act appeared yellowed. Peterson-Berger assumed that the intention was to suggest bright sunlight, but this did not succeed. And, like other critics, he considered the scene change in Act 3 to be a disappointment.

⁷⁵ *Aftonbladet* 12 December 1905.

⁷⁶ *Svenska Dagbladet* 12 December 1905 and *Dagens Nyheter* 12 December 1905.

⁷⁷ A picture of the Act 2 scenery is reproduced in Rödin 1968/69, 18.

The fight with the dragon was another stumbling block. B. Haglund claimed that the scene should have taken place in the background where the stage was darker. As it was, the scene turned into a parody because of its placement in the spotlight where the dragon's immobility was too obvious. Siegfried picked a little at the monster, and then informed the spectators that he had killed the beast. There was nothing resembling a fight.⁷⁸ Fahlstedt also found fault with the dragon, which, contrary to Wagner's stage directions, was cumbersome. It lay as still as a log, unable to turn towards the hero, who because of the lack of elbow room had to walk calmly behind Fafner and stab him somewhere close to the tail. According to Fahlstedt, a modern stage technician or director should be able to find better ways of staging such scenes. Besides the dragon, the bear in Act 1 was sharply criticized. To Fahlstedt it seemed filthy and looked more like one of the lions in *Die Zauberflöte* than a huge, frightening bear, and in Peterson-Berger's mind, the creature made the impression of a black-lacquered orangutan instead of a furry, brown European bear.

Götterdämmerung (1907)

It is not clear who directed *Götterdämmerung* in 1907,⁷⁹ but as with *Siegfried*, Thorolf Jansson was again responsible for the scenery. This time, unlike *Siegfried*, Jansson's sets were praised for their beauty and tastefulness. However, the final scene was an exception, and all critics were of the opinion that it had failed in its effect, even though some excused Jansson by claiming that Wagner had made impossible demands. The direction was viewed in a more negative light, but was

⁷⁸ *Stockholms Dagblad* 12 December 1905.

⁷⁹ The playbill for the premiere lacked the director's name (see Rödin 1970, 17), and no director is mentioned in the reviews. After the second of the two complete *Ring* cycles that followed the premiere of *Götterdämmerung*, "Rh." in *Vårt Land* (9 April 1907) stated that during the present interim regime at the Royal Opera no one knows who ultimately is responsible for the direction. According to Rödin (1969/70, 17), the German tenor Otto Briesemeister was engaged to direct. However, Stefan Johansson (2006, 222) claims that the baritone Carl August Söderman served as the director.

largely criticized in general terms without specific examples. However, Peterson-Berger mentioned some flaws.⁸⁰ The worst was that, in his only scene, Alberich was seen between the legs of Hagen (Act 2, scene 1). Because of this ridiculous arrangement, the scene's terrible and ghostlike character was lost. Peterson-Berger also found the use of the heavy rope, which the Norns throw to each other, unimaginative: with every throw it fell to the floor with a heavy thud (this opinion was shared by the critic in *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*⁸¹). Harald André criticized the lighting, especially the "intolerable theatrical effect" ("odrägliga teatraliska effekten") of having spotlights illuminate occasional points on an otherwise darkened stage. As for the chorus of Gibichungs in Act 2, André was critical of the lack of effective groupings.⁸²

Tristan und Isolde (1909)

Tristan und Isolde was directed by Peterson-Berger, who also made the Swedish translation of Wagner's libretto (Thorolf Jansson once again was responsible for the scenery). During his twelve years as a harsh and ruthless critic, Peterson-Berger had made many enemies. In order to understand the reception of his staging of *Tristan und Isolde*, it is important to contextualize his relationship to the critics who reviewed the performance. The most negative was Harald André. André had been hired as a director at the Royal Opera in 1907, and in 1908 he directed the first Swedish staging of Richard Strauss's *Salome*. In his review Peterson-Berger wrote that the direction followed international models, "which is not any kind of direction at all".⁸³ Owing to financial

80 *Dagens Nyheter* 1 March 1907.

81 *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* 2 March 1907.

82 *Svenska Dagbladet* 1 March 1907. In André's years as a director at the Royal Opera, the skilful use of lighting and the ability to infuse big crowd scenes with life were to become hallmarks of his style, see Helander 1993, 118.

83 *Dagens Nyheter* 14 April 1908: "vilket icke är någon regikonst alls." The review is reprinted in Peterson-Berger 1923, vol. 1, 255–258.

difficulties, the shareholders responsible for funding the opera withdrew their support in 1907. After a provisional rule by businessman Arthur Thiel, the theatre director Albert Ranft (1858–1938), known as the theatre emperor of Stockholm in the early twentieth century, took over the contract to run the opera on 1 July 1908.⁸⁴ André left the Royal Opera and returned to music criticism, now at the newspaper *Stockholms Dagblad*. It is obvious from André's review of *Tristan und Isolde* that he had a grudge against Peterson-Berger. When Ranft gave up the project of running the opera in 1910, Peterson-Berger was dismissed as a director and André was rehired. Now the roles were reversed, and over the following years Peterson-Berger was ruthless in his criticism of André's productions at the Royal Opera.⁸⁵

In the preface to his translation of *Tristan und Isolde's* libretto, Peterson-Berger suggested that his direction was going to avoid conventional solutions. He intended to exercise artistic freedom to achieve simplification and clarification.⁸⁶ In his review André could not understand what the simplification consisted of, unless it concerned unnecessary cuts (see below), while the clarification, in his opinion, seemed to amount to making characters and objects mentioned in the text or in the stage instructions visible to the audience. For instance, at the end of Act 1, Marke and Melot were seen going aboard the ship. The singers' acting repeatedly testified to inadequate instruction. André advised Peterson-Berger that, instead of relying on a purely superficial desire to paw over everything by showing his originality with big gestures, he should study the art of stage direction together with Wagner's directions.⁸⁷

André also criticized the youthful appearance of Kurwenal. André admitted that Wagner did not explicitly state that Kurwenal was an older man. Yet this was obvious, in part from the sources on which

84 Rundberg 1953, 271.

85 Helander 1993, 116–117.

86 Peterson-Berger 1908, 3–4.

87 *Stockholms Dagblad* 12 February 1909.

Wagner based his text, and above all because Kurwenal's almost tender and intimate relationship with Tristan easily acquired "an unpleasant flavour" ("en obehaglig bismak") if he was portrayed as a younger man. This statement was clearly meant to be a personal jab at Peterson-Berger. In his unpublished memoirs, the Swedish composer Kurt Atterberg (1887–1974), another enemy of Peterson-Berger, wrote that around 1910 innuendos began to appear in the press suggesting that Peterson-Berger was homosexual.⁸⁸ André's statement is one example of this trend. A few years later André expressed this opinion in a more palpable way in response to an article in which Peterson-Berger had criticized the Royal Opera.⁸⁹

Other critics were less negative than André, and some did not evaluate the direction at all. Yet only one review was positive. Sven Söderman wrote that the direction showed artistic taste and intuition rare in Swedish theatres.⁹⁰ However, Söderman was among Peterson-Berger's circle of friends,⁹¹ and his opinion is no more neutral than André's. And given this connection, his praise was rather nebulous and non-committal.

Parsifal (1917)

Parsifal was staged by Harald André, and the scenery, as in the preceding Wagner productions since *Siegfried*, was by Thorolf Jansson. André is considered the pioneer of modern opera direction at the Royal Opera,⁹² but his most groundbreaking stagings took place after 1920, when new stage and lighting techniques were introduced at the Royal Opera (at André's instigation). In several articles in connection with

88 Atterberg 1954, 118.

89 *Svenska Dagbladet* 26 June 1914. The issue of Peterson-Berger's sexual orientation is complex; see Karlsson 2013, 438–443.

90 *Aftonbladet* 12 February 1909.

91 See Karlsson 2013, 327.

92 See Helander 1993 for a detailed account of modern direction at the Royal Opera, with emphasis on André's accomplishments.

his *Parsifal* and *Die Zauberflöte* productions in 1917, André complained about the difficulties caused by the outdated stage machinery at the Royal Opera, and he argued that modernization was necessary.⁹³ For *Parsifal* a brown tulle veil was obtained from Germany and hung in the proscenium to create a mysterious distance. Technically advanced, electrically-powered, moving forest backgrounds were also introduced.

In the mid-1910s, Peterson-Berger's grudge against André had softened, and in a review of Rabaud's *Marouf* the critic admitted that André was a professionally skilled director, especially in the area of lighting.⁹⁴ In his *Parsifal* review, Peterson-Berger wrote that the Stockholm production had succeeded in capturing the overall mood of the work. This was not only because of the appropriate scenery, the discreetly magnificent costumes and the colour effects of the lighting, but also because of the scenic arrangements made by the director. However, Peterson-Berger did not mention André's name, and he attributed the production's success above all to the conductor, the Finnish composer and conductor Armas Järnefelt (1869–1958). In Peterson-Berger's opinion there were a few flaws in the staging: in the forest scenes and the temple of the Grail he would have preferred clearer groupings of the singers on stage (given that this was one of André's recognized strengths, the remark was perhaps intended to be more harmful than it appears), and better technical resources (the shimmer of the Grail, the lance glimmering in the air, the Miracle of Good Friday and so on).⁹⁵

Other critics were unanimous in their praise of the scenery and of André's direction. Andréas Hallén considered the scenic arrangements to be admirably carried out, but noted that originality rather than imitating Bayreuth seemed to be the goal, something that was most apparent in Act 2 where the colour was a hellish fiery red.⁹⁶ According

93 Helander 1993, 118.

94 Helander 1993, 117.

95 *Dagens Nyheter* 22 April 1917.

96 *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 22 April 1917. Hallén stated he had visited Bayreuth in 1884 in order to see *Parsifal*. The truth of this claim can be questioned; see Knust 2011, 57.

to Olallo Morales, Wagner's "dictatorial instructions" ("diktatoriska föreskrifter") did not leave much freedom for a director's independent creativity, but what was intended for Bayreuth's perfect stage was not suitable everywhere. In general, André had succeeded in rendering the dignified simplicity the story demanded, and even in the more vivid scenes had avoided trite theatricality, maintaining the moderation necessary to prevent this "lofty work" ("upphöjda verket"), as Morales put it, from descending to the level of ordinary theatre. Morales considered Jansson's scenery to be among his highest accomplishments. The exception was Klingsor's Enchanted Garden, which was unimaginative and whose lighting was tiring to the eye. The scenery of Act 2 was thus below the standard of the luxurious and exotic Eden created in the Bayreuth productions.⁹⁷

Cuts and longueurs

In accordance with the performance practice of the time, both *Die Meistersinger* in 1887 and *Die Walküre* in 1895 were extensively cut when they were performed at Stockholm's Royal Opera. The Swedish critics were almost unanimous in the opinion that, given the longueurs in Wagner's works, these cuts were beneficial, and some thought they could have been even more extensive.⁹⁸ *Das Rheingold* was performed in 1901 with only minor cuts, but this time no critic complained about longueurs. On the contrary, Magnus Josephson wrote that this work was one of Wagner's most accessible precisely because of its relative brevity. However, many other critics argued that, in this continuous music drama without separate acts, the lack of intervals made demands that were too great on the audience and on the performers.⁹⁹ The critic for *Stockholms-Tidningen* asked whether it really would be too brutal a violation of the master's work if an interval were intro-

97 *Svenska Dagbladet* 22 April 1917.

98 Tillman 2012, 208–209.

99 *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* 28 October 1901.

duced after the second scene.¹⁰⁰ Another critic, Hilder Sandström, wrote that he had seen the work several times in Vienna with just such an interval,¹⁰¹ and Adolf Lindgren pointed out that several opera houses abroad performed *Das Rheingold* with an interval.¹⁰² Thus, according to Lindgren, there should be no problem for the Royal Opera to introduce an intermission. It is obvious that there would be no negative consequences for the Royal Opera if such an arrangement were made, claimed *Stockholms-Tidningen*, because the critic knew many people who would be frightened by the prospect of two and a half hours of continuous music, and therefore would refrain from attending the performance.

Just over a week after the premiere, starting with the performance on 7 November, a ten-minute interval was indeed introduced between the second and third scenes “for rest and recreation for the audience and the performers”.¹⁰³ In 1905 *Siegfried* was performed without cuts, “amazing to relate” (“vidunderligt att förtälja”), wrote Peterson-Berger in his review, indicating how extraordinary he considered this event to be. He pointed out that, despite the length of the work and the late hour, the audience was delighted with the performance.¹⁰⁴ Besides Peterson-Berger, two other critics mentioned that no cuts had been made, and both viewed this circumstance in a positive light. B. Haglund in *Stockholms Dagblad* wrote that it had gradually become the custom on all stages of any artistic rank to perform Wagner’s works without abridgements, and he claimed that there could no longer be any argument that this practice was justified. According to Haglund, every scene in *Siegfried* was so logically constructed and so closely joined to the preceding and following scenes that cuts must seem like brutal and deforming interference:

100 *Stockholms-Tidningen* 28 October 1901.

101 *Stockholms Dagblad* 27 October 1901.

102 *Aftonbladet* 28 October 1901.

103 *Svensk musiktidning* 18, 1901, 137: ”till hvila och rekreation för publiken och medverkande.”

104 *Dagens Nyheter* 12 December 1905.

For instance, look at the first act! It would not occur to anyone to shorten Mime's brooding, the dialogue between him and the wild foster son, or even the admittedly lengthy scene between Mime and the Wanderer with its double riddle contest. Even less would one want to alter the final scene, which, although only two characters are involved, is more effective than most opera finales. Nor do the scenes in the second act withstand insensitive treatment, and despite their lengths there is nothing one would like to have removed. The hardest nut to crack is undoubtedly the Erda scene, which requires perfect pronunciation of the text to be understood and a mind strongly disciplined by Wagner to be enjoyed.¹⁰⁵

Eugène Fahlstedt found that *Siegfried* performed without cuts was testimony to a growing reverence for Wagner's music and a promising sign in view of the approaching performance of the complete *Ring* cycle. However, he admitted that the work might appear difficult to understand as well as too long for those who came to the performance without knowledge of the text or the music of the two previous dramas. Such people would not grasp the meaning of the long dialogues, and the Erda scene could be trying for many.¹⁰⁶ Actually, even a few of the critics found some of the scenes mentioned by Haglund and Fahlstedt to be trying. For instance, in *Aftonbladet* "n." stated that the first act was weighed down with too-long conversations between Mime and Siegfried and between Mime and Wotan,¹⁰⁷ while in *Social-Demokraten*, "o." observed that the listener might lose interest during the Erda scene.¹⁰⁸

105 *Stockholms Dagblad* 12 December 1905: "Se t.ex. första akten! Icke skulle det falla någon in att avkorta Mimes grubblerier, dialogen mellan honom och den vilde fostersonen, eller ens den visserligen långa scenen mellan Mime och Wandraren med sin dubbla gåtstrid. Ännu mindre vill man röra vid slutscenen, som trots att endast två personer deltar, i verkningsfullhet överträffar det mesta i operafinalväg. Ej heller andra aktens scener tål en o mild beröring, trots deras bredd finnes där intet som man vill ha bort. Den hårdaste nöten att knäcka är utan tvivel Erdascenen som förutsätter ett fullkomligt textuttal för att uppfattas och ett starkt Wagner-disciplinerat sinne för att njutas."

106 *Svenska Dagbladet* 12 December 1905.

107 *Aftonbladet* 12 December 1905.

108 *Social-Demokraten* 11 December 1905.

Like *Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung* in 1907 was performed without cuts. Many newspapers pointed out that an opera starting at 6:30 pm and finishing at 11:30 pm, thus lasting five hours, was extraordinary. Despite this length, only one reviewer questioned whether it was wise to perform Wagner's works without any cuts at all. Because of this reverence, wrote "Rh." in *Vårt Land*, the audience was subjected to a severe endurance test, and the consequences were evident in several ways at the *Götterdämmerung* premiere.¹⁰⁹ *Svensk Musiktidning* did not explicitly ask for cuts, but its critic was of the opinion that the length combined with the monotony of speech song made the work tiring in the long run, especially when you had to stay focused on identifying the leitmotifs in the orchestra with its harmonic complications.¹¹⁰ In contrast to these views, "n." in *Aftonbladet*, who had objected to the long dialogues in the first act of *Siegfried* (see above), claimed that, despite the colossal length of Act 1, the gradual increase in musical beauties was so great that the listener did not have time to become tired.¹¹¹

When Peterson-Berger staged *Tristan und Isolde* in 1909, he made many cuts, and in the preface to his translation of the libretto he explained the reasons.¹¹² He stated that in many of Wagner's dramas, and especially in this one, the beauty of the poem was distorted by "intellectual philosophizing, and sometimes even scholastically speculative lines of thought." This feature, together with Wagner's "German inclination for long-winded expression", created an impression of obscurity and pedantry that lacked poetry.¹¹³ Therefore, according to Peterson-Berger, to remove or reduce these traits showed reverence of a higher, more ideal order than being literal. In this way the translator could make the beauty of the poem and the essential ideas of the content more accessi-

109 *Vårt Land* 1 March 1907.

110 *Svensk Musiktidning* 5, 1907, 36.

111 *Aftonbladet* 1 March 1907.

112 Peterson-Berger 1908, 3–4.

113 Peterson-Berger 1908, 3: "förståndsmässigt filosoferande, ibland rent av skolastiskt spekulativa tankevändningar"; "tyska benägenhet för omständlig bredd i uttryckssättet."

ble to a Swedish audience, most of whom were about to experience the work for the first time. Peterson-Berger emphasized that his procedure should not be confused with the “extremely barbaric *Kapellmeister* cuts” (“ytterst barbariska kapellmästarstrykningar”) to which Wagner’s works were usually subjected.

With the exception of Patrik Vretblad,¹¹⁴ all critics expressed negative opinions of some kind to Peterson-Berger’s cuts. Andréas Hallén admitted that practical circumstances often made cuts necessary, and he pointed out that Wagner himself had been forced to allow such cuts, for instance in a Vienna production of *Tristan und Isolde*, which Hallén had attended in 1875. However, it would have been better if the Royal Opera had tried to determine which cuts Wagner himself had sanctioned, and he considered the cuts Peterson-Berger had made to be unnecessary.¹¹⁵ Carl Lambère in *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* stated that, in principle, cuts were highly questionable, but, like Hallén, he pointed out that external circumstances had to be considered.¹¹⁶ Likewise, “H.” in *Stockholms-Tidningen* argued that a work like *Tristan und Isolde* should be performed in full – as Wagner thought and felt it – so that audiences could learn and understand it. In any case, continued “H.,” the cuts were not that extensive (although in this assumption he was completely wrong), and were probably made for practical reasons.¹¹⁷ Ture Rangström referred to Felix Weingartner (1863–1942), the Austrian conductor who, according to Rangström, was liberal with cuts in other Wagner works, but did not allow them in *Tristan und Isolde*. And Rangström’s personal opinion was that the extensive cuts at Tristan’s entrance in Act 1 and in the love duet in Act 2 disturbed the artistic coherence and organic whole of the drama.¹¹⁸

The fiercest critic of the cuts was, not surprisingly in view of his

114 *Social-Demokraten* 13 February 1909. According to Vretblad, the first part of Act 3 could have been shortened even more as it tried one’s patience more than was tolerable.

115 *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 12 February 1909.

116 *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* 12 February 1909.

117 *Stockholms-Tidningen* 12 February 1909.

118 *Svenska Dagbladet* 12 February 1909.

opinion of Peterson-Berger's staging, Harald André.¹¹⁹ First, he refuted Peterson-Berger's reason for making the cuts at all, that is, to make the work more accessible to the audience. If the purpose was to attract a larger audience and have a positive effect on the finances of the Royal Opera, the effort was futile, because not even with the most extensive cuts was *Tristan und Isolde* likely to become a box office hit. If the purpose was to facilitate the audience's understanding, the cuts were unnecessary. Thanks to the incorporation of Wagner's other works into the repertoire, the audience should be fully prepared to appreciate the individual character of *Tristan und Isolde*. The only remaining reason was a practical one: the capacity of the performers was insufficient for the extreme demands made by the score. However, Peterson-Berger made no appeal to such a cause. The only reasons for the cuts were his personal opinions and values. And André considered it a rare lack of insight into the responsibility of artistic leadership to mutilate a work of art on such shaky grounds and make an "arrangement" ("bearbetning") of an opera that does not have any deficiencies and whose features all reveal the glowing artistic will and ideal striving of its master. At the premiere André found that the practical application of Peterson-Berger's "[musical] adaptation" ("bearbetningsprogram") exceeded his worst expectations. There were dozens of cuts, and they varied from a few bars to nearly 20 pages of the vocal score. According to André, it was obvious that cuts of the first kind were pure mischief. But the larger cuts also showed an absence of dramatic and musical discrimination.

Armas Järnefelt, the conductor of *Tristan und Isolde*'s Stockholm premiere, had been opposed to the cuts, and a conflict had ensued. During the rehearsals, Peterson-Berger and Järnefelt were not on speaking terms, and their communications had to be carried out through messengers.¹²⁰ During preparations for the staging, Järnefelt asked Felix Weingartner about cuts in this work. Weingartner answered that, in Vienna, *Tristan* was performed without cuts, although

¹¹⁹ *Stockholms Dagblad* 12 February 1909.

¹²⁰ Rundberg 1953, 273.

he recommended cuts in other Wagner works.¹²¹ This is the same information provided by Rangström in his review, and it suggests that Järnefelt leaked the content of the letter from Weingartner to members of the press as a way of undermining Peterson-Berger's position in the conflict. After Peterson-Berger's departure from the Royal Opera, Järnefelt reinstated the omissions. When Peterson-Berger discovered this, he wrote an article in which he again defended his position.¹²²

In 1917 *Parsifal* was performed in Stockholm without cuts. Patrik Vretblad, who had approved of Peterson-Berger's cuts in *Tristan and Isolde*, emphasized the importance of *Parsifal* as a musico-dramatic work, but he questioned its effectiveness as a drama because Wagner's epic style, where the characters relate the backstory of the drama in long-winded narrations, was too abundantly used in *Parsifal*. Examples of these longueurs were Gurnemanz's narrations in Acts 1 and 3, and the scene between Kundry and Parsifal in Act 2.¹²³ Besides Vretblad, two other critics complained about longueurs. Although Sigurd von Koch considered many musical "ingredients" ("ingredienser") magnificent, there also were many tedious passages,¹²⁴ and "G. L." mentioned Klingsor's part as an example of the many longueurs the drama displayed.¹²⁵ That talk about this subject was still in the air before the premiere is suggested by Andréas Hallén's defence of Wagner in this regard. According to Hallén, the often-heard complaints of Wagner's longueurs were justified only when the meaning of the action became incomprehensible because of the singers' poor pronunciation. When that happened, listening to the complex motivic work in the orchestra became a pointless exercise.¹²⁶

121 Åhlén 2014, 114. Weingartner was the director of the Vienna Hofoper from 1907 to 1910.

122 Karlsson 2013, 204.

123 *Afton-Tidningen* 22 April 1917.

124 *Stockholms-Tidningen* 22 April 1917.

125 *Social-Demokraten* 21 April 1917.

126 *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 22 April 1917.

Language confusion and translations

Like all operas performed at Stockholm's Royal Opera, Wagner's works were sung in Swedish. However, performers from abroad, including Otto Briesemeister (1866–1910, Loge in *Das Rheingold*) and Modest Menzinsky (1875–1935, Siegfried in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*), sang the original German text while the rest of the cast sang in Swedish. Many critics complained that this resulted in a linguistic confusion that was detrimental to the unity of the works. Peterson-Berger was the most outspoken critic of this mixture of languages. In his *Rheingold* review he argued that Wagner's vocal parts, at least in the later works, should never be translated. Sung in the original language the declamation appeared natural in a way that united all musical and linguistic intonations to achieve real expression.¹²⁷

Peterson-Berger returned to this issue after the *Siegfried* premiere. He wrote that it was a blemish on the overall style to hear the performers speak and answer each other in different tongues. As this was the first performance of *Siegfried* in Sweden, it was of particular importance to convey its spirit as faithfully as possible: "And the spirit of the work lives in the style, and the style is dependent on the interplay."¹²⁸ After *Götterdämmerung*, Peterson-Berger again pleaded for the work to be sung in German. He referred to the Berlin Hofoper, where Verdi's works were now being sung in Italian, the Germans having realized that singing a libretto translated into another language diminishes the effect of the music. And in Wagner's works the German language and the music were so intimately intertwined that Peterson-Berger exclaimed: "As a matter of fact, he is untranslatable!"¹²⁹ Even for Swedes, the German they had heard from visiting Wagner singers was more natural, comprehensible and expressive compared to the indistinct – "or sometimes, in contrast, ugly and exaggeratedly clear" – pronunciation

127 *Dagens Nyheter* 27 October 1901.

128 *Dagens Nyheter* 12 December 1905: "Och verkets anda lever i stilen, och stilen beror av samspelet."

129 *Dagens Nyheter* 1 March 1907: "hur oöversättlig är han icke i själva verket!"

of Swedish performers.¹³⁰

The only critic who defended the language mixture, or at least tried to understand why it was necessary, was Albert Andersson Edenberg. He admitted that it was disturbing to hear Siegfried sing in German while the other characters sang in Swedish, and he noted that many of the morning newspapers criticized this language confusion. However, to demand that all the performers sing in German when the sole guest performer would not attempt to use Swedish was not only ridiculous, but also would have a very negative effect on the box office receipts. For aesthetic snobs it might be an abomination to consider such circumstances, Edenberg argued, but still it was a reality that could not be left out of the financial calculations.¹³¹

The Swedish translations for *Das Rheingold*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* were made by the writer and translator Sigrid Elmblad (1860–1926), the wife of Johannes Elmblad, the director of the *Rheingold* production at the Royal Opera in 1901, and her translation of all four *Ring* dramas was published in 1905. After the *Rheingold* premiere opinions about the translation were divided. In three newspapers the critics considered that, given the difficulties and with the exception of some minor flaws, the translation was very successful.¹³² For instance, Adolf Lindgren in *Aftonbladet* wrote that the libretto was translated with great talent and ingenuity, and even if the language was somewhat strange and new words were coined, he could make allowances, considering the difficulty of the task and given Wagner's own rather strange language with its bold neologisms.¹³³

Other critics expressed more negative opinions. Fahlstedt, a close friend of August Strindberg, wrote that, even though the translator

130 *Dagens Nyheter* 1 March 1907: "eller ibland, som kontrast, oskönt och överdrivet tydliga."

131 *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* 4 March 1907.

132 *Aftonbladet* 28 January 1901; *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* 28 January 1901; *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* 29 January 1901.

133 *Aftonbladet* 28 January 1901. In 1884 Lindgren translated Hans Herrig's libretto for Andréas Hallén's *Harald der Viking*, a text in which the alliterative verse is constructed on the model of the *Ring*. Thus, Lindgren had practical experience with the same difficulties that Elmblad had faced.

had struggled bravely to render the alliterative verse, all too often the result was an unnatural word order, unnecessary Germanisms and incomprehensible, non-Swedish expressions. Fahlstedt also accused Elmlblad of not understanding that, in *Stabreim*, the sound and not the letters is the crucial aspect. Why coin the strange word *ljudig* (lj pronounced as English y in yes), asked Fahlstedt, when it does not even rhyme with *leka* and *lysa* (l pronounced as English l)?¹⁸⁴ According to Peterson-Berger, the Swedish translation was of inferior quality, with many errors and awkward, artificial word compositions. His opinion was that Elmlblad should have sacrificed the alliterations for a more relaxed and natural Swedish, and the Old Norse colour could then have been achieved with simpler means.¹⁸⁵ After *Siegfried*, Fahlstedt wrote that Elmlblad was much more successful with this work than with the earlier *Rheingold* translation. The *Siegfried* translation was faithful to the original, had linguistic power, was often ingenious and took into account the demands of the music. However, flaws remained, such as Germanisms and forced expressions that were difficult to understand.¹⁸⁶ Peterson-Berger did not mention the translation in his *Siegfried* review, but he returned to the issue after the *Götterdämmerung* premiere. He claimed that the “Swedish translation is so bad, because, like our opera translations in general, it has not kept to the essentials, but has faithfully strived to reproduce all the original types of rhyme and embellishments”.¹⁸⁷ However, even when the singer pronounces the text in an exemplary fashion, all these details are lost on the listener. Therefore,

all that is needed is a naturally-shaped sentence in which the most meaningful words are co-ordinated with the most expressive tones and musical accents. This is a thousand times more effective than the

184 *Vårt Land* 28 October 1901.

185 *Dagens Nyheter* 27 October 1901.

186 *Svenska Dagbladet* 12 December 1905.

187 *Dagens Nyheter* 1 March 1907: ”den svenska översättningen är så dålig, därför att den, liksom våra operaöversättningar i allmänhet, icke hållit sig till det väsentliga, utan strävat att troget återge alla originalets rimslag och andra prydnader.”

most artistic lines of rhyme in which the order of the words and the accents are unnatural.¹⁸⁸

After *Tristan und Isolde*, the critics were unanimous in their appreciation of Peterson-Berger's translation of the text. Even his enemies, like Hallén and André, praised this aspect of the production. Hallén pointed out that it was not an easy task to translate Wagner's complicated language, and Peterson-Berger had solved the task in a way that, in Hallén's opinion, should more appropriately be called an adaptation rather than a translation. However, it was done with the true intention of making the idea-content as comprehensible as possible to the reader. Peterson-Berger had maintained as many of Wagner's archaisms as the Swedish language allowed, and thus had avoided artificial word combinations and word orders. His translation thus had its merits, and despite its free rendering into Swedish, it was true to the meaning of the original.¹⁸⁹ Thus, it is evident from Hallén's evaluation that Peterson-Berger followed the prescriptions he had given in his own reviews of Elmblad's *Ring* translations and avoided the pitfalls he had criticized.

In *Parsifal* the Royal Opera again used a translation by Sigrid Elmblad. Peterson-Berger stated that she had accomplished the task slightly better than with the *Ring*, but her work could not be characterized as completely successful. According to Peterson-Berger, this was probably the reason that the Royal Opera made revisions to the translation, so that the singers did not always use Elmblad's words. One such passage was the important "Durch Mitleid, wissend der reine Tor; harre sein', der ich erkor" (as punctuated by Peterson-Berger). In her translation Elmblad had avoided the most important word - *Mitleid* (compassion) or *medlidande* in Swedish. But on the stage something

188 *Dagens Nyheter* 1 March 1907: "en naturligt formad sats, med de meningsfullaste orden lagda under tonsättningens uttrycksfullaste tonfall och accenter, är allt vad som behövs och verkar tusen gånger bättre än den mest konstfulla rimramsa med onaturliga ordställningar och betoningar."

189 *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 12 February 1909.

else was sung, although Peterson-Berger had not been able to catch all the words.¹⁴⁰

The performers

The Swedish premieres of *Das Rheingold*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, as well as the first complete *Ring* cycles there were conducted by Richard Henneberg, a German composer and conductor who had settled in Stockholm in 1878. In 1876 he had conducted the first Swedish performance of *Tannhäuser* in a special performance with a German opera troupe at Mindre Teatern. Between 1885 and 1907 he was employed by the Royal Theatre. The *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal* premieres were conducted by Armas Järnefelt, who succeeded Henneberg as conductor at the Royal Opera in 1907 and remained there until 1932. In the reviews both conductors were unanimously praised after each premiere and were often considered the persons most responsible for the success of the performances. Göran Gademan points out that it was not until 1878 that the conductors of operatic performances were mentioned in reviews in Swedish newspapers and then only briefly.¹⁴¹ It is striking how this situation changed with the critical reception of *Die Meistersinger* in 1887 and *Die Walküre* in 1895, where the two conductors, Conrad Nordqvist and Andréas Hallén, were acknowledged and praised. It seems obvious that the new and enlarged role of the orchestra in Wagner's later works not only increased the importance of the conductor, but also made the critics notice their contribution.¹⁴² In one of the *Siegfried* reviews this is explicitly mentioned. Carl Lambère wrote that the essence of Wagner's *Ring* dramas is not to be found on the stage: rather the excellent contribution by the orchestra under the leadership of Henneberg should be stressed in bringing off

140 *Dagens Nyheter* 22 April 1917.

141 Gademan 1996, 63.

142 Tillman 2012, 215.

the work's success.¹⁴³

At the *Rheingold* premiere most critics found the vocal and dramatic performances of the singers to be uneven in quality. One singer was unanimously singled out as being outstanding in all respects, the German tenor Otto Briesemeister, who sang Loge. All critics lauded his expressive singing, clear diction (as mentioned above he sang the part in German) and acting ability. The Swedish critics were not alone in their appreciation. Between 1899 and 1909, Briesemeister sang Loge in Bayreuth, and on hearing him there in 1901, Eugen Gura (Donner in the first 1876 *Ring*), wrote: "Dr. Otto Briesemeister (of Breslau) was a skilled Loge: a good actor, always in motion, and he knows how to use all the vocal colours imaginable. There has been no-one better since Vogl."¹⁴⁴ Of the Swedish singers, Carl August Söderman as Alberich and Sven Nyblom as Mime were considered the most successful because, according to Henrik Victorin, they had mastered the idiomatic way of performing Wagnerian "sprechsingen".¹⁴⁵ The other singers, however, were found wanting. Their inexact pronunciation was especially criticized, an objection voiced frequently in connection with all the Wagner premieres discussed in this article. The Rhinemaidens were also accused of singing out of tune, but this was excused on the basis of the difficulties caused by the swimming machines.

In *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* the most outstanding performer to be singled out by the critics was Modest Menzinsky, who sang the part of Siegfried in both works. Like Briesemeister, he was praised for his clear pronunciation and his acting abilities, but what most impressed the critics was his strong and untiring voice. He also had a convincing appearance as the young hero. For instance, in his review of *Siegfried*, Peterson-Berger wrote that Menzinsky managed his voice, his declamation and his acting with brilliance and without effort, and showed no signs of slackness or fatigue. Furthermore, he was

143 *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* 12 February 1905.

144 Grey (ed.) 2009, 457.

145 *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 28 October 1901.

a good and convincing Siegfried, full of youthful eagerness and rowdiness, childish naïveté, dawning heroism and the most glorious purity of soul. His harshness and aversion to Mime never appeared brutal, but only as a natural and necessary antagonism between a child of light and the black elf.¹⁴⁶

Magna Lykseth-Schjerven (1874–1949),¹⁴⁷ Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*, was also praised, above all for her beautiful, convincing appearance and brilliant singing. “[A] youthfully fair maid with a beautiful voice,” wrote “n.” in *Aftonbladet* after *Siegfried*, but added that her dramatic rendering failed in its characterization of Brünnhilde.¹⁴⁸ Her acting was also criticized in many other reviews, especially her facial expressions. For instance, “n.” in *Aftonbladet*, Eugène Fahlstedt, and Peterson-Berger complained about a too frequent use of a fixed, mechanical smile.¹⁴⁹ After *Götterdämmerung* there were objections to her gestures as well. According to “n.” her movements came across as parodic with their big and empty gestures, and Peterson-Berger stated that her gestures sometimes resembled gymnastic exercises.¹⁵⁰ Although Lykseth-Schjerven’s vocal performance was generally considered successful, there were some reservations about the quality of her voice. In his *Siegfried* review, B. Haglund wrote that although the voice was big and rich in the high register, distinct pronunciation was beyond her capacity in the middle register.¹⁵¹ And after *Götterdämmerung* “H.” in *Stockholms-Tidningen* stated that her performance worked well vocally. Nevertheless, the part required a more

146 *Dagens Nyheter* 12 December 1905: “en god och övertygande Sigfrid, full av ungdomlig iver och bråkihhet, barnslig naivitet, gryende hjältekraft och den härligaste själsrenhet. Hans strävhet och ovilja mot Mime verkade aldrig brutal, utan blott som den naturnödvändiga antagonismen hos ljusets barn inför svartalfen.”

147 She was known as Lykseth-Skogman after her new marriage in 1911.

148 *Aftonbladet* 12 December 1905: “en mycket ungdomsfager och röstskön mö.”

149 *Aftonbladet* 12 December 1905; *Svenska Dagbladet* 18 December 1905; *Dagens Nyheter* 12 December 1905.

150 *Aftonbladet* 1 March 1907; *Dagens Nyheter* 1 March 1907.

151 *Stockholms Dagblad* 12 December 1905.

brilliant voice to make its full effect.¹⁵² In the second of the two complete *Ring* cycles that followed the *Götterdämmerung* premiere, renowned Wagner soprano Ellen Gulbranson (1863–1947) made a guest appearance as Brünnhilde (a part that she performed in Bayreuth between 1896 and 1914). “H.” in *Stockholms-Tidningen* now wrote that one good thing about the visit of Gulbranson was that Stockholm had learned what a fine Brünnhilde the Royal Opera had in Lykseth-Schjerven. When comparing the two singers, “H.” stated, the audience could hardly avoid noticing that not much remains for Lykseth-Schjerven to reach the level of Gulbranson.¹⁵³

In *Tristan und Isolde* the male title role was sung by the Swedish tenor David Stockman (1879–1951), who had made his debut at the Royal Opera in the 1906–1907 season as a lyric tenor. All critics agreed that his voice was not adequate for Tristan, as it was too bright and lyrical. Yet Olallo Morales praised his clear diction.¹⁵⁴ Several critics emphasized that Stockman himself was not responsible for the failure, but that the blame should be put on those who had cast him in a role for which he did not yet have the necessary requirements. As Peterson-Berger personally had coached Stockman in the role of Tristan, these statements were obviously another way of criticizing the production's director. In contrast to Stockman, Magna Lykseth-Schjerven in the part of Isolde was singled out as the most outstanding singer in the majority of the reviews, with Sven Söderström paying the highest tribute. In his opinion her Isolde was almost ideal. The appearance was beautiful and dramatically inspired, and the expressive richness of her singing was deeply affecting. In addition, never before had her acting and facial expressions been more convincing than in this part.¹⁵⁵ However, as with her Brünnhilde, some critics raised objections against the pronunciation and acting. For instance, Andréas Hallén

152 *Stockholms-Tidningen* 1 March 1907.

153 *Stockholms-Tidningen* 9 April 1907.

154 *Dagens Nyheter* 9 February 1909.

155 *Aftonbladet* 12 February 1909.

wrote that Lykseth-Schjerven's gestures and facial expressions were stiff and conventional; especially disturbing was the repeated raising of her arms, an old-fashioned gesture that she used in a completely absent-minded way. However, she performed her vocal part correctly, and her high notes were as usual of great effect. Yet the middle register was "drowned in the orchestral flood" ("drunknade i orkesterfloden"), and the pronunciation could have been more precise.¹⁵⁶ John Atterbom expressed a similar opinion, and claimed that her voice did not have the strength of volume and deep resonance required to match the volume of the orchestra. And her diction was defective both as regards vowels and consonants.¹⁵⁷ Ture Rangström found her singing strained and the un-Swedish pronunciation annoying (Lykseth-Schjerven was born in Norway), although he praised her acting and claimed that her facial expressions and gestures had the "true dramatic rapture" ("sanna dramatiska extas") required by this work.¹⁵⁸ In his review, Harald André generally considered her *Isolde* to be first-rate, but he added that the voice did not sound as healthy as at the dress rehearsal, where the final scene achieved an exceptional brilliance.¹⁵⁹ Eugène Fahlstedt had made a similar comment after *Siegfried* in 1905, stating that her voice did not have the same power and volume at the premiere as at the dress rehearsal.¹⁶⁰ This suggests that perhaps Lykseth-Schjerven was suffering from first-night nerves.

Stockman also sang the title role in *Parsifal*. As could be expected, Peterson-Berger was the most positive critic, claiming that among the individual performers Stockman was the one who deserved to be mentioned in first place.¹⁶¹ However, this time Stockman also garnered praise from other critics, some of whom had been negative in 1909.

156 *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 12 February 1909.

157 *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* 12 February 1909.

158 *Svenska Dagbladet* 12 February 1909.

159 *Stockholms Dagblad* 12 February 1909.

160 *Svenska Dagbladet* 18 December 1905.

161 *Dagens Nyheter* 22 April 1917.

On the one hand, in the eight years since the premiere of *Tristan und Isolde*, Stockman had had time to develop his voice; on the other hand, Parsifal's role made different demands than Tristan's. According to "n." in *Aftonbladet*, the clear, pure beauty of Stockman's voice was in heartfelt accord with the musical character.¹⁶² The critics also praised the singer's appearance and his acting. Olallo Morales stated that Stockman gave the title role its proper naïve character and combined a youthfully attractive appearance with a fresh, euphonious voice and poetic delivery.¹⁶⁸ The only negative comment was made by Sigurd von Koch, who admitted that Stockman certainly sang with lyrical beauty, but that as a stage character he appeared a little too weak. Von Koch would have preferred someone far more powerful.¹⁶⁴

Kundry was sung by Olivia Edström Järnefelt (1878–1971), who had made her debut at the Royal Opera in 1897; in 1910 she married the conductor of *Parsifal*, Armas Järnefelt. Like Stockman, Olivia Järnefelt was praised by most critics, especially for her acting. However, there were some objections to her singing. Von Koch wrote that, even though the performance was dramatically good, she did not have the proper vocal range for the part.¹⁶⁵ And Herman Glimstedt stated that, while Järnefelt was satisfying as a Grail messenger in Act 1 and as a mute penitent in the last, for the demanding part in Act 2 a greater singer was needed, or at least a singer of a different quality.¹⁶⁶ By contrast, Peterson-Berger found her wondrous, soft timbre in the seduction scene to be effective and successful.¹⁶⁷ Harshest of all critics was "G. L." in *Social-Demokraten*, who complained that her insensitive voice and strained high notes detracted from the enjoyment even for those who

162 *Aftonbladet* 22 April 1917.

163 *Svenska Dagbladet* 22 April 1917.

164 *Stockholms-Tidningen* 22 April 1917.

165 *Ibid.*

166 *Stockholms Dagblad* 22 April 1917.

167 *Dagens Nyheter* 22 April 1917.

appreciated her intelligent acting.¹⁶⁸

Audience reactions

The premiere of *Das Rheingold* was received with loud applause and many curtain calls. However, the response was evaluated differently by the press. Albert Andersson Edenberg claimed that the audience was hardly filled with enthusiasm, and there could be no talk of the kind of success that would guarantee a long life for *Das Rheingold* in the repertoire.¹⁶⁹ In *Social-Demokraten* the critic “n.” stated that the applause mostly seemed for the performers and not the work.¹⁷⁰ Adolf Lindgren admitted that the many curtain calls had little relevance for the work’s future in Stockholm. Of greater importance in this regard was the curious attention the audience gave to the opera’s new and intoxicating sounds.¹⁷¹ Karl Valentin was also of the opinion that the audience showed a high level of interest, and he proclaimed that *Das Rheingold* had undoubtedly won a victory.¹⁷²

Without doubt, *Das Rheingold* was a success with the audience, and was performed 22 times in the 1901–1902 season. In the first decade of the twentieth century at the Royal Opera, the only premiere to receive more performances in its first year was *Madama Butterfly*, played 43 times in the 1908–1909 season. Puccini’s *La Bohème*, which was premiered at the Royal Opera a month after *Das Rheingold*, on 29 November 1901, had 18 performances in the 1901–1902 season. *Das Rheingold* is not the work by Wagner that one would expect to be so popular. What could have been the secret of its 1901–1902 success in Stockholm? In a report published a month after the premiere, “T. RH.” in *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* noted that *Das Rheingold* was

168 *Social-Demokraten* 23 April 1901.

169 *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* 29 January 1901.

170 *Social-Demokraten* 28 January 1901.

171 *Aftonbladet* 28 January 1901.

172 *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* 28 January 1901.

still able to fill a house. However, it was received with a certain reservation, although the splendid stage sets captivated the audience and aroused their admiration. "As a fairy-tale play, if for no other reason, Wagner's magnificent creation should be able to stay in the repertoire", was the opinion of "T. RH."¹⁷³ The Stockholm audience appears to have embraced Magnus Josephson's view of the work as a fabulous fairy-tale opera based on popular Nordic myths that could be enjoyed apart from the rest of the *Ring*, without knowledge of the deeper symbolism and meaning of the cycle as a whole.¹⁷⁴ This circumstance together with the spectacular staging guaranteed the success of the work. The charm of novelty soon wore off, however, and in the 1902–1903 season *Das Rheingold* was performed just three times, in 1903–1904 once and in 1904–1905 not at all. Thereafter it was mostly performed as part of complete *Ring* cycles.

Both *Siegfried* in 1905 and *Götterdämmerung* in 1907 were received with storms of applause. The audience reaction confirmed that Wagner had become a classic and that the first decade of the new century marked the victory of Wagner in Sweden. Yet just how representative were the audiences at these premieres? Complaining that the stalls and the dress circle at the Royal Opera were empty during concerts with Swedish music, composer Hugo Alfvén (1872–1960) wrote:

Their audiences only appear at gala performances when the gentlemen have a reason to wear tailcoats with all their medals, and the ladies have an opportunity to shine in dazzling evening dresses, munch chocolates and talk rubbish.¹⁷⁵

However, after the *Götterdämmerung* premiere Albert Andersson

173 *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* 29 November 1901: "Som féeri-skådespel, om ej annat, skall nog Wagners storslagna skapelse kunna hålla sig uppe länge ännu på operans repertoar."

174 *Post- och Inrikes Tidningar* 28 October 1901.

175 Alfvén 1948, 146: "Deras publik kommer endast vid galaföreställningar, då herrarna få anledning att dra på sig den ordensbehängda fracken och damerna få tillfälle att lysa i prålände aftontoaletter, snaska konfekt och prata strunt."

Edengren noted that the audience was different in several respects from the usual first-night people, appearing to be made up exclusively of music enthusiasts, especially Wagnerians.¹⁷⁶ Thus, it is possible that a Wagner audience was more or less different from the ordinary opera audience. As a report from the *Parsifal* premiere shows (see below), even at Wagner premieres a large part of the gala audience described by Alfvén was present.

Reports about audience reactions to *Tristan und Isolde* are less unanimous than those to *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. According to John Atterbom, the work garnered only moderate applause, but he supposed that the beautiful and rich music would attract true friends of music. Unfortunately, true friends were perhaps few by comparison with those who preferred more accessible and entertaining operas.¹⁷⁷ Andréas Hallén wrote that after its initially reserved reactions the applause was warm.¹⁷⁸ Olallo Morales also used the word “warm” (“varmt”) to characterize the response, and, like Hallén, he wrote that it was less intense after Act 1, but then gradually increased, and reached great heights when the curtain fell after the “Liebestod”, with numerous flower wreaths given to the leading singers.¹⁷⁹ In Sven Söderman’s review there is no information about the strength of the applause, but he claimed that the audience showed an unambiguous fascination.¹⁸⁰ Some newspapers published not only reviews of the performance, but also other kinds of reports about the premieres. In *Dagens Nyheter* “X.X.”, writing in a column entitled “Interval”, had this to say:

“Wonderful, delightful, divinely beautiful, transcendental” – such was the conversation during the interval at the Opera yesterday. And it is good to hear people speak such words when they look like they mean

176 *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* 4 March 1907.

177 *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* 12 February 1909.

178 *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 12 February 1909.

179 *Dagens Nyheter* 12 February 1909.

180 *Aftonbladet* 12 February 1909.

what they say.¹⁸¹

Thus, it appears that the applause was less strong after the *Tristan und Isolde* premiere, but the question is whether this was because the audience was less enthusiastic or because the work affected them in a different way than did *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. When *Parsifal* had its Swedish premiere in 1917, the special character of that work certainly had consequences for audience behaviour. With the exception of some isolated attempts, which were immediately hushed, there was no applause at the *Parsifal* premiere, not even after the last act. According to Peterson-Berger, the audience received the work in a spirit of devotion and with reverent silence.¹⁸² “Un revenant” claimed that, since even Wagner himself allowed applause after *Parsifal*, the audience behaved more papally than the pope, but he noted that people were deeply moved by the work’s sublime beauty and obviously considered the reaction to be appropriate.¹⁸³

When *Parsifal* was premiered in 1917, the make-up of the audience had begun to change. In an article on the musical situation in Stockholm in 1921, the composer and critic William Seymer (1890–1964) complained that the audiences of older times had disappeared, by which he meant audiences who, because of frequent music-making at home, were open-minded to all the values of music and for whom every new concert and every new musical experience was something of importance. Today, he went on, everything was ruled by financial considerations. The new audiences wanted only well-known repertoire and famous artists; meanwhile, concert arrangers, who wanted to attract audiences at all costs, adapted their programmes to suit these desires.¹⁸⁴

However, according to “Con moto” writing in *Stockholms Dagblad*

181 *Dagens Nyheter* 12 February 1909: “Härligt, ljufligt, gudaskönt, öfversinnligt’ – sådan var mellanaktskonversationen i går på Operan. Och det är vackert höra människor säga sådana ord, när de se ut som om de menade hvad de sade.”

182 *Dagens Nyheter* 22 April 1917.

183 *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning* 22 April 1917.

184 Seymer 1921, 171.

(a conservative daily), the “gulaschen” (goulash) were absent from the *Parsifal* premiere.¹⁸⁵ “Con moto’s” Swedish word for goulash together with “gulaschbaron” was coined in the mid-1910s to designate those who made fortunes selling supplies to the armies during the First World War. However, the term soon expanded to generally refer to members of the nouveau riche, no matter how they had acquired their wealth. “Con moto” claimed that not even high prices had been able to mobilize that particular set to purchase tickets for *Parsifal*, even if they considered themselves distinguished because they had money and knew that original editions of good writers, important premieres and château-bottled wine were characteristics of a cultivated connoisseur. Because they made a living from their nose for money, they also had a nose for finding out that *Parsifal* was a matter of seriousness, religion and mystery, but not of ecstatic applause, and therefore, they stayed away.

According to “Con moto”, it was rare that a Stockholm premiere had the audience it deserved, but *Parsifal* was that rare exception. In the Royal Box sat the King of Sweden surrounded by the Duke and Duchess of Västergötland, one of their daughters and Prince Wilhelm. In the box reserved for the Royal Court the only man present was Commandant Baron Rosenblad, dressed in a light blue uniform and wearing his commander’s cross, surrounded by women in court gowns. The centre of the dress circle was dominated by aristocratic women, while among the diplomatic corps on the left side the American legation was prominent. In the stalls all the leading personalities in the field of culture who normally attended operatic premieres were present, as were a number of decent young people who apparently wanted to take part in a memorable experience. To a large extent, then, *Parsifal* seemed to attract the same kind of gala audience Alfvén had described ten years earlier.

Summary and conclusion

This article has studied the critical reactions to the first Swedish stag-

¹⁸⁵ *Stockholms Dagblad* 22 April 1917.

ings of the *Das Rheingold* (1901), *Siegfried* (1905), *Götterdämmerung* (1907, which was also the year of the first complete *Ring* cycles at the Royal Opera), *Tristan und Isolde* (1909) and *Parsifal* (1917). In contrast to the Swedish premieres of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1887) and *Die Walküre* (1895),¹⁸⁶ the music dramas premiered after 1900 did not garner any substantial negative opinions. The only exception was Adolf Lindgren's review of *Das Rheingold*, the last new Wagner staging in Stockholm to be covered by this critic of Wagner's post-*Lohengrin* works. In the first decade of the twentieth century a new generation of music critics succeeded the old, and several among the younger critics considered bitter Wagner feuds to be a thing of the past. Wagner's works were no longer controversial, but considered to be masterpieces and classics. The music dramas introduced after 1900 were no longer compared unfavourably with established favourites in the repertoire, but judged in relation to the Wagner works already introduced at the Royal Opera. However, many of the Swedish critics did not assess the works themselves at all, but rather evaluated the staging and the performers, the translations of the librettos, and the use or absence of cuts.

The stagings of *Das Rheingold* (directed by Johannes Elmblad) and *Parsifal* (directed by Harald André) were the most successful, and the critics compared them favourably with the productions in Bayreuth. The stagings of *Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung* and *Tristan und Isolde* were less well received. However, the reactions to Peterson-Berger's direction of *Tristan und Isolde* were influenced by the enmity caused by his ruthlessness as a critic. In particular, the scathing review by Harald André must be seen in light of the rivalry between the two men. The conductors Richard Henneberg (*Das Rheingold*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*) and Armas Järnefelt (*Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal*) were unanimously praised, and considered most responsible for the success of the performances. Among the singers, the foreign guests, Otto Briesemeister (Loge) and Modest Menzinsky (*Siegfried*), were singled out for their expressive singing, clear diction, and convincing

186 The reception of the Swedish premieres of *Die Meistersinger* and *Die Walküre* is described in Tillman 2012.

acting and appearance. The Swedish singers were generally considered uneven, and indistinct pronunciation was a recurrent complaint in the reviews after all the Wagner premieres discussed in this article. Despite some reservations, though, Magna Lykseth-Schjerven's interpretations of Brünnhilde and Isolde were commendable according to a majority of the critics. All the performances were sung in Swedish, but Briesemeister and Menzinsky sang their roles in German. Several critics complained that this resulted in a language confusion that detracted from the unity of the works. Furthermore, many were negative about the Swedish *Ring* and *Parsifal* translations by Sigrid Elmblad. In their opinion, her ambition to render Wagner's alliterative verse into Swedish all too often resulted in an unnatural word order, unnecessary Germanisms and incomprehensible, non-Swedish expressions. In contrast, the non-literal translation of *Tristan und Isolde* by Peterson-Berger, which was sung in his staging of the work, was unanimously appreciated, even by his enemies who slated the production. After the premieres of *Die Meistersinger* in 1887 and *Die Walküre* in 1895 at the Royal Opera, most critics were of the opinion that, given the longueurs in Wagner's works, the cuts were beneficial, and some thought they could have been even more extensive. *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* were performed without cuts, and now the critics who mentioned this fact defended the practice as laudable. When Peterson-Berger made numerous cuts, both big and small, in his staging of *Tristan und Isolde*, almost all critics turned against this "mutilation" and claimed that it was wrong to make cuts in Wagner's work, especially in this work.

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My Wagner is Not Your Wagner: The Swedish Reception of the Richard Wagner Legacy During the First Half of the Twentieth Century¹

HENRIK ROSENGREN

In studying German nationalism and the emergence of the German nation-state, there is every reason to emphasize Richard Wagner's development as a composer and author, as well as the intense Wagnerism of the nineteenth century. Germanism after all has been a continuous thread in the reception of Wagner and the Wagner legacy, while the German musical heritage and those who were perceived as German composers played a central role in the rise of German nationalism. Along with Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, Johannes Brahms and Anton Bruckner, Wagner was perceived as an agent of a certain musical Germanness. These composers were at the heart of the myth of a specifically German brand of music.² In the case of Wagner's reception, the myth of music and Germanness was intensified, first by the existence of Bayreuth and later by the Nazi reinterpretation of Germany's musical heritage. Yet, equally, the Wagner legacy was also interpreted in terms of internationalism and cosmopolitanism.³ This

1 Parts of this article have previously been published in Swedish in Rosengren 2013c, 17–39.

2 Applegate & Potter 2002, 11; Sponheuer 2002, 54.

3 Karlsson 2005, 41.

interpretation united disparate cultural figures such as Thomas Mann, Friedrich Nietzsche and the Swedish critics and composers Wilhelm Peterson-Berger and Moses Pergament.

During and after the Second World War, the connection between Wagner and Germanness was much debated, polarizing Wagner's supporters and opponents. Using selected cases of Swedish music critics and composers drawn from the period 1930–1955, I will illustrate how the Swedish reception of the Wagner legacy was related to notions of Germanness and anti-Semitism and to the Swedish connection to German culture.

Wagner's music in Sweden 1840–1917

Compared to other northern European countries such as Finland and the Baltic countries, Wagner's music came relatively late to Sweden. According to the cultural historian Hannu Salmi, this was largely the result of the popularity of French opera and the wariness on the part of the Royal Theatre in Stockholm to stage the work of such a revolutionary figure as Wagner. However, the image of Wagner the revolutionary changed in 1864 when he entered the service of King Ludwig II of Bavaria. This move dispelled much of the conservative and aristocratic opposition to the composer.⁴ Some of his works had been performed at the Stockholm Opera (*Rienzi* in 1865, for example, and *Der fliegende Holländer* in 1872) and in Swedish concert halls as piano arrangements, but it was only with a highly acclaimed performance of *Lohengrin* in 1874 that one can speak of the breakthrough of his music in Sweden. *Der Ring des Nibelungen* was performed in 1907 and *Parsifal* in 1917.⁵ The period 1890–1910 also saw a sharp rise in the number of performances of Wagner's works in Stockholm, from 18 in 1890 to 62 in 1910. In this period he was the seventh most-often played composer on the Stockholm music scene, where Beethoven, Grieg and Mozart

4 Salmi 2005, 41.

5 Westernhagen 1988, 728; Salmi 2005, 227.

held sway.⁶

Yet, of course, Wagner's reception involves more than his music and its dissemination: he was also the focus of attention in the press and in book-length publications because of his political views. Wagner personally edited his collected works as *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen* (1871–1873), a fact recognised in Sweden. *Bayreuther Blätter*, Bayreuth's official newsletter, with its openly racist content and anti-Semitic propaganda, had Swedish subscribers.⁷ Fredrik Vult von Steijern, the editor-in-chief of the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* from 1889 to 1898, stands out as one of the most important mediators of the Wagnerian legacy at this time. He was a pioneering figure in this respect and, as the newspaper's music critic, had published some twenty extended articles about Wagner. It was a shared interest in Wagner that led him to hire the composer Wilhelm Peterson-Berger as the newspaper's music critic in 1896. As a reporter for *Dagens Nyheter*, Peterson-Berger visited Bayreuth for the first time, in 1899. Even during previous stays in Germany in the 1880s and 1890s, Peterson-Berger had attended several Wagner operas. In Bayreuth at last in 1899, he saw *Parsifal* three times.⁸ In addition to writing articles and reviews about Wagner and performances of Wagner's works, Peterson-Berger also translated and published a selection of the composer's writings in 1901.⁹

The centenary of Wagner's birth in 1913 intensified interest in the man and his music. Peterson-Berger gave a number of lectures at the Stockholm branch of the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of Wagner's death, 13 February 1913, and a few months later on the centenary of his birth, on 22 May 1913. The critic ranged widely over his theme, which was presented under the heading "Richard Wagner – en musikalisk kultursyntes" (Richard Wagner – a musical culture synthesis). The lectures were

6 Tegen 1955, 203.

7 Salmi 2005, 226.

8 Karlsson 2005, 31, 33–34.

9 Peterson-Berger 1901.

published in 1913.¹⁰

The same year saw the publication of *Richard Wagner: Noveller och uppsatser* (Richard Wagner: Short stories and essays), a collection of texts from Wagner's time in Paris around 1840–1841, edited and translated by Bertold Lundén. Lundén, later the editor of the anti-Semitic publication *Vidi* from 1920 to 1931, was a professional violinist in Gothenburg. He went on to found Svenska Antisemitiska Föreningen, SASF (the Swedish Anti-Semitic Union) in 1923. SASF evolved into Sweden's largest and most influential anti-Semitic organization at the time.¹¹

As Wagnerians, Vult von Steijern, Peterson-Berger and Lundén shared an enthusiasm for the racial ideas and race myth, with strong anti-Semitic overtones, that were cultivated in Bayreuth. Vult von Steijern was not only a fervent admirer of all that was German, but also was personally acquainted with Wagner's widow, Cosima Wagner, and Wagner's son-in-law, the racist author Houston Stewart Chamberlain. The latter was an important source of inspiration for Vult von Steijern's views on society. In 1899, Chamberlain published his notorious *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (*The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, 1911), considered an iconic work by devotees of scientific racism and the race myth. Chamberlain became world famous for his volume and for the idea that world history could be explained in terms of a racial struggle; he wrote that the white "Aryan race" was threatened by other "races", especially the "Jewish race", and that to prevent their extinction Aryans needed to resort to active "selective breeding". Chamberlain became a prominent figure in the construction of Nazi ideology.¹²

Just like Vult von Steijern, Peterson-Berger was strongly influenced by the kinds of racial ideas that Chamberlain expounded. These beliefs underpinned much of Peterson-Berger's writing. It is plainly evident in

10 Peterson-Berger 1913.

11 Andersson 2000, 43.

12 Karlsson 2005, 31, 34–35.

his writing about Wagner in the chapter “Det germanska musikdramats rötter” (The roots of Germanic musical drama) in the volume *Wagner som kulturföreteelse* (Wagner as a cultural phenomenon), where the starting points are race, weather climate and a supposed Germanic spiritual superiority. However, it should be noted that Peterson-Berger’s Wagneritis eventually abated, replaced in his later writings by a more critical attitude.¹³

Moses Pergament and Wagner

An illuminating example of the complexities of Wagner’s reception is the Swedish-Jewish composer and music critic Moses Pergament. Born in Finland, Pergament became a Swedish citizen at age 25. He had a strong Jewish identification which he expressed, for example, in his work as a composer. As a result, he met with vigorous resistance from several leading Swedish music personalities, who saw him as the antithesis of “Swedish” musical art. The argument in these cases was often clearly grounded in what Wagner, in his notoriously anti-Semitic essay “Das Judenthum in der Musik”, described as the Jews’ inability to understand national art.¹⁴

One indicator of the extent to which Wagner’s anti-Semitic arguments echoed in Swedish musical circles in the interwar period is the much-debated fight in 1928 between Peterson-Berger and Pergament. This was sparked by Peterson-Berger’s verbal attack on Pergament in a review in which he called the Jewish composer “a foreign parasite”. Pergament reacted furiously. He called on Peterson-Berger at his apartment, rang the doorbell and when Peterson-Berger opened the door, slapped him in the face. This became a *cause célèbre* in the Swedish daily papers, and Pergament came under attack from leading representatives of the Swedish music scene. In several instances condemnation of Pergament was expressed in anti-Semitic rhetoric that

13 Ibid., 33.

14 Rosengren 2013a, 245–261.

can be traced to Wagner's views about the Jews' supposed inability to understand national art.¹⁵

Yet Pergament himself was a devoted Wagnerian, and nurtured a youthful dream of becoming the "Wagner of the Jews". Just as Wagner wrote Germanic history through his music dramas, Pergament wanted to portray the fate of the Jewish people in his works. The influence was more on a narrative than a musical level, however; as a composer, Pergament drew greater inspiration from Jewish music, Gustav Mahler and expressionism, than from Wagner.¹⁶

As a music critic, Pergament wrote about Wagner in several lengthy articles in the 1920s and 1930s. In his interpretation, Wagner should be understood as a cosmopolitan composer who spoke to the general human condition rather than as a specifically German composer. Pergament never explicitly touched on Wagner's anti-Semitism in his articles before 1945; however, in his personal correspondence he made it quite clear that Wagner's brand of anti-Semitism was central to the way Peterson-Berger, for example, wrote about Jewish composers.¹⁷

Bayreuth, Hitler and Nazism

The most controversial expression of Wagnerism was undoubtedly the one constructed in Bayreuth some decades after Wagner's death under the leadership of Winifred Wagner. In this environment the link between racist thought and the Wagnerian legacy was intensified and paved the way for the conceptual affinity with the emerging Nazi ideology. Yet this version of events was strongly criticized, for example, by Thomas Mann, as early as the re-dedication of the Bayreuth Festival in 1924. Mann wrote that Wagner would never cease to interest him, yet in contrast the Bayreuth Interpretation under no circumstances held any appeal for him. Mann also spurned all overtly nationalistic

15 Rosengren 2007, 13–15.

16 Rosengren 2013a, 245–261.

17 Rosengren 2007, 98–102.

interpretations of Wagner. His view was seen as a criticism of the Nazis and the cherished nationalist Wagner cult, personified by Hitler. The outcry against his article ultimately forced Mann's exit from Germany in 1933. Mann's protests may well have inspired Peterson-Berger in writing his anti-Nazi articles, which were published that same year in *Dagens Nyheter*. Here Peterson-Berger used Wagner as an example of the Nazi perversion of Germany's cultural heritage.¹⁸ The example of Peterson-Berger demonstrates that frankly anti-Semitic attitudes did not automatically make one a Nazi sympathizer. In the event, Peterson-Berger was one of the first lone voices in Swedish music circles to criticize the cultural politics of Nazi Germany.

Bayreuth's enlistment as a Nazi centre was one of Hitler's pet projects; other members of the Nazi elite were distinctly sceptical about the place. It was Hitler's close personal ties with the Wagner family, primarily Winifred, and the family's strong support for the Nazi movement from the early 1920s onwards, combined with Hitler's Wagner-inspired aesthetic understanding of society that laid the foundation for the Nazi leader's ambition to make Bayreuth a source of Nazi power. To understand National Socialism, you had to know Wagner, according to Hitler.¹⁹ However, several leading Nazis eyed the Bayreuth Festival with considerable suspicion. Its international tone, with guest musicians and singers from other countries, did not sit well with Nazi ideology. Hitler's passion for Wagner waned as the Nazis' early successes in the war turned into defeat. After the Battle of Stalingrad in 1942–1943 he stopped listening to Wagner's operas.²⁰

Wagner and the roots of Nazism

The notion that Wagner was closely associated with Nazism was set out by the American historian and poet Peter Viereck, who in 1939

18 Karlsson 2013, 356–366.

19 Spotts 2003, 247–263; Hamann 2002.

20 Spotts 2003, 250–263.

published the book *Metapolitics: The Roots of the Nazi Mind*, which in 1942 was published in a Swedish translation (*Nazismens rötter: En historisk och psykologisk överblick*). Although the link between Germany's Wagnerian heritage and Nazism was not an unknown phenomenon when Viereck's book was published, it is clear that in the Swedish reception *Metapolitics* stood out as one of the first detailed comparisons between Wagner and the basic tenets of Nazism.²¹ It is relevant here that Viereck's anti-Nazism was combined with a strong conservatism, and that his book can be read in part as a way of dealing with his relationship with his German-born father, George Sylvester Viereck, whose pro-Nazi propagandizing in the United States meant that he spent the years 1942–1947 in prison.²²

Viereck *filis* believed that the roots of Nazism could be summarised in the concept of metapolitics. "Metapolitics" was a term that was espoused in the nationalist circles in which Wagner moved as a political ideal for Germany. According to Viereck, it consisted of four lines of thought: Romanticism, racial science, a featureless economic socialism that stood up to capitalist materialism and the idea of national community.²³ Wagner was described by Viereck as the key inspirational figure behind the emergence of the Nazi ideology. However, the most important person in the interface between Wagner's cultural beliefs and Nazism was Houston Stewart Chamberlain. In addition to Wagner's ideas about "racial purity", Viereck saw Wagner's texts as linguistic models for Hitler's writing of *Mein Kampf*, and showed how Wagner's master principles, formulated in terms such as "hero" and "peoples' king", set the tone for the Nazi *Führer* ideal.²⁴ Yet, according to Viereck, Wagner should not be seen as a Nazi, unlike some of the Wagnerians in Bayreuth, whose reconstruction of his person and ideas were crucial for his recasting as a prominent Nazi celebrity. It was the Bayreuth

21 Viereck 1942.

22 "Peter Viereck", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Viereck, accessed 6 March 2014.

23 Viereck 1942, 10–11.

24 *Ibid.*, 14, 83, 97, 99, 102–107.

circle that made him into one of the founding fathers of Nazism. In such a context, the cosmopolitan Wagner necessarily became the German Wagner, wrote Viereck.²⁵

Parsifal – “A Nazi Gospel”?

Representative examples of the interpretation advanced by Viereck were found in the writings of Yngve Flyckt, who worked as a music critic for the Swedish tabloid *Expressen*. *Expressen* was founded 1942 as a counterweight to another tabloid, the pro-German *Aftonbladet*. In three long articles in April 1945, Flyckt developed his notion that Wagner was central to Nazi ideology.²⁶ According to Flyckt, the music could not be separated from the politics, at least not when it came to Wagner, just as Viereck had argued in his book. With the support of Thomas Mann’s statement that not only Wagner’s written works, but also his music bore traces of a Nazi world view, Flyckt argued that the denazification in Germany had to deal with the music and the music dramas, and especially the Bayreuth cult. Of all Wagner’s operas, it was particularly *Parsifal* that clearly had the kind of content that would appeal to Hitler in his capacity as world saviour. As Flyckt wrote:

The dubious scene where Parsifal worships the spear, the remorse of the seductress Kundry, which is sadistically portrayed as she lies grovelling and crying at Parsifal’s feet after being saved by his grace, and prepares to make her atoning sacrifice: to die – surely a fiery image of Judaism or Neuropa – but especially the large, transparent, blood-filled bowl, which must have made it flicker in the eyes of this racist and anti-Semite, all this makes *Parsifal* a Nazi gospel.²⁷

25 Ibid., 115.

26 Flyckt 1945b; Flyckt 1945c; Flyckt 1945d.

27 “Den dubiösa scenen där Parsifal tillber spjutet, den med sadism skildrade ångern hos förförerskan Kundry där hon ligger krälände framför Parsifals fötter i gråt efter att ha blivit frälst genom hans nåd och bereder sig att göra sitt försoningsoffer: att dö – helt visst en eldande bild av judendomen eller Neuropa, men framförallt den genomlysta, blodfyllda stora skålen, som måste ha fått det att flimra för ögonen på denne rasfanatiker

Kundry is here interpreted as a “Jewish” character, and with the use of the word “Neuropa” the reference to Nazi politics and ideology is not left in any doubt. It is made even stronger by the connection drawn between the blood myth and Nazi racist policy. Flyckt had expressed himself even more explicitly two weeks earlier when he reviewed *Parsifal* at the Stockholm Opera. He interpreted the Christian symbolism of *Parsifal* and the music drama’s final scene as follows:

When at the culmination of the ritual light shines through the large red bowl, it leaves a bitter taste in the mouth. Is it not the unveiling of a blood sample from one of the Third Reich’s eugenics labs we are witnessing? And the blessed dove that descends from the narrow roof opening, couldn’t this just as well be a swastika? One thing is certain. It’s a straight line from Wagner’s Montsalvat to Majdanek.²⁸

Flyckt highlights the blood symbolism and staged details in *Parsifal* that he believed formed a continuous line between Wagner and Nazi Germany, between the mythological castle of Montsalvat, which in *Parsifal* houses the Holy Grail, and the concentration camp of Majdanek in Poland. Flyckt’s argumentation was incisive and provocative.

I would argue that this explicitly stated point of view regarding the connection between Wagner’s music dramas, in this case *Parsifal*, and Nazism is something of an exception in Swedish post-war reception. The Swedish religious historian Anders Jarlert argues that *Parsifal* was anything but an obvious basis for Nazi ideology. The work was not performed in Bayreuth in the years 1940–1944, and the Nazi intellectual Alfred Rosenberg rejected it.²⁹

That the Wagner–Nazism pairing was a sensitive issue, especially

och antisemit, allt detta gör Parsifal till ett nazistiskt evangelium”, Flyckt 1945d.

28 “När i ritualens kulminationsögonblick den stora röda skålen genomlyses får man en besk smak i munnen. Är det inte avtäckande av ett blodprov från något av Tredje rikets rasbiologiska laboratorier man bevittnar? Och duvan som välsignande sänker sig ner ur den trånga taköppningen, kunde det inte lika gärna vara ett hakkors? Ett är säkert. Det går en rak väg från Wagners Montsalvat till Maidanek”, Flyckt 1945a.

29 Jarlert 2013, 101–102.

the interpretation of *Parsifal* as an expression of Nazi ideology, is evident from the reactions to Flyckt's article. It was not well received. One example was an indignant letter to the editor written on 10 April 1945 in which someone writing under the pen name Fra Giovanni scorned Flyckt's interpretation:

Anyone who writes things like that dooms himself. Even though Yngve Flyckt's obvious loathing of Nazism is understandable, it does not give him the right to write such a derogatory piece about a music drama like "Parsifal". The freedom to criticise even religion doesn't include the right to besmirch the purity and loftiness of "Parsifal". It is sacrilege, and anyone who shares Yngve Flyckt's opinion about "Parsifal" and its supposed spiritual affinity with Nazism must be simple-minded. Anyone who refuses to accept this view will probably be labelled a Nazi – but his conscience is as clean as Parsifal himself – "der reine Thor".³⁰

By the letter writer's own account, his (or her) criticism did not stem from any Nazi belief on his part. Quite the contrary, he found Flyckt's anti-Nazism praiseworthy, he says. Yet Wagner's works were a great achievement that emphasized morality and religious sentiment.

They had nothing to do with Nazism.

These two examples illustrate diametrically opposed positions in the interpretation of Wagner in the Swedish cultural debate in the years following the end of the Second World War. They also testify to the fact that Nazism and the end of the war intensified the discussion about how Wagner should be interpreted and how the Wagner legacy ought to be handled.

Flyckt came to modify his position in a later article in which he dis-

30 "Den som skriver sådant dömer sig själv. Yngve Flyckts i och för sig förklarliga avsky för nazismen utgör intet fribrev för honom att skriva hur nedsättande som helst om ett sådant verk som 'Parsifal'. Friheten att kritisera t.o.m. religionen är ingen frihet att dra renheten och upphöjdheten i 'Parsifal' i smutsen. Det är ett helgerån, och den människa skall vara bra enfaldig som delar Yngve Flyckts åsikt om 'Parsifal' och dess själsfrändskap med nazismen. Den som vägrar att acceptera denna åsikt blir antagligen skälld som nazist – men hans samvete blir lika rent som Parsifal själv – 'der reine Thor' ", Fra Giovanni 1945.

cussed whether *Parsifal* and Wagner operas generally should be regarded as Nazi propaganda. Should they be banned for that reason? His own response was clearly no. Admittedly, he wrote, the “Wagnerian soil” was fertile ground for the “weed” of Nazi ideology, but Wagner’s music drama contains so much more of the “noble flower”. It was important to recognise and clear out “the weeds”.³¹ Broadly speaking, Flyckt was arguing that future Wagner stagings had to be weeded of anything that could call to mind the Nazi legacy.

