

# *The Raven*

Newsletter of

*The Richard Wagner Society of the Upper Midwest*

Volume VII Numbers 3/4

Fall/Winter 2011



*In this Issue ...*

*Thirteenth Annual Founders Day Dinner Review*

*Daniel Freeman's Siegfried Lecture*

*Betrayal in Bayreuth: An Era Ends*

*Membership Renewal*

*Video Night News*

## 2011 FOUNDERS DAY GALA



by David W. Cline, MD, President

The thirteenth annual Founders Day meeting of the Richard Wagner Society of the Upper Midwest was held from 5 to 9 PM, Saturday, September 10, 2011, at the Germanic American Institute, 301 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota, and was attended by 49 members and guests.

I invited participants to share brief episodes of what fascinated them about Richard Wagner's music dramas from 5 to 5:30. My sister, Lyda Lea Lanier, reported on a practical matter – introducing high school students to opera. She spoke with a music teacher at the Norwalk Ontario Wilton High School in rural Wisconsin who found three eager students to attend a high-definition Metropolitan Opera presentation at a theater in La Crosse, Wisconsin, at reduced rates. All three were enthusiastic attendees, opening the door for other high school students to attend future programs.

I spoke about Wagner's efforts to reform German society and society in general. Peter Allen, in his 4-CD cycle *Talking About The Ring*, notes, "There is probably no more controversial figure in all of art than Richard Wagner." So said Leo Tolstoy, renouncing Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* as "counterfeit art." Romer Rouleau, noted Nobel Prize winner, said, "Tolstoy was one of the two great suns of the universe. The other was Richard Wagner." He said, "I would die for Mozart, but for Wagner I would kill!" Peter Allen also described Richard Wagner as probably the most formidable talent in the entire history of art, a comment made by Thomas Mann. He is not only the most influential figure in all of art, but one of the most interesting. If ever there was a bundle of contradictions, it was Richard Wagner. He began the *Ring* with a clear philosophy of optimism and ended it with ambiguous fatalism. He is famous for writing that music should serve drama, and from writing music that dominates drama. He fulminated against grandiosity of grand opera, yet he exploited grandiosity to the fullest. In many ways, his thinking was admirable, and in many ways it was ridiculous.

## Dinner

(Continued from page 2)

He wrote a long polemic calling for reform of the Royal Opera. A small example of the things he wanted to reform was the physical layout of the opera. It is startling to know that in those days, not only in Dresden, not all the orchestra players could see the conductor, and the music sounded like it. These reforms were blocked by incompetent players and incompetent management. To Kappelmeister Wagner in Dresden in 1848, it was grueling to learn that his reforms were blocked by an aristocratic establishment. Not only that, but by 1848, he had composed *Lohengrin*, and that same management was blocking the production partly because they felt him to be a threat. In his frustration, Wagner saw but one hope: Not just to reform the Royal Opera but to reform society. At that time, there was an interest in developing a constitutional monarchy, and Wagner wanted the king to rid himself of the corrupt nobility, the very group that was frustrating Wagner. In 1848 & 1849, there was an armed uprising and Wagner was active in it. It was put down by force, and Wagner fled with the help of his friend Franz Liszt. The next year, 1850, Liszt conducted the premiere of *Lohengrin* in Weimar, but Wagner was not present. He had fled to Switzerland to avoid arrest in any German state. Yet he did not despair in his reformation efforts.

He conceived of a mighty work that consisted of three individual opera dramas and a prologue, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. But how to begin? He needed music that would introduce not just a big work but a work, as he said in a letter to Franz Liszt, that would include the beginning and end of the world, a work about the triumph of love over power, of natural man over corrupt society. Like illustrious German writers such as Goethe and Schiller, he wanted to establish the theater as the profoundly significant institution he felt it had been for the ancient Greeks. Through this theater, he wanted to bring about the moral regeneration of Germany, a goal that would be shared by the young King Ludwig of Bavaria, without whom the *Ring* might never have been realized.

