



# The Wagner Society of Ireland

Founded 2002

President: Dr. Alexander Anissimov, Conductor



## Newsletter

January 2012

### CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Dear Member,

First, on behalf of the Committee, let me wish you a very Happy New Year.

In this newsletter there are a number of important matters discussed, gathered into two separate issues.

The **first issue** regards developments regarding the **schedule of talks and events** we have organised up to the summer. There are a number of changes.

First, the talk by Chris McQuaid, which was scheduled for March, has been postponed – as we are now having the Study Days on *Tristan und Isolde* at the end of March. Instead, Chris's talk will be in September, where it will appropriately be the Anniversary Lecture, marking 10 years of the Society.

Secondly, it has been decided to hold the AGM immediately before the talk by John Allen in February. As a result there will be an earlier start, with the AGM at 7pm and John's lecture following at 8pm.

Our first talk this year will be given by Paul McNamara, who will tell us about singing Wagner and his career. This should be a very interesting evening especially for those of us going to hear him sing Tristan in Würzburg. **Please note that the talk is not on a Thursday as usual but is on Tuesday 24th January** to coordinate with his rehearsal schedule for the NCH on Friday where he is singing Rimsky-Korsakov and Mozart with the NSO.

Our study of *Tristan und Isolde* will take place over two days, starting on Saturday 31st March and ending around 4pm on Sunday 1st April. Derek Watson will again lead us through the work and, given the complexity of this opera, we felt the extra time was needed. On this occasion we are going to hold the study days in the United Arts Club and not the Herbert Park Hotel.

The **second issue** in this newsletter is the very disappointing news from **Bayreuth** that we will not be receiving tickets for this year's Festival, or indeed in future years. I was horrified to receive the letter informing us of this decision, which went so against the spirit of Wagner and the Festival he planned. I was angry that even though the Festival knew since October that they would not be allocating tickets to us, they did not inform us, or other Societies, until

after I made an enquiry in December. I am very disappointed for those members who were drawn in this year's Ballot, especially those who have not been to Bayreuth before. At least we have a Society which is not there solely for access to Bayreuth tickets but has an interesting schedule of events of our own and indeed our own trips to hear Wagner's works. An outline of events to date follows later in this newsletter. We will keep members informed of significant developments over time.

Lastly, our trip to Würzburg is planned and I outline details below. A good number of members have already expressed their interest but we still can accommodate more members (or their friends), if you are interested in travelling with us.

We look forward to seeing you at our events this year, and if you are a new member please make yourself known to other members, and particularly Committee members.

Kind regards  
Anthony Linehan

## SOCIETY PROGRAMME OF EVENTS – 2012

The Committee has been delighted to see that attendance of our wide-ranging programme of lectures has continued to thrive over the past months. While we issue invitations to possible speakers, we also welcome suggestions from members who would like to give a talk on an aspect of Wagner that they find particularly interesting.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Time</u>
<b>January 24</b> <b>Tuesday</b>	Talk by Paul McNamara: 'Singing Wagner'	United Arts Club 3, Upper Fitzwilliam Street Dublin 2	8.00 p.m.
<b>February 23</b> <b>Thursday</b>	Wagner Society of Ireland AGM Followed by Talk by John Allen: 'The Wagner Legacy - German Opera in the Wake of the Master'	United Arts Club 3, Upper Fitzwilliam Street Dublin 2	7.00 p.m. 8.00 p.m.
<b>March 31<sup>st</sup> /April</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup></b> <b>Sat – Sun</b>	<i>Tristan und Isolde</i> Study-Days with Derek Watson	United Arts Club 3, Upper Fitzwilliam Street Dublin 2	Exact schedule to be confirmed.
<b>April 14 – 16/17</b> <b>Sat – Mon/Tues</b>	Trip to Germany, including <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> with Paul McNamara as Tristan	Würzburg and Nürnberg	-
<b>May 17– 20</b> <b>Thurs – Sun</b>	International Richard Wagner Congress	Prague	-
<b>May 24</b> <b>Thursday</b>	Talk by Ian Fox: 'Irish Visitors to Bayreuth'	United Arts Club 3, Upper Fitzwilliam Street Dublin 2	8.00 p.m.