The idea of prohibition first arose in connection with denazification and the Allies’ occupation of Germany after the war. Wagner’s work was pronounced counterproductive to the democratization of the German people, and opera houses hesitated to put on his operas. According to a statement in *Expressen* in 1946, the US and the Soviet Union imposed a ban on the performance of Wagner’s music in opera houses in Berlin because of their potent symbolism.³²

From the Russian point of view, the ban may also have been related to Wagner’s reception following the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. In the years just after the war, Wagner’s music dramas disappeared from Russian stages for reasons of political expediency. *Lohengrin* and *Die Walküre* had been the music dramas most frequently performed in the Soviet Union during the first half of the twentieth century. In contrast, *Parsifal* and *Tristan und Isolde* were never performed. The reasons were mainly ideological or related to Russian nationalism and historical experience. Especially after 1941, a Fascist stigma was attached to the Wagner legacy, and Wagner was seen as ideologically incorrect. It was not until Stalin died in 1953 that a slight change can be observed.³³ The link between Wagner and Nazi ideology was also strongly emphasized by leading cultural figures in the Soviet Occupation Zone in Germany during the later 1940s. One clear representative of this view was the acclaimed German theatre critic

31 Flyckt 1942.

32 Flyckt 1946.

33 Bartlett 1995, 287; Redepenning 2000, 248–250.

Herbert Ihering, who in his 1947 book, *Berliner Dramaturgie*, characterised Wagner as the “Opiumsmuggler des Nationalsozialismus”.³⁴

Flyckt was not alone in his dislike of a ban. Several influential voices in Sweden shared the view that prohibiting Wagner was not the right way to go about curbing anti-democratic tendencies in Germany or coming to terms with the Nazi past. One such voice belonged to the communist music critic and language teacher Maxim Stempel. Stempel was born 1898 in Odessa to Jewish parents and had a professional career as a music critic, musician and music teacher in Germany and Austria. Because of his Jewish and communist background, he first fled Nazi Germany, then later, Austria. In 1937 he came to Sweden, where he worked as a music critic and cultural journalist, pianist, language teacher and educationalist. In Sweden he eventually reconciled his strong roots in the German-speaking tradition with his communist loyalties, a combination that did not always go smoothly. As a music critic at the communist daily newspaper *Ny Dag*, his personal aesthetic standpoints sometimes collided with the demands for loyalty to the dictates of Soviet music.³⁵

In an article in *Ny Dag* in 1948, Stempel touched on Wagner’s post-war legacy. In contrast to the official Soviet policy, he argued that it would be very strange to excommunicate Wagner, given that the people like “Governor President Schacht, General Chief of Staff Halder, arms magnate Thyssen and Buchenwald’s Ilse Koch” had gone scot-free. Wagner had politically suspect notions, his anti-Semitism attracted Nazis and his “music-dramaturgical principles” had lost their power, but his role as a musical dramatist was undeniable, says Stempel. The young people of the day, especially the German-speaking youth, should not be cut off from Wagner, he argued forcibly.³⁶

A ban on Wagner was never an issue in Sweden. The notion that art was above politics was by all accounts the dominant opinion immedi-

34 Ihering 1947, 37. Many thanks to Jukka von Boehm who kindly provided me with Ihering’s text.

35 Rosengren 2013b, 53–126.

36 Stempel 1948.

ately after the war as well as later during the Cold War.³⁷

Wagner as a communist hero

As we have seen, the belief that there was a causal link between Wagner and Nazi ideology was very much in evidence in the Soviet Union and among leading cultural personalities in what was to be East Germany. The perception of him as a forerunner and a link to Nazism was mixed with the communist interpretation of Wagner as a symbol of bourgeois values. But the East German reception was more complicated than that.³⁸ Wagner could also be interpreted as a source of inspiration for German national unity in the early 1950s. This can be seen in Hanns Eisler's remarks, in which he spoke of Wagner as postulating popular opera "as national artwork against the stupidity of a disunited Germany".³⁹

Wagner's strong position in Germany's heritage is especially noticeable in the fact that the emerging East German communist government also strove to make Wagner their hero. In East Germany, not only Wagner, but also composers such as Bach, Handel and Beethoven were made key figures in the construction of the East German national identity. They were all claimed to have had geographical and/or ideological points of contact with East Germany and its ideology.⁴⁰ Both national and ideological identities could be strengthened through the country's music heritage, and East German leaders had no plans to abandon the Wagnerian legacy to West Germany.⁴¹ Wagner became a cultural weapon in the Cold War between East and West.

As a response to the "New Bayreuth" launched by Wagner's grandsons in 1951, the East Germans created a "Richard-Wagner-Festwoche"

37 Karlsson & Ruth 2009, 75.

38 The complexity of Wagner's reception in East Germany is illustrated in Jukka von Boehm's case study of *Lohengrin* (Boehm 2014).

39 Quoted in Calico 2002, 198.

40 Kelly 2008, 799–829.

41 *Ibid.*, 806.

in Dessau in 1953. Since 1950, the bombed but quickly restored theatre in Dessau had established itself as a Wagner stage, with performances of *Tannhäuser*, *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Dessau was labelled the “Bayreuth of the North”, and by putting on more performances than their southern rival, the East Germans hoped to outshine Bayreuth. Communist ideology was the guiding principle in the interpretation of Wagner, and by emphasizing the popular element, the organizers in Dessau strove to distance their festival from Bayreuth. While Bayreuth was described as a hotbed of capitalism, a luxury available only to the initiated, the Festwochen would achieve what was said to have been Wagner’s real goal – to become a people’s composer. Their watchword was “from Bayreuth court theatre to Dessau folk theatre”. In the East German reception, the stress was on Wagner’s early revolutionary period, which could readily be associated with East German cities such as Dresden and Wagner’s involvement there in the revolution of 1848/49. The Wagnerian legacy took on the character of a Janus head, a metaphor for a divided Germany: the reactionary against the progressive, capitalism against socialism, popular culture against elite culture and fascism against anti-fascism.⁴²

The battle for Wagner in a divided Germany had echoes in Sweden, which is evident in the career of Maxim Stempel. Stempel was interested in how the German music scene would be reconstructed after the war, and he made several trips to the German states in the first post-war years. Astonishingly early, in May of 1945, live performances and radio broadcasts restarted in the occupation zones in Germany.⁴³ The fast recovery of the German music scene was Stempel’s main concern when he returned to Germany on a brief visit in 1949.

In an article which was a product of this visit and written for the Swedish music magazine *Musikvärlden* in 1949, Stempel compared the cultural recovery after the First World War, which had led to a flourishing period and made Berlin into a European music metropolis, with

42 Ibid., 807.

43 Calico 2002, 194.

all the difficulties that had to be faced after the Second World War and the Nazi cultural annexation. But despite Nazi indoctrination and a bombed-out Berlin, the city and its culture had made a tremendous recovery, and particularly its music, Stempel wrote confidently. Yet the six orchestras had difficulty filling the concert halls, which Stempel explained by pointing to the administration of the occupation zones and the division that this had created.⁴⁴

A *Ny Dag* article that stemmed from the same Berlin trip dealt with Wagner and German reconstruction in the light of the Cold War and East–West relations. While the leaders of the Western occupation sectors had not succeeded in their “war of nerves” on the people of East Berlin, the latter had tirelessly worked towards reconstruction, writes Stempel. Cultural life was flourishing, and Stempel believed the revival of the German cultural heritage was firmly on track in East Berlin. The supposed aggression of the West was set against the East’s stubborn cultural progress. Stempel was delighted to find a performance of *Die Meistersinger* at the State Opera, temporarily housed in the relatively unscathed Admiral Palace. The challenge for the State Opera was to maintain its reputation as “the leading German opera institution”, wrote Stempel, who made no bones about his certainty that the German cultural heritage would be cultivated by East Germany’s cultural institutions. With Wagner as a weapon, East Germany recaptured the German cultural heritage that had previously been appropriated by the Nazis.⁴⁵

Initially, there were two main images of Wagner in Sweden after the war. As the examples of Viereck and Flyckt show, there was a clear belief that Wagner was at the root of Nazism. In the case of Stempel and East Germany, Wagner could as well be turned into a political and national symbol of a socialist, grass-roots Germanism with the West German interpretation as a clear counterpart. But a third image also appeared. It was a less politicized picture of Wagner in which he sym-

44 Stempel 1949.

45 Ibid.

bolized the “good” German-speaking heritage, a heritage that could be purified and released from the Nazi defilement and returned to its original, non-political art forms. Two main Swedish advocates of this view will be presented here – Richard Engländer and Bertil Carlberg.

Restoration of the Wagnerian legacy

Richard Engländer came to Sweden in 1939 as a fugitive from the Nazis’ racial laws. He had previously worked as a music historian, musician and critic, primarily in Dresden. In Sweden he made a name for himself as a harpsichordist and expert on eighteenth-century music. Wagner was a musical figure to whom Engländer regularly returned throughout his musical career, and his approach can be understood as part of the restoration of the German-speaking cultural heritage after the war.⁴⁶ Engländer had personal experience working with Winifred Wagner and the Wagner Festival in Bayreuth. During the 1933–1934 season, he was an accompanist to the singer Robert Burg and received a glowing letter of thanks from Winifred, in which she thanked him for their collaboration, adding that Engländer had contributed to the artistic success.⁴⁷

Engländer occupied himself with Wagner not only as an accompanist, but also as a teacher, educator and critic. He maintained this interest throughout his Swedish exile. In 1952 in a review of Ludwig Strecker’s *Richard Wagner als Verlagsgefährte: Eine Darstellung mit Briefen und Dokumenten*, Engländer wrote about his confidence in what he perceived as a rehabilitation of the Wagner legacy. He presented a historical review of the Wagner reception and wrote that criticism of man and music alike after the First World War had less to do with changing tastes than the fact that the strong Bayreuthian image of Wagner was personified by Houston Stewart Chamberlain and his race mysticism. Bayreuth’s influence redoubled during the “Third Reich’s

46 Rosengren 2013b, 185–226.

47 Richard Engländer Archive, Uppsala University Library, Sweden. Winifred Wagner > Richard Engländer, Bayreuth 11 October 1934.

glory days”, Engländer noted, writing from personal experience. He pointed to the fact that Wagner’s “Das Judentum in der Musik” had had an abiding influence on German musical institutions:

It was not unknown for the young applicants on entering the music academy to be confronted with questions of this sort: What was Richard Wagner’s most compelling work? The expected answer was “Das Judentum in der Musik” – this unfortunate pamphlet, in fact directed against the “financial musicians” Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer. [...] Faster than you might think, the Richard Wagner legacy has recovered from this shock, from this partly politically determined crisis.⁴⁸

Wagner’s politics and written legacy were rejected, at least partially. Wagner’s anti-Semitic attacks were thought by Engländer to have been directed mainly against Felix Mendelssohn and Giacomo Meyerbeer, not against the supposed Jewish musical influence overall. Later in the article Engländer showed appreciation of Wagner’s grandsons, Wolfgang and Wieland Wagner, whom he believed had come to terms with the old spirit of Bayreuth, for example in their sets of *Ring* and *Parsifal* in 1951. These were the first performances of Wagner’s music dramas in Germany after the Second World War, and they had been stripped of much of the symbolism associated with Nazi ideology. In *Modeströmningar och mästare i musiken* (Current modes and masters of music) Engländer wrote how Wagner’s grandsons, “successfully and ruthlessly have distanced themselves from Bayreuth’s own theatrical traditions”, implying that Wagner’s work had previously been interpreted in the shadow of Nazism. Generally, Engländer depicted Bayreuth, and not Wagner himself, as the main conduit between the Wagner leg-

48 “Det kunde hända att vid inträde i musikakademien en ung aspirant konfronterades med frågor av detta slag: Vilket är Richard Wagners mest vägande arbete? Svaret man räknade med var: Das Judentum in der Musik – denna beklagliga pamflett som i själva verket riktade sig mot ‘finansmusikerna’ Mendelssohn och Meyerbeer. [...] Fortare än man skulle kunna tro, har Richard Wagner återhämtat sig från denna chock och denna delvis politiskt bestämda kris”, Engländer 1952.

acy and Nazism.⁴⁹

Yet it was not only Wieland and Wolfgang's new versions of the music dramas that restored the Wagnerian legacy and did the composer great justice. The new music literature in which previously untapped material was highlighted and Wagner's "cosmopolitan traits" emphasized as a complement to the image of the "nationalist" Wagner showed a rather different picture of Wagner. Wagner has been brought closer to humanity, wrote Engländer in 1952, seeming to suggest that a more original and accurate picture of Wagner was to be found in such post-war literature.⁵⁰ Engländer's singling out of Wagner for praise can be seen as demonstrating his loyalty to a German-speaking heritage, as personified by Wagner. It was a legacy that had been desecrated and abused by racial theorists and Nazis, but since the war had regained something of its original, balanced shape.

Yngve Flyckt likewise viewed Wieland and Wolfgang Wagner's "New Bayreuth" with appreciation. Given the broader analytical appropriation, this approval can be read as hope for a revival of German cultural life. In an article on Bayreuth and the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the festival, Flyckt described how his initial concerns about "bigotry and neo-Nazism", which can be read between the lines in his articles from 1945, were allayed when he found himself experiencing "the true spirit of artistic festival" headed by Wieland and Wolfgang Wagner. This resembled the way Engländer praised the new-found emphasis on what was perceived as the more "human" Wagner. Wagner's legacy, exemplified by *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, was something no war could obliterate, said Flyckt, whose account was coloured by his belief in the enduring defiance of the German-speaking heritage in the face of Nazi abuse and war.⁵¹

In a special "Sweden and the new Germany" issue of the Swedish music magazine *Musikrevy* in 1955, Bertil Carlberg, a Wagnerian and a

49 Engländer 1954, 41.

50 Engländer 1952.

51 Flyckt 1951a; Flyckt 1951b and Flyckt 1951c on his hopes for a quick restoration of German culture.

music administrator, expressed similar views in an article on Bayreuth. Carlberg had previously been something of an authority on Wagner, as can be seen from an earlier piece about Wagner and Bayreuth written in 1938 to mark the centenary of Cosima Wagner's birth. Carlberg had not taken a stand against Hitler's fascination with Wagner. It was too early to analyse the direction in which Hitler had taken Bayreuth, Carlberg wrote in 1938.⁵²

More than fifteen years later, Carlberg's new article about the Bayreuth stage described how it had survived the bombing during the war. After the war it became the scene of American army squads' cabarets, which Carlberg saw as demeaning to Wagner's artistic ideals. It was some time before Wagner's music dramas could again be staged, which was not only a result of the war itself, but also because Wagner was "in some way compromised in the eyes of the new German state. The reception of his works was deeply affected by the Nazi interpretation", Carlberg wrote.⁵³ He seemed surprised that Wagner was not accepted in post-war Germany's first year, but he rejected the way Bayreuth and the Wagner tradition had been used by the Nazis. This had been an abuse, according to Carlberg, and far removed from Wagner's own attitudes. He did not mention the issue of Wagner's anti-Semitism or the national myths that the Nazis had blithely incorporated into their ideology. Wagner's reception in Nazi Germany had been a departure from the norm, and in the light of this Carlberg had watched the modern performances by Wieland and Wolfgang Wagner with great confidence. "Finally" Bayreuth in 1951 could lay claim to Wagner performances, wrote Carlberg, clearly glad that it had returned to favour: "Only now has Richard Wagner's day finally come", he quotes Wieland Wagner as saying, and related this to the "purely human aspect" that he noted was highlighted in the brothers' interpretations. Thanks to Wolfgang and Wieland "Wagner's creative and energetic musical leadership, it [Bayreuth] has become a national German af-

52 Carlberg 1938, 6–12.

53 Carlberg 1955, 337.

fair”, Carlberg wrote.⁵⁴ His descriptions and review of the new Wagner stagings at Bayreuth are an expression of how he welcomed this development. Again, Wagner acted as a driving force for the Germans, German culture and indeed the rest of the world, and in Carlberg’s eyes this was something very positive. Germany was again the centre of the musical fine arts.

Conclusions

The aim of this article has been to illustrate how the Swedish reception of the Wagner legacy, with emphasis on the first half of the twentieth century, was related to notions of Germanness and anti-Semitism and to the Swedish connection to German culture. As in many other contexts in which composers have become political symbols and weapons in ideological battles, so Wagner and the Wagnerian legacy have triggered a plethora of disparate interpretations. In Wagner’s case his political opinions, and not least his anti-Semitism, were to prove crucial, including in the Swedish reception of his works. While the post-war treatment of the Nazi experience also determined how Wagner, Germanness and Germany would now be interpreted, there was a reception tradition that stretched over longer periods, such as the image of the universal Wagner versus the nationalist. Notably, there was a distinct sense of relief about many of the interpretations by writers such as Flyckt, Engländer and Carlberg in response to the new Bayreuth. Read between the lines, these writers concluded that a way had been found out of the Wagner–Nazism impasse. In their minds the German cultural heritage could now rise like a phoenix from the Nazi ashes and reclaim its rightful place in the vanguard of the fine arts.

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Richard Faltin and Wagner's Music in Finland

RIIKKA SILTANEN

Es freut mich aber sehr, dass es auch dort oben Leute gibt, die meine Musik gern haben. (I'm very happy to know there are also people there [in Finland] who like my music.)

– Richard Wagner, 24 August 1876

Introduction

In the nineteenth century, many foreign musical influences came to Finland from Germany. A number of German-born musicians contributed to Finnish musical life, the most important being the composer and violinist Fredrik (né Friedrich) Pacius (1809–1891) and the composer, music teacher, pianist, organist and conductor Richard Faltin (1835–1918).¹ Pacius, born in Hamburg, moved to Helsinki in 1835 and played a leading role in organizing musical activities in his adopted city.² His compatriot Richard Faltin continued this ground-breaking work, first in Vyborg (Viipuri in Finnish), in 1856–69, and then in Helsinki, from 1869 until his death in 1918. In these decades Faltin was a prominent figure in shaping professional musical life in Finland. Among other things, he played an important role in introducing Finns to the music of Richard Wagner.³ This article explores this role and demonstrates that, well before Martin Wegelius (1846–1906), the

1 Korhonen 2004, 25; Tarasti 1998, 107–108.

2 Vainio 2009.

3 Siltanen 2010 and 2013.

Finnish composer who is usually acclaimed as the first Wagnerian in Finland, Faltin was already at work in Wagner's behalf.⁴

My methodological approach in this article contains elements of both musicology and cultural history. The goal has been to identify all the Wagner–Faltin connections, including those missed in previous research, by examining primary materials. Along with contemporary Finnish newspapers (listed in the Bibliography), my main sources have been the materials of the Richard Faltin's Archive (hereafter Faltin's Archive) and The Richard Faltin Collection (hereafter The Faltin Collection) preserved in the National Library of Finland.⁵ Broadly speaking, this study is related to the development of musical life in Finland in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Apropos the primary sources, some of the materials in Faltin's Archive and The Faltin Collection have yet to be entered into the database, although there is a typewritten catalogue of both collections. Faltin's Archive includes, among other things, Richard Faltin's correspondence, documents of musical institutes with which Faltin was involved and music manuscripts.⁶ The Faltin Collection – Faltin's so-called scholarly library – consists of over 1,000 volumes, including scholarly music literature, periodicals, editions of music and concert programmes.⁷ As for Faltin's several thousand letters and his diaries, the handwriting is very small with all the fine, old-fashioned flourishes that often are almost impossible to read. On many of the concert programmes it is not always possible to identify the Wagner numbers by the names we know today. Therefore, I report the names only in the form given, for example, “a duet from *Der fliegende Holländer*”, unless further details enable more precise identification. I also use the expressions “music of the future”, “new style music” and “modern music”

4 Huttunen 1995, 13; Lappalainen 1998, 12.

5 Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52 and The Richard Faltin Collection, H 881, both in the National Library of Finland.

6 <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe201401301363>, accessed 30 July 2016.

7 <https://www.kansalliskirjasto.fi/en/collections/the-richard-faltin-collection>, accessed 30 July 2016.

synonymously.

Previous research on Wagner's music in Finland has dealt in part with Faltin.⁸ Yet these studies have almost entirely disregarded his Wagner connections in the 1850s and 1860s. Moreover, some events from the 1870s have been studied based only on secondary sources. This is partly understandable, given the state of the primary materials.

Friedrich Richard Faltin was born on 5 January 1835 in Danzig (then part of West Prussia, now Gdańsk) and grew up in a very musical family. In 1856, after study at the Leipzig Conservatory, he was offered a teaching position at the German Boys' School in Vyborg and moved to Finland. In 1863, he married the Finn Olga Holstius (1843–1901) with the idea that Finland would be his new homeland. Six years later, when he moved to Helsinki, he became a Finnish citizen. Faltin learned Swedish, the language of the elite and of administration in Finland, but only a little Finnish during his lifetime. Nevertheless, he composed music to Finnish words, for example the large-scale orchestral composition *Promootiokantaatti* (Promotion Cantata, 1890) along with dozens of choir compositions. He continued to live in Helsinki until his death in 1918.⁹

Wagner's music in Finland in the 1850s

The music of Wagner was said to have influenced all European composers in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, including composers in Finland. There have been many debates about the extent of this influence, for example, with regard to Jean Sibelius.¹⁰ Faltin and the music of Wagner both arrived in Finland at a time when Finnish art music was on the verge of a golden age.

In Finland in the first half of the nineteenth century there were few native composers. Those who flourished composed a great many solo

8 Huttunen 1995; Lappalainen 1998; Salmi 1995, 1998 and 2005; Sarjala 1995.

9 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.1; Krohn 1945, 119–129; Siltanen 2010. Today Finland has two official languages, Finnish and Swedish.

10 Salmenhaara 1996; Tarasti 1998; Tawaststjerna 2000.

songs. The foreign composers who could be heard in Finnish concerts were mainly from earlier generations, such as G.B. Pergolesi, Joseph Haydn, W.A. Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven. Over time the music of Carl Maria von Weber, Friedrich Kuhlau and Franz Schubert began to be heard.¹¹

It was at the end of the 1850s that Wagner's compositions reached Finland, mainly in the form of arrangements meant to be played at home soirées.¹² In the summer of 1857 the opera company of the German Theatre of Riga came to Helsinki to give two performances of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, but the audiences were said to be very small. Little was written about Wagner in Finnish newspapers or journals in this decade. One reason was almost surely the central musical figure in Helsinki, Fredrik Pacius, who was known to dislike the music of the future – *die Zukunftsmusik* – at least until the early 1870s.¹³ Finland's first real Wagner debate in public took place only in 1872,¹⁴ when Faltin was living and working in Helsinki.

Pacius and Faltin had opposite reactions to Wagner's music. The reasons had to do with both generation and location. Pacius had very conservative musical tastes and found Wagner's new style of thinking disturbing.¹⁵ Faltin, who was more than 25 years Pacius's junior, was born more or less in the midst of Wagner's rise to prominence, and he was more sympathetic to Wagner as well as to other contemporary composers.

Along with the generational factor, there was also a geographical one. In 1854–1855, Faltin was studying at the Leipzig Conservatory, located in a city considered Germany's musical centre. Unlike in Finland,

11 Huttunen 2002, 326, 333.

12 See Vesa Kurkela's article in this volume.

13 Salmi 1998, 14–16.

14 Sarjala 1995, 11–12.

15 In Salmi 2005, 47–48, Hannu Salmi takes up the question of Pacius's influence on musical attitudes in Helsinki in the 1850s and 1860s. "His [Pacius's] low opinion of Wagner's contemporaries, such as Berlioz, is illustrative of the reputation of these composers in Finland at the time. The possibilities for the performance of Wagner's music did not improve until Filip von Schantz entered the arena in the 1860s." See Tarasti 2009, 125.

heated debates about Wagner had been taking place in continental Europe and especially in Germany at least as early as the publication of Wagner's *Die Kunst und die Revolution* (1849), "Das Judenthum in der Musik" (1850) and *Oper und Drama* (1851).¹⁶ At the age of 20, Faltin found himself in the midst of these Wagner debates and a changing musical world.¹⁷

Faltin had begun professional music study in Dessau in 1852 with the court conductor Friedrich Schneider (1786–1853). Schneider was an excellent teacher and a valued master, but he could not understand the enthusiasm of his young students for composers like Robert Schumann, for example. So Faltin practised Schumann's music in secret with friends.¹⁸ In 1852 Faltin attended the Ballenstedt Music Festival, where among other things, Wagner's Overture and the Pilgrims' Chorus from *Tannhäuser* were performed as well as Senta and the Dutchman's duet from *Der fliegende Holländer*. The programme also included works by Franz Liszt and Hector Berlioz, as well as part of Beethoven's Symphony no. 9, a childhood favourite of Faltin.¹⁹

Schneider's sudden death in the end of 1853 caused Faltin to continue his studies at the Leipzig Conservatory.²⁰ He wanted as comprehensive a musical education as possible, and the Conservatory offered an impressive faculty: piano was taught by Louis Plaidy (1810–1874) and Ignaz Moscheles (1794–1870), organ and music theory by Ernst Friedrich Richter (1808–1879), violin by Friedrich Hermann (1828–1907), counterpoint by Moritz Hauptmann (1792–1868), composition and orchestration by Julius Rietz (1812–1877), musical score and ensemble playing by Ferdinand David (1810–1873) and the history of music by Franz Brendel (1811–1868).²¹

16 Millington 2000, 44, 47–51; Wagner 1849, 1850 and 1851.

17 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.31.

18 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.18.

19 National Library of Finland, The Richard Faltin Collection, H 881, uncatalogued file (Musikfest in Ballenstedt).

20 von Prosky 1884, 119.

21 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.1.

Faltin's conservatory years were filled with musical conflicts. With the exception of Franz Brendel, Faltin's teacher in the history of music, most of the teachers represented "the old school".²² Brendel, however, was one of the most eager spokesmen for the new style of music – the New German School – and especially for Wagner.²³ On 3 September 1850, Brendel published Wagner's essay "Das Judenthum in der Musik" in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, having succeeded Robert Schumann as the journal's editor in 1845. The other teachers at the Leipzig Conservatory were outraged and called for Brendel's resignation from his teaching post. They claimed that the article had insulted the memory of Felix Mendelssohn, the conservatory's founder. The opposition notwithstanding, Brendel kept his post until his death in 1868.²⁴

Faltin was one of the regulars attending Brendel's classes at the Leipzig Conservatory,²⁵ and perhaps Brendel was something of an inspiration to Faltin in encouraging him to appreciate the new music. In The Faltin Collection there is a copy of Brendel's *Die Musik der Gegenwart und die Gesamtkunst der Zukunft*.²⁶ Brendel noticed Faltin's keen interest in new music and invited the young man to visit his home many times.²⁷ Because of the sensitivity of the later history around Wagner and anti-Semitism, I want to make it clear that I have not found any evidence concerning Faltin's position on the subject.

Wagner was not the only composer to generate emotional excitement during Faltin's years in Leipzig. Julius Rietz, Faltin's teacher in composition and orchestration and the conductor of the Gewandhaus concerts, and Ferdinand David, Faltin's teacher in musical score and ensemble playing and the Gewandhaus Orchestra's concertmaster, did not want to perform Robert Schumann's music. They wanted to maintain

22 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.31.

23 Salmi 2005, 158–159.

24 *Almanach des Allgemeinen Deutschen Musikverein* 1869, 165–167; *Leipziger Musik- und Kunstzeitung* 1888, 21–22.

25 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.31.

26 Brendel 1854.

27 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.31.

the highly valued Mendelsohnian atmosphere in this arena. Only when Schumann's wife, Clara Schumann (née Wieck), whose musical authority even they were afraid to challenge, played did the Gewandhaus Orchestra perform Schumann's symphonies and overtures. In protest, one of the music students, Otto Singler, founded an association called "Aufschwung", whose purpose was to play modern chamber and piano music, especially Schumann's. Faltin, who had been a Schumann enthusiast already during his time in Dessau, readily joined the association.²⁸

Meeting Wagner in 1861

In the autumn of 1855, Faltin was graduated from the Leipzig Conservatory with honours and accepted an invitation to become the music teacher at the German School for Boys in Vyborg, Finland, beginning in the autumn of 1856.²⁹ Yet he regularly visited his family and friends in Danzig and attended musical events in various German cities. Then, in the autumn of 1861, Faltin, now 26, returned to Leipzig to pursue further study at the conservatory. His travel took him through Weimar, where the second gathering of the *Tonkünstler-Versammlung* (the Congress of Musical Artists) was taking place.³⁰ This organization had been founded in 1859 by the critic, composer and teacher Louis Köhler (1820–1886), Franz Brendel and Franz Liszt.³¹ It was at that meeting that Faltin met not only Liszt and Hans von Bülow, but also Richard Wagner.

Faltin's article about this event was published in the newspaper *Wiborg* on 17 September 1861 under the title "Bref om musik" (A letter about music). Faltin wrote: "[...] *one* of the main purposes for my staying here is to make my *own* judgement about the results of the New German

28 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.31; Flodin & Ehrström 1934, 30–31.

29 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.1 and Coll. 52.31.

30 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.31; Flodin & Ehrström 1934, 91–92.

31 *Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein*, Weimar 24–27 May 1884.

School, which previously I knew only from newspapers and music reviews.”³² After hearing many concerts and great performers, Faltin became completely enamoured of the new music. For him, the musical highlight of the Congress of Musical Artists was hearing Liszt play at a gala concert as well as attending Liszt’s rehearsals of his *Faust* and *Prometheus*, for which Faltin had bought the scores beforehand. None of Wagner’s music was played on that occasion.³³

In addition to describing his musical experiences, Faltin’s article related details about a dinner party at which many composers had given speeches. Wagner had spoken movingly about his own eventful life. He had emphasized what a pleasure it was to be shown the respect of so many artists after the bitter years of deportation and adversity. Later in the evening Wagner had walked through the ballroom arm-in-arm with Liszt and modestly responded to a toast: “Without my friend Liszt, you, my dear gentlemen, would have actually heard very little about me.”³⁴

In this very year, 1861, the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein* (the General German Music Association) was founded,³⁵ with Faltin as one of the founding members.³⁶ The association’s aim was to protest against the conservative musical attitudes in Germany,³⁷ in other words, to

32 “[...] ett af hufvudändamålen för min vistelse härstädes är att bilda mig ett eget omdöme om den nya tyska skolans alster, hvilka jag ju förut endast ur tidningarna och musikkritiken kände.” *Wiborg* 17 September 1861.

33 National Library of Finland, The Richard Faltin Collection, H 881, uncatalogued file (Bref om musik); *Wiborg* 17 September 1861.

34 “Utan min vän Liszt skulle ni, mina herrar, sannerligen hört litet om mig.” *Wiborg* 17 September 1861.

35 *Almanach des Allgemeinen Deutschen Musikvereins* 1869, 167.

36 A telegram addressed to Faltin on 13 May 1911 says: “The General German Music Association welcomes you as a founding member of the association on the occasion of the Liszt-centennial, together with the fifty-year anniversary of the association to the Musical Artist’s Celebration in 1911 in Heidelberg, with grateful thanks for the faithfulness shown to the association for so long years.” (“Der Allgemeine Deutsche Musikverein begruesst Sie als Gruendungmitglied des Vereins aus Anlass der Lisztcentenarfeier verbunden mit dem fuefnzigjaehrigen Jubilaem des Vereins an seinem Heidelberger Tonkuensterfest 1911 mit aufrichtigem Dank fuer die dem Verein so lange Jahre bewiesene Treue.”) National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin’s Archive, Coll. 52.3.

37 Sarjala 1995, 11.

promote the new style music, the New German School. Faltin regularly attended the association's meetings and kept up his membership until his death in 1918, making him the longest-lived founding member.³⁸

During his postgraduate year in Leipzig (1861–1862), Faltin came to know other aspects of Wagner. An old friend from the Leipzig Conservatory, Hans von Bronsart (1830–1913), was then serving as music director of an orchestra association called *Euterpe*. The association had been founded in 1824 with the aim of playing “the best works of the best composers”. Over time the purpose began to change focus, shifting to young and rising composers. It was in Hans von Bronsart's term that *Euterpe* began performing the music of Berlioz, Liszt and Wagner.³⁹ Despite dire warnings by some of his older teachers, Faltin was deeply impressed with Wagner's approach to music. Along with attending a number of *Euterpe* and Gewandhaus concerts, Faltin now heard Wagner's first four operas – *Rienzi*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*.⁴⁰

Faltin and Wagner's music in Vyborg

On his return to Vyborg, Faltin wanted to offer new music to the local audience, a desire almost certainly sparked by the postgraduate year in Leipzig and the personal meetings with Wagner, Liszt and many other German musicians. Yet Faltin had performed Wagner's music in Vyborg even before the graduate year in Leipzig: a concert programme from December 1860 lists a march from *Tannhäuser* arranged for two grand pianos performed by Faltin and his colleague, the German-born organist Heinrich Wächter (1818–1881).⁴¹

In 1864, Faltin organized a large concert with several Wagner numbers: *Elsa's Dream*, *Lohengrin's Reproof to Elsa* and the *Festival*

38 *Mitteilungen des Allgemeinen Deutschen Musikvereins* 1919.

39 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.31; K.W.W. 1874, 23–24, 39.

40 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.31.

41 National Library of Finland, The Richard Faltin Collection, H 881, Concert programmes: Bound, Kotimaisia [domestic] 1853–1859.

and Bridal Song from *Lohengrin*. He performed these himself on the piano, using Liszt's arrangements. The concert also included chamber and vocal music by Schumann for which Faltin was again the pianist.⁴² A review of this concert in the local newspaper, *Wiborgs Tidning*, on 20 January 1864, relates that the programme had featured three types of music: classical music, concert music and the so-called music of the future. Liszt's arrangements of the *Lohengrin* numbers had represented the last-named and were mainly received with pleasure. The critic lamented that this kind of concert enjoyment was seldom experienced in Vyborg.⁴³ As was typical of Finnish newspapers in the 1860s, the reviews were not signed, critics and journalists remaining anonymous.⁴⁴

In the autumn of 1864, a series of four articles appeared in *Wiborgs Tidning* with the title "Hvilken ställning intager konsten till sin framtid?" (What position will art take in the future?). All four articles mainly involved music. The last two analysed modern music, especially Wagner's.⁴⁵ The anonymous writer was evidently a great Wagner enthusiast and viewed Wagner as a leader for those born after the Revolution of 1848:

Wagner is the determined opponent of all learned and aristocratic art, but at the same time he is the boldest advocate for the kind of art that puts down roots and exists for the people. [...] He himself is in line with the current taste for artwork, [namely] that it has to have an instant and full effect on the feelings, for his rule is that a work of art must always speak to and be perceived through feeling.⁴⁶

42 National Library of Finland, The Richard Faltin Collection, H 881, Concert programmes: Bound, Kotimaisia [domestic] 1853–1859; *Wiborgs Tidning* 13 January 1864.

43 *Wiborgs Tidning* 20 January 1864.

44 Sarjala 1994, 97.

45 *Wiborgs Tidning* 21 September 1864; 24 September 1864; 1 October 1864; 5 October 1864.

46 "Wagner just är den afgjorda motståndare till all de lärda och aristokraternas konst, på samma gång som han är den djerfvaste förkämpe för den konst, som rotar i och finnes till för folket. [...] Han sjelf fordrar aldeles i nutidens smak af ett konstverk en omedelbar och fullständig verkan på känslan, ty hans regel lyder: konstverket måste tala till och

In the fourth article, the writer referred to Franz Brendel, writing as if the author himself had experienced Wagner's operas in Germany or at least had been very aware of their reception in Wagner's homeland:

Everywhere in Germany where the Wagner operas are performed you can be sure that they are liked. As soon as the public has had time to empathize with them (as [happened] in Dresden), they respond with admiration and sympathy. This is due to Wagner's powerful, fruitful idea of strengthening the characters' declamation with singing and the enchanted colouring of all modern operas [...].⁴⁷

The descriptions of Wagner's operas show that the writer knew the works very well. He praises Wagner's wonderful instrumentation and is of the opinion that until now, no one had mastered instrumentation as Wagner had done with the exception of "den odödliga fransmannen Berlioz" (the immortal Frenchman Berlioz).⁴⁸ The writer was well aware of the various debates around Wagner and clearly wanted to have Wagner crowned king of the new music era. He was also familiar with Franz Brendel. The writer of this series is not known. It could have been Faltin. It is also possible that it was another Wagner enthusiast from among the large German population living in Vyborg in the 1860s. In any event, the author had to have been an educated musician.

On 13 May 1864, a piece appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* about Faltin's pioneering work in Vyborg:

Vyborg in Finland: The continuously expanding musical education has also penetrated the Far North, and it seems that, from the light that

uppfattas af känslan." *Wiborgs Tidning* 1 October 1864.

47 "I hela Tyskland, der de Wagnerska operorna uppföras, kan man vara säker på att de anslå. Såsnart en publik hunnit lefva sig in i dem (såsom i Dresden), kunna de säkert räkna på dess beundrande sympati. Detta är en verkan af Wagners mäktiga, fruktbara tanke, att förstärka de handlande personernes declamation med sång och hela den moderna operans förtrollade kolorit", *Wiborgs Tidning* 5 October 1864.

48 *Wiborgs Tidning* 5 October 1864.

R. Wagner has shown by extending the conducting of his compositions to concerts in St Petersburg, the beam has turned on what, until now, was a musically dark region. The honour for this goes to Mr. Richard Faltin from Danzig (a former student of Friedrich Schneider, who completed his musical studies at the Leipzig Conservatory, becoming an excellent organist, and with his theoretical and well-rounded humanistic education is currently music teacher in Vyborg), who by his teaching and conducting – also at times with limited sources – has successfully broadened the understanding of German music in this city. As a pianist, he gave a concert on 14 January this year with the collaboration of Concertmaster Herrmann, Göde, Feldmann, Reichstein and many dilettantes in the following programme: Sonata in C-sharp minor, op. 27 no. 2 of Beethoven; *Elfentanz: Capriccio* for three violins by Bolk [...]; *Variations de Concert*, op. 1 by Henselt; *Der Taucher* by Schiller [recitation], *Märchen-Erzählungen*, four pieces for clarinet, viola and pianoforte by Schumann [...]; *The Grenadiers* by Schumann; three excerpts transcribed by Liszt of Wagner's *Lohengrin* (Elsa's Dream, Lohengrin's Reproof to Elsa, the Festival and Bridal Song). The Sonata by Beethoven, the Variations by Henselt and the three Transcriptions were performed by the one who arranged the concert. Mr. Faltin has been the first to plant in these circles the yet unknown names of Schumann, Wagner and Liszt, and the conducting of these last-mentioned composers produced loud applause and calls for the one who arranged the concert [...].⁴⁹

49 “Wyburg in Finnland: Die sich immer weiter verbreitende musikalische Bildung ist auch bis in den höheren Norden vorgedrungen und es scheint, als habe sich von dem glänzenden Licht, welches R. Wagner durch Vorführung seiner Compositionen in den Petersburger Concerten verbreitete, ein Strahl jenen bis jetzt musikalisch dunklen Regionen zugewendet. Hier gebührt Hr. Richard Faltin aus Danzig (früher ein Schüler von Friedrich Schneider – vollendete er seine musikalischen Studien auf dem Leipziger Conservatorium, wo er sich als vortrefflicher Orgelspieler, sowie durch theoretische und allseitig humanistische Bildung auszeichnete – gegenwärtig Lehrer der Musik in Wyburg) die Anerkennung, in dieser Stadt durch seinen Unterricht, sowie durch Aufführung – wenn auch zur Zeit nur noch mit beschränkten Mitteln – für die Verbreitung um das Verständniss deutscher Musik erfolgreich gearbeitet zu haben. Er gab am 14. Jan. d. J. als Pianist ein Concert unter Mitwirkung des HH. Concertmeister Herrmann, Göde, Feldmann, Reichstein und mehrerer Dilettanten mit folgendem Programm: Sonate in Cis moll, op. 27 no. 2 von Beethoven, Elfentanz, Capriccio für drei Violinen von Bolk [...];

In 1867 a similar review of a Vyborg concert appeared in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Here again Faltin was presented as an ambassador for the New German School: “Our hard-working Music Director Richard Faltin [...] has already tried for years with wholehearted eagerness to make us familiar with Liszt’s, Wagner’s and Schumann’s compositions.”⁵⁰ The authors of these reviews are not mentioned, nor is it stated who sent them to the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Possibly Faltin’s colleague mentioned earlier, the organist Heinrich Wächter or another music enthusiast with German connections or even Faltin himself was the source.

Faltin’s activities bringing Wagner’s music to Finland continued apace. In March of 1867 he organized a concert with the violinist Johan Lindberg and the singer Ernst Lindblad. Faltin accompanied Lindblad in Wolfram’s romance from *Tannhäuser*.⁵¹ Yet these and other concerts were limited to accompanying singers or violinists on the piano. The orchestral music of Wagner was another matter. Although in 1860 Faltin had succeeded in putting together a symphony orchestra in the town, the musicians’ ability to play Wagner was out of the question.⁵² The orchestra was made up of local amateurs plus Faltin’s most talented violin students in the German School for Boys. Only occasionally did professional musicians play with the orchestra in concerts. The orchestra’s activity fell off sharply when Faltin left for his postgraduate year in

Variations de Concert, op. 1 von Henselt, der Taucher von Schiller, Märchen-Erzählungen, vier Stücke für Klarinette, Viola und Pianoforte von Schumann [...], die beiden Grenadiere von Schumann, drei Transscriptionen von Liszt aus Wagner’s Lohengrin (Elsa’s Traum, Lohengrin’s Verweis an Elsa, Festspiel und Brautlied). Die Sonate von Beethoven, die Variationen von Henselt und die drei Transscriptionen wurden vom Concertgeber vortragen. Hr. Faltin hat die in jenen Kreisen noch unbekannt Namen Schumann’s, Wagner’s und Liszt’s zum erstenmale dorthin verpflanzt, und es trug die Vorführung der Musikstücke letztgenannter Componisten dem Concertgeber reichen Applaus und Hervorruf ein”, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 13 May 1864, 173.

50 “Unser tüchtiger Musikdirector Richard Faltin [...] welcher schon vor Jahren mit warmem Eifer bemüht war, Liszt’s, Wagner’s und Schumann’s Werke bei uns bekannt zu machen”, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 6 December 1867, 444.

51 *Wiborgs Tidning* 27 March 1867.

52 Nevertheless, the symphony concert Faltin organized on 1 February 1860 was the first of its kind in all of eastern Finland, Hällström 1915, 78–79.

Leipzig. Yet on his return he succeeded in establishing a new orchestra, which performed actively in 1862–1863 and in 1867–1869. Still, the most “modern” composers on Faltin’s concert programmes were Mikhail Glinka, Carl Reinecke, Anton Rubinstein and Robert Schumann.⁵³

Along with his performance activities, Faltin followed musical life and its concerns in continental Europe through several musical journals. In addition to the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, he subscribed to *Signale für die musikalische Welt* in 1857–1874, to *Die Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* in 1863–1870, to the *Leipziger Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* in 1866–1868, and to *Die Tonhalle: Organ für Musikfreunde* in 1868–1869.⁵⁴ There are also all the volumes of the *Bayreuther Blätter* between the years 1878 and 1914.⁵⁵ Moreover, there is also a copy of the series *Verschiedene musikalische Schriften*, which contained Wagner’s writings.⁵⁶

Faltin had also acquired several scores of Wagner’s operas. As was typical of the time, many were arrangements of excerpts from the operas. This was especially useful in Finland, where orchestras were not sufficiently large to perform Wagner’s music until late in the nineteenth century. Faltin had acquired both German and French scores. The French scores seem to have been bought in Paris, but there are no indications of the years of publication, and some lack the name of the arranger. These include *Le Vaisseau fantôme (Der fliegende Holländer)*, partition à 4 mains; *Tannhäuser*, arrangé à 4 mains par Hans de Bülow; *Lohengrin*, arrangé à 4 mains; *Tristan et Yseult*, version française de Victor Wilder, partition pour chant et piano arrangée par R. Kleinmichel; *Les Maîtres chanteurs de Nuremberg*, version française de Victor Wilder, partition pour chant et piano, à 4 mains. German

53 *Wiborgs Tidning* 15 May 1869.

54 National Library of Finland, The Richard Faltin Collection, H 881, P.3981, P.3999, P.4004, P.4008. Beginning in the 1870s Faltin subscribed to more than twenty musical magazines and journals from continental Europe.

55 National Library of Finland, The Richard Faltin Collection, H 881, P.3984.

56 *Verschiedene musikalische Schriften* 1865, Band A–D; *Verschiedene musikalische Schriften* 1867, Band 1–3.

editions with arrangement of music are from *Lohengrin* (vollständiger Klavierauszug von Theodor Uhlig), *Tristan und Isolde* (vollständiger Klavierauszug von Hans von Bülow, neue revidierte Ausgabe), *Tristan und Isolde* (Arrangement für das Pianoforte zu vier Händen), *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (vollständige Partitur). These seem to have been purchased in Leipzig, with the latter *Tristan* perhaps acquired in Riga.⁵⁷

Musical atmosphere in Helsinki before the 1870s

In the summer of 1869 Faltin and his family moved from Vyborg to Helsinki, where he continued his musical activities. Although in Vyborg the response to Wagner's music had been quite positive, in Helsinki it was more reserved. As mentioned earlier, Fredrik Pacius, the central figure in Helsinki's musical life, opposed Wagner and his "music of the future".⁵⁸ And Pacius was a powerful force in the city, especially during the 1840s and 1850s. Among his many activities, he had founded an orchestra, a symphony society and a men's choir, which continues today as *Akademiska Sångföreningen* (the Academic Male Choir of Helsinki), the oldest men's choir in Finland. But gradually Pacius began to withdraw from orchestral conducting in Helsinki. The result was something of a lull in orchestral activities from 1853 to 1867.⁵⁹ Only in 1868, did Lorenz Nicolai Achté (1835–1900), opera singer and conductor, put together an Academic Orchestra with student musicians,⁶⁰ although this was an amateur ensemble.

The first successful attempt at founding a professional orchestra in Helsinki took place in 1860 when a new building was completed for the Swedish Theatre (Svenska teatern; the new building was properly called the New Theatre. However, to distinguish it from the Finnish

57 National Library of Finland, The Richard Faltin Collection, H 881.

58 For an introduction to Pacius see Lappalainen 2009.

59 Vainio 2009, 234–235.

60 Väisänen 1951, 8.

Figure 1. Richard Faltin, composer, pianist, organist, music teacher and conductor in 1872 in Danzig. The National Board of Antiquities.



Theatre, I will refer to it here as the Swedish Theatre). With financial support from the Russian emperor, the theatre was able to establish its own orchestra. Its first conductors were the Finnish composer Filip von Schantz from 1860 to 1863, followed by the German-born cellist August Meissner from 1863 to 1867 and then by the Swedish-born composer C.G.R. Littmarck in 1868–1869.⁶¹ Having this orchestra meant that, for the first time, it was possible to hear Wagner's music in public concerts in Helsinki,⁶² although not very often and with limited repertoire. According to the Finnish newspapers, the Swedish Theatre Orchestra performed Wagner at the following concerts in the 1860s: in January 1863 a mosaic from *Tannhäuser*;⁶³ in November 1863 a march for choir and orchestra from *Tannhäuser*;⁶⁴ in November 1864 the Overture

61 Vainio 2009, 235–236.

62 Salmi 2005, 48.

63 *Helsingfors Dagblad* 8 January 1863.

64 *Helsingfors Dagblad* 4 November 1863.

from *Lohengrin*;⁶⁵ in May 1865 the romance “An den Abendstern” from *Tannhäuser*;⁶⁶ in January 1869 the Finale from *Lohengrin*.⁶⁷

There were also occasional pieces about Wagner in the Helsinki press. The articles usually consisted of news from Europe, only rarely written by Finnish contributors. However, on 4 April 1862 a polemical article appeared in *Helsingfors Dagblad* signed “W. B-n.” The letters stood for Wilhelm Bolin (1835–1924), the professor of philosophy at the Imperial Alexander University in Helsinki.

What is meant by this music of the future? Among us, this phenomenon is an even bigger secret than in the rest of Europe. [...] As anyone well knows who has had the luck of hearing one of Wagner's operas, you get the same impression as from all modern operas in general: lots of noise, splendid stages, beautiful costumes, wondrous effects and lively acting. Although the music impresses and stays in the mind. [...] But then in addition you get the inconvenience of the dissonances and recitatives, the awful tremolos and life-threatening passages [...].⁶⁸

In addition to articles about Wagner's music, a number of Wagner issues other than music received attention: for example, in 1860 there was a description of Wagner's relationship with and influence on the young king of Bavaria, Ludwig II, who was a great admirer of Wagner and a generous sponsor.⁶⁹ In 1863 a report was published on Wagner's

65 *Helsingfors Tidningar* 25 February 1864.

66 *Hufvudstadsbladet* 29 May 1865.

67 *Hufvudstadsbladet* 10 January 1869.

68 “Och hvad menas nu med denna framtidsmusik? Hos oss är denna företeelse en ännu större hemlighet än för det övriga Europa. [...] Den som en gång haft lyckan att höra en Wagners opera, känner väl att man öfverhuvud medhemtar ett intryck som af alla andra nutidens operor: mycket buller, präktigt sceneri, sköna kostymer, gripande effekter och ett ganska lifligt spel. Äfven musiken imponerar och rotläster sig i minnet. [...] Men så har man tillika en hågkomst af dissonanser och recitativer, fasliga tremolos och halsbrytande passager”, *Helsingfors Dagblad* 3 April 1862.

69 *Helsingfors Dagblad* 15 January 1866.

plans to build a special theatre to present the *Ring* cycle.⁷⁰ In 1867 and 1869 there was more news about the complex and ambivalent relationship between Wagner and Ludwig II.⁷¹ Then, in the summer of 1869, a peculiar discussion arose in Finnish newspapers about a visit Wagner supposedly planned to make to Finland and of his scheme to compose a new opera called *Imatra*.⁷² Rumours of this had circulated as early as 1863, but the story mysteriously disappeared from the pages of the newspapers until the end of summer. The mystery surrounding this issue has still not been completely clarified.⁷³

Faltin and the orchestras in Helsinki

Such was the state of affairs in Helsinki when, in the spring of 1869, Faltin was offered the post of conductor of the Swedish Theatre Orchestra. He signed a one-year contract and took up his duties on 10 July 1869. But in the first half of 1870 Faltin submitted applications for two vacancies, both in Helsinki. One was for the position of organist at the St Nicholas Church. The other was Pacius's old position of music teacher at the Imperial Alexander University. Without knowing whether he would be selected for either one, Faltin decided to resign from the Swedish Theatre Orchestra at the end of his first year.⁷⁴

There were several reasons for his decision. One was that the orchestra included only 12 musicians. Moreover, the salary was too low to provide for Faltin's family in Helsinki. But most of all, Faltin disliked the *populära konserter* (the popular concerts) expected of the orchestra.⁷⁵

70 *Helsingfors Dagblad* 12 August 1863.

71 *Helsingfors Dagblad* 8 July 1867; 22 September 1869; 23 September 1869.

72 *Imatra* refers to Imatrankoski, a famous rapid in eastern Finland.

73 Salmi 2005, 111–118.

74 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.18 and Coll. 52.31; Flodin & Ehrström 1934, 137.

75 Richard Faltin > Olga Faltin, Danzig 5 June 1870, 16 June 1870 and 26 June 1870, National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.6. For more on the popular concerts see Kurkela's article in this volume.

For in addition to the symphony concerts and theatre music, Faltin was charged with giving concerts with “lighter” programmes at the spa in Brunnsparken (Kaivopuisto in Finnish), a well-known Helsinki park. These concerts were held throughout the summer, with morning concerts every Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday, and evening concerts featuring dance music every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.⁷⁶ During the summer of 1870, between the waltzes, polkas, polonaises and gallops, Faltin inserted orchestral arrangements of three Wagner numbers: the Pilgrims' Chorus from *Tannhäuser*, and the Overture and a chorus from *Rienzi*.⁷⁷

Faltin's departure from the helm of the Swedish Theatre Orchestra displeased a number of people in Helsinki. Nor was it welcome news to many that, in the autumn of 1870, Faltin was hired for both vacancies to which he had submitted applications: he became the organist of the St Nicholas Church and the music teacher at the Imperial Alexander University, filling the post recently vacated by Pacius.⁷⁸ As part of this latter position, Faltin became the conductor of the university's Academic Orchestra.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, he had joined Suomalainen Seura (The Finnish Society), whose goal was to promote the Finnish-speaking culture, create a new art form in Finland and present entire operas, which he – Faltin – would conduct.⁸⁰

The turnover in Helsinki's musical landscape provided fertile soil for the first real Wagner debates in Finland, which were reported in the newspapers in 1872. In the 1860s music critics had mostly written their reviews anonymously. However, from the 1870s on it became very important for texts to be signed. Even though a number of critics used

76 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.15 and Coll. 52.18.

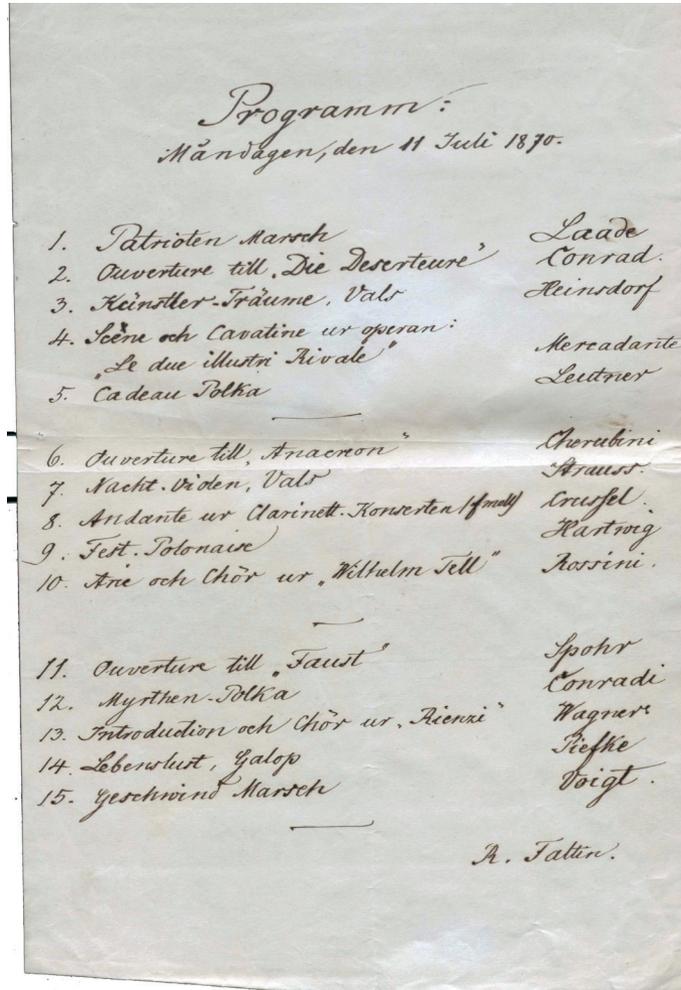
77 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.15.

78 Flodin & Ehrström 1934, 135, 146–148. The university was renamed Helsinki University after Finland's independence was declared.

79 Väisänen 1951, 8.

80 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.18; Paavolainen 2013, 449, 542–543.

Figure 2. Concert programme for 11 July 1870. The National Library of Finland, Richard Faltn's Archive, Coll. 52.15.



pseudonyms, everyone knew who was behind the assumed names.⁸¹

Once the critics acquired identities, it was not long before the antagonisms between the competing musical tastes as well as between the Finnish- and Swedish-language groups began to show up in the newspapers, which were used as a forum to settle all kinds of extra-musical matters in public. During the 1870s, critics began to be identified with newspapers, and newspapers began to represent different allegian-

⁸¹ Sarjala 1994, 96–98.

es in the quarrels. The Wagner debate in 1872 was in fact based on a power struggle between two men, the composer Martin Wegelius and Wilhelm Bolin.⁸² Bolin had been known as an anti-Wagnerian since the early 1860s,⁸³ as shown by his earlier mentioned polemic in *Helsingfors Dagblad* on 4 April 1862. Wegelius on the other hand was an eager, newly-minted Wagnerian, having become an enthusiast in the years 1871–73 during his study at the Leipzig Conservatory.⁸⁴ Even though both men were known as dedicated Svecomans (those who wanted to maintain the Swedish language in Finland and valued the Finns' Swedish heritage), this did not prevent them from arguing with each other.

The bitter quarrels between the Finnish- and Swedish-speaking music factions were quite a contrast to cosmopolitan Vyborg, where Swedish, Finnish, German and Russian were regularly heard.⁸⁵ Faltin collaborated with musicians on both sides of the quarrel, although some may have wanted to brand him a Fennomane (those promoting the Finnish language and its causes) when he left the Swedish Theatre Orchestra after only a year, especially as he went on to become involved with the Finnish Opera (where works were sung in Finnish, as opposed to conducting at the Swedish Theatre, where the language of performances was Swedish).⁸⁶

In 1873–1874 Faltin planned a series of three concerts with Martin Wegelius, who was then a young and promising composer. A word is in order here about the relationship between these men, both of whom played such important roles in Helsinki's musical life. Faltin and Wegelius became acquainted as early as September of 1868, when Faltin gave an organ concert in Helsinki.⁸⁷ After Faltin moved permanently

82 Sarjala 1994, 99–108.

83 Sarjala 1995, 11.

84 Lappalainen 1998, 12–13; Huttunen 1995, 14.

85 Flodin & Ehrström 1934, 197.

86 Paavolainen 2014, 553–554.

87 Flodin 1922, 162–163, 285; *Helsingfors Dagblad* 24 September 1868.

to Helsinki, Wegelius studied counterpoint with him for a short time in the autumn of 1871. At the end of the same year, Faltin wrote a letter of recommendation for Wegelius to study at the Leipzig Conservatory (as he did for a number of his students).⁸⁸ According to the biographies of both,⁸⁹ Faltin seemed to have been happy to help his younger colleague become acquainted with the Leipzig musical world and to share his own musical interests with someone in Finland, as their jointly planned concert series shows. In fact, there was both a lifelong friendship between the men and many shared efforts to develop Finnish musical organizations (perhaps most significantly, founding the Helsinki Music Institute in 1882,⁹⁰ which years later would be renamed the Sibelius Academy). Their joint concert venture was thus not an anomaly.

They planned the series to feature *only* new and Nordic music. The first and third concerts were to be dedicated to choral and orchestral compositions, while the second was to include chamber music and solo singing with piano accompaniment. The announced repertoire included the music of Wagner, Liszt, Berlioz, Brahms, Grieg and Johan Svendsen (1840–1911).⁹¹ The first concert took place on 9 December 1873. Its Wagner selection was the Prayer for soloist, choir and orchestra from *Lohengrin*:

With the performance of the number from *Lohengrin*, the planners of the concert had wanted to crown their programme; they chose the scene before the duel between Lohengrin and Telramund with its beautiful solo quartet and the impressive choir. A mishap occurred, and the performance failed. The careful practice and the skilful conducting lacked for nothing, but even the most careful preparation and the

88 Flodin 1922, 244–245, 251. Faltin wrote recommendations for musical study in Germany e.g. for Robert Kajanus, Ilmari Krohn, Ernst Fabritius, Karl Flodin, Oskar Merikanto and Emmy Achté (née Strömer).

89 Flodin & Ehrström 1934 and Flodin 1922 for biographies of Faltin and Wegelius respectively.

90 Faltin was one of the founding members of the Helsinki Music Institute in 1882 and taught organ on its faculty from 1882 to 1906. Dahlström 1982, 21–22, 337.

91 *Finlands Allmänna Tidning* 20 September 1873.

most skilful conducting were powerless against the calamities caused by inaccurate intonation [...].⁹²

With the exception of the Wagner number, the concert was pronounced a success.⁹³ The orchestra was the Swedish Theatre's, but the reviews did not mention who conducted.⁹⁴ The second concert took place on 24 February 1874, and it too was a success. This programme, although mainly devoted to chamber music and singing, included the Swedish Theatre Orchestra playing Wegelius's *Rondo quasi fantasia* for piano and orchestra and Liszt's *Hungarian Fantasy* for piano and orchestra, but no Wagner.⁹⁵

After the first concert, Wilhelm Bolin had raised the question in the pages of *Helsingfors Dagblad* as to why Faltin and Wegelius wanted to create a new concert series devoted to modern music and thereby squander the town's limited orchestral resources. Was it not enough to have the annual six symphony concerts by the Swedish Theatre Orchestra? Did these men want to spark a competition between conductors, Faltin on the one hand and Nathan B. Emanuel, Faltin's successor at the Swedish Theatre Orchestra, on the other?⁹⁶

Public speculation about a competition, the dull reviews and the mocking of Wagner's music fed the tensions between Helsinki's factions and led to the death of the series after just two concerts: Emanuel was not willing to loan his orchestra for the third one.⁹⁷

92 "Med upptagandet af ett nummer ur Lohengrin hade konsertgiwarne ernat sättä kronan på programmet; de hade walt scenen före enviget mellan Lohengrin och Telramund med dess vackra soloqvartet och imponerande manskör. Genom ett missöde förolyckades utförandet. Omsorgsfull inöfning och skicklig ledning saknades ingalunda, men den omsorgsfullaste förberedelse och den skickligaste ledning äro wonmäktiga mot de kalomiteter, en felaktig intonation kan hafwa med sig", *Morgonbladet* 15 December 1873.

93 *Finland Allmänna Tidning* 12 December 1873; *Morgonbladet* 15 December 1873.

94 *Morgonbladet* 9 December 1873. It is uncertain whether Faltin had "borrowed" the Swedish Theatre Orchestra for the event or whether that orchestra had been conducted by his successor, Nathan B. Emanuel.

95 *Finlands Allmänna Tidning* 26 February 1874.

96 *Helsingfors Dagblad* 22 December 1873.

97 Flodin & Ehrström 1934, 179–180. Nevertheless, before 1874, Emanuel had conduct-

When the co-operation with the Swedish Theatre Orchestra faltered, Faltin tried to establish another orchestra for his musical activities in Helsinki. The regular part of this ensemble was made up of volunteers consisting of student musicians from the university's Academic Orchestra and amateur players. Professional musicians from the Guards Band and elsewhere were hired as needed.⁹⁸

Faltin and performances of Wagner's operas

In 1876, Faltin decided to travel to the grand opening of the Bayreuth Festival Theatre to hear Wagner's completed *Ring* cycle. A stipend from the Imperial Alexander University in Finland made the journey possible.⁹⁹ In his application to the university, submitted to "Noble Grand Duke, Tsarevitch and Heir Apparent, Imperial Alexander University of Finland High Chancellor", Faltin pointed out the uniqueness and importance of the festival:

Considering the brilliant poet-composer's [Wagner's] extraordinary and epochal activity in developing the art of our time, the enormous attention he has attracted, as well as the recognition that has come to him throughout the whole world of art, the presentation of his finest works must be seen as an artistic event of the greatest import through which an explicitly formed opinion can be made and the enormous progress of both dramatic and instrumental art music over the last three decades can be assessed [...].¹⁰⁰

ed Wagner with the Swedish Theatre Orchestra in at least the following concerts: in 1871 a Fantasy from *Tannhäuser* (*Helsingfors Dagblad* 13 March 1871) and the prelude from *Lohengrin* (*Helsingfors Dagblad* 28 October 1871), in 1872 the Overture (*Helsingfors Dagblad* 27 January 1872) and a march and a choir from *Tannhäuser* (*Hufvudstadsbladet* 17 November 1872), in 1873 again the march and the choir from *Tannhäuser* (*Helsingfors Dagblad* 16 October 1873), as well as the Overture from *Lohengrin* and Elisabeth's prayer from *Tannhäuser* (*Morgonbladet* 15 November 1873).

98 National Library of Finland, Einari Marvia's Archive, Coll. 779.21; Paavolainen 2012, 135.

99 Flodin & Ehrström 1934, 207–208.

100 "Högborne Storfurste, Cesarewitch och Thronföljare, Kejslerliga Alexanders Universitetets i Finland Höga Kansler! [...] I betraktande af den geniale diktare-kompo-

The university officials granted Faltin's request, and the trip to Bayreuth turned out to be one of the most significant musical experiences of his life.

Before departing, Faltin had promised to write a travel diary to be published in the Helsinki newspaper *Morgonbladet*. But on meeting Martin Wegelius in Neuenmarkt, who was also on the way to the Bayreuth Festival, Faltin learned that Wegelius was writing a travel diary to be published in another Helsinki newspaper, *Helsingfors Dagblad*. Faltin hesitated. "Do you think that I still could decline? A comparison with Wegelius's summaries in *Dagbladet* would only turn to my defeat", he wrote to his wife, Olga. "My hand has become so terribly tremulous that I prefer to write *only to you*. I almost get sick when I think of *Morgonbladet*."¹⁰¹

Apparently, Faltin indeed declined, leaving the public summaries to Wegelius. Wegelius wrote seven articles of which the first five concerned the Bayreuth Festival, with the last two devoted mostly to the philosophy of music and the German music style in general. Wegelius explained in great detail the scenes and acoustics, the singers and *Siegfried*, his favourite of the *Ring* operas.¹⁰²

Faltin's letters, written to his wife and his sister Rose (Ziemssen, née Faltin), dealt with many of the same topics and were also quite interesting.¹⁰³ Some parts of them were still published in *Östra Finland*

sitörens utomordentliga och epokgörande verksamhet för vår tids konstutveckling, samt det ofantliga uppseende han väckt och det erkännande, som kommit honom till del inom hela konstvärlden, måste uppförandet af hans förnämsta verk emot ses såsom ett konstnärligt evenement af den allrastörsta betydelse, helst dervid både den dramatiska och den instrumentala tonkonstens ofantliga framsteg under de sista trenne decennierna tydligast kunna öfverskådas och bedömas", National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.1.

101 "Tror Du, att jag ännu kan avsäga mig? En jämförelse med Wegelius' referat i Dagbladet kan naturligtvis endast utfalla till min nackdel. Min hand har blivit så avskyvärt darrande att jag helst skulle skriva *bara till Dig*. Tänker jag på Morgonbladet så mår jag nästan illa." Flodin & Ehrström 1934, 209–210.

102 *Helsingfors Dagblad* 12 August 1876; 21 August 1876; 26 August 1876; 9 September 1876; 24 September 1876; 25 October 1876; 26 October 1876.

103 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive Coll. 52.32.

and in *Helsingfors Dagblad* a month after the Festival.¹⁰⁴

The first week in Bayreuth Faltin spent in Wegelius's company, but stayed on after Wegelius's departure for almost two weeks more. During that time, he saw the *Ring* operas three times through and met many German colleagues and old friends.¹⁰⁵ On arriving in Bayreuth, Faltin's first destination had been the Festspielhaus. He described it as being beautiful in a classical manner, simple without luxurious extravagances, but nevertheless impressive. He wrote to Olga about the new conventions that Wagner had developed to express the total work of art – the *Gesamtkunstwerk*:

The orchestra is arranged in quite an original way: it is positioned lower than the stage and is isolated by a wall so that the audience can see neither the orchestra nor the conductor. In general, there is nothing to disturb your view so that you can surrender yourself completely to the ambience on stage.¹⁰⁶

After seeing the full *Ring* cycle for the first time, Faltin described for Olga the most impressive parts of the four operas in terms of music, direction and staging:

I feel as if it is unfair to an enormous work of art as monumental as this if I now pick out some details which have especially touched me in a composition in which you would not change any word, any note, in which the compelling necessity of the scenes grows from the first moment, the suspense mounts until the very end, in which the shivering,

104 *Östra Finland* 9 October 1876; *Helsingfors Dagblad* 12 October 1876.

105 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive Coll. 52.32.

106 "Die Einrichtung des Orchesters ist ganz originell: es liegt tiefer als der Zuschauerraum und ist durch eine Schallwand von dem selben getrennt, so dass man weder Orchester noch den Dirigenten zu sehen bekommt. Ueberhaupt wird das Auge durch nichts Unwesentliches gefesselt, so dass man sich ausschliesslich dem Eindrucke hingeben kann, welchen die Vorgänge auf der Bühne erwecken." Richard Faltin > Olga Faltin, Bayreuth 12 August 1876, National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.32.

awaited catastrophe of the noble heroes is brought forth with a trembling force! I don't believe that there was a single dry eye during the chords of this Funeral March [...], I cried like a child. I would say that an artwork that grasps the listener so compellingly [...] must belong among the most outstanding ever created.¹⁰⁷

Well in advance of his journey, Faltin had acquired and carefully studied the piano scores of the *Ring*.¹⁰⁸ He had been somewhat sceptical about some parts that seemed tiresome, and the many challenging staging issues had made him thoughtful.¹⁰⁹ "If I had doubts about the musicality – potentially in some parts – these doubts were completely driven away during the performance: everything is not only possible, but also relatively easy to perform."¹¹⁰

Most of the artists were on top of their roles; above all, praise went to the orchestra with [August] Wilhelmi as the concertmaster, [Hans] Richter in the conductor's desk! I could have not imagined such an

107 "Es kommt mir wie ein Unrecht gegen das grosse Kunstwerk vor, wenn ich nun im Folgenden Dir Einzelnes hervorheben würde, was mich ganz besonders ergriffen hat, bei einem Werke, so monumental wie dieses, wo man sich kein Wort, keine Note anders wünschen möchte, wo vom ersten Momente an die eine Scene mit zwingender Nothwendigkeit aus der andern gleichsam herauswächst, die Spannung immer grösser wird, bis endlich die mit Beben erwartete Katastrophe über den edlen Helden hereinbricht mit erschütternder Gewalt! Ich glaube kaum, dass bei den Klängen dieses Trauermarsches ein Auge hat trocken bleiben können [...], ich weinte wie ein Kind. Ich sollte denken, ein Kunstwerk, das mit so zwingender Gewalt den Zuhörer packt [...] muss zu den Hervorragendsten gehören, die je geschaffen worden." Richard Faltin > Olga Faltin, Bayreuth 19 August 1876, National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.32.

108 In The Richard Faltin Collection at Finland's National Library are piano scores of *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* in the form of Klavierauszüge zu vier Händen eingerichtet von A. Heintz. There is also a large volume entitled *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, vollständiger Klavierauszug von Karl Klindworth.

109 Flodin & Ehrström 1934, 214.

110 "Hegte ich noch Zweifel hinsichtlich des Musikalisch-Möglichen einiger Stellen, so sind diese Zweifel durch die Aufführung gründlich verscheucht: alles ist möglich nicht nur, sondern auch verhältnissmässig leicht auszuführen." Richard Faltin > Olga Faltin, Bayreuth 19 August 1876, National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.32.

ideal sound in the ensemble and in the diverse groups [...]. Only here in Bayreuth do you get the impression of how Wagner's music is thought through and how it should sound. The string orchestra leads the way, and its raw overpowering of the brass instruments, which almost always happens in theatres and concert halls, is totally out of the question.¹¹¹

Faltin's favourite of the *Ring* operas was *Die Walküre* and his favourite singer was the Austrian soprano Amalie Materna (1844–1918). After seeing *Die Walküre* for the second time, Faltin wrote:

It seemed on the whole that the artists soared to ever greater perfection. But what would become of art and artists if they were not presented with tasks in which they can grow? If one gave no other acknowledgement to Wagner, this alone would make him great, because he sets up the kinds of challenges that have not existed before, and so has brought art and artists forward!¹¹²

Faltin also wrote enthusiastically about social occasions with the artists. After the performance of *Götterdämmerung*, he enjoyed the evening with his Danish friend, the pianist Frits Hartvigson (1841–1919) along with Nikolai Rubinstein, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Karl Klindworth and Edward Dannreuther: “We drank nothing but champagne, the atmos-

111 “Die meisten Künstler standen auf der Höhe ihrer Aufgabe, über alles Lob erhaben war das Orchester, Wilhelmi an der Spitze der Streicher, Richter am Dirigentenpulte! Einen so idealen Klang in Ensemble und in den einzelnen Gruppen, habe ich mir nicht vorstellen können [...]. Erst hier in Bayreuth bekommt man einen Begriff davon, wie die Musik Wagners gedacht ist und wie sie klingen soll. Das Streichorchester führt das Wort und ein rohes Übertönen desselben durch die Blechbläser, wie man es im Theater und Konzertsäle fast immer hört, ist vollkommen ausgeschlossen.” Ibid.

112 “Erscheint überhaupt dass die Künstler sich zu immer grösserer Vollkommenheit emporschwingen. Was würde aber auch aus Kunst und Künstlern, wenn ihnen nicht Aufgaben gestellt werden, an denen sie wachsen können? Will man auch nichts Anderes anerkennen an Wagner, so würde schon dieses ihn gross machen, dass er früher nicht dagewesene Aufgaben gestellt und so Kunst und Künstler vorwärts gebracht hat!” Richard Faltin > Olga Faltin, Bayreuth 22 August 1876, National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.32.

phere was the most superb imaginable."¹¹³

Yet possibly the more significant meeting for Faltin in Bayreuth was the gala dinner arranged by Wagner himself at the Festspielhaus restaurant on 18 August, which Faltin attended with Wegelius. Wegelius, writing about this event in *Helsingfors Dagblad*, recalled, "[I]t was in its entirety one of the most interesting evenings I have experienced".¹¹⁴ Faltin reported the following to Olga:

[W]e were able to be seated quite near the table where Liszt and Wagner sat with their families [...]. Wagner gave a long speech, a masterpiece in form and content, in which he elaborated in detail on the ideas he had expressed a few days earlier (regarding the establishment of a national art); thereafter, he gave the artists, administrators and supporters his heartfelt thanks.¹¹⁵

Faltin's travel letters from the first Bayreuth Festival were later published in *Die Musik* in 1904–1905 and in *Danziger Zeitung* in 1906. They also appeared in the Finnish music journal *Finsk Musikrevy* in 1905 and 1906.¹¹⁶ Since the first Wagner opera to be performed in full in Finland did not take place until 1904, the Wagner stories were timely and informative.

113 "Es wurde nur Champagner getrunken, die Stimmung war die denkbar höchste." Richard Faltin > Olga Faltin, Bayreuth 19 August 1876, National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.32.

114 "[D]et var i sjelfva verket en af de intressantaste aftnar jag upplefvat", *Helsingfors Dagblad* 26 August 1876.

115 "[Wir] kamen ganz nahe dem Tische zu sitzen, wo Liszt und Wagner nebst Familie präsidirten [...]. Wagner hielt eine lange Rede, ein Meisterstück nach Form und Inhalt, worin er den Tags zuvor ausgesprochenen Gedanken (hinsichtlich der Gründung einer nationalen Kunst) ausführlich entwickelte, sodann seinen Künstlern, dem Verwaltungsrathe und den Patronen seinen tiefgefühlten Dank aussprach." Richard Faltin > Olga Faltin, Bayreuth 19 August 1876, National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.32. *Östra Finland*, a Vyborg newspaper, published part of a Faltin letter to Olga (on 9 October 1876), which described this meeting with Wagner. The paper's chief editor, Gabriel Lagus (1837–1896), was a close family friend of the Faltins; presumably he acquired the letter from Olga Faltin and translated it into Swedish. *Helsingfors Dagblad* printed the same article three days later, 12 October 1876.