But how to begin? The creative breakthrough was described by Wagner himself. He felt a need to refresh himself, and in the Italian town of La Spezia after having overindulged he found himself feverish and exhausted from dysentery. He lay down to take a nap and found himself feeling that water was rushing over his head, hearing a low E<sup>b</sup> with increasing intensity. He awoke in a frenetic state as the water

(Continued on page 12)

## Daniel Freeman Discusses Siegfried

Many of us, members and friends, had turned out for Daniel Freeman's presentation on Siegfried. Daniel did not disappoint; he delivered his thoughtful lecture with his usual flair to the delight of all. We are very fortunate, indeed, to have Daniel among us. Below is his synopsis of his lecture. Again, thank you so much, Daniel!  
Renate Sharp.



Wagner's Siegfried  
by Daniel Freeman

It is often impossible for Wagner lovers to single out a clear favorite among the four operas from the cycle *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, but there certainly are many enthusiasts who express a particular fondness for Siegfried. As with all the *Ring* operas, it is only to be expected that it would contain music that is both highly distinctive and ravishingly beautiful, but it also has a welcome feature that is very unusual both for a Wagnerian opera and for nineteenth-century opera as a whole: a happy ending joined to serious dramatic action. Regardless of national origins, it is ordinary for nineteenth-century European operas with serious action written after about 1830 to feature an amorous couple whose relationship will end in tragedy (usually including the death of one or both partners). The *Ring* cycle as a whole of course conforms to this convention perfectly with its two love stories that end with the death of everyone involved (Siegmund/Sieglinde and Siegfried/Brünnhilde). Siegfried, however, concludes with a temporary moment of happiness for the lovers Siegfried and Brünnhilde that is only ruined when they awaken from their one rapturous evening together in the next opera of the series, *Götterdämmerung*. Wagner's original scenic conception intensifies

*(Continued on page 5)*

## **Siegfried**

*(Continued from page 4)*

the sense of joy and optimism experienced by Siegfried and Brünnhilde at the end by progressing from dark (the cave of the dwarf Mime), to partial light filtered through foliage in the forest where the dragon Fafner lives, to the glorious sunlight on the top of the mountain where Siegfried awakens Brünnhilde from her long sleep to claim as his own.

Another aspect of temporary optimism is fostered by the passing of the Ring forged by the dwarf Alberich from the gold he stole from the Rhinemaidens into the hands of a morally incorruptible individual: the hero Siegfried. He is able to kill the dragon Fafner who has hoarded it away after re-forging the enchanted sword Nothung from pieces left by his dead father and claim it for himself. In this case also, events that unfold in the opera *Götterdämmerung* destroy any sense of hope at seeing the Ring controlled at last by a character not motivated by greed and lust for power.

The music for Siegfried utilizes many of the recurring motives with symbolic meaning (“Leitmotives”) that are a hallmark of Wagnerian style, but they are not as prominent as in the other three Ring operas—and similarly, the political and social messages that are easy to discern in the other Ring operas are played down significantly in favor of a concentration on the central emotions associated with the love story of Siegfried and Brünnhilde. The music is memorable to most listeners for highly individualistic evocations such as the forging music in the first act, the magic horn music and songs of the Forest Bird in the second act, and the extraordinary love duet that concludes the third act, which includes musical ideas that became the basis for Wagner’s brilliant symphonic composition “The Siegfried Idyll.” Typical of Wagner, compositional procedures that he ordinarily condemned are introduced occasionally as a source of musical and dramatic variety. Examples would be the inclusion of vocal “set pieces” with clear starts and endings and the hackneyed operatic tradition of having lovers sing simultaneously in defiance of the ordinary capabilities of human conversation. The love duet at the end of the third act is certainly impressed with Wagner’s own distinctive musical style, but in having Siegfried and Brünnhilde express their feelings simultaneously (not alternately) he could have been cultivating a more conventional technique for nineteenth-century opera. A good example of a true vocal “set piece”

*(Continued on page 9)*

# Betrayal in Bayreuth

## An Era Ends

*By B. Kevin Edgar*

A decision made at a meeting of the Festival's Supervisory Board on 18 October, 2011 leaves all Wagner Societies out in the cold. Furthermore, in a public relations move reminiscent of der Meister himself, the Wagner sisters did not bother to inform us for almost two months, until a letter arrived the day after Christmas.