## Trip to Würzburg and Nürnberg

As outlined in our last newsletter, we are planning a trip to Würzburg and Nürnberg in April. The tickets and hotels are provisionally reserved, and we now just need to finalise numbers. Members are of course free to find their own hotels, if they prefer. Flights and train transport should be organised by members themselves, but suggested travel arrangements are outlined below.

### Saturday 14th April :

- Aer Lingus flight EI650 to Frankfurt at 7 am arriving in Frankfurt at 10.05
- Train to Würzburg from the airport at 11.37 - Takes 1 hour 30 min (there are trains every 30 minutes, so if you are not as cautious as me, you could easily try and make one earlier). The site for booking train journeys in English is: <http://www.bahn.com/i/view/GBR/en/index.shtml>. The cost at present is €29. It is worth booking well in advance, as prices increase significantly as a date draws nearer.

Hotel in Würzburg: the best hotel in Würzburg, I am informed, is the Best Western Hotel Rebstock <http://www.rebstock.com>. We have rooms reserved in the hotel for the nights of the 14th and 15th April. The rate for the room is €95 for a single room and €152 for a double/twin room per night. Breakfast is €12 per person.

We have no performance booked for the evening of the 14th but will arrange a restaurant if members wish to dine together.

**Sunday 15th April :** 15.00 Performance of *Tristan und Isolde* with Paul McNamara as Tristan. The tickets are in rows 4-8 and 1st Category. The cost of the ticket will be approx. €40 (we will get a discount depending on the number of tickets).

**Monday 16th April:** Travel to Nürnberg for one or two nights. The train from Würzburg to Nürnberg is not available for booking yet ( 92 days in advance) but the trains are frequent and the journey takes approx. 50min

Hotel in Nürnberg: We have made reservations with the Maritim Hotel <http://www.maritim.com/en/hotels/germany/hotel-nuernberg> which is just beside the railway station and is very convenient. As a number of members have expressed an interest in staying on a second night I have asked for rooms for both the 16th and the 17th. The rate increases significantly for the 17th as there is a fair on in Nürnberg. The following are the rates including breakfast:

Monday 16th - Room rate single €119, double €148

Tuesday 17th - Room rate single €164, double €193

Monday evening 16<sup>th</sup>, Nürnberg Opera: *Der Fliegende Holländer* at 20.00. Ticket cost €44.30 for 1st category ticket

**Tuesday 17th April :** If staying on in Nürnberg, the opera is *Elektra* at 20.00. Ticket cost as above.

If leaving for home:

- Return to Frankfurt is by direct train ( approx 2 hours and 20 min).
- The evening Aer Lingus flight to Dublin is at 20.20, thus allowing considerable time to enjoy Nürnberg

Anthony Linehan, Chairman

## Reports, Information, Reviews....

### Bayreuth Ticket D eb acle

A highlight of our Society's calendar of events is the annual Bayreuth Ballot. Each year, the Society, along with other Wagner Societies worldwide, receives a number of tickets to the Bayreuth Festival, allowing some lucky winning members to bypass the general requirement to apply annually for a decade or more, before acquiring tickets. We never assume that our ticket allocation will match those of previous years, and a degree of tension builds for the Committee in the lead-up to the Ballot, as we wait to hear confirmation of our exact allocation for the current year. Although it has on occasion been necessary for the Chairman to contact Bayreuth in order to extract the information in time for the Ballot, things have always gone well. We held our breath a little more than usual this time, having heard rumours circulating during last summer about possible changes to Societies' ticket allocation coming down the tracks. It was for this reason that we accompanied the Bayreuth Ballot Form with a caveat last November. In December, on hearing nothing, our Chairman contacted Bayreuth just before we held the Ballot, to be given some rather incomprehensible information about a new computer system which would delay confirmation about ticket allocation to Societies for a further period. We decided that the best thing was to go ahead and hold the Ballot and keep a careful record of the results pending further clarification of the situation.