116 *Danziger Zeitung* 1906; Faltin 1904–1905, 1905, 1906a and 1906b.

Writing his family about another evening, Faltin described his visit to an old friend, Richard Fricke (1818–1903), the ballet master of Dessau and Wagner’s choreographer: “He told me many interesting things about the rehearsals since the middle of the May and showed me several delightful, mostly humorous letters from Wagner.”¹¹⁷ Later they went to a tavern where Faltin was introduced to many interesting people, including the Wagner singers Albert Niemann, Amalie Materna and the elderly Joseph Tichatschek. The next evening Faltin was in the company of Wagner’s niece – Mrs. Franziska Ritter, her husband, the composer and violinist Alexander Ritter, and their daughter.¹¹⁸

A few days later the acquaintance with the Ritter family led to a Wagner fan’s dream. Faltin wrote to Olga on 27 August 1876: “Let me now tell you everything I experienced on Thursday: I was invited to Wagner’s soirée, where I was introduced to the master [Wagner], Mrs. Cosima and [Franz] Liszt, and heard Liszt’s incomparable playing!”¹¹⁹

When I came home at 8 I found an invitation from Mrs. F. Ritter, Wagner’s niece, and she asked me to come to Wagner[’s home]. There was a reception there [in Villa Wahnfried], she wanted to introduce me [...]. When I heard from the servants that Mrs. Ritter had not yet come, I gathered up my courage and went [...] directly to Wagner. I introduced myself, told him where I came from [...]. “You are welcome, dear Mr. Faltin”, he said [...]. When I told him [...] of the overwhelming impression his music had made on me, he said with an inimitable, mischievous expression: “Well, everyone does the best he can.” He seemed to be very delighted and interested to hear that I was going to attend

117 “Er erzählte mir viel Interessantes von den Proben seit Mitte Mai und zeigte mir viele sehr reizende, meist humoristische Briefe von Wagner.” Richard Faltin > Olga Faltin, Bayreuth 21 August 1876, National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin’s Archive, Coll. 52.32.

118 Ibid.

119 “Doch nun lass Dir erzählen, was ich am Donnerstag alles erlebt habe: ich bin zu Wagners Soiree eingeladen worden, habe dort des Meisters, Frau Cosimas und Liszts Bekanntschaft gemacht, habe Liszt, den Unvergleichlichen, spielen hören!” Richard Faltin > Olga Faltin, Bayreuth 27 August 1876, National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin’s Archive, Coll. 52.32.

all three performances of the *Ring*: “That’s right, that’s right, dear Mr. Faltin; most people just come and go, but don’t warm up to Bayreuth.”¹²⁰

When Faltin told Wagner that so far there had been only a few attempts to perform portions of his operas in Finland, Wagner graciously replied, “Oh, you should rather come to Bayreuth. But I am very pleased that there are people up there who like my music.”¹²¹

In addition to conversing with Wagner, Faltin introduced himself to Liszt, who confessed to being exhausted after all the festivities: “I introduced myself to Liszt and held his velvety hands [...], his head was empty because of the several months’ excitement caused by the Festival, and the number of letters arriving daily and awaiting answers which surpassed his strength; ‘he was a kind of Wagner chamberlain’, he added laughing.”¹²²

On 30 August Faltin wrote:

The sweet days of Bayreuth are almost at an end. Today the performance of the *Götterdämmerung* shall put a seal on the whole cycle. Tomorrow I’ll leave for Leipzig to be there on Friday [...] the same day they shall perform *Lohengrin* there [...]. If the rumour proves to be

120 “Als ich abends 8 Uhr heim kam, fand ich eine Karte vor, durch die Frau F. Ritter, Wagners Nichte, mich aufforderte, zu Wagner zu kommen. Es wäre Empfang dort, sie wolle mich vorstellen [...]. Da ich vom Bedienten hörte, dass Frau Ritter noch nicht gekommen, fasste ich mir ein Herz und ging [...] direct auf Wagner zu. Ich stellte mich ihm vor, sagte woher ich käme [...]. ‘Seien Sie mir sehr willkommen, lieber Herr Faltin’, sagte er [...]. Als ich ihm [...] den überwältigenden Eindruck schilderte, den seine Musik auf mich gemacht, sagte er mit einem unnachahmlich schelmischen Ausdruck: ‘Je nun, man macht’s so gut, wie man kann.’ Sehr erfreut und interessiert schien er zu hören, dass ich alle drei Vorstellungen des ‘Ringes’ anhören würde: ‘Das ist recht, das ist recht, lieber Herr Faltin; die meisten kommen und reisen wieder ab, ohne recht warm in Bayreuth geworden zu sein.’” Richard Faltin > Olga Faltin, Bayreuth 27 August 1876, National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin’s Archive, Coll. 52.32.

121 “Ach, kommen Sie lieber nach Bayreuth. Es freut mich aber sehr, dass es auch dort oben Leute gibt, die meine Musik gern haben.” Ibid.

122 “Ich stellte mich Liszt vor und drückte seine sammetweichen Hände [...], der Kopf wäre ihm wüst von der mehrmonatlichen Aufregung der Festzeit, die Zahl der ihm täglich zugehenden und zu beantwortenden Briefe übersteige seine Kräfte; ‘er wäre so eine Art Kammerherr Wagners’, fügte er lächelnd hinzu.” Ibid.

true, that they perform *Der fliegende Holländer* on Sunday [...], then I will return home many experiences richer.¹²³

By the time he returned to Helsinki, Faltin had become an even more dedicated Wagnerian. His enthusiasm was, of course, partly due to the atmosphere at the Festival, but it was mostly the result of having once again been so strongly impressed by Wagner's music.

Although Faltin regretted not being able to produce Wagner's operas in full in Finland, his orchestral activities in Helsinki involved him directly in opera. In the early 1870s, he was one of the founding members of the Finnish Opera and served as the conductor of its orchestra from 1874 to 1876 and again in 1878–1879. A year after Faltin attended the first Bayreuth Festival, Emilie Bergbom (1834–1905), the co-founder of the Finnish National Theatre with her brother Kaarlo Bergbom (1843–1906), who was then director of the Finnish Opera, wrote to her brother saying, "Faltin asks you to consider *Tannhäuser* [for the Finnish Opera's repertoire]; he believes that it would do very well."¹²⁴

Faltin had encouraged Kaarlo Bergbom to make a Finnish translation of *Tannhäuser*, which Bergbom did.¹²⁵ Unfortunately, the completed translation went unused, another victim of the quarrelling between Helsinki's Finnish- and Swedish-language factions. In 1876, the Swedish Theatre, whose stage offerings represented the Swedish-language faction and where both Nathan B. Emanuel the conductor and Wilhelm Bolin the critic were on its board, unexpectedly started up its own op-

123 "Die schönen Tage von Bayreuth sind ihrem Ende nahe, heute wird mit Aufführung der Götterdämmerung der ganze Cyklus abgeschlossen. Morgen reise ich nach Leipzig um dort Freitag zu bleiben [...], an demselben Tage wird Lohengrin dort gegeben [...]. Bewahrheitet sich das Gerücht, dass am Sonntag Der Fliegende Holländer gegeben wird [...], ich kehre heim um manche Erfahrungen reicher." Richard Faltin > Olga Faltin, Bayreuth 30 August 1876, National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.32.

124 Emelie Bergbom > Kaarlo Bergbom, Helsinki 21 July 1877, Finnish Literature Society, Kaarlo Bergbom's Archive, Letter Collection 45; Aspelin-Haapkylä 1907, 364.

125 Paavolainen 2012, 151.

era programme, in which works would be sung in Swedish.¹²⁶ Having two opera companies in a relatively small town the size of Helsinki soon led to the financial collapse of both (the Finnish Opera in 1879 and the Swedish Theatre Opera in 1880).¹²⁷ The Finnish theatre historian Pentti Paavolainen has observed that, in addition to complicating music education and the development of Finnish musical life, the national language quarrels claimed other victims, including modern music and especially Wagner's music, with the language antagonisms delaying the production of his operas in Helsinki by some 25 years.¹²⁸

Faltin's enthusiasm for Wagner's operas was manifested in other ways. On 19 March 1879, Fredrik Pacius's 70th birthday was celebrated in Helsinki, for which the Finnish author Zachris Topelius (1818–1898) had written some suitable words.¹²⁹ As was the custom in those days, notable persons were traditionally awakened early in the morning with a serenade. Faltin conducted a mixed quartet singing a melody from Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. The Faltin and Pacius families were good friends, and even though there is no correspondence between them about Wagner, Faltin would certainly have known that Pacius had changed his earlier negative opinions about Wagner.¹³⁰ Otherwise, he would not have serenaded his friend with *Die Meistersinger*. One wonders whether Faltin's enthusiasm for Wagner and the other new music might even had a positive influence in changing the older man's attitude.

Whatever the truth of the matter, analyses of Pacius's last opera, *Die Loreley* (1887), show that Pacius knew the Wagner style very well,¹³¹

126 Paavolainen 2012, 145.

127 Marvia & Vainio 1993, 22.

128 Paavolainen 2012, 150–151.

129 *Helsingfors Dagblad* 20 March 1879; *Wiborgs Tidning* 22 March 1879.

130 In my earlier article (Siltanen 2013), I had assumed that the decrease in the number of Wagner works on Faltin's Helsinki concerts in the 1870s was perhaps due to the opinions of his highly valued predecessor Pacius. However, based on the information I have found for this article, I believe that the main reason was simply the lack of a proper orchestra.

131 Salmi 2005, 48; Tarasti 2009, 146, 150.

although it took him a long time to admit it. Because Pacius was almost 80 years old at the time he completed *Die Loreley*, he asked Faltin to help him finish the score.¹³² Faltin's exact role in this work is not known; whether it was limited to transcribing and correcting or whether it extended to shaping melodies, harmonies, solos, choral and orchestra parts or even orchestration has not been ascertained.¹³³

Faltin as accompanist to Wagner singers

Although lack of resources and the language quarrels prevented Faltin from performing Wagner's works at the Finnish Opera, he nevertheless accompanied many opera singers in concert. In June of 1874 Faltin organized two concerts at the Festival Hall of the Imperial Alexander University, which included the Spinning Chorus from *Der fliegende Holländer*.¹³⁴ As singers, a soloist from the Finnish Opera and "några musikälskarinnor" (some lady music lovers) were mentioned. In 1871 Faltin had founded a mixed choir called Sångföreningen i Helsingfors / Helsingin Laulu yhdistys [The Singing Society in Helsinki], whose various ensembles sang with the Finnish Opera as well as in university concerts and elsewhere around town as needed. Perhaps these were the singers performing the "Spinning Chorus". The name of the soloist from the Finnish Opera was not mentioned. Faltin himself conducted and accompanied the Wagner-chorus and the visiting clarinet soloist F. Wohlleben.¹³⁵

Other Wagner singers whom Faltin accompanied in concert were Bruno Holm (1853–1881) in the recitative and romance from *Tannhäuser*, 1877, and on two occasions, in 1879, Josef Navrátil (1840–1912); they performed Lohengrin's Farewell from *Lohengrin*, the Prize Song from *Die*

132 Fredrik Pacius > Richard Faltin, Helsinki Good Friday 1886, National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.9.

133 Vainio 2009, 417–418.

134 *Helsingfors Dagblad* 6 Juni 1874; *Hufvudstadsbladet* 3 Juni 1874.

135 *Finlands Allmänna Tidning* 1 Juni 1874.

Meistersinger and Siegmund's Love Song from *Die Walküre*.¹³⁶

Faltin's collaboration with opera singers continued even after the collapse of the Finnish Opera in 1879. In 1880, he accompanied Emmy Achté (1850–1924), Josef Navrátil and a women's choir in [Senta's] Ballad with chorus, Eric and Senta's duet and the Spinning Chorus from *Der fliegende Holländer* and the quintet from *Die Meistersinger*.¹³⁷ An anonymous critic writing for *Finlands Allmänna Tidning* expressed the following opinion:

It is not so easy for the uninitiated to really understand and enjoy Wagner's music without knowing the dramatic situation well, and it was therefore well done that a special text for both Wagner numbers was available to the public. A man who has such enthusiastic admirers on the one hand and so many sceptics on the other of course possesses unusual merits and also has much importance for the development of the art, but in appearance with the classical heroes of music, he certainly seems sometimes too peculiar and complex [...].¹³⁸

In 1880 Lydia Lagus (1853–1928) gave a concert that included the Prayer from *Tannhäuser* accompanied by Faltin.¹³⁹ Faltin accompanied Emma Engdahl (1852–1930) in a few concerts during the 1880s: in 1882 their programme included a Wagner rarity, the lied "Dors, mon enfant";¹⁴⁰ in 1883 the pair performed "Dich theure Halle" from *Tannhäuser*

136 The Holm concert was reported in *Helsingfors Dagblad* 4 Juni 1877; the concerts with Navrátil appeared in *Helsingfors Dagblad* 22 February 1879 and *Morgonbladet* 29 April 1879.

137 *Hufvudstadsbladet* 12 February 1880; *Uusi Suometar* 9 February 1880.

138 "Det är icke så lätt för den oinvigde att rätt fatta och njuta Wagners musik, utan att tillika noga känna den dramatiska situationen och man hade därför väl betänkt dragit försorg om, att särskild text till de båda numrorna af Wagner hölls allmänheten tillhanda. En man, hvilken har så entusiastiske beundrare å ena sidan och så många förkättare å den andra, besitter naturligtvis ovanliga förtjenster och mycken betydelse för konstens utveckling, men framträdande i brett med musikens klassiske heroer förefaller han dock stundom allför egendomlig och svårfattlig", *Finlands Allmänna Tidning* 13 February 1880.

139 *Helsingfors Dagblad* 21 May 1880.

140 *Helsingfors Dagblad* 21 October 1882.

and in 1888, a duet from *Lohengrin* with Hortense Synnerberg (1856–1920).¹⁴¹ On 1 February 1883, Faltin played Wagner’s “Wach auf” from *Die Meistersinger* in an organ arrangement during a concert at the St Nicholas Church in Helsinki, where his playing made a deep impression on the listeners.¹⁴²

Less than a month after Wagner died on 13 February 1883, Faltin and his three colleagues from the Helsinki Music Institute¹⁴³ arranged a concert dedicated to Wagner’s memory (held 6 March 1883). The first number on the programme was Siegfried’s Death and the Funeral March from *Götterdämmerung* for two grand pianos, played by Faltin and Karl Pohlig (1864–1928). Faltin accompanied the violinist Anton Sitt in Wagner’s romance “Albumblatt”. The voice teacher at the Helsinki Music Institute, Emilie Mechelin (1838–1917), sang the Prayer from *Tannhäuser* and the *Tristan* study “Träume”.¹⁴⁴ However, the head of the Institute, the Wagnerite Martin Wegelius, was not mentioned, either as one of the organizers or as being among the performers.

In May of 1887, Faltin played an entire concert of Wagner’s music in collaboration with the opera singers M. Scheidweiler, Abraham Ojanperä and Emma Englund. The programme included the aria “Dich theure Halle” and the Rome narration from *Tannhäuser*, Hans Sachs’s Monologue and “Am stillen Herd” from *Die Meistersinger*, as well as the duet from the Bridal Chamber Scene and Lohengrin’s Farewell from *Lohengrin*.¹⁴⁵

Karl Fredrik Wasenius (1850–1920), a leading Helsinki critic who wrote under the pseudonym *Bis*, had this to say of the concert:

Anything more beautiful in solo singing than this choice of Wagner songs presented to yesterday’s audience is difficult to find in recent

141 *Helsingfors Dagblad* 25 September 1888; *Nya Pressen* 26 October 1883.

142 *Helsingfors Dagblad* 5 February 1883; *Morgonbladet* 1 February 1883.

143 Faltin was one of the founding members of the Helsinki Music Institute in 1882 and taught organ there from 1882 to 1906. Dahlström 1982, 21–22, 337.

144 *Morgonbladet* 7 March 1883; *Nya Pressen* 7 March 1883.

145 *Nya Pressen* 22 May 1887; *Helsingfors Dagblad* 23 May 1887.

annals of our musical life. [...] With a master's hand Director R. Faltin carried out the important accompaniment. It was interesting to witness how Mr. F. brought out the right mood in every changing moment of the music, as well as many different, fleeting emotions on which the song so much depends [...].¹⁴⁶

In Faltin's Archive in Finland's National Library there is a 36-page orchestral arrangement of music from Wagner's *Lohengrin* in Faltin's hand. Faltin signed the score in July of 1886, giving it the title *Potpourri aus Lohengrin af R. Wagner (Potpourri from Lohengrin by R. Wagner)*.¹⁴⁷ It is not mentioned for which occasion Faltin made the arrangement, but very likely for the Academic Orchestra; on a concert programme of the Academic Orchestra in spring 1889 there was the Fantasy from *Lohengrin*. This was the first time Faltin could include a Wagner number in a concert of the Academic Orchestra. The same number was played also next year, in spring 1890, in a concert of the Academic Orchestra. It was the only number that an anonymous critic thought too difficult for the student orchestra.¹⁴⁸

Given the examples presented in this chapter, it should be evident that there was a great deal of ambivalence about Wagner's music in Helsinki in the 1870s and 1880s. In addition to the difficulty of accepting this "music of the future" as part of Finnish concert life, there was the practical problem during all of the 1870s of establishing an orchestra suitable for playing Wagner's music, a matter complicated by the national language quarrels. Despite the challenges, the Swedish Theatre Orchestra did include Wagner numbers on its concerts approximate-

146 "Någonting vackrare i solosångväg, än detta urval Wagner-sånger, som i går presenterades publiken, blir också svårt att leta fram ur vårt musiklifs senaste annaler. [...] Med mästerehand utförde direktör R. Faltin det betydelsefulla accompagnementet. Intressant var att bevittna huru hr F. i hvarje vexlande moment af musiken, bragte i dagen den rättä stämningen, samt derbredvid en massa af olika, ögonblickliga känsloutryck, på hvilkas förekomst sedan så mycket i sången berodde", *Helsingfors Dagblad* 23 May 1887.

147 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Ms.Mus.Faltin 13.

148 *Finland* 15 April 1890; *Helsingfors Dagblad* 2 March 1889.

ly twice a year during the 1870s.¹⁴⁹ Yet it was not until 1882 that the Finnish composer and conductor Robert Kajanus (1856–1933), who had been Faltin's student in music theory and composition in the years 1869–1877, established what would become a permanent orchestra, initially called Orkesteriyhdistys (the Helsinki Orchestral Society, which today continues as the Helsinki Philharmonic). This organization began to perform Wagner's music regularly. And gradually, Wagner's music began to be included more and more in Finnish musical life.¹⁵⁰

As for Faltin, he travelled to continental Europe almost every year between the late 1870s and 1914. In addition to visiting his family in Danzig, he made frequent visits to Bayreuth. In these years, he often travelled with members of his own family, sometimes with his daughter Elisabeth Hjelt (née Faltin, 1864–1944), sometimes with his wife, Olga. For example, in 1882 at the second Bayreuth Festival, Faltin witnessed *Parsifal* three times.¹⁵¹ In 1884 he again heard *Parsifal* in Bayreuth. In 1888 he was in attendance at *Die Meistersinger* and *Parsifal*. In 1896 he followed the entire *Ring* cycle at Bayreuth, and in 1897 he attended *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* and possibly other operas with Olga. In 1899 he heard the entire *Ring* once again as well as *Die Meistersinger* and *Parsifal* in the company of Olga and Elisabeth.¹⁵²

Faltin also attended Wagner operas in other cities; in 1884 he saw *Die Meistersinger* in Berlin and *Lohengrin* in Frankfurt. In 1897 in Rome

149 *Dagens Nyheter* 9 February 1877, 2 November 1877, 15 December 1877, 18 January 1878; *Finlands Allmänna Tidning* 13 November 1877; *Helsingfors Dagblad* 13 March 1871, 28 October 1871, 27 January 1872, 16 October 1873, 31 January 1874, 4 Juni 1877, 11 December 1878; *Hufvudstadsbladet* 17 November 1872, 3 September 1874, 17 February 1877; *Morgonbladet* 15 November 1873, 24 September 1874, 22 March 1875.

150 Marvia & Vainio 1993, 41; Salmi 1998, 16; Vainio 2002, 43–45. See Kurkela's article in this volume.

151 In The Richard Faltin Collection there is a score entitled *Parsifal*, in *Tonsätzen zu vier Händen* von E. Humperdinck.

152 Concert programmes: Från Bayreuth, National Library of Finland, The Richard Faltin Collection, H 881, uncatalogued file.

he was in the audience for *Il crepuscolo degli dei* (*Götterdämmerung*). In 1900 Faltin heard *Tristan und Isolde* in Munich and attended the first Bayerisches Musikfest in Nuremberg.¹⁵³ As an enthusiastic Wagner fan and long a leading musician in Helsinki, Faltin must have felt it something of a dream come true when, on 9 March 1904, the first full Wagner opera produced entirely by Finns was staged in Finland. The work was *Tannhäuser* at the Finnish National Theatre, conducted by Faltin's former student from the Academic Orchestra, Armas Järnefelt (1869–1958).¹⁵⁴

Faltin as the Finnish representative of the
Bayreuther Patronat-Verein

After the powerful experiences in the summer of 1876, Faltin eagerly began to serve as the official representative of the *Bayreuther Patronat-Verein* (the Bayreuth Patrons' Association) in Finland. It is not quite clear how many supporting members Faltin persuaded to join the association, but according to the receipts, on which Faltin marked the annual membership fees, about twenty, Wegelius being one of them. Along with Wegelius, the names that repeatedly come up on his membership lists include the notary Viktor Ekroos, the composer Karl Flodin (1858–1925), the conductor Robert Kajanus, the violinist and concertmaster Anton Sitt, Professor A.F. Sundell, the organist Olga Tavaststjerna and the opera singer Abraham Ojanperä. With the exception of Anton Sitt and Abraham Ojanperä, all had been music students of Faltin, either privately or as members in the ranks of the Academic Orchestra. With membership came the opportunity to acquire tickets and accommodation for the Bayreuther Festival.¹⁵⁵

153 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.32; National Library of Finland, The Richard Faltin Collection, H 881, Concert programmes: Unbound, Kotimaisia [domestic] 1897–1911 and Ulkomaisia [foreign] 1850–1914; National Library of Finland, The Richard Faltin Collection, H 881, uncatalogued file.

154 Marvia 1957, 14; Paavolainen 2012, 151.

155 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.15; Salmi 1998, 18–19.

The activities of the *Bayreuther Patronat-Verein* were discontinued in 1882, and support for the Bayreuth Festival continued in Finland as well as elsewhere after Wagner's death in 1883 under a new name, *Allgemeiner Richard Wagner-Verein*.¹⁵⁶ Faltin continued to be the Finnish representative of this association until 1914. He himself attended the Bayreuth Festival at least seven times, but many other Finnish members also travelled to Bayreuth to experience Wagner's music.¹⁵⁷

In 1898 Martin Wegelius founded the first *Finnish* Wagner Society in Finland (*Wagnerföreningen*) of which Faltin was a member, but its activities died out the following year.¹⁵⁸

Conclusions

My research into the primary sources has shown that Richard Faltin became acquainted with Wagner's music in the early 1850s in Germany. His study at the Leipzig Conservatory, then the centre of the German musical world, enabled him to hear the most recent German music and made him aware of the issues and debates swirling around Wagner along with other aspects of modern music.

Throughout the rest of his life, spent first in Vyborg and then in Helsinki, Faltin performed and conducted Wagner's music as often as possible, despite limited resources in the beginning and linguistic discord in Helsinki. He programmed Wagner's music with the orchestras he conducted, he accompanied singers in concerts with Wagner repertoire, and he played solo recitals that included Wagner's works. In short, he enabled Wagner's music to be *heard* in Finland. Faltin was also working behind the scenes, urging the translation of *Tannhäuser* for performance at the Finnish Opera, for instance, and serving as Finland's official representative of the *Bayreuther Patronat-Verein* (from 1883 replaced by the *Allgemeiner Richard Wagner-Verein*) for more than 35 years.

156 Millington 2000, 118; Youmans 2005, 34.

157 National Library of Finland, Richard Faltin's Archive, Coll. 52.15.

158 Flodin 1922, 482–483.

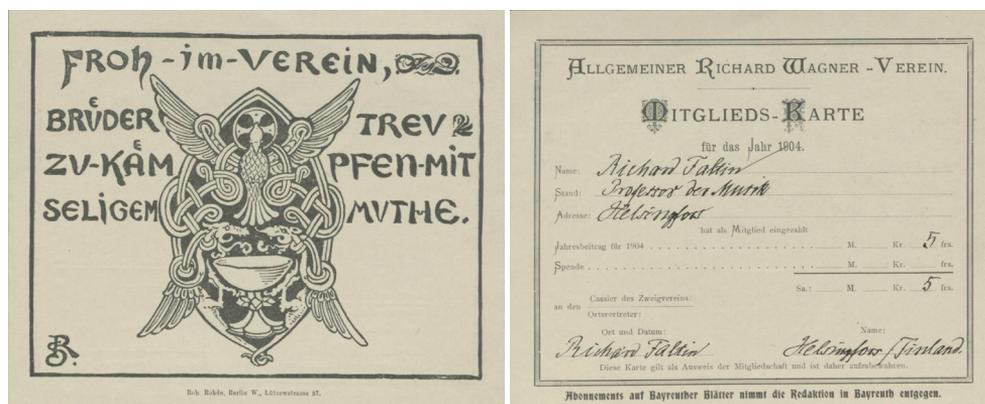


Figure 4. Membership card for the *Allgemeiner Richard Wagner-Verein*. The National Library of Finland, The Richard Faltin Collection, H 881, uncatalogued file.

Not least, Faltin came to know Wagner's operas extremely well. After the completion of the Bayreuth Festival Theatre in 1876, Faltin attended performances there of all the Wagner operas, hearing some of them multiple times – and this at a time it was impossible to experience the works in Finland. Arguably, witnessing these works first-hand may well have meant that he knew Wagner's operas better than anyone in Finland in his day. It would be hard to believe that his knowledge and enthusiasm were not conveyed to his students in his role as the Imperial Alexander University's music teacher and orchestra conductor. And among these students were the next generation's musical leaders, including Martin Wegelius and Robert Kajanus, while Jean Sibelius played in the Academic Orchestra under Faltin's direction.

Without question, Faltin played a key, if heretofore largely unacknowledged, role, not only in the introductions and performances of Wagner's music in Finland, but also in fostering understanding and insight into this dynamic force in nineteenth-century life. Rather than resort to new quarrels, perhaps we might instead take time to recognize and appreciate the forgotten legacy of this pioneering musician who devoted himself so assiduously to cultivating the art of music in his adopted land.

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Popular Wagner: Robert Kajanus's Wagner Evenings in Helsinki 1890–1911

VESA KURKELA

Introduction

Wagner research normally concentrates on “serious Wagner”, i.e. Richard Wagner as an opera composer and as the modernizer of operatic art. Conventional research may well underestimate the most popular Wagner repertoire. However, given this composer’s central position in the popular music repertoire of nineteenth-century orchestral music, there is no reason to ignore this topic. In this article “popular Wagner” refers to the reception of Wagner’s music outside the operatic scene and serious concerts. In other words, here Richard Wagner will be introduced as a popular composer.

In late nineteenth-century Helsinki an active promoter of Wagner’s music was Robert Kajanus (1856–1933), a conductor who organized special “Wagner Evenings”¹ as part of a series of popular concerts favoured by middle-class audiences. Kajanus’s ensemble, Helsingfors musikförenings orkester (today known as the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra) was founded in 1882, and it soon achieved a prominent position in local musical life, owing to its regular and highly-appreciated activities.

The first such Wagner evening was held on 20 November 1890. A brief notice in Helsinki’s Swedish-language newspaper *Hufvudstadsbladet* listed the works performed, showing that, right from the beginning, a wide-ranging sample of Wagner’s music was presented. The programme included nine operas, with an extract from each, plus two

1 In Finnish: “Wagner-ilta”; in Swedish: “Wagner-afton”.

favourite minor works, as follows: *Huldigungsmarsch*, “Spinnerlied” from *Der fliegende Holländer*, “Waldweben” from *Siegfried*, scenes from *Die Walküre*, the *Rienzi* overture, “Träume”, the prelude to *Tristan und Isolde*, scenes from *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, the prelude to *Lohengrin*, “Karfreitagszauber” from *Parsifal*, and the *Tannhäuser* overture.

The writer of the brief newspaper notice, Karl Wasenius (1850–1911), added: “One can predict that this Wagner concert will be noted by all music lovers, who will enjoy a selection of musical numbers from the great composer’s most significant works. The evening will be one of the most interesting this season.”²

During the following two decades, Robert Kajanus organized several Wagner Evenings per season. Programme information for these evenings is available for 21 seasons (1890–1911) and a total of 36 concerts. The number of concerts is not great compared with the total number of Kajanus’s popular concerts as a whole: these were usually held three times a week and amounted to 80 to 90 popular concerts per season.

Nevertheless, the Wagner Evenings were unique among the many popular concerts. With one exception (a “Johann Strauß Evening” in February 1891), Kajanus’s popular concerts were not devoted to a single composer. The single-composer format was poorly suited to and even contradicted the fundamental idea of a popular concert, which was that the programme should be diverse and multifaceted.

Research problem

Around the dawn of the twentieth century, the Wagner Evenings began to be a permanent feature of Kajanus’s orchestral activity. What was this almost institutional practice based on? Kajanus was a devout Wagnerian who, with the aid of his popular concerts, wanted to promote the wider reception of Wagner in Finland. Furthermore, Wagner’s music seems to have been in favour with Helsinki’s musical

² *Hufvudstadsbladet* 20 November 1890.

audiences. In this article my main research objective is to identify the specific features of Wagner's music that made it suitable for Kajanus's popular concerts and made its material so highly sought-after.

Other research questions relate to the reception of Wagner's music more generally. At the beginning of the 1890s music critics in Helsinki seem to have been thrilled and happy with the opportunity to enjoy Wagner's masterpieces. Karl "Bis" Wasenius, one of the leading music critics in town, expressed an opinion that was probably shared among contemporary Wagnerians when he commented on Kajanus's Wagner programme in the spring of 1892: "One could not wish for a finer programme."³

However, Wagner's music was doubtless challenging from the perspective of the general audiences attending popular concerts: his works were not necessarily easy to digest. The challenge was also noted in the press. In 1900, after ten years of Wagner Evenings in Helsinki, an author using the pseudonym "J.K." and writing in the Finnish newspaper *Päivälehti* highlighted the unpopular aspect of Wagner's music – it was too demanding for the common listener:

The Wagner evening last night offered a great number of ingenious works by the great master, not all of which were fully capable of capturing the listeners' interest. As it happens, Wagner's music requires an advanced listener and complete surrender to what one hears; otherwise, this serious, authentic music may prove tedious, for it is devoid of all mawkishness and everyday influences.⁴

The Wagner programme in question consisted, according to *Päivälehti*, of the extracts "Finale und Klingsors Zaubergarten und die Blumenmädchen" from Wagner's last opera *Parsifal*, music that at least some of the listeners must have thought strange and even disruptive for a light-hearted evening, something the newspaper writer also

³ *Hufvudstadsbladet* 25 March 1892.

⁴ *Päivälehti* 7 March 1900.

noted. This suggests that, in the course of time, the Wagner Evenings became more demanding and harder to appreciate. It also leads to my final research question, which deals with the main purpose or intention of Kajanus's Wagner Evenings: Was Kajanus's goal to civilize his audiences and improve musical tastes – an aspiration that ultimately failed? Alternatively, it is highly possible that, for Kajanus, Wagner's popular repertoire was business as usual, a resource of suitable material for popular concerts. In his popular concerts, Kajanus wanted to provide something for everyone, including Wagner fans.

The research material has been collected from concert announcements in local Helsinki newspapers, namely *Hufvudstadsbladet*, *Nya Pressen*, *Uusi Suometar*, *Program-bladet* and *Päivälehti* (DIGI – the National Library's Digital Collections) and filed in a research database (FileMaker). The material has also been compared to and completed with the handbills of Kajanus's orchestral concerts found in the National Library, Helsinki (The Weckström Collection).⁵

Commercial Wagner

Popularizing his music outside the operatic scene was an essential part of Wagner's reception from the 1840s. Printed music by Wagner arranged for two- or four-hand piano was an effective medium for making his new works well-known to wider audiences. Furthermore, overtures and musical scenes by Wagner were performed all around Europe as part of the repertoire of military bands, spa orchestras and other ensembles several decades before Kajanus founded his Wagner Evenings.⁶

Circulating operatic works for wider use was by no means limited to Wagner's music. It was part of a widespread commercial practice in which two expanding fields in the music industry, namely opera and music publishing, joined forces, thereby accelerating the popularity

5 I would like to thank Dr Nuppu Koivisto and Dr Olli Heikkinen for collecting and organizing the material needed for this study.

6 Salmi 2005, 31–44.

of nineteenth-century music. Arranging operatic works for various instruments and ensembles began, at the latest, during the eighteenth century. However, only in the 1820s and 1830s did this practice develop into an ambitious and large-scale music business. Through this means, all the successful grand opera productions in Paris were circulated and made available to European audiences as operatic medleys, fantasies, paraphrases and other kinds of arrangements.⁷

During those years virtuoso instrumentalists – pianists, violinist and cellists – were extremely popular on the European concert scene. Decade after decade they performed their own arrangements of numbers from famous operas. Yet while the popularity of virtuoso players slowly began to decline after mid-century, the use of arrangements from operas increased. Music publishers saw to it that operatic works were available not only to professional performers, but also to amateurs; easy-to-play arrangements for parlour piano players were often called “a bouquet of melodies” or “fantasies”. The simplest way of popularizing opera was to compose single dance tunes – quadrilles, anglaises, contradances, polkas, gallops, etc. – based on favourite opera themes or ballet numbers; their demand was constant among the urban middle classes. Concurrently, public concerts aimed at large audiences in European and American metropolises became more frequent than ever. The repertoires and concert practices of monstrous concert halls and amusement parks “à la Vauxhall” were duplicated in thousands of restaurants, salons and smaller fun-fair parks. It was just this phase of cultural change that Robert Kajanus's popular orchestral concerts typify.⁸

The popular Wagner scene

Given this background, performing Wagner in Kajanus's popular concerts appears to be part of continental practice rather than a local spe-

7 Lenneberg 1983, 175–178; Christensen 1999; Weber 2008, 152–154.

8 Salmen 1988, 133–136, 171–187; Clark 2002, 518–526.

ciality. Similarly, the idea of performing lighter repertoire was adopted from the pan-European musical scene very early in Finland; in the 1860s, the orchestra of Helsinki's New Theatre (Nya teatern), later known as the Swedish Theatre (Svenska teatern), began organizing concerts with musical content similar to the repertoire that Kajanus's orchestra would be playing twenty years later.

Beginning in 1882, from October to the end of April, Kajanus's orchestra played popular concerts two or three times a week. The venue was usually Society House,⁹ the oldest and for a long time the most distinguished entertainment centre in Helsinki, with a hotel, various restaurants and a large concert hall under one roof. The concert audience was comprised mainly of the middle and upper middle classes: hotel guests, functionaries, university teachers, artists, businessmen and their families. The popular concerts formed the economic backbone of the orchestra, and audiences regularly crowded into these concerts. Meanwhile, in many Helsinki restaurants the *variété*, a variety show, that was a real novelty of the era, attracted middle-class audiences, thanks to its lighter and more diverse programmes.¹⁰

A comparison of Kajanus's popular concerts with the repertoire of his serious series shows that the musical differences were smaller than one might imagine. Orchestral works typical of symphony concerts, such as overtures, concertos and orchestral suites, also appeared on popular concert programmes, although the latter included minor and lighter works, like concert waltzes, orchestral medleys (potpourris) from operas and operettas, ballet and other incidental music, patriotic marches and so on. Often Kajanus invited foreign virtuosi who had been hired for his symphony concerts to perform in the popular concerts as featured guests. The biggest difference between the popular and the symphony concerts was that no symphonies were played in the popular concerts.¹¹ Furthermore, compared to symphony concerts,

9 In Swedish: "Societetshuset"; in Finnish: "Seurahuone".

10 Kurkela 2015, 128.

11 This rule was not followed strictly; a symphonic work – Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony – was performed in a popular concert at least once, on 11 April 1911. At that time, however,

canonized classics were performed less often in the popular concerts; contemporary music was favoured, and, among other things, the newest trends in French, Scandinavian and Russian music were presented and eagerly awaited.¹²

From the perspective of the audience, popular concerts differed from the more serious ones only in terms of general atmosphere, which stressed a relaxed and wealthy lifestyle. These concerts were not only “easily comprehensible” – as the Finnish name of the concerts, “helpotajuinen”, literally means – but also they were comfortable and entertaining. Based on the content of the programmes, Kajanus's popular concerts should be called *miscellaneous concerts*.¹³ The programme was highly mixed and was constantly shifting from one atmosphere to another, according to a certain pattern. The pattern was familiar to all habitués, who expected the changing moods. Without a medley of shifting moods, the evening could well have been considered too monotonous.

The same was true for the general atmosphere, which was far removed from a serious and intense concert situation. The listeners sat at small tables, eating and drinking as they listened to the music, while an army of waiters dressed in tailcoats ran around the great concert hall and between the tables serving the audience. Using Tia DeNora's terms, one could argue that in a popular concert the audience not only did things *to* music, but *with* music.¹⁴

Despite the kaleidoscopic musical outlook, popular concerts were highly appreciated by local music critics and regularly mentioned in their reviews. Even the extremely critical young Ilmari Krohn (1867–1960) – later known as the founding father of Finnish musicology – emphasized the artistic value of Kajanus's popular concerts in a newspaper article in 1890:

popular concert practice started to change, and the difference between the two series probably lessened.

12 Kurkela 2015; Marvia & Vainio 1993, 304–305.

13 See Weber 2008, 13–18.

14 DeNora 2000, 7.

I want only to mention the fact that some of the town's newspapers have more or less regularly offered the readers detailed reviews of trifling *tingeltangel* performances and other nonsense, but have usually kept quiet about the really good concerts, which the orchestra calls "popular" and are held two times a week at a fine venue; at least three out of four numbers on the concert programme must satisfy even the most artistic of tastes.¹⁵

Music for these relaxed concerts had to be relatively easy to listen to, uplifting and lively, and also romantic and exotic – all in all, suitable for a pleasurable musical evening. On the other hand, Kajanus seems to have carefully kept his popular repertoire distinguished as well as elevating. This actually meant that the repertoire should be clearly more elegant and less grotesque than that of the *variété* shows, which Kajanus saw as being a serious competitor to his popular evenings. The conductor clearly strove to keep all his concerts part of the art world and high culture – and thus, on the good side of art music criticism.¹⁶

Wagner's music in Helsinki

Wagner's music suited Robert Kajanus's artistic aims well. By the 1890s, Wagner had been popular and famous in Finland for decades. Since the 1860s, his favourite overtures and opera scenes had been performed in Helsinki as part of normal concert repertoires. Undoubtedly, every active concertgoer counted the *Rienzi* and *Tannhäuser* overtures among the standard orchestral repertoire. *Tannhäuser* had also been performed in Helsinki as early as 1857 – part of a lavish 33 opera performances by the Riga German Theatre during six summer weeks. However, *Tannhäuser* was played on only two occasions during the operatic weeks, and because of the hot August weather, the audiences stayed away. According to contemporary press

¹⁵ In "Bravo Bis!", *Finland* 10 October 1890.

¹⁶ Kurkela 2015, 129.

reports, only “a few dozen” local opera aficionados became acquainted with Wagner’s “brilliant but difficult music”, and thus the episode remained just a curiosity in music history. A continuation of operatic Wagner in Finland had to be put on hold for several decades: the first Wagner operas performed by local and cosmopolitan forces did not take place until 1904.¹⁷

Wagner was not included in the repertoire, even in the 1870s when Helsinki experienced an exceptionally fervent opera boom mainly due to the local activity of the Finnish Theatre Company. During 1873–1877 several grand operas were translated into Finnish and performed by the Finnish Opera Company as part of the Fennoman cultural policy to develop the Finnish vernacular into a civilized language and lift Finland to the rank of civilized nations. During the same decade many grand operas were also staged at the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki. However, this repertoire did not include Wagner’s works.¹⁸

In 1865–1866, the Royal Opera in Stockholm staged its first Wagner production: *Rienzi*, Wagner’s grand opera from the year 1842.¹⁹ Stylistically, *Rienzi* could have fit well among masterpieces by Donizetti, Meyerbeer and Auber, many of which were being translated and performed in Helsinki in the 1870s. However, for one reason or another, the Fennoman opera company did not produce the work. Yet even if *Rienzi* did not come to Finland, its overture became very popular. As will be seen, not even Kajanus could exclude it from his orchestral repertoire.

At the same time, opera fans in Stockholm finally had an opportunity to become acquainted with Wagner’s works when three of his early operas, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*, were taken into the repertoire and staged several times at two-year intervals (1872, 1874, 1876). During the summer seasons, the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki imported opera troupes from Stockholm, and several conti-

17 Salmi 2005, 94–97, 103. See also Knust’s article in this volume.

18 Broman-Kananen 2015, 71–75.

19 See Ander’s article in this volume.

mental masterworks were staged and performed. However, Wagner's works were not among them.²⁰

The absence of Wagner's operas from Finnish theatres tended to emphasize the importance of concert performances of his music. By the mid-1880s, Wagner's music had a permanent place in Kajanus's popular repertoire, yet by no means dominated it. During the season 1886–1887, the most popular composer was unquestionably Johann Strauß Jr., while the second most popular was Moritz Moszkowski, with Mendelssohn and Wagner sharing third place. With the exception of Strauß, the popularity differences between the composers were not great, as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Most frequently performed composers in Kajanus's popular concerts, 1886–1887.

Composer	NOP ²¹	Most often performed work (frequency)
Johann Strauß	31	<i>Perpetuum mobile</i> (4)
Moritz Moszkowski	20	“Ungarn” from <i>Aus aller Herren Länder</i> (4)
Felix Mendelssohn	18	<i>Canzonetta</i> in E, (6)
Richard Wagner	18	<i>Tannhäuser</i> , overture (4)
Johan Svendsen	17	<i>Norsk kunstnerkarneval</i> (3)
Charles Gounod	16	<i>Faust</i> , overture (3)
Franz von Suppé	15	<i>Die schöne Galathée</i> , overture (2)
Carl Maria von Weber	15	<i>Der Freischütz</i> , overture (3)
Karl Goldmark	11	<i>Sakuntala</i> , overture (3)
Giuseppe Verdi	11	<i>Il trovatore</i> , fantasia (4)
Giacomo Meyerbeer	11	“Blessing of the Swords” from <i>Les Huguenots</i> (5)
Franz Liszt	11	<i>Hungarian Rhapsody</i> no. 2 (4)
Antonin Dvořák	11	<i>Slavic Dances</i> (not specified) (3)
Mikhail Glinka	10	Mazurka from <i>A Life for the Tsar Suite</i> (3)
Léo Delibes	10	(<i>Grand</i>) <i>Cortège de Bacchus</i> (3)
Gioachino Rossini	10	<i>Wilhelm Tell</i> , overture (3)
Émile Waldteufel	10	<i>Dolores</i> (2)
Anton Rubinstein	10	<i>Toréador et Andalouse</i> (2)

Kajanus favoured the same group of composers on his popular concerts, but not the same works. As one can guess, concert waltzes by Johann Strauß Jr. were played frequently. However, no single work by

20 Salmi 2005, 94–97. On the performance of Wagner's operas in Stockholm, see Knust's, Ander's and Tillman's articles in this volume.

21 Number of performances.

Strauß was performed more than twice per season, meaning that audiences could become acquainted with a total of twenty Strauß pieces. The same was true of music by Wagner: Only two of his ten works were performed more than twice – the *Tannhäuser* overture and the prelude from *Lohengrin* (Act 3).

In the following years, the popularity of Wagner clearly increased. By the beginning of the 1890s his music was played practically as much as that of Johann Strauß Jr., allegedly the favourite light music composer in the Western world at the time (see Table 2). In this decade the Norwegian composer Johann Svendsen, Kajanus's artistic paragon and close friend from the 1870s, ranked third in frequency of performance (see Table 2). In 1886, Kajanus invited Svendsen to Helsinki to conduct a programme in which only Svendsen's orchestral works were performed.²²

Table 2. Most frequently performed composers (in number of performances) in Kajanus's popular concerts, 1889–1905.

1889–1890	1894–1895	1899–1900	1904–1905
1. Wagner (34)	Wagner (59)	Wagner (46)	Wagner (41)
2. J. Strauß Jr. (33)	Massenet (28)	J. Strauß Jr. (25)	Sibelius (36)
3. Svendsen (24)	Tchaikovsky (27)	Saint-Saëns (25)	Tchaikovsky (21)
4. Gounod (21)	Liszt (27)	Liszt (23)	Saint-Saëns (20)
5. Liszt (20)	Mendelssohn (25)	Massenet (21)	J. Strauß Jr. (18)
6. Mendelssohn (19)	J. Strauß Jr. (24)	Mendelssohn (21)	Liszt (18)
7. Tchaikovsky (18)	Saint-Saëns (24)	Gounod (20)	Massenet (15)
8. Rubinstein (18)	Grieg (21)	Grieg (19)	von Weber (14)
9. Massenet (16)	Rubinstein (18)	Tchaikovsky (17)	Mendelssohn (13)
10. von Weber (16)	Moszkowski (17)	Sibelius (16)	Grieg (13)

Five years later Wagner's sovereignty as a popular composer in Helsinki was indisputable; his works were performed twice as often as music by Jules Massenet, who came in second in popularity. In addition to the special Wagner Evenings, Wagner's music was included in every other popular concert, which was exceptional in Kajanus's repertoire planning. Kajanus continued to favour Wagner well into the new century: Wagner held the number one position among the favourites, whereas

²² Vainio 2004, 75–76; Ringbom 1934, 94.

the positions of other composers varied considerably. Still, the set of favoured composers as a whole stayed relatively stable. Among those favoured in the 1880s, von Suppé, Svendsen, Glinka and Moszkowski lost their positions. The new composers who rose to the list of favourites were Tchaikovsky, the prominent French names Massenet and Saint-Saëns and above all, Jean Sibelius, Kajanus's new protégé. During the season of 1904–1905, almost every popular concert featured either Sibelius's *Valse triste*, *Swan of Tuonela*, *Spring Song*, *Lemminkäinen Suite* or his *Karelia Suite*.

Why Wagner?

Below, I will highlight the reasons that Robert Kajanus elevated Wagner to a special position on the programmes of his popular concerts. Arranging special Wagner Evenings, of course, was a pivotal move in this direction. Wagner's fame most likely motivated Kajanus in this concert planning. However, among contemporary European composers there were many equally well-known musical geniuses, some of them with similarly controversial media visibility, some younger, some older, some living and some recently deceased: Massenet, Tchaikovsky, Liszt, Sibelius, Strauß, Saint-Saëns and Grieg, just to mention the names that appeared in the Helsinki concerts.

Kajanus was not only the advocate of German music in Finland. Moreover, because of his student years in Paris, he also wanted to further the reception of new French music as well. Therefore, Gallic music was played in popular concerts nearly as often as music by German composers (172 French works vs 192 German works in the years 1889 to 1905). However, it is undeniable that Kajanus was a fervent Wagnerian, as were many of his professional colleagues in Finland. In the background of the Wagner Evenings was an active Wagner cult that involved the leading figures in Helsinki music circles.²³ The focal point of their activities was the local branch of the *Allgemeiner Richard Wagner-*

²³ Salmi 2005, 207–211.

Verein led by Richard Faltin (1835–1918),²⁴ music director and teacher at the Imperial Alexander University of Finland (today the University of Helsinki). Since the 1880s, Kajanus was known as an active member of this society.²⁵ In addition, he was in a position to learn the best ways to popularize Wagner, thanks to his continental connections.

Kajanus found a direct model for his Wagner Evenings in September 1889, when Julius Laube (1841–1910) and his “Elite Orchestra” visited Helsinki and gave several concerts at Society House with varying programmes (Figure 1). The orchestra, permanently based in Hamburg, had been on tour, and had travelled to Helsinki from Pavlovsk, then a fashionable summer retreat near St Petersburg, where the Russian aristocracy gathered for amusement. The local Helsinki press introduced Laube as an “eminent violinist, proficient conductor and a great admirer of Wagner”. It was also reported that Laube had been the concertmaster in a Hamburg concert whose purpose was to raise funds for a special foundation that was organizing the Bayreuth Festivals. Wagner himself had conducted.²⁶

Laube's orchestra had a profile very similar to Kajanus's ensemble: It gave regular symphony concerts and collaborated with several leading composers besides Wagner, such as Tchaikovsky and Mahler. The orchestra's regular venue was the new Ludwig Concert Hall on Hamburg's Reeperbahn located in the notorious entertainment area of St Pauli. It was probably because of a close connection with the local entertainment industries that Laube's concerts were usually marketed as popular concerts (“populäre Konzerte”), regardless of the music performed. Lighter music was usually included in Laube's repertoire, as it was on his popular concert in Helsinki where large orchestral works were framed by Russian salon music and concert waltzes by Johann Strauß and Anton Rubinstein. However, unlike Kajanus's programmes, Laube's popular concerts included symphonies, both classic

24 On Faltin, see Riikka Siltanen's article in this volume.

25 Siltanen 2013, 39–40.

26 *Hufvudstadsbladet* 12 September 1989; Tchaikovsky Research / Julius Laube (http://en.tchaikovsky-research.net/pages/Julius_Laube), accessed 2 October 2019).

Figure 1. Announcement of Julius Laube's last orchestral concert in Helsinki, 4 October 1889

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Julius Laube

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Elite-Orkester.

Börjas kl. 8 e. m.

Entrée 3 mark.

Obs.! Sista konserten.

and modern.²⁷

Nevertheless, Wagner's music had a central position during Laube's Helsinki visit. His "Farewell Concert" was dedicated to Wagner's music, and during his visit at least the following Wagner works were performed: *Die Meistersinger* prelude, *Huldigungsmarsch*, the *Lohengrin* prelude, the *Faust* overture, "Waldweben" from *Siegfried* and the *Tannhäuser* overture. The performance of the last overture was singled out for praise: "The last mentioned could hardly be played any

²⁷ Seippel 2012, 52; for more information about entertainment in St Pauli, see Kaufmann 1997, 43–58.

better.”²⁸ As will be shown below, the very same popular works were often played during Kajanus's Wagner Evenings.

In the 1890s the musical scene in Helsinki was unbelievably small, consisting of a handful of trained Finns, a few dozen foreign musicians, and a few hundred active concertgoers. The music professionals were all closely connected and dependent upon one another. This fact must be kept in mind when considering local Wagner activism and Robert Kajanus's position. According to the Wagner scholar Hannu Salmi, behind Wagnerism in Finland were two musical powerhouses: Richard Faltin and Martin Wegelius (1846–1906). Faltin was mentioned above, the director of music who taught at the Imperial Alexander University in Helsinki, while Wegelius was one of the founders of the first conservatory in Finland, Helsingfors Musikinstitut (today the Sibelius Academy).

Faltin had come from Germany and retained close ties to his native country. Like Faltin, Wegelius had been trained at the Leipzig Conservatory in the heart of German musical culture. It was Wegelius who first and foremost brought Wagner's music closer to the Finnish public through his writings. In his book *Västerländska musikens historia* (History of Western Music), Wegelius introduced Wagner's music as the final point of a musical evolution that “made his life's work one of the unique achievements in the history of music”.²⁹ In addition, many leading music critics in Finnish newspapers were influential advocates of German music. The most prominent among them were the *éminences grises* of local musical life, Hermann Paul (1827–1885), lecturer in the German language at the university, and the critics who succeeded him, namely Karl Wasenius and Ilmari Krohn, who used the pseudonyms Bis and Cis, respectively.³⁰

28 *Nya Pressen* 5 October 1889.

29 Salmi 2005, 212. Wegelius also wrote a biography of Wagner (in Swedish), which, however, was never published; an incomplete version of the manuscript is available at <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe2019111839002>, accessed 2 October 2019.

30 The two men were tough and respected music critics at *Hufvudstadsbladet* (Bis – Wasenius) and *Uusi Suometar* (Cis – Krohn); Sarjala 1994, 263–265.

The absence of Wagner's operas from local theatres strengthened the activity of the Finnish Wagnerians, Robert Kajanus among them. Led by Richard Faltin, a small group of devotees – most of them music professionals – became members of the *Patronat-Verein*, whose aim was to raise funds for the Bayreuth Festival. In the 1880s and 1890s, some of them travelled regularly to Bayreuth, where *Parsifal*, *Die Meistersinger* and *Der Ring des Nibelungen* were staged almost every year. Martin Wegelius founded an unofficial Wagner society, which provided an opportunity to study the operas to be performed at future Bayreuth festivals.³¹

However, the number of “Wagner pilgrims” to Bayreuth remained small; the record year was 1899 when a total of twenty-two Finnish citizens attended the festival.³² Doubtless the most eager Wagnerians also visited the opera theatres in the neighbouring metropolises of St Petersburg and Stockholm, where Wagner operas were regularly staged. Nevertheless, this does not negate the fact that the great majority of Helsinki musical and theatrical audiences never had an opportunity to see or hear Wagner's music performed on an operatic stage. This reality considerably motivated Robert Kajanus to implement and maintain his series of Wagner Evenings.

Encountering “popular Wagner”

At the end of the nineteenth century, Wagner was an opera composer *par excellence*. Naturally, his music and its reception were written about from the perspective of operatic music and scenic productions. The plots, staging, scenic and musical directions were discussed the most, but other topics also claimed attention, especially those characteristic of the Wagner discourse, such as the relationship of singing and the orchestral part, singing style, the libretto and its psychological background. The anti-Wagnerians often took note of the forceful and hefty

31 Salmi 2005, 178, 212–213.

32 *Ibid.*, 179.

way of singing, which was typical of Wagner's music and was considered unnatural. In his review of a concert in Helsinki by the German tenor Ludwig Hess in October 1901, another music critic at the Finnish newspaper *Uusi Suometar*, Evert Katila (1872–1945), commented ironically on the Wagnerian school of singing:

How deep a gap has been formed between the ideals set by us and those set by the great nation of Germany, now treading its strange musical paths. On the one hand there is admiration for the natural and simple way of performing and for the ideal development of the human voice and vocal splendour; on the other hand there is “great feeling”, affected performance, next to which small things such as purity of intonation and symmetry of phrasing are trivial. [...] This naturally follows from the fact that German tenors nowadays see themselves as little Lohengrins, Knights of the Holy Grail, whose high ideals are *unnahbar euren Schritten* – unattainable to mere mortals. By all means, we'll gladly let them have them!³³

On a more general level, contemporary anti-Wagnerian comments reiterated words such as obscurity, fuzziness and exclusiveness.³⁴ Music by Wagner was frequently regarded as elitist and rarefied, “*unnahbar euren Schritten*” – literally, unapproachable by your footsteps.

In the context of Kajanus's popular concerts this sort of assessment sounds odd. The Helsinki Wagner Evenings included vocal music only infrequently, solo performances being limited to virtuoso instrumentalists. The question inevitably arises of whether one can find another aspect of Wagner's music that accounts for why his works were so readily comprehended, favoured and even suitable for easy listening. It is hard to believe that regular mention in the daily press, favourable newspaper reviews and stories of spectacular opera festivals in Bayreuth were sufficient to persuade merry restaurant goers

³³ *Uusi Suometar* 10 October 1901.

³⁴ For examples of critical attitudes towards Wagner in Sweden, see Salmi 2005, 142–157.

in Helsinki of the fascination of Wagner's musical world. The music had to speak for itself as well.

This question is closely connected with popular music aesthetics. In the history of music popularity and popular music are too often relegated to the realm of simple musical structures and the bad taste of uncivilized audiences. In the context of the late nineteenth century, one must keep in mind that the art world was more bound to class and education than it is today. In a similar way popularity was related to social structures: Musical quality was valued differently by different social groups. The audiences in attendance at Kajanus's popular concerts were for the most part composed of the educated classes. The music favoured by these listeners had to be performed well and be generally acceptable in the public sphere of music – played by first-rate musicians and created by respected composers. In addition – and somewhat contradictorily – the music favoured in popular concerts needed to suit a general atmosphere that was more informal and relaxed than that found at conventional concerts.

What sort of music, then, was suitable, and what were the main musical qualities that produced hits in Kajanus's popular concerts? The answer will be found first in identifying the most frequently-performed works from four concert seasons – minus the Wagner Evenings – from 1889 to 1905 (the seasons of 1889–1890, 1894–1895, 1899–1900, 1904–1905).³⁵ The sample contains data from 4,148 performances, which form a list of the works most frequently played (each work was given a minimum of twelve performances). (See Table 3.)

What is striking once again is the few repetitions. It was unusual for a work to be played twice during the same season, as shown by sample of more than 400 concerts in which even the most popular works received a total of only 26 performances. This also explains why works of Johann Strauß Jr., a composer whose music was among the most often performed at the popular concerts, do not appear at all among “the most frequently played”: There were so many waltzes and polkas

³⁵ See footnote 3.

Table 3. Most frequently performed works in Kajanus's popular concerts, 1889–1905.

Work	Composer	Frequency
<i>Hungarian Rhapsody</i> no. 2	Franz Liszt	26
<i>Mignon</i> , overture	Ambroise Thomas	26
<i>Tannhäuser</i> , overture	Richard Wagner	22
<i>Canzonetta</i> (String Quartet no. 1)	Felix Mendelssohn	21
<i>Faust</i> , <i>Marche hongroise</i>	Hector Berlioz	19
<i>Lohengrin</i> , prelude to Act 3	Richard Wagner	19
<i>Die Walküre</i> , potpourri	Richard Wagner	17
<i>Drömmebilleder</i>	Hans Christian Lumbye	17
<i>Le Cid</i> , ballet music	Jules Massenet	17
<i>Sakuntala</i> , overture	Karl Goldmark	16
<i>Der Freischütz</i> , overture	Carl Maria von Weber	16
<i>Scènes napolitaines</i> (Suite no. 5)	Jules Massenet	15
<i>Danse macabre</i>	Camille Saint-Saëns	15
<i>Henri VIII</i> , <i>Danse de la Gypsy</i>	Camille Saint-Saëns	15
Andante (String Quartet no. 1)	Pyotr Tchaikovsky	15
<i>Toréador et Andalouse</i>	Anton Rubinstein	14
<i>Sotilaspoika</i> (Soldier Boy)	Fredrik Pacius	14
<i>Norsk kunstnerkarneval</i>	Johan Svendsen	14
<i>Hakkapelittäin marssi</i>	traditional	14
<i>Capriccio Italien</i>	Pyotr Tchaikovsky	14
<i>Aufforderung zum Tanz</i>	Carl Maria von Weber	14
Hungarian dances (not specified)	Johannes Brahms	13
<i>Il trovatore</i> , fantasia	Giuseppe Verdi	13
<i>Kinderszenen</i> no. 7, “Träumerei”	Robert Schumann	13
<i>Polonaise</i> in E	Franz Liszt	13
Gavotte (not specified)	Johann Sebastian Bach	13
<i>Carmen Suite</i> no. 1	Georges Bizet	13
<i>Valse caprice</i> in E _b	Anton Rubinstein	12
<i>Vaasan marssi</i>	Karl Collan	12
<i>Aus alle Herren Länder</i> , “Ungarn”	Moritz Moszkowski	12
<i>La traviata</i> , fantasia	Giuseppe Verdi	12
<i>Peer Gynt Suite</i> , Solveigs sang	Edvard Grieg	12
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , fantasia overture	Pyotr Tchaikovsky	12
<i>Maximilian Robespierre</i>	Henry Charles Litolf	12
<i>Die Königin von Saba</i> (ballet music)	Karl Goldmark	12
<i>Kleopatra</i> , overture	August Enna	12
<i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i> , Wedding March	Felix Mendelssohn	12
<i>Lieder ohne Worte</i> , “La Fileuse”	Felix Mendelssohn	12
<i>Euryanthe</i> , overture	Carl Maria von Weber	12
<i>Egmont Overture</i>	Ludwig van Beethoven	12
<i>Efterklanger af Ossian</i>	Niels Gade	12
Air	Johann Sebastian Bach	12
<i>Zwei elegische Melodien</i> , Vären	Edvard Grieg	12

by Strauß in Kajanus's repertoire that seldom were any of his works repeated. Table 3 testifies to the broad range of Kajanus's repertoire: the performance of an astonishing 1,261 works in popular concerts is awe-inspiring.³⁶

From today's perspective, Kajanus's popular concerts were not based on recycling the same hits. What was repeated and reused were certain basic affections or *popular topics*, as Leonard G. Ratner puts it.³⁷ I have previously argued that Kajanus's popular repertoire was constructed according to the principles of the centuries-old *Affektenlehre*, a theory of affects. The repertoire was based on contrasting moods, which were constantly mixed and changed. Single works in this alternation created different musical atmospheres, which were often the opposite of one another.³⁸

Because of the limited scope of this article, the popular themes in Kajanus's repertoire cannot be discussed in greater detail here. However, the works listed in Table 3 can be classified according to the principal moods they represent. Each work contains one or several affective features given below. I argue that these topics are generally shared and identifiable in many kinds of music – at least in the Western Hemisphere.

1. Heroism, belligerency, solemnity (including marches)
2. Romantic dreams and longing (including pastoral moods)
3. Cheerfulness and high spirits (including dance tunes)
4. Exoticism, musical tourism
5. Changing moods (a combination of medleys, operatic scenes, ballet music)

The last group consists of works that represented popular concerts in miniature. The structure of a potpourri was based on a model that

36 See the catalogue compiled in the research database (FileMaker) described in footnote 3. Note that Table 3 includes Wagner Evenings during the sample years.

37 Ratner 1980, 9 and 30.

38 The concept of popular topics is explained in more detail in Kurkela 2015.

combined musical sections, often different from and opposite to each other, in a chain of varying moods. Many nineteenth-century operatic overtures had a potpourri-like musical structure. In all probability the central message or promising musical hooks tended to be expressed in compressed form right at the beginning of a work.³⁹ For instance, the *Rienzi* overture from Wagner's only grand opera is a potpourri-like construction beginning with Rienzi's prayer aria, followed by several other scenes and ending with a solemn march tune. The following well-known operatic overtures are among a number from the nineteenth century which have similar potpourri-like structures: *Wilhelm Tell* by Rossini, *Zampa* by Hérold, *Nabucco* by Verdi and *L'Étoile du Nord* by Meyerbeer.

The Wagner Evenings

The Wagner Evenings faithfully followed the general structure of Kajanus's popular concerts, as seen on the programme of the Wagner Evening held in February of 1897 (see Figure 2). The programme was divided into three sections (there being two intermissions), and every section began with an overture or the equivalent musical section from a Wagner opera.

The analysis can be extended by examining more closely the content of the Wagner Evenings proper, with information gathered from 36 concert programmes and 20 seasons (1890–1910). The source material contains information from 287 performances and 45 single compositions or arrangements. Twenty of the most frequently-performed works on these evenings are listed in Table 4. Ten of the most popular were played at every other concert at least, with the three at the top of the list, "Träume", the *Tannhäuser* overture and *Die Walküre*, played even more often. The remaining 27 works on the programmes were mostly single scenes and arias from *Lohengrin*, *Das Rheingold*, *Tannhäuser*, *Siegfried*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Die Walküre* and *Parsifal*, which were per-

³⁹ Jalkanen 2003, 24.

Filharmoniska Sällskapet

46:te Populära Konsert

i Brandkårshuset.

Torsdagen den 4 Februari 1897.

Wagner-afton.

Program:

1. Ouverture till „Rienzi“
2. Spinnvisa ur „Der fliegende Holländer“
3. Finale ur „Lohengrin“

PAUS.

4. Förspel till „Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg“
5. „Träume“ (violin-solo: hr Neumann)
6. „Der Ritt der Walküren“ (ny)

PAUS.

7. „Charfreitags-zauber“ ur „Parcival“
8. Huldigungs-marsch

Konserten börjar kl. $\frac{1}{2}$ 8 e. m.

Richard Wagner.

Figure 2. Wagner Evening by Kajanus's Orchestra, *Program-Bladet* 3 February 1897.

formed only two or three times during the sample period. To summarize, nearly all of the main operatic works by Wagner were introduced to Finnish audiences or at least their overtures or preludes.

Table 4. Works most frequently performed in the Helsinki Wagner Evenings, 1890–1910.

Composition	Number of performances
<i>Träume</i>	23
<i>Tannhäuser</i> , overture	20
“Walkürenritt” (<i>Die Walküre</i>) ⁴⁰	18
<i>Lohengrin</i> , preludes ⁴¹	17
“Spinnerlied” (<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i>)	15
<i>Rienzi</i> , overture	15
“Karfreitags-Zauber” (<i>Parsifal</i>)	14
“Waldweben” (<i>Siegfried</i>)	13
<i>Eine Faust-Ouvertüre</i>	13
“Wotans Abschied” (<i>Die Walküre</i>)	12
“Trauermarsch” (<i>Götterdämmerung</i>)	11
“Gesang der Rheintöchter” (<i>Götterdämmerung</i>)	11
<i>Die Meistersinger</i> , selected scenes	10
<i>Die Meistersinger</i> , prelude	10
<i>Huldigungsmarsch</i> [for King Ludwig II]	9
<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , overture	8
<i>Parsifal</i> , prelude	7
“Einzug der Götter in Walhall” (<i>Das Rheingold</i>)	6
<i>Tannhäuser</i> , march ⁴²	5
“Walthers Preislied” (<i>Die Meistersinger</i>)	5

As mentioned above, nearly all the numbers were operatic excerpts, the only notable exceptions being the romantic “Träume” arrangement for violin and orchestra (1857) and the uplifting and patriotic *Huldigungsmarsch*, which was originally composed in 1864 to honour Wagner’s great patron, King Ludwig II of Bavaria.⁴³ “Träume” was the single most frequently-performed work during the Wagner Evenings (24 performances).

40 “Walkürenritt” was not performed in its original form until 1897; in the Wagner Evenings melodies from *Die Walküre* were performed eight times as a medley.

41 Preludes to Acts 1 or 3 (it is not always specified in the programme).

42 Arranged by the Finnish composer Filip von Schantz, one of the earliest popular works by Wagner in the orchestral repertoire in Sweden and Finland in the 1860s, and also printed in a piano arrangement; see Salmi 2005, 41.

43 *Grove Music Online*, s.v. Wagner, Richard (accessed 22 September 2015).

Kajanus seems to have had a mission to demonstrate the whole of the Wagnerian operatic world to his regular listeners – usually with one or two representative examples per concert. In the year 1909 he even widened the Wagnerian canon with historical repertoire that, according to a newspaper report, had been completely unknown to local audiences. Four orchestral overtures from Wagner’s early career caused a small local sensation:

The popular concert today will be a significant event. All the numbers on the programme are dedicated to Richard Wagner. No fewer than four of the master’s compositions, previously unheard in Helsinki, will be performed, namely the overtures “König Enzo” (new), “Polonia” (new), “Christoph Columbus” (new) and “Rule Britannia” (new). The concert will include two overtures as well as “Zug der Frauen” from the opera “Lohengrin” and the March, Introduction and Prelude from the opera “Tannhäuser”. One can hardly wish for a more impressive programme. The hall can surely be expected to be full.⁴⁴

Placing historical and unknown repertoire between conventional Wagner numbers can be seen as an effort to demonstrate a new side of Wagner as a composer. The attempt, however, may have remained a historical curiosity. The orchestral overtures from the 1830s by no means broadened the overall image of Wagner as a modern composer. On the contrary, stylistically old overtures from the *Biedermeier* era were readily consigned to the harmless and innocent repertoire of popular Wagner Evenings.

The Wagner Evenings mainly repeated and utilized the first two popular topics or the musical affections mentioned above: (1) Heroism and solemnity and (2) Romantic dreams and longing. “Walkürenritt” is one of the most famous examples of the first mood, the heroic and the belligerent, which supposedly formed the high point of every Wagner Evening. The work was also often repeated – the original score or a

44 *Hufvudstadsbladet* 16 March 1909.

medley from the same opera was third in popularity, as seen in Table 4. With good reason the overtures of *Rienzi* and *Der fliegende Holländer*, as well as the preludes to *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and *Lohengrin* (Act 3) can also be placed in this category, which could be called the “Pomp and Circumstance” affection after Edward Elgar’s well-known musical work.

The popularity of “Träume” serves as a reminder that romantic sentiment was a central part of the Wagner Evenings, as well as of all the popular concerts organized by Kajanus. Pompous marches and brass sections had to be interrupted by a gentler and more calming feeling that could also be produced by such music as “Waldweben”, “Wotan’s Leb’wohl” (Farewell), prelude to *Lohengrin* (Act 1), as well as prelude and “Karfreitagszauber” from *Parsifal*.

Along with fluctuating affections, a successful popular concert should contain works with musical “hooks”. The idea of a hook was developed by the recording industry in the mid-twentieth century, and the term refers to “that part of a song, sometimes the title of a key lyrical line, that keeps recurring”. A musical hook can also be defined as “a musical or lyrical phrase that stands out and is easily remembered”.⁴⁵ It is self-evident that earlier popular music possessed certain qualities which hooked listeners and were used as “attention grabbers”. Songs typical of *variétés* – highly popular in the late nineteenth century – were based on catch phrases or melodic lines that were continuously repeated. These kinds of humorous songs, however, never belonged to Kajanus’s orchestral repertoire, and their hooks were not useful in his popular concerts and certainly not in the Wagner Evenings.

Rather the hooks in Wagner’s popular repertoire can be found in the orchestral sounds and the melodic structure. Numerous works played in the Wagner Evenings were based on long, song-like melodic lines that, compared to the general style of the time, were unconventionally harmonized and stocked with a contrasting accompaniment. A very good example is the *Tannhäuser* overture with its starting point of a

45 Burns 1987, 1; Trout 2005, 57–59.

hymn-like melody played mainly by the brass section and seemingly unending. Soon the melody is strengthened by string accompaniment with a diatonically descending riff pattern. The long melodic line is so commanding and extensive that no other structural idea is needed; the work is actually based on a simple repetition of the undulating melody, which is surely “easily remembered”.

It is no coincidence that the orchestration of *Tannhäuser* and many of Wagner’s most popular overtures and marches emphasized the brass section. In the late nineteenth century brass band sounds can be seen as the harbinger of modernity and progress. Thanks to the thousands of amateur and military brass bands playing in the streets, amusement parks and assembly houses, Western audiences were accustomed to hearing smooth, dark and often noisy brass sounds with a wide ambitus and with deep bass voices played by the tuba and other brass instruments in the middle and low registers.

Wagner developed the brass sound and formed his own style of using the brass section, which was masterfully combined with other timbral families and sections of the orchestra. The result was a brassy, characteristically Wagnerian sound that was designed for orchestra and not for brass bands. It is easy to understand why so many works played during the Wagner Evenings emphasized the role of the brass section.⁴⁶

Conclusions

The Wagner Evenings designed and organized by Robert Kajanus formed a conspicuous series of concerts different from the popular concert mainstream in Helsinki. From the year 1890 and continuing for more than twenty years, these evenings occupied a distinct position in the city’s musical life. The popularity of the Wagner concerts was

46 In the late nineteenth century, Wagner’s principles of orchestration and his manner of using wind instruments tempted some Wagnerians – no doubt justly – to speak of the “orchestration of the future”. Wagner was also compared to Berlioz as an innovator of orchestral timbre. See Webb 1998 and also Wotton 1929.

based on Kajanus's ability to discover a dimension of the composer's music which was easy for ordinary music lovers to embrace and which satisfied the audience's expectations. Furthermore, the continental model of miscellaneous popular concerts in which various emotional moods and affections fluctuated according to an old convention served Kajanus as an example for his evenings.

The repertoire of the Wagner Evenings in Helsinki concentrated on a few orchestral works, among which a great number were overtures, preludes and interludes from the composer's most famous operas together with other original compositions for orchestra. There were only a few arrangements of arias and other operatic scenes compared to the repertoire of Kajanus's usual popular concerts. It is plausible that Wagner was so highly-esteemed as a composer that only original works were considered suitable for performance in concerts dedicated solely to his compositions.

The works performed were excerpts from Wagner's various operas without favouring any particular opera. It makes one wonder whether an important aim of the Wagner Evenings was to introduce as many of the composer's masterpieces to the audience as possible, the majority of whom had never experienced a single opera by Wagner in a theatre. Another aim was to serve the local Wagner cult: in the Wagner Evenings, the few true Wagnerians in the capital of Finland could consolidate the memories of their earlier Bayreuth visits while planning their next pilgrimage to the festival.

Did the Wagner repertoire performed in Kajanus's popular concerts become more difficult over time? There is no evidence of this kind of development. Practically all the most frequently-played works were performed as often in the early 1890s as at the beginning of the 1910s when the last Wagner Evenings were held. Other works not belonging to the top repertoire were performed, but rarely. Accordingly, the Wagner Evenings established a specialized Wagner canon suitable for the convention of popular concerts and emphasizing a variety of musical moods and affections. In fact, the canonized Wagner programme contained excerpts from nearly all of Wagner's operas. In addition, there were approximately half a dozen minor orchestral works by Wagner

that were regularly performed in these popular concerts.

Judging by his choices of repertoire, Kajanus did not have any tendency whatsoever to improve the musical taste of his Wagner audiences. The fact that melodically lingering, ponderous or dissonant music from *Tristan und Isolde* and the *Ring* tetralogy – with the exception of the preludes and other popular numbers – was practically left out of the programming suggests the same. As the example of performing real rarities, i.e. orchestral music by the young Wagner, shows, the choices of new repertoire used to be quite conservative and safe. The orchestral overtures from the 1830s were doubtless easy-listening pieces compared to Wagner's late operatic works. Kajanus was clearly aware of the limits of the musical competence and tastes of his popular audiences.