In many ways, this change was not a surprise. Concern has been expressed within Germany for some time over the ticket allocation procedures. Apparently, over half of the available seats are pre-allocated to various groups: labor unions, politicians, the Friends of Bayreuth, corporate sponsors, politicians, and the Wagner Societies, among others. With massive public subsidies for the Festival, pressure was mounting. The Sisters admit this in their letter announcing the change: "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 criticized certain measures in ticket allocation and proposed clear conditions to bring about tangible and lasting changes in order to introduce greater fairness in the allocation of tickets and excluding as far as possible the preferential treatment of certain groups or individuals and to improve transparency."

We are exploring other options for obtaining tickets, and those who requested tickets for 2012 have been informed. We have also joined with the other North American Wagner Societies in a protest to the Administrative Board of the Bayreuther Festspiele, asking them to reconsider. We will keep you informed for any developments. Meanwhile, what can you do? If you wish to physically attend the festival your only options at the moment seem to be to join the Friends of Bayreuth, which is expensive, at

[www.freunde-bayreuth.org/](http://www.freunde-bayreuth.org/)

or join the queue for tickets at the Bayreuth ticket office at

[www.bayreuther-festspiele.de/english/tickets/\\_service/tickets/how\\_to\\_order/](http://www.bayreuther-festspiele.de/english/tickets/_service/tickets/how_to_order/)

*(Continued on page 7)*

## **Betrayal**

*(Continued from page 6)*

It is too late for next year, but at least you will be in the queue. If you don't really feel the need to suffer the discomforts of the Festspielhaus, there are two options. The Festival webcasts one opera each year live over the internet. The second option is DvD. It appears that the Sisters intend to record most, if not all, productions on DvD. Tankred Dorst's *Ring* and Katharina's bobble-head *Meistersinger* are already out. The rat *Lohengrin* is due out this summer. The poison gas factory *Tannhäuser* has been recorded. Perhaps the best response is to go somewhere else. Wagner is performed in many places now, and performed well. That latter cannot always be said of the productions currently oozing across the Bayreuth stage.

The full text of the letter follows:

22. Dezember 2011

Allocation of tickets to the Bayreuth Festival

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 of 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.

Yours faithfully,

/s/ Eva Wagner-Pasquier

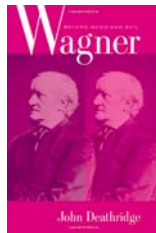
/s/ Katharina Wagner

## BOOK CLUB

By David Bergerson

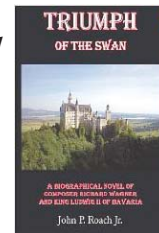
We are reviving our Book Club once again, with myself as host. I propose to hold the first meeting at my home in Wayzata [8 miles west of intersection of I394 & Hwy 100] in the 1st quarter of 2012. I would appreciate input on three aspects:

- First, please state if you are interested in the book club
- Second, preference among four books I have listed below
- Third, preference as to meeting times, e.g. weeknights or weekends, as to which we may alternate



Book No. 1 is *Wagner: Beyond Good and Evil* by John Deathridge, which has a fascinating and eclectic table of contents.

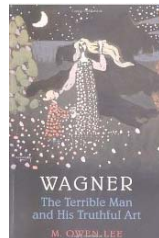
Book No. 2 is *Triumph of the Swan* by John P. Roach, which examines the master's relationship with King Ludwig.



Book No. 3 is *Wagner* by Michael Tanner, which examines the meaning and philosophicak underpinning of each opera.



Book No. 4 is *Wagner: The Terrible Man and his Truthful Art* by M. Owen Lee, which looks at Wagner's effect on others who are part of the cultural milieu.