To our amazement, on 19<sup>th</sup> December, a letter arrived for our Chairman (who was abroad at the time) from the Joint Managing Directors of the Festival, Ms Katharina Wagner and Ms Eva Wagner-Pasquier, informing him as follows:

*Dear Sir or Madam,*

*We would like to inform you of certain important changes concerning the allocation of tickets to the Bayreuth Festival.*

*The modifications to ticket allocation procedure have been made following investigations conducted by the Bavarian General Accounting Office and the German Federal Court of Auditors, which are responsible for the Bayreuth Festival. The reports by both institutions explicitly criticised certain measures in ticket allocation, and proposed clear conditions to bring about tangible and lasting changes. With the aim, therefore, of introducing greater fairness in the allocation of tickets and excluding as far as possible the preferential treatment of certain groups or individuals, as well as to improve transparency, the supervisory committees of the Bayreuth Festival - the Supervisory Board and the Shareholders' Meeting - decided on fundamental and binding changes on 18 Oct. 2011.*

*As a result of these resolutions it is unfortunately no longer possible for us to accord special interest groups or tour operators any privileges in the allocation of tickets. This means that you will not be sent an order form and any orders made via the Internet will not be processed. The members of your group or your customers, as the case may be, are of course still free to order tickets individually.*

*Thank you for the interest you have shown over the years and for the excellent working relationship.*

*Signed by*

*Eva Wagner-Pasquier and Katharina Wagner*

This letter, also received by other societies, caused considerable shock. On the 21st December, Prof Eva M artson, President of the Richard Wagner Verband International, wrote a letter of protest on behalf of all societies. An English translation of the letter which was

provided to us is attached along with this newsletter. With Christmas nearly upon us, we circulated this unwelcome information to members who have email addresses.

On the 4th January, the North American Wagner societies sent their own joint letter of protest to Bayreuth, which is also attached to this newsletter. At present we are contemplating a letter jointly with the UK societies along similar lines. We continue to keep the results of our ballot in case we receive some tickets in due course, but we do not hold out much hope. At this stage, apart from the question of whether there is any prospect of tickets being issued to us for 2012, the time for booking suitable accommodation in Bayreuth for the Festival period is fast running out.

We hope that there may be more hope of success for some appropriate and fair arrangement to be negotiated for future years and will keep members informed of developments.

### Derek Watson Seminar on The Ring in Scotland July 2012

Those members who participate in the Study Days we hold, led by Derek Watson, will know that they are events to be savored. Our next Study Days will focus on *Tristan und Isolde*, and a detailed schedule will be circulated closer to the date. Our master plan is to accomplish a review of Wagner's complete oeuvre over coming seasons. However, some members may be enticed by the prospect of an intensive Study Session being led by Derek closer to his own home, in July of this year. In fact, we already know of three members who intend to travel for the event. In case any other members would like to participate, we enclose the following information:

**Wagner Society of Scotland**

Der Ring des Nibelungen

A residential Summer School at  
Carberry Tower, near Edinburgh

15-22 July 2012  
For information email  
[derek@lintonbooks.plus.com](mailto:derek@lintonbooks.plus.com)

If you would like to go to this and to make contact with other members intending to travel, just let us know, and we will put you in touch with each other.

### Membership Subscriptions 2012

Reminders that subscriptions are due have just issued, and members should already be receiving these in the post. As our Treasurer, Mary Spollen, will be abroad for the next while, subscriptions need to be returned to Jarlath Jennings. Jarlath has kindly agreed to be co-opted onto the Committee, in order to act as deputy Treasurer while Mary is travelling. He will stand for election at the AGM, along with all the members of the Committee.

## Wagner Society Website

We would remind members to keep an eye on the [www.wagnersociety.ie](http://www.wagnersociety.ie) website. Michael Marr keeps it as up-to-date as possible, and fresh information often appears there in advance of circulation in the newsletter or by special communication.

We try to make the website as interesting and relevant as we can, Michael published an informative guide in the Newsletter of September 2011. If you have any suggestions for improvements, alterations or additions to the website, please do contact him at [michael@wagnersociety.ie](mailto:michael@wagnersociety.ie) and he'll do his best to incorporate them

## NEWSLETTER

### *Circulation and Interim Updates*

The Newsletter is circulated by email unless members do not have an email address, in which case it is sent by ordinary post. Updates or reminders are also sent by email from time to time.

### *Contributions*

The Committee welcomes contributions members themselves might like to send us, whether brief reports on performances or recordings of Wagner's works, or thoughts on aspects of his work that they would like to share with other members of the Society. Contributions can be sent by email to: [info@wagnersociety.ie](mailto:info@wagnersociety.ie)

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