The Wagner Evenings by Kajanus's orchestra can also be seen as a specialty with which Robert Kajanus strove to maintain his orchestra's popularity. At the dawn of the twentieth century in Helsinki, competition for audience favour was intense in the expanding scene of popular concerts and other musical entertainments. It was important for Kajanus to succeed in this rivalry, as the economy of his orchestra was based to a considerable degree on the income from the popular concerts. Furthermore, the popular Wagner Evenings were an important component that helped Kajanus maintain his successful position as the leading music producer in Helsinki's orchestral field and a cultural constant. Simultaneously, Wagner's highly-esteemed music promoted Kajanus's tendency to differentiate his orchestra from other ensembles on the local popular music scene. Distancing itself from *variété* shows and other light music producers outside the art world was a necessity for an orchestra that strove to become the leading classical music performer on the scene of a budding national art music.

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Being Siegfried in Helsinki: Richard Wagner and the Young Ferruccio Busoni¹

CHRISTINE FISCHER

Wagner and Busoni's early years

Although Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924) felt the urge to compose for music theatre even before he was a teenager, it was a long and complicated journey to creating his first opera.² It was only in 1912, after leaving several sketches and projects incomplete³ and after having decided to write his libretti himself, that he completed and premiered *Die Brautwahl*, based on a story by E.T.A. Hoffmann.⁴ As this article will show, there are many reasons to suggest that part of Busoni's struggle with the operatic genre was related to the operas of Richard Wagner. By presenting some sources hitherto not considered, this article contextualises the path of the young composer as he emerged from the shadow of the giant of Bayreuth. Furthermore, a diverse range of secondary literature on Busoni discusses his responses to Wagner, in terms of both their concrete nature and of their time in Busoni's life,

1 I would like to thank the two anonymous peer-reviewers for their valuable comments and advice on this article. A first draft of this article was presented at the conference “Joseph Viktor Widmann und das deutschsprachige Opernlibretto nach Wagner”, held in Berne in 1999. I would like to thank the organisers Anselm Gerhard and Victor Ravizza for this opportunity. Furthermore, I want to thank Glenda D. Goss and Dawn Rose for improving my English.

2 See Feldhege 1996, 22–39 for an overview of Busoni's opera projects.

3 Beaumont 1987, 13 (footnote), 224; Busoni 1884; Dent 1974, 57.

4 Scher 2004.

while the composer's early years are seldom considered.⁵ In her book on Ferruccio Busoni's aesthetics, Martina Weindel discusses Wagner's impact in her chapter on the composer's relation to program music.⁶ Focusing on letters from the early twentieth century, she depicts the composer quite clearly as an anti-Wagnerian in his opposition to programme music in general, but she does not explicitly refer to his youth. Piero Rattalino's examination of Busoni's writings leads to a similar conclusion, namely that Busoni, from his very earliest years, disapproved of Wagner's music and theories.⁷ Albrecht Riethmüller seems to be the first scholar who presented a more profound study about Wagner's impact on Busoni during the latter's formative years. He concluded that the role of Wagner changed fundamentally during Busoni's lifetime: on one hand the composer was educated by an opponent of Wagner, Wilhelm Mayer (a.k.a. W.A. Rémy, 1831–1898); on the other hand Busoni published a piano transcription of Siegfried's *Funeral March* in order to honour a deceased colleague in 1883.⁸ Furthermore, although Busoni's father claimed in 1889 that his son seemed to have fought against German music in general (rather than specifically against Wagner),⁹ the composer wrote in a letter to his wife in 1907: "I have been hostile to Wagner, then I admired him, then again I romantically turned away from him."¹⁰ Riethmüller took this letter as

5 For studies on Busoni and Wagner in general, see Duse 1986; Sablich 1982, 187–208; Jones 1982.

6 "Verhältnis zur 'Programm Musik'", Weindel 1996, 55–59.

7 "[I]l giudizio di Busoni su Wagner non muterà più, e non sarà altrimenti motivato", Rattalino 1959, 157.

8 Ferruccio Busoni, *Marcia Funebre in morte di Siegfried nel Dramma musicale "Il Crepuscolo degli Dei" di Riccardo Wagner*. Trascrizione per Pianoforte, Milan: F. Lucca [1883], dedicated to the Italian pianist Luigi Cimoso, Busoni Verzeichnis III. "Es ist freilich nur ein Zufall, daß Busoni in sehr jungen Jahren eine sehr wirksame und leicht spielbare Paraphrase der Trauermusik aus der 'Götterdämmerung' in einem italienischen Verlag in Triest als 'Marcia funebre' aus Wagners 'Crepuscolo degli dei' hatte erscheinen lassen. Aus dieser Tatsache dürfen keinerlei Schlüsse gezogen werden. Busoni war schon damals kein Anhänger, noch weniger ein Freund der Musik Wagners." Pfohl 1925, no. 7, 5.

9 Stuckenschmidt 1967, 20–21.

10 "[Ich habe] Wagner angefeindet, dann angestaunt, dann wieder romanisch mich von ihm abgewandt", quoted in Riethmüller 1985, 269.

the reason for dividing Busoni's attitudes towards Wagner during his formative years into three consecutive periods; firstly hostility (up to 1882), secondly admiration (1882–1900), and then turning away from him altogether.¹¹ Some sources give the opportunity for exploring the question of Busoni's early Wagner reception, including his time in Helsinki, beyond periodization; among these sources are academic studies of his life and music,¹² the letter commenting on his attendance at the entire *Ring* tetralogy in Dresden in August 1889 along with his mother and Adolf Paul¹³ and the Busoni texts presented in this article.

Two letters of Busoni to Egon Petri and to his wife, written in 1913, might also indicate the need for a re-consideration of the composer's reception of Wagner: Busoni writes about his "cruel, inescapable fate to have been born and brought up, and quite probably [...] also [...] take my leave with Wagner."¹⁴ And again, "The new generation starts to oppose [...]. They are better off than my generation who had to carry Wagner on their shoulders from the time they were born!"¹⁵ Busoni was writing these passages at the age of 47, wondering how "a little, contemptible Saxon, with boring music and some strokes of genius, could call an international society of this magnitude into being. One is reminded of that rather restricted Jewish rabbi from Nazareth, who had to suffer for the sake of the extension of the ecumenical power of Rome, and who filled the bill so perfectly."¹⁶ Weindel interprets this letter and oth-

11 "Die anfängliche Anfeindung könnte in die Zeit der unmittelbaren Abhängigkeit vom Vater bis zur Grazer Zeit bei Rémy fallen, das folgende Anstaunen könnte sich über fast zwanzig Jahre erstrecken (ca. 1882–1900). Die 'romanische Abwendung' dürfte etwa von der Jahrhundertwende an datieren." Riethmüller 1985, 269; see also Pfohl 1925, no. 8, 4. English translations are by the author of this article if not otherwise indicated.

12 See e.g. Beaumont 1985, 31.

13 Busoni > Egon Petri, 18 August 1889, in Beaumont 1987, 42.

14 "[...] verhängnisvolles Schicksal [...], mit Wagner geboren, erzogen zu sein und höchstwahrscheinlich auch mich empfehlen zu müssen." Busoni > Egon Petri, 22 May 1913, in Weindel 1996, 55. For the English translation see Beaumont 1985, 32.

15 "Die neueste Generation beginnt zu opponieren [...]. Die hat es besser, als meine, die den Wagner von der Geburt an auf den Schultern schleppen mußte." Busoni > Gerda Busoni, 19 September 1913, in Riethmüller 1985, 289.

16 "Dass ein kleiner unerquicklicher Sachse, mit langweiliger Musik und einigen

er documents of Busoni's Wagner critique as results of his efforts to liberate himself "from the ideational and compositional dominance" of the older composer.¹⁷ She even diagnoses a Wagner psychosis similar to Debussy's.¹⁸

Correspondence between Ferruccio Busoni and Josef Viktor Widmann

It is not widely known that in 1884 Ferruccio Busoni contacted Joseph Viktor Widmann (1842–1911), a successful journalist and writer residing in Berne.¹⁹ Max Kalbeck recommended this connection.²⁰ As a librettist Widmann had collaborated with the composer Hermann Goetz (*Der Widerspenstigen Zähmung*, 1874) and discussed opera plans with Johannes Brahms in the late 1870s (though this never came to fruition).²¹ The 18-year-old Busoni asked the author, who was 20 years his senior, to write a libretto for him. Widmann answered immediately, and their correspondence continued (with some interruptions) until 1885.²²

Genieblitzen, einen Weltenbund dieser Stärke in's Leben rufen konnte, ist erstaunlich. Es erinnert an jenen etwas beschränkten jüdischen Rabbi von Nazareth, der zum Ausbau der römischen Kirchengewalt erhalten musste und so ausgezeichnet den Zweck erfüllte." Busoni > Egon Petri, 22 May 1913, in Weindel 1996, 55; for the English translation see Beaumont 1985, 32.

- 17 "Busonis Kritik an der Programmmusik und damit verbunden die Kritik an Wagner ist vielmehr die logische Konsequenz, der Versuch, sich von der ideellen und kompositorischen Übermacht, dem 'lastenden Erbe', zu befreien." Weindel 1996, 55.
- 18 "Möglicherweise war ähnlich wie bei Debussy die 'Wagnerpsychose' so ausgeprägt, daß Busonis ablehnende Haltung [...] hier [in der Kritik an der Programmmusik] ihre Kulmination gefunden hat." Weindel 1996, 56.
- 19 Widmann 1922–1924; Strasser 1942; Fränkel 1964; Wehrli 1992; Pulver & Käser 1992.
- 20 Beaumont 1987, 223–224.
- 21 Kalbeck 1915; Reich 1980; Wirth 1983; Brody 1985–1986.
- 22 Busoni > Widmann, Vienna 17 September 1884, Bürgerbibliothek Berne; see Appendix I, letter 1; Widmann > Busoni, Berne 19 September 1884, in Widmann 1922–1924, vol. II, 251; Busoni > Widmann, Vienna, 25 September 1884, Dichter- und Stadtmuseum Liestal, see Appendix I, letter 2; Widmann > Ernst Frank, Berne 1 October 1884, in Einstein 1924, 425; Widmann > Gottfried Keller, Berne 18 October 1884, in Widmann 1922, 97; Widmann > Frank, Berne 24 October 1884, in Einstein 1922, 429; Keller > Widmann, Zurich 9 November 1884, in Widman 1922, 98; Widmann > Busoni, Berne 4 October 1885,

However, neither libretto nor composition was forthcoming. Two unedited letters of Busoni stemming from this correspondence have been preserved, now held in the Widmann collections in Berne and Liestal.²³

In his first letter, written on the 17 September 1884, Busoni suggested Heinrich Heine's *Der Schelm von Bergen* or Gottfried Keller's *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* as libretto subjects. The young musician concluded his letter by positioning himself in relation to Richard Wagner:

I think I have to tell you in advance that I am not a Wagnerian in the sense of the modern followers but do not belong to the opponents of this grand master either. The libretto I would like to ask for may not be thought of or be written like Wagnerian poetry but neither in the conventional, traditional way. Separation of single numbers and overlong monologues and scenes have to be avoided. The choir should be used sparingly in order to compromise the dramatic truth as little as possible. The musical should dominate, the language should express more poetic, classical moods than subtle poetic details or thoughts [...]. If I may add that I prefer the concrete, manly, manifest sides of art, that I prefer clarity, purity of form and presentation, a distinct depiction of situation and characters, then you know approximately what I want.²⁴

in Widmann 1922–1924, vol. II, 253; Widmann > Friedrich Hegar, Berne 10 October 1885, Burgerbibliothek Berne; Widmann > Busoni, Berne 18 October 1885, in Widmann 1922–1924, vol. II, 253; Widmann > Hegar, Berne 25 February 1886, in Müller 1987, 283; Busoni > Hugo Leichtentritt, 12–13 November 1915, in Beaumont 1987, 223–224.

23 The full texts of these letters are transcribed in Appendix I, Letters 1 and 2.

24 “Ich glaube voraussetzen zu müssen, daß ich kein Wagnerianer im Sinne der modernen Kunstjünger bin, doch auch nicht zur Gegenparthei dieses erhabenen Meisters gehöre. Das Textbuch, das ich mir wünsche [,] sollte jedoch durchaus nicht in Wagner'scher Dichtung gedacht noch gedichtet sein, doch auch wieder nicht nach der herkömmlichen, traditionellen Weise geformt werden. Allzu deutliche Abgrenzung der einzelnen Nummern voneinander, überlange Monologe und Szenen wollen vermieden sein. Der Chor soll sparsam, die dramatische Wahrheit möglichst wenig beeinträchtigend angewendet werden. Das Musikalische soll vorherrschen, die Sprache soll mehr poetische, plastische Stimmungen, als dichterische Feinheiten, oder Gedanken zum Ausdrucke bringen. [...]. Wenn ich noch hinzufüge [,] daß ich in der Kunst überhaupt das Kernige, Männliche, Plastische Allem anderen vorziehe, daß ich Klarheit, Reinheit der Form u. der Darstellung, Sicherheit in der Zeichnung der Umriße und der Charaktere bevorzuge, so haben Sie ungefähr eine Vorstellung von dem, daß ich mir wünsche.” Busoni > Widmann, 17 September 1884, 6–8, 12, Burgerbibliothek Berne, N Joseph Viktor Widmann 25 (9).

Widmann sent an answer immediately (19 September 1884), but hesitated to commit himself. He wrote that he hoped to start a libretto project in the following year and that he had to write libretti for other composers first, among them Brahms. Moreover, he declined the subjects suggested by Busoni. Declaring that he abhorred libretti dealing with the German Middle Ages, he suggested instead Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's *El niño de la bola*: "Hot blood may run through it like in Bizet's 'Carmen'."²⁵ Busoni answered one week later that he had now read the novel, liked it and would comment on it more extensively later. We do not know if he did, but can suppose that this suggestion inspired Busoni's scenario for an opera entitled *El niño de la bola*.²⁶ About one month later, before the 24 October, Widmann wrote to Busoni that he would not write a libretto for him.²⁷ However, their correspondence about potential opera subjects continued for one further year. Widmann suggested texts by Miguel de Cervantes, Lord Byron, the Persian poet Ferdowsi and Franz Grillparzer.²⁸ Busoni's direct reaction is not known, but their collaboration plans are mentioned in Widmann's correspondence with Ernst Frank, Gottfried Keller and Friedrich Hegar in the mid 1880s.²⁹ Widmann even tried to organize a concert tour for the young composer and pianist in Switzerland in 1885 though it did not go ahead for reasons we do not know.

Much later, Busoni explained to Hugo Leichtentritt the reason why he failed to collaborate with Widmann. In 1915 he mentions that the project *Manuel Venegas / El niño de la bola* was cancelled because there was

25 "Lesen Sie doch einmal dagegen die prächtige glühende spanische Novelle des modernen Dichters Alarcón: 'El niño de la bola' (das Kind mit der Weltkugel), in deutscher Übersetzung erschienen in der bekannten Spemann'schen Kollektion unter dem Titel: 'Manuel Venegas'. Da flösse feuriges Blut hindurch, wie in Bizet's 'Carmen'. Wenn Herr Kalbeck, den ich herzlich zu grüßen bitte, Ihnen nach dieser Novelle das Libretto schreiben wollte, so hätte ich nichts dagegen." Widmann 1922–1924, vol. II, 251.

26 See Busoni 1884a, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv, Busoni-Nachlaß CI: Textbuch 26a, which is Busoni's sketch for a libretto entitled *El niño de la bola*.

27 Widmann > Frank, Berne 24 October 1884, in Einstein 1922, 429.

28 Widmann > Busoni, Berne 4 October 1885, in Widmann 1922–1924, vol. II, 253.

29 For the exact dates of these letters see footnote 22.

no scene in which the lovers talked with each other – and because of the fee of 1,000 marks, which Widmann wanted for writing the libretto.³⁰

In the correspondence with Widmann we encounter the 18-year-old Busoni who is not fanatically opposed to Wagner's works but seems to differentiate between admiration for Wagner and looking for a practical way to start producing his own opera. He is open to suggestions and the so-called "Mediterranean way", outlined a few years later by Friedrich Nietzsche in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*³¹ and *Der Fall Wagner*,³² seemed to be a viable option.

Writings in *L'Indipendente*

During the time he was exchanging letters with Widmann, Busoni worked for the newspaper *L'Indipendente*, reporting news to his hometown Trieste about the musical life in Vienna,³³ described by him and others as sharply polarized between pro- and anti-Wagnerians.³⁴ Thus, his nuanced attitude towards Wagner might testify to his independent point of judgement. Busoni's article with the title "Della intelligenza musicale" (1885) can give insight into his Wagner critique during this period.³⁵ Wagner does attract listeners, Busoni says, not because they understand his works musically, but because "his music affects the nerves as does an opium intoxication."³⁶ Eduard Hanslick's "gesunge-

30 Busoni > Hugo Leichtentritt, 12–13 November 1915, in Beaumont 1987, 223–224. Richard Heuberger's opera on Widmann's libretto *Manuel Venegas* was premiered in 1889.

31 Nietzsche 1886, chapter 254.

32 Nietzsche 1888, chapters 1 and 2.

33 Rattalino 1959.

34 "Qui c'è musica dappertutto, anche troppa. Le dispute tra Wagneriani e anti-Wagneriani non sono ancora finite. Anche Brahms ha il suo partito, e Slavi e Tedeschi son sempre in lotta. Così il mondo va avanti come tra cani e gatti: eterna agitazione, senza di cui il mondo non esisterebbe". Busoni > Luigi Cimoso, without date (probably the end of 1883 or the beginning of 1884), in Sablich 1982, 24.

35 Busoni 1977, 507–524.

36 "[...] ad operare sui nervi un affascimento non molto dissimile da un principio d'ebbrezza d'oppio." Della intelligenza musicale, *L'Indipendente* (July 1885), in Busoni 1977, 508.

ner und gezeigter Opiumrausch” – he coined this term in 1874³⁷ – reappears in the words of the young Busoni. Regarding Wagner’s leitmotifs, Busoni operates in a similar manner: they make the audience believe that they understand something musically, yet the understanding remains on the surface of the text-music relationship.³⁸ This sensual pleasure is described in opposition to a spiritual apprehension of music, which is what Busoni wants. His demand for “the musical” in his letter to Widmann may be a hint at his opposition to Wagner as Weindel presumes in her chapter on programme music in Busoni’s writings.³⁹

Inherent in Busoni’s Wagner conflict are two not necessarily converging aspects of Wagner’s legacy. On the one hand the nationalist, chauvinistic overtones and on the other hand the debates between the followers of “absolute music” and the followers of “programme music” who shaped the German musical culture during Busoni’s formative years. Busoni’s position regarding absolute music, as he articulates it in his later writings, is influenced by his encounter with Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, published in 1886.⁴⁰ Yet Busoni’s earlier articles in *L’Indipendente* anticipate similar strategies for breaking the Germanic hegemony in opera. Busoni refers to an opera which was performed in Trieste in May 1884 – that is, before he contacted Widmann and suggested libretto subjects from the German Middle Ages – and left him astonished and enthusiastic: Georges Bizet’s *Carmen*. In his panegyric on *Carmen*, Busoni mentions the same things which are important in his letter to Widmann: purity of form, dramatic truth, “the musical” as independent from the action, and musical unity. “In *Carmen* the purity of the musical form and the dramatic truth become the most perfect couple, something not done in opera before.”⁴¹

37 Hanslick 1874, Vorwort.

38 “Le impressioni, che riceviamo da questi ed altri numerosi momenti nelle opere di Wagner [...] sono aggradevoli e tutt’al più interessanti, ma non si possono dire puramente musicali.” Della intelligenza musicale, *L’Indipendente* (July 1885), in Busoni 1977, 509.

39 Weindel 1996, 55–59.

40 Ibid., 92–93.

41 “Nella *Carmen* la purezza della forma musicale e la verità drammatica si accoppiano più

In June 1884, one month later, Busoni develops his thoughts about “dramatic truth” in an article about the historic position of Bizet’s *Carmen*. His point of departure is the allegedly miserable condition of Italian opera, which as an art form cannot easily adjust to the German reforms. Busoni sees a way away from Wagnerian dominance in a re-orientation along the lines of models written in the French style, which combines stylistic lightness with profound musicality now and in the past. The article continues with a sketch of the “French school” in opera history. In it, Busoni discussed the relation of Jean-Baptiste Lully, Christoph Willibald Gluck and Giacomo Meyerbeer to Wagner’s theories of drama. He concluded:

History proves that the maxims, the principles of Monteverdi, Lully, Gluck, Wagner are the same: all of them were trying to attain truth in the drama, in the action, in the accent, in the character of the music. They wanted to purge the stage of the implausibility and incoherence that obscured it.⁴²

Dramatic truth is implicitly defined as a counter-concept to implausibility and incoherence and does not necessarily mean veristic tendencies: “In [*Carmen*] the truth and not verism predominates: the first makes the beautiful natural, the second makes ugliness artificial, and the modern musical drama must come close to the first and escape the second.”⁴³

Bizet’s *Carmen* inspired Busoni in his quest for a way out from Wagner’s shadow as he points out in the following passage:

perfettamente che noi si fece nelle opere antecedenti.” Della “*Carmen*” di G. Bizet e del posto ch’ella occupa nella storia dell’opera francese, *L’Indipendente* (May 1884), in Busoni 1977, 473.

42 “La storia ci prova, che le massime, i principii di Monteverdi, di Lully, di Gluck, di Wagner sono gli stessi; tutti tendono a raggiungere la verità nel dramma, nell’azione, nell’accento, nel carattere della musica. Tutti si adoperano a sbarazzare la scena delle inverosimiglianze e incoerenze di cui è ingombra.” *Ibid.*, 487.

43 “In [*Carmen* ...] la verità e non il verismo prevale: la prima rende naturalmente il bello, il secondo artificialmente il brutto, ed è a quella che il dramma musicale moderno deve accostarsi, da questo che deve fuggire.” *Ibid.*, 496.

When we are able to achieve a greater unity of style throughout the opera, if we could let these dances and choruses disappear, which take away truth and plausibility from the action, when we can prevent a hiatus between recitatives and musical pieces through different ways to connect them and through the right proportion in their length and musical character, when we finally can limit the action to a minor number of persons who would share the same musical importance, then I think it will not be difficult to achieve this dramatic ideal that Bizet so powerfully aspired to and that certainly will prove correct.⁴⁴

In *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* and more extensively in *Der Fall Wagner*, published in 1886 and 1888 respectively, Nietzsche described *Carmen* in similar terms as the “healthy” cure for the “sicknesses” that Wagner’s music imposes on listeners.⁴⁵ That Widmann, as early as September 1884, recommended Alarcon’s drama *El niño de la bola* to Busoni as a subject for their possible opera project with the words: “Hot blood may run through it like in Bizet’s ‘Carmen’”⁴⁶ seems to anticipate the sentiment of Nietzsche. Busoni, who in his articles in *L’Indipendente* had reflected about the stylistic features of Bizet’s opera, responded positively.

44 “Potendo, adunque, raggiungere maggiore unità di stile per tutto il corso dell’opera, potendo abolire quelle danze e quei cori che all’azione tolgono di verità e di verosimiglianza, potendo evitare un distacco troppo forte fra recitativi e pezzi musicali, negli alternativi loro attacchi, nonché nella proporzione della loro vicendevole durata e carattere musicale, potendo infine restringere l’azione ad un numero minore di personaggi ai quali tutti venga impartita la medesima importanza musicale, credo non sarà difficile di raggiungere quell’ideale drammatico, a cui aspirava potentemente Bizet ed il quale certo si avvererà.” *Ibid.*, 497.

45 Nietzsche 1886, 1888; Gilman 2007, 247.

46 “Lesen Sie doch einmal dagegen die prächtige glühende spanische Novelle des modernen Dichters Alarcon: ‘El niño de la bola’ [...]. Da flösse feuriges Blut hindurch, wie in Bizet’s ‘Carmen’.” Widmann 1922–1924, II, 251.

Busoni's *Der Ring des Niebelungen in's Finnische*
übertragen

Very few Busoni sketches or libretti survived prior to *Die Brautwahl*. However, one source that has not been investigated extensively until now, and that might offer insights into the young composer's thinking during his formative years, is therefore of major importance. In 1892, after his time in Helsinki (1888–1890) as a teacher at the newly founded Helsinki Music Institute (nowadays the Sibelius Academy), Busoni wrote a thus far unpublished parody of Richard Wagner's tetralogy with the title *Der Ring des Niebelungen in's Finnische übertragen*. A copy is held in the Busoni Collection in Berlin in the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz.⁴⁷

Busoni's Helsinki appointment was arranged through Hugo Riemann who recommended the young pianist and composer, then living in Leipzig, to Martin Wegelius (1846–1906) who had also studied in Leipzig in the early 1870s. Wegelius attempted to internationalize his teaching staff in Helsinki, and Busoni who was in financial trouble gratefully accepted the job offer. Soon after his arrival in Finland, he expressed his disappointment about the local standards of teaching, performing and composing.⁴⁸

As indicated on the title page, the *Ring* parody is dedicated to Wegelius as a birthday present: “[For] Martin Wegelius on 10 November [without year]”.⁴⁹ In an accompanying letter to Wegelius, sent from New York in 1893, Busoni explains that he wrote his parody on the musical life of Helsinki retrospectively in the year 1892 (“The enclosed joke was written one year ago in a frisky mood.”⁵⁰) Moreover, Busoni writes how

47 Busoni, 1892: *Der Ring des Niebelungen in's Finnische übertragen von OMNIBUS*. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv, Busoni-Nachlaß, CI: Textbuch 19. A transcription with comments is attached to this essay in Appendix II.

48 Schnapp 1934; Wis, 1977, 253; Beaumont 1987, 30–46; Bertogli 2016, 8–9.

49 “Martin Wegelius zum 10. November”, Busoni 1892, title page, see Appendix II.

50 “Der mitfolgende Scherz war schon vor einem Jahr in einer Stunde loser Laune geschrieben.” Busoni > Wegelius, New York 26 October 1893, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv; see Appendix I,

he wanted the parody to be understood:

The little malicious allusions are therefore not to be taken seriously. My satire does not burn like an intoxicated arrow but at the most like paprika; and you should only let those people taste it for whom this pepper will not arouse a thirst for revenge. The best thing would be that you shake with laughter over it yourself – if you can laugh about it at all – and then keep it locked up somewhere or tear it up.⁵¹

Der Ring des Niebelungen in's Finnische übertragen was not intended to be set to music or performed. It seems to have been some kind of self-amusement,⁵² which Busoni decided to share with his former boss and friend Wegelius on the occasion of his 47th birthday. Although the parody was certainly not meant to display Busoni's personal artistic concepts, it might form part of the picture relating to his quest for an opera subject in the context of the composer's earlier responses to Wagner.

Like Wagner in his *Ring* cycle, Busoni divided his parody into four parts. Each part has its own title and alludes to the titles of the four Wagnerian dramas: "Vanda-Å-Gold",⁵³ "Die Walküre", "Sieg und Fried" and "Die göttliche Dämmerung oder Die Mittsommernacht". Busoni imitated Wagner's language and used alliterations ("Stabreim") and paraphrases of well-known verses. The parody shares features with other Wagner parodies of the time that Andrea Schneider has de-

Letter 3.

51 "Die kleinen boshafte Anspielungen sind deshalb ja nicht ernst zu nehmen. Meine Satyre brennt nicht wie ein vergifteter Pfeil, sondern höchstens wie Paprika, und ich bitte, daß du sie nur solchen Leuten zu schmecken gibst, bei denen dieser Pfeffer keinen Rache=durst zu erzeugen vermag. Am besten aber, du lachst dich für dich selbst darüber aus – falls du überhaupt darüber lachst – und schließest dann das Ding ein, oder zerreissest es." Ibid.; see Appendix I, Letter 3.

52 "[...] rein zu seiner [Busonis] eigenen Erheiterung niedergeschrieben." Feldhege 1996, 25.

53 Vanda Å is the Swedish name the river originating in a lake in Hausjärvi, continuing its route south through the city of Vanda (in Finnish: Vantaa) to Helsinki, where it flows into the Baltic Sea Northeast of the capital.

scribed.⁵⁴ Busoni creates a collage of scenes from Wagner's *Ring* plots and substitutes its personae with persons he encountered in Helsinki, his colleagues, acquaintances and friends at the Music Institute. Beside mocking Wagner – e.g. the display of national chauvinism at the end of the piece – Busoni gives a critical and sometimes sarcastic image of the musical life of Helsinki. The subtitle *in's Finnische übertragen* does not refer to a translation into the Finnish language, which Busoni did not speak well. Instead, it means an adaptation of the plot of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* to the life in the city of Helsinki and its musical protagonists.⁵⁵ Busoni mocked the widespread admiration for Richard Wagner in the musical world, which included Finland⁵⁶ and his respected friend Wegelius⁵⁷ as one of the German composer's most prominent Finnish champions.⁵⁸

There are many allusions to important events and actors in Helsinki's music life of this period, among others Busoni's depiction of "Commerzienrath Borgström", the politician, businessman, co-founder and president of the board of the Music Institute Johan Leonard Borgström (1832–1907), as Wotan; the end of "Das Vanda-Å-Gold" mentions the founding of the institute by Wotan and his secretary Loge, a caricature of Abraham Ojanperä (1856–1916), the Finnish bass-baritone

54 Schneider 1996, 265.

55 For a similar parodic approach to the *Ring*, see e.g. *Isarblech* and *Undingsholzerei* of 1869–1870 performed in the Münchner Marionettentheater, Schneider 1996, 209–210.

56 Busoni also made a parodistic drawing of the Helsinki Music Institute in which it is depicted as a Roman temple. In it, Martin Wegelius appears as Jupiter gathering the instructors around him; see Flodin 1922, 428.

57 Wis 1977, 257.

58 Salmi 2006, 102–109. Busoni visited Bayreuth in 1888 right before leaving for Helsinki; see Beaumont 1987, 4 (footnote), 42. Schneider 1996, 271–272 mentions that the fight between pro- and anti-Wagnerians in Vienna, which Busoni mentions in his early writings for *L'Indipendente*, was a favourite subject of Wagner parodies in these years: "Der orthodoxen Anhängerschaft wird vor allem die distanzlose Bewunderungssattitüde vorgeworfen, die Glorifizierung Wagners als Messias der deutschen Kunst, der verstiegene Geniekult um den Bayreuther Meister, nicht zuletzt auch die ideologisch motivierte Rezeption der Musikdramen und die politische Ausbeutung ihres Schöpfers." See also Goss 2009, 73–74, about Wegelius's role in outlining a Finnish national style of music.

with whom Busoni gave concerts in 1889;⁵⁹ and the approval of state funding for the institute for three years. The institute and its protagonists turned out to be hostages of Wagner's musical heritage in their quest for national Finnish musical identities.

The humour displayed in this parody was intentionally rude: The Rhinemaidens are transvestites, represented by Carl von Knorring (1861–1931), Adolf Fredrik Leander (1833–1899), his son Emil Leander (1866–1932) and Gösta Sohlström (1849–1925). Sohlström was one of the founders of the amateur men's choir Sällskapet Muntra Musikanter, Adolf Fredrik Leander was brass teacher in Helsinki Music Institute and von Knorring leader of Akademiska Sångföreningen, an academic Swedish-speaking men's choir in Helsinki. They toast with liquor and lose the gold because they are too drunk to guard it.⁶⁰ Alberich's role was attributed to the Jewish Hungarian violinist Hermann Csillag (1852–1922). Busoni played concerts with him on a regular basis during his Helsinki years.⁶¹ Depicting anything but a flattering portrait of his colleague, Busoni portrays Csillag play the entire *Rheingold* scene on the violin's fourth string.⁶² Fasolt and Fafner, represented by Hoyer, the renowned architect Theodor Höijer (1843–1910)⁶³ and one unidentifiable Smelewsky,⁶⁴ are promised a box of cigars with the Finnish label "Freia" for their work on "Kalevalhalla", a play on words created by fusing the names Walhall, Wotan's fortress in the *Ring*, and the title of the Finnish national epos *Kalevala*. Since the cigars do not meet their expectations, they give them back in exchange for the "Vanda-Å-Gold".⁶⁵ Mime was Karl Fredrik Wasenius (1850–1920), a well-known

59 Wis 1977, 268–269.

60 Busoni 1892, *Der Ring*: "Das Vanda-Å-Gold", scene 1.

61 Wis 1977, 267–268.

62 In his letters from Helsinki Busoni made derogatory comments about the musical abilities of this violinist; see Beaumont 1987, 38, and Busoni 1892, *Der Ring*: "Das Vanda-Å-Gold", scene 1.

63 Busoni 1892, *Der Ring*: "Das Vanda-Å-Gold", scene 1.

64 *Ibid.*, scene 1.

65 *Ibid.*, scene 2.

music critic (alias Bis) of the Finnish Swedish-speaking daily newspaper *Hufvudstadsbladet*, who was described as being in need of “Mendel’s Universal Encyclopedia” in order to write his reviews.⁶⁶ Brünnhilde’s role was given to Bertha Paulina Holstius (1845–1891), the sister of Richard Faltin’s wife and a renowned piano teacher, who held long monologues on emancipation.⁶⁷ Richard Faltin (1835–1918), the Finnish representative of the *Patronat-Verein* Bayreuth during Busoni’s time in Helsinki, appeared as well. His entry on stage was not very dignified: he was led onto the stage as a horse by “Walküre Faltin”, his wife Olga Alina (b. Holstius; 1843–1901), and characterized as a henpecked husband.⁶⁸

Der Ring des Niebelungen in’s Finnische übertragen draws a detailed and intimate picture of the musical world in Helsinki during Busoni’s time at the Institute, including petty rumours and intrigues. Borchmeyer and Kohler stated that the tension between the archaic dramatic gesture and modern psychological sensibility, between the past of the mythological plot and the presence of its content, made Wagner’s dramas especially suited for parodies.⁶⁹ In this respect, Busoni’s text remains within the conventional frame of the Wagner parodies of his time. The composer’s intentions with it were not only to make jokes about the Finnish musical world by underlining his position as a cultural outsider. One of the main characteristics of Busoni’s parody was to question the inevitability of Wagner’s plot. In his double role as rebelling Siegfried in Wagner’s story and as new piano teacher in the “strange” world of the Helsinki Music Institute, Busoni called off

66 Ibid., scene 3.

67 Busoni 1892, *Der Ring*: “Die Walküre”, Act 1.

68 Ibid., Act 3. For a short paragraph on Busoni’s *Ring* parody and its characters see also Couling 2005, 198.

69 “[...] die dem musikalischen Mythendrama immanente Spannung zwischen archaischer dramatischer Gebärde und moderner psychologischer Sensibilität, zwischen dem ‘Einst’ der mythischen Handlung und dem ‘Jetzt’ ihres Gehalts.” Borchmeyer & Kohler 1983, 284. See also p. 292: “Die Parodieanfälligkeit scheint geradezu eine Bedingung des [Wagnerschen] Musikdramas zu sein, das den Mythos nicht als Gewesenes, sondern als Gegenwärtiges beschwört. Parodie und Travestie sind mithin der Prüfstein seiner Modernität.”

his own funeral at the end as a humorous act of liberation.

Self-stylization in *Der Ring*

Like many self-stylizations, Busoni's *Der Ring* relied on mechanisms of othering: he depicted important musical protagonists in Helsinki as Wagner fanatics and as lacking original inspiration in looking for their national classical music traditions. Therefore, Busoni addressed a problem that was overshadowing his own operatic work during these years as similar to the situation in Finland: the question of how to deal with Wagner's legacy for creating a musical future of one's own.

One of Busoni's reactions to the problem is his role in *Der Ring*: he is Siegfried who literally feels out of place in Finland as his ambiguous question – “Is it right that I am in Finland?”⁷⁰ – suggests. His self-definition as an outsider in this community makes the young composer a rebel in his Wagnerian environment. Additionally, the nationalistic and chauvinistic overtones of Wagner's impact in Finland are clearly and pejoratively characterized. For instance, in the scene of the forest bird: After “having tried to play a Finnish song [as Siegfried], in which he (according to the opinion of the domestic musicians) did not succeed”,⁷¹ not only one but three birds sang for Busoni. Another example is when Ilmari Krohn (1867–1960) and Oskar Merikanto (1868–1924) appeared as two young, promising Finnish composers together with Gustav Brückner (1865–1927), a German composer living in Helsinki. They showed their compositions to Siegfried/Busoni who did not appreciate them. Thereafter a “whole flock of jolly music birds comes and sings Finnish songs”,⁷² Busoni quickly composed *Ten Variations on Kultaselle* (Busoni Verzeichnis 237) for cello and piano and scares

70 “Bin ich hier recht in Finland?” Busoni 1892, *Der Ring*: “Die göttliche Dämmerung oder Die Mittsommernacht”, Act 1.

71 “[...] versucht ein finnisches Lied zu blasen, [das] gelingt ihm aber (nach der Meinung der einheimischen Musiker) nicht”, Busoni 1892, *Der Ring*: “Sieg und Fried”, Act 2.

72 “Ein ganzer Schwarm von munteren Musik-Vögeln kommt und singt finnische Lieder.” *Ibid.*, Act 2. Busoni is here referring to Sällskapet Muntra Musikanter [the Merry Musicians' Society], an amateur choir founded in 1878 in Helsinki.

them off. In despising the quality of the Finnish musical avant-garde of these years, Busoni emphasised his own musical talents that seemingly overcame national boundaries when composing his variations on Finnish folk melodies. He refused to accept Wagner's influence on his Finnish colleagues, nor would he condone their attempts to appropriate Nordic elements.

This perspective on the hegemonic aspects of the Wagnerian tradition becomes prevalent at the end of the *Ring* parody. After the curtain closes the action of "Die göttliche Dämmerung oder die Mittsommernacht", Busoni directed Richard Wagner to appear on stage and say: "Dear Gentlemen, actually I only wanted to give you a German art but my genius is so limitless that it has also yielded something for Finland."⁷³ Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) listened and applauded frenetically. Next to him sat Armas Järnefelt (1869–1958), a student of Busoni and Wegelius, who was to become an important champion of Wagner in Scandinavia as a conductor of his operas in Stockholm and Helsinki after 1904 (Sibelius had married Armas Järnefelt's sister Aino (1871–1969) the previous summer). Järnefelt and Busoni's student Adolf Paul (1863–1943) joined Sibelius's attempts to collect money for Wagner – probably an allusion to Faltin's activities who was collecting money for the *Patronat-Verein* in Finland. Because all of these "Leskovites" (a group of Busoni's students named after his Newfoundland dog Lesko)⁷⁴ were in financial distress and the project was doomed to fail.

The national and cultural chauvinism that was a characteristic feature of the Wagner reception by critics and musicians during this period affected Busoni's relation with his own work as Albrecht Riethmüller has shown.⁷⁵ Busoni was rooted in the Italian as well as in the German culture. To neglect the German tradition might have come close to an act of self-denial, and Busoni's admiration of German Romanticism

73 "Meine Herren, eigentlich wollte ich Ihnen nur eine deutsche Kunst geben, aber mein Genie ist so beispiellos, dass es auch für Finnland was abwirft." Busoni 1892, *Der Ring*: "Die göttliche Dämmerung oder Die Mittsommernacht", epilogue.

74 Bertoglio 2016, 8–9.

75 Riethmüller 1991.

– and not only the Romanticism in music – became manifested in his texts.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, *Der Ring* underlines Busoni's need to overcome Wagner's Germanic hegemony as a composer, especially as an opera composer. Busoni referred to the nationalist aspects of the parody in his letter to Wegelius: "In the meantime I have become less German to a certain degree and tend more and more to cosmopolitanism. Is this good? Who knows."⁷⁷

The Germanic chauvinist overtones that characterize later reviews of Busoni's compositions and concerts⁷⁸ suggest that he did not fully succeed with this project of self-salvation from Wagner.

The conflict of being rooted in Wagner's world while at the same time rebelling against him is evident in the development of the character of Siegfried in the *Ring* parody, though Busoni's rebellion goes further than that of the original Siegfried. Siegfried/Busoni cancelled "Die göttliche Dämmerung" and declared to the funeral attendants that he will not die but has decided to live and leave for Moscow. (Busoni had accepted a position as piano professor at the Moscow Conservatory.) He announced that he will marry Guttrune alias Gerda Sjöstrand (1862–1956) whom he had met in Helsinki and married in 1890 in Moscow. The parody, together with Busoni's ambiguous situation as Siegfried in Helsinki suggest that a creative overcoming of Wagner had become a question of artistic survival for the young composer, a posture that does not necessarily contradict Busoni's admiration for Wagner's artistic achievements and creative qualities.⁷⁹ Martin Wegelius seems to have played an important role in this process of self-positioning of the young composer. In the parody he played Hagen, a kind of pathfinder for Busoni's unconventional ending of "Die göttliche Dämmerung".

76 Weindel 1996, 49–54.

77 Busoni > Wegelius, 26 October 1893; Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv; see Appendix I, Letter 3.

78 Riethmüller 1991, 68–69.

79 "Busoni never admired Wagner but sincerely believed him to have attained perfection in his own sphere. Yet this sphere, in his opinion, occupied only a diminutive space in the 'sounding Universe'. Therefore, one had to take pains never to imitate him." Beaumont 1985, 31.

That Busoni might have found an ally in Wegelius in this respect – even though the latter remained a consistently enthusiastic admirer of Wagner and reacts sarcastically to Busoni’s exit from the Finnish Wagner world in *Der Ring*⁸⁰ – might be explained by Busoni’s ironic remark in a letter to Wegelius, written in Weimar on the 3 July 1889:

After a wonderful journey, which I enjoyed, I dwell comfortably in Weimar, where I work much and well. A few days ago I attended the music festival in Wiesbaden in which I took part and met Faltin. He was most enthusiast and seemed to be rejuvenated. I am back in Weimar again, where a little Nordic colony threatens to be established. The frontman: the Finn F.B. Busoni [...]. We are expecting [...] Sibelius and Janusfeld⁸¹ in autumn. Here we intend to open a local branch of the Helsingfors Music Institute and a society for the “introduction of Nordic musical art”. I will found another branch of the society in Verona, your favourite Italian city.⁸²

Nietzsche’s and Busoni’s Wagner parodies

The act of transferring Wagner’s most pretentious dramas to the realm of daily life in the sphere of the middle-class might have been an act of rebellion in itself. In this respect Busoni more or less literally followed a recommendation by Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) in *Der*

80 “Da bist du ja so gut wie tod [sic!]. Es ist überflüssig, Dich zu erschlagen” (Anyway, you are as good as dead. It’s redundant to try and slay you). Busoni 1892, *Der Ring*: “Die göttliche Dämmerung oder Die Mittsommernacht”, Act 3.

81 Armas Järnefelt, see above.

82 “Nach einer herrlichen Fahrt, die mir viel Freude gewährte, habe ich mich behaglich in Weimar eingenistet, wo ich viel u. gut arbeite. Vor Tagen besuchte ich das Musikfest in Wiesbaden, wo ich mitwirkte u. daselbst Faltin antraf. Er war in vollem Enthusiasmus und förmlich verjüngt. Wieder sitze ich in Weimar, wo sich eine kleine nordländische Kolonie anzusammeln droht. An der Spitze: der Finnländer F.B. Busoni [...]. Wir erwarten [...] im Herbst hoffentlich Sibelius u. Janusfeld [sic!]. Allhier beabsichtigen wir eine Filiale des Helsingforser Musikinstitutes zu gründen, sowie einen Verein zur ‘Einführung nordischer Tonkunst’. Einen weiteren Zweigverein davon werde ich später in Verona, deiner ital. Lieblingsstadt, ins Leben rufen.” Flodin 1922, 426–427; quoted in Wis 1977, 263.

Fall Wagner regarding how to test the mythic, and therefore the eternal content of Wagner's texts:

[O]ne translates Wagner into the real, into the modern, let us be still more cruel, into civil life! What happens with Wagner? To speak confidentially, I have attempted to do it. There is nothing more entertaining, more recommendable for a walk than to retell Wagner in more modest proportions. For instance, Parsifal as a student of theology, with high school education [...]. You will experience a surprise! Would you believe that the Wagnerian heroines – all of them – are like counterparts of Madame Bovary when you strip them of their heroic costumes! And on the other hand one comprehends that Flaubert was free to transfer his heroine into Scandinavian or Carthaginian and to offer her – as a myth – to Wagner as a libretto.⁸³

It is likely that Busoni knew this passage when he wrote the parody, given his earlier texts that point towards the same direction. According to Beaumont, Nietzsche's thoughts are "buried deep in the personality of the composer [Busoni] and rise to the surface only at times of dire need".⁸⁴ Busoni's Wagner conflict in Helsinki may have been such a moment of dire need and the parody, penned a few years later and following Nietzsche's advice, was a means of overcoming it. The parody suggests that Nietzsche's writings were important for Busoni long before he explicitly referred to them in *Neue Ästhetik der Tonkunst* in 1906.

Busoni was looking for a Romanic way out of Wagnerian domi-

83 "[M]an übersetzt Wagners in's Reale, in's Moderne, – seien wir noch grausamer! in's Bürgerliche! Was wird dabei aus Wagner? – Unter uns, ich habe es versucht. Nichts unterhaltender, Nichts für Spaziergänge mehr zu empfehlen als sich Wagnern in verjüngten Proportionen zu erzählen: zum Beispiel Parsifal als Kandidaten der Theologie, mit Gymnasialbildung [...]. Welche Überraschungen man dabei erlebt! Würden Sie es glauben, dass die Wagnerischen Heroïnen sammt und sonders, sobald man nur erst den heroïschen Balg abgestreift hat, zum Verwechseln Madame Bovary ähnlich sehn! – wie man umgekehrt auch begreift, dass es Flaubert freistand, seine Heldin in's Skandinavische oder Karthagische zu übersetzen und sie dann, mythologisirt, Wagnern als Textbuch anzubieten." Nietzsche 1888, chapter 9. See Nietzsche 1899, 34, for the English translation by Thomas Common. See also Borchmeyer & Kohler 1983, 285.

84 Beaumont 1985, 31.

nance in the early 1880s. For this reason, it was unlikely that he would be happy in Helsinki, which he experienced as a Wagner-dominated musical environment. The end of “Die göttliche Dämmerung” was a consequence of his attempts to gain independence from Wagner. This includes moments of repudiation as well as moments of admiration, but not in strictly separate consecutive periods.⁸⁵ Siegfried/Busoni serves as a personification of the Wagner conflict that the composer went through since the beginning of his career. The parody is the result of the young composer’s self-reflection on Wagnerian perspective – and as such, it is as impressive as it is amusing.

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⁸⁵ Riethmüller 1991, 269.

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APPENDICES I-II¹

Appendix I: Three Busoni Letters Edited by Christine Fischer

Editorial guidelines

Abbreviations have been written out in full. Busoni emphasized words or syllables by underlining, I replicated this method herein. Editorial additions are set in square brackets [].

1) Busoni 1884.1, letter to Joseph Viktor Widmann, 17 September 1884, Burgerbibliothek Berne, N Joseph Viktor Widmann 25 (9).

Sehr geehrter Herr Doctor,

Ich habe Ihre Dichtung zu Goetz' Oper "der Widerspaenstigen Zähmung" gelesen und aus der Bewunderung, die dieses Werk in mir erregte, fasse ich Muth [,] Ihnen vorliegende Zeilen zu schreiben.

Ich bin selbst ein junger, angehender Künstler, Componist, dessen Werke, wie ich zu meiner eigenen Genugthuung gestehen darf, einen unpartheiischen Erfolg errangen. Lange habe ich mich nicht an eine dramatische Composition gewagt, und habe den Schritt, den ich jetzt ausführen will, mit ernsten Studien und praktischem Fleiße vorbereitet.

Stoff und Dichter zu dem Texte einer Oper zu finden ist, wie Sie wissen, nicht leicht.

¹ The bibliography for these appendices can be found in the end of Christine Fischer's article.

Oft wandte ich mich darum an erfahrene Personen, doch diese wußten meistens mir weder Rath noch Bescheid zu geben.

Endlich theilte ich die längst gehegte Absicht dem hiesigen Kritiker der "Muße", Herrn Max Kalbeck mit, durch den Ihr Name und Ihre Dichtung mir bekannt wurden.

Obgleich ich mich bisher nur mit Kammermusik-Werken und Orchester-Compositionen beschäftigt, so fühle ich doch sehr stark den Drang zum dramatischen Schaffen. Ich möchte vorerst mit einer kurzen, zweiactigen, romantischen Oper auftreten (dieselbe könnte eventuell auch aus 3 kurzen Acten bestehen) und erlaube mir nun [,] Sie, gehrter Herr Doctor, zu fragen, ob Sie geneigt wären [,] mir zu solchem Werke Ihre gewandte, erfahrene Feder zu leihen, eine Textdichtung zu der beabsichtigten Composition zu liefern.

Ich glaube voraussetzen zu müssen, daß ich kein Wagnerianer im Sinne der modernen Kunstjünger bin, doch auch nicht zur Gegenparthei dieses erhabenen Meisters gehöre.

Das Textbuch, das ich mir wünsche [,] sollte jedoch durchaus nicht in Wagner'scher Dichtung gedacht noch gedichtet sein, doch auch wieder nicht nach der herkömmlichen, traditionellen Weise geformt werden. Allzu deutliche Abgrenzung der einzelnen Nummern voneinander, überlange Monologe und Scenen wollen vermieden sein. Der Chor soll sparsam, die dramatische Wahrheit möglichst wenig beeinträchtigend angewendet werden. Das Musikalische soll vorherrschen, die Sprache soll mehr poetische, plastische Stimmungen, als dichterische Feinheiten, oder Gedanken zum Ausdrucke bringen. Auch über die Wahl des Stoffes habe ich nachgedacht.

Sagen aus dem deutschen Mittelalter, eignen sich zum musikalischen Zwecke vollkommen. Nicht ohne Reiz wäre die Tradition des Schelmen von Bergen,² so man eine Handlung hinein zu flechten wüßte. Die Epoche bietet mehrere günstige, wirksame Momente. In anderer Richtung fände ich eine Dramatisierung von G[ottfried] Keller's Novelle "Romeo und Julie auf dem Dorfe"³ besonders anziehend. Es

2 Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), *Der Schelm von Bergen* (1846).

3 Gottfried Keller (1819–1890), *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* (1856).

sind darin Bilder und Szenen von großer Wirkung, die durch plastische Charaktere und Figuren [,] die sich dramatisch verwerthen lassen (so jene des schwarzen Geigers) [,] belebt werden. –

Für diesen Stoff wäre ich einigermaßen eingenommen, es steckt auch darin etwas Neues, was von den [sic!] gewöhnlichen, conventi- nellen Behandlung von Stoffen zu Operntexten, absticht. Doch auch der “Schelm von Bergen” ist nicht zu verwerfen. Den Helden stelle ich mir als einen [sic!] kecke verwegene Gestalt vor, deren Wirkung nicht ausbleiben dürfte.

Wenn ich noch hinzufüge [,] daß ich in der Kunst überhaupt das Kernige, Männliche, Plastische Allem anderen vorziehe, daß ich Klarheit, Reinheit der Form und der Darstellung, Sicherheit in der Zeichnung der Umriße und der Charaktere bevorzuge, so haben Sie ongefähr eine Vorstellung von dem, daß [sic!] ich mir wünsche.

Ich wäre Ihnen, sehr geehrter Herr Doctor, unendlich verbunden, wenn Sie die Güte haben wollten [,] mir umgehend eine Antwort auf die in vorliegenden Zeilen enthaltene Frage zu geben, und mir zugleich die Ansprüche und Bedingungen [,] die sich an die Erfüllung meiner Bitte knüpfen, gefälligst bekannt gäben. –

Empfangen Sie dafür meinen herzlichsten Dank im Voraus, und die Versicherung der vorzüglichsten Achtung [,] womit ich die Ehre habe zu verbleiben [,]

Ihr Ergebenster

Ferruccio B. Busoni

Döbling bei Wien.

Hauptstrasse 98.

bei Frau Westheimstein.

Am 17. September 1884.

2) Busoni 1884.2, letter to Joseph Viktor Widmann, 25 September 1884, Burgerbibliothek Berne, N Joseph Viktor Widmann, 25 (9) (copy), original since 1946 at Dichter- und Stadtmuseum Liestal.

Verehrtester Herr Doctor!

Daß Sie meinem Briefe mit so viel Liebenswürdigkeit und ohne alle Verzögerung Antwort gaben, verpflichtet mich Ihnen zu unendlichem Danke: gestatten Sie mir [,] Ihnen denselben aus vollem Herzen auszusprechen.

Ebenso gütig ist es von Ihnen, daß Sie mir Aussicht geben auf meinen Wunsch einzuwilligen, so daß ich hoffen darf, daß meiner künftigen Bühnencomposition schon im Voraus, durch Ihren illustren Namen und Ihre unschätzbare Mitwirkung, ein wirklicher Werth verleiht [sic!] werde.

In gleichem Maaße bin ich Ihnen dafür verpflichtet, daß Sie schon jetzt mit Ihrem schätzbaren Rathe – in Betreff einer geeigneten Lecture – mir beistehen; ein Rath, den zu befolgen ich mich beeilte, indem ich mir das betreffende Buch verschaffte und durchlas. Über Dieses ein Urtheil abzugeben, sowie auch über alle Punkte Ihres werthen Schreibens eine ausführliche und definitive Antwort zu geben, behalte ich mir in einem nächsten längeren Briefe vor.

Doch schon jetzt darf ich Ihnen gestehen, daß die Erzählung Alarcon's "El niño de la bola"⁴ auf mich einen gewaltigen Eindruck gemacht hat.–

Indeßen wiederhole ich Ihnen meinen tiefgefühltesten Dank und versichere Sie, daß ich mir [sic!] durch den Empfang Ihrer freundlichen Zeilen unendlich beehrt fühlte. –

Mit der Absendung eines zweiten Schreibens werde ich nicht lange zögern und Sie dürften dasselbe von mir in der nächsten Zeit erwarten.

Bis dahin verbleibt mit dem Ausdrücke vorzüglichster Hochachtung
Ihr ergebener

Ferruccio B. Busoni

Döbling/Wien 25.9. [18]84

4 Pedro Antonio Alarcón (1833–1891), *El niño de la bola* (1880).

3) *Busoni 1893, letter to Martin Wegelius, New York 26 October 1893, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv, Busoni-Nachlaß, Bl: 1173.*⁵

Lieber Freund Wegelius.

Der mitfolgende Scherz war schon vor einem Jahre in einer Stunde loser Laune geschrieben. Die kleinen boshaften Anspielungen sind deshalb ja nicht ernst zu nehmen. Meine Satyre brennt nicht wie ein vergifteter Pfeil, sondern höchstens wie Paprika, und ich bitte, daß du sie nur solchen Leuten zu schmecken gibst, bei denen dieser Pfeffer keinen⁶ Rache=durst zu erzeugen vermag. Am besten aber, du lachst dich für dich selbst darüber aus – falls du überhaupt darüber lachst – und schließt dann das Ding ein, oder zerreißest es.

Die Facta [,] auf die es anspielt [,] sind übrigens schon veraltet aber – notabene – die handelnden Personen sind zwar nicht verjüngt, wandeln aber noch auf Euerer Erde.

Ich sage "Euerer", denn sie ist von dieser amerikanischen höchst verschieden. Amerikanisch sind bei Euch nur die Zeitungsjungen und höchstens noch A-Merikanto.⁷ Au!

Durch Nya Pressen⁸ erfahren wir glücklicherweise Alles [,] was in Helsingfors öffentlich geschieht; "Tante Helmi"⁹ versorgt uns mit privateren Mittheilung [sic!]. Von dir hätte ich Beides umsonst erwartet!

Auch Dayas¹⁰ scheint sehr verschlossener Natur geworden zu sein und ganz finnisch. Ja, ja finnisch. Sein einziger, an mich gerichteter Brief, (der mich übrigens enorm freute) [,] spielte [sic!], ganz im finni-

5 Enclosed with the parody *Der Ring des Niebelungen in's Finnische übertragen*. The digital version of the letter can be found in <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0002B85400000000> accessed 31 August 2016.

6 Erased: "nicht".

7 Oskar Merikanto, composer, see below footnote 112; A-Merikanto is a play on words: "Amerika" (America). Incidentally, the name of his son was Aarre Merikanto, born 29 June 1893.

8 *Nya Pressen*, Swedish-language daily newspaper in Helsinki; see footnote 148.

9 Helmi Gunhild Sjöstrand (1864–1957), painter, sister of Gerda Busoni.

10 Allusion to William Humphreys Dayas (1863–1903); see footnote 134.

schen Volkston, stets zwischen Des dur u. Des moll. Das moll war leider (aber charakteristisch) vorwiegend...

Wenn du von mir Etwas wissen willst, so habe ich – scheint mir – im Clavierspiel Fortschritte gemacht; als Componist vollendete ich ein “Symphonisches Tongedicht” für größtes Orchester¹¹ (absolut nicht “kammermusikhaf”) [,] das ebensowenig, wie alle meine übrigen Sächelchen, deinen Beifall erhofft. Nichtsdestoweniger – (Ickedestomindre¹²) werde ich dir seinerzeit ein Exemplar der Partitur zuschicken; es ist eben im Erscheinen.

Boston haben wir Valet gesagt und New York wird wohl bald auch sich ohne mich trösten müssen.

Überall will man mich gern zurückhalten, wogegen ich wieder große Zurückhaltung zeige.

Ich bin unterdeßen um ein gutes Stück weniger deutsch geworden und treibe immer mehr zum Cosmopolitismus – ob zum Heil? wer weiß. Aber auch ein guter Lisztianer bin ich geworden; ich spiele jetzt mit Vorliebe (und beinahe alles!) von diesem Meister; ich glaube auch mit richtiger Auffassung. Mein Spiel hat dadurch entschieden an Glanz und dergleichen mehr gewonnen.

Ich brenne danach [,] Etwas von Sibelius kennen zu lernen; koennte ich was bekommen? Es waere möglich, daß man es zur Aufführung braechte. –

Grüße ihn herzlichst; vor Allem aber deine vortreffliche Frau Hanna,¹³ Berggroths,¹⁴ Wifung,¹⁵ Dayas, Ojanperä¹⁶ und noch viele ausgezeichnete Menschen. Herzlichst dein Alter, Unterlehrergehülfe

FBBusoni

11 *Symphonisches Tongedicht*, op. 32a, Busoni Verzeichnis 241.

12 “ickedestomindre” – “nevertheless” in Swedish.

13 Hanna Wegelius (1847–1906), Martin Wegelius’s wife (née Bergroth).

14 The maiden name of Wegelius’s wife Hanna; it may refer either to her parents, to her siblings and their families or to both.

15 Probably a colleague or a friend of Busoni in Helsinki, named or nicknamed Wifung, see footnote 142.

16 Abraham Ojanperä (1856–1916), see footnote 44.



Figure 1. Title page of Ferruccio Busoni, *Der Ring des Niebelungen in's Finnische übertragen*, [1892], Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv, Busoni-Nachlaß, CI: Textbuch 19; used with kind permission. Busoni was a talented painter. He might have designed this title page himself that shows Wagner carrying a Finnish 5-string kantele.

Appendix II:

Ferruccio Busoni's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in's Finnische übertragen von OMNIBUS [1892]¹⁷

Edited by
Christine Fischer,
Martin Knust and
Anne Kauppala

Editorial guidelines

Abbreviations have been written out in full. Later additions by Busoni are set in braces {}, and editorial additions in square brackets []. Stage directions are given in Italics and in standard brackets (). Names of characters are emboldened. As Busoni emphasized words or syllables by underlining, we replicated this method herein. Quotations from Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen* are according to the critical edition *Richard Wagner. Sämtliche Werke*. We would like to thank Ulla-Britta Broman-Kananen, Glenda D. Goss, Vesa Kurkela, Veijo Murtomäki, Pentti Paavolainen and Timo Virtanen for sharing their knowledge by commenting on the edition.

¹⁷ Accessible online at <http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB0002B8540000000>, accessed 11 June 2020. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv, Busoni-Nachlaß, CI: Textbuch 19; printed with kind permission.

Martin Wegelius¹⁸ zum 10. November¹⁹
Der Ring des Nibelungen
in's Finnische übertragen von
OMNIBUS²⁰

Der Ring des Nibelungen
in's Finnische übersetzt von
Ohne-Busse.²¹

-
- 18 Martin Wegelius (1846–1906), Finnish pedagogue, conductor and composer; studied in Helsinki, Vienna, Leipzig and Munich; founder of the Helsinki Music Institute in 1882; author of numerous textbooks on music theory. He was an enthusiastic Wagnerite who even wrote a Wagner biography in Swedish that remained incomplete and unpublished, stored at The Uniarts Helsinki Library: Sibelius Academy, accessible online at <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe2019111839002>, accessed 11 June 2020.
- 19 Busoni supposedly wrote this text in 1892 (after having left Helsinki) and sent it to Wegelius the following year on the occasion of his 47th birthday; see Christine Fischer's article in this volume.
- 20 Anagram for Busoni (except for the “m”). The first public transportation system in Helsinki, “Helsingin Raitiotie- ja Omnibus Osakeyhtiö”, was founded in 1888 and started regular service on two rail routes in the 1890s. The trams were drawn by horses.
- 21 Allusion to Omnibus (lat.: for everybody), in everyday language abbreviated to “Bus”; “ohne Busse” meaning “without buses” but also “without penitence”. This probably referred to the content of the parody, but also alluded to the composer's name.

Vorabend.

Das Vanda-Å-Gold.²²

[I. Szene]

*Scene in der Tiefe des Vanda-Å. Die drei Rheintöchter: Knorring,²³
Leander junior²⁴ und Solström²⁵ tanzend und singend.*

Knorring: Skål.

(Sie trinken Munk.)²⁶

Leander: Schade, dass wir nur drei sind. Sonst könnten wir ein
Maennerquartett singen.

Solström: Ja, wo sollen wir einen guten Tenor herkriegen?

Knorring: Ich denke einen zweiten Bass. Mit Falsett helfe ich
mir schon durch.

Leander: Ist das Vanda-Å-Gold noch da?

Solström: Ich kann nicht sehen. Ich hab' meine Brille verloren.

22 Vanda-Å, in the original sometimes also Wanda-Å, is the Swedish name of the river originating in a lake in Hausjärvi, continuing its route south through the city of Vanda (in Finnish: Vantaa) to Helsinki, where it flows into the Baltic Sea, Northeast of the capital.

23 Carl von Knorring (1861–1931) was serving as a naval cadet when he lost a leg due to an accident (see end of the scene, when he throws a crutch). After that he worked as civil servant on the Finnish railways. Around the turn of the century, he became a renowned figure in the cultural life of Helsinki. He conducted Akademiska Sångföreningen, an academic Swedish male choir in Helsinki (1885–1892, 1894 and 1899–1902), and thereafter the male choir of Sällskapet Muntra Musikanter (The Merry Musicians' Society) 1901–1903, see footnotes 24–25. Later he became the chairman of the board of the Swedish Theatre in Helsinki (1904–1916).

24 Adolf Emil Leander (1866–1932) was a conductor of the M.M. Choir (Sällskapet Muntra Musikanter) 1890–1891, see footnotes 23 and 25, and son of the military band conductor Adolf Fredrik Leander (1833–1899). He, in turn, was brass teacher at the Helsinki Music Institute and brother of the singer Adolphine (Adée) Thérèse Leander (1873–1935). In 1900 Adolphine married the music critic Karl Flodin, see footnote 148.

25 Gösta Sohlström (1849–1925) founded the Swedish male choir Muntra Musikanter in 1878 and directed it during the years 1878–1879, 1886–1890, 1898–1900 and 1911–1913. The choir's name is derived from a Swedish translation of a German song "Die lustigen Musikanten", composed by August Ferdinand Riccius (1819–1886).

26 Probably Bénédictine D.O.M. Munk Liqueur, produced in the Benedictine Abbey in Fécamp, situated in the French Normandie.

Csillag-Alberich,²⁷ als Mann "der die Liebe nie gekannt"²⁸ tritt auf und bewegt sich wie immer auf schlüpfrigen Wegen.

- Csillag:** Glatter, glitschiger, Glimmer²⁹ – (*erblickt Leander-Rheintochter*)
(*für sich:*) Wenn ich nur die für 2 Mark nach Hause nehmen könnte...
- Knorring:** (*begeistert*) Da ist ja der zweite Bass.
- Csillag:** Bewahre. Ich bin Geiger. (*für sich:*) Das Gold da oben wär' mir auch lieb. Vielleicht bekomm' ich zwei Fliegen auf einen Schlag. –
- {Knorring:** Wenn du ein Geiger [bist], so spiel' uns zum Tanz auf.
- Csillag:** Recht gern
(*spielt die ganze Partitur der Rheinscene auf der 4. Saite*)
War das nicht eine Virtuosenleistung?}
- Solström:** Der Mond scheint.
- Csillag:** O Du Sonnenstrom,³⁰ es ist ja nur meine Glatze.³¹
(*er will Leander fangen, erwischt ihn bei den Haaren. Diese bleiben ihm aber in der Hand.*)

27 Hermann Csillag (1852–1922), a violinist of Jewish Hungarian origin. He studied in Berlin and had a professorship in Rotterdam, after which he became a professor of violin at the Helsinki Music Institute, where he taught Jean Sibelius. Both names, Csillag and Alberich, were used interchangeably in the parody.

28 Not a direct citation of *Rheingold*, but probably derived from Alberich's unsuccessful courting of the Rhinedaughters as suggested by his words: "Erzwäng' ich nicht Liebe, / doch listig erzwäng' ich mir Lust?" and "so verfluch' ich die Liebe!" in the first scene of *Rheingold*. Perhaps "slippery" refers to Csillag's promiscuous reputation; see his first lines and footnote 95. Around 1900, the character of Alberich was often understood as a Jewish caricature, a premise supported by the fact that Csillag is described as being greedy.

29 Alberich in *Das Rheingold*, first scene: "Garstig glatter / glitschriger Glimmer!"

30 German translation of "Solström".

31 As early as 3 July 1889, Busoni referred to Csillag as shown in his letter to Martin Wegelius (who had left Helsinki at that time) by paraphrasing his baldness: "Unterdessen ist in Helsingfors ein anderer Mond in schönem (Violin-) Bogen untergegangen. Möge ihm Gott ein ruhigeres Temperament u. einen üppigeren Haarwuchs verleihen. Beides hat er nöthig. Nun ist er in eine andere Phase getreten u. leuchtet wohl den heimathlichen Gefilden", Flodin 1922, 426–427, cited according to Wis 1977, 263.

Knorring: O Wunder, zwei Monde! Lieber Herr Csillag, wollen Sie nicht ein Glas Munk?

Csillag: Ja, wenn's nichts kostet.

Alle vier: Skål.

Die drei Rheintöchter kneipen, bis Sie [sic!] unter den Tisch fallen.

Unterdessen macht sich Csillag-Alberich mit dem Gold davon.

Knorring bemerkt es und wirft ihm eine Krücke nach, kann aber nicht aufstehen. – Allgemeiner Katzenjammer der Rheintöchter.

II. Scene.

Vor dem fertigen Bau der Kalewalhalla.³² –

Commerzienrath [Borgström]-Wotan³³ schläft wie gewöhnlich. Frau Fricka-Borgström³⁴ kommt mit Papilloten im Haar.

Fricka: Wie konntest du den beiden Architekten eine Kiste von deinen besten Cigarren, von den "Freia"³⁵ versprechen? Das ist Verschwendung.

Wotan: *(Erwacht, reibt sich die Augen und streckt sich.) –*

Fricka: Fi,³⁶ das ist nicht gentleman like, sich so zu strecken. –

Wotan: Bekommen wir nicht bald den Thee?

Fricka: Antworte lieber auf die Cigarrenkiste!

Wotan: Liebe, englische Frau – –

32 "Kalewalhalla" is a combination of two names, created by fusing the word "Kalevala", the Finnish national epos, and "Walhall".

33 Name "Borgström" deleted; Busoni uses it interchangeably with the name Wotan in his parody. Johan Leonard Borgström (1832–1907) was a Finnish entrepreneur and manager of a famous Borgström tobacco factory in Helsinki, located in Kruunuhaka, Meritullinkatu 1, practically in the centre of Helsinki. He was also an active politician, co-founder of the Helsinki Music Institute and the first chairman of its board.

34 Alice Travers (1834–1919), Johan Leonard Borgström's wife of English origin.

35 Whether the name "Freia" was indeed a brand of cigars, perhaps manufactured at Borgström's factory, could not be verified. Maybe Busoni had the Norwegian sweets and chocolate manufacturing company Freia (started in 1889) in mind.

36 The Swedish word "Fy" means "boo".

- Fricka:** Ah was, ich will keine Schmeicheleien. Du wirst die Cigarrenkiste behalten.
- Wotan:** Ich hab sie schon gegeben.
- Fricka:** (*Reisst sich die Papilloten vom Haar, aus Verzweiflung*)
*Fasolt-Hoyer*³⁷ und *Fafner-Smelewsky*³⁸ kommen.
- Hoyer:** Bin ich nicht ein zweiter Brunelleschi?³⁹
- Smelewsky:** Gutes Material in dem Bau.
- Wotan-Borgström:** Hört Kinder [,] die Cigarrenkiste...
- Smelewsky:** Richtig, wir haben eine Cigarre versucht. Sie sind absolut unrauchbar.
- Hoyer:** Ich war den ganzen Tag krank davon.
- Borgström:** (*unglücklich*) Es ist aber mein bestes Fabrikat...
- Smelewsky:** Kein Penni werth. Hier ist die Kiste zurück. Wir wollen lieber das Vanda-Å-Gold dafür haben.
- Fricka:** (*triumphierend.*) Ah, ich hab sie.
(*Steckt sich eine Cigarre an, wird aber seekrank und geht davon, sprechend:*)
Meine englische Erziehung erlaubt mir nicht... vor Freunden...⁴⁰
- Borgström:** Aber Kinder, das Vanda-Å-Gold hat Alberich-Csillag gestohlen – ich hab's nicht.
- Hoyer:** Ist uns Wurst. Hier Papier und Feder. Unterschreiben Sie, Herr Commerzienrath. –
- Wotan unterschreibt einen Wechsel auf das Vanda-Å-Gold.*
(*Die Riesen ab.*)

37 Carl Theodor Höijer (1843–1910), renowned Finnish architect and creator of the Ateneum building in Helsinki which opened in 1888 as public display for the art collection of the Finnish Art Society.

38 This character is difficult to identify, but he could perhaps be P. Smelewsky, a factory owner living in the centre of Helsinki at that time (Wladimirsgatan, since 1929 Kalevankatu).

39 Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446), architect and sculptor, most famous for the cupola of the Florentine Dome St Maria del Fiore.

40 Erased: "(*Hinter der Scene rauscht ein Wasserfall.*)"

Wotan-Borgström vertreibt sich die Zeit [damit], in das Heilige Speer [sic!]⁴¹ die Statuten des Musikinstitutes in Runen einzugraben.

III. Scene

Nibelheim.

Csillag-Aberich schlägt seinen Bruder Wasenius-Mime,⁴² der ganz schwarz von Zeitungsschwärze und eigener Bosheit erscheint.

Wasenius-Mime: O Weh! O Weh! Warum schlaegst du mich so?

Csillag: Kannst du deine zweite Geige nicht besser spielen?
(schlägt ihn wieder)

Mime: O weh, ich spiele ausgezeichnet.

Csillag: (wüthend) Ah' ich bin Gott sei Dank Concertmeister,
obwohl man mich überall weggejagt hat.⁴³

(Beide ab.)

Wotan-Borgström und sein "schlauer" Secräter [sic!] Loge-Ojanperä⁴⁴ kommen.

Ojanperä: Hier ist König's Biertunnel.⁴⁵

Borgström: Du darfst meiner Frau nichts davon sagen. –

41 Allusion to Wotan's spear in which the law was engraved.

42 Karl Fredrik Wasenius (1850–1920), music critic with the pseudonym "Bis"; in 1888 he founded a publishing house in Helsinki and worked as composer and violin player. He used to play in string quartets together with Csillag.

43 Busoni wrote in a letter to Katharina Petri on 25 September 1888 about Csillag: "Er war in Rotterdam Professor und zehrt an einige Jugenderfolgen, die er mit Hervorzeigung von alten Programmen und Kritiken triumphierend beweist. Traurige Existenzen das! Ist Jude und besitzt das Talent, es sich mit allen Leuten zu verderben", Weindel 1999, 23.

44 Abraham Ojanperä (1856–1916), Finnish bariton; after having studied in Dresden he returned to Helsinki and worked successfully as a vocal teacher in the Helsinki Music Institute. He was a member of the Common Richard Wagner Club in the 1890s and singer in the first performance of a Wagner opera in Finland, *Tannhäuser*, in 1904; see footnote 16.

45 A beer hall inside Hotel Kämp in Helsinki, inaugurated in 1887 and operated by the German Karl König.

- Ojanperä:** (*Mit Intelligenz*) O – ich weiss – ich weiss
(*singt für sich: "Loge her"*)⁴⁶
- Wotan-Borgström:** Du Narr, das habe ich ja zu singen und erst im nächsten Stück.
- Ojanperä:** O, es ist wahr, aber ich meine – jag menar att⁴⁷ – den Begleitung – o es ist krossartig – Perkele,⁴⁸ wie schade [,] daß ich keine Sprache kann!
- Borgström:** Da kommt ja Csillag-Alberich.
- Ojanperä:** Den werden wir fangen.
- Borgström:** Wie denn?
- Ojanperä:** O, ich denke – es ist sehr leicht.
- {Alberich:** Was wollen die Zwei hier? Der eine hat Geld, soviel ich weiß, obwohl er schlecht geigt; der andere hat keins, geigt auch schlecht und ist leider mein College.
(*er geht ihnen mit freundlicher Mine entgegen.*)}
- Ojanperä:** (*zu Csillag*) Was hast du da für einen Helm?
- Csillag:** Ei, das ist ein Tarnhelm.
- Ojanperä:** Und was machst du damit?
- Csillag:** Wenn ich ihn aufsetze kann ich jede Gestalt bekommen [,] die ich will.
- Borgström:** (*mit Interesse*) Kannst du auch wie ein Commerzienrath aussehen?
- Ojanperä:** Das ist ja krossartig, wenn ich das hätte, könnte ich ja im Theater jede Rolle spielen und mir grade Beine anschaffen. –
- Borgström:** Nun zeig' mal.
- Csillag:** Sofort. Wollt ihr etwas recht Großes sehen?
(*verwandelt sich in einen philosophischen Messias*)

46 Wotan in *Walküre*, Act 3, scene 3: "Loge, hör! Lausche hierher!"

47 "jag menar att": "I mean, that" (Swedish); Loge-Ojanperä mixes Swedish and Finnish words and speaks German with a Finnish accent ("krossartig" instead of "großartig").