References to these books may be found by Googling “Richard Wagner books” and selecting the Amazon entry.

I can be contacted by email at [dbergerson1@gmail.com](mailto:dbergerson1@gmail.com) or by phone 952-471-7175.

---

## Join Us on Facebook and Twitter

The Richard Wagner Society of the Upper Midwest is now on Facebook! Join us at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). Create a discussion, see the latest details on events, and check out who else is interested.

Follow us on Twitter for last minute updates on events. *WagnerSocietyUM* at [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com).

## **Siegfried**

*(Continued from page 5)*

would be the self-pitying song given out by the dwarf Mime in the first act. There has long been a feeling (famously propagated by the composer Gustav Mahler) that the depiction of Mime, a dwarf who raises the hero Siegfried from infancy in isolation in hopes of using his abilities to secure the Ring for himself one day, was intended to be an anti-Semitic caricature, and his song recognizably resembles Jewish folk music. Whether Mime was also intended to be a caricature of a gay man is an open question, but it is an interpretation that has become common among operatic directors in recent times (for example Jossi Wieler and Sergio Morabito for a production of the Stuttgart Opera in 2002).

Siegfried is renowned for certain dramatic situations that appear ridiculous to many operatic audiences, for example the fact that the title character's lover is actually his aunt and that he has never seen a woman before he removes the breastplate worn by his lover, the female warrior Brünnhilde, after mistaking her originally for a man. The portrayal of the dragon Fafner also strikes many opera-goers as being rather silly and cartoon-like. Nonetheless, the emotional power of both drama and music is such that only a most dispassionate listener could ever escape its impact.

---

## **Membership Renewals**

Yes, it is that time of year again, time to renew your membership! Our membership year is on a calendar year basis. A form is included for your convenience. Please fill in the necessary information to it and mail to

The Richard Wagner Society of the Upper Midwest  
P.O. Box 3804  
Minneapolis MN 55403

If you have any questions about your membership status contact [membership@wagnertc.org](mailto:membership@wagnertc.org) or call Carol Thomas at 612-559-6468.

## Video Nights 7-9 PM

### Second Wednesdays

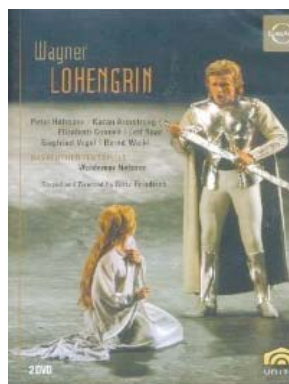
In January and February, we are viewing the last two acts of *Lohengrin*. This is a 1982 Bayreuth production, a time when Bayreuth was still capable of staging acceptable productions.

Director: Götz Friedrich. Bayreuth 1982 (production from 1979). Cast: Peter Hofmann (Lohengrin), Karan Armstrong (Elsa), Elizabeth Connell (Ortrud), Leif Roar (Telramund), Siegfried Vogel (Heinrich). Conductor: Woldemar Nelsson.

From <http://mostlyopera.blogspot.com>:

*Götz Friedrich's vision of Lohengrin is dark and static, shifting between reality and Utopia - reality being the power-obsessed people of Brabant, Utopia being the land of Elsa's dreams where Lohengrin lives. A golden disc mediates between these two worlds, reality and fantasy, thus replacing the traditional swan.*

*That Elsa is a sensitive, but not overly naive woman dreaming of an alternative to her power-obsessed compatriots is obvious from the moment she appears in misty light during the prelude. She conjures up the imaginary Lohengrin, appropriately dressed in white. However, when he returns in Act 3 as a black knight returning a miniature warrior brother to Elsa, we realize that there really is no hope.*



*The staging is simple, square, dark and unfortunately very static as well. While it may offend no-one, I doubt many will find it exciting. What however works well, austere surroundings apart, is the core romantic drama, mainly thanks to Peter Hofmann.*