48 "Perkele!" = "Devil!" (a common Finnish swear word).

Ojanperä: Das verstehe ich nicht. Aber ich habe Scheidemantel⁴⁹
als Alberich in Dresden gesehen [,] der...

Borgström: (*unterbrechend*) Du erschreckst uns.

Ojanperä: (*Pfiffig*) Kannst Du Dich auch klein machen?

Csillag: O ja, das kleinste, das Ihr Euch denken könnt.

(*Erscheint wieder in seiner eigenen Gestalt.*)

Ojanperä: Da sind wir sogar größer.

(*Sie fangen Csillag [,] indem Wotan ihm ein Jahresgehalt von 4000 Mark als Lehrer garantirt.*)

Mime rächt sich an Alberich, indem er ihm eine schlechte Recension im Hufvudstadsbladet⁵⁰ drucken läßt.

IV. Scene

(*wie in der II.*)

Fasolt und Fafner bekommen den Schatz und Commerzienrath Wotan wird⁵¹ der Wechsel zurückgegeben.

Fasolt: Ich will den Ring.

Fafner: Nein ich. (*Sie streiten.*)

(*Fasolt wird finanziell todt, indem er sich Ecke Vladimirsgatan⁵² verbaut und in Schulden kommt.*)⁵³ (*Geht ab. –*)

49 Karl Scheidemantel (1859–1923), a German bariton and famous Wagner singer who worked in Dresden 1886–1911 and performed in Bayreuth. Scheidemantel's signature roles were Wolfram (*Tannhäuser*) and Hans Sachs (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*).

50 Swedish daily newspaper in Finland, founded in 1864 by August Schaumann.

51 Erased: "bekommt den".

52 The Finnish version of the street name was Vladimirkatu (or Wladimirkatu), today Kalevankatu, in the southwest of Helsinki; the road stretched from Ruoholahdenranta to Mannerheimintie leading to Aleksanterinkatu. At the turn of the 1890s "Luna", a huge neo-renaissance building designed by the architects Elia Heikel and Konstantin Kiseleff, was erected at the corner of Wladimirkatu (Kalevankatu) and Heikinkatu (Mannerheimintie).

53 Erased: "**Fafner-Smelewsky** verwandelt sich in *Concertmeister Sitt*: [footnote 102] und singt: 'lasst mich schlafen'" [see *Siegfried*, Act 2: Fafner: "Ich lieg' und besitz: - / lasst mich schlafen!"], was ihm vom Orchesterverein bewilligt wird. This deletion also occurs in the second scene of "*Sieg und Fried*", see footnote 103.

Commerzienrath Wotan: Nun, Kinder, ist alles in Ordnung.

{Fafners Schuld habe ich mit bedeutendem Profit ausgeglichen.}

(Zu Fricka) Du hast die Cigarrenkiste, ich hab' die Kalewalthalla und dir

(zu Loge-Ojanperä) gebe ich tausend Mark zur Belohnung, damit du dir London ansiehst.

Ojanperä: Ist der Londoner Nebel nicht schlecht für die Stimme? *(für sich)* 1000 Mark sind nur 40 Pfund. Wie schäbig.

Loge brennt – vor Ungeduld abzureisen [.] – Der Brandcorps Meister erscheint als Donner und macht Feueralarm, der Violin-Bogen von Csillag wird ein Regenbogen und das Stück schließt mit der Eröffnung des Musikinstituts und der Bewilligung einer Staatsunterstützung auf drei Jahre.

Erster Tag

Die Walküre.

[I. Akt]

Huntings [sic!] Haus. Alexandergatan.⁵⁴ Es ist Nacht. Sieglinde-[Ilta] [,]⁵⁵ eine "Musikälskarinna" [,]⁵⁶ allein.

54 Alexandergatan (in Finnish Aleksanterinkatu) is one of the principal streets in Helsinki and one of the best-known shopping areas in the capital. (Karl) Viktor Ekroos (1844–1914), a civil servant and amateur violin player and husband of Anna Matilda (Ilta) Ekroos. His family home was in Alexandergatan (Aleksanterinkatu) 11.

55 Anna Matilda (Ilta) Ekroos (née Lagus, 1847–1928), an alto singer and member of the soloist-ensemble of the Finnish Opera Company (1870–1878), wife of Viktor Ekroos, see footnote 54. Ilta is also the Finnish word for evening.

56 "Female music lover" (Swedish).

Sieglinde: Es hilft nichts. Von meinem Mann bekomme ich keine Kinder mehr und für ein romantisches Verhältniß werde ich bald zu alt.⁵⁷

{Die Bibel sei mein Trost.

*Sie schlägt die Bibel auf (Moses. 38,9).}*⁵⁸

Halvorsen-Siegmund⁵⁹ (*kommt herein und ist sehr durstig.*)

Sieglinde: (*für sich*) Ein junger Mann – die letzte Hoffnung.⁶⁰
(*Bringt ihm eine Flasche Cognac [sic!], die er sofort aussäuft.*)
*Stummes Spiel waehrend dessen die Violoncelle getheilt in die Höhe steigen.*⁶¹ – *Auch die Meinungen sind sehr getheilt.*

Siegmund: (*für sich*) Teufel, daß die Cellisten immer so hoch wie die Geiger krabbeln wollen. –

Hunting-Ekros kommt und merkt nichts.

{**Hunting:** Freut mich [,] Sie zu sehen. Ihr Name?

Siegmund: Halbes darf man nicht heißen
Orgel möchte ich wohl sein
doch Senfteig muss ich mich nennen.

Hunting: Der Kukuk wird klug aus dem Geschwaetz.

Siegmund: Ei, das ist eine Charade. Die drei ersten Sylben [.]⁶²

Hunting: Und das Ganze?

Siegmund: Was wissen Sie von [dem] ‘Ganzem’??

57 Deleted: “Es bleibt nichts übrig [words illegible]”.

58 Genesis 38, 8–10: “Then Judah said to Onan, ‘Go in to your brother’s wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother’ [vers 8]. But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. So whenever he went in to his brother’s wife he would waste the semen on the ground, so as not to give offspring to his brother [vers 9]. And what he did was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and he put him to death also [vers 10].”

59 Johan Halvorsen (1864–1935), Norwegian composer, conductor and violin player; after studies in Stockholm and Leipzig and a sojourn in Scotland, he stayed in Helsinki 1890–1893 working as a soloist and teacher at the Helsinki Music Institute. He dedicated his *Suite for violin and piano* to Viktor Ekroos, see footnotes 54 and 90.

60 Allusion to *Walküre*, Act 1, Sieglinde: “Ein fremder Mann! Ihn muß ich fragen.”

61 Wälsungen leitmotiv in *Walküre* Act 1, scene 1, measures 204–222.

62 The first underlined syllables add up to the name “Hal(v)orsen”, see Siegmund in *Walküre*, Act 1: “Friedmund darf ich nicht heißen; / Frohwalt möcht’ ich wohl sein: / doch Wehwalt muß ich mich nennen.”

- Hunting:** (*zu Siegmund.*) Theilen Sie mit mir ein Glas Wein.
- Siegmund:** Danke, ich trinke nur Cognac.
- Hunting:** Nun, dann gute Nacht.
- Siegmund:** (*spöttisch*) Schlafen Sie nicht zu fest. –
Nach einer Weile kommt Ilta wieder.
- [Sieglinde:]** (*für sich*) Mein Mann merkt nichts und schläft wie ein Murmelthier, wir wollen's also versuchen. –
- Siegmund:** Da sind Sie ja wieder. Sagen⁶⁸ Sie 'mal [,] was ist das da in dem Baum [?]
(zeigt auf den Schwertgriff)
- Sieglinde:** Das ist ein Schwert, keiner kann's herausziehen.
- Siegmund:** Nichts leichter als da[s]
(Zieht sein Schwert heraus.)
- {Alberich:** (*von unten*) Das hätte ich auch zusammengebracht.}
- Sieglinde:** (*schreit*) Ach! So was habe ich immer geträumt, aber nie gesehen. Es ist wunderschön!
- {Regisseur:** Nun muss der Zeltvorhang gelüftet werden.
- Siegmund:** Das besorg ich selbst.
(Er schlägt den Vorhang auf. Man erblickt eine Herbstlandschaft.)}
- Sieglinde:** (*Bewundernd*) Wie heißest Du denn?
- Siegmund:** Ich heiße Halvorsen.
- Sieglinde:** Was für ein Pech. Grad du mußt mein Zwillingsbruder sein. Aber ich kümmere mich ein[en] Pfifferling d'rum.
- Siegmund:** Nun, dann meinetwegen kann der Vorhang fallen. –

68 Erased: "Was ist".

II. Scene [sic!]

Molly-Brünhilde [sic!]⁶⁴ *kommt und schreit mehr als nothwendig über die Frauenemancipation.*

(Singt:) Walküre und Amazone
Sind beide gar nicht ohne
Doch scheint's nur Zeitvertreib
Ge'n das moderne Weib.
Leider muss ich mich quälen
Mit Stunden, Sapperment
Sonst koennte mir nicht fehlen
Nen [sic!] Sitz im Parlament.
Ich würde sie verblüffen
Mit meinem Argument
Mit Advocaten-Kniffen
Und meinem Weib-Talent
Ich würde sie vernichten
Die Männer bis an's End
Sie sollten mir entrichten
Noch eine fette Beut'
Der grösste dieser Herren⁶⁵
Sollt' sein der Sklave mein,
So aber muss ich leider
Stets eine Jungfrau sein.

*Dr. Engström⁶⁶ kommt, untersucht sie und geht kopfschüttelnd ab.
Commerzienrath Wotan und Frau Commerzienrath.⁶⁷*

64 Erased: "-Holstius". Molly Karin Holstius (1849–1895), piano teacher in Helsinki, studied with Richard Faltin and at the Conservatory in Leipzig. She remained unmarried. Her sister Bertha Paulina Holstius (1845–1891), a renowned piano teacher in Helsinki, was married to Carl August Wahl in 1863. Both were sisters-in-law of Richard Faltin, see footnote 76.

65 Erased: "Männer".

66 Otto Engström (1853–1919), a renowned gynecologist who was engaged as a professor in 1892 at the Imperial Alexander University (University of Helsinki since 1919) in Finland.

67 Alice (née Travers, 1834–1919), the wife of Johan Leonard Borgström since 1858.

- Fricka:** Hast du gehört von dem Scandal in Alexandergatan?
- Commerzienrath:** (*gutmüthig*) Ja [,] man spricht Schlimmes, aber Professor Pfeffer⁶⁸mann versichert mir, es waere nur ein Bauchpilz.
- Fricka:** Bauchpilz oder nicht – ich kenne die Sachen besser – ich verlange, dass Du den Anstand rettetest.
- Commerzienrath:** Gut, ich will mit Siegmund ein Wort reden.
Sieglinde⁶⁹ kommt noch etwas interessanter als gewöhnlich und Commerzienrath Borgström bittet Siegmund "um ein Wort".
- Borgström:** Lieber Siegmund, das Beste wäre [,] Sie nähmen Ihren Abschied.
- Siegmund:** Sehr gern. Aber mein Sohn? –
- Borgström:** Verlassen Sie sich deshalb ganz auf Prof. Pfeffer⁷⁰mann.
- Siegmund:** Nun gut. Adieu nu.
- Borgström:** (*freundlich*) Das Schiff geht um 6 Uhr, Sie haben Zeit [,] Ihre Koffer zu packen.
- Siegmund:** O [,] ich nehme nur mein Schwert mit.
- Borgström:** Erlauben Sie, das geht nicht.
(Schlägt ihm das Schwert in Stücken [sic!])
- Siegmund:** O weh, ohne Schwert, Adieu schoene Carrière.
(Ab.)
Molly-Brünhilde⁷¹ kommt und spricht über die Rechte der Frauen.

68 Erased: "Salz", probably play on the words 'salt and pepper'; as such Busoni might have been referring to Fredrik Salzmann (1839–1914), a well-known doctor, residing in Helsinki and connected to the Helsinki Music Institute. In 1879 he became a professor of surgery, and later the director general of the medical administration of Finland and a privy counsellor.

69 Original: "Ilta", see footnote 54.

70 Erased: "Salz", see footnote 68.

71 Erased: "Holstius".

Molly-Brünhilde: Liebes Fräulein, Sieglinde [,] vertrauen Sie nur mir, ich verstehe Sie, ich würde dasselbe gethan haben. Kommen Sie, ich führe Sie in's Accouchement Haus.⁷²

Commerzienrath: (*wüthend*) Was, so wird der Anstand bewahrt? Was werde ich von meiner Frau für [eine] Explosion erleben.
(*drohend*) Fräulein Brünhilde, wir sprechen uns noch.

(*Fräulein H[olstius]* fasst die Hoffnung als erste Lehrerin engagirt zu werden.) –

III. Act

*Walkürenversammlung in Riddaregatan No. 10.*⁷³ *Es wird Caffé mit Kuchen servirt,*⁷⁴ *Molly-Brünhilde präsidiert.*

*Frau Walküre Faltin*⁷⁵ *führt ihr geliebtes Ross Richard*⁷⁶ *an der Nase herein.*

[**Walküre Faltin:**] Ist er nicht süß mein Richard? Sieh' die schönen zwei Falten zwischen den Augen.

Brünhilde: Ja [,] die kommen vom schweren Begreifen.

Walküre Faltin: Und seine Flügel sind sie nicht schön?

Brünhilde: Oja, es sind ja Hamburger-Steinway's Flügel.

72 Maternity hospital.

73 Richard Faltin's address in Helsinki.

74 Deleted: "(Jetzt Norra Esplanad) ???". Since the 1830s a café, founded by the Swiss Flavio Catani (1781–1871) and famous for its pastries and cakes, was located at Norra Esplanad 31. Catani's son Anton, and later his grandson John, continued the business until 1917.

75 Olga Anna Holstius (1843–1901), the wife of Richard Faltin since 1863. They had six children, born between 1864 and 1881, see footnote 76.

76 Richard Faltin (1835–1918), conductor, organist, music pedagogue and composer of German origin, active in Finland since 1856. He was an important personality in the Helsinki musical scene, and became a music teacher in 1869 at the Imperial Alexander University in Finland (University of Helsinki since 1919). He was also an important champion of Wagner in Finland, see Riikka Siltanen's article in this volume.

- Walküre Faltin:** O, und so stark. Denkt, er hat damit den Mime geschlagen, dass er sich krümmte.
- Eine Walküre:** Der hat aber wieder annoncirt.
(*Zeitungen werden geholt. Es entsteht ein großes Geschrei um die Blätter.*)
- Ross Richard:** (*schüchtern*) Wenn ich meine bescheidene Meinung sagen dürfte...
- Walküre Faltin:** (*entrüstet*) Hat man je gehört, daß ein Pferd spricht?
- Ross Richard:** Du hast recht.
- Commerzienrath Wotan:** (*erscheint.*) "Mit Ihnen Fräulein Brünhilde möchte ich sprechen."⁷⁷
- Walkürenchor:** O [,] wir wollen nicht belästigen.
(*geht ab*)
- Brünhilde:** Wie gütig von Ihnen, Herr Commerzienrath.
(*für sich* Schade [,] dass der liebenswerte Herr schon verheiratet ist.)
- Commerzienrath:** Meine Frau hat mir Bemerkungen gemacht über die Protection [,] die Sie öffentlich einer Dame zukommen liessen [,] welche – welche –
(*räuspert sich*)
- Molly-Brünhilde:** Aber die Rechte der Frauen? Mein Freund Ibsen,⁷⁸ den ich in München besuchte, schrieb mir ins Album – – –
- Commerzienrath:** Es handelt sich nicht um Ibsen, sondern um den Anstand. Kurz [,] ich muß Sie, wenigstens zum Schein, bestrafen. –
- Molly:** Aber warum?
- Commerzienrath:** Weil meine Frau es will.

77 No direct citation from *Walküre*, probably alluding to Wotan's words in *Walküre*, Act 3: "Steh! Brünnhild!" and "Hörst du's, Brünnhilde? / Du, der ich Brünne, / Helm und Wehr, / Wonne und Huld, / Namen und Leben verlieh? / Hörst du mich Klage erheben [...]?"

78 Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906), a Norwegian writer, whose drama *A Doll's House*, premiered in 1879, had become an important contribution to the women's emancipation movement.

- Molly:** Ihre Frau? Oh, ich waere [sic!] Ihnen eine andere Frau gewesen sein!
- Commerzienrath:** (*weich*) Ich glaube es Ihnen. Aber ich kann nicht 2mal heirathen.⁷⁹
- Brünhilde:** Also müssen wir uns trennen. O [,] ich möchte [,] dass dieser Abschied ewig waere.⁸⁰
- Commerzienrath:** Ja, das wollte Wagner auch, aber alles muß ein Ende haben.
(*Er ruft Loge-Ojanperä.*)
- Commerzienrath:** Lieber Ojanperä. Nun mußst du die Abschieds-Szene für mich spielen. Ich kann nicht singen.
- Loge-Ojanperä:** O – krossartig – aber den Begleitung –
- Commerzienrath:** Die soll Fräulein Brünhilde spielen.
- Brünhilde:** Das ist mir zu schwer.
- Ojanperä:** O – jag kan mycket bra⁸¹ – ohne den Begleitung – ich habe alles im Kopf. (*singt*) “Leb wohl – Du schoene –”⁸²
- Commerzienrath:** Ich habe für Sie ein Zimmer in der letzten Etage von Grönqvist Haus⁸³ gemiethet – Herr Loge wird sie führen. Ich bitte sehr, im Namen meiner Frau, unser Haus nicht zu besuchen.
- Brünhilde:** Schon recht.
(*piquirt*) Ich bitte aber nur kein Feuerzauber, mein Fett würde dabei schmelzen.

79 Erased: “Wir müßen uns trösten.”

80 Word play with “wäre” and homophone “währe”: “would be” / “would last”.

81 “I can do it very well” (Swedish).

82 Wotan in *Walküre*, Act 3: “Leb wohl, du kühnes / herrliches Kind! / Du meines Herzens / heiligster Stolz! / leb wohl! leb wohl! leb wohl!”

83 Grönqvist House (originally Grönqvistska huset) was finished in 1883 and named after its architect, Fredrik Wilhelm Grönqvist (1838–1912). It was designed by Carl Theodor Höijer (see footnote 37) and at the time of its construction the largest private building in Northern Europe. It covers an entire quarter in the Northern Esplanade 25–27 extending from Fabianinkatu 12 to Kluuvikatu.

Ojanperä-Loge: (*hört nicht*) "Ein bräutliches Feuer soll dir nun brennen"⁸⁴

(*Geht singend mit Brünhilde ab.*)

Zweiter Tag

Sieg und Fried'.⁸⁵

I. Act.

*Höhle bei Alphütten.*⁸⁶ –

Mime-Wasenius: (*zerbricht sich den Kopf über eine Recension.*)

Hier Mendel'[s]

Conversationslexikon;⁸⁷ Ambros'

Musikgeschichte⁸⁸ habe ich mir auch zu Hülfe genommen. Fatale Arbeit. Erstens muß ich alles Schwedisch übersetzen und zweitens verstehe ich nichts davon. Wie bringe ich meine Recension fertig? "Ach [,] ich kann es nicht schweißen"⁸⁹

84 Wotan in *Walküre*, Act 3: "ein bräutliches Feuer / soll dir entbrennen, / wie nie einer Braut es gebrannt!"

85 On another page of the manuscript "Sieg-und-Fried".

86 "Alphütten" = "Alphyddan" or "Alppila", a famous restaurant situated on a hill close to what is nowadays the Linnanmäki amusement park in Helsinki. It was designed as a log cabin with terrace.

87 Hermann Mendel and August Reissmann, *Musikalisches Conversationslexikon. Eine Enzyklopädie der gesamten musikalischen Wissenschaften für Gebildete aller Stände*, Leipzig: List & Francke, 1870–1879.

88 August Wilhelm Ambros, *Geschichte der Musik*, Leipzig and Breslau: F.E.C. Leuckart, 1862–1868.

89 Alluding to Mime's words in *Siegfried* Act 1: "Zwangvolle Plage! Müh' ohne Zweck! [...] Und kann ich's nicht schweißen, Nothung, das Schwert!"

(**Commerzienrath Wotan als Wanderer**).

Mime: Ach mein Principal. Man muß gute Miene zum bösen Spiel machen. Nun, womit kann ich Ihnen die Zeit angenehm machen? Lieben Sie Räthsel?

Commerzienrath: Wenn Sie [sic!] nicht zu schwer sind.

Mime: Was geben Sie mir zum Pfand, wenn Sie nicht rathen?

Commerzienrath: Meinen Kopf.

Mime: Puh, das ist nicht viel. Aber wir wollen anfangen. Zuerst. Wie komme ich dazu, Recensent im Hufvudstadsbladet zu sein? Mir ist das ein Räthsel.

Commerzienrath: Weil du die nöthigen Talente, nämlich Dummheit und Bosheit besitzt!

Mime: Ah, dachte ich mir's doch, daß ich Talente hätte. Nu, zweitens. Warum ist die Sieglinde nach 6 Monate[n] und nicht nach 9 niedergekommen?

Commerzienrath: Weil er Siegmund⁹⁰ heisst.

Mime: Ei! Dein Kopf ist doch viel werth. Nu, aber das dritte. Wie konnten Sie, bei Ihren schlechten Zigarren, so reich werden?⁹¹

Commerzienrath: Dummkopf, weil der Schwindel immer Glück macht. – Nun aber sollst du mir drei Räthsel lösen. Bei deinem Strohkopf.

Mime: O weh. Ich muß [es] wohl versuchen.

Commerzienrath: Erstens. Was ist ein Ohrfeigen[-]Gesicht [?].

Mime: Ein Gesicht auf⁹² dem lange Ohren und große Feigheit zu sehen, also meines.⁹³

90 Erased: "Halvorsen (Half år sen)" = "half a year ago" or "half a year later" (Swedish), allusion to Halvorsen's fathering of an illegitimate child by Ilta Ekroos who was married to (Karl) Viktor Ekroos, see footnotes 54, 55 and 59.

91 See footnote 35.

92 Erased: "mit langen Ohren und grosser Feigheit".

93 Erased: "**Commerzienrath:** Bravo. Wer ist der schlechteste Dichter?"

Mime: Wagnier, weil er mich gedichtet hat."

Commerzienrath: Bravo. Zweitens. Was ist die Ewigkeit?

Mime: Das, womit ich etwas begreifen lerne.

Commerzienrath: Sehr gut. Nun das schwerste. Wo ist jetzt der ewige Jude?

Mime: O Weh, o Weh, das kann ich nicht rathen.

Commerzienrath: Du hast deinen Kopf verloren. Der ewige Jude ist in Pesth,⁹⁴ spielt Geige und hat ein Verhältnis mit der Köchin eines Restaurant[s] III. Ranges.⁹⁵ Adieu. Deinen Kopf behalte⁹⁶ und komm' morgen pünktlich ins Contor.

(ab.)

(Mime ist sehr aufgeregt und macht sich wieder an die Recension.)

Siegfried-Busoni *(kommt und fängt mit Mime einen Streit über Claviere an.)*

(Mime antwortet, indem er sich in einen Capellmeister verwandelt.)

Busoni-Siegfried: Herr Capellmeister, was haben Sie sich hereinzumischen?

(Der Capellmeister wird wieder Mime und der Mime ein ganz kleiner Wurm.)

Mime: Seien sie wieder gut, Herr Siegfried, ich bin ein armer Familienvater; hier ist eine schöne Kiste Cigarren von der Fabrik Wotan.⁹⁷

Busoni: Du fängst mich nicht mit Deinen⁹⁸ Zigarren, ich weiß, Du willst mich damit vergiften.

Mime-Wasenius *fängt an, Siegfrieds⁹⁹ Hinteren zu zu lecken. –*

94 Erased: "u."

95 Probably an allusion to the Jewish Hungarian Hermann Csillag, see footnotes 27 and 28.

96 Allusion to *Siegfried*, Act 1, end of scene 2 when the Wanderer passes Mime's head to the one "der das Fürchten nicht gelernt". Original: "Dein weises Haupt wahre von heut: / verfallen laß ich es dem, / der das Fürchten nicht gelernt!"

97 Erased: "Borgström".

98 Erased: "solchen".

99 Erased: "Busonis".

Busoni-Siegfried: Donnerwetter, das wird zu arg.

(*Gibt ihm einen Fusstritt*) und bläst dann lustig in sein Horn

Mime: (*boshaft*) Sie haben gekixt, sie haben gekixt, morgen schreib ich's in der Zeitung.¹⁰⁰

II. Act.

Waldgegend zwischen Petersburg und Helsingfors.

Fafner liegt verwandelt¹⁰¹ als Concertmeister Sitt,¹⁰² bewacht den Schatz und singt: "lasst mich schlafen" [,]¹⁰³ was ihm vom Orchesterverein bewilligt wird.

Busoni-Siegfried: (*kommt.*) Lieber Herr Concertmeister, eigentlich habe ich nichts Persönliches gegen sie, aber ich muß mir Ihren Schatz da nehmen.¹⁰⁴

Sitt: Ich bin viel zu faul um zu streiten, nehmen Sie mein wegen den Schatz.

Siegfried stachelt ihn, aber das rührt Fafner nicht.

Frau Sitt.¹⁰⁵ (*aufgeregt*) Ich höre Du hast einen Schatz. Ich werde sofort zu meinen Eltern nach Petersburg fahren. Wer ist der Schatz? Ist es die Mimi?¹⁰⁶

Sitt: (*gähnend*) Aber liebe Frau. Rege mich nicht auf. Ich muß nächstes Jahr das Andante aus Bruch's Concert spielen und will Ruhe haben, mich vorzubereiten. Der

100 Deleted: "Siegfried componirt vierhändige Stücke über finnische Lieder, Mime schüttelt den Kopf und denkt, sie sind schlecht."

101 Erased: "*vor einer Höhle*".

102 Anton Sitt (1847–1929), a violinist of Bohemian origin who worked in Helsinki since 1882 and the first violinist of the Philharmonic Orchestra in 1885; brother of the famous violin player Hans Sitt (1850–1922).

103 See footnote 53.

104 Erased: "erkämpfen".

105 Sima (Serafima) Sitt (née Wekowsky, 1860–1945) was married to Anton Sitt since 1881, see footnote 102.

106 "Mimi" was the nickname of Molly Karin Holstius (1849–1895), see footnote 64.

- Schatz ist kein Mädel [,] sondern ein wirklicher.
- Frau Sitt:** Jaso, nun mein Vater ist reich genug – wir brauchen den Schatz nicht.¹⁰⁷
- Siegfried:** Dann nehme ich ihn.
- Sitt:** Meinetwegen.
- Siegfried:** Auch den Tarnhelm.
- Sitt:** Auch den. Ich kann mich nicht mehr verwandeln.
- Mime:** Lieber Herr Siegfried, geben Sie mir den Schatz, ich will Sie dafür heruntermachen ha ha! und fein intrigieren hi! hi!¹⁰⁸
- Siegfried:** Du?
(Blamirt ihn so colossal, daß er moralisch todt wird.)
Sitt geht nach Hause zum Abendbrot.
Siegfried versucht ein finnisches Lied zu blasen, [das] gelingt ihm aber (nach der Meinung der einheimischen Musiker) nicht.
- Vogel Ilmari Krohn:**¹⁰⁹ *(tritt auf)* Ich höre Sie plagen sich¹¹⁰ da umsonst mit vierhändigen Sachen, ich kann Ihnen sehr hübsche Dinger anbieten, ganz echte.
- Siegfried:** Ei woher habt ihr sie?
- Krohn:** Na¹¹¹ ich hab sie sorgfältig gesammelt und sehr schlecht harmonisirt.

107 The father of Sima Sitt was the factory owner Paul Wekowsky.

108 Mime's laughter in *Siegfried*, Act 2: "gewinn' ich dein trautes Schwert, / und mit ihm Helm und Hort! Hihihih!" and "Drum [...] hau' ich dem Kind den Kopf erst ab; / dann hab' ich mir Ruh' und auch den Ring! Hihihihihihihihihihih!"

109 Ilmari Krohn (1867–1960), Finnish musicologist and composer; studied in Helsinki, Leipzig and Weimar. Wrote his dissertation on Finnish sacred folksongs and extensively collected Finnish folk music. He edited several collections of these melodies with his own harmonisations (*Suomen kansan sävelmiä*, Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1893–1910). Also active as a music critic, choir conductor and organ player, as well as teacher, including, among other places, at the Helsinki Music Institute in 1900–1901, 1905, 1907, 1914–1916. He was nominated as the first lecturer of music history and theory at the Imperial Alexander University in Finland and 1918–1935 he was the first supernumerary professor of musicology at the University of Helsinki.

110 Original: "Sie".

111 Erased: "Ei".

- Siegfried:** Und ich hab' sie von meinem eigenen Kopf. Ich brauch' dich nicht.
- Ilmari Krohn:** Sagen Sie [,] was sie wollen, ich habe mein Schlußzeugniss vom Leipziger Conservatorium in der Tasche. (*Geht stolz ab.*)
- Siegfried:** Das war ein kurioser Vogel.
- Vogel Merikanto:**¹¹² (*tritt auf.*) Hören Sie, wie göttlich ich phantasie-re. Das ist finnische Tonkunst.
- Siegfried:** Was machen Sie damit?
- Merikanto:** Volksconcerte à 50 Penni Entrée. Das heisst [,] ich wirke nur mit.
- Siegfried:** Gehen Sie, Sie sind ein Dilettant.
- Merikanto:** Sagen Sie [,] was Sie wollen, man nennt mich aber schon in Finlands [sic!] Musikgeschichte [,] (*geht stolz ab.*)
- Siegfried:** Das war auch ein kurioser Vogel.
- Vogel Brückner:**¹¹³ (*tritt auf.*) Fürchten Sie sich nicht, ich will Ihnen keine Concurrenz machen; ich hab aber solange als Flötensolist geblasen, daß ich mich jetzt paaren will. Aber denken Sie nicht, das ist ein schönes Lied? (*zeigt ein Manuscript*)
- Siegfried:** Gehen Sie und versuchen Sie noch Kinder zu machen ehe es zu spät ist. Ihr Lied ist miserabel.
- Brückner:** Sagen Sie was Sie wollen, aber ich bin finnischer Bürger¹¹⁴ und werde mir eine Stellung machen.

112 Oskar Merikanto (1868–1924), Finnish composer, music critic and organ player. Studied in Leipzig and Berlin; important contributor to the development of the Finnish music scene at the turn of the 1900s. He composed the first opera in Finnish language *Pohjan neiti* (1898), premiered in 1908. Busoni, among others, did not hold Merikanto in high esteem, whose taste appeared to him as too folkloristic and popular. He mocked him in the accompanying letter of the parody addressed to Wegelius 26 October 1893, see footnote 7. Nevertheless, during Merikanto's lifetime, his songs and piano tunes were well-received in Finland.

113 Gustav Julius Brückner (1865–1927), violin player who had studied in Dresden and worked as teacher in Gothenburg where he married the Finnish musician Aina Erika Edlund (1863–1931) in 1891 before they moved back to Germany.

114 Erased: "u. durch".

(Geht stolz ab.)

Ein ganzer Schwarm von munteren Musik-Vögeln¹¹⁵ kommt und singt finnische Lieder.

Siegfried: *(deckt sich die Ohren.)* Teufel, nun wird es sentimental und ekelhaft fad. Das ist aber doch komisch, daß ihr Kapellmeister eine der Rheintöchter ist!¹¹⁶ – Nun hab' ich die finnischen Lieder satt.

(Er schreibt schnell einige Variationen über Kultaselle¹¹⁷ und verscheucht die Vögel.)

Die Vögel M.M.: *(davonfliegend)* Wir sehen uns noch in der Götterdämmerung!

Ein Vogel Stadsbod¹¹⁸ kommt und bringt das Stammbuch von Fräulein Holstius nebst Brief.

Siegfried: *(liest)* "Es würde mich freuen wenn Sie mich besuchen. Ich bin am Sonntag zu Hause. Grönqvist Haus, letzte Etage".¹¹⁹

Siegfried *(gibt dem Vogel ein Trinkgeld und verspricht zu kommen.)*

Die Vögel lachen ihn aus.

Dritter Act.

Letzte Etage in Grönqvist Haus.

Siegfried: *(prustend)* Uf, die vielen Treppen.

Brünhilde: Sie sind der größte Künstler.

Siegfried: Und sie das fetteste und naseweiseste Frauenzimmer [,] das ich je gesehen.

115 Erased: "bekannt unter den Initialen M.M.", see footnotes 23–25.

116 Footnotes 24 and 25.

117 Ferruccio Busoni, *Kultaselle. Zehn kurze Variationen über ein finnisches Volkslied* [To Darling. Ten short variations on a Finnish Folk Song], Busoni-Verzeichnis 237, for cello and piano.

118 Recte "stadsbud": "errand boy" (Swedish).

119 See footnote 83.

- Brünhilde:** Sie vergessen die Rechte der Frauen.
- Siegfried:** Und Sie möchten nie genug von den Pflichten der Maenner.
- Brünhilde:** Sie sind sehr scharfsinnig.
- Siegfried:** Und Sie sehr scharf und sinnlich [.]
- Brünhilde:** (*schmeichelnd*) Gegen Sie würde ich nur das letzte sein.
- Siegfried:** Und ich gegen Sie nur das erste.
- Brünhilde:** (*dreht den Spiess um*) Ich liebe nur geistigen Verkehr und will nur einen Kameraden.
- Siegfried:** Dann nehmen Sie Hunting.¹²⁰
- Brünhilde:** Das kann ich nicht. Ich habe seine Frau vertheidigt und mich deshalb mit Commerzienraths gezankt.
- Siegfried:** Dann versuchen Sie's vielleicht mit Vogel Brückner.
- Brünhilde:** Ach ja, Vögeln liebe ich sehr. Wenn man aber das Geistige mit der Sympathie des Blutes vereinen koennte...
- Siegfried:** Das ist sehr schwer. Bitte aber auf mich nicht zu rechnen.
- Brünhilde:** Also ich habe mich getäuscht.
- Siegfried:** Es scheint so.
- Brünhilde:** Sie sind also nicht der große Künstler, den ich meinte. Wie können Sie, mein Herr, so unedel von mir denken? Glauben Sie ich würde mir auch nur einen Finger von Ihnen anrühren lassen? (*Gibt ihm herzlich die Hand* [.] Wir bleiben gute Freunde.
- Siegfried:** Sehr gern, als Kameraden.
- Brünhilde:** (*schenkt ihm ein Buch von Ibsen.*) – Und das zum Andenken;¹²¹ Ibsen ist mein Freund und hält etwas von mir. –
- Siegfried:** Ich bin kein Ibsen. Adieu. –
- Brünhilde:** (*für sich*) War wieder umsonst.

120 Erased: "Ekroos", see footnote 54.

121 Erased: "wenn Sie lesen darin, erinnern Sie sich".

Dritter Tag

Die göttliche Dämmerung oder Die Mittsommernacht.

[Vorspiel.]

Die drei Nornen¹²² (*Fräulein Wendell*,¹²³ *Tavastjerna* [sic!] *die aeltere*¹²⁴
und *Leontieff*¹²⁵ *ziehen den Faden und singen.*)

Wir sind die Faden-Mädchen¹²⁶

und spinnen ohne Raedchen

Und haben kein Talent

Wendell: Ich bin der Anfang

Tavastjerna: Ich die Mitte

Leontieff: Ich das End!

Wendell: Ich bin der Anfang und bleibe immer am Anfang und
komme nicht weiter. Ein ewiges Wunderkind der Natur.

Tavastjerna: Ich bin die Mitte

Um mir [sic!] dreht sich Alles,

Der Anfang und das Ende

Sie gehen durch meine Haende [.]

Ich bin nicht ganz so dumm

Und spiele Organum [.]

Ich dirigire Chor

Und hab' ein gutes Ohr [.]

Ich bin der Secräter [sic!]

122 Erased: "Parzen".

123 Gerda Wendell (1870–1956), pianist, studied at the Helsinki Music Institute during the years 1885–1890 and 1891–1893.

124 Olga Zelma (Selma) Maria Tavaststjerna (1858–1939). She was an organist and music pedagogue, and Richard Faltin's former organ student at the Helsinki Music Institute. She taught singing (1890–1913), solfège (1890–1929) and organ (1893–1920) and worked as a librarian and treasurer at the Helsinki Music Institute.

125 Antonie ("Toni") Leontjeff (1861–1922), pianist, studied at the Helsinki Music Institute 1883–1891 and taught piano there 1886–1922.

126 Word play: "die faden Mädchen" translates into "the boring girls".

- Und der Bibliothekär [sic!]
 Ich¹²⁷ gebe Unterricht
 Was kann ich Alles nicht?
 Ich bin die rechte Mitten
 Und Mittelmässigkeit
 bin überall gelitten
 und mache mich recht breit.
- Leontieff:** Ich bin das Ende und schneide den Faden ab, hab mir die Haare abgeschnitten und möchte mir gern ein Stück Nase abschneiden, wenn es ginge.
- Tavastjerna:** (*verwandelt sich in die praktische Vernunft.*) Kümmere Dich nicht um die Nase, wenn du nur deine Stelle behältst.
- Wendell:** Was leuchtet dort für ein Licht?¹²⁸
- Tavastjerna:** Das ist Ekman,¹²⁹ das neue Licht vom Musik Institut. Singe, Schwester.¹³⁰
- Wendell:** Ich hab's gelernt, kann es aber nicht. Singe Du.
- Tavastjerna:** Ich kann auch nicht singen, singe aber doch.
 (*Sie singt die Concertarie von Beethoven¹³¹ begleitet von Leontieff*)
 (*Kann auch gestrichen werden.*)
- Tavastjerna:** (*sinkt so bedeutend in der Stimmung, daß nur ihr Oberkörper mehr aus der Erde steht.*)¹³² Ich glaube, ich bin etwas tief.

127 Erased: "kann auch Stun[den geben]".

128 *Götterdämmerung*, prelude: Erste Norn: "Welch Licht leuchtet dort?"

129 Karl Ludvig Ekman (1869–1947), a piano student at the Helsinki Music Institut 1889–1892. Among his teachers were Ferruccio Busoni, William Dayas, Richard Faltin and Martin Wegelius. He later became one of the first Finnish piano players known outside his home country. He worked also as conductor, composer, music pedagogue and music critic. Father of the writer Karl Ekman (1895–1962).

130 *Götterdämmerung*, prelude: Erste Norn / Zweite Norn: "Singe, Schwester, / dir werf' ich's zu."

131 Ludwig van Beethoven, *Ah, perfido, spergiuero*, concert aria for soprano and orchestra op. 65.

132 Stage directions *Rheingold*, fourth scene: "[...] wird plötzlich Erda sichtbar, die bis zu halber Leibeshöhe aus der Tiefe aufsteigt."

- Leontieff:** Das habe ich nicht bemerkt.
Wendell: Jetzt müssen wir etwas prophezeien. Ich sehe nur den Anfang der Dinge, also sprich du.
Tavastjerna: Ich sehe nicht weiter als was vor meiner Nase ist. Du?
Leontieff: Ja, bei der Götterdämmerung kann man das Ende nicht absehen.

(Sie verschwinden.)

[I. Akt]¹³³

*Gunther-Dayas*¹³⁴ und *Hagen-Wegelius*¹³⁵ sitzen in der Kapelle.

- Dayas:** Hör, Martin, sage mir Mensch
Sitz ich nicht herrlich beim Munk?
William zu Wegelius Ruhm.¹³⁶
- Wegelius:** Du solltest heirathen, und der Guttrune-Gerda¹³⁷
wünsche ich auch einen Mann.
- Dayas:** Ich bin schon verlobt.
- Wegelius:** Das macht mir ein[en] Strich durch die Rechnung. Ich wollte Du hättest die Brünhilde geheirathet.
- Dayas:** Warum nicht gar. Erstens will ich kein Des-Moll (Dayas-Molly) werden und zweitens gab mir Dr. Engström¹³⁸ sehr zweifelhafte Informationen.
- Wegelius:** Schade. Aber der Siegfried könnte die Guttrune nehmen. Skål på det.¹³⁹
- Dayas:** Skål.

133 Original: "II. Scene".

134 William Humphreys Dayas (1863–1929), American composer and pianist, studied in Germany, among others with Franz Liszt; taught at the Helsinki Music Institute 1890–1894; see footnote 10.

135 Martin Wegelius, see footnote 18.

136 *Götterdämmerung*, Act 1, scene 1: Gunther: "Nun hör', Hagen; / sage mir, Held: / sitz' ich herrlich am Rhein, / Gunther zu Gibich's Ruhm?"

137 Gerda Sjöstrand (1862–1956), piano teacher and, since 1890, wife of Busoni. They met in Helsinki and married in Moscow (Busoni 1958).

138 See footnote 66.

139 "Skål på det": "Cheers to that", "let's drink to that" (Swedish).

(*Sie saufen.*)

- Siegfried:** (*kommt.*) Bin ich hier recht in Finland [sic!] ?
- {**Dayas:** Da ist ja der gehörnte Siegfried.
- Siegfried:** Wieso? Ich bin noch nicht verheirathet.}
- Wegelius:** Grüß Gott¹⁴⁰ Busoni!
Danke für die Invenzioni.
- Dayas:** Wir wollen Bruderschaft trinken. Zapf dir etwas Blut.
- Dr. Engström:** (*mischt sich plötzlich hinein*) Halt, das Blut ist schon ganz verdorben, ich habe [einen] Blick [dafür] und warne dich. Er koennte dich anstecken.
- Siegfried:** Den Menschen halte ich für einen ausgemachten Charlatan!
- Wegelius:** Er ist ein Modearzt für hysterische Frauen.
- Siegfried:** (*zu Dayas*) Was ist mit der Brünhilde [?].
- Dayas:** S'ist nichts. Ich mag nicht.
- Siegfried:** Nun, wenn Du sie nicht nimmst, dann nimm die Stelle als mein Nachfolger ein.
- Wegelius:** Abgemacht.
- (*Sie saufen zu dritt.*)
- Siegfried:** Und ich nehm die Gutrune.
- Wegelius:** Und ich berufe eine Lehrer-Conferenz für morgen Abend mit Toddy.¹⁴¹
- Wifung vom Geschlecht der Wifungen:**¹⁴² Da komme ich hin.
- Loge-Ojanperä:** A – krossartig – neuer Lehrer – Herr Gunther
– Herr Collega – willkommen – nicht wahr Sie wollen mich begleiten – a, den Begleitung – krossartig – haben Sie Lieder componirt – ach, wissen Sie – Sie sollen eine Oper componiren – mit grosser

140 Erased: “Da ist ja der”.

141 “Toddy” is a punch of Scottish origin, but popular in Scandinavian countries. It is made from a strong alcoholic liqueur, mostly cognac or rum with hot water, often with lemon and honey, or sometimes sugar.

142 An unidentifiable allusion to Wagner's *Gibichungen*, probably a teacher in Helsinki named or nicknamed Wifung. Busoni sent greetings to him in his letter to Wegelius, accompanying the parody; see footnote 15.

Baritonpartie – o ich möchte sehr gern nach Amerika
– das ist krossartig – Herr Pusoni – ich gratulire zur
Verlobung – det war en – värkligen¹⁴³ – nein – krossar-
tig – nein danke – ich rauche nicht – ach ja, wir wollen
Skål trinken.

II. Act.

Brünhilde: (*kommt.*) Wagner war ein grosser Meister, denn er
giebt mir sogar zwei Maenner.
Siegfried und Gunther. Ich hätte mich nicht ge-
sträubt, den zweiten zu nehmen, so aber hab' ich kei-
nen einzigen.
(*singt*) "O ewig Jungfrau zu verbleiben"¹⁴⁴
(*Dr. Engström und Dayas schneiden Grimassen im Hintergrunde.*)

III. Act.

*M. M.'isten, Wegelius-Hagen, Siegfried-Busoni, Dayas-Gunther und ande-
re machen einen Ausflug nach Grakholm.*¹⁴⁵

Siegfried: (*erstaunt.*) Da sind ja auch die drei Nornen. Wie kom-
men die hierher?
Wegelius: Lieber Freund, du bist komisch. Jedes Ding hat doch
Anfang, Mitte und Ende, warum nicht auch unser
Ausflug?
*Die mittlere Norne bereitet einen Frukost-Middag*¹⁴⁶ [,] *an dem
alle theilnehmen.*
Siegfried: (*zieht sich zurück, um ein kleines Bedürfnis zu machen,
stösst aber auf die 3 Rheintöchter.*)

143 Mixture of "verkligen" – "really" (Swedish) and "värk" – "pain" (Swedish).

144 Not a direct citation from the *Ring*-libretti; inverts Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, where Brünhilde is forced to marry Gunther and allow Siegfried into her chamber.

145 Recte "Kråkholmen" (in Finnish Varissaari, "Crow island"), small island southeast of Helsinki.

146 Swedish for "brunch".

- Siegfried:** Potz Tausend, das ist eine komische Insel, da sind auch die Rheintöchter.
- Die Rheintöchter:** Die Vanda-Å ist ausgetrocknet.
- Leander:** Wir sitzen im Trockenem, da wir kein Gold mehr haben.¹⁴⁷
- Knorring:** Nun, Munk hat doch eine schöne Goldfarbe, trösten wir uns.
- Alle drei:** (*im Accord*) Skål.
- Siegfried:** Wenn das Gesöff nicht reiner ist wie Euere Stimmung, so werdet ihr Katzenjammer bekommen.
- Die Rheintöchter:** Den haben wir immer.
- Flodin:**¹⁴⁸ (*einfach*) Das ist wahr.
- Siegfried:** (*will fort*)
- Rheintöchter:** Halt, gib uns den Ring.
- Siegfried:** (*lachend*) Ei, das ist mein Verlobungsring, gestern bei Mellin¹⁴⁹ gekauft, den geb ich nicht her.
- Rheintöchter:** (*mit langen Gesichtern*) Sooh!
(*wieder lustig*) Da gratuliren wir.
(*Ergreifen diese Gelegenheit, um wieder anzustoßen.*)
- Siegfried zu Wegelius:** Lieber Freund, ich weiß du solltest mich in diesem Act erschlagen; aber ich gebe lieber meine Demission und reise ab.
- Wegelius:** (*den Kopf von oben nach unten schüttelnd*) Und wohin?
- Siegfried:** Nach Rußland.
- Wegelius:** (*sarkastisch*) Da bist du ja so gut wie tod [sic!]. Es ist überflüssig, Dich zu erschlagen.
- Siegfried:** Kannst du mir nicht was pumpen?

147 Erased: "Solström: Und ich hab' ganz verdammte Schulden; die wollten mich gar nicht zu der Pariser Ausstellung fortlassen."

148 Karl Theodor Flodin (1858–1925), Finnish writer of music books and articles, music critic and composer; studied in Helsinki and Leipzig. He wrote for the Swedish daily newspapers *Nya Pressen*, *Aftonposten* and *Helsingfors Posten* in Helsinki and became famous for his critiques of Jean Sibelius's music.

149 Otto Roland Mellin (1834–1904), renowned goldsmith with a shop in Helsinki.

- Loge:** Ah, Moskau etc. (*unterbricht*) –
*Ein Dachdecker*¹⁵⁰ *kommt, weinend mit Trauerflor.*
- Siegfried:** Ah, Herr Dachdecker, warum in Trauer?
- Decker:** Sollte nicht Ihr Begräbniss stattfinden? Es war auf dem Programm angesagt.
- Siegfried:** Für heute noch nicht. Ich reise.
- Decker:** (*weint noch mehr*) Ach wie schade um das schoene Begräbniss, ich waer' so gern dabei gewesen.
- Brückner:** (*kommt.*) (*neugierig*) Ist der Siegfried schon erschlagen?
- Siegfried:** Im Gegentheil, ich habe mich verlobt.
- Brünhilde:** (*weint vor Aerger*)
- Decker:** Kommen Sie, lassen Sie uns den Trost der Religion genießen.
(gehen ab)
- Wegelius:** Es dämmert. Wir wollen nach Hause gehen.
- Commerzienrath Wotan:** Mir dämmert auch etwas.
- Alle:** Das ist nicht möglich.¹⁵¹

150 Erased: "Architekt Decker". Alexander Theodor Decker (1838–1899), renowned Finnish architect who designed three villas during the years 1870–1880 for the three children of his father-in-law, the business man Henrik Borgström (1799–1883), among them Decker's wife Adelaide (1846–1889). One of the buildings was Villa Decker where the couple lived with their children. Adelaide Decker was the sister of the tobacco manufacturer "Commerzienrath" Johan Leonard Borgström, see footnote 33. It is possible that Decker's funeral garments are mentioned because he had lost his wife the 25 December 1889.

151 Erased: "Letzte Szene
Allgemeiner Abschied Siegfrieds am finnischen Bahnhof. Allgemeine Umarmungen und Versprechungen.

Brünhilde: Ich schicke Ihnen das Neueste von Ibsen.

Wifung: Such mir eine Stelle. –

Mime: Empfehlen Sie meine Claviere.

Die Rheintöchter singen Hurrah.

Loge: A Moskau, grossartig, Kreml – Wie im Orient – aber viel Schmutz – ja – das ist Schade –

Borgström: (*gerührt*) Grüßen Sie die Fohström [Alma Fohström (1856–1936), a Finnish coloratura soprano who was engaged at the operas of Saint Petersburg and Moscow 1890–1900].

Decker (*weint*)

Zum Schluss erscheint Siegfrieds Hund Lesco [Busoni's Newfoundland dog; Pfohl 1925, 5–6, 8–9 and Bertoglio 2016, 8–9] *und wedelt mit dem Schwanze.* –

Der Vorhang fällt.

Richard Wagner erscheint vor der Rampe.

[**Wagner**]: Meine Herren, eigentlich wollte ich Ihnen nur eine deutsche Kunst geben, aber mein Genie ist so beispiellos [,] dass es auch für Finland was abwirft.¹⁵²

Sibelius:¹⁵³ *(vom Parterre, stotternd)* Aaabb... bravv... bbravo *(stöhnt)* Meister – Meister. Wir müssen ihm ein Sexar in 35¹⁵⁴ geben
(zu Järnefelt) Hast du Geld?

Järnefelt:¹⁵⁵ Nein
(zu Paul) Hast du?

Paul:¹⁵⁶ Nein, aber ich lade Euch alle ein. – Eine solche Gelegenheit muss man feiern.

Er telephonirt zu[m] Societätshaus.

Wagner *(sagt:)* Eigentlich wollte ich Ihnen nur eine Deutsche Kunst geben, aber mein Genie ist so gross, daß es auch für Finland was abgibt."

152 Parody of Wagner's controversial speech in the Bayreuth Festspielhaus after the *Ring* world premiere on 30 August 1876 in which he suggested the German nation embrace his work as a new national dramatic artform (Knust 2007, 171–172).

153 Jean Sibelius (1865–1957); during his student years in Helsinki, Sibelius met Busoni and they became friends. Together with Adolf Paul and Sibelius's brothers-in-law, Armas and Eero Järnefelt, they founded the circle of the Leskovites, named after Busoni's Newfoundland dog (Bertoglio 2016, 8). For more information about the friendship between Sibelius and Busoni, see Goss 2009, 76–80.

154 "Sexa" is a late evening meal (Swedish). 35 might refer to a cabinet number in the famous restaurant Societetshuset (nowadays the City Hall in the Market Square).

155 Armas Järnefelt (1869–1958), Finnish composer and conductor; studied with Wegelius and Busoni at the Helsinki Music Institute (1887–1890), then in Berlin and Paris. Between 1906–1907 he was director of the Helsinki Music Institute, and from 1907, conductor at the Royal Swedish Opera Stockholm. Later he became the conductor and artistic director for the Finnish National Opera. He conducted the first performance of a Wagner opera in Finland, *Tannhäuser*, in 1904. His brother Eero Järnefelt was a famous Finnish painter and teacher of visual arts at the Imperial Alexander University in Finland (University of Helsinki since 1919), 1902–1928. He portrayed Jean Sibelius in 1892.

156 Adolf Paul, originally Adolf Georg Wiedersheim-Paul (1863–1943), Finnish author who studied piano with Busoni at the Helsinki Music Institute 1886–1889 in the early years of his career. In 1891 he wrote the autobiography *En bok om en människa* [A book about a person], describing his friendship with Jean Sibelius. Later Sibelius wrote incidental music for his play on King Christian II.

57
 Weg. Es dämmeret. wir wollen
 nach Hause gehen.
 Comm. Wotan. Mir dämmeret
 auch etwas.
 Alce. Das ist nicht möglich.

~~Allgemein Letzte Scene.
 Der Abschied Siegfrieds am finnischen
 Bahnhof. Allgemeine Ermahnungen
 sind besprechungen.
 Bruch. Ich möchte Ihnen das Hauptwort
 wissen. Such mir eine Stelle. -
 Mime. Empfehlen Sie meine Claviere.
 Die Rheintöchter singen Hurrah.
 Loge a Wotan, grossartig, Kreml
 - wie im Orient - aber viel
 Schmutz - ja - das ist Schade -
 Das (Gerüst) greifen Sie die Folsion.
 Becker. (weint)
 Zum Schluss erscheint Siegfrieds
 Hund Lesco und wedelt mit dem
 Schwanz. - Wagner sagt:
 Eigentlich wollte ich Ihnen nur ein
 Deutsche Kunst geben, aber mein Genie~~

*so gross, Siegfried auch
 für Finkenwald warhaftig.*

Figure 2. Last page of Ferruccio Busoni, *Der Ring des Niebelungen in's Finnische übertragen*, [1892], with the entrance of Busoni's/Siegfried's dog Lesco and Richard Wagner himself. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Musikabteilung mit Mendelssohn-Archiv, Busoni-Nachlaß, CI: Textbuch 19; used with kind permission.

In the Lab with Wagner: Jean Sibelius's *Jungfrun i tornet* (JS 101) as Experiment¹

ULRICH WILKER

On 17 July 1941 Jean Sibelius received a letter from the United States. It was written by Cyril Clemens of Missouri, the founder of the Mark Twain Society, and it read, “Did we ever tell you that Mark Twain himself was a great admirer of your glorious music, especially the opera Tornissa[?]”.² Clemens referred to Sibelius’s only completed opera, *Jungfrun i tornet* (“The Maiden in the Tower”), a one-act opera composed in 1896. It is very unlikely that Mark Twain knew this work because it was not performed again in Mark Twain’s lifetime nor was it published or recorded until the 1980s.³ Nevertheless, it would be nice to imagine that Mark Twain, whose opinion of Wagner’s lengthy music dramas was notoriously ambivalent, would have liked a small-scale, one-act opera by Sibelius, who, as Eero Tarasti has pointed out in his essay “Sibelius and Wagner”,⁴ was himself highly ambivalent about Wagner. Although Sibelius was very impressed with Wagner’s music after hearing *Parsifal*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Siegfried*, *Die Walküre*, *Götterdämmerung* and *Die Meistersinger* in Bayreuth and Munich in 1894, he wrote to his wife Aino, “I was awfully excited about

1 I am indebted to two anonymous peer reviewers for their constructive and helpful advice and to Glenda Dawn Goss for her help with the English language and numerous helpful notes. – Only after the completion of this article, Tuomas Hannikainen published his study on *Jungfrun i tornet* which therefore could not be taken into account anymore. See Hannikainen 2018.

2 Cyril Clemens > Jean Sibelius, 17 July 1941; see Goss 2009b, 86. Customary Finnish translation for Sibelius’s opera is *Neito tornissa*.

3 See Mäkelä 2011, 201.

4 Tarasti 1996.

Meistersinger. But, oddly enough, I am no longer a Wagnerite.”⁵ Instead, Bizet’s *Carmen* became his new favourite opera. And after studying scores by Franz Liszt, Sibelius abandoned his plans for completing his then current opera project, “Veneen luominen” (The Building of the Boat). Instead, he used some of the musical material for the four *Lemminkäinen Legends*.⁶

It was in the year of the premiere of the first version of *Lemminkäinen*, 1896,⁷ that Sibelius composed *Jungfrun i tornet*, using a libretto by the Finland-Swedish writer Rafael Hertzberg (1845–1896). The opera was composed for a lottery soirée for the Helsinki Philharmonic Society and premiered at that soirée in the Hotelli Seurahuone on 7 November 1896.⁸

The single act of *Jungfrun i tornet* consists of eight scenes: After the overture, the maiden is picking flowers while waiting for her lover. Instead, a bailiff arrives and tries to seduce her. She rejects him, but he catches her and imprisons her in the tower. In the second scene the maiden prays to the Holy Virgin for rescue, and in the third scene her prayers seem to have been heard: She recognizes the voice of her father, but he misunderstands the situation, and the maiden stays in incarceration. In the fourth scene we are introduced to the lover, who sings about his beloved, while in the fifth scene he discovers her in the tower, and they sing a love duet. In the sixth scene there is a confrontation between the lover and the bailiff, but then the chatelaine arrives, and the bailiff is arrested. In the eighth and final scene the three protagonists and the choir sing in praise of love and faithfulness.

Some commentators have considered the libretto the reason for *Jungfrun i tornet*’s lack of success.⁹ Even today, this work is seldom performed and rarely appreciated. Another reason, however, may lie

5 Jean Sibelius > Aino Sibelius, Munich 22 August 1894, English translation cited in Wicklund 2013, VIII. The Finnish text is given on p. XII, endnote 10: “Meistersingeristä olin hirveän innoissani. Mutta – kummallista en ole enään mikään Wagneriaani.”

6 Wicklund 2013, VIII–IX.

7 Dahlström 2003, 559.

8 Goss 2009a, 231.

9 See for example Barnett 2007, 108.

in the opera's heterogeneity of style. Perhaps the first to notice was the critic for the newspaper *Uusi Suometar*, who claimed that the work was *yleiseurooppalaisuutta*¹⁰ ("all-European"), thus implying that it featured ingredients from French, German and Italian opera. For him, this was an advantage rather than a shortcoming, and he therefore assumed that the work "had a good chance of becoming known outside the country's borders." Had Mark Twain indeed known the opera, this critic would have been correct in his assessment.

Recent musicological research has commented more specifically on the different styles Sibelius employed in his opera. It has been noted that some passages sound like Sibelius's *Karelia* music,¹¹ while others remind of passages from *Kullervo*.¹² Erik Tawaststjerna found similarities to Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, "which Sibelius had heard in Vienna in 1891".¹³ Kari Kilpeläinen has related the style in *Jungfrun* to Charles Gounod's *drame-lyrique*.¹⁴ Yet another important influence has been mentioned, although in a way it contradicts Sibelius's own comment about distancing himself from Wagner's music: in Andrew Barnett's view, "the ghost of Wagner occasionally hovers in the background" of *Jungfrun i tornet*.¹⁵

This stylistic heterogeneity will be addressed in this article, with particular interest in the question of why the ghost of Wagner still haunts the maiden in the tower, even though Sibelius had declared that he was no longer a Wagnerite. I will argue that the different styles in *Jungfrun i tornet* are not a compositional failure on the part of a composer seeking his personal style, but rather are deliberately employed mechanisms for acting out Sibelius's own Wagner crisis.

10 Goss 2009a, 232.

11 Tawaststjerna 2008, 185.

12 Barnett 2007, 108.

13 Ibid., 109.

14 Kilpeläinen 1994, 706–707.

15 Barnett 2007, 109.

In a search for traces of Wagner's music in *Jungfrun*, at first there seem to be only a few superficial similarities. There is the plot, a classic damsel-in-distress story set in a distant past that may bring *Lohengrin* or *Siegfried* to mind rather than verismo, even if some of the music¹⁶ and the layout of the work have been described as "a one-acter roughly along the lines of *Cavalleria Rusticana*".¹⁷ Moreover, there are leitmotifs for the maiden and the bailiff, as well as another motif that Tawaststjerna called the "love motive",¹⁸ even though those motifs are not treated as Wagner would have; the love motif is the only one to "crop [...] up in a number of contexts but is not developed either musically or in its range of psychological association."¹⁹

Veijo Murtomäki has called attention to a passage in which Sibelius not only makes use of the Wagnerian leitmotif technique, but also explicitly alludes to motifs from Wagner's works:

[A]t the end of the first scene, when the bailiff abducts the fainting maiden and imprisons her in his tower, Sibelius employs in passing an A minor chord (mm. 250–53) with chromatic inflections of D# and F#. Instead of an emphatic *Tristan* chord, this time he uses a modification of the *Sehnsuchtsschmerzmotiv* from *Tristan* or *Wundemotiv* from *Parsifal* in C minor [...] with the text: "Now you are mine."²⁰

But it is not only the obvious allusion to specific motifs that suggests Wagner. Even the overall "sound" of that passage seems to refer to a more Wagnerian musical idiom, marked by heavy orchestration, chromatic lines and declamatory singing. In the preceding bars the somewhat "naïve" tone of the music (scene 1, before b. 203) changes to chromatic lines with string tremolo (b. 211) and a trill in the flute (b. 232), while the part of the maiden is marked *quasi parlando* in

16 Kilpeläinen 1994, 706–707.

17 Tawaststjerna 2008, 185.

18 Ibid., 188.

19 Ibid.

20 Murtomäki 2001, 132.

bar 213. It all culminates in the fortissimo bars of the bailiff (b. 246), whose words “Nu min du är, nu min du är. Ja nu min du är”, are now accompanied by the full orchestra, including the brass section. What is striking here is the deliberate use of different musical idioms for dramatic purposes: the music turns most obviously Wagnerian at the moment the maiden is successfully abducted, as if that Wagnerian tone itself would take possession of the almost operetta-like, light tone of the music connected with her.

Another key passage showing Sibelius playing off different musical idioms against each other is the maiden's prayer in the second scene. Her first words, “Santa Maria” (scene 2, bb. 4–6), bring to mind an Italian-style *preghiera* and a rather traditional corresponding musical style, but Sibelius deliberately deceives the listener here: the first bars of the following sentence, “Mild och nåderik från ditt barn ej vik” (b. 11–17), suggest regular meter and phrase-length, yet this is betrayed from the third bar on by its syncopations (Example 1).

The image displays two systems of musical notation. The first system, labeled 'Jungfrun', shows a vocal line in treble clef with lyrics 'Mild och nåderik från ditt' and a piano accompaniment in bass clef with lyrics 'barn ej vik'. The piano part includes parts for Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet in B-flat (Cl. II), and strings (Fg., Vlc., Db.). The piano part features a *pp* dynamic and a *cresc.* marking. The second system, starting at bar 15, continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment, with the piano part showing triplet figures in the bass line.

Example 1. Jean Sibelius, *Jungfrun i tornet*, Scene 2, bars 11–17. (Copyright © 1983 Edition Wilhelm Hansen AS, Copenhagen. Printed with permission.)

The same applies to the next phrase, “Fräls mig ur denna nöd” (bb. 26–30), as well as to the following, “fräls mig från död ock skam” (bb. 44–48), because here the initially established regular division into two-bar units, which is clearly apparent in the orchestral accompaniment, once again ends after only four bars. Moreover, the recurring cries for help and the chromatically rising and rhythmically accelerating lines of the orchestral accompaniment make it impossible to establish fully the underlying, slowly rocking 3/2 beat (Example 2).

Jungfrun

Fräls mig ur denna

V.I/II

meno forte

Va.

Fg., Cor.,
Vlc., Db.

30

-na nöd. Hjelp,

p

poco a poco cresc.

hjelp.

Example 2. Jean Sibelius, *Jungfrun i tornet*, Scene 2, bars 26–32. (Copyright © 1983 Edition Wilhelm Hansen AS, Copenhagen. Printed with permission.)

What begins like a textual allusion (“Santa Maria”) and a musical (traditionally regular phrasing) allusion to a *preghiera* scene is interrupted again and again by dramatic outbursts (“Hjelp!”) with irregular phrase lengths and declamation-like singing, which can be identified as elements of a more Wagnerian compositional style. Those outbursts might also be read as expressions of the maiden’s despair. But what is remarkable in both examples is the intrusion of a different musical idiom. There may be other passages in the opera that employ just as many stylistic devices connected with Wagner’s musical language, but here the allusions to this language obviously serve a particular purpose. Remarkably, both scenes that reveal some influence of Wagner are connected with the imprisonment of the maiden. Especially in the second scene with the *preghiera*, one gets the impression that the maiden wants to free herself from this stylistic influence by turning back to a more Italian style. But just as she is imprisoned in the tower, she seems to be condemned to fall back again and again on a more declamatory, Wagner-like way of singing. Accordingly, I take the maiden as a personification of Sibelius’s music, which is supported by two statements from the composer himself: after three performances in Helsinki, he commented on possible further performances “the maiden may remain in the tower”,²¹ thereby identifying the opera and its music with its main character. Furthermore, in a letter from 1893 Sibelius declared, obviously drawing on the sexual metaphor Wagner used both in *Oper und Drama* and *Eine Mitteilung an meine Freunde*,²² “Music is like a woman, it is only through man that she can give birth and that man is poetry”.²³

With the maiden being the embodiment of music, it can be argued that *Jungfrun i tornet* is a story not only about a maiden’s rescue from

21 With no further comment on the source quoted in Barnett 2007, 109. Although Sibelius seemed not to be very keen on having the work performed anymore, he seems to have had a quite high opinion of it for some time, as he included it in his own catalogue of works at least twice, as “op. 29” (1897) and “op. 20” (1905). See Dahlström 2003, 689.

22 “Die Musik ist die Gebälerin, der Dichter der Erzeuger”, Wagner 1984, 116. – In *Eine Mitteilung an meine Freunde* Wagner refers to that metaphor in the context of *Stabreim*, see Wagner [1914], 182.

23 Jean Sibelius > J. H. Erkko, 8 July 1893; quoted in Murtomäki 2001, 101.

the tower, but also about Sibelius freeing himself from his own Wagner crisis. That being said, it may be no accident that he sought this freedom, not in a full-scale opera, but in a one-act opera.

One-act operas of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been described as experimental works that explored new ways of using musical form and language; theatrologist Hans-Peter Bayerdörfer called one-act plays and operas “das theatrale Experiment par excellence”.²⁴ On the one hand, this has to do with the small scale, which allows composers to become accustomed to operatic style. An example is Mozart’s singspiel *Bastien und Bastienne*, a one-act work in which the 12-year-old composer experimented with the *parlando* style of *opera buffa* for the first time. On the other hand, the more important issue of one-act opera is its lack of genre theory. Early one-act operas were simply constructed like condensed three- or five-act operas, but in the nineteenth century this started to change, and different musical and/or dramatic structures were explored.²⁵ One prominent example for this use of one-act opera is Wagner’s *Das Rheingold*, a work that is experimental on several levels: not only is it Wagner’s first work to be modelled on the ideas he set out in *Oper und Drama*, but also, as Reinhold Brinkmann observed, its nearly symmetrical structure has the second and fourth scenes (each “Bild”) mirroring each other.²⁶ From this point forward, symmetrical structural design became very common for experimental one-act operas in the twentieth century. This may be because the symmetrical A–B–A form is the easiest form one can think of – and of course it underlies the idea of sonata form as well. The features of a symmetrical architecture and some kind of experimental gesture together with a strong focus on the psychological development of the main character can be found in works like Richard Strauss’s *Salome* in which Strauss experimented with what Normal del Mar has

²⁴ Bayerdörfer 1991, 46.

²⁵ Kirsch 1975.

²⁶ Brinkmann 1997, 600.

called stage tone poems;²⁷ Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, which experiments with idiomatic writing for its Hungarian libretto; Schönberg's first atonal opera *Erwartung*; and Zemlinsky's *Der Zwerg*.²⁸

Sibelius's *Jungfrun i tornet* shows two of those characteristics, for it features both a symmetrical form and an experimental trait, characteristics which are interconnected. Until now I have only commented on the references to Wagner in the first and second scenes. Other stylistic borrowings from French or Italian opera are framed by the passages that sound unmistakably Sibelian: the theme in the winds over a string tremolo at the beginning of the overture is reminiscent of the *Karelia* music²⁹ (the first *Intermezzo*³⁰), the third movement of the *Cantata for the University Graduation Ceremonies of 1894* and even the beginning of *Skogsrådet*. Furthermore, according to Andrew Barnett, the third scene for choir in the middle of the opera brings to mind the choral writing from "the fourth movement of *Kullervo*".³¹ The finale not only brings back the love motif from the beginning of the first scene (bb. 16–48) in a climax with full orchestra and choir, but also anticipates with its last three ascending notes and plagal cadence the ending of works like the yet to be composed *Finlandia* hymn and the Second Symphony.³²

Those passages in the beginning, middle and end of the opera provide a symmetrical framework within which Sibelius tries to rid himself of Wagner's influence and – as if carrying out an experiment – tries out different composing traditions and idioms: I already mentioned the *Kullervo*-like unison choral writing of the third scene (from b. 67). This contrasts with the beginning of that scene, whose string tremolos and woodwind lines bear some resemblance to the music that accompanies Isolde's impatient listening at the beginning of Act 2 in *Tristan*

27 Del Mar 1962, 239, 287.

28 For further discussion of the mentioned one-act operas and especially Zemlinsky's *Zwerg*, see Wilker 2013, 98–111.

29 Another similarity is the ballad-like tone of some passages; see Kilpeläinen 1994, 707.

30 Tawaststjerna 2008, 185–186.

31 Barnett 2007, 108.

32 As a result, each scene in the opera has its own characteristic tone.

und Isolde (Act 2, scene 1, from b. 122). At the end of scene 3, there is a reprise of the *preghiera* music (from b. 185), which again makes a considerable contrast with the entrance of the love motif in the flute over “conventional Nordic harmonies”³³ at the beginning of the fourth scene. The fifth scene, on the other hand, comes back to the *preghiera* music and then develops into a Puccini-like³⁴ veristic love duet. The resulting heterogeneity of this experimental score is compensated for by the sophisticated symmetrical form. The outcome of Sibelius’s experiment can be heard in the finale. As the above-mentioned references to Wagner were associated with the maiden’s imprisonment, the appearance of the bailiff (in the sixth scene) and his confrontation with the lover brings back Wagnerian chromaticism, tonal instability and heroic dotted rhythms. It is only the entrance of a somewhat external *dea ex machina*, the chatelaine (who did not appear earlier), that leads to the happy ending. At the beginning of the finale, all protagonists and the choir are on stage together for the first time. Yet this does not lead to further mixing of styles. On the contrary, at the chatelaine’s call to order, the ensemble (now without the bailiff) sings in praise of love and faithfulness – “Låt oss sjunga om tro och kärlek” – to a pentatonic, straightforward melody built on the love motif, which is far from any Wagnerian *Musikdrama* at that point. It seems as if, with this music, Sibelius was reaping the consequences of his Wagner critique:

Wagner’s music does not have an overwhelming effect on me in every respect. In my view it is altogether too calculated. I do not like it when a piece of music is so carefully worked out. Besides his musical ideas themselves strike me as manufactured (not fresh) [...].³⁵

The ensemble finale is another of those reflexive moments in opera when the fictional protagonists on the stage are aware that they

33 Tawaststjerna 2008, 188.

34 “The maiden’s entry during the love duet that follows suggests that Sibelius had just a little Puccini in him”, Tawaststjerna 2008, 188.

35 Jean Sibelius > Aino Sibelius, 28 July 1894; quoted in Tawaststjerna 2008, 155.

are singing and about which Carolyn Abbate wrote in *Unsung Voices*.³⁶ After all the experimentation, at this moment it seems as if Sibelius himself – the “chatelain” of his work, so to speak, who has called his protagonists to order – is saying, “let us sing of faithfulness and love” in his own musical idiom, thus expressing *his* faith in and love of his Finnish homeland. By this time, after the first performances of *Kullervo* in 1892, this idiom was recognized as Finnish, as is evident from Oskar Merikanto’s comment on *Kullervo*: “He [Sibelius] caresses our ears with Finnish tones, which we recognize as our own, even though we had never heard them before.”³⁷

In any case, Sibelius could be sure that his heterogeneous score would match the context of its premiere performance. Glenda Dawn Goss describes its context:

The usual rich lottery soirée mix of homegrown and international music and drama swirled together with dance, food, drink, wafting cigar smoke, rustling silk gowns and bespoke suits, all intermingled in the elegant rooms of Society House [Seurahuone], where a glimpse of paradise was offered those who jostled for places. This time the artistic organization was in the capable hand of Albert Edelfelt, who had arranged three *tableaux* for the Sofia Room alone: “A Folk Song”, featuring a peasant girl playing a *kantele* before a seascape; “Church Music”, highlighting Cecilia, the patron saint of music, looking like an “inspired nun”; and “Opera Music”, showing Venus with her knight, Tannhäuser, the march from Wagner’s opera having begun the evening.³⁸

This context exactly mirrors Sibelius’s opera, providing the heterogeneity of different kinds of music, including Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* and the personification of music by a woman, here Saint Cecilia.

36 In her book, Abbate (1991, 155) focuses on the “transfiguring confluence of music heard and unheard, of singing sung and unsung”.

37 Oskar Merikanto in an article on *Kullervo* in *Päivälehti* 28 April 1892; quoted in Mäkelä 2011, 196.

38 Goss 2009a, 232.

Claire Taylor-Jay in her book *The Artist-Operas of Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith* has stated that artist-operas have to do with a crisis of their composer's identity: "[t]he composer of an artist-opera may be interpreted as attempting to create his own internal unity through creating a form of unified autonomous self which is objectified in the fictional artist."³⁹ Certainly, *Jungfrun i tornet* is no artist-opera. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that in this work, Sibelius acted out his Wagner crisis in a musical way, just as Pfitzner, Krenek and Hindemith did in their artist-operas. Andrew Barnett has already interpreted *Jungfrun* as an allegory, suggesting that "the virtuous Maiden could represent Finland, the villainous Bailiff could be Russia, and the Lover and the Chatelaine could stand for the Finnish patriots".⁴⁰ Glenda Dawn Goss observed that "the theme of the innocent maid cruelly incarcerated against her will offered the perfect subtext to the Finnish minded, who had been personifying their beloved country as 'the Maid of Finland' since 1890".⁴¹ The circumstances of the genesis and premiere performance of *Jungfrun* also encourage a political interpretation. Like the *Karelia* music, composed on commission for the Vyborg Students' Association, *Jungfrun* was a commission for another lottery soirée, this time for the benefit of the Helsinki Philharmonic Society. Moreover, the *tableaux* arranged in the Sofia Room at the premiere bring to mind not only the *tableaux* for which Sibelius composed the *Karelia* music, but also those of the Press Celebrations in 1899 (Sibelius's operatic music being the precursor of "Finland awakens"). And even if the libretto was in Swedish, the subtitle of the opera – "*efter en finsk folkballad*"⁴² – made sure that this was nevertheless a "Finnish" work.⁴³

In this article, my aim was to take the political interpretation of

39 Taylor-Jay 2004, 25.

40 Barnett 2007, 109.

41 Goss 2009a, 231.

42 Dahlström 2003, 559.

43 Goss addresses the problem of "how difficult it was for a Swedish-speaking Finnish composer to craft a genuinely Finnish opera. First of all, the text, *In a Maiden's Bower*, allegedly based on a 'Finnish ballad', was written – and sung – in Swedish (although there were those who insisted the tale came from Lönnrot's *Kanteletar*)", Goss 2009a, 231.

Jungfrun i tornet one step further than has previously been done: just as the incarcerated maiden can be understood as a representation of Sibelius's music, her rescue from the tower can be seen as standing for Sibelius's attempt to free himself from the powerful model of Wagner. After trying out different national musical traditions, Sibelius ultimately chose the Finnish idiom to bring about a happy ending. The finale's praise of love and faithfulness can be understood as praise for love of and faithfulness to the Finnish homeland.

Jungfrun i tornet can therefore be understood as a work about a search not only for political identity, but also for musical independence and identity. It is this aspect that the work shares with another famous artist-opera, Richard Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and its notorious finale. There, it is Hans Sachs who warns against "welschen Dunst mit welschem Tand" and preaches at the very end of his speech "ehrt Eure deutschen Meister, dann bannt Ihr gute Geister!", which has been read as a political as well as an aesthetic statement.

Thus, in acting out his personal Wagner crisis, Sibelius paradoxically ended up drawing on Wagner and his music. And although he declared, "really I am a tone painter and a poet. Liszt's view of music is the one to which I am closest. Hence my interest in the symphonic poem",⁴⁴ and a few days later claimed that he was no longer a Wagnerite, it was not the last time Sibelius was in the experimental lab with Wagner, although he never completed another opera.⁴⁵ In his first attempts at the genre of symphonic poem, such as the *Swan of Tuonela*, a dark counterpart to the *Lohengrin* prelude,⁴⁶ or in *En saga* with its often-cited string arpeggios, which could be taken from the *Parsifal* prelude,⁴⁷ Wagner is omnipresent. And even in the highly advanced

44 Jean Sibelius > Aino Sibelius, Munich 19 August 1894; quoted in Tawaststjerna 2008, 158. According to Goss (2009a and 2006), "the tone poem *Skogsrået* had resolved his [Sibelius's] 'Wagner crisis'".

45 Sibelius was asked more than once for a collaboration on opera projects (for example by Adolf Paul or Georg Boldeman), but eventually nothing came of these plans; see Tawaststjerna 1986, 205–206.

46 Tarasti 1996, 68 and Mäkelä 2011, 199.

47 Tarasti 1996, 68 and Goss 2009a, 181–191.

Symphony no. 4 (1910–1911) there are echoes of *Parsifal*. Since this symphony has been read as Sibelius’s reaction to musical modernity, it shares with *Jungfrun i tornet* a reflexive trait as a work of “music about music”. Finally, similar references to Wagner are heard in Sibelius’s last numbered symphony, the Seventh, which Serge Koussevitzky labelled a “Nordic *Parsifal*”⁴⁸ – a *Parsifal* that lasts twenty minutes. Mark Twain would have loved it.

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48 Tarasti 1996, 72.

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Translated Transfigurations: Armas Järnefelt and the Finnish “Liebestod”

JENNI LÄTTILÄ

Armas Järnefelt (1869–1956) was a Finnish conductor whose important role in bringing Wagner’s music dramas to operatic stages in the Far North has often gone unrecognized. One of his least-known contributions was making Finnish translations of Wagner’s librettos, yet his approach to translation and his attempts to understand Wagner’s works “in a Finnish way” have much to teach contemporary singers and audiences.

In this article, based on a demonstration recital I gave in the conference “Richard Wagner and the North” in 2013,¹ I will discuss Järnefelt’s Finnish renderings of Wagner’s operas, using “Isolde’s Transfiguration” (“Liebestod”) from *Tristan und Isolde* as an example. I will cover both the translation as an artwork in its own right, the translation as a linguistic and cultural artefact and the translation as music. Finally, I will take an introspective point of view to explain how it feels to sing Wagner in Finnish.

Translated opera

Opera, which especially in the German-speaking world developed into formal entertainment in a baroque court, turned into or perhaps returned to a popular art form at some point between Gluck and Mozart.²

1 Richard Wagner and the North, International Symposium, Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, 8–9 November 2013.

2 Bacon 2001, 167–175.

At roughly the same time, the awakening idea of a national state and a nation turned culture into an educational project. In particular, those forms of culture understood as “higher” were soon harnessed to the wagons of nationalist projects.³

Singing opera in the vernacular or the local language was thus a natural continuum in the great story of romanticism and national romantic style. Opera provided the newly-born European national states with the lustre of finesse and exposed a greater number of people to the higher art forms. In Finland as well as elsewhere the nationalist project shunned explicit and daring folk art, such as poems and songs in which sexuality, intoxication and rowdy behaviour were discussed openly and even celebrated. Instead, elevated, sophisticated artworks that were supposed to teach morals and build nationalist understanding were preferred.⁴ Opera was considered one of the most elevated, educational and civilising of the arts. For this reason it was of utmost importance to make opera available to everyone by singing the libretto in the national language.⁵

Another aspect of communication that motivated the singing of opera in translation was a practical one. In Finland, for example, during the 1870s the Finnish Opera Company performed to an audience who spoke fluent Swedish and Finnish and perhaps some Russian or German, but rarely Italian or French. In a time before electronic surtitles were available, the principal means for an opera house to communicate to listeners was to have the work sung in translation.

Today, operas are still performed in translation to some extent. In Germany, it is rather usual to perform Verdi's great dramas in German translation. Yet while the German language is spoken by 90 million people, Finnish is spoken by around 6 million. In Finland therefore only comedies, operettas and singspiels are still normally sung in Finnish, while great dramas and tragedies are most often presented in their

3 Herder 1781, 335–346.

4 Taruskin 2005, 212.

5 Kirby 1962.

original language.⁶

In sum, today Wagner’s masterpieces are rarely if ever performed in Finnish translations. However, in Järnefelt’s time, translations were much more commonly used. During his term as the artistic director of the Finnish Opera (1932–1936), Järnefelt conducted several of Wagner’s operas in Finnish translation.⁷

The translator himself

Before discussing the challenges of translating opera and the translated *Tristan und Isolde*, or the experience of singing Wagner in Finnish, the translator himself should be introduced.⁸ Armas Järnefelt was born in Vyborg, then the principal city in eastern Finland, in 1869. His mother, Elisabeth Järnefelt (1839–1929, née Clodt von Jürgensburg), came from a family of Russian nobility, and his father, Alexander Järnefelt (1833–1896), served as a lieutenant general in the Tsar’s army, although he was Finnish by nationality and by identity. Perhaps unsurprisingly in this humanistically and artistically orientated family,⁹ Armas Järnefelt chose a life in the arts: he studied at the Helsinki Music Institute at the same time as Jean Sibelius (1865–1957, his future brother-in-law), and complemented his music studies in Berlin and in Paris. Järnefelt first aspired to become a composer, but later

6 As it happens, while finalizing this article, I was on tour around Finland with the Finnish National Opera performing William Walton’s *The Bear* (an “extravaganza in one act”) in a Finnish translation: on this kind of tour there is rarely any possibility to use supertitle devices.

7 Koivisto 2011, 67.

8 Where not otherwise indicated, this biography relies on Heiniö et al. 1994, 138–140.

9 Of the four Järnefelt sons, Kasper (1859–1941) became a critic, Arvid (1861–1932) a writer, and Eero (1863–1937) an artist. Two of the maternal uncles were well-known artists in Saint Petersburg: the sculptor Peter Clodt von Jürgensburg (1805–1867) and the painter Mihail Konstantinovič Clodt von Jürgensburg (1833–1902). The family matriarch, Elisabeth, was a central cultural figure in Finland, known for her literary salon and her support of the Finnish language, while one of Armas’s five sisters, Aino (1871–1969), was a respected translator before becoming the wife of Jean Sibelius in 1892.

decided on a career as a conductor. Starting in Vyborg 1898–1903,¹⁰ he worked with several Finnish and European orchestras before settling in Stockholm in 1905, where he made a remarkable career at the Royal Theatre (Kungliga Teatern, later known as the Royal Opera – Kungliga Operan). He became a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music in 1908, and was appointed Court Conductor (“hovkapellmästare”) in 1911 and First Court Conductor (“förste hovkapellmästare”) in 1923. In 1932, he was invited to fill the position as artistic director of the Finnish Opera in Helsinki.¹¹

Armas Järnefelt was an ardent Wagnerite from the time he discovered Wagner’s music during his studies in Helsinki. There, he was influenced by two well-known Finnish Wagnerians: his composition teacher Martin Wegelius (1846–1906)¹² and Richard Faltin (1835–1918),¹³ who conducted the Helsinki Academic Orchestra in which Järnefelt played the timpani as a student.¹⁴ While studying in Berlin, Järnefelt became enthralled with *Tristan und Isolde*.¹⁵ When Sibelius hinted in his letter in 1894¹⁶ at his annoyance with certain Wagnerites who had the habit of insisting and pushing their opinions on him, he probably meant Armas Järnefelt and Martin Wegelius. In the years 1904 to 1906, Järnefelt conducted a celebrated series of Wagner’s operas in Helsinki, thereby becoming one of the key figures in introducing Wagner’s operas to Finnish audiences.¹⁷

Later in life, Järnefelt clashed with the board of the Finnish Opera over Wagner: for him, ballet and operetta were not worthy of the Finnish Opera stage. Instead, he preferred Wagner. When he was not

10 Lappalainen 2004a.

11 For more details, see Salmi 2009.

12 Sarjala 1999.

13 Lappalainen 2000.

14 Marvia 1957.

15 Sirén 2010, 61–62.

16 Tawaststjerna 1976, 158.

17 Åhlen 2009, 89–95.

re-elected to the Opera board in 1936, he resigned from his position as artistic director.¹⁸ Järnefelt remained a respected conductor and continued his work in the Finnish Opera as a guest conductor. He was given the title of Professor (*honoris causa*) in 1940 and held the post of chief conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra in 1942–1943. In 1957, he received a doctorate (*honoris causa*) from the University of Helsinki. Armas Järnefelt died in Stockholm on 23 June 1958.¹⁹

Over the course of his career, Järnefelt conducted every Wagner opera except *Rienzi*. Long before he was affiliated with the Finnish Opera as its artistic director, he had been appearing there as guest conductor for three decades, in a total of 270 performances.²⁰ During his four years as the artistic director in Helsinki, he conducted and directed several Wagner operas, including *Parsifal* (1933), *Die Walküre* (1933), *Siegfried* (1934), *Lohengrin* (1934), *Der fliegende Holländer* (1934), *Götterdämmerung* (1935) and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1936), and had a hand in their stage designs as well.²¹

The Finnish language was very important to Armas Järnefelt. Raised in an ardent Fennomaniac family, he was fluent in both Finnish and Swedish. His first wife was the soprano Maikki Järnefelt (1871–1929; née Pakarinen, later Järnefelt-Palmgren), a Wagnerian soprano, whose mother tongue was Finnish.²² Armas Järnefelt thus had a personal connection with singing in Finnish. It was with his wife Maikki that Järnefelt arranged at the couple's own expense the cycle of Wagner operas in Helsinki – *Tannhäuser* (premiered March 1904), *Die Walküre* (April 1905) and *Der fliegende Holländer* (April 1906) – with Maikki Järnefelt singing the leading roles of Elisabeth, Sieglinde and Senta. The *Tannhäuser* libretto had been translated into Finnish by Toivo

18 Koivisto 2009, 200–203.

19 Lappalainen 2004a.

20 Koivisto 2009, 175.

21 Koivisto 2011, 67, 222.

22 Lappalainen 2004b.

Muroma²³ and directed by Jalmari Finne (1874–1938), who translated other librettos into Finnish, including *Die Walküre*.²⁴ Both works were conducted and directed by Järnefelt.²⁵ These performances were very popular.²⁶

In 1924, in addition to his other duties Armas Järnefelt made a Finnish translation of Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz* for the Finnish Opera.²⁷ He continued to translate librettos until his death, his last being Claude Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. This translation was left unfinished and was completed by the conductor Jussi Jalas (1908–1985) and staged a few months later. Wagner's operas were Järnefelt's speciality, and he translated two of them: *Götterdämmerung* and *Tristan und Isolde*. The first (and, so far, only) production of *Tristan und Isolde* sung in Finnish had its premiere in 1946, with performances continuing until January 1947. In the title roles were Irja Aholainen (1904–1994) and Alfons Almi (1904–1991), who later became the director of the Finnish National Opera.²⁸

Singability

In translating opera librettos or lied texts for performance purposes, the translator must consider not only the words and the meanings, but also the stress and rhythms of the original text, the “singability” of the text, and not least, its intelligibility when sung. By “singability”, I am referring to the subjective, cumulative effect of factors such as vowel–pitch matching, consonant sonority or fricativity (i.e. how much sound or friction there is in a consonant) in relation to the pitch and length of the note for which the syllable is composed, and the natural

23 According to a handwritten annotation in the score preserved in the Archives of the Finnish National Opera and Ballet.

24 Ibid.

25 Sirén 2010, 69–72.

26 Koskimies 1953, 92.

27 The Finnish Opera known today was founded in 1911.

28 Koivisto 2013 and 2011, 162–165.

rhythm of speech compared to the rhythm of music and the like. This “singability” is subjective, because each singer is a different user of the spoken language; the singer’s mother tongue, as well as other languages learned fluently together with personal habits and idiosyncrasies of the individual’s speech affect a singer’s ability to produce certain consonant sounds or at least affect the ease with which those sounds can be produced.

For example, the Finnish language has fewer consonants than most Germanic languages. The difference between voiceless and voiced, hissing and hushing sibilants (such as [s], [z], [ʃ] and [ʒ]), or palatal and velar fricatives (the German *Ich-Laut* [iç] and *Ach-Laut* [ax]), can be difficult for a native Finnish speaker to produce correctly. The vowels in these two languages also differ. Without discussing Finnish phonology at length, perhaps the general point can be made that Finnish vowel placement is typically more central-back than in the Germanic languages. In Finnish the difference between long and short vowel phonemes is distinct and stable, whereas in the Germanic languages this difference often exhibits instability. Finnish diphthongs are, phonologically speaking, sequences, but phonetically they appear as fully vocalized sounds, unbroken by pauses or stress patterns, wherein both vowels are vocalized with a gradual change from one vowel to another.²⁹

The natural rhythm of a spoken language is affected by the prevalence of short words such as articles and prepositions: these are common in German, where grammatical genders and cases are denoted with definite articles and where the spatial and temporal relations of objects are expressed using prepositions.³⁰ In the Finnish language, however, there are no articles, although certain pronouns are sometimes used like articles.³¹ Also in Finnish there are far fewer prepositions than in the Germanic languages. Instead, the case of the word is

29 For a more complete discussion of German and Finnish phonologies, refer to Wiese 1996 and Suomi et al. 2008.

30 Hentschel et al. 2003, 275–331.

31 Larjavaara 2001.

used to denote time, place, manner of doing something and so on.³² The case of a Finnish noun is formed by adding a suffix to the word stem; for example, *koira*, “a dog”, would take the form *koiran* in the genitive case (“the dog’s”), *koirana* in the essive case (“as a dog”), and *koiratta* in the abessive (“without a dog”). There are 15 different cases for Finnish nouns, with both singular and plural forms, which usually differ.

Another aspect of the language affecting its spoken rhythm is its morphology. Finnish morphology is agglutinative,³³ in other words, Finnish words are formed by stringing together morphemes. This yields a language of rather lengthy and complex single words. For example, a usable and easily understood Finnish word such as *koirattasiko* is formed of the stem *koira*, meaning “dog”, together with the morphemes *-tta*, *-si* and *-ko*, which denote, respectively, the abessive case or the state of being without something (*-ttA*), the genitive of the second-person singular (*-si*) and a question (*-kO*). Thus, the single word *koirattasiko* translates as the question “without your dog?”, and is understandable and usable modern Finnish. It could be used, for instance, in the sentence *Koirattasiko metsästät?* meaning “Are you hunting without your dog?” In vernacular dialects and poetic renditions, these words will be abbreviated: for example, a contemporary speaker from my childhood neighbourhood would say *Koirattas(i)ko met(s)ästät?* – and he or she would be understood by every native speaker of the Finnish language.

A third important difference between the rhythms with which German and Finnish are spoken is the lexical stress. Finnish is a fixed stress language, in which stress is always, without exception, on the first syllable of the word.³⁴ German, on the other hand, exhibits variable stress, more precisely (weak) stress-timed isochrony.³⁵ This means that when the libretto for a German opera is translated into Finnish,

32 Hakulinen et al. 2004, 1173.

33 Ibid., 179–188.

34 Ibid., 48.

35 Gibbon 1998, 84–86.

the stresses imposed by the music and the natural stresses of the text will usually be out of sync and difficult to match.

The intelligibility of a translated text when it is sung is also affected by the aspects of language discussed above. In addition, the Finnish language has very limited allophony³⁶ (hence, it is mostly written just as it is spoken, with one phoneme corresponding to one letter), but it involves crucial significance of vowel and consonant lengths: for example, the pronunciation of the words *tuli*, *tuuli* and *tulli* differ only in the length of the phonemes (the words mean “fire”, “wind” and “customs”, respectively). Therefore, stretching syllables of the translated text to correspond to the length of the note on which the syllable is sung or difficulties of vowel-pitch matching may sometimes change the meaning of the translated text when it is sung. Moreover, Finnish words tend to begin with a short syllable, whereas German words often start with a long syllable. This makes it challenging to produce Finnish translations for music with numerous dotted rhythms, for example.

An opera libretto or a lied text, on the other hand, may also exhibit unnatural rhythms in the spoken language; often, a librettist employs some poetic meter or writes in a highly literary style of the time.³⁷ Wagner himself employed an archaic Germanic form of alliterative verse called *Stabreim* in his libretti for *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, which, despite being a medieval poetic form, is described by Hans Rudolf Vaget as “a decidedly avant-garde idiom”.³⁸ The libretto of *Tristan und Isolde* is also written in *Stabreim*, although Leo Spitzer³⁹ pointed out that the end of the libretto especially shares a certain similarity with the ecstatic religious poetry in the vein of John Donne.

Translating Wagner’s texts with their strong *Stabreim* influences into modern English poses certain challenges, as Dinda L. Gorlee⁴⁰ points

36 Hakulinen et al. 2004, 37–42.

37 Weiss 1985.

38 Vaget 2009, 115.

39 Spitzer 1949, 5.

40 Gorlee 1996, 417 and 429.

out in her study of the Wagner translations by the philosopher Charles Peirce. *Stabreim* is all about rhyme, assonance, alliteration – and is also a matter of sound symbolism and vowel colours, which are not easy to translate from German into another language. However, the oral poetry of Finnish folklore uses an alliterative trochaic meter, which has some reminiscence of *Stabreim*. Wagner’s verse appears somewhat rhythmically familiar to those who have read the *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic compiled by Elias Lönnrot.⁴¹ Therefore, translating Wagner’s librettos into Finnish is perhaps somewhat less complicated than translating some other forms of poetry. Given the Finnish language’s morphology and grammatical structure, which is devoid of articles and prepositions, iambic meter such as that used by Shakespeare is rather challenging to produce: a poet or translator of poems has to make prolific use of short interjections or poetic abbreviations, rendering the text often a bit obsolete, peculiar or difficult to understand.

The translation

How did Armas Järnefelt solve the problems outlined above of translating *Tristan und Isolde* into Finnish? It turns out that he was both creative and bold. Where his translation of words did not fit the music, he was not afraid to introduce additional notes. For example, in *Tristan und Isolde*, Act 1, scene 5, when Isolde chastises Tristan – “Nicht da war’s, wo ich Tantris barg, wo Tristan mir verfiel”, Järnefelt translated the line “schweig da mein Mund, bannt’ ich meine Hand” as “vaiti oli suu, herpautui käsi mun”, and added a C5 between the E_♭ 5 and A4 in “bann’t ich” to accommodate the three-syllable “her-pau-tui”. He did not, however, usually add completely new notes into the score; rather he just added or reduced the number of notes on the same pitch to make all the necessary syllables fit.⁴²

In his translation he intentionally used archaic language and

41 Lönnrot 2005.

42 Koivisto 2013.

Kalevalaic imagery: this gives the listener a sense of something really old, a mythological story from ancient times, which is exactly what Wagner was doing when he chose to write *Tristan's* libretto in *Stabreim*. With the use of Kalevalaic imagery Järnefelt created a mythological atmosphere familiar to Finnish listeners; not only did he *translate* the text, he also *localized* it by converting the underlying social and societal concepts to a Finnish context. For example, in *Tristan und Isolde*, Act 1, scene 1, when Isolde calls for the sea to destroy the ship carrying her towards Cornwall (“Zu tobender Stürme, wütendem Wirbel! Treibt aus dem Schlaf dies träumende Meer, weckt aus dem Grund seine grollende Gier! Zeigt ihm die Beute, die ich ihm biete!”), Järnefelt introduced Ahti, the Kalevalaic deity of lakes, sea and fishing. It is noteworthy that Ahti is a male deity, whereas Isolde addresses the sea using the neuter noun “Meer” (“Vonkuvat vihurit, riehuvat, rajut, valveille pieskää tää uinuva meri! Ahneutta Ahdin te kiihoittakaa! Näyttäkää saalis, minkä tarjoon”).

Another example, from Act 1, scene 5, when Tristan and Isolde have emptied the love-potion and look into one another's eyes, Järnefelt translated one of Isolde's lines, “Trautester Mann!”, as “Lemmitty lieto!”, even though the Finnish word “*mies*” (“man”) would have had only one syllable (like “*Mann*”) and thus would fit the musical rhythm better. But in the score, there is a melisma of two notes on that word, so it is possible to fit a word with two syllables there without changing the music. Järnefelt apparently chose to use “lieto” for the sake of alliteration and nuance. The word “lieto”, which means “gentle”, had already disappeared from the Finnish language, and was re-introduced in the *Kalevala*, where it is used as an epithet for the character Lemminkäinen. In his edition of Järnefelt's translation, Juhani Koivisto⁴³ remarks that there are certain similarities between Lemminkäinen and Tristan: both are revived from serious wounds, and both seek a bride from across the sea.⁴⁴

43 Ibid., 25.

44 An even more striking resemblance between Wagnerian and Kalevalaic characters can be found in comparing Kullervo, the son of Kalervo, and Siegmund: both are separated

Järnefelt also used the archaic word “haaksi” to translate “Schiff”, instead of choosing a more common term from the several nearly-synonymous Finnish epithets for a ship. “Haaksi” originates from the Uralic proto-language⁴⁵ and is used prolifically in the *Kalevala*, but it has nearly disappeared from modern Finnish, surviving only as part of a specific term for shipwreck, “haaksirikko”. Similarly, when Isolde and Brangäne first discuss Tristan in *Tristan und Isolde*, Act 1, scene 2, they use the word “urho” – literally “a brave one”, still in use in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century poetry to mean brave soldiers, but which by the 1920s and 1930s when Järnefelt made his translation had evolved to be almost solely a boy’s name. Another word of Isolde’s in this scene, “huovi”, is derived from early Swedish “húskarl”, a housecarl or household warrior, used in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Finnish to denote any soldier serving in the Swedish army. By the nineteenth century this word had become archaic and was found only in poetry.

This evocation of archaic language and Finnish mythology appears to a certain extent not only in the words, but also in the context, although not necessarily in the exact meanings of the terms. Järnefelt’s Finnish audience would have recognized the archaic style and connected it with the mythical past. However, the mythos that the Kalevalaic use of language connects with is Finnish – not Germanic, French or Arthurian. And although there are some overlapping narrative elements and themes in Wagner’s works and the *Kalevala*, there are also distinct differences. First, the *Kalevala* and other medieval European myths, including Wagner’s versions of them, are set in the polar opposites of the oedipal coordinate system: for example, the entire *Ring* is aimed at a (symbolic?) patricide, and it can easily be argued that *Tristan*’s King Mark also represents a father figure. On the other hand, Kalevalaic poems tell of men who struggle to win the love of young

from their families by an enemy, both seem to be cursed by misfortune, both have an incestuous relationship with their sisters, and both die as a consequence. See Tarasti 1979, 197–226.

45 Itkonen et al. 1992.

women, shadowed by overpowering mother figure(s)⁴⁶ – sometimes both their own mother as well as the prospective mother-in-law. Whereas almost every character in the *Ring* is defined by his or her relationship with the war-father, Wotan, Kalevalaic heroes are seldom familiar with their fathers. Instead, they are defined by their mothers. Moreover, Kalevalaic mothers possess remarkable powers: not only do they have clear and respected positions in society with associated economic and political means, but they also possess magical abilities. In this respect the Kalevalaic mothers resemble Isolde's mother, whose magical abilities she mentions several times, the first being in *Tristan und Isolde*, Act 1, scene 1 ("Wohin, Mutter, vergabst du die Macht, über Meer und Sturm zu gebieten?").

A second difference between these myths is best described through the associations and mental images these two epics evoke: the *Ring* legend and the French medieval poems take place in courts, in noble hunting parties, and in park-like forests where it is possible to ride merrily and spend time pleasantly. The *Kalevala*, on the other hand, depicts small dwellings and grain fields surrounded by vast and impenetrable wild forests of spruce and pine, where one journeys for several days just to reach a neighbouring village. In this landscape live people between whom social distinctions are far less pronounced than in the poetry of medieval middle-Europe. Thus, when in *Tristan und Isolde*, Act 1, scene 1, Brangäne addresses Isolde as her mistress ("O weh! Ach! Ach des Übels, das ich geahnt! Isolde! Herrin! Teures Herz!"), Järnefelt translated this as "Voi mua! Ah! Aavistuksein toteen nyt käy! Isolde kallis, rakkaimpain!" Instead of "mistress", Brangäne here calls Isolde "precious" and "most loved", speaking not as a trusted servant of a noblewoman, but as a friend and equal.

Later Järnefelt used the word "herratar" to translate the German "Herrin". This is a direct translation of the Finnish word "herra" ("sir" or "master", the proper form for politely addressing *any* man) plus the ending with *-tar* denoting a female title-holder or practitioner of a pro-

46 Hägglund 1990.

fession (for example, “kuningatar” – queen – from “kuninga(s)”, king or “opettajatar” – female teacher – from “opettaja”, male teacher), and similar to the German affix *-in*. Järnefelt’s “herratar”, however, is a slightly odd construction. Even though its meaning is clear to any native speaker of Finnish, the word is artificial and seldom used. In the classless society that Finnish-speaking Finland was and still is, there simply does not exist a form for politely addressing a young, unmarried (noble) woman. Whereas in English the word *Lady* can be used as a formal and polite address for both married and unmarried women – for example, in a British court of law a female judge is addressed My Lady – in Finnish the form of address is always “rouva” (as in “rouva tuomari”, My Lady Justice). “Rouva” means a married woman, and in Järnefelt’s time was strictly reserved for them. The address for unmarried women, “neiti”, carries a strong dismissive undertone,⁴⁷ and by the early twentieth century was used as a part of the title for certain (lower pay-grade) female professionals, as in “postineiti”, a female postal worker.⁴⁸ Thus, the language Järnefelt used did not (and cannot) denote the social differences between Brangäne and Isolde or the sailors and Tristan.

A third difference between the Finnish and German myths is the sparing use of physical violence in the *Kalevala*: the heroes do compete, but they do so through words and songs. Singing in the *Kalevala* is truly singing, sometimes described as being accompanied by the *kantele*,⁴⁹ but singing also carries the implication of using incantations and spells. In fact, even the (current) Finnish word for hero, “sankari”, is derived

47 Kolehmainen 2007.

48 Engelberg 1998.

49 For example, Poem three in the *Kalevala* depicts the characters Joukahainen and Väinämöinen in a contest of words, chanting incantations. Väinämöinen sings Joukahainen chin-deep into a bog until Joukahainen promises his sister as a bride to Väinämöinen. Compare this to Poem 41, in which Väinämöinen plays his *kantele*, crafted from the jawbone of a giant pike, and sings. This poem clearly describes an artistic performance, not only a shaman chanting. What is most striking is the language used to describe singing in these two poems: an enjoyable performance by a skilled singer and incantations by a powerful shaman are described similarly as two comparable and equal things.

from an early Swedish term for singer, "sångare".⁵⁰ Thus, seldom does a Kalevalaic hero draw a blade in anger. Even more striking, the characters in the *Kalevala* are never rewarded (in the narrative) for their use of violence: every violent act is followed by loss. Even the ultimate hero Väinämöinen loses the Sampo, a magical source of wealth, when he draws his sword to fend off Louhi, the Mistress of the North, to protect the Sampo.

The fourth significant difference between Kalevalaic heroes and Tristan or Siegfried is that Kalevalaic men display weakness: their response to disappointment in love or hardship in life is to weep. The heroes are shown wooing women and being rejected or going to extraordinary – even ridiculous – lengths to win a mother-in-law to their side (the bride-to-be is seldom consulted; it is her mother who is the decisive party). More often than not, the men fail in these attempts, and even when successful, they are seldom rewarded with the bride they so covet. Romance is rarely a theme in the *Kalevala*: the heroes lust more than love and are revealed as laughable in their lust.

Thus, when Järnefelt evoked Kalevalaic imagery in his translation, he perhaps lost some of the noble refinement and socially segregating finesse of the original text, replacing it with a dash of down-to-earth "Finnishness". On the other hand, this kind of connection to Finnish mythology and mentality not only translates, but also localizes *Tristan und Isolde* and makes the story more approachable for a Finnish audience.

Singing Wagner in Finnish

Finally, how does it feel to sing Järnefelt's translation? First, because opera singers' profession is truly international – specialists in certain roles are typically called on to perform their bravura parts around the world – an investment in learning a translation is seldom rewarding. Whereas learning the original text enables one to reproduce the role internationally, thus repaying the time spent, learning a role in Finnish

50 Anttila 2000, 58.

allows one to compete for casting in the one or two productions of that translation to be performed during a singer's career. The return on this kind of investment (by the singer) will necessarily be small, especially as the big international opera houses never perform Finnish translations. The opera companies which do perform in local languages seldom pay on levels similar to what the Vienna State Opera or the Metropolitan Opera can afford.

For those reasons, I had not sung Wagner's "Liebestod" in Finnish before learning it for the conference demonstration, but I had rehearsed it in German, which I know by heart. This was not the case with the Finnish translation, and therefore I permitted myself to use the music for the conference performance. This decision was not made out of laziness, but because I wanted to safeguard my investment in learning Isolde's part in German: learning the translation by heart would perhaps have mixed with the original version and text in which I had already practised, possibly causing confusion in future performances. Such incidents have happened: in the Finnish Opera in the 1960s *Rigoletto* was performed alternately in Finnish and in Italian. The tenor Veikko Tyrväinen, who sang in both casts, sometimes found himself singing in the wrong tongue and had to switch languages in the middle of an aria.⁵¹

A singer does not really hear his or her own voice as it sounds in a concert hall.⁵² Rather, in learning new music, we learn the physical and physiological sensations caused by singing the music correctly and well, and we learn to reproduce the effort that causes these sensations. As an analogy, consider a dancer who cannot see his or her dance, but learns the movements – and the sensations caused by these movements – that make up the dance performance.

We learn how a sound – a tone and the associated phoneme – should feel in the mouth and in the vocal tract, such as where a vowel should "sit" in the mouth and where one should think of the centre or the origin

51 Koivisto 2011, 28.

52 Lättilä 2014.

of the produced sound as being. As an example, the very first phrase of Isolde's transfiguration reveals how different the translation is from the original text. The original starts with very soft and pliable sounds ("Mild und Leise wie er lächelt"): here, all consonants⁵³ apart from the "t", "d" and "ch" are voiced, and the "ch" is a voiceless palatal fricative, leaving only two plosives, "t" and "d". Even among these, only one sound – "t", the very last phoneme in the phrase – is in its fortis form.⁵⁴ All vowels in the phrase can be pronounced with a close or mid-tongue position, and the need for labial effort is slight.

In Finnish, the sung phrase is "Rauhallisna kuin hän hymyy": it opens with an alveolar trill, very different from the German post-vocal allophone "r" found in the German *-er*. The next phoneme is a wide diphthong, *-au-*, in which the first sound is an unrounded vowel, followed by a rounded one, necessitating labial effort that is not present in the original text. The end of the word is composed of voiced consonants and front vowels (in sung Finnish, "a" is pronounced more frontally than in spoken Finnish), making its singing effort comparable to the original text.

The end of the phrase, "kuin hän hymyy", opens with a velar occlusive stop, "k", followed by a close, rounded back vowel, moves through a diphthong to a front unrounded close vowel "i", followed by a dental nasal consonant "n", a glottal fricative "h" followed by an unrounded, open front vowel "ä" [æ], and finally ending with a frontal, close, rounded "y". The labial and tongue movements are more pronounced, and, most importantly, the sensation caused by the resonances of the singing voice in the vocal tract and facial cavities is slightly different from that felt in singing German.

With this analysis of the first two bars of the sung text, it should be clear that a thorough analysis of the entire aria far exceeds the space

53 For reasons of printability and typography, and because this article is intended for readers in the field of musicology and research in the performing arts rather than linguistics, I chose to use IPA only where normal alphabets would not convey the difference between speech sounds.

54 A fortis consonant is a "strong" consonant produced by increased tension in the vocal apparatus. These strong consonants tend to be voiceless and aspirated.

allotted for this article. However, another example is needed to illustrate how Järnefelt managed to translate the vocally more challenging passages. When the vocal line rises above the second *passaggio*⁵⁵ for the first time, Järnefelt cleverly placed speech sounds on the A₁ 5 similar to the original text, even though these are written differently in German and in Finnish. Here “Immer lichter wie er **leuchtet**” is translated into “Kirkkahammin hän yhä **loistaa**”: both are pronounced with almost the same [oi]. Also the German voiceless palatal fricative “ch” (*Ich-Laut*) and the sibilant “s” in the Finnish version can be managed in a similar way when singing the word on a top note, with practically the same amount of articulation and respiratory control needed to produce both sounds.

However, with the next top note Järnefelt’s solution was less successful: “stern-umstrahlet **hoch** sich hebt” was translated as “laila taivaan **tähtivyön**”. On the A₁ 5 there, instead of a rounded “o” in “hoch” there is a near-open “ä” [æ] in “tähti” [tæhti], which is far more difficult to sing beautifully on a high pitch. This means that the soprano must alter the vowel colour to make it a bit rounder and almost sing “ö” [ø] instead of “ä” [æ]. Fortunately, there is no such word as “töhti” [tøhti] in the Finnish language, so there is no danger of confusion of meaning. Furthermore, a soprano’s vowel production is seldom phonetically accurate in her top range.⁵⁶

Of course, a singer does not actively consider the phonology of his or her singing. Indeed, it is perfectly possible to sing opera without having the slightest familiarity with the phonological research literature. Still, probably because of the control of the soft palate necessary for classical singing technique, and because of the vowel–pitch mismatches, especially in the soprano range, the pronunciation of different phonemes is not as natural and easy in singing as it would be in speaking the same words. Therefore, in practising, singers not only learn the music and the text, but also practise pronouncing the text correctly while main-

55 Passaggio is an area between two vocal registers; a second *passaggio* from the middle to the high range in a soprano voice is usually somewhere around F#5. See for example Miller 1996, 134–135.

56 See Garnier et al. 2010; Lättilä 2014.

taining the technique, voice quality and pitch precision required for an operatic performance.

In addition to differences in text phonetics, a singer also has to reconsider phrasing in singing a translation. As I pointed out earlier, Finnish words are often significantly longer than their German counterparts, and the structures of sentences are very different in these two languages. One consequence is that in singing a translation a singer sometimes has to inhale in a place that differs from the original version. Near the end of Isolde's Transfiguration scene, for instance, a soprano singing in Finnish has to practically ignore two quaver rests in the score. In the original German text, "Wie sie schwellen, mich umrauschen, soll ich atmen, soll ich lauschen?", there are more commas (breaking the sentence in two, creating an opportunity for the singer to inhale) than in the Finnish text ("[...] minut sulkee_helmahansa, hurmaavalla_soinnullansa"), where placing a rest (or inhaling) between these words would render the rhythm of the sentence unnatural. For this reason, in my performance of the Finnish version, I chose to tie these words together and sing the phrases without the rests in between. In isolation, these phrases are actually not difficult to sing in one breath, but Wagner masterfully and apparently intentionally placed numerous rests between short phrases here to allow the soprano to prepare for the immensely lengthy phrases in the scene's climax ("In dem wogenden Schwall, in dem tönenden Schall, in des Welt-Atems wehendem All"), which preferably should be sung in one breath. In a conference performance of the Finnish translation, my artistic choice proved feasible, but on the operatic stage, after the singer has already sung for five hours or so, this could be challenging.

Finally, it is difficult to verbalise the differences between singing Isolde's Transfiguration in German and singing it in Finnish. The subjective differences in the physical and physiological feelings of singing in these two languages are clear and pronounced for the singer, but are not easy to describe to a non-singer. After some consideration, the best simile I could think of was the difference between tasting madeleine cakes (as immortalized by Marcel Proust) and ordinary lemon cupcakes: even though these two pastries are made of the same ingre-

dients and taste quite similar, there is a clear difference between the sensations one experiences when biting into each. Similarly, the Finnish “Lemmenkuolo” and the original “Liebestod” taste almost the same, but they feel very different indeed.

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The Grail as the Symbol of Art: Richard Wagner and the Young Volter Kilpi

JUKKA VON BOEHM

Parsifal, Richard Wagner's last music drama, was premiered at the Bayreuth Festspielhaus in 1882. Wagner's masterpiece on the Grail brotherhood was so tremendous that it took some time before other artists dared to use the imagery of the Holy Grail in their works.

The post-Wagnerian Grail resurgence took place between the turn of the century and the 1920s.¹ In addition to prominent authors such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929) and T. S. Eliot (1888–1965), many lesser-known artists followed in Wagner's footsteps.² Even in northern Europe, including Sweden and Finland, authors at the *fin de siècle* adopted the Grail and its imagery.³ In Finland, the 28-year-old Volter Kilpi (1874–1939) published his second literary work in 1902, a symbolist tale called *Parsifal – Kertomus Graalin ritarista* (*Parsifal: The Tale of a Knight of the Grail*). Along with Kilpi's other early works, *Bathseba* (1900) and *Antinous* (1903), *Parsifal* is one of the most original literary texts from the short-lived flowering of Finnish symbolism.⁴ Universal content and a lack of any allusions to Finland and Finnishness are no-

1 Mertens 2003, 212. I would like to thank Dietrich Assmann and Jukka Relas for valuable information about Volter Kilpi.

2 Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Künstlerweihe* (1890); T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (1922). On the Grail allusions of both see Mertens 2003, 210–211 and 214–215.

3 In Sweden, the poet Gustaf Fröding (1860–1911), whom Kilpi admired, wrote his poetry collection *Gralstänk* in 1898.

4 Other important Finnish symbolist authors were Eino Leino (1878–1926) and Johannes Linnankoski (1869–1913). Kilpi's current reputation as one of the most acclaimed Finnish authors, however, rests largely on his epic novel, *Alastalon salissa* (*In the Hall of Alastalo*) from 1933 rather than on his early symbolist works.

ticeable traits in Kilpi's tale.⁵

Because Wagnerian influence on the *fin-de-siècle* arts was far-reaching, it is of interest to note and discuss adaptations of the Grail story from roughly the same era as his *Parsifal*. This article focuses on two fundamentally Wagnerian points in Kilpi's *Parsifal*. The first is the very idea of the Grail. Both Wagner and Kilpi reinterpreted that originally Christian symbol as the symbol of an art which they promoted as an *Ersatzreligion* for a secularized world. The second Wagnerian aspect to be discussed is Kilpi's attempt to "musicalize" the language. The debate on the boundaries between poetry and music originated in the early phase of French symbolism in the 1860s. It was inspired by Wagner's art and art theory. The most striking feature in Kilpi's *Parsifal* is his experimental and synaesthetic approach to language. Even today it challenges the reader to "hear", "see" and "feel" the text. In 1937 Kilpi even called his *Parsifal* a "musical fantasy".⁶ However, in 1902 the Finnish-speaking reception of Kilpi's synaesthetic experiment was rather reserved.⁷ Even after a half century, such an overtly balanced study as Vilho Suomi's considered Kilpi's musical language the most problematic part of his *Parsifal*.⁸ In contrast, the reaction of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland, generally thought to be more responsive to European influences, was more enthusiastic.⁹

Kilpi, who regarded himself as unmusical, never heard Wagner's *Parsifal*. At best, he knew it only indirectly.¹⁰ In contrast to the devoutness of Wagner's *Weltabschiedswerk*, Kilpi's symbolist tale is full of unrestrained youthful enthusiasm. Its ethos differs remarkably from

5 In Kilpi's previous work, *Bathseba*, King David still played the Finnish national instrument the kantele.

6 Volter Kilpi > Vilho Suomi, 12 September 1937, as cited in Suomi 1952, 129.

7 Suomi 1952, 135–136.

8 Ibid., 129.

9 The young poet Bertel Gripenberg (1878–1947) enthusiastically praised Kilpi's *Parsifal*. There were also two attempts to translate *Parsifal* into Swedish. Neither was completed, perhaps because of the linguistic challenges (Suomi 1952, 136–137).

10 Lyytikäinen 1997, 249 (footnote 36). On Kilpi's relationship to music see Suomi 129–130.

the aestheticism and decadence of the *fin de siècle*. Stylistically, *Parsifal* belongs to Finnish neo-romanticism.¹¹ There are no fewer than 117 direct references to flowers, the famous motive of German romanticism, in *Parsifal*'s 120 pages.¹² Blue and red flowers also decorate the imposing cover, designed by the Finnish symbolist painter Hugo Simberg (1873–1917) (figure 1).

This article discusses the two *Parsifals* in three sections. The first deals with Wagner's and Kilpi's use of the Grail as a symbol of art. The second section offers a closer examination of Kilpi's tale. Finally, I provide some concluding remarks about the idea of art-religion.

The Grail as a symbol of art by Wagner and Kilpi

As Volker Mertens has noted, the Grail has been an important topic in periods of cultural and spiritual upheaval and reorientation.¹³ The turn of the century, when Kilpi wrote *Parsifal*, was an era of turmoil in a Europe undergoing modernization and secularization. Both of Wagner's Grail operas, *Lohengrin* (1850) and *Parsifal*, could be regarded as counter-utopian reflections of their times. In the 1840s while working with *Lohengrin* Wagner was bitterly disappointed in the German politics of the *Vormärz*; likewise, around the 1880s, at the time he was working on *Parsifal*, he was further disappointed in the political practices of the Second German Empire. In both operas, there is a disintegrating collective: in *Lohengrin*, it is the people of tenth-century Brabant, and in *Parsifal*, the degenerate brotherhood of the Grail. Hope has not yet died, as there is a utopian realm symbolised by the idea of the Grail. As Wagner stated in his essay *Die Wibelungen* (1848), the Grail is the utopian hope of the Golden Era.¹⁴

For Wagner, the aesthetic realm was closely intertwined with the

11 Lyytikäinen 1997, 249 (fn 40).

12 Relas 2008, 79; Kilpi 1902.

13 Mertens 2003, 212.

14 Kühnel 1986, 492.

Figure 1. Blue and red flowers designed by Hugo Simberg decorate the symbolist cover of Kilpi's *Parsifal*.



political realm. In his Zurich essays from the 1850s, Wagner strongly criticised religion, the state, German society and opera.¹⁵ Inspired by the anarchist ideas of Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876), Wagner, a revolutionary figure in the Dresden Uprising of 1849, believed that radical revolution alone would guarantee the redemption of mankind. Along with the decline of the oppressive state, degeneration in the arts would also come to an end. The concrete revolutionary process would occur along with the metaphysical rebirth of a qualitatively new human being.

¹⁵ Bermbach 2004, 92–93.

As stated in *Kunst und Revolution* (Art and Revolution) from 1849, the “goal is the strong fair Man, to whom Revolution shall give his Strength, and Art his Beauty!”¹⁶ Thus the Wagnerian idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* is a utopian symbol in which oppressive politics disappears and a new kind of unity between the arts and society is achieved.

The idea of the Grail in fact symbolises the endpoint of that politico-aesthetic revolution. Accordingly, in attending a performance of *Lohengrin*, the audience discovers that beyond tenth-century Brabant there is an abstract musical realm in A major: it is the realm of the Grail. As Lohengrin reveals in his famous Grail narration, “In fernem Land”, there is only beauty and harmony in the utopian Grail brotherhood, whose ethical principle is altruism. In *Parsifal* the Grail is a bowl that is unveiled twice during the opera. The first time, when Amfortas, the brotherhood’s wounded king, unveils it, he suffers. The second time, the outcome is different. In the end, as the new king, Parsifal, unveils the Grail, the degenerate brotherhood has a chance to redeem itself.

The lack of revolutionary intentions and the absence of connection between the societal and aesthetic realms mark some differences between Kilpi’s and Wagner’s ideas. In his main essay on aesthetics, *Taiteesta ja siveydestä* (On Art and Morality) from 1901, Kilpi treats society and art as two strictly separate realms.¹⁷ He provocatively proposes that society is always moral, while art is always immoral. For him, it is machine-like individuals and their mechanical conventions that guarantee the functioning of a moral bourgeois society. Then, as Kilpi stresses, because art can arouse hidden emotions in any individual it is always immoral and a potential threat to the morals of society. Ultimately, as Kilpi notes in the second part of the essay, art is always moral from the point of view of any given human being (and not from society’s viewpoint). Art enables the individual to develop his soul. Accordingly, art is like a church service, as Kilpi puts it.¹⁸

16 Wagner 1895, 56.

17 Kilpi 1990.

18 Ibid., 80–81.

Kilpi's ideas on art in this essay have been seen as the background to his *Parsifal*.¹⁹ As Pirjo Lyytikäinen has pointed out, the Grail in Kilpi's *Parsifal* stands for the new symbolist art. It will redeem culture from the degenerating effects of materialism and naturalism in the science and arts.²⁰ Although Wagner too regarded art-religion as a vehicle for redemption, his *Parsifal* differs from Kilpi's in one crucial respect, namely in the Schopenhauerian ethos of compassion (*Mitleid*). For Wagner, only those enlightened by compassion can unveil the Grail. Kilpi's view, in contrast, acknowledges neither societal change nor the societal dimension of art. It seems that it is art alone and the emotions that an artwork can evoke that have importance for him. Aestheticism and art for art's sake (*l'art pour l'art*) have generally been criticised for their remoteness from real life. For Walter Benjamin, the idea of *l'art pour l'art* meant rejecting the social function of art.²¹ However, Kilpi's *Parsifal* was not the only *fin-de-siècle* work on the Grail to which that description applies. Among his contemporaries, Eduard Stucken likewise celebrated the idea of *l'art pour l'art* with a religious tone in his play *Gawân, ein Mysterium* (1902).²²

Kilpi's version of *Parsifal*

The idea of synaesthesia in the arts refers to cross-connections between the senses, such as seeing certain colours on hearing certain tones. In music, it was most notably Wagner and after him Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915) who attempted to fuse poetry, music and optical impressions in a utopian *Gesamtkunstwerk*.²³ In literature, on the other hand, the concept of synaesthesia refers to a writer's use of a "meta-

19 Suomi 1952, 126.

20 Lyytikäinen 1997, 54.

21 Benjamin 1977, 17.

22 Mertens 2003, 235.

23 On Wagner's and Scriabin's concepts of synaesthesia see Pütz 1995.

phor of the senses”.²⁴ French symbolist poetry of the late nineteenth century, which endeavoured to extend the expressive function of poetry, owed its concepts to Wagner and Wagnerian ideas. The arrival of Wagner’s art in Paris in the early 1860s marked a new chapter in aesthetics, namely a competition for supremacy between music and poetry.²⁵ As is well known, the two leading French symbolist poets, Charles Baudelaire (1821–1967) and Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–1898), were Wagnerians. Both were deeply involved in the tension between music and poetry and well aware of Wagner’s main message in his *Oper und Drama* (Opera and Drama) from 1851, a study that, perhaps surprisingly, focused more on renewed poetry in dramatic performance than on music.²⁶ For the symbolist poets, the idea of music enabled them to theorise about poetry and transcend its limits: Music was often defined as poetry’s inassimilable “other”.²⁷

Characteristic of Volter Kilpi’s symbolist style in *Parsifal* is an attempt to create new words. In addition, colours and acoustic signs are fundamental aspects of his tale. Three sentences in *Parsifal* exemplify Kilpi’s “musical”, synaesthetic style.²⁸ In the first sentence Kilpi mentions that the breast of the swan (*joutsen*) is white (*valkoinen*). In the first part of the second sentence Parsifal’s mind is described as being even whiter (*valkeampi*). In the second part of the second sentence Kilpi describes Konviramur’s breast by using the metaphor of snow (*lumi*). In the third sentence the author reveals that the forest is vibrating (*värähtävä*) and snowy (*luminen*), and he continues by saying that the trembling forest is like the sound of a bright bell (*heleän kulkusen ääni*). After the colour white has been mentioned twice in the first two

24 O’Malley 1957, 391.

25 Acquisto 2006, 13.

26 Lees 2007, 71.

27 Acquisto 2006, 3.

28 (1.) ”Valkea on joutsenen korkea rinta, kun se suvisena iltana soutelee päilyvillä vesillä.

(2.) Valkeampi on Parsifalin mieli, kun hän seisoo lumirinta Konviramurinsa rinnalla häilyvässä illassa.

(3.) Värähtävä on luminen metsä, kun heleän kulkusen ääni...”, Kilpi, *Parsifal*, 100 (emphasis JvB).

sentences, the reader immediately associates the word “snow” with white. The word “vibrating”, in turn, requires the reader to identify emotionally with a certain mood. And finally, after seeing and feeling, the acoustic symbol of the bell requires the ability to “hear” the text.

Wagner’s music had and still has extraordinary potential for evoking powerful images in the listener’s mind. Early evidence of that was a concert of Wagner’s music in Paris in 1860 attended by Charles Baudelaire. After the concert, Baudelaire wrote to the composer, stating that he felt as if the music were his own.²⁹ Baudelaire’s reaction was not only one of spontaneous enthusiasm, but also reflected the idea of a realm in which the strict boundaries between poetry and music were surpassed. In a seminal study of French Wagnerism, *Richard Wagner et Tannhäuser à Paris* (1861), Baudelaire discussed the *Lohengrin* prelude. He identified the prelude – the realm of the aesthetic – with the strength of the colour white.³⁰ In the essay, Baudelaire quoted his own poem *Correspondances*: “Nature is a temple in which living pillars / Sometimes give voice to confused words.”³¹ Seen in the context of Wagner’s synaesthetic music, the idea of a temple connotes the aesthetic realm of the Grail. It is worth bearing in mind that Théophile Gautier, the theoretician of *l’art pour l’art*, also spoke about the “temple of art”.³²

The colour white and the temple of art also have crucial functions in Kilpi’s tale. *Parsifal* begins with a prologue in which the miraculous qualities of the Grail, the Grail temple and the degeneration of the Grail community are described. Like Baudelaire’s vision of the strengthening white ray of light in the *Lohengrin* prelude, in Kilpi’s tale the white colour is associated with the ideal realm of love and art. In the very first sentence we learn that the Grail temple is made of marble (something strongly envisioned as white).³³ Then the temple is described as

29 Baudelaire > Wagner, 17 February 1860, in Baudelaire 1986, 145–146.

30 As cited in Csampai and Holland 1989, 184.

31 See also the remark on Kilpi’s allusion to Baudelaire’s *Correspondances* with Kilpi in Lyytikäinen 1997, 57.

32 <https://arthistorians.info/gautiert>, accessed 2 December 2014.

33 ”Graalin temppeli on marmorista, ja korkeana se seisoo äänettömässä puistossa

the white temple and a temple of purity. Inside the temple, there is the “priest of purity” who kneels before the Holy Grail. Kilpi reveals that the Grail could enflame the heart of a pure and profound human being. Such a heart, in turn, would illuminate the entire world.³⁴

As it turns out in the prologue, the colour black, representing pessimism and degeneration, is used as the antithesis of the utopian white of purity and beauty. In the very first sentence the author mentions that dark waters surround the marble temple. Anfortas (not Amfortas), the king and the holy priest of the Grail, has become a sinner: his eyes and heart are full of dark suffering.³⁵ In Wagner’s opera the brotherhood’s degeneration is connected with Amfortas’s wound, which originated in his sexual act with Kundry. In Kilpi’s version Anfortas has slept with a woman other than his wife Herzeloide. Unlike in Wagner’s opera, Anfortas does not feel physical pain, but rather suffers mentally. As an allegory of art, Anfortas’s deed symbolises artistic degeneration. Anfortas has betrayed his own ideal and identity by betraying the one he really loves.³⁶

In Kilpi’s *Parsifal* four chapters and an epilogue follow the prologue. Perhaps because both Wagner’s and Kilpi’s *Parsifals* were loosely based on Wolfram von Eschenbach’s epos from the thirteenth century, their main dramaturgical tension is nearly analogous. In both, the first climax is the temple scene: they use the first unveiling of the Grail and Parsifal’s immaturity to redeem the degenerate community of brothers. After Parsifal has matured as human being, he returns to the temple and unveils the Grail. This time he succeeds and becomes the new leader of the Grail community.

Unlike von Eschenbach’s *Parzival* and Wagner’s *Parsifal*, in Kilpi’s version Parsifal is the son of Herzeloide and Anfortas, a relationship

tummain vesien partaalla”, Kilpi, *Parsifal*, 9.

34 ”Graalin pyhän maljan edessä tulvii nimittäin puhdas ja syväpalava ihminen maailman liikutusydämeksi ja valaisee ihanan ilon heijastuksena maailman”, Kilpi, *Parsifal*, 9.

35 ”[...] siksi sammuu hänen silmänsä ja sydämensä pimeänä kärsimyksenä”, Kilpi, *Parsifal*, 10.

36 Lyytikäinen 1997, 54.

that increases the intimacy of the tale as a family drama. Chapter 1, “Parsifal ja Herzeloide” (Parsifal and Herzeloide), is about Parsifal’s youth. He grows up alone with his mother Herzeloide in a white castle outside the Grail temple. In contrast to the prologue’s dark colours around Anfortas, Herzeloide’s realm is white, the colour of pure emotion. One day, after Herzeloide noticed Anfortas’s gaze suddenly turn impassive, she takes little Parsifal and leaves the king. Because of Anfortas’s betrayal, Herzeloide is aware of evil in the world. She is deeply worried about Parsifal’s fate once he enters the world as a grown man. The music that Parsifal hears – organ tones in the church and music in the castle – are signs of an unfamiliar realm. His longing for the world is associated with the expansion of the colour blue.³⁷ After Parsifal has seen a “blue knight”, he leaves the white castle of his childhood.

In the beginning of Chapter 2, “Parsifal ilona” (Parsifal as Joy), the blue colour that represents longing and hope becomes dominant.³⁸ That blue realm is described as a wondrous world and, in acoustical terms, as the sounding world.³⁹ Parsifal rides around as the “blue knight”, and although he encounters different women, he remains emotionally absent. Kilpi “paints” sensual and colourful pictures by comparing Parsifal’s women with flowers.⁴⁰ The scene is astonishingly similar to the most sensual and impressionistic part of Wagner’s *Parsifal*, namely the flower maiden scene in Act 2.

The climax of Chapter 2 is Parsifal’s arrival at the Grail temple, where his father Anfortas is waiting for him. Whereas Parsifal in Wagner’s music drama simply observes the Grail ceremony, in Kilpi’s version he is the centre of attention. The future of the collective depends

37 There are 11 references to the “blue” in five pages; see Kilpi, *Parsifal*, 25–29.

38 Lyytikäinen 1997, 54.

39 “Ihmeellinen maailma. Soiva maailma”, Kilpi, *Parsifal*, 34.

40 “Aigarin silmät ovat päivänpaistetta ja hän itse hilpeä omenakukkanen, mutta Kunnevar kukoistaa ruusuna ja Miljan on kalpean kuun valkea lilja. Parsifal vesillä ja kukkasten keskellä, Parsifal illan puistoissa ja punervaliehuissessa tanssissa, neitojen silmät säteilevät hänen sydämessä, neitojen posket hiipivät hänelle sydämelle, kenestä kukoistaa hänen rintansa?”, Kilpi, *Parsifal*, 41.

on how Parsifal encounters the Grail. Kilpi's acoustic landscape anticipates failure as Parsifal makes his way to the temple. The gurgling of joyful waves, the bright melody of Parsifal's horn and the twittering birds refer to the joyous, but superficial realm of the "blue knight" Parsifal.⁴¹ In sharp contrast to that exterior world of sounds, the temple is meaningfully "silent" – only dusky "sighs" are heard.⁴² These acoustic realms are irreconcilable. After Parsifal enters the castle, Anfortas suddenly realises that his son is too immature to encounter the Grail. Anfortas tells Parsifal what could happen after the Grail has been revealed to him. There are two possibilities: Either the Grail will move Parsifal's heart so profoundly that his personality will illuminate the whole world, as mentioned in the prologue. Or Parsifal will feel only superficial sensations that will not touch his heart. Parsifal kneels before the Grail and deeply reconsiders his entire life. After he awakens, he sees the burning Grail in front of him. Kilpi describes Parsifal as turning serious. He feels naked before the powerful rays of the Grail. Once Parsifal realises that the rays do not touch his heart, he grows worried as the blue ray of the Grail turns even darker. Finally, Parsifal looks inside the Grail and sees that it is empty. He has failed in his task.

In Wagner's opera, after the Grail ceremony in Act I has come to its conclusion, Gurnemanz bitterly pushes Parsifal out. Because Parsifal has not reacted in the way Gurnemanz wanted during the ceremony, Gurnemanz does not consider Parsifal to be the long-awaited redeemer. However, Gurnemanz does not realise that at the point Parsifal saw Amfortas's suffering during the ceremony, he felt compassion for the first time. In Kilpi's *Parsifal*, by contrast, Parsifal reacts to his failure before the Grail with narcissistic rage at the whole world.⁴³ Chapter 3, "Parsifal suruna" (Parsifal as Sorrow), focuses on Parsifal's reaction to his own immaturity. He becomes earnest, violent and unable to love anything or anyone, even while he slaughters dragons, liberates cap-

41 "Kuin iloisten aaltojen solina"; "Raikuvampana tanssii torvi"; "[...] linnut virkoavat livertämään", Kilpi, *Parsifal*, 58 and 60.

42 Kilpi, *Parsifal*, 60.

43 Lyytikäinen 1997, 60.

tured women and wins every tournament in which he participates. The former “blue knight” has turned into the “red knight”, and red along with black are the colours that dominate the chapter.⁴⁴

The path of Wagner’s Parsifal to leader of the brotherhood is stony. As he sings in Act 3, it is a path of errors and suffering (“Der Irrnis und der Leiden Pfade kam ich”) that has made him a mature human being. Finally, enlightened by compassion, he can become the new king and the leader of the community and unveil the Grail. In Kilpi’s tale, by contrast, Parsifal’s change occurs rather abruptly. In Chapter 4, “Parsifal ja Konviramur” (Parsifal and Konviramur), Parsifal falls in love with Konviramur, an emotion that changes his life. Although Kilpi’s solution might appear somewhat mannered, it is justified: The glorification of idealised love derives from the tradition of medieval chivalric romances.⁴⁵ Most important, in Kilpi’s interpretation life-long romantic love is the strong and pure emotion that an artist ultimately needs in order to create real art.

Kilpi’s Parsifal is now ready to return to the Grail temple and redeem the community. A remarkable feature in Kilpi’s tale is that Parsifal arrives at the temple and encounters the Grail in the company of his beloved, Konviramur. After Parsifal and Konviramur kneel before the Grail, things proceed differently than before. The couple does not in fact see the Grail unveiled in front of them. Rather, as Kilpi poetically expresses it, Parsifal and Konviramur feel that the Grail’s power is something that is deep in their hearts – a feeling that the sun has replaced their hearts. The feeling is so powerful that Kilpi asks whether the earthly and conventional idea of a human being would still be valid to describe Konviramur and Parsifal.⁴⁶

Finally, after Wagner’s Parsifal has entered the temple, he heals Amfortas’s wound with the lost spear and, as the new leader, unveils

44 In Chapter 2, there are ca. 15 direct references to the colour red and ca. 10 references to the colour black. There are only ca. 10 references to white in contrast to ca. 60 in Chapter 1.

45 Suomi 1952, 127.

46 ”Parsifal ja Konviramur tuntevat sydämensä kuin auringon... Onko ihminen enää?”, Kilpi, *Parsifal*, 112–113.

the Grail. However, as is characteristic of Wagner, the ending is highly ambiguous. As modern German performances have frequently tried to demonstrate, a pessimistic interpretation of this scene is possible.⁴⁷ It indeed remains unclear whether Parsifal could truly redeem the degenerate brotherhood. If he can, what would redemption really mean? What is obvious, however, is that, as Udo Bermbach has remarked, the moment Parsifal unveils the Grail – the symbol of art – the path to the artwork of the future has been opened. It is the point of a new beginning for mankind, since Amfortas's wound, the symbol of mankind's degeneration, has been healed.⁴⁸ In Kilpi's *Parsifal* all these ambiguities are absent. By contrast, the colours in Kilpi's ending reflect the harmony in the temple of art. Black and other dark colours have disappeared. Only white, the colour of pure love and of art, shines through. At the very end Kilpi begs Parsifal and Konviramur to illuminate by example the heart of the author (that is, Volter Kilpi) and all hearts of the human race.⁴⁹

Parsifal, art-religion and the fin de siècle

Art-religion of the last decades of the nineteenth century was a symptom of European modernity. It was a counter-reaction to the rationalization and secularization of society across the continent. The expansion of art-religion necessitated a fundamental change in religious consciousness. Art-religion was symbolist alternative to religion, filling the gap opened by the "death of God".⁵⁰ As Wagner stated in the famous opening sentences of his *Religion und Kunst* (Religion and Art), widely regarded as a commentary to *Parsifal*, the institutional Christian church had irreversibly lost its impact, and its liturgical symbols had become meaningless. Therefore, it was art that had to replace religion

47 See Levin 2006.

48 Bermbach 2003, 309.

49 "[...] minä kirjoittajakin polvistun, kun minä kirjoitan teistä: valaiskaa minunkin rintani ja jokainen ihminen ilonne liikutuksella!", Kilpi, *Parsifal*, 120.

50 Auerochs 2006, 97.

and adopt its symbols.⁵¹ Similar to Wagner, for Volter Kilpi as well the Grail symbolised the idea of reaching the sacral realm through art.

From a longer historical perspective, both *Parsifals* are ultimate examples of the “expansion of the aesthetic” that the conservative political philosopher Carl Schmitt defined as a symptom of the nineteenth century.⁵² As he retrospectively observed of the era before the First World War in his *Preface* (1924) to *Political Romanticism* (1919), in modern society “the Church is replaced by the theater, the religious is treated as material for a drama or an opera” and the artist “avails himself of certain functions of the priest.”⁵³ That description matches both *Parsifals* and their authors, who used the Grail as the symbol of their aesthetic worldviews. Performances of *Parsifal* at the Bayreuth Festival in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth were among the most extreme examples of a personal cult ever manifested around any artist and his work. Though having a lower profile, Kilpi also became a kind of preacher in the epilogue of his *Parsifal*, where he speaks directly to his reader as the proponent of pure art.

As mentioned above, the societal dimension which is an essential part of Wagner’s *Parsifal* is absent from Kilpi’s tale. Unlike the deep and psychologically ambivalent *dramatis personae* in Wagner’s music drama, Kilpi’s characters, whether described in blue, red, black or white, remain distant. Rather, they are aesthetic objects. Whereas Wagner’s Amfortas’s wound is supposed to evoke “fear and empathy”, it is unlikely that the misery of Kilpi’s Anfortas would move the reader. Nor are the dragons likely to evoke fear. Instead, Kilpi’s *Parsifal* attempts to revive the early romantic concept in which the utopia of absolute art is interconnected with ideal love and moral purity, as the merging of Parsifal and Konviramur into one through love symbolises. Kilpi’s tale has rightly been compared with the aesthetics of Pre-Raphaelite

51 Wagner 1913, 130.

52 Schmitt 1986, 16.

53 *Ibid.*, 18.

paintings.⁵⁴ Edward Burne-Jones's *The Attainment of the Grail* from 1895–1896 (Figure 2) provides an appropriate visual point of comparison with Kilpi's *Parsifal*. Both attempt to create the inviolate wholeness of beauty, harmony and moral purity without decadence.



Figure 2. Figure 2. Edward Burne-Jones's *The Attainment of the Grail* (1895–1896).

The unshakeable belief in the supremacy of aesthetics which both Wagner and Kilpi shared in their *Parsifals* also has questionable traits. As did Wagner, so too young Kilpi considered emotion to be superior to rationality. In his essay “Taiteesta ja siveydestä”, Kilpi indicated that the value of art is dependent on its ability to evoke emotions.⁵⁵ Kilpi treated philosophy in a way similar to the arts. For him, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were “true philosophers” because of the profound aesthetic impact their works had on him. Even further, he despised academic philosophy and philosophical systems in general.⁵⁶ Such an “aesthetic” approach to philosophy bears a resemblance to Wagner, who mocked philosophy as too intellectual and distant from reality. Wagner’s writings came close to an inner monologue aimed at convincing the reader through emotional identification instead of through

54 Tarkkainen 1902, 83.

55 For that reason, the common denominator between such different authors as Heine, Goethe, Byron, Ibsen, Milton and d’Annunzio for Kilpi was their ability to evoke deep emotions in him; see Kilpi 1990.

56 On Kilpi’s attitude to philosophy see *ibid.*, 87–93.

clear argument or rationality.⁵⁷ The same could be said about Kilpi's essays on aesthetics.

Wagner's and Kilpi's Grail embodies the belief that art-religion could redeem people from the misery of the complex modernized and rationalized world. They both implied that all problems would be cleared away as the Grail of art enlightened mankind. As an attitude, however, the unshakeable belief in aesthetics as the guiding principle of human existence is problematic. In connection with Walter Benjamin's thesis on the politicization of aesthetics, there was always the danger that the boundaries between fiction and reality would become blurred in an ignoble way. As an example, Benjamin mentioned Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's praise for the beauty of warfare, which Benjamin regarded as the perfection of *l'art pour l'art*.⁵⁸ To be aware of certain questionable traits in Wagner's and Kilpi's programmatic art-religion does not, however, necessitate rejecting their *Parsifals*. Indeed, the literary works of young Volter Kilpi deserve a comprehensive comparative examination in the context of European symbolism.

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57 On Wagner and philosophy see Mork 1990, 22–23.

58 Benjamin 1977, 43–44.

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Back to the North? Reframing Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* in French Cinema under German Occupation

Jean Delannoy's and Jean Cocteau's
L'Éternel retour (1943)

MAURO FOSCO BERTOLA

“A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.”
– John Keats, *Endymion*

Directed by Jean Delannoy, based on a script written by Jean Cocteau and released in October 1943, *L'Éternel retour* was an immediate triumph for Cocteau, both as a screenwriter and as a lover. The film, which relocates the story of Tristan and Isolde to a contemporary milieu, was one of the greatest successes of French cinema under German occupation and marked the debut of Cocteau's lover Jean Marais in the glamorous world of the movies. Although directly after the war the film was prized as confirming the unbroken creativity of *la grande Nation* despite that nation's political defeat, it soon became one of France's most controversial creations, symbolizing the ambiguous interconnections of the day between political collaboration and artistic freedom. Indeed, *L'Éternel retour* reshapes the Tristan legend as reconstructed in the early twentieth century by Joseph Bédier using a

double set of oppositions.¹ Firstly, the film blends clearly Wagnerian elements with various allusions to Claude Debussy's Tristanesque opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and not only at the dramaturgical level and in the *mise-en-scène*, but also in the score composed by Cocteau's friend Georges Auric, a former member of *Les Six*, who in the following decades would create the music for most of Cocteau's further cinematic endeavours. Secondly, by displacing the events to France, the film reframes Wagner's Nordic iconography by twisting it towards Nazi ideology. From the astonishing Aryan beauty of both protagonists, clearly recalling Arno Breker's notorious sculptures made for the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, to the link between physical disability and moral poverty, as well as the filmic commonplace of a chalet in the Alps, a broad array of references link *L'Éternel retour* to Nazi Germany and its embodiment in the eagerly produced blockbusters of the *Universum-Film Aktiengesellschaft* (UFA), Germany's state-owned film production company. The Nietzschean title makes the references complete.

In my article I intend to highlight the different levels at which the ambiguous entanglements between Wagner and Debussy, Aryan mythology and Cocteau's poetic idiosyncrasies manifest themselves in the movie. In this respect I will explore the film and its prominent featuring of Nietzsche's idea of Eternal Return as an endless recurrence of a finite set of events using the concept of parallax. A notion originally used to describe an optic phenomenon – “the apparent displacement of an object (the shift of its position against a background), caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of sight”² – a parallax has been philosophically elaborated in recent years, especially by the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek in *The Parallax View* from 2006. In adopting Žižek's concept of parallax, as well as his elaborations on the Nietzschean topic of *amor fati*, I will point out how, through Cocteau's

1 Bédier 2012.

2 Žižek 2006, 17. In this regard see another article of mine (Bertola 2014), in which I compare Cocteau's film *Orphée* (1950) with Philip Glass's operatic version of the movie from 1992, delineating an inherent link between Cocteau's filmic language and Glass's “minimalist” music by using the concept of anamorphosis.

peculiar reading of Nietzsche's notion of Eternal Return, the film was able to hold together the contradictory complexities of its references so successfully, conveying an uncertain French identity split between national tradition and a new Nordic vision of Aryan supremacy.

In the following I will firstly introduce the notion of parallax and the specific way I intend to adopt it for my analysis. In three subsequent sections I will then explore the different levels at which this notion operates within Delannoy's and Cocteau's film: the philosophical, musical-dramaturgical and political.

On the threefoldness of parallaxes

Karl Valentin, the leading German comedian and actor of the 1920s and 1930s, once famously said, "In the past even the future was better" ("*Die Zukunft war früher auch besser*").³ For the span of a sentence the joke conflates past, present and future, confronting us with a slightly paradoxical temporal loop. It is the same temporal loop that we find at the beginning of Franz Schubert's *Winterreise*: in the first song the poet, silently leaving the home of his former love by night, recalls the sweet time he had once spent there, when "the girl spoke of love, her mother even of marriage". We have to take Wilhelm Müller quite literally here: he is not depicting the loss of a past happiness but the loss of a past confidence in the possibility of a better future.⁴ As Charles Rosen remarked, it is mostly in the loss of imaginary hopes and not of concrete happiness that romantic melancholia is to be found.⁵

One hundred years later Karl Valentin repeats the same romantic

3 Valentin 1986, 128.

4 For the complete text of Müller's poem and an in-depth analysis of Schubert's setting see Youens 1991, 119–130. Youens does not go into the paradoxical temporality of hope, which I have highlighted here. Instead she postulates a "view of dreams as privileged realms of happiness and escape from misery" and therefore a "contrast between reality and imagination" as the structural axis of both text and music (Youens 1991, 126), something which I think, even if correct in principle, misses the originality of Müller's temporal loop, which aims to point out the puzzling, inextricable interdependency (and not merely a contrast) of both past and future.

5 Rosen 2003, 174–175.

insight about past hopes while simultaneously reversing its emotional standpoint. Instead of Schubert's empathic identification with the lyrical self, we see in Valentin a radical, ironic distance towards these past hopes. Schubert fully assumed in his music the subjective position of the romantic Self lamenting his broken promises; in contrast, Valentin voices the cold externality of a fully unrelated observer. But where actually are we, the audience, when we laugh? Because, strictly speaking, there is nothing to laugh about in Valentin's cynical statement. The answer to this question is a parallaxic one. It is from the irreconcilable gap between Valentin's coldness and the inherent melancholia of his statement that our bittersweet laugh arises. In it, two conflicting positions of enunciation are simultaneously at work: on the one hand, we agree with the statement and assume a sympathetic-subjective standpoint ("yes, back then even the future looked better!"); on the other hand, Valentin's ironic voice also forces us to assume an external, de-subjectivized position ("what a fool you were, lost in false hopes!"). We find ourselves stuck here between the two perspectives, and our bittersweet laugh just indicates this deadlock. Our laughter is the signifier of our incapacity either to reject fully or assume one of the two viewpoints, i.e. to overcome the parallaxic gap between the two by forming a third, fully satisfying stance. To put it in more philosophical terms, the concept of parallax refers in its minimal form to the paratactic bringing together of two opposing and non-complementary stances in which any final sublation or synthesis of the two elements is avoided or rather is impossible. The "new" or final statement arises here in the gap originating in the contradictory openness of the two opposed elements. This new, "third" element is purely virtual, merely marking the void opened up by the underlying antinomy.⁶

Jean Delannoy's and Jean Cocteau's film *L'Éternel retour* of 1943 is another example of just such a parallaxic gap between irreconcilable positions, even if it is a twisted one. The gap around which *L'Éternel retour* revolves and from which it originates is indeed multi-layered,

6 Žižek 2006, 20–28.

involving at least three intersecting levels: a philosophical, a (music-) dramatic, and a political level. It is only in the logic of a parallax between conflicting elements that the apparent incoherence and elusive nature of *L'Éternel retour* can be successfully interpreted and properly understood. In the following pages, by considering the unresolved, structural antagonism underlying each of the three aforementioned levels in the film, I will highlight how Delannoy's and Cocteau's puzzling attempt to twist the Tristan saga into an ideologized North of Aryan beauty, culminating in the evocation of a Viking funeral, can be read as a reflection on the nature of the tragic in a post-Wagnerian era and at the same time as an attempt to reformulate under different conditions Wagner's claims on the regenerative power of artwork for the national collective.⁷

From Wagner to Nietzsche or where actually is the Tragic?