*Peter Hofmann is the ideal romantic Lohengrin. He looks the part. He is the real romantic hero. He sings well. He is very moving. What more can anyone want? That Peter Hofmann in the last part of his career (end-80s) may have performed less well, may quite possibly be attributed to the well-known incipient onset of the invalidating Parkinson disease he officially was diagnosed with in 1994, and which has resulted in him apparently struggling economically as well being virtually crippled today. But in 1982 he was on top of his game.*

After *Lohengrin*, we sample Eurotrash Bayreuth with one of the evil sister's productions. We bravely turn to Katharina Wagner's bobble headed production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, a production which will have you rooting for Beckmesser. At least

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Video

(Continued from page 10)

the seats are more comfortable (and cheaper) than those at Bayreuth.  
Recorded live at the Bayreuth Festival, July 2008

*Not only is the intellectual underpinning of the production thought-provoking and largely convincing, the show is also full of stunning theatrical spectacle, especially in Act III. A less satisfactory aspect, however, concerns the Personenregie, or lack of it. By this I mean the director's craft of working with the singer-actors to develop their characterization through line-by-line assimilation of the text and score--above all, working as an ensemble on the kind of detailed character interaction that is the stuff of true Wagner music drama. This, it seems to me, is a serious weakness at Bayreuth at the moment. For all the intellectual input into this production of Die Meistersinger, and for all its brilliantly imaginative theatricality, the level of Personenregie remained disappointingly low.*

Barry Millington in **Opera Canada**

Conductor Sebastian Weigle  
Stage director Katharina Wagner

Hans Sachs Franz Hawlata  
Sixtus Beckmesser Michael Volle  
Walther von Stolzing Klaus Florian Vogt  
Eva Michaela Kaune



Stage design Tilo Steffens

## The current schedule is:

11 January, 2012	<i>Lohengrin</i> Act 2
08 February, 2012	<i>Lohengrin</i> Act 3
14 March, 2012	<i>Die Meistersinger</i> Act 1
11 April, 2012	<i>Die Meistersinger</i> Act 2
09 May, 2012	<i>Die Meistersinger</i> Act 3

*This event is hosted by Kevin Edgar at 700 Douglas Ave, Minneapolis. If you are planning to attend please let Kevin know by email ([wagner@bke.org](mailto:wagner@bke.org)) or phone 612-564-0253.*

## Dinner

(Continued from page 3)

rushed over his head, but in a moment he knew what had emerged.

He knew what he had all along carried with him but could not enunciate. He had discovered the orchestra prelude to *Das Rheingold*.

He began with one note, unprocessed, a long, low E<sup>b</sup> played by eight-string bass, half of them tuned one octave lower. After several seconds, he adds one note by the bassoon, then he adds one French horn, then eight French horns overlapping each other to give the impression of water flowing in the Rhine. Think of that first audience that heard that first timeless note at the beginning of creation, at the beginning of the world.

Where did this motivation to bring about moral regeneration of society come from? My thesis: From The Influences and The Repercussions of a book written by the Roman historian Tacitus in the year 89 AD: the *Germania*. Christopher Krebs, a classics professor at Harvard, has described this whole affair in a book entitled *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus's Germania from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich*. In a book review published in the *New York Times*, Sunday, June 21, 1102, by Cullen Murphy, he states,