In dealing with Delannoy's and Cocteau's *L'Éternel retour*, the striking point we have to begin with is the title. Indeed, by combining Tristan and Isolde's love story with Nietzsche's Eternal Return of the Same, Cocteau is promising something very intriguing: the very opera in which Wagner most clearly affirms the inherent negativity of the Day-World, i.e. of the socio-symbolic space in which our daily lives

7 For the biographical and factual background as well as the reception of *L'Éternel retour* during the German occupation see Williams 2008, 182–186. For Cocteau's early views on cinema and his critique of cinema as “photographed theatre” (instead of a cinema relying on its own, able to produce “surprises par l'appareil de prise de vues”) see Clair 1970, 40. For the link between the film and Nietzsche's philosophy see also Azoury/Lalanne (ed.) 2003, 41–45, in which the authors dismiss the Nietzschean title as a modish homage of sorts on the part of Cocteau. In contrast, Azoury and Lalanne highlight the theme of “resentment” as the true *trait d'union* between Nietzsche's philosophy and the movie. Even if this Nietzschean theme is undoubtedly present in the film, Cocteau's retelling of the Tristan myth cannot be successfully reduced to it. It is the aim of my paper to show the appropriateness of the film's title, which points towards precisely that issue which the concept of the eternal return of the same is about in Nietzsche's works, i.e. the reformulation of the Tragic in the modern age. I would also like to thank Matt Fentem, who drew my attention to the specific Viking background underlying the death (and transfiguration) of both protagonists at the end of the film.

are rooted and which is marked, as Novalis puts it in his *Hymns to the Night*, by its “eternal unrest” (*ewige Unruhe*), is now to be retold using one of Nietzsche’s most important concepts, by means of which the philosopher definitively articulates his most radical “Yes!” to the very world that Wagner is so eager to deny. Is not Cocteau tacitly promising here to give concrete form to that impossible, non-decadent Wagner whom Nietzsche was dreaming of by so harshly polemicizing the real Wagner?

Relying on Schopenhauer’s ontological postulation of an irrational substance perpetually at odds with itself, i.e. the metaphysical Will, which takes its most conspicuous and painful form in the human world through the individuation principle, in *Tristan und Isolde* Wagner attempts an ethical project which conflates precisely those elements that Schopenhauer strictly separates. Still cherishing some remnants of his youthful admiration for Feuerbach, Wagner calls for an overcoming of the pains of individuation and of the Will to life, which is incessantly pulsing behind them, as reason to reject Schopenhauer’s asceticism.⁸ If Schopenhauer preaches the “deliberate breaking of the will by refusing the agreeable and looking for the disagreeable, the voluntarily chosen way of life of penance and self-chastisement, for the constant mortification of the will”,⁹ Wagner clearly endorses the opposite solution. It is not by denying the Will, but by fully embracing its most conspicuous manifestation, i.e. sexual craving, that we can overcome our individuality and achieve the Nirvana of self-obliteration.¹⁰ Of course, as we all very well know, in *Tristan und Isolde* Wagner is not depicting some kind of orgiastic fête; on the contrary, he is proposing a strictly regulated practice of intersubjective self-overcoming through a radical form of love between man and woman. The two lovers must not only reject the valid social norms and more generally the symbolic order of the Day-World they live in, but also must fully and joyously embrace the con-

8 On the necessity of an ascetic life for Schopenhauer, see Schopenhauer 1969, vol. I, 4th book, § 68, 378–398.

9 Schopenhauer 1969, vol. I, 392.

10 Reinhardt 1992, 291; Hutcheon & Hutcheon 2004, 60–65.

sequences necessarily following from the next step in their ritualized practice; in other words, the transition from the rejection of the Day-World (*Weltverneinung*) to attaining the Nirvana of absolute Oneness beyond individuation (*Einswerden*) involves death, mutual death. The Tragic in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* thus arises from the two lovers' conscious and active endorsement of an emancipatory project with all its inherent paradoxes. By striving for the utmost liberation from the pains and constraints of the Will to life, Tristan and Isolde wilfully choose the Nothingness of non-being. The bliss of the "Liebestod" consists precisely in the antinomy it relies upon: liberation through deliberate and mutual annihilation.

This is what Nietzsche had in mind when, in 1872 after attending a performance of *Tristan und Isolde*, he paradoxically wrote, "This drama of death does not sadden me at all; on the contrary, I feel happy and redeemed".¹¹ As he puts it in his ground-breaking opus primus *The Birth of Tragedy* published in the same year, compared to ancient tragedy and the Aristotelian catharsis theory, the specificity of the tragic experience in modern times – an experience Nietzsche famously considered paradigmatically embodied in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* – consists in "that certain foreknowledge of a supreme delight reached by a path leading through destruction and negation".¹² In the complex interplay between the "Apollonian" quality of the drama and the nihilistic, "Dionysian" power of music Nietzsche identifies the redemptive potential of Wagner's music drama, which can liberate us from the impasse of our "Socratic", decadent culture.¹³ But after the deterioration of his friendship with Wagner during the first Bayreuth Festival in 1876 and the last encounter with the composer in Sorrento in September of the same year, things changed in Nietzsche's philosophy. In particular, after Wagner's death in 1883, with the publication of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and the formulation of his theory of the Eternal Return of the same,

11 Quoted in Fischer-Dieskau 1976, 90.

12 Nietzsche 2007, 100.

13 Ibid., 98–108, in particular paragraphs 21 and 22; see Burnham & Jesinghausen 2010, 132–143.

Nietzsche's idea of the Tragic evolved, and he now levelled a specific accusation at Wagner and his concept of *Musikdrama*. By embracing the emancipatory potential of the Nothingness, the composer and former friend was not nihilistic enough.¹⁴ But what does that mean? Here we have to read Nietzsche through the lens of Heidegger's interpretation and its reception in the French post-structuralism of the late 1960s and 1970s. Both point to Nietzsche as a thinker pre-eminently concerned with the problem of overcoming metaphysics, with its corollary of allegedly ultimate truths.¹⁵

Just as Heidegger did, let us consider a note Nietzsche wrote in 1887, posthumously collected in *Will to Power* (aphorism 2). Here Nietzsche is asking a specific question: "What does nihilism mean? *That the highest values devalue themselves*. The aim is lacking; 'why?' finds no answer."¹⁶ Now we can measure at its clearest the radical difference between Wagner and Nietzsche: Tristan and Isolde indeed share an ultimate, unquestionable Truth (Nirvana) and with it a high value, i.e. true love as *Einswerden*. Wagner's Schopenhauerian Night-World is therefore for Nietzsche a further, albeit paradoxical, form of metaphysics. The peace-bringing Nothingness of Nirvana may be a pure void ontologically, but anthropologically it functions like any other "positive" metaphysics of the past, positing a supreme entity from which a system of values and normative stances follows. The counterproof of the still positive nature of this Nirvana-esque non-being is the "Liebestod": Is not Love-Death the specific aim that both lovers stubbornly pursue throughout the entire opera? A goal referring to a higher value and giving an exact meaning to the events on stage is by no means lacking; in-

14 Müller-Lauter 1999 and Sommer 2006.

15 During the 1930s and 1940s in Paris, Heidegger held a series of lectures on Nietzsche, which laid the groundwork for the French reception of Nietzsche's thought over the next decades. In particular, I am referring here to an early text by Jean-Luc Nancy on Nietzsche (Nancy 1968), in which in a close reading of Heidegger's interpretation of the French philosopher reverses Heidegger's conclusions, presenting Nietzsche not as the last, failed attempt to elaborate a true metaphysic, but rather as the first post-metaphysical philosopher.

16 Nietzsche 1968, 9.

deed, it is utterly (even oppressively) present in Wagner's celebration of the peace of mutual self-obliteration in Nothingness. But in Nietzsche's eyes Wagner's nihilism is nothing more than a sham, and it is hardly coincidence that this Nirvana of non-being can only be attained by denying the world, which for Nietzsche is the defining feature of all metaphysical attempts. Such attempts, by constructing their worlds of ideas, lose, as it were, the real world of our everyday experience, as, according to Nietzsche, all metaphysics are based on the nihilistic dismissal or renouncement of the world as it is, with its concrete demands in favour of pure intellectual, basically hollow, constructs.¹⁷ The nihilism Nietzsche sees in *Tristan und Isolde* is thus a deceptive one: it is a "pessimism of weakness".¹⁸ Here originates Nietzsche's notorious reproach of Wagner, namely that he is the embodiment of Western "decadence" through and through.

But what then would define a Nietzschean "pessimism of strength?" The answer is provided by the title of Delannoy's and Cocteau's film: *L'Éternel retour*, the eternal return of the same. The wisdom that, as Nietzsche put it at the end of *The Gay Science*, "every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence—even this spider and this moonlight between the trees".¹⁹ This tragic wisdom apparently reducing man to some kind of puppet is for Nietzsche what allows us to escape the decadence of asceticism and world-denial. But why, or rather, how?

Recall the famous passage in part three of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, where the protagonist tells of his meeting with the dwarf, that "spirit of gravity" which is Zarathustra's most powerful enemy.²⁰ Standing before a gateway at the top of which the words "This Moment" are inscribed and where two paths come together, that of the past and that

17 Consider in this regard the famous passage from *Twilight of the Idols* entitled "How the 'true world' finally became a fable", Nietzsche 2007, 171.

18 Raymond Geuss's Introduction to Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*, 2007, vii-xxx, here xxvi.

19 The penultimate aphorism in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche 2001, 194.

20 Part III, "On the Vision and the Riddle", Nietzsche 2006, 123–127.

of the future, Zarathustra and the dwarf debate on the significance of this convergence. The dwarf quickly comes to the nihilistic conclusion that what they see is the circularity of time, the eternal occurrence of the same. There is no place for higher values that give a meaningful structure to our lives, because all we experience is just the pointless and necessary repetition of the same occurrences, gestures, instances and so on, regardless of our commitment, goals and efforts to posit values. In his rebuttal Zarathustra does not deny that idea, and likewise fully assumes the ontological nihilism of a closed universe of indifferent necessity. Nevertheless, he highlights something else, namely the crucial importance of the gateway, of that “Moment” which eternally shapes both paths.²¹ The dwarf, who casually jumps down from Zarathustra’s shoulder before delivering his statement, assumes a meta-perspective by looking at the circularity of time as if he stood *outside* it. Zarathustra emphasizes the factual impossibility of such a stance; even if we rationally recognize the circularity of time and the inevitable necessity of all that happens, given our structural embeddedness in the world, we live *in* and not *outside* the moment. And herein lies the emancipatory potential of *amor fati* for Nietzsche, of loving the necessity inscribed in the moment: by actively embracing what will nevertheless happen or, as Nietzsche put it, by “seeing as beautiful what is necessary in things”, we recognize this necessity as being just as much our own as our “guilt” – or our *Gewesenheit* as Heidegger would have put it. For Nietzsche, the practical oxymoron of freely accepting what is in any case necessary is not a purely empty gesture. On the contrary, it is this active acceptance of the inevitability of every moment that allows life to have meaning under the sign of *amor fati*. It is by loving the in-itself meaningless necessity that we regain our goal, our aim, without positing a metaphysical truth, a higher value. As Nietzsche put it, “I shall be one of those who make things beautiful.”²²

21 “Must not whatever *can* happen, already have happened, been done, passed by before? [...] And are not all things firmly knotted together in such a way that this moment draws after it *all* things to come? Therefore – itself as well?”, Nietzsche 2006, 126.

22 Nietzsche 2001, 157.

Once again the counterproof of our being free of any decadence is the fact that we no longer deny the world; on the contrary, we now fully accept it. The tragic wisdom for Nietzsche thus lies, as he writes in *Twilight of Idols*, in the affirmation of life, “even in its strangest and harshest problems”, in realizing in oneself “the eternal joy in becoming – the joy that includes even the eternal *joy in negating*”.²³ The Tragic is no longer the inherent need to deny the world in order to reach the higher values or rather the ultimate Truth. The Tragic is now the readiness to say “Yes!” fully to our being in the world regardless of the consequences. Is this not precisely what Nietzsche had in mind when he famously proposed the Mediterranean qualities of Bizet’s *Carmen* as an antidote to Wagner’s Nordic World-Denial in *The Case of Wagner*?²⁴ Bizet’s operatic tragedy relies on the full acceptance on the part of Carmen and Don José of their tragic fate and on their efforts (through their singing) to make that inevitability beautiful. It is in the melodic qualities of their vocal line, which continues throughout the opera, not against and not despite, but precisely because of their fate, that Bizet’s work reveals to Nietzsche the utmost and tragic wisdom of an unrelenting affirmation of life, the eternal joy of becoming. The beauty of Carmen’s and Don José’s singing is no longer grounded in the metaphysical certitude of a Nirvana waiting at the end of the “Liebestod”. On the contrary, this beauty arises in the certainty of the ontological groundlessness on which their love (and hate) relies. What makes this metaphysical void meaningful is the extreme tenacity with which they cling to the primordial “Yes!” in the sheer repetitiveness of their respective drives.

23 Nietzsche 2007, 228. The complete passage from the famous fifth section (“What I Owe the Ancients”) in *Twilight of the Idols* reads: “The psychology of the orgiastic [...] gave me the key to the concept of *tragic* feeling, a concept that had been misunderstood by Aristotle and even more by our pessimists. [...] Saying yes to life, even in its strangest and harshest problems; the will to life rejoicing in its own inexhaustibility through the *sacrifice* of its highest types – *that* is what I called Dionysian, *that* is the bridge I found to the psychology of the *tragic* poet. *Not* to escape horror and pity, not to cleanse yourself of a dangerous affect by violent discharge – as Aristotle thought – : but rather, over and above all horror and pity, so that *you yourself may be* the eternal joy in becoming, – the joy that includes even the eternal *joy in negating*...”, Nietzsche 2007, 228.

24 Sections 1–3 in *The Case of Wagner*, Nietzsche 2007, 234–239.

This is what Cocteau is implicitly promising by titling the film *The Eternal Return*: Tristan and Isolde's love story is now to be retold from the standpoint of Mediterranean tragic wisdom, i.e. as the two protagonists' joyful endorsement of the never-ending reoccurrence of their in-themselves meaningless heartaches, without any transcending, Nirvana-esque peace at all. But this is not what we get, at least, at first glimpse.

On broken promises: Tristan's eternal *detour*

Even if immediately after the outbreak of World War I in 1914 Cocteau "led a crusade", as Jay Winter put it, against the deleterious Germanic influences on art, setting up "the virtues of the Mediterranean" in opposition to their Teutonic counterparts, what we quickly note in *L'Éternel retour* is that almost three decades later Cocteau was by no means championing some kind of Mediterranean flair over Teutonic *décadence*.²⁵ Instead, what becomes instantly clear in the film is the astonishingly Aryan look of both protagonists (Jean Marais as Patrice/Tristan, and Madeleine Sologne as Nathalie/Isolde). Their physical features clearly recall the notorious statues that Arno Breker, Hitler's favourite sculptor, created during the 1930s and 1940s, in particular those made for the 1936 Olympics in Berlin.²⁶ This is hardly a coincidence. In 1942 – one year before the film was released – Cocteau publicly praised Breker, who was displaying his works in occupied Paris, a point we will revisit at the end of the article.²⁷ But as if that were not enough, by relying on a secondary figure in Bédier's reconstruction of

25 Winter 1998, 131–132.

26 Williams 2008, 183–185 on the link between the physiognomy of Jean Marais and Madelaine Sologne in *L'Éternel retour*. Breker's statues of the 1930s and 1940s are reproduced in Egret (ed.) 1996; see in particular the images nos. 85–282.

27 Cocteau 1942. For the reception of Breker and German art in general in occupied France see Bertrand Dorléac 2008, in particular 99–102 on the relationship between Breker and Cocteau. In 1963 Breker sculpted a bronze effigy of Cocteau, which was unveiled in 1964 at the Chapel of Saint-Blaise-des-Simples during a service marking the first anniversary of the poet's death. A reproduction can be found in Egret 1996, n.p. (image no. 333).

the poem, the film ominously links physical disability and moral poverty. Achille, Patrice's twenty-four-year-old cousin, is not only a dwarf irremediably tied to his mother's apron strings, but he is also overcome with jealousy of Patrice's good looks and happiness. Significantly, the film opens with Achille sneaking around Patrice's room, and shortly before the end it will be Achille who surreptitiously inflicts a deadly wound on Patrice. Are we not clearly dealing here with National Socialist motifs in the interpretation of Nietzsche?²⁸

The topic of the Overman seems to be rearticulated by Cocteau in the guise of Nietzsche's unfortunate characterization of him as the "blond beast", and the issue of resentment, lying at the core of Nietzsche's critique of Christian morality, is now linked, not with the falseness behind the ethical principles (the higher values which devalue themselves), but rather with the Devil, who can allegedly be found in all who are mentally or physically challenged.²⁹

Far from the Nietzschean "healthy" South, Cocteau seems to be using an ideologized North to (dis-)place the legend.³⁰ But even more

28 On Nietzsche's interpretations under Fascism see the chapter "Nietzsche zwischen Alfred Baeumler und Georg Lukács" in Montinari 1982, 169–206, and Zapata Galindo 1995.

29 Both issues are taken from *On the Genealogy of Morality*. The topics of the *Sklavenmoral* and of the blond beast are in the first of the three treatises constituting the work ("Good and Evil, Good and Bad"). Significantly Patrice, upon finding Achille in his room at the beginning of the film, mocks the dwarf by jokingly setting his dog on him. Achille is somewhat frightened (but not too much), yet Patrice does not feel any guilt for his mockery. This is what Nietzsche explicitly highlights in §13 of the treatise, where he writes: "There is nothing strange about the fact that lambs bear a grudge towards large birds of prey: but that is no reason to blame the large birds of prey for carrying off the little lambs. [...] It is just as absurd to ask strength *not* to express itself as strength, *not* to be a desire to overthrow, crush, become master, to be a thirst for enemies, resistance and triumphs, as it is to ask weakness to express itself as strength", Nietzsche 2006, 26.

30 In this respect consider also the following passage, which Alfred Baeumler, the most important interpreter of Nietzsche during the NS regime, wrote as early as 1931, in which he resumes the "paths towards a new theory of the state", which Nietzsche allegedly sketched out in his writings: "He [Nietzsche] wanted to hear nothing of the state as a moral organism in Hegel's sense, he also wanted to hear nothing of Bismarck's Christian '*Kleindeutschland*'. Before his eyes stood the task of our race: the task of being leader of Europe. [...] *What would Europe be without the Germanic North? What would Europe be without Germany? A Roman colony.* [...] Germany can only exist world-historically in the form of greatness. It has the choice to exist as the anti-Roman power of Europe, or not to exist", Baeumler 1931, 180–183 (italics in the original).

puzzling is the question of Cocteau's location of the Tragic inherent in Tristan and Isolde's Love-Death. Patrice has gone to the island in search of a bride for his uncle Marc. He becomes involved in a fight with a brute who is harassing a woman at an inn – the blonde Nathalie, of course. While rescuing her, Patrice is wounded, and Nathalie (like Isolde in the original legend) tends his wounds. If we take a closer look at the final sequence of this scene in the inn, we can readily identify a thoroughly Wagnerian statement about the healing power of love in general and the feminine in particular. In a pose clearly recalling the Deposition of Christ from the cross, the wounded Patrice is carried away with Nathalie holding up his head. Here Cocteau seems to promise exactly the opposite of what his Nietzschean title suggests: as in Wagner's opera, mutual love appears to be that "higher value" capable of rescuing the lovers from the brutal absurdity of the Day-World.

Is Cocteau like Wagner and despite the Nietzschean elements in the film not nihilistic enough? Or rather for the French public is he trying to mimic the hodgepodge of Wagner and Nietzsche that Nazism had forcefully put together for its own purposes?

Jumping ahead to the end of the film and following once again Bédier's version of the legend, we find Cocteau depicting Patrice on his deathbed, waiting to say farewell to Nathalie. Waiting with Patrice is another woman, a brunette also named Nathalie. On being falsely informed that the first Nathalie is now happily married to Marc and believing she had completely forgotten their time together at the Alpine chalet, Patrice was heartbroken. Making a new start with the brunette Nathalie, he had even proposed to her. But shortly before dying, Patrice realizes that, despite her apparent abandonment of him, he still loves the first Nathalie. As expected, at the decisive moment the jealous brunette Nathalie, who keeps a close eye out for the ship that may be carrying her blonde rival, is overwhelmed by jealousy and lies to Patrice, telling him that the ship has docked without his beloved on board. Patrice dies alone, and the blonde Nathalie, on finding his corpse already transfigured into a kind of heroic Aryan statue, lies down beside him and dies as well. The last image in the film shows the two dead lovers in a Nordic landscape beyond time and space, lying on

two overturned fishing boats, as in a Viking funeral. As the panels immediately following the opening credits have already made clear, this is the place from which such immortal stories as Tristan and Isolde come. The exact circumstances may differ, but the substance is unaffected; these stories just repeat themselves again and again.

At the end of the film we thus do not get the liberating peace of a Wagnerian Nirvana after the “Liebestod”, as is implied in the inn scene at the beginning. When the lights come back up in the movie theatre, we have the disquieting feeling that we have just watched a kind of Romeo and Juliet drama where things went even worse than in the original story. Not only do the two lovers die estranged from one another and unable to fulfil their Love-Wish, but they also have to repeat that failure over and over again. They have by no means achieved any kind of Nordic peace; they are simply waiting to return in an eternal, circular motion of infinite deception. Not only does Wagner seem out of place here, but so too does Nietzsche’s “pessimism of strength”. Where is that Dionysian “Yes!” on the part of the lovers, an element that the concept of Eternal Return necessarily entails for Nietzsche?

It is here that we have to insert a third element, namely *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Many features in the film closely recall Debussy’s and Maeterlinck’s opera (mysterious fountains, the topic of hair, a persistent atmosphere of impending doom, etc.). In the score Auric explicitly links Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* and Debussy’s *Pelléas et Mélisande* by referring to some of the most iconic motifs from both works and to their different musical styles, as Colin Roust has convincingly laid out in his detailed account of Auric’s score.⁸¹ But above all, is not *Pelléas et Mélisande* that nihilistic version of *Tristan und Isolde* at which the film seems to aim? As is well known, there is a broad range of thematic and music-thematic ties between the two operas, as Carolyn Abbate famous-

31 Roust 2007, 220–232. Furthermore, Roust points out the following: “Throughout his life, Auric would contrast Debussy with Wagner [...]. Auric argued that Debussy’s primary virtue was his sublimation of the Wagnerian aesthetic into a distinctively French one. The masterpiece of this French aesthetic, and the work that Auric always mentioned in discussions of Debussy’s music, was *Pelléas et Mélisande*”, Roust 2007, 222.

ly stressed at the beginning of the 1980s.³² But the point here is to note how Debussy's opera (and Maeterlinck's drama, of course) relies upon a conception of the Tragic that is diametrically opposed to the Wagnerian model. If *Tristan und Isolde* is characterized by the active, even obsessive pursuit of the "Liebestod" on the part of the two lovers (in an intriguing reversal of the Orpheus myth, Tristan even temporarily returns from the hereafter in order to take Isolde with him, finally accomplishing their emancipatory ritual of mutual death), *Pelléas et Mélisande* is a notoriously static drama in which the death of Pelléas is a simple accident, one that does not carry those metaphysical implications the Wagnerian Love-Death entails. Instead of the dialectical logic of Wagner's music drama, striving dramatically and musically towards the culminating point of the "Liebestod" and the definitive resolution of the dissonances in the final B-major accord, *Pelléas et Mélisande* is constructed on the logic of elusiveness. It is in the fissures of drama and music, in their continual thwarting of our expectations, that Maeterlinck's vision of the obscure, unknown forces governing our daily lives becomes visible (and audible). As he puts it in his essay *The Tragic in Daily Life* of 1896,

Thousands and thousands of laws there are, mightier and more venerable than those of passion; but, in common with all that is endowed with resistless force, these laws are silent, and discreet, and slow-moving; and hence it is only in the twilight that they can be seen and heard.³³

And therefore "the only words that count in the play are those that at first seemed useless, for it is therein that the essence lies."³⁴ This is the Tragic in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, the protagonists being no more than puppets in the hands of an inscrutable Fate indifferent to human free will.³⁵

32 Abbate 1981. For the influence of Wagner on Debussy's instrumental music see Médicis 2007.

33 Maeterlinck 1903, 108–109.

34 Ibid., 111.

35 It is by no means surprising that after the premiere of *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1893

And it is precisely this negativity that seems to be the final upshot of Delannoy's and Cocteau's film. Here the Nietzschean concept of the Eternal Return appears to be conceived from the perspective of the dwarf in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, i.e. as the ultimate truth of a radical nihilism asserting the inherent meaninglessness of a never-ending, in-itself purposeless repetition of the same. Is *L'Éternel retour* just a filmic remake of *Pelléas et Mélisande*? Indeed, in the film the blonde Nathalie fits quite well this desolate understanding of the human condition. By no means active, she seems to be passively resigned to her fate like a new Mélisande, accepting the senseless violence of her aggressor at the inn as well as Marc's dogged persistence in carrying on a loveless marriage. Once again we see here a clear correspondence with Maeterlinck's view on the specific Feminine; as he formulates it in his essay *On Woman* in 1896:

It would seem that women are more largely swayed by destiny than ourselves. They submit to its decrees with far more simplicity; nor is there sincerity in the resistance they offer. They are still nearer to God, and yield themselves with less reserve to the pure workings of the mystery.³⁶

But this of course does not apply in the case of Patrice, who throughout the film actively tries to realize his love dream. And of course, the idea of an Eternal Return of the same deceitful love story explicitly advocated by Cocteau in the opening credits suggests a tragic fate that is hardly inscrutable. Quite the opposite. The Tragic here lies in the all-too-clear predictability of the events. Once again we are deceived, derailed by Cocteau's elusive artistry, and once again we have to ask the same question: Where actually is the Tragic here? But this will be the last time.

Maeterlinck's next three plays (*Alladine et Palomides*, *Intérieur* and *La Mort de Tintagiles*, all three written in 1894) were conceived exclusively for marionette theatre. On Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and his concept of the Tragic see McGuinness 2000, 125–168, 217–253.

36 The essay is included in the same collection cited above, Maeterlinck 1903, 83–84.

The politics of the impolitic: Cocteau's parallaetic Tragic

As we have seen, something uncanny happens at the end of the film. Upon his death, Patrice undergoes a startling transformation, his corpse progressively coming to resemble a sculpture modelled on Arno Breker's Aryan classicism. But why does Cocteau enact here the thematic narrative of death and transfiguration, offering, as it were, a visual version of Richard Strauss's symphonic poem of the same name? The obvious answer is that Patrice's biological death is just an illusion, as he and Nathalie are doomed to eternally return to our world and re-enact their story. But, just as in Strauss, likewise in Cocteau there is an additional and unmistakably heroic touch to this transfiguration. It is precisely this heroic aspect that we have to question in order to reach our conclusions.

At first sight the Tragic in Patrice's death scene arises from his being deceived by the jealous brunette Nathalie, who lies about the ship's arrival, letting him die in the false belief that his Nathalie-Isolde no longer loves him. Here Cocteau seems to fulfil quite unsurprisingly the rules of Aristotle's *Poetic*, the Tragic resulting in the unjust punishment of the protagonist.³⁷ But recall what Patrice went through over the course of the film: through his *amour fou* for the first Nathalie, the athletic "sunny boy" comes to recognize the narrow-mindedness of the uncle he was once so willing to help, revealing the family love as egoistic and oppressive. But his hedonistic and in-itself healthy attitude, which is searching for a mutual love fully rooted in our worldly life, will be progressively set aside. After the brusque end of his Alpine idyll with the blonde Nathalie, Patrice tries to pursue the same hedonistic principle by starting a new romance with the brunette Nathalie. But it is *in articulo mortis* that he finally realizes how the factual possibility of this new love and with it the hedonistic, life-preserving principle it relies upon no longer make any sense to him. He consciously embraces his Dionysian fate, his devotion to his first love, regardless of the impossibility of pursuing it.

³⁷ See Aristotle's *Poetics*, sections 1452b and 1453a.

But now let us avoid making a basic mistake: here we are facing not the triumph of the redemptive power of true, mutual love transcending the ugly world, as in Wagner. Instead, what we are witnessing is effectively the radical devaluation of all higher values, inclusive of the ideal of mutual love that is at the core of Tristan and Isolde's legend. At the end of the film Patrice firmly believes that the first Nathalie has abandoned him. He knows that even the highest of all values, namely the mutual love he shared with Nathalie, has now become devalued. And still, his death is not merely a meaningless, chance occurrence, as it is with Pelléas. The point is that Patrice now no longer attempts to stifle his impossible desire for the first Nathalie. It is by fully accepting this in-itself meaningless desire that Patrice makes it and his own fate meaningful. Like Don José or Carmen, he freely accepts the deceptive nature of his desire and by doing so makes it "a thing of beauty". This is Patrice's heroic feature, transfiguring his corpse into a timeless statue of Aryan beauty. And this is that *amor fati* lying at the core of Nietzsche's tragic wisdom about the Eternal Return of the same, the wisdom which the film explicitly evokes in its title.

To conclude, Cocteau does not state the Nietzschean slant of his film directly, but allows it to emerge from a deceptive and at times puzzling oscillation between Wagner and Debussy, i.e. in the parallax gap arising from the constant alternations between elements suggesting the redemptive power of mutual love and moments of radical nihilism. It is in that ineffable space of pure difference between two mutually exclusive conceptions of the Tragic that the Nietzschean promise of the title and the final message of the film emerge. But what is fascinating in terms of artistry is also what makes the film politically problematic. Both Wagner and Debussy felt entitled to speak not only *to*, but also *for* their respective nations, and Cocteau is trying to do the same here.³⁸ The nation to which he refers, or rather for which he would like to speak, is, however, neither France nor Germany. In the contested eulogy to Arno Breker which Cocteau wrote in 1942, he speaks of a "country

38 Sims 1998 on Cocteau's attempt to "transcend the political" in *L'Éternel retour*.

of poets” lying beyond the distinct nations and their particularities.³⁹ But by combining German (or rather Nazi) elements with French ones and trying to play them off against each other, Cocteau failed to attain that ideology-free space he was striving for. Unlike the Tragic, the parallax gap which the ideal of a “country of poets” relies upon fails to succeed in creating this “thing of beauty”, which – to quote Keats’s famous lines cited at the beginning of this article – is “a joy for ever”, even under the bitter historical circumstances France was confronting at the time. Instead of a virtual space beyond or above the political contradictions of France under German occupation, an ideal space in which beauty and accomplishment “will never pass into nothingness” and “still will keep a bower quiet for us”, Cocteau’s “country of poets” simply mirrors the impasse of a French nation divided between *collaboreurs* and *résistance*, duplicating, as it were, on the screen the political and ideological deadlock of this all-too-*real* country.

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39 Here is the complete text of Cocteau's *Salut à Breker* in the original French: “Je vous salue, Breker. Je vous salue de la haute patrie des poètes, patrie où les poètes n'existent pas, sauf dans la mesure où chacun y apporte le trésor du travail national. // Je vous salue, parce que vous réhabilitez les milles reliefs dont un arbre compose sa grandeur. / Parce que vous regardez vos modèles comme des arbres et que, loin de sacrifier aux volumes, vous douez vos bronzes et vos plâtres d'une sève délicate qui tourmente le bouclier d'Achille de leurs genoux, qui fait battre le système fluvial de leurs veines, qui frise le chèvrefeuille de leurs cheveux. / Parce que vous inventez un nouveau piège où se prendra l'esthétisme, ennemi des énigmes. / Parce que vous rendez le droit de vivre aux statues mystérieuses de nos jardins publics. / Parce que, sous le clair de lune, véritable soleil des statues, j'imagine vos personnages arrivant une nuit de printemps, place de la Concorde, avec le pas terrible de la Vénus d'Ille. / Parce que la grande main du David de Michel-Ange vous a montré votre route. / Parce que, dans la haute patrie où nous sommes compatriotes, vous me parlez de la France”, Cocteau 1942, n.p.

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Deeds of Music Made Visible: Acting and Costuming in Wagner's Stage Direction

MIRIAM SELÉN GERSON

"[...] how shall one name so inaudible, invisible a thing? I should almost have felt disposed to take my stand on its visibility [...] as I would gladly have called my dramas deeds of Music brought to sight".

– Richard Wagner (1996, 303)

"The art of stage production is the art of projecting into Space what the original author was only able to project in Time".

– Adolphe Appia (1993, 114)

Two main fascinations prompted the writing of this article. The first was academic: when I began researching the Bayreuth premiere of the *Ring* (1876), I found that much of the scholarship in this area is concerned with providing overviews and aesthetic criticism of *Ring* cycle performances throughout history, certainly a laudable task. But there is often little interest in actually understanding the artistic decisions that were taken in 1875–1876 during the rehearsals. The second fascination was artistic: as a director and choreographer, I find it both crucial and rewarding to explore different methods for the interpretation and stage representation of artworks. Methods of movement, costuming and acting techniques all fall into this category. It is too easy to forget that the style of one's own time and society is only one style amongst thousands, and there is no need to limit ourselves. This interest took practical expression in the following form: in the spring of 2013 Cornelia Beskow (soprano), Nigar Dadascheva (piano) and I presented an "artistic experiment" consisting of three scenes from *Tristan*

und Isolde. Our choreographies were based on movement instructions handed down by Anna Bahr-Mildenburg (1872–1947), who had studied with Cosima Wagner in Bayreuth, and claimed that her acting technique descended from Richard Wagner himself.¹ Drawing on both my practical experiences of the “Bayreuth style” of Cosima Wagner and on academic research into Wagner’s personal work as a stage director in Bayreuth in 1876, this article will deal with four different aspects of “stage aesthetics”: naturalism, gesture, mimesis and costume.

To judge a production separated by some 140 years in time will necessarily be fruitless if one hopes to find something more than the taste of the judge in question. We cannot measure one aesthetic against another. What we can do, however, is determine whether or not Wagner was satisfied with the 1876 production of the *Ring* and, with the help of that information, ask what he would have liked to see instead on stage. I wanted to avoid getting caught up in abstract or taste-based discussions of what “should” or “should not” happen on stage according to directors and scholars from various centuries, but instead present the result of “positivist” research into Wagner’s theory and practice of stage representation in the areas of acting and costuming. The result is fascinating, many-faceted and often paradoxical. The article’s first section, on “naturalism”, looks into the theory and historical context of Wagner’s beliefs about stage practice, and is followed by two sections on elements of acting: one on gesture and mimesis, the other on costuming. These three sections form the main part of the discussion of the activities at Bayreuth in 1876 and are followed by a conclusion that ties the ideas together and depicts a fuller picture.

Thomas Mann once stated something worth keeping in mind in approaching an artwork from a different time and place: “In books we never find anything but ourselves. Strangely enough, that always gives us great pleasure, and we say the author is a genius.”² This applies to music dramas as well as to literature. I found from the outset of my

1 Bahr-Mildenburg 1936.

2 Reich-Ranicki 1990, 48.

work a general tendency in the writings of modern scholars to look with a condescending eye at the old-fashioned, cluttered aesthetic displayed in the practical work of Cosima Wagner, Anna Bahr-Mildenburg and Richard Wagner, as if one doubted that the great artist Wagner could have had a taste for stage representation different from ours. Thus, this project has been a long and worthwhile exercise in theatrical tastes other than my own – and how delightful it is to find something entirely unexpected, different, and mind-expanding in a supposedly familiar work of art.

I. Naturalism

“Art ceases, strictly speaking, to be Art from the moment it presents itself as Art to our reflecting consciousness.”³ This statement embodies the core of Wagner’s artistic beliefs about stage representation at the time of his *Ring* cycle production in 1876. For Wagner, the ideal performance was one in which the performer transcends his nature to *become* that which he imitates, and the audience members are transported entirely outside themselves. Thus, art must transcend its own nature to be classified as art, and the kind of presentation in which the artist remains a performer of the art and the audience remains spectators who judge the art is artificial rather than artistic. Wagner’s essay “Actors and Singers” (1872)⁴ can be boiled down to three main claims: there should be nothing “artificial” about “art”; all acting should be naturalistic; and the acting style of his time should be rejected as a stylised and artificial product of Mediterranean court culture. “Actors and Singers” was written in the same year that the foundation stone of the Festspielhaus was laid; naturally, this was a year when the practical presentation of the *Ring* cycle was occupying his mind with increasing intensity. Thus, it constitutes an ideal source for the theory behind the practices at the Bayreuth Festival in 1876.

3 Wagner 1996, 162.

4 Ibid., 157–228

Compared to the Baroque and Classical ideals of stage representation, where naturalism never went further than four stylised waves at the back of the stage to represent the sea, the Romantic ideal was that props, sets and costumes should be as true to life as possible. This was true for Wagner's stage as well. In addition, he desired acting to be natural rather than a reflection of nature. There is necessarily a link between Wagner's compositional techniques and his vision of the ideal stage practice. Since the earliest days of opera, philosophers, writers and singers alike recognised that time on stage progresses differently from time in real life once action is set to music. This inevitably makes opera a non-naturalistic art form. In established forms such as *da capo* arias, the conditions to which physical movement, expression and dramatic action are subjected differ significantly from those in a play or in declamation. The purpose of a form like the *da capo* aria is rhetorical and musical, not dramatic: the singer returns to the A-part not because of an inner, psychological need to sing the same words again, but because the return gives symmetry, beauty, and rhetoric to the expression of a feeling (and, as some would say, thus convinces and communicates more powerfully than something that is more life-like).⁵ Put simply and briefly, Wagner's music is not concerned with forms like *da capo* or styles like recitatives, the reason being that the composer believed in a "life-like" drama that progresses more freely. Likewise, his use of leitmotif technique adds a dimension of psychological naturalism. This naturalistic ideal runs through Wagner's compositional practice as well as through his stage practice: he wanted to dispose of the French-Italian style (as he perceived it to be) – an unnatural and formal acting mode that was employed on most German, as well as European, stages at the time. This acting style actually stems from the art of public speaking in ancient Rome.⁶ Much of it was handed down

5 This could perhaps also explain why modern audiences and directors alike seem to find *da capo* arias so difficult to "understand"; this musical form is the product of a dramatic aesthetic of an age very different from ours.

6 On the claims of earlier acting styles made here as well as in later paragraphs, Barnett (1987) offers a useful overview.

to Renaissance, Baroque and Classical actors as well as to philosophers through Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory*. Initially designed for speech-making at any sort of formal occasion, this "acting style" was a technique of body language and gesture which held sway in Europe for hundreds of years, with some obvious stylistic modifications and adaptations. Its usage was widespread, and it was considered appropriate for all kinds of public occasions: in royal courts as part of decorum, in preaching, in appearing at a court of law, as well as in acting and singing on stage. The prevalence of this technique for public speaking is even acknowledged in "Actors and Singers":

If *Goethe* was already of the opinion that "a comedian might instruct a clergyman" at times, it need not surprise us that nowadays almost the whole of our more elegant burgher-world has moulded itself of the teachings of stage decorum and propriety. We gladly would equal the French in this, with whom no difference is any longer to be detected between the actor in the ministerial cabinet, or the porter's lodge, and the actor on the boards.⁷

The roots of this technique in Roman oratory are clear in its aims to arouse the emotions, interests and empathy of the listener by using a stock vocabulary of body language and gesture, which accompanies, elucidates and sometimes even illustrates the spoken words. Presenting the body in a graceful and appealing way was a crucial part of this style; for example, it was not unusual for actors to bulk up their legs with fake calves to present a more attractive *contrapposto* on stage. In the same sense that Baroque and Classical scenery is two-dimensional, this style required the actor to face the audience at all times (thereby acknowledging its existence). This style is an art in the sense that art is nature "transformed", and therefore represents the opposite of Wagnerian naturalism. Exaggerated pathos, slow delivery of the lines, a strong interest in one's audience (combined with no interest in one's

7 Wagner 1996, 171; emphasis in the original.

fellow actors) and numerous asides were all part of this acting style. Likewise, all these features were condemned by Wagner as affectations, as they contributed to the loss of dramatic illusion. To judge only from Wagner's writings, it would appear that the German acting style of his time was a sort of provincial adaptation of something that worked brilliantly on the stages of France and Italy – this simply because French and Italian plays were adapted to it and actors were sufficiently skilled. In Germany, on the other hand, things were different:

Get our best poet to read his verses to us, he promptly mounts into falsetto, and trots out all those pompous fooleries to which we at last are almost as accustomed as if they were matters of course. [...] Plainly, we must recognise that here we have an affectation wellnigh grown into a second nature, and to be traced at bottom to a false assumption; perhaps to the poor opinion of our natural faculties that has been drilled into us by a foreign Culture so unconditionally accepted as a higher one that, even at the risk of making ourselves ridiculous, we have felt compelled to seek our welfare in its utmost possible assimilation.⁸

These words clearly reveal an artistic, philosophical and political *credo*: if German stage practice was to be fruitful for performers and artists as well as audiences, it needed to be reborn. In accordance with the widespread nationalist philosophy of Johann Gottfried von Herder, Wagner claimed that German writers, actors and stage directors needed to recognise that their current practice went against their natural inclinations, since it was not “theirs” originally. If their current artistic style was an adaptation of French and Italian modes, they could not possibly be expected to do especially well in it: instead, writers needed to produce plays in an original German style. Actors needed to let go their expectations of grand manners and instead speak and behave according to what their natural instincts prompted them to do. Wagner

8 Ibid., 179–180.

writes about Goethe's *Faust*:

Here no pathos of voice is required for even God Almighty, who "speaks with the Devil himself as a man to man"; for he is German like the rest, and speaks the tongue we all know well, the accents each has heard outgoing from the kindly heart and lucid mind.⁹

Wagner's theory of acting as explained in "Actors and Singers" also constitutes an account of the history of theatrical stage performance. He claimed that the current stage practice was of Mediterranean origin; initially, it had been a flawed Renaissance conceptualisation of the ancient Greek stage. On the other hand, he saw Shakespeare's plays as well as their original staging to be expressions of his own dramatic ideal:

Shakespeare, in fact, is to be explained in virtue of no national school, but only through our seizing the pure essence of mimo-dramatic art in general. With him all schematism of Style – i.e. each formal or expressional tendency imposed from without, or adopted through reflection – resolves into that one root-law from which the natural lifelike imitation of the mime derives its wondrous power of illusion. [...] the mimetic naturalism of Shakespeare's dramas is to be distinguished from [...] [that] of almost every other poet. I venture to deduce this principle from the *one* fact that Shakespeare's actors played upon a stage surrounded by spectators on all sides, whereas the modern stage has followed the lead of the French and Italians, displaying the actors only from one side, and that the front side, just like the painted "wings". [...] Now, it is both surprising and instructive to see how a trend toward rhetorical Pathos [...] has always preponderated on this Neo-European stage, miscopied from the antique; whereas on Shakespeare's primitive folk-stage, which lacked all blinding scenic glitter, the interest was centred in the altogether realistic doings of the meanly clad play-actors.

9 Ibid., 183.

Whilst the later, academically ordered English Theatre made it the actor's imperative duty under no circumstance to turn his back on the audience, and left him to sidle off as best he could in case of any exit toward the rear, Shakespeare's performers moved before the spectator in all directions with the full reality of common life.¹⁰

As Wagner states in the above passage, the acting techniques employed on stage are often reflected in the architecture of the theatre. He mentions the Baroque-Classical stage of painted, flat backdrops and props that are two-dimensional rather than practical, and draws the conclusion that the style of "rhetorical Pathos" has its origin in this design. In this style entire monologues and dialogues were, as a rule, recited facing the audience. This "frontality" was a central conception; an actor was never allowed to turn his back on the audience. A person with his back to the audience was considered "silent", since all the speaking parts of his body were hidden from the audience. This practice was long-lived; authors as late as Goethe prescribed dialogues to be spoken facing the audience, never to another actor.¹¹ It was considered more important to display every physical sign of emotion to the audience than to present a life-like picture on stage. To give an illusion of conversation in dialogues, gestures could be made towards the other person on stage; glances were exchanged without too much turning of the head, and one could take a small step forward or put weight on the front foot when speaking and do the opposite when listening. Through such techniques, an actor would be in constant communication with the audience, while all emotions, reactions and thoughts were clear to the onlookers.

Wagner departed completely from this script, both in theory and in practice. He advocated that singers should remain in profile as much as possible and refrain from engaging with anything outside the stage.

10 *Ibid.*, 190–191; emphasis in the original.

11 Woehl 1927. See especially rule 39: "It is mistaken naturalness for the actors to play to each other as if no third person were present; they should never play in profile, nor turn their backs to the audience."

By directing the eyes down, up or to the side when one had to turn outwards to the audience, a greater realistic effect could be achieved, since such a practice meant that the singer never revealed awareness of the audience's presence. This was a bold departure from a practice that was as old as opera itself. To give a sense of how some of the theories Wagner presented in "Actors and Singers" actually became practice in 1876, one only need look at the following notice that Wagner posted in back of the stage on the day of the Bayreuth premiere for all his singers to read. More will be said on this in the following section.

To the artists of the Bayreuth Festival.

Final request

to my dear fellow artists.

!Clarity!

– The long notes will take care of themselves; the small notes and their text are what matters. –

Never address the audience directly, but always the other character; in monologues look up or down but never straight ahead. –

Final wish:

Remain loyal to me, my dear friends!¹²

II. Gesture

How did Wagner's ideas on naturalism translate into practice on stage? Wagner's notice, addressed "to the Artists of the Bayreuth Festival", tells us a few things, but there is more to discuss. With regards to his actor-singers, Wagner was faced with a specific practical problem, similar to the often-mentioned challenge of finding fitting props and effects: a convincing rainbow bridge, swimming Rhinemaidens, a *Tarnhelm* and so on. In all areas, including acting, Wagner demanded more from current theatrical practice than was available. The dramatic portrayal of the *Ring* characters requires a very high level of acting

¹² Wagner 1987, 857.

skill, both physically and psychologically. The *Ring* cycle is intended to explain everything worthwhile from the beginning until the end of the world; compared to what Wagner's singers must have been used to acting-wise, the challenges presented by the *Ring* were monumental. As so much has been written in other places about the strengths and weaknesses of the stage techniques of the production in 1876, this section will investigate a similar question, but one that concerns the acting: to what extent were then-current acting techniques of gesture and characterisation sufficient (or not) for Wagner's practice?

The philosophy behind Wagner's stage practice can be described as surprisingly modern in its belief that character portrayal, gesture and body language (in short, every physical action) should come from an inner understanding of and belief in the character one portrays. This dichotomy of internal as opposed to external acting technique is often thought of as a pre- and post-Stanislavski division, but it is not quite that simple. Already in the mid-nineteenth century, Wagner believed that an actor should strive to "become" internally the character he was portraying; as a result of internal conviction, everything external (gesture, movement, facial expression, voice) would fall into place. He wrote,

[...] the actions and passions of purely fictitious persons thrill us in exact degree as the performer himself is steeped in them, nay, possessed to the point of yielding up his whole real personality.¹⁸

Thus, physical actions were to happen as a result of psychological actions rather than characterisation being the result of studied gesture and movement. Before and during Wagner's time, much attention went into masterly physical character portrayal, but less consideration was given to nuanced psychological understanding in the way twentieth-century actors, directors and audiences are accustomed to. It is helpful to remember that Wagner has been called history's first opera director; before (and to some extent during and after) his time

18 Wagner 1996, 161.

it was customary for actors to direct themselves and each other, and they spent far less time rehearsing together.¹⁴ This was made possible through an accepted vocabulary of stock gestures that were perhaps non-naturalistic, but were understood by all. By contemporary standards, the Bayreuth performances in 1876 were given an extraordinary amount of collective rehearsal time and attention.

Contrary to what happened in Bayreuth in 1876, an exemplary early nineteenth-century theatrical performance could have looked something like the one described below. The kinds of movements and gestures displayed in Figure 1 are likely to be similar to those Wagner had seen in the theatre, especially in his youth.¹⁵ These drawings form part of a series depicting an actual performance of Joseph Franz von Goetz's (1754–1815) melodrama *Lenardo und Blandine* (1783) set to music by Peter von Winter; von Goetz was a German playwright and painter. The drawings present an early Romantic style with gestures that are, unsurprisingly, far more extended and grand than can be seen in similar drawings by Baroque and Classical artists.¹⁶ The movements of the protagonist, Blandine, are calculated not only to be clear as well as pleasing to look at, but also to give an unambiguous physical explanation of what happens in the drama. Figure 1a shows Blandine using her left arm to point at the urn (in which her beloved's heart has been placed by her vicious father) and her right arm expresses surprise and alarm, whilst her upper body bends away from the object in fright. Figure 1b presents an image of someone *pretending* to look inside the urn (perhaps as opposed to someone actually looking!): no-one would bend over an urn in such a studied way in real life. Every part of Blandine's body is designed to convey this image; Goetz has taken care not to put her too much in profile, as that would cover expressive

14 See Carnegy 2006, chapter 1.

15 von Goetz 1783.

16 Apart from Barnett's *Art of Gesture* (1987), two good and extensive resources on Classical and early nineteenth-century acting styles are Austin's *Chironomia, or, the Art of Rhetorical Delivery* (1806) and Johannes Jelgerhuis's *Theoretische lessen over de gesticulatie en mimiek* (1970). These sources support the claims made in this paragraph.

parts of her body and make her movements less clear to the onlooker. Similarly, Figure 1c shows her clasping her head and her heart: to touch such symbolic parts of the body instantly indicates certain emotions. The power of the technical and physical portrayal of emotions was of great concern, and not only to the artist Goez; it was also of equal importance to many generations of actors and singers before Wagner.



Figure 1 (a-d). Blandine's gestures in *Lenardo und Blandine* (von Goez 1783).

It seems that “stock gestures” like these were not appropriate for the highly developed psychology of the characters in the *Ring*. We all know that feelings of sorrow and despair can manifest themselves “physically” through intense pain in the chest and troubled thoughts; the meaning of Blandine’s gestures in Figure 1c are immediately obvious to us. Yet her movements tell us nothing about her psyche or her personality; every nineteenth-century actress would represent “pain” as she does, and for each of them, the representation would be a learned mannerism rather than an immediate response to a real feeling. On the other hand, there certainly is a limit to how specific, personal and unique a gesture can be if it is still to communicate clearly and immediately. Some of the more unbiased contemporary accounts from the 1876 rehearsals make it clear that Wagner did not always know what kinds of movements, or even blocking, he wanted. Richard Fricke, balletmaster from the Dessau Court Theatre, was hired by Wagner to choreograph the choral and group scenes, but his responsibilities quickly expanded

to assisting Wagner in all dramatic rehearsals. His diary entries from that time reveal a Wagner who had no fixed interpretation of each and every scene, who relied on improvisation, and for whom various possibilities continued to assail him, rehearsal after rehearsal:

The male and female singers from the second scene of *Das Rheingold* were ordered to Wagner's [home] for 11 o'clock to try to develop poses, gestures, etc. The same things happened here as with Unger. They are discouraged, because today he [Wagner] wants it done this way, tomorrow a different way. It is impossible to firmly establish the various scenes. He interrupts continuously; he demands outrageous things, which downright confuse these professionals who after all are not appearing on the stage for the first time. For instance, he asked that when the two giants appear over the mountain, they should walk in a certain way. He showed them such a strange movement that I broke in, and secretly told him, "Master, this does not work, it is not natural. I will show you how I have perceived it." I demonstrated a clumsy walk, in keeping with the motive. "Very good, very good," was Wagner's response. "My manner of walking was good for nothing." However, at the same time he still asked Eilers (Fasolt) for some very unnatural gestures which I had to correct.¹⁷

Several similar accounts can be found in Fricke's diary; there are too many incidents like this to be considered accidental. Juxtaposed to Wagner's confident words in "Actors and Singers" and *Oper und Drama*, Fricke's account makes the reader wonder what was actually going on. A sharp contrast to this is provided by Heinrich Porges, who gives a lengthy (and hagiographic) account of the strong-willed, heroic director Wagner who set every gesture in stone for future performances to come and worked until perfection was reached. It is revealing that Porges was paid to write something that was to be published, whereas Fricke confided his thoughts to a personal diary. Yet we cannot write Wagner

17 Fricke 1998, 67.

off as a theorist with no practical grasp at all: even Fricke occasionally admits admiration, for example, of Wagner's abilities:

Today I thrilled in admiration of Wagner's gift, how he was able to interpret a character such as Mime to the actor. It was masterly, how he portrayed and nuanced the details of the role.¹⁸

Another interesting and similar account is found in costume designer Carl Emil Doepler's autobiography:

Seldom have I seen such stark contradiction united in one person as in Richard Wagner. At one moment he seemed as insecure in making decisions as a small-minded Saxon schoolmaster, whilst at the next moment his outward appearance and behaviour seemed that of a hero, commanding admiration. Especially was this so during rehearsals, where he constantly instructed the singers.¹⁹

It is clear that Wagner interpreted his own music in a very physical way, but also that – despite the assertiveness displayed in his writings – he was relatively unsure of exactly what kinds of gestures and movements should replace the conventional, theatrical ones that he aspired to get rid of. His decision to hire a ballet choreographer, of all things, to teach the singers about true character portrayal reflects this aspiration. An attitude highly reminiscent of this will be seen below in section IV on costume designs. Wagner clearly needed a seasoned choreographer like Fricke to help him find the right movement in order to stage a physical expression of a specific emotion and overcome the difficulties presented by other practicalities like the Rhinemaidens' swimming and Alberich's climbing over slippery rocks and so on. And Fricke was aware of

the importance of lessons in graceful movement for those on stage

18 Ibid., 60.

19 Doepler 1979, 34.

– singers, actors, choir members, and extras, [yet] in the opera, as Wagner has created and reformed it, it is a *sine qua non* to banish all those customary unmotivated gestures of the singers. The dramatic situations in Wagner's opera demand reform.²⁰

In this respect Fricke must have become an ideal physical interpreter of Wagner's ideas, leaving the composer to focus on explaining the psychological aspects of his drama and (as will be shown in section III) the exact relation between the music and the stage action.

III. Mimesis

The word "mimesis" has been used to denote a variety of things (perhaps most famously by Aristotle, to define the action of mimicking nature). For the purpose of this section, it has been given the specific meaning of the co-ordination of a gesture and a sound, that is, how, by mimicking a sound, gesture becomes the physical expression of that sound. In other words, it constitutes a literal definition of a musical deed made visible. This section will look in detail at this fundamental part of the nature of music drama with specific references to the Bayreuth performances of 1876 and discuss the relationship between compositional techniques and stage action.

In a famous letter to Brahms, Wagner wrote, perhaps jokingly, that "I have sometimes been told that my music is like theatrical scenery", a reference to a comment by Hanslick.²¹ That short statement carries considerable truth when applied to Wagner's music dramas. Aside from obvious features such as leitmotifs and a continuous flow of music, one of the most characteristic traits of Wagnerian music drama is the extent to which physical stage action is portrayed in the score. The *Ring* music often is highly theatrical and gestural, sometimes overwhelmingly so. Musical character portrayal can be found in most good operatic

20 Fricke 1998, 46.

21 Wagner 1987, 848.

scores, but is a different concern from Wagner's practice, which was to have almost every important stage action expressed in music as well as in words. As will be shown, this connection between stage action and music was carried out on the Bayreuth stage in 1876. A rather obvious example of this kind of mimesis can be found in the first scene of *Das Rheingold*: Wagner created a musical figure to portray the flow of the Rhine (music mimicking the stage set), another figure represents the exact movements of the Rhinemaidens as they dive upwards or downwards or circle around the rocks, and still other musical figures depict how Alberich climbs over the slippery rocks, how he sneezes, loses his grip and plunges back into the water (music mimicking movements and gestures). And this deals only with what happens physically on stage. A psychological dimension is added by the potential of leitmotifs to signal with striking accuracy a sudden thought, the appearance or remembrance of something or someone, as well to describe the nature of something through the use of musical topics. Examples are endless but include the low E-flat chord that belongs to the Rhine (providing a fittingly low sound-world for an age-old river as nature was on the first day of the world) as well as chordal progressions denoting either the "innocent" or the "corrupt" Rhinegold. Thus, leitmotifs illustrate both the physical and the psychological nature of something.

In 1876 Heinrich Porges (1837–1900) was hired by Wagner to provide a written record of the *Ring* rehearsals for posterity. His account abounds in hagiographic storytelling and fails to mention crucial facts, such as Wagner's deep unhappiness with the final result of the 1876 performance and the complete and ridiculous failures of certain taxing parts of the production, as well as the unwillingness or incompetence of certain singers to understand and do what Wagner asked. However, interesting glimpses of what Wagner was striving for at the time can be captured. Porges provided numerous entries of the following type:

Everything combined to produce a totally unified effect. The swift, impetuous movements of the Rhinemaidens and the corresponding

orchestral passages were co-ordinated with hair's-breadth precision.²²

Following a long explanation of the dramatic content of the action in Act 1, scene 2 of *Das Rheingold*, Porges wrote:

As Donner, stung by Loge's contempt, is on the point of swinging his hammer, Wotan restrains him, stepping between them with a protective movement of the arm. It goes without saying that all this stage action [referring not only to Wotan's movement, but also to the entire scene] should be exactly co-ordinated with the orchestra's descriptive passages.²³

Together with the idea of acting "in profile" during dialogues and never acknowledging the presence of the audience, musical mimesis formed the main elements of the "Bayreuth style" of acting of which Cosima Wagner was the guardian after her husband's death. The following review by the British critic Ernest Newman, written after attending a performance of the *Ring* cycle at Bayreuth in 1911 (directed by Cosima Wagner), contains some impartial discernment when it comes to the acting styles employed at Bayreuth:

Now and again, too, we got that peculiar pleasure that Bayreuth seems to give us more abundantly than any other theatre: the delight given by the perfect correspondence of the music and the gestures. The best example, perhaps, was in the untying of Alberich's bonds by Loge in the "Rhinegold", where each right-and-left fling of the rope seemed the exact material counterpart of the darting phrases in the orchestra. But Bayreuth always rides a good principle to death. In some of its attempts to achieve this synchronism of gesture and tone it becomes ludicrously wooden and mechanical. In the final scene of the "Valkyrie", for instance, Brynhilde had evidently been taught at two points to raise her hands slowly above her head, the full stretch to be reached each

22 Porges 1983, 8.

23 Ibid., 21.

time at the climax of the phrase. The melody, however, is so long and slow that a gradual uplifting of the arms was impossible; so what we had was a series of jerks and pauses, with the hands coming into final position with a kind of click as the theme touched its highest point.²⁴

Wagner himself wrote in *Oper und Drama* that “[j]ust as gestures express to the eye something that only they can express, the orchestra expresses something correlating to this expression to the ear”.²⁵ One often hears about his (pre-Schopenhauerian) striving for music to serve drama, but forgets that “drama” includes stage action as well as words. Music should thus serve the stage action as well as the words. When Gustav Mahler directed and conducted Wagner performances at the Vienna Hofoper in the early 1900s, he claimed that “it’s all in the score”.²⁶ There is probably no other composer who dictated stage action and dramatic meaning so precisely through his orchestral writing. To musicologists, the most compelling point about this approach to stage action is perhaps that it can be found in the very notes of the score: it is therefore something more than “performance history”.

Related to the topic of mimesis is the long-standing discussion of whether Wagner’s works are epic (owing to the great amount of narrative rather than action in the dramas) or dramatic.²⁷ After having concluded that the element of mimesis is not only a matter of performance history but also a compositional technique, one can also claim that Wagner’s music dramas (or at least the *Ring*) fall outside the categories of “epic” and “dramatic”: instead, they should be called *theatrical*. Even when an “epic” narrative takes place, in his score Wagner attempts to bring onstage the action that is being narrated through gestural music and leitmotifs. A good example is Siegmund’s narration (Act 1, scene

24 Newman 1911, 577.

25 As quoted in Puchner 2002, 44.

26 As quoted in Carnegy 2006, 164.

27 The most important (and perhaps the first) writer to discuss this was Thomas Mann, in his 1933 lecture “The Sufferings and Greatness of Richard Wagner” (Mann 1937); see Mann 1989.

2 of *Die Walküre*) as well as Sieglinde's (in Act 1, scene 3). Such scenes often call for acting that to some extent embodies the deeds being narrated. The element of mimesis in Wagner's music drew considerable criticism after his death; the elderly Nietzsche claimed in his *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* that

[...] next to the Wagner who created the most unique music that has ever existed there was the Wagner who was essentially a man of the stage, an actor, the most enthusiastic mimomaniac that has perhaps existed on earth, even as a musician. And let it be said *en passant* that if Wagner's theory was "drama is the object, music is only a means" – his practice was from beginning to end "the attitude is the end, drama and even music can never be anything else than means." Music as the manner of accentuating, of strengthening, and deepening dramatic poses and all things which please the senses of the actor; and Wagnerian drama only an opportunity for a host of interesting attitudes!²⁸

Whether one agrees with Nietzsche or not, his comment highlights an interesting fact: gestural-musical mimesis was, at the time, a very important element both in the composing and in the performance of Wagner's music dramas. Adorno took a similar view to Nietzsche's, believing that

Wagner's art suffers from being too gestural [...], his fixation on gestures, even and especially in music, is an effect of both his theatricality and his excessive reliance on vulgar mimesis.²⁹

This practice seems to have been unique to both the writing and the presentation of Wagnerian music dramas: older and future generations of actors as well as writers on stage art would have advocated against

28 Nietzsche 1911 [1888], 60.

29 As quoted in Puchner 2002, 34.

it.³⁰ It was seen as unnecessary, or at best comical, to depict with movement that which could already be heard in the music. As a rule, gestures depicting a word or a sound should never be exactly timed with that word or sound, but happen slightly beforehand. Writing on Wagner's compositional techniques, Thomas Mann stated:

Wagner's music is not music to the same extent that the dramatic basis (which unites with it to form a creative art) is not literature. It is psychology, symbolism, mythology, emphasis, everything – only not music in the pure and consummate sense intended by those bewildered critics. The texts, round which it twines, filling out their dramatic content, are not literature – but the music is! [...] The endless chromatics of the *Liebestod* are a literary idea. The Rhine's immemorial flow, the seven primitive chords – like blocks to build up Valhalla – are no less so [...]. This stringing together of symbolic musical quotations, till they lie like boulders in the stream of the musical development – it was too much to ask [of Wagner's contemporaries] that they be considered music as Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart are music. Too much to ask that the E flat-major triad at the beginning of the *Rheingold* be called music. It was not. It was an acoustic idea: the idea of the beginning of all things. It was the self-willed dilettante's exploitation of music to express a mythological idea.³¹

This remarkable explanation makes a good deal of sense when coupled with what has been said above about the mimetic element in Wagner's music, and together these accounts show how non-abstract and theatrical Wagner's music usually is. It seems that, for Wagner, the performance of his works was so important that his music became intimately tied to, and almost inseparable from, their stage actions. One of the great appeals of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* idea is that it thoroughly copies the real world and transforms it into art, to the extent that a

30 See Austin 1806 and Barnett 1987.

31 Mann 1937, 131–132.

parallel world is created in which every single detail is strung together by music. Its aim to transcend time and place by using mythology and psychology is also interesting to consider in relation to the staging methods employed in Wagner's Bayreuth performance of 1876. Wagner undoubtedly sought to find not only a mythological, timeless theme, but also embarked on an impossible quest for a timeless representation of this theme on stage, one that belonged to no specific aesthetic or trend. Acting and movement can be fairly timeless compared to costume, which necessarily always reflects a style or aesthetic conviction. As will be seen in the next section, this obviously became a problem for Wagner.

IV. Costumes

I believe I am more than justified in regarding the task I have set you as a field that is fertile in inventive possibilities. For basically what I require is nothing less than a characteristic portrait made up of individual figures and depicting with strikingly vivid detail personal events from a period of culture not only remote from our own experience but having no association with any known experience [...]. In my own opinion, the artist who wishes to take up the subject I offer him and make it his own will find a unique field open to him in terms not only of intelligent compilation but also his own inventiveness.³²

Such were the words of Richard Wagner when, in 1874, he wrote to Carl Emil Doepler (1824–1905), a professor of costume design in Berlin and former costume designer at the Weimar Court Theatre, to ask for his assistance at the first Bayreuth Festival. The interest in realistic stage depiction of the supernatural and unknown is certainly pre-Wagnerian; it can even be called a nineteenth-century obsession. Romantic operatic practice differs greatly from previous styles in the sense that realistic depiction of the most non-realistic things was sought

³² Wagner 1987, 846.

on stage. A Baroque representation of an allegory of Peace descending to earth on a cloud would have nothing realistic about it; neither would the proportions of the props or the painted, flat backdrops. Whilst nineteenth-century machinists at the Paris opera conducted detailed experiments to find the most effective and truthful way of portraying a conflagration on stage, a Venetian eighteenth-century prescription for a *bocca d'inferno* would be simple and more or less the result of improvisation.³³ Change came with the Romantic period, and at the heart of that change was perhaps the question of whether art should transport or educate through pleasure. In 1814 E.T.A. Hoffmann wrote,

[...] scenery and stage effects should unobtrusively blend with the drama, so that the total effect would transport the spectator, as though on invisible wings, right away from the theatre to the fantastical land of poetry.³⁴

It soon became customary for the larger, trend-setting opera houses to send their set and costume designers to the location of the opera's plot, where they could begin their work by sketching what they saw and then replicate their drawings on stage. Local colour and exact dating of the plot would be added by the set and costumes. In much the same way that today's designers refrain from the supposedly cluttered and kitschy style of the nineteenth century, designers of the Romantic period ridiculed the art of eighteenth-century designers for being childish and naïve, and did everything to avoid their influence.³⁵ This is the backdrop against which Doepler's designs (Doepler 1889) should be considered.

Wagner's demand for costumes that had "no association with any known experience" must have put a man like Carl Emil Doepler in a thoroughly new situation. Doepler was not only a costume designer

33 Charlton 2003, especially part I, "The Resourcing of Grand Opera".

34 Hoffmann 1989, 115.

35 See Hoffmann 1989, "The Complete Machinist", a satire on eighteenth-century stage designers and machinists.

trained in the proper nineteenth-century school of stage realism, but he was also a professor of archaeology and thus used to searching for historic and academic truth. It can be assumed that his first step towards a final product was usually research in order to be able to reproduce the "truths" he found; it is of course impossible to reproduce that which has "no association with any known experience". It seems that neither Wagner nor Doepler was completely aware of the difficulty and depth of such a task; otherwise, Doepler would not have claimed in writing to Wagner that, through academic research into Nordic remains from the Stone and Bronze Ages, he would be able to create something poetically graceful, yet historically correct. Neither would Wagner have approved Doepler's drawings with which he was later presented.³⁶ Some of these drawings are shown in Figure 2, juxtaposed with photographs of the singers in 1876 wearing the end-products.

Most of the practical parts of the 1876 production, such as machines and stage effects, sets, acting, and singing, were matters of much debate at the time. In comparison, the costume business seems to have progressed smoothly; the designs, the fabrics, the metals and the final products turned up on time and worked effectively on stage. But during the rehearsals, Doepler's costumes were the most debated part of the production. When Cosima Wagner tried to recreate every single aspect of Richard Wagner's performance in her production of 1896, she decided against using Doepler's original costumes; she even hired a different costumier. However, we know very little of what Wagner himself actually thought of Doepler's creations. This has led modern scholars to base their accounts on one of two sources in order to substantiate their own beliefs: the first of these sources is the agreement between Wagner and Doepler on the suitability of the designs after their presentation. The second is Wagner's famous comment after the Festival

36 In *A Memoir*, Doepler (1979, 27) described the situation as follows: "Wagner, his wife and Karl Brandt went together with me into the room on the right side, where I showed my figurines of 'Rheingold' and 'Walküre'. They received the complete approval of the Master and Frau Cosima."



2a. Rhinemaidens: Marie Lammert (Floßhilde), Lilli Lehmann (Woglinde) and Marie Lehmann (Wellgunde).



2b. Karl Hill as Alberich in *Das Rheingold*. (Digitale Porträtsammlung Manskopf, Universitätsbibliothek Goethe Universität, Frankfurt am Main).



2c. Josephine Scheffzsky as Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*.



2d. Rhinemaidens's costume sketch.



2e. Alberich's costume sketch.



2f. Sieglinde's costume sketch.

Figure 2 (a–g). The photographs (2a, 2b and 2c) are from the 1876 Bayreuth production of the *Ring* and the costume sketches (2d, 2e and 2f) are Carl Emil Doepler's designs for that production. The photographs (2a and 2b) have been reproduced in several publications for instance in Fricke 1998 whereas the costume sketches are drawn from the digital edition of Doepler 1889 (Digitale Sammlungen, Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek).

had ended: "Next year, I will do it all differently!"³⁷

Yet in order to glean information on the costumes, it is perhaps to Cosima – rather than to Richard – Wagner that we need to look. Of the two, Cosima was certainly the one with the finest sensibilities to the visual arts, even though today she is mostly known for having chased designers like Adolphe Appia and Gordon Craig out of Bayreuth and putting progress on hold. Although we cannot know what Richard Wagner actually thought of Doepler's costumes, we do know that he wrote the following to Mathilde Wesendonck during his later travels to Paris:

See everything for me too – I need to have somebody to do it for me [...]. I have my own way of responding to these things, as I have discovered again and again, and finally quite conclusively when I was in Italy. For a while I am vividly impressed by some significant visual experience; but – it does not last. It seems that my eyes are not enough for me to use to take in the world.³⁸

And, later in the same letter:

Well, well, how the child is revelling in Raphael and paintings: all very lovely, sweet, and soothing; only it never touches me. I am still the vandal who in a whole year spent in Paris never got round to visit the Louvre. Does that not tell the whole story?³⁹

It should not surprise anyone if Wagner was unable to put exact colours and shapes to the creations of his imagination. The way in which his characters should be dressed was hardly the first item of concern for him, and the fact that he delegated the invention as well as the execution of the costumes to Doepler is, to some extent, a sign of his inse-

37 As quoted in Carnegy 2006, 101.

38 As quoted in Mann 1937, 124.

39 As quoted in *ibid.*, 124–125.

curity. It is also significant that throughout Wagner's prolific writings on almost every aspect of the art of drama, very little can be found on costume design. Instead, during the rehearsals, it was Cosima Wagner who spent time and energy trying to manipulate Doepler's decisions. In one of many anti-Cosima anecdotes recounted by Doepler, she seems to have revealed an interest in the dramatic and communicative potential of atmosphere, made possible through the use of appropriate colours and costumes (realistic or not). Doepler's account runs as follows:

The wedding procession of Guttrune [in *Götterdämmerung*] with the attendant women and children was just passing across the stage when the wife of the Master addressed me in the following way: "But dear professor, are not the costumes for the women and children too colourful and festive?" I replied, "Yes, honoured lady, they should be like that; they have attired themselves for a wedding." "But against the background of such a drama, Professor, think of that!" "They are certainly a contrast," I replied, "but it is by means of contrasts that one is most effective." "Yes, but in the context of such a drama, that must not be allowed to happen." "Very well, honoured lady, then we shall immediately dress the women and children in black, so that they fit into the drama as if they had foreknowledge of the outcome."⁴⁰

Of course, Doepler never bowed to Cosima Wagner's commands, but he threatened to leave the Festival unless he got his way, and his final comment reveals a rather typical nineteenth-century opinion of "naturalism" on stage. Cosima Wagner's opinions of the costumes were subject to change, although they were never wholly positive. Initially, she found them wanting in mysticism, then was annoyed over the excessive archaeological influence they showed, and in the year after the premiere at Bayreuth, she referred to them as clothes worn by Red Indian chiefs. And truly, they do give a sense of ethnological confusion: it is actually from the 1876 performances at Bayreuth that the longstanding mis-

40 Doepler 1979, 46.

conception arose that Vikings wore horned helmets. Thus, not even in terms of “historical correctness” do Doepler’s designs contribute very much (to the extent that ideas of “historical correctness” can apply to the clothing of gods and goddesses from a mythic world!). In a diary entry on 13 July 1876, Cosima Wagner wrote:

I am very much grieved by [Doepler’s costumes], revealing as they do an archaeologist’s fantasy, to the detriment of the tragic and mythical elements. I should like everything to be much simpler, more primitive. As it is, it is all mere pretence.⁴¹

Cosima, or both of the Wagners, were probably responsible for the following bitter note that can be found towards the end of the sections on Bayreuth in Doepler’s long autobiography:

I never saw Richard Wagner again after my farewell from Bayreuth in 1876 nor received a single line from him. Thus his so often assured friendship and his frequent protestations of gratitude to me had little meaning.⁴²

Today, many of us are reluctant to believe that Wagner would have approved of costumes that were so literal and even “academic” in a search for historical correctness; we think far too highly of his taste to consider him to have been bound by such things. But just like nineteenth-century audiences and stage designers approved of much eighteenth-century music whilst disapproving of the style of eighteenth-century props and costumes, our century seems to do the same with regards to Wagner on stage. The use of myth and allegory in drama has for a long time been the most efficient way of elevating a story above notions of time and space. In the end Doepler’s costume designs became the cause of a great deal of dissatisfaction in Bayreuth, but as

41 *Cosima Wagner's Diaries* 1978, 915.

42 Doepler 1979, 51.

no-one could think of another practical way of achieving that “timelessness”, that is how it had to be done.

V. Conclusions

It is difficult to provide definitive answers to questions about something as fluctuating and ephemeral as the art of stage representation: it is, after all, an art form that deals with “representations” of things. As can be seen in the discussion above, there are a number of “paradoxes” in Richard Wagner’s staging of the *Ring*. The most obvious is the disjunction between his theories of stage performance and his practice in Bayreuth. Section I outlined Wagner’s theory and goals with regards to acting styles and techniques, and sections II, III and IV showed what actually happened in Bayreuth. This consideration of theory and practice highlights three main contradictions between these two areas. Firstly, even though Wagner believed that acting had to be naturalistic and the actor’s inspiration and preparation needed to be internal rather than external, he chose to hire as his movement director Richard Fricke, a dancer and choreographer, who like every other dancer at the time had been trained in an older, non-naturalistic style to move gracefully and beautifully and present his body differently on stage than in real life. Secondly, whilst Wagner wrote on how movement on stage should be naturalistic and have some psychological explanation rather than arising from a desire for “movement for movement’s sake”, he insisted that his singers co-ordinate their gestures with his music. Even though Wagner admitted that stage action and scenery already existed in his music (“I have sometimes been told that my music is like theatrical scenery”, as quoted above), he wanted that music to have a physical equivalent on stage. Gestures that are rehearsed to be timed with the music can be dramatically effective, but they are hardly something those interested in naturalistic acting styles would employ. Thirdly, whilst Wagner wanted his costumes to be timeless and without associations with specific periods in history or “common experiences”, he nevertheless hired an archaeology professor to design them. These three points may seem like great disjunctions

between theory and practice, and we are not surprised to hear that Wagner was unhappy with the performances in 1876. It is worth inquiring further into why his theories did not really translate into practice.