Why is there a Germany? Part of the answer goes back to the battle fought in 9AD in the treacherous marshes and dense thickets of the Teutoburg Forest near modern Osnabruck. As described by the Roman historian Tacitus, three Roman legions led by Quinctilius Varus had crossed the Rhine from Gaul intent on incorporating the vast area known as Germania into the Roman empire. They were ambushed and annihilated by German tribes under the command of a warrior named Arminius, later known as Herman the German. It was one of the worst military disasters the Romans ever suffered. Some years ago, archeologists discovered the site of the battle; the debris field was a mile wide and 51 miles long. Cesar Augustus, it is said, roamed the hallways of his palace, crying, "Quinctilius Varus, give me back my legions!" Henceforth, the Romans pretty much wrote off the area east of the Rhine and north of the Alps. The line of demarcation survives to this day as a cultural divide. The Romans had been bedeviled for years by the motley tribes they lumped together as German. In 89 AD, Tacitus set out to describe them. In his telling, the Germans possessed "fierce blue eyes, tawny hair, huge bodies." They prized freedom, scorned luxury, and esteemed military courage above all else. They were a people of sturdy values for whom "good laws" were no substitute for "good habits." In the land of the Germans, Tacitus writes, "nobody laughs at vice; and to corrupt and to be corrupted is not called "modern times." Pointedly, he observed that the Germans were "not tainted by intermarriage with any other nations." Many centuries later, the German literate elites looked abroad to the advanced kingdom of England and France and began to wonder, "who are we?" They knew that a book called the *Germania* once existed, but the text itself had been lost since antiquity. Suddenly, in the mid fifteenth century, book collectors picked up vague rumors – a copy may have surfaced in a distant monastery, and yes, it was true! Tacitus's *Germania* was about the origin and mores of the Germanic people. The only comprehensive accounts from ancient times of the Germanic people, it was read as a report of Germany's past and widely celebrated as a

## Dinner

(Continued from page 12)

magnificent monument. A majority of readers from the 15th century to the 20th century studied *Germania* through the ideal lens and valued it as a gateway to the German past. Considered the dawn of German history, Tacitus's text was taken to illuminate life and mores of those ancient German days. Most readers formed a positive impression. No sooner had *Germania* been retrieved from the murky library of a German monastery in the 15th century than it supplied what quickly became the standard epitaph for the German ancestry – simple, brave, loyal, pure, just and honorable. The Italian humanist Giannantonio Campano in 1471 called upon his German audience to rise to that which they had once been. Later, Tacitus's books had exactly what nationalists had been waiting for. In truth, its portrait was complex. Germans were not one nation; Tacitus listed 50 tribes. They manifested plenty of appalling qualities. And Tacitus, who probably never set foot in Germany, clearly had an agenda – to provoke his own soft and decadent society. All this proved easy enough to ignore. *Germania* was received as the “golden booklet.” It was published and republished. An adviser to Frederick the Great, citing Tacitus, called the German people “still the same aboriginal and indigenous nation which has preserved its independence, its name and its language.” Tacitus's work yielded so great an influence over such an extended period of time from 1450 to 1950 – 500 years in all – because “Germany,” for many centuries, was a product of the imagination. Another way to put it, the idea of Germany posed a question to which Tacitus's *Germania* provided an answer. “To be German meant to wonder what it meant to be German,” as the 19th century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche put it. Wagner was influenced by this. Fichte, Herder, Grimm – they and many others repeated the main Tacitean tropes, including Richard Wagner.

Wagner was influenced by this treatise that espoused high moral values from the ancients, but he was also persuaded by the thesis that German and European society was degenerating.

The view held in virulent form by the French philosopher Gobineau who said the degeneration was so inevitable that only decent thing to do was to go out and shoot oneself.

One reason that Wagner considered moving to St. Paul, Minnesota, to reestablish his music drama endeavors in the late 1870s was that there was pure German stock who had escaped European degeneration by emigrating to the Midwest, who would be a resource to him, and he could teach them to meet his expectations.

So how successful was Wagner's effort at moral regeneration of society? My answer is that it failed. Two world wars with millions of people killed (how could Hitler, who is said to be a devotee of Wagner, not get the message of the *Ring* and instead pursue pathways of Wotan and Albrecht?), at least three genocides, not to mention the moral degeneracy in the Enron scandal, the savings and loan crisis, the 2008 financial institution-induced recession.

**Dinner**

*(Continued from page 13)*

But the story is not over yet. In the past recent years, there are more productions of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* than ever before, and they all seem to be sold out. We must be slow learners, but at least persistent.

Following this presentation, there was a discussion led by Claus Pierach, MD, a student of German history.

The business meeting lasted 28 minutes.