It takes a great mind to conceive of new and unconventional ways for art to fit theory, but it takes another sort of mind to find new, unconventional ways for art to fit physical practice. In the latter, one need to have a sense of how to communicate with people in a new way (in a new artistic language, as it were): is not artistic convention one of the most straightforward ways of expressing an idea, since everyone understands directly the medium through which it is expressed? It is clear that Wagner was not fully aware of how his ideas should be carried out in practice (i.e. on stage). Had that been apparent to him, he would not only have had the totally new idea of using “timeless” costumes, but he would also have been able to envisage them. This is reinforced by the discussion in section II and particularly by Fricke's diary entries on Wagner in rehearsal, both of which reveal an artist who struggled to depict and communicate physically what he had in mind. There is a significant passage on the staging of operatic works in one of Wagner's letters to August Röckel, written in 1856:

Can an artist expect that what he has felt intuitively should be realised by others, seeing that he himself in the presence of his work, if it is true art, feels that he is confronted by a riddle, about which he, too, might have illusions just as another might?⁴³

The differences among the three art forms mentioned in the first paragraph of this article also reveal something important about the nature of theatrical production, namely that it is far more “ephemeral” and bound to the time of its creation than music or drama. In seeking a style for costumes and acting that was natural, timeless and unaffected by society and the aesthetics of its time, we are more or less looking for what is impossible to find: style is always subject to, and marked by,

43 Wagner 1897, 150.

time. In considering the goals of Wagner's dramatic theories, one can ask whether they are attainable at all. Is it possible for acting in opera to be entirely naturalistic, since music makes time move in a way that is different from the way time moves in real life? Is it possible for clothing to be "timeless" and to have "no associations with any common experience" and still communicate anything at all to onlookers? Whilst music and drama (even though they are marked by the society and aesthetics of their time) can transcend many boundaries of time and place, their physical representations on stage seem to be less able to make this leap. It seems that, although we can understand specific features of an old piece of music and drama without needing to "update" the score or libretto, greater effort is required to do the same with their stage portrayals. It is likely that generations of people will continue to listen to Wagner's *Ring* cycle, but it is hardly imaginable that performers a hundred years from now will replicate our stagings of it. When Wagner set out to create a timeless and all-encompassing artwork in words and sounds, he was more successful than when he set out to create a timeless staging of those words and sounds. Theatre is a very direct and obvious medium for artistic expression, one that requires physical, tangible representations of ideas, and it is quite merciless. Perhaps, as Wagner hinted in his above-quoted letter to Röckel, it is necessary to look at theatrical representations of a great artwork as something that can never fully realise the riddles hidden within.

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Wagner Belongs to All: Reflections on His Body, Person, Profession and Values

EERO TARASTI

Everyone studying Wagner encounters a challenge which may seem overwhelming. As known this concerns the most investigated and most disputed composer in the world. However, as to the latter aspect, one has to remark that there must be something extraordinary if a person after two hundred years can still excite people's minds so much. One of the aims of Wagner has thus been attained.

Cosima wrote in her diary what Richard had said on the evening of March 18 1880:¹

No one in the history of arts has gained anything like this: erected a big theatre house, where due to the power of my personality our first rate artists have been invited to perform such works. What followed from this success? Path, path! It has brought only costs to me. Well, ladies arrived with their knitted hair, men with their beards, they made fun and even the Emperor and King were there. One asked: Heavens, was that what Wagner still desires? Does he want to have anything more?

Probably at the end Wagner wanted only one thing – which is longed for by all people: that he be understood, that his message, whatsoever it was, would reach its destination.

However, if one wants to publish a book about Wagner, there should, to my mind, be two motifs. First, one must have a personal relationship

1 C. Wagner II, 506 (author's translation).

with Wagner, whether passionate or not, but some relationship in any case. Many works of Wagner have been already entitled according to the model of his autobiography.²

On the other hand, when approaching Wagner one should have a theory or vision about him. However, such a theory can unfortunately become an obstacle for understanding Wagner, unless the theory is also tested in the light of facts and particularly of his music. No single theory can explain this whole phenomenon. The fresh tractates by media intellectuals³ are examples of this. They rather establish a cloud of mutual praising without ever going “zu den Sachen” as the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl recommended, they repeat the same clichés which an Adorno⁴ or a young American musicologist once invented.

A theory

My next purpose is to apply my theory of existential semiotics to Wagner – but the reader does not need to be scared. My model can be applied so that the reader does not even notice that it is semiotics, or it can be exercised as Umberto Eco or as Monsieur Jourdain does, speaking the prose without knowing of it. My aim is simply that my theory could help someone to navigate the immeasurable sea of Wagnerian research. I cannot presuppose that my reader would become familiar with my theory by first reading my book such as *Existential Semiotics*.⁵

However, and according to its title, what is involved is existence and existing. In no way is my theory a return to existentialism as such that beginning from Kierkegaard and moving on to Heidegger and Jaspers until reaching Jean-Paul Sartre and other French scholars.

2 See the titles of *Mein Leben* [My Life] by Richard Wagner (1963) to *Mein Leben mit Wagner* [My life with Wagner] by the conductor Christian Thielemann (2012).

3 Lacoue-Labarthe 1991; Badiou 2010 and Žižek 2010.

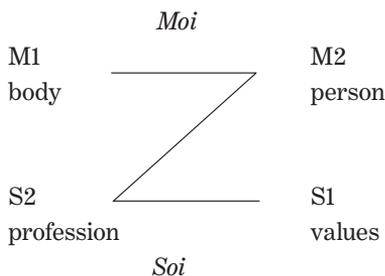
4 Adorno 1974/1952.

5 Tarasti 2000; see also 2009a and 2009b for French and Italian versions; translations into Bulgarian and Chinese appeared in 2012.

My most essential notions stem from the same heritage of German thought, which my object Wagner also admired, albeit Immanuel Kant and G.W.Fr. Hegel have been more important for me than Arthur Schopenhauer. Central here is the idea of *Dasein*, the place, the world in which we exist.

However, inside *Dasein* man is determined by four modes or entities which are simply body, person, social practice and values (or norms). Accordingly, one can name four modes of being, the origin of which can be found in *Wissenschaft der Logik* by Hegel and which emerge from the concepts of *An-sich-Sein* and *Für-sich-Sein*. To be-in-oneself means human beings as such with their inherent qualities; to be-for-oneself means humans as beings in a society, community, defined by others, observed and determined by them.

From these fundamental categories of being we get four cases when it is understood that *An-sich-Sein* represents me and *Für-sich-Sein* society. In French philosophy they are called by the principles of *Moi* and *Soi*. Me and Society. Adorno⁶ thought that the life of an artist, a composer, was a perpetual struggle between these entities (see for example his book *Beethoven-Fragmente*). By applying this we finally get four modes or species of being: *An-mir-Sein* and *Für-mich-Sein* which belong to the sphere of *Moi*, and *Für-sich-Sein* and *An-sich-Sein* which represent the *Soi*. In what follows I will abbreviate these modes by the letters M1, M2, S2 and S1 and compose a four case field of them, which in Paris is called “a semiotic square”:

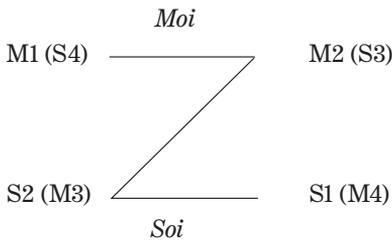


6 Adorno 1974/1952.

What do they mean? M1 signifies man’s ego as such, flesh, emotional, chaotic, not yet articulated this being, in one word, his/her body with as yet no consideration or reflection. M2 refers to the fact that this body gradually develops into a person; through the force of certain manners and habits he assumes an identity and certain stability, he is able to define him/herself, and he can judge and think.

Below are the two cases for *Soi*: in the lower right hand corner S1 there are the values and norms and rules of society, as abstract principles. When they are brought into functional practice in social life one arrives at S2, to which thus belong the institutions, roles, professions, society contracts– all those rules according to which social life is enacted.

This requires illustration: S1 for example with a value such as “aesthetically beautiful”, for example in sound or music, then the corresponding S2 would of course be a conservatory, opera house or symphony orchestra and the musicians operating there. Furthermore, these roles need certain kinds of persons, who are suitable for such professions or M2:s; these M2:s must also have some physical and personal qualities, so that their identities would be functional in such jobs. Therefore one can say that the social values of S1 gradually concretize, and become instantiated when one shifts towards M1. Similarly, in the other direction, thinking of M1 or the body, when it grows up, develops, gets educated and trained, it socializes and is spiritualized towards the S1. Now my model could be called a “Z model” as follows:



The letters in parentheses mean that these modes are present but to a minor degree in the mode under question. Hence, the model portrays

man's existence, with both being and growing occurring via different modes of being.

My second hypothesis is that in principle the symbolic actions of man can also be articulated in these four ways. What is involved is how man is *represented* via different texts and signs. That should also apply to music. This is called "Nachahmung", imitation or "mimesis".⁷ What then are body, person, social practice and values *in* music? Body is the same as sound, physical tone, kinetic energy, movement, emotions stimulated by music, without as yet any closer formation. This means that to encounter music as such, the person is constituted by the recognizable actor, music themes; social practices are provided by genres, forms, rhetorics, narrativity, values including the aesthetic ideas of music – its contents, so to speak. However, in what follows I shall not deal any more closely with this aspect although it does open a precise point of view on to the music itself and on to how the modes of being of man are represented therein.

Nevertheless, let us now return to Wagner. Ultimately everyone who studies a composer must respond to the challenge which exists between his life and work. That is also the most common title of composer monographs. However, how many are those who stop and ponder what this entails? Next I shall scrutinize the case of Wagner, regarding his body, person, profession and values/norms.

Body

Naturally the first question about all those previous modes is on which sources our observations regarding them are based. Regarding Wagner's life, three primary sources emerge. In Wagner's autobiography the composer's *Moi* lives on all levels amidst the romantic age. Moreover, the work has been written in a witty manner applying the Hoffmannian "romantic irony" at all turns. Another less known doc-

7 Carvalho 2009, 89.

ument is *Das braune Buch. Tagebuchaufzeichnungen 1865–1882*.⁸ It contains notes which did not end up in other published sources, and critical editor's remarks about the subsequent stages of various sources.

The third source is of course Cosima Wagner's *Die Tagebücher 1869–1883*, published 1976/77 in two volumes, an extremely valuable document. However, reading it is not an easy task for anyone, since it proceeds day by day, slowly and unpredictably like life itself. One cannot skip over anything, since it may offer up some comment by Richard, which throws light on his life, output and thought, always in a fresh manner. All the above mentioned modes are to be found there, whether Richard was ill or healthy, how he slept, the dreams he had, what he ate, whom he met, "Richard arbeitet", whether successfully composing, professional issues, performances, philosophies, reading circles, recitations, playing, walking, letters, journeys, politics, children education, animals, guests, the whole life, M1, M2, S2 and S1 always side by side. In addition to these three sources there is the entire correspondence, the pearls of which being the letters by Ludwig II of Bavaria (1845–1886) to Richard and Cosima Wagner.⁹

As to all other sources it holds true that the closer they are to Richard's own time, the better. Those who take the trouble in a library to copy the sources printed in old German lettering will be rewarded. Often the analyses of his time are as sharp as at the best music scholars of our time. For instance, the portrayal of Heinrich Porges of how Richard Wagner conducted Beethoven's Symphony no. 9 in Bayreuth in 1872, constitutes in fact a completely "modern" existential semiotic analysis.¹⁰

He starts from the statement that "every true artistic work and performance is a manifestation of an inner force which not only appears in its outer existence [des äusseren Daseins]" and only such artists are "great in whom the life of the whole humanity is focused on one

8 R. Wagner 1975.

9 Correspondences between Richard Wagner and Ludwig II of Bavaria, 1993, and between Cosima Wagner und Ludwig II of Bavaria, 1996.

10 Porges 1897 [1872].

point [in einem Brennpunkte konzentriert]". This needs interpreting, in all the four modes of being. Then he speaks of "the powerful forces of nature with the purest ethical will" (M1 and M2). The problem is how to portray this in art. A real artist does not take an artistic work as an object but its presentation goes from the inner to the outer. It is allowed to appear as a particular entity behind which the personality of the artist disappears (as such, M2 vanishes). In Wagner this mere passivity of emotion (M1) is completely mastered. So we can ask: what prevails at every moment – M or S? And the fight about balance among these modes internally emerges from their affirmation or negation, so either M1 denies S4 or S4 M1.

In the performance this manifests in the tempo and in how it enables the musical organism, i.e. the melody (M2), its highest freedom and beauty to emerge. This is illustrated by the two last measures of this first motif and how Wagner remarkably performed them more slowly than the previous part. Later in the change to B major we are taken away from the real world in order to look at its inner secrets – in other words: we are brought to transcendence. In these moments the life of the whole world is unveiled to us, and in them the cosmic appears over the individuality of the *Dasein*. This had to be played pianissimo with an impersonal character (non-M2). Later, Wagner was able to portray how he transgressed the borderlines of his individuality into immense growth (so again: negation of the M2). The holy desire of love which fills individual persons is not able to solve the opposition which has its roots in the innermost grounding of *Dasein* in the world (so *Moi/Soi*, affirmation or negation, resistance/deliverance).

So I now propose a new "existential" reading of Porges and his study on Wagner as conductor. Conducting is a bodily activity, so M1 is speaking there; it is the Barthesian body with its "beats" and "soma-themes". Yet, we know a great deal about Wagner's body. He was too short to become an actor, which he had desired, and his voice was also not appropriate for the stage. His manner of talking was confused and fast, and he swallowed at the end of the phrases as another witness from Bayreuth performances, Richard Fricke, the ballet master,

tells us.¹¹ Richard Wagner spoke Saxonian dialect, as anyone who met him could affirm. Yet, he was very “sporty”, almost acrobatic, with his mountain walks, and ability to jump on to the stage to show how something had to be done. However, he suffered from many illnesses, which he openly described in his autobiography. He was not a vegetarian and attacked Nietzsche, who refused to eat animals for ethical reasons. Richard stated that we live in a world of compromises and the good things we achieve redeem our eating of animals. He obviously suffered from a manic-depressive mind and one doctor recently said that if he had attended him, he would have prescribed laudanum – but secretly wishing that he would have torn the prescription up since otherwise we would not have had *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Nevertheless, from the composer’s M1 there is a long path to its representation in art as text and art as performance.

Person

Wagner’s person was at the same time fascinating and frightening. He was able to use the “media” of his time and he was a celebrity all over Europe due to his literary pamphlets. Many had a negative opinion of him even before having heard a bar of his music. But he was also surrounded by a quire of immeasurable admiration which canonized everything concerning him during his life. Yet, in the media he was also treated disrespectfully and caricatured.¹² Notwithstanding this, it is impossible to imagine reading all the sources about him in a naïve state of “Firstness”.¹³

When reading such documents we get an instinctive “Einfühlung” into the original period, its atmosphere and at the same time we abstain from anachronistically applying the views of our own time. Nevertheless, it is impossible to imagine it such that we could, so to

11 Fricke 1906.

12 Bermbach et al. 2007.

13 Meyer 1859; Prévost 1869; Porges 1872; Puschmann 1873; Moszkowski [1881] 1911; Porges 1881–1896; Grand-Carteret 1891; Jay 1896; Tappert 1903; Fricke 1906.

say, piece by piece reconstruct Wagner's life and person as such and his impact as a "cultural unit", as Umberto Eco would say.

This reserve also applies to the sound records.¹⁴ A Wagnerian buys such a recording with enthusiasm as he will finally hear it authentically "wie es eigentlich gewesen ist" but (s)he will be disappointed. Only three original voices are the same as they were singing under Wagner himself in Bayreuth: Lilli Lehmann (1848–1929), Marianne Brandt (1842–1921) and Herman Winckelmann (1849–1912). But when they were recorded, they were 30 years older than in their Bayreuth performances. The performances are totally different, not only due to the recording techniques but because orchestras and scores were not like they are nowadays. They sound grotesquely awkward. Only at times can the splendour of authenticity be heard, as in the case of the hero tenor Wilhelm Grüning (1858–1942), whose "Morgendlich leuchtend" and "Winterstürme wichen dem Wonnemond" in 1905 already foreshadow the Max Lorenz of the 1920s.¹⁵ From Lilli Lehmann we also get an idea – later, the director of the Paris opera and the anti-Wagnerian (but still friend of Marcel Proust!) Reynaldo Hahn destroyed the singer's voices, unless they had a bel canto training like Lilli Lehmann.

For all sources it holds true that the watershed was 1914, or the time before World War I. Although the term *la belle époque* should perhaps not be applied to the Europe outside France it is true that the impact of the war upon manners, culture, spirit of the time, style, world view, speech, gestures and action was devastating and brutalizing. This holds true for visual documents.

Among Wagner movies the absolute king is the one by Carl Froelich.¹⁶ For our time it is – with all of its deficiencies and perhaps mistakes of biographical interpretations – the best visual representation of the period. All the actors still behave according to the codes of the nineteenth century. Sabine Sonntag has clarified the background

14 *100 Jahre Bayreuth auf Schallplatte* released in 2004 containing recordings from 1900–1930.

15 On Lorenz see Herrmann 1976.

16 Froelich 1913.

of this movie.¹⁷ What is involved is a central document in the sense that it is the first German film with original composed film music.

The producer of the film Oskar Messter (1866–1943) had earlier filmed Wagner arias, but now he chose the Italian composer and actor Giuseppe Becce (1877–1970) for the main role and the director of music. The first idea was naturally to use Wagner's music, but it proved to be unrealistic due to the copyright demands of the publishers. Messter had met, in Berlin, at Café Größenwahn, a person who drew the attention of all through his obvious similarity to Richard Wagner. He wanted in his film to have an actor who through his age and physiognomy fitted the "original". This was also the case with the other roles in the movie, the figures of Minna, Mathilde Wesendonck, von Bülow, Liszt and Ludwig II of Bavaria; all of them seem quite plausible compared to their photographs. Only Cosima was completely different and perhaps on purpose since the real Cosima was still alive. Everyone agreed that Becce seemed just like the Master alive among us.¹⁸ Messter's goal was in the first place to provide the audience with a film with good music. To do this he used several authentic staged scenes, the mimed aspect of which the contemporary critics in 1913 stated had been splendidly successful. This is probably how Wagner's own stagings looked. The singers are really like "living statues", what was one of Wagner's own ideas which Cosima later took perhaps too literally, thereby stagnating stage production into stereotypical gestures.

The structure of the movie is like in a play in VII acts, each with 6–8 scenes. There was little need for censorship yet two scenes were deleted: Minna taking off her clothes and Wagner in the bath. In any event the film was forbidden from being seen by youth (*Jugendverbot*). One of the external circumstances of the film was that it was a preparation for Wagner's centenary.

Wagner performances in an authentic sense have been richly stud-

17 Sonntag 2010.

18 Ibid., 54–55.

ied by Mario Vieira de Carvalho¹⁹ in his social history of the Lisbon opera house which discusses in depth transformations of Wagnerian performance practices and their relationships to his ideas as well. He deals with precisely what was important to Adolphe Appia: that is, how opera is staged, “sich inszenieren”, at various times and places.

Wagner's person was full of tensions. He obviously did not feel any contradiction in the fact that during his Triebtschen time he was simultaneously dating four women while he was still married to Minna Planer (1809–1866), whose biography we have finally obtained.²⁰ This shows her role in sharing with Richard his most difficult times but also his most creative ones. With Mathilde Wesendonck (1828–1902) a Platonic relationship at the least was initiated. Hans von Bülow (1830–1894), the brilliant Wagnerian interpreter, was on a visit with his spouse Cosima (1837–1930), daughter of Franz Liszt (1811–1886) and Comtesse Marie d'Agoult (1805–1876). Yet they had met even earlier in Paris. Cosima's marriage was unhappy and Liszt had not cared about his children, so Richard immediately became a kind of father figure in her psyche. She became a total servant of Richard; to help him was the only purpose of her life. This explains her fervent anti-Semitism, as a kind of personality disturbance as her biographer has explained. Since she had completely subordinated herself to Richard she needed a class of people under her, to which she could project her negative feelings.

However, in addition, Wagner maintained relations with Mathilde Maier (1830–1910), whom he asked to keep his household in 22 June 1864 – perhaps without knowing that Cosima was going to arrive on 29 June 1864 after having left her family. Yet Mathilde reasonably refused to become Wagner's housekeeper and anything else.

Wagner's personality was unpredictable and irascible. When Paris was in flames after Prussian occupation and the Paris Commune in 1871 and the Louvre was about to be destroyed, he stated there were hardly twenty persons mourning this. Yet ten years later he said that of

19 Carvalho 1999.

20 Zehle 2004.

all metropolises he could live only in Paris. The anti-Semitism of Wagner had its roots in his bitter years in Paris and was caused by his envy of Meyerbeer, and later he believed in a Jewish conspiracy to prevent the performance of his works. But at the same time he was totally dependent on his Jewish interpreters. No one else could conduct *Der Ring des Nibelungen* than Hans Richter (1854–1916), no one else *Parsifal* than Hermann Levi (1839–1900). However he treated the latter in an insulting manner, asking him to convert to Christianity, which he of course refused. Wagner forced him to read aloud an anonymous letter at breakfast in Wahnfried claiming that he and Cosima had had a relationship. This was too much for Levi who immediately left Bayreuth. But he was soon reached by Wagner's letters of excuses and prayers for him to return.²¹ The pianist in Wahnfried was Joseph Rubinstein (1847–1884) who played Bach's preludes and fugues to the Wagners.

Wagner had admirers who were at the same time Jewish and French like Judith Gautier (1845–1917), the first wife of the writer Catulle Mendès. Judith's description of her visit to the Maestro in Tribschen is among the most entertaining.²² Later when the war between France and Prussia broke out, the Mendès's and the poet Villiers de l'Isle-Adam continued their stay with Wagner in Switzerland. The level of the persons M2 was different from that of S2, society, *Soi 2*, following my model.

However, Wagner had faithful friends of all ages and in all positions. Ludwig II of Bavaria was young when he entered Richard's life. He was thoroughly saturated by Wagner's ideas and music. He was called "Parsifal" in their correspondence and in his autobiography Wagner foresaw that his life would not end well. The sentimental style of their letters should not lead to premature conclusions, since such figurative expressions belonged to the discourse of the time. When Richard wrote: "In ewiger Liebe und Treue" then Ludwig answered: "Mein Freund Mein Geliebter" or: "Treu bis zum Tod. Mein treu geliebter Freund,

21 On Levi see Haas 1995.

22 Gautier [1909] 1992.

Mein Alles!" Or Richard to Ludwig II of Bavaria 11 September 1876: "Mein königlicher Erlöser's ewiges Eigen: RW" or "Mein innigstbeliebter erhabener Einsamer!" or "Mein wunderbar herrlicher König und Freund!" and Ludwig answered similarly: "Einziger! Herre meines Lebens!"²³ Cosima knew how to understand this although she admitted having felt a certain amount of jealousy when they wrote to each other: "Mein Liebster!" What was involved was a role play king/servant. So we should not come to the conclusions of New Musicology scholars regarding the nature of their relationship.

Wagner's attitude to Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) remained a fostering one although Cosima never forgot to call Nietzsche "Professor Nietzsche". He was then – in 1864 – 31 years old and a young professor of philology in Basel – were his students requested him to be fired due to the "non-scientific nature" of his teaching – whereas Richard was already a 57 year-old celebrity.

Richard had also a sense of humour. Cosima said that without it Richard would not have been able to pass through his life. *Mein Leben*²⁴ is full of anecdotes and puns. When Karl Ritter finally visited Arthur Schopenhauer, the latter had stated: "I greatly admire Wagner as a poet, but he is no musician at all!" When Richard heard about this, it amused him a lot, particularly the expression "ich admiriere". After having become familiar with the Buddhist doctrine of resignation, which was first placed against his "cheerful Greek world view", Wagner wrote: The most important Nation in the world is Resignation.

Profession: Composer

As the German musicologist Martin Knust has argued in his doctoral thesis, the dilemma of Wagner's life was that of actor or musician.²⁵ And consequently: are his music dramas primarily theatre pieces or

23 See the correspondence between Richard Wagner and Ludwig II of Bavaria, 1993.

24 R. Wagner 1963.

25 Knust 2007; see also 2013.

symphonies?

Wagner never revealed how he composed. He had his reasons for this: firstly, it was accepted that he did not need to technically report on this to anyone – it is only our time with its technical-essentialist need for such knowledge that wishes to be informed of this (the term is from Richard Taruskin). Secondly, Wagner would not have been able to conceptually portray what he yielded as a composer. Thirdly, he was against the idea of a pure musician, a musician who from morning to night only made music was like cattle (“Vieh”): he would be better doing something else, as he once said to Cosima. It is almost only via the diaries of Cosima that we can get closer to his creative processes, since Cosima had no reason to change this information. Yet sometimes she became so moved that she was unable to write down Richard’s comments. This occurred particularly when Richard played *Tristan und Isolde*, “their opera”.

According to Knust, Wagner first wrote libretti, then learned by heart all his roles and then recited them to a selected audience. This was a special theatrical genre, nowadays forgotten, which he mastered. But as Knust says, it would have been hopelessly comical to our ears and eyes, since words were followed by naïve gestures: when something elevated was said, hands had to be raised, when something sad, they had to be down, when love was indicated, hands had to be pressed upon the breast and so on. This leads to exaggeration. From sketches we know that Wagner first wrote the melody line, then chordal foundations and finally, the orchestration. Magee states that Wagner always started from a poetico-musical basic atmosphere, a core idea which determined the soundscape of every opera. Christian Thielemann has observed that every Wagner opera has a different *Klang* or sound. He sometimes even wrote music before the text: an example is the *Meistersinger*’s prelude.²⁶

How did Wagner compose? John Deathridge claims that he improvised everything. The efforts of those such as Alfred Lorenz²⁷ are

²⁶ Magee 2000; Thielemann 2012.

²⁷ Lorenz 1924.

useless in revealing the secret of form in Wagner. But are Wagnerian operas basically theatre symphonic works? Guido Adler pondered this in his lectures at Vienna University.²⁸ According to Lorenz he followed the strict formal scheme of “Stollen, Stollen, Abgesang” throughout. Yet he also admits that when the singing stops then the orchestra alone continues the melos. The fact is that in various parts of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* an ideal balance prevails between “Sprechgesang” type texture and melodic-lyrical absolute music. When in *Siegfried* everything has been speech-like, in the last act melodic quality bursts out, just as in *Die Walküre*. In emotional climaxes he almost always builds a bel canto expression like the love duet in the prologue of *Götterdämmerung* and in the theme of hope in the Act 3 of *Die Walküre*.

Wagner did not write symphonies, but this possibility always loomed in his mind. After *Parsifal* he promised to always write a symphony for Cosima on each of his birthdays. In fact, the whole of *Tristan und Isolde* is a symphony. He said to Cosima that there he wanted to get rid of the straight jacket of drama and stage.

His operas are an archive of music history. His models were Beethoven – as he said he aimed at “sich musikalisch auszurasen”. “Modern” music starts in music history with the first theme of the *Eroica* and its C sharp note, the first radical deviation. Bach’s fugues were for him movements of planets. We could well study Wagner as Rhetoric since his teacher, the Thomaskantor Christian Theodor Weinlig (1780–1842), had certainly taught its figures to him. As for Berlioz, he admitted to being his pupil as far as orchestration was concerned. Italian opera was also a model and he admitted even in his most patriotic period – “Was ist deutsch?” – that Germany had got music from Italy.

One of his inventions which continues to have its impact on popular music in cinema is the leitmotif technique. Studies have shown that *Der Ring des Nibelungen* has about 200 leitmotifs. Why? Because if there were more one could not remember all of them. If there were less, the

28 Adler 1904.

music would become monotonous and boring, due to their frequent repetitions. However, to keep diagrams and tables of leitmotifs and give them names was senseless to him, “ein Unsinn”, as he once said when playing *Götterdämmerung* with four hands with Cosima.

Values and norms

The quantity of writing by Wagner is enormous. Writing was to him an important activity as a counterbalance to composing but it would be an error to believe that he would have first created a kind of system of thought which he subsequently realized in his operas. However, this was a common view in his time for the simple reason that his most fervent literary activity took place in the 1850s whereas composing dominated his life the 1860s and 1870s. However, as Meyer writes, “[i]n spite of the devoted admirers of Wagner, theory and practice, the aesthetics and those works of art, do not harmonize [...] the Aesthetics is a later product of his development than his art works” and moreover he states that his writings are not written with the peaceful mind of a philosopher but with a drive of an action-thirsty artist.²⁹

Wagner was a philosopher of no class. To take his writings as the starting point for staging is a serious mistake. He tried to study philosophy in the university without success. However, he was influenced by many thinkers. Important years were those spent in Dresden under the impact of the Russian revolutionist thinker Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876). His sermons of world revolution and destruction of the old Europe anticipated *Götterdämmerung*. When in *Siegfried* Fafner as a dragon sleeps in his cave upon his treasure, he is a caricature of a capitalist enjoying his possessions. “Hier lieg’ ich und besitz”, sings Fafner. Yet *Götterdämmerung* constitutes such a crazy utopian idea to put the end of the world on stage. It can never be staged satisfactorily and so it is equal to Goethe’s *Faust II* and its final scene. Thielemann has in a funny way even questioned the whole idea of a complete destruction. When

²⁹ Meyer 1859, 6.

Brünnhilde has thrown the burning torch to Valhalla causing its fire, the Rhine river floods and perhaps extinguishes the fire. So the gods maybe saved and perhaps next Brünnhilde reappears with her horse. Thielemann likewise has another musical commentary: no opera by Wagner ends with a minor chord.³⁰ They all end with a major! Was he basically an optimist? Death in his mythical world was not real. This was found by Proust who wrote about the themes of music – having Wagnerian leitmotifs certainly in mind – as follows:

[...] we feel that these phrases of music, these conceptions which exist in relation to our dream, must be nothing either. We shall perish, but we have as hostages these divine captives who will follow and share our fate. And death in their company is somehow less bitter, less inglorious, perhaps even less probable.³¹

Another shift of values took place in Wagner when he became familiar with Buddhism and Schopenhauer. He wrote in his *Das braune Buch*: Truth = Nirvana = night; Music = Brahma = twilight; Poetry = Sansara = Day. In his *Mein Leben*³² he states that the whole leitmotif technique is an effort to portray the rebirths of musical motifs, “actors” in the Buddhist sense.

Next came the unification of Germany 1871 and Wagner wrote about the German character. But in the end he was disappointed with the Germany of Bismarck, who never understood Wagner. He wrote to Liszt from Bückeberg, 14 October 1849: “You will not understand this, being at home in all Europe, while I came into the world in a specifically Teutonic manner.”³³

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg became his most patriotic work and was adopted as a symbol of Germanity, although it is only at the end of

30 Thielemann 2012.

31 Proust, *Swann's Way*.

32 R. Wagner 1963.

33 Richard Wagner and Franz Liszt 1969 [1889], *Correspondence 1*.

the opera that Hans Sachs praises the noble German art. It was customary in the 1910s and 1920s to sing “Deutschland über alles” with the audience at the end. *Parsifal* again was of universal nature making art into a kind of religion. However, a strange circle gathered around him in the late years of Wahnfried, including Bernhard Förster (1843–1889),³⁴ Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855–1927) and others.³⁵

However, sometimes Bayreuth was also seen in a humoristic light as in the story about the experiences of two average German gentlemen, Schultze and Müller, who arrived at the Bayreuth festival but never succeeded in seeing any performance there.³⁶ It is the most perfect and funny portrayal of which kind of person was a true Wagnerian, the personification and embodiment of Wagner’s ideas, values and norms, either expressed by him or conveyed in his operas or interpreted in his community.

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35 See Salmi 1993 which is an important source for studying the political thought of Wagner.

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Abstracts and Contributors

Owe Ander

The Swedish Reception of Wagner 1840–1865

The Swedish lexicographer Leonard Höijer (1815–1885) wrote 1864 in his dictionary: “His [Wagner’s] opera *Tristan und Isolde* has not yet been performed, but has been published in score and piano reduction.” His comment is characteristic for the situation, where many in Sweden had heard of the later *Musikdramen*, even before the first stage performances of any early Wagner opera in Stockholm. The article aims to investigate the Swedish reception of Wagner from the 1840s up to, and including, the production of Wagner’s grand opéra *Rienzi* in Stockholm in June 1865.

The article deals with the travels on the continent of musicians, singers, composers and conductors and their contacts with Wagner’s works and writings. In addition, it examines foreign travelling artists and companies in Sweden and their contributions to the Swedish Wagner reception, concert performances (Foroni, Norman) and publication of the music. How was Wagner discussed in the press and in other media? The essay studies in particular the discussions and decisions leading to the preparations, rehearsals and performance of *Rienzi* in 1865, with Ludvig Norman conducting and with the international star and Wagner specialist Joseph Tichatscheck in the title role. The aesthetic and ideological context and the reception of the opera are discussed.

Owe Ander is Associate Professor in Musicology at Stockholm University and Senior Lecturer at SMI, the University College of Music Education in Stockholm. His research focuses on orchestral music and opera in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from an ana-

lytical as well as historical point of view. Ander has participated in several research projects, including the “Musical life in Europe 1600–1900, Circulation, Institutions, Representation” (European Science Foundation research programme); “An Inventory of Swedish music” (Royal Swedish Academy of Music); “Opera on the move” (NOS-HS). As editor, he has worked for *Monumenta Musica Svecicae* and for *Franz Berwald Sämtliche Werke* (Bärenreiter).

Mauro Fosco Bertola

Back to the North? Reframing Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* in French Cinema under German Occupation: Jean Delannoy’s and Jean Cocteau’s *L’Éternel retour* (1943)

Located in a contemporary, if at times surreal French milieu of the 1930s, *L’Éternel retour*, a film from 1943 directed by Jean Delannoy based on a script by Jean Cocteau, retells the story of Tristan and Isolde, combining some Wagnerian features with elements borrowed from Joseph Bédier’s reconstruction of the poem in the early twentieth century as well as with Claude Debussy’s own Tristanesque opera of 1902, *Pelléas et Mélisande*. At the same time, a broad array of references seems to twist the Tristan legend towards a highly ideologized Nordic iconography as embodied in the Nazi blockbusters of the era. The Nietzschean title and the closing scene, which evokes a Viking funeral, make the iconography complete. By adopting Slavoj Žižek’s concept of parallax as well as his elaborations on the Nietzschean topic of *amor fati*, my article intends to highlight the different ways in which the ambiguous entanglements between Wagner and Debussy, Aryan mythology and Cocteau’s poetic idiosyncrasies manifest themselves in the movie. In this respect my inquiry will involve three intersecting levels of analysis: one philosophical, one (musical-)dramatic and one political. At the end I will point out how, through Cocteau’s parallaetic reading of Nietzsche’s notion of Eternal Return, the film was able to

maintain successfully the contradictory complexities of its references, conveying an uncertain French identity split between national tradition and a new Nordic vision of Aryan supremacy.

Mauro Fosco Bertola studied philosophy in Italy and musicology in Heidelberg. From 2012 to 2017 he was a lecturer in musicology at Heidelberg University and from 2017 to 2019 research fellow in the post-graduate programme “European Dream Cultures” at the University of Saarbrücken. He is the author of *Die List der Vergangenheit. Musikwissenschaft, Rundfunk und Deutschlandbezug in Italien, 1890–1945* (Böhlau, 2014), co-editor of *Žižek and Music* (special issue of the *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, 2017) and *An den Rändern des Lebens. Träume vom Sterben und Geborenwerden in den Künsten* (Fink, 2019) as well as editor of *The Sound of Žižek. Musicological Perspectives on Slavoj Žižek* (Peter Lang, forthcoming). He is currently working on a monograph on the presence of dream in contemporary musical theatre.

Jukka von Boehm

**The Grail as the Symbol of Art:
Richard Wagner and the Young Volter Kilpi**

Although the Finnish author Volter Kilpi (1874–1939) has above all been acclaimed as the creator of the epic novel *Alastalon salissa* (1933) [In the Hall of Alastalo], his early works, *Bathseba* (1900), *Parsifal* (1902) and *Antinous* (1903) are stimulating products of the short-lived Finnish symbolist movement from the turn of the century. In these works, Kilpi convincingly proves that he was in vogue with European symbolism – a movement considerably influenced by the ideas of Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche and Richard Wagner. Kilpi’s *Parsifal – kertomus Graalin ritarista* [Parsifal – a Tale of the Knight of the Grail] provides a stimulating example of Wagner’s impact on the *fin-de-siècle* arts.

This article analyzes the Wagnerian influence in Kilpi’s tale in two

ways. First, Kilpi's self-styled "musical fantasy" *Parsifal* is a stimulating synesthetic experiment; in order to increase the expressiveness of the Finnish language Kilpi created innovative word-combinations. In this respect, the author followed in the footsteps of the French symbolist movement, whose main proponents – Charles Baudelaire and Stéphane Mallarmé – were influenced by Wagner's attempts to re-evaluate the relationship between music and poetic language. Accordingly, for the French symbolists, the idea of music was understood as the inassimilable "other" to poetry. In addition to that basic feature, Kilpi's text is full of allusions to sounds, such as horn calls, organ playing or lamenting voices.

The second main point the article discusses is the Grail as the symbol of art in both Wagner's and Kilpi's *Parsifals*. Art-religion was a phenomenon of the long nineteenth century: a counter-reaction to secularization, modernization and disenchantment with the world. After "the death of God" it was the artist who was expected to be the intermediary of divine truth through an artwork. Both *Parsifals* demonstrate how religious symbols, the Grail or the temple, no longer referred primarily to their Christian context. Instead, Wagner and Kilpi were interested in the suggestive and aesthetic value of those sacral symbols. Accordingly, both *Parsifals* could be interpreted as the glorification of art as *Ersatzreligion*: the aesthetic experience as the highest realm of human existence.

Jukka von Boehm holds a position as lecturer in the history of performing arts at the Theatre Academy of University of Arts Helsinki. Von Boehm's recent research interests have included political mass theatre in Germany and Russia – following the subject of his post-doctoral research – as well as a minor research project on *fin de siècle* incidental music. He completed his PhD on the reception history of Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin* at the Department of Theatre Research at the University of Helsinki in 2015. His articles on *Lohengrin* have appeared in the *Finnish Historical Journal*, *Avain* [The Finnish Review of Literary Studies] and *Synteesi*. In 2014 his extended article "Lohengrin als Feindbild der progressiven sozialistischen Kunst" was published

in *wagnerspectrum*. In the field of music theatre, von Boehm wrote the libretti for the chamber opera *Eläkö Stalin?* [Is Stalin Alive?], premiered in Helsinki in 2011, and the news opera *SHITSTORM*, premiered at the Turku Music Festival, Finland, in 2012.

Christine Fischer

Being Siegfried in Helsinki:

Richard Wagner and the Young Ferruccio Busoni

Appendix I: Three Busoni Letters (edited by Christine Fischer)

Appendix II: Ferruccio Busoni's *Der Ring des Niebelungen in's Finnische übertragen von OMNIBUS* [1892] (edited by Christine Fischer, Martin Knust and Anne Kauppala)

The article examines Busoni's encounter with Richard Wagner's operas during the younger composer's formative years from two perspectives. On the one hand, I use Busoni's little known correspondence with the Swiss writer and journalist Josef Victor Widmann and the former's early texts written as a music correspondent for a journal in his hometown of Trieste to shed new light on his aesthetic self-positioning in relation to Richard Wagner as opera composer. On the other hand, I take a closer look at the composer's self-description as Siegfried in his parody entitled *Der Ring des Niebelungen in's Finnische übertragen*. Busoni created the piece after his stay in Helsinki as a teacher at the newly founded Helsinki Music Institute, during the years 1888–1890, and sent it to Martin Wegelius, its director, on the occasion of his 47th birthday in November 1893. Positioning himself as a Siegfried torn apart between rebellion against and adoration for Wagner, between Northern mythology and Southern musical passion, he not only mocks Finnish musical life as he experienced it during these years, but also frees himself from the giant of Bayreuth; as Siegfried he calls off his own funeral and declares to leave for Moscow. The sources on which the article sheds a new light are edited as an appendix to the text and

illustrate, next to Busoni's self-fashioning, the search for a Finnish "national style of music" in the shadow of Richard Wagner.

Christine Fischer is senior research associate at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. She studied musicology, history of art and Italian literature in Munich (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität) and Los Angeles (University of California), earning her PhD with a thesis on the compositions of Maria Antonia Walpurgis of Bavaria (1724–1780). From 2007 to 2013 she held an Associate professorship of the Swiss National Science Foundation at Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, leading an interdisciplinary research team in a project dealing with the performance practices of Italian opera at German courts. She also works as a freelance musicologist, author and editor as well as a university lecturer, music journalist and dramaturg at home and abroad.

Martin Knust

**Wagnerisms: An Overview of the European
Wagner Reception with a Focus on the North**

Given that Wagner succeeded in establishing himself as a national icon, it is not surprising that he was seen abroad as a representative of German culture. But when all over Europe composers and dramatists began imitating his style in the late nineteenth century, they adapted it to their own national traditions. In this respect Wagner's work became synonymous with national art in music theatre in different contexts, modified according to particular national self-images. Wagner's reception in Europe differed from country to country in social terms. For instance, French *wagnérisme* was quite elitist. It was restricted to the upper social classes and to artists, whereas German *Wagnerianer* came from all different classes and professions. It is therefore no exaggeration to speak of various national Wagnerisms. In my essay, I concentrate especially on the Wagnerisms in Sweden and Finland, where

they appear to have differed from German and French practices and took different forms in each of these two Nordic countries. Swedish and Finnish Wagnerisms are evaluated against the backdrop of other European Wagner imitations. This overview focuses on the introduction of Wagner's practical and theoretical work into composition, the operatic repertoire and the cultural life of the European North.

Martin Knust studied musicology, theology and philosophy in Greifswald, Berlin (Humboldt University) and Dresden (Technical University). He earned an M.A. (Magister Artium) in musicology in 2000 and his Dr. phil. in 2006 in Greifswald. Since 2007, Knust has held appointments and lectureships at the E.-M.-Arndt-University in Greifswald, the Technical University Berlin, the University of Örebro and the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. From 2008 to 2012 he was a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Stockholm. Since 2013, he has been Senior lecturer and since 2020 Associate Professor in musicology at the Department of Music and Art at Linnæus University in Växjö, Sweden. Since 2015, he has been a member of the research centre for Intermedial and Multimodal Studies at Linnæus University (IMS) and has been a guest teacher at academic institutions in Switzerland, Finland, Estonia, Portugal and Kenya. He has published about Richard Wagner, Jean Sibelius and other Northern European composers of the nineteenth through twenty-first centuries, as well as on sixteenth-century liturgical music and music of Cambodia.

Vesa Kurkela

**Popular Wagner: Robert Kajanus's Wagner
Evenings in Helsinki 1890–1911**

Wagner studies have tended to disregard “popular Wagner”, i.e. the reception of the composer's music outside the opera scene and serious orchestral concerts. However, Wagner's popularization played an im-

portant part in the programme planning of Robert Kajanus, an active Wagner promoter in late nineteenth-century Helsinki. Kajanus was a conductor who organized special Wagner Evenings as part of a series of popular concerts, especially favoured by upper-class audiences. “Popular Wagner” was performed sporadically: during the period under study (1890–1911), Wagner Evenings were held almost every year, numbering altogether 36 concerts.

Presumably, there were two reasons for this institutional practice of presenting Wagner’s music. On the one hand, Wagner’s music was in great demand by concert audiences in Helsinki. On the other hand, Kajanus was a devout Wagnerian who used his popular concerts as a tool for promoting Wagner’s reception in Finland.

A detailed analysis of the repertoire of Kajanus’s orchestra shows that, despite the term “popular”, the concerts were far from being merely entertaining or undemanding. They included a great deal of music that was no less serious than the music performed by the orchestra in its symphony concerts or in concerts featuring soloists.

Furthermore, the music played during the Wagner Evenings repeated and utilized two musical affections typical of the popular concerts organized by Kajanus: Heroism and solemnity and Romantic dreams and longing. These contrasting moods were continuously mixed during the evening in a manner familiar to popular concert audiences, who were used to enjoying music at the Helsinki concert venue, Seurahuone.

All of this means that playing Wagner’s music in popular concerts was well-suited to Kajanus’s repertoire planning – it was by no means exceptional or curious – nor can it be considered to have appeared in the wrong context. The repertoire of the Wagner Evenings in Helsinki concentrated on a few orchestral works, of which most consisted of overtures, preludes and interludes from the composer’s most famous operas – without favouring any particular one – and other original compositions for orchestra.

The Wagner Evenings featured the most well-known Wagner repertoire, which was familiar to every average concertgoer in twentieth-century Finland and elsewhere from one generation to the next. Kajanus no doubt made Wagner’s music popular among the wider audience in

Helsinki, thus making the Wagner Evenings he organized an important episode in the history of Wagner reception in Finland.

Vesa Kurkela is Professor in Music History at Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts, Helsinki. Since 1980, Kurkela has worked as a full-time music researcher and university teacher in various academic posts at the University of Helsinki, University of Tampere and Sibelius Academy. After taking the university exams in ethnomusicology and sociology, his research focused on vernacular traditions in Finland, including folk music, political song, world music, brass bands, amateur choirs and popular music. Kurkela's doctoral thesis (1989) explored the artistic and political utilization of Finnish folk music (music-folklorism).

In the 1990s Kurkela held a two-year research fellowship (the Humboldt Foundation Grant) at the International Institute for Traditional Music in Berlin. His research dealt with the change in the folk and popular music scenes in several post-Socialist European countries, including several short-term fieldtrips to Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania. After receiving a research professor post at the Seinäjoki University Consortium (Sibelius Academy 2002–2007), Kurkela's research mainly concentrated on three topics with related research projects: local music history, radio music and mobile music consumption. From 2007–2011 Kurkela chaired the National Doctoral School Network (seven universities) and from 2012–2017 was the director of the Sibelius Academy doctoral school "MuTri".

Kurkela has written extensively on various issues of music history in Finland and elsewhere: popular music, music publishing, nationalism and transnationalism, folk music and ideology, concert institution and repertoires, radio music and the recording industry. He is co-author of *A History of Finnish Popular Music* (in Finnish, 2003), author of *A History of Music Publishing in Finland* (in Finnish, 2008) and co-editor of both *De-Canonizing Music History* (2009) and *Critical Music Historiography: Probing Canons, Ideologies and Institutions* (2015).

Between 2011–2016, Kurkela was the Principal Investigator of the research project "Rethinking 'Finnish' Music History: Transnational construction of musical life in Finland from the 1870s until the 1920s" (fund-

ed by the Academy of Finland and the Finnish Cultural Foundation). Research work continues in the recent PI position of the research project “Trans-local Cultural Fields: Music as a Cultural and Economic Enterprise in the Four Biggest Cities in Finland, 1900–1939” (Academy of Finland, 2017–2020). His own contribution to these projects deals with orchestral repertoires, entertainment, cultural transfer, institutionalization and cosmopolitanism.

Jenni Lättilä

**Translated Transfigurations:
Armas Järnefelt and the Finnish “Liebestod”**

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, both practical and ideological reasons led opera companies to stage operas with libretti translated to the local language. With no technology to display surtitles and operating within a newly-born national state under the influence of a strong national romantic ideology, the Finnish Opera also staged most of its productions in the early nineteenth century sung in the Finnish language. Thus, Wagner was performed in Finnish. An ardent Wagnerite, Armas Järnefelt, the general director of Finnish Opera during the 1930s, produced and conducted several of Wagner’s masterpieces – including *Ring* and *Tristan und Isolde* – using his own translations.

Translating opera is not an easy task: the natural rhythm, emphasis and word lengths of different languages may vary and a word for word translation is almost certain not to fit the rhythm of the music. Even when using archaic words or poetic abbreviations to fit the number of syllables to the music, the differences in the rhythm and emphasis between languages easily render the translated text unintelligible or laughable. Furthermore, for a singer the match between vowels and pitch is important: it is quite impossible to sing recognizable vowels with the highest notes of a soprano voice. Wagner’s musical genius shows in the natural manner in which he matches the vowels to the

pitch, rendering his works even more challenging to translate.

This presentation discusses Finnish translations of Wagner's operas from a singer's perspective. Touching briefly on the reasons and motivations behind translating Wagner's operas and performing them in the local language, as well as the history of performing Wagner in Finland and in Finnish, my main emphasis is in the act of singing Wagner in Finnish: how does it sound and how does it feel?

First, I consider the linguistic differences between German and Finnish languages, using Järnefelt's translations as an example. I briefly touch on how the meaning of Wagner's text is translated and what adjustments the translators have made both to the context and meaning of the text, as well as to the music. Finally, I consider the subjective "singability" of these translations when compared to the original texts, using some performed excerpts from Järnefelt's translations as a basis for this discussion.

Jenni Lättilä earned two master's degrees at the Sibelius-Academy from the department of Church Music and from the Vocal Music and Opera departments. Her singing teachers were Pekka and Outi Kähkönen. Jenni Lättilä also supplemented her education abroad with several singing teachers, the longest period being with Dorothy Irving.

Lättilä obtained her doctorate in 2017 from the Sibelius Academy DocMus Doctoral School, focussing on Richard Wagner's music and the young dramatic soprano voice as the vehicle of Wagner's art (recital series), as well as opera as emotional labour (written thesis).

Lättilä is a prize winner of several national and international vocal competitions. Her dramatic soprano instrument is particularly suited to the great female roles in operas by Verdi and Wagner, and her debut role as an opera singer was Lady Macbeth from Verdi's *Macbeth* in 2010. Jenni Lättilä made her debut in the Finnish National Opera by singing three roles in Wagner's *Ring* in 2011 and has since been a regular guest soloist. She is also a sought-after orchestral soloist and gives regular recitals. Lättilä's and pianist Kirill Kozlovski's recording of Wagner's complete lieder was published in 2016, and this duo has since appeared on the 2017 recording of newly discovered songs by Finnish composer

Yrjö Kilpinen. At the moment they are working on a complete recording of Toivo Kuula's lieder. As a versatile musician, Jenni Lätttilä is renowned as a performer of contemporary Nordic music. She has also worked as church musician and as a conductor of a chamber orchestra and several choirs.

Lätttilä held post-doctoral researcher positions in the DocMus Doctoral School at the Sibelius Academy (2018–2019) and at the University of the Arts Helsinki Center for Artistic Research CfAR (2019–2020). At the moment, besides her performing career, she works as lecturer and Head of the Vocal Music Department at the Sibelius Academy.

Barry Millington

Understanding Wagner in the Bicentenary Year

To what extent does the all-embracing, comprehensive nature of Wagner's works militate against a true understanding of them? Could our understanding of them in the bicentenary year be said to do them justice? What opportunities are there to promote a better understanding? My article investigates these issues with regard to recent research on Wagner, challenging stereotypical views of the composer and examining his work with particular regard to his heroines and his anti-Semitism. I then move on to consider aspects of the theory and practice of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, making a case for the primacy of the drama in Wagner's works and the consequent necessity for a rigorous approach to stage production based on meticulous attention to the text and keenly observed character interaction.

Barry Millington is chief music critic for the London *Evening Standard* and the founder/editor of *The Wagner Journal*. He is the author and editor/co-editor of eight books on Wagner, including *Wagner*, *The Wagner Compendium*, *The Ring of the Nibelung: A Companion* and *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, and contributed the articles on Wagner and his

operas to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*. His latest Wagner book, *The Sorcerer of Bayreuth: Richard Wagner, his Work and his World*, was published by Thames & Hudson/OUP in 2012. He was the founder and artistic director of the Hampstead & Highgate Festival (1999–2003), has acted as dramaturgical adviser at international opera houses and is co-director of the ensemble Counterpoise. He lectures widely on Wagner and opera generally, especially for Martin Randall Travel.

Pentti Paavolainen

Nordic Myths in Drama Prior to Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* with a Special Look at *Sigurd der Schlangentöter* by de la Motte Fouqué

Since the 1780s the Nordic Myths gradually became subjects for dramatic writing, not least in the service of constructing cultural and political identities. In many countries the emerging nationalist aspiration took them to the service of nationalism as a state policy. Only scarce attention has been given to Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué's drama *Sigurd the Dragon Slayer* (1808) as the essential background text for the two last operas of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1848–1876) by Richard Wagner. The article aims to repair this partly deliberate oblivion by presenting the striking similarities in the dramaturgical structure of de la Motte Fouqué's *Sigurd* and Wagner's *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* as well as in textual examples. As Wagner had a proven acquaintance with this drama since his adolescence, it is assumed that this experience and *Sigurd's* highly dramatic potential came to his mind within the context of the catastrophe of 1848/49 when he lost his position in Dresden. Whereas de la Motte Fouqué is only too seldom mentioned in Wagner literature, the *Ring* and the whole era of learning and developing the Nordic Myths will be shown to have strong roots in the earlier writer's work.

Pentti Paavolainen is a theatre historian with a specialty in the theatre history of Finland. His PhD thesis defended at the University of Helsinki in 1992 analyzed the theatre repertoires in the mental landscape of the rapid urbanization of the 1960s. Paavolainen held the Chair of Art Research (theatre and dance) in the Theatre Academy in Helsinki (1993–2007) and was responsible for developing the doctoral programs of the Theatre Academy. He worked as a visiting professor and thesis supervisor in Malmö Theatre College, Sweden (2003–2007). In the Nordic countries Paavolainen has been used as an examiner for doctoral dissertations, peer evaluator for professorships and a member of the assessment committee for the Swedish Research Council. He was the president of the Nordic Society for Theatre Research (1995–1999) and member of the IFTR Historiography working group (1996–2008). He has served twice as the president of the Society of Theatre Research in Finland (2005–2006 and 2015–2018).

Paavolainen's publications range from a monograph on the director Jouko Turkka (1987) and electronic teaching materials on European and Finnish Theatre History (University of the Arts, Helsinki), to a range of articles on the issues of Finnish theatre historiography, the most recent one on the legacy and policies of remembering the Finnish Civil War (1918) in theatre (*Nordic Theatre Studies* 31/2, 2019).

His major scholarly contribution is the three-volume biography of Kaarlo Bergbom, the portal figure of nineteenth century theatre and opera in Finland: *Kaarlo Bergbomin elämä ja työ* I–III [The life and work of Kaarlo Bergbom] (2014, 2016, 2018). The project was realized as a senior researcher of the Academy of Finland and as a senior researcher in the project on the Finnish Opera Company (1873–1879), funded by the Academy of Finland, executed in the Sibelius-Academy.

Paavolainen has worked for the series of critical editions of the works by the national author Aleksis Kivi, published by the Finnish Literary Society (SKS). In addition, he has focused his interests in the facilitation of modern scholarship on the cultural history of the city of Vyborg (formerly in Finland, today in Russia) as the chairman of the Viipurin Suomalainen Kirjallisuusseura [Society of Finnish Literature in Vyborg] in 2010–2020.

From his early years he also has practical experience in theatre and opera.

Henrik Rosengren

My Wagner is Not Your Wagner: The Swedish Reception of the Richard Wagner Legacy During the First Half of the Twentieth Century

As in many contexts in which composers have become political symbols and weapons in ideological battles, Richard Wagner and the Wagner legacy have triggered a plethora of disparate interpretations. In Wagner's case his strong political opinions and, not least, his anti-Semitism, mark an important point of departure from most other highly politicized composers.

There is every reason to emphasize Wagner's development as a composer and author, as well as the intense Wagnerism in the 1800s in studying German nationalism and the emergence of the German nation-state. The subject of Wagner and "Germanism" serves as a continuous thread in the reception of the composer and his legacy. In the wake of nationalism, the German musical heritage and those who were perceived as German composers in music history played a central role. Along with Bach, Beethoven, Brahms and Bruckner, Wagner was perceived as an agent of a certain musical Germanness. In the case of Wagner's reception, the myth of music and Germanness was intensified by the activities at Bayreuth and later, by the Nazi reinterpretation of German musical heritage. But Wagner's legacy was also interpreted in terms of internationalism and cosmopolitanism. This interpretation united such disparate cultural figures as Thomas Mann, Friedrich Nietzsche and the Swedish critics and composers Wilhelm Peterson-Berger and Moses Pergament.

During and after World War II, the connection between Wagner and Germanness came under intense discussion during the polarizing debates between supporters and opponents of Wagner. Using selected

cases of Swedish music writers and composers, I will try to illustrate how the Swedish reception of Wagner's legacy, with emphasis on the period from 1930 to 1955, was related to notions of Germanness and anti-Semitism and to the Swedish connection to German culture.

While the post-war treatment of the Nazi experience became a trigger for how Wagner, Germanness and Germany would be interpreted, there was also a reception tradition that stretched over longer periods, such as the image of the universal Wagner versus the nationalist. Notably, the interpretation of the new Bayreuth from 1951 by writers such as Yngve Flyckt, Richard Engländer and Bertil Carlberg brought a sigh of relief. If read between the lines, these writers could be understood as concluding that there was a way out of the clutch of Wagner-Nazism. According to them, German cultural heritage could rise from the ashes of the Nazis and, like a phoenix, reclaim the role of good art's obvious guiding principle.

Henrik Rosengren, Ph.D, is an associate professor at the Department of History at Lund University. His publications include *"Judarnas Wagner". Moses Pergament och den kulturella identifikationens dilemma omkring 1920–1950* (2007); *Med livet som insats. Biografen som humanistisk genre* (edited together with Johan Östling) (2007); *"Min tid ska komma". Gustav Mahler i tvärvetenskaplig belysning* as well as *Kult, konst eller myt: Richard Wagner i tvärvetenskaplig belysning* (both edited together with Ursula Geisler) and *Tysk höst, tysk vår. Fem musikpersonligheter i svensk exil 1930–1950* (2013). An updated and translated version was published in 2016 as *Fünf Musiker im schwedischen Exil. Nazismus, Kalter Krieg, Demokratie*. He was the editor of the historical journal *Scandia* 2014–2017. His research topics include anti-Semitism, biography writing, music history and exile research and his recent research project deals with the musical relation between Sweden and GDR.

Hannu Salmi
**Wagnerism as Participatory Culture:
Nordic Perspectives**

The Wagner audience has often been described as special. Wagner listeners are often depicted as “Wagnerians” – fans or devotees who are different, for example, from those who listen to Johann Sebastian Bach or Felix Mendelssohn. This interpretation seems to insinuate that Wagner is a cult figure; hence, his audience is especially active. The main intention of this essay is to explore the ways Wagner’s audiences in the past, particularly in the Baltic Sea region, participated in the process of music-making and/or in what ways they participated in creating music culture outside concert halls and opera houses. This exploration has been inspired by recent studies of social media, especially the works of the media theorist Henry Jenkins. In his *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006) and *Fans, Bloggers and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture* (2006), Jenkins has pointed out the paradigmatic change to understanding an audience as interactive in its spectatorship. Instead of being passive recipients, music consumers are able to “archive, annotate, appropriate and recirculate media content”. It is obvious, of course, that this present-day understanding cannot be projected onto the past. Still, there are grounds for arguing that, in the nineteenth century, the media world was in tremendous flux, which also meant that audiences could have a more active role than before. The essay analyses Wagnerism as a participatory culture by focusing on such areas as societal activities and tourist visits to Bayreuth.

Hannu Salmi is Professor of Cultural History and Academy Professor (2017–2021) at the University of Turku. He has written extensively on nineteenth- and twentieth-century history, including *Wagner and Wagnerism in Nineteenth-Century Sweden, Finland, and the Baltic Provinces: Reception, Enthusiasm, Cult* (University of Rochester Press, 2005) and *Nineteenth-Century Europe: A Cultural History* (Polity, 2008; Polish translation 2010). He is also the editor of *Armas Järnefelt, kahden*

maan mestari (Finnish Literature Society, 2009; Swedish translation 2015) and *Routledge Companion to Cultural History in the Western World* (with Alessandro Arcangeli and Jörg Rogge, 2020).

Miriam Selén Gerson

**Deeds of Music Made Visible: Acting and
Costuming in Wagner's Stage Direction**

A musical-dramatic performance represents an idea projected into space. It is inevitably the physical embodiment of a specific taste or aesthetic. That is a difficult condition for any art form to bear for a long time: in fifty years, our tastes will have changed significantly. Music, on the other hand, allows its listeners a great deal of interpretative freedom and listeners' receptions can be extremely varied. Musical deeds made visible are too physical to have that flexibility. Drama positions itself somewhere between music and staging. But the three aspects of stage representation in Wagner's work as a director (gesture, mimesis and costume) to be discussed in this article are arts that present themselves physically to the onlooker and demand to be taken at face value. For just that reason, looking at stage arts of another period and aesthetics other than ours can be enlightening: they may well tell us much more about the period than the music, which speaks so well across time and is so adaptable. With the help of these "physical arts", we can consider the music afresh and perhaps understand it in its context. This makes operatic performance history something more than "the history of opera performances".

Miriam Selén Gerson is currently a PhD student in Hebrew Bible at the Faculty of Theology, University of Uppsala, in Sweden. She got her BA in Music at the University of Oxford in 2012 and spent the following years working with opera and theatre as a freelance stage director, assistant stage director and writer in Oxford, Copenhagen, Venice and her hometown, Stockholm. She has worked at the Drottningholm

Theatre, the Nordic Network for Early Opera and La Fenice in Venice, among other places. In 2015, she wrote and directed her own play *Codex Paradisi* in the medieval church of Täby in Stockholm. In 2016, she moved back to Sweden and pursued an old interest at the University of Uppsala: religious studies.

Relating to her doctoral studies, Selén Gerson has taught at Paideia, The European Institute for Jewish Studies and written reviews for *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalstidskrift*. She is also active in the field of inter-religious relations. Among other things she took part in arranging an international conference on interreligious dialogue at the University of Lund in December 2016 and has taught at the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel. The focus of her PhD research is early Rabbinic interpretations of the Biblical sacrificial cult.

Riikka Siltanen

Richard Faltin and Wagner's Music in Finland

In the second half of the nineteenth century Finland got its foreign musical influences above all from Germany. There were few important German-born musicians contributing to the Finnish musical life, of which composer-organist Richard Faltin (1835–1918) was one of the most influential.

Faltin got to know the turmoil around Richard Wagner's musical and philosophical thinking already in the early 1850s, when he was studying at the Leipzig Conservatory. Faltin was always a supporter of "the music of the future" and became, therefore, the first Wagner ambassador in Finland, first in Vyborg from 1856–1869, and then in Helsinki, from 1869–1918. Faltin, for example, organized concerts with Wagner repertoire, played himself and conducted Wagner's music in the concerts. He also acted as the Finnish representative of the associations *Bayreuther Patronat-Verein* and *Allgemeiner Richard Wagner-Verein* from the middle of the 1870s up to 1914 and visited the Bayreuth

Festival many times. Faltin met Wagner personally twice, in *Tonkünstler-Versammlung* in Weimar in 1861 and at the first Bayreuth Festival in 1876.

Riikka Siltanen acquired a PhD in musicology from the University of Helsinki in 2020. The title of her doctoral dissertation was “*För gedigen music*” – *Richard Faltin Suomen musiikkielämän rakentajana* [“For solid music” – Richard Faltin as developer of the Finnish music life] and her contribution in this volume is one of the four articles of her PhD thesis. Richard Faltin is Riikka Siltanen’s ancestor in the direct line of descent. Riikka Siltanen also has a M.Div. and M.Mus. and works as a classical voice teacher.

Eero Tarasti

**Wagner Belongs to All: Reflections on His Body,
Person, Profession and Values**

Richard Wagner is a phenomenon of European culture which constitutes an almost overwhelming challenge to any scholar. However, in order to study his life and work, one needs a theory unifying its various aspects – but not too much of one, since no single idea would be sufficient in his case. In my existential semiotic theory, I have arrived at the “Z model” which consists of four modes of being, stemming from Hegel’s logics but modified by the categories of *Moi/Soi* of French philosophy as well as by the semiotic square of the Paris school. The four instances may be called: M1: body; M2: person (identity); S2: profession (social practice) and S1: values (norms).

Moreover, we may apply these cases to their representations in musical works. Then we would speak of “Klang” (M1), sound or kinetic energy; musical theme as “actors” (M2); musical styles and forms including genres, types, rhetorics, narrativity (S2); and musico-aesthetic ideas (S1). With this methodology we can scrutinize both “authentic” sources on Wagner’s life and impact, and the musical facts, i.e. his works as

such. We know that every Wagner opera has a different “sound” (M1). Most of them are based on particular leitmotif techniques (M2). There is a secret of form in his works (S2), and their aesthetic ideas are always different from those in his writings (S1).

Eero Tarasti was professor of musicology at the University of Helsinki (chair) 1984–2016. He has been director of the International Semiotics Intitute at Imatra, Finland since 1988, president of the IASS/AIS (International Association for Semiotic Studies) since 2004, founder and president of the Semiotic Society of Finland since 1979, as well as of the Music Society of the University of Helsinki since 1989. He studied music at the Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, and then in Vienna, Paris, Rio de Janeiro and Bloomington. He got his PhD from the University of Helsinki (1978) after studies in Paris with Claude Lévi-Strauss and A.J. Greimas. He is one of the founders and the director of the international research group Musical Signification since 1984. Tarasti has become Honorary Doctor at Estonian Music Academy, New Bulgarian University (Sofia), Indiana University (Bloomington), University of Aix-Marseille (Aix-en-Provence), Gheorghe Dima Music Academy (Cluj-Napoca). He is also Honorary Fellow of Victoria College at University of Toronto and is a recipient of the White Rose Order (Finland), Palmes Académique (France) and Ordem Rio Branco (Brazil).

Tarasti has published over 400 articles and edited tens of anthologies on musicology and semiotics. He is the chair of publishing series *Acta Semiotica Fennica*. He has published about 30 monographs, including: *Myth and Music* (1979, also in French), *A Theory of Musical Semiotics* (1994, also in French), *Heitor Villa-Lobos* (1996), *Existential Semiotics* (2000), *Signs of Music* (2003, also in French and Italian), *Fondements de la sémiotique existentielle* (2009), *Fondamenti di semiotica esistenziale* (2010), *Semiotics of Classical Music* (2012), *Music and Humanism* (in Finnish, 2013), *Sein und Schein: Explorations in Existential Semiotics* (2015). He has also published novels, including *Le secret du professeur Amfortas: roman* (2002) and *Le retour à la Villa Nevski: roman* (2014). His scholarly articles and monographs, as well as his fictional works, have been published in several translations.

Joakim Tillman

**The Introduction of Richard Wagner's Music
Dramas in Stockholm: The Critical Reception
from *Das Rheingold* (1901) to *Parsifal* (1917)**

This article examines the reception of the first Swedish stagings of *Das Rheingold* (1901), *Siegfried* (1905), *Götterdämmerung* (1907, which was also the year of the first complete *Ring* cycle at the Royal Opera), *Tristan und Isolde* (1909) and *Parsifal* (1917). In contrast to the Swedish premieres of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1887) and *Die Walküre* (1895) (described in Tillman 2012) the music dramas premiered after 1900 did not garner any substantial negative opinions. In the first decade of the twentieth century a new generation of music critics succeeded the old and furious feuds between Wagnerians and anti-Wagnerians were considered to be a thing of the past. Wagner's works were no longer controversial, but considered to be masterpieces and classics. The article focuses on the most prominent and frequently discussed topics in the reviews: the works, the stagings, cuts and longueurs, language confusion and translations, the performers and the audiences' reactions.

The music dramas introduced after 1900 were no longer compared unfavourably with established favourites in the repertoire, but judged in relation to the Wagner works already introduced at the Royal Opera. The stagings of *Das Rheingold* (directed by Johannes Elmlblad) and *Parsifal* (directed by Harald André) were the most successful, and were compared favourably with the productions in Bayreuth. The stagings of *Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung* and *Tristan und Isolde* were less well received. However, the reactions to Peterson-Berger's direction of *Tristan und Isolde* were influenced by the enmity caused by his ruthlessness as a critic. The conductors Richard Henneberg (*Das Rheingold*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*) and Armas Järnefelt (*Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal*) were unanimously praised and considered most responsible for the success of the performances. Among the singers, the foreign guests, Otto Briesemeister (Loge) and Modest Menzinsky (Siegfried), were singled out for their expressive singing, clear diction and convincing acting and appearance. The Swedish singers were generally considered

uneven and indistinct pronunciation was a recurrent complaint in the reviews. All the performances were sung in Swedish, but Briesemeister and Menzinsky sang their roles in German. Several critics complained that this resulted in a language confusion that detracted from the unity of the works. Furthermore, the Swedish *Ring* and *Parsifal* translations by Sigröd Elmlad were criticised for unnatural word order, unnecessary Germanisms and incomprehensible, non-Swedish expressions. In contrast, the non-literal translation of *Tristan und Isolde* by Peterson-Berger, sung in his staging of the work, was unanimously appreciated, even by his enemies who slated the production. In the reviews of *Die Meistersinger* in 1887 and *Die Walküre* in 1895, most critics were of the opinion that given the longueurs in Wagner's works, cuts were beneficial, and some thought they could have been even more extensive. *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* were performed without cuts, and critics then defended this practice. When Peterson-Berger made numerous cuts, both big and small, in his staging of *Tristan und Isolde*, almost all critics turned against this "mutilation" and claimed that it was wrong to make cuts in Wagner's work, especially in *Tristan*.

Joakim Tillman is professor of musicology at Stockholm University, where he teaches courses in music analysis, film music, game music and opera. He has published in numerous scholarly journals and volumes, including "Topoi and Intertextuality: Narrative Function in Hans Zimmer's and Lisa Gerrard's Music to *Gladiator*" in *Music in Epic Film: Listening to Spectacle* (2017). His editorial work includes, among many, *Contemporary Film Music: Investigating Cinema Narratives and Composition* (2017; with Lindsay Coleman). Currently, he is completing a book about Wagnerian influences in Swedish late romantic opera. In addition, his present research interests include the film music of Elliot Goldenthal, James Horner and Hans Zimmer.

Ulrich Wilker

**In the Lab with Wagner: Jean Sibelius's
Jungfrun i tornet (JS 101) as Experiment**

Jean Sibelius's only completed opera, *Jungfrun i tornet* (*efter en finsk folkballad*), composed in 1896, is a seldom performed and rarely appreciated work. Some say that the libretto by Rafael Hertzberg is primarily to blame, but another reason may lie in the many contradictions of the composition as a whole. Two years earlier, after having heard Wagner's *Parsifal*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Siegfried*, *Die Walküre*, *Götterdämmerung* and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in Bayreuth and Munich, Sibelius confessed, "I was awfully excited about *Meistersinger*. But, oddly enough, I am no longer a Wagnerite".

Indeed, at the first hearing *Jungfrun i tornet* seems to owe much to Pietro Mascagni's veristic one-act opera *Cavalleria rusticana*, which Sibelius praised enthusiastically. On the other hand, the title and even the subject have little in common with Italian *verismo*. Rather, they point back to national romanticism as pursued in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* or *Die Meistersinger*. The music bears a resemblance to Wagner's as well: although comprised of arias, duets and so on, *Jungfrun i tornet* is through-composed. Also, the maiden's *preghiera* is not an Italian prayer, but a decidedly Wagnerian one. Veijo Murtomäki has shown that Sibelius even quoted some leitmotifs from *Tristan* and *Parsifal*.

In my article I re-evaluate the enduring impact of Wagner's music on Sibelius after the latter's declaration, "I am no longer a Wagnerite", by way of the one-act opera *Jungfrun i tornet*. One-act operas of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been described as experimental works that explored new musical forms and language. Theatrolgist Hans-Peter Bayerdörfer called one-act operas "das theatrale Experiment par excellence". With regard to its experimentation, Sibelius's *Jungfrun i tornet* is a typical turn-of-the-century one-act opera, which combines Wagnerian characteristics with other European traditions and inventions and whose composer was in search of a distinctly Finnish national romantic musical language. Allegorically telling the story of Finland's struggle for independence, Sibelius's opera

can be understood as being about the search for musical independence and identity, similar to Wagner's artist-operas *Tannhäuser* and *Die Meistersinger*.

Ulrich Wilker is a postdoctoral researcher at Goethe University's Institute of Musicology in Frankfurt a.M. He studied Musicology, German Literature and Film Studies at Cologne University and graduated with a Master's thesis on dodecaphony and form in Arnold Schönberg's Violin Concerto. He was granted a doctoral scholarship by Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes and received his PhD from Cologne University with a thesis on the one-act opera *Der Zwerg* by Alexander Zemlinsky. From 2011 until 2016 he worked as a postdoctoral research assistant at the Haydn Institute in Cologne where he co-edited a volume of symphonies and worked on the critical report to the 1968 edition of the last three London Symphonies (published in 2016). He has taught as a visiting scholar at Cologne University, the Cologne Hochschule für Musik und Tanz and the Berlin University of the Arts. In 2016, he began teaching music history at Goethe University. His current research explores representations of male bonding in instrumental music and stage works of the Western classical repertoire. His main areas of research are the Second Viennese School, Jean Sibelius, Joseph Haydn (with a focus on edition) and gender in Western classical music. Forthcoming publications include a conference proceedings article about Sibelius's string quartet *Voces intimae* and the various meanings of its title, as well as a reading of Maurice Ravel's *L'Heure espagnole* as a musical embodiment of what Judith Butler has termed "heterosexual comedy". He is a member of the Sibelius Society of Finland.

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This volume presents Wagner’s impact on music performers, composers, writers and stage directors in the European North from different angles and more broadly considers his championing of Nordic mythology beyond well-known sources. The essays collected herein focus on two main geographic areas – Sweden and Finland – but include examples from other Northern countries as well. Wagner’s relationship with the North, albeit mediated through art and literature rather than his own experiences, has been dealt with extensively in Wagner research. This does not apply when looking in the opposite direction. How did the cultural life in the North respond to Wagner’s works? The essays in this book describe, document and interpret the North’s relationship with Wagner: what it was like in the beginning, how it has developed and distinguished itself from the experience of Wagner in other parts of the world and how the introduction and impact of Wagner’s works have differed within the European North.



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