ACTIVE MEMBERS 40

HONORARY MEMBERS 3

MONEY IN THE BANK: Total amount: \$ 12,552

TRISTAN FUND: \$ 9303

WORKING CAPITAL: \$ 3149

Newsletter, DVD nights, membership, Bayreuth tickets, and the treasury are all handled by Carol Thomas with a great deal of assistance from B. Kevin Edgar and were appreciated with loud applause. The Society secretary and programs are arranged and produced by Renate Sharp and also greatly appreciated by the audience. David Bergerson will lead the book club henceforth, and both he and Bernt Von Ohlen have been very helpful in planning future projects, including the 200-year anniversary of Wagner's birth in 2013. The board members, Carol Thomas, Renate Sharp, Bernt Von Ohlen, David Bergerson and David Cline, were re-elected and received warm applause of appreciation from the audience. The Board will elect officers of the board at the next meeting.

After a half-hour reception, we enjoyed the highlight of the evening. Dennis Peterson, the star tenor who has performed with the Metropolitan Opera, the Seattle Opera, the Israeli Opera and the Bard Music Festival in upstate New York, joined Matt O'Neill, accompanied by the gifted pianist Laura Bolton in discussing and performing various leitmotifs using arias and a few duets preceded by explanations. The program included Erik's Aria and Der Steuermann's Aria from

*(Continued on page 16)*

## Mark Your Calendars

20 and 21 January 2012  
Christine Brewer Sings Beethoven and Wagner  
with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra  
Ordway Center  
St Paul

*Conductor Ward Stare makes his eagerly anticipated SPCO debut in one of the season's most decadent programs. Mozart's invigorating Symphony No. 17 is answered by Schoenberg's dark expressionist masterpiece Transfigured Night, in the composer's own arrangement for string orchestra. Grammy Award-winning soprano Christine Brewer anchors the program with music by Beethoven and Wagner.*

*Check with the Ordway for further details at 651.224.4222.*

---



Saturday 11 February 2012  
The Metropolitan Opera's New  
Production of *Götterdämmerung*

*Daniel Freeman returns to guide us to the cataclysmic climax of Wagner's masterpiece. Then enjoy the HD broadcast of the Met's new Ring cycle, directed by Robert Lepage, starring Deborah Voigt as Brünnhilde and Jay Hunter Morris as Siegfried. Fabio Luisi conducts. Further details to be announced.*

## **Dinner**

*(Continued from page 14)*

*Der Fliegende Holländer*; “Dir Tone Lob!” and the Pilgrim’s Chorus from *Tannhäuser*; “In Fernem Land” and “Mein Liber Schwan” from *Lohengrin*; “Wie Sie Selig” and the Shepherd’s Song from *Tristan und Isolde*; the Prize Song from David’s and Walter’s duet, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*; Loge’s response to Woton from *Das Rheingold*; Siegmund’s Love Song to Sieglinde including “Winterstürme,” Siegfried’s Nothung; and first act finale of Mime and Siegfried from *Siegfried*. Renate Sharp provided the lyrics in German and in English for all of the excerpts presented, which added to our pleasure. The music and applause afterwards shook the rafters and is the best we have heard since we started this tradition.

The dinner following gave new members the opportunity to tell how they became interested in Wagner and old members to recapitulate their experience. It was a lovely evening which furthered the goals of our society, “To learn, to teach, and to share appreciation for the music works of Richard Wagner.” We will do it again next year at the Founders Day Meeting and many times between now and then. Come and join us!

**On the cover:  
Daniel Freeman discusses Wagner’s Siegfried with audience  
members after his lecture.**

Published by  
The Richard Wagner Society of the Upper Midwest  
P.O. Box 3804  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
612-467-9786  
Fax: 612-863-4384  
General Email: [Info@wagnertc.org](mailto:Info@wagnertc.org)  
Newsletter Email: [newsletter@wagnertc.org](mailto:newsletter@wagnertc.org)  
Copyright © 2012 by  
The Richard Wagner Society of the Upper Midwest

STAFF  
Carol Thomas – Editor  
B. Kevin Edgar – Production/Design