

WNO



Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

Supported by WNO's Meistersinger Syndicate
with lead gifts from Anthony and Elizabeth Bunker
and The Kobler Trust

I am delighted to welcome you to this new production of Richard Wagner's masterpiece *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, directed by the acclaimed director Richard Jones. This is in fact a company première, as this opera has never been performed in Welsh National Opera's 64 year history.

Staging *Die Meistersinger* presents one of the greatest challenges in opera and WNO is fortunate to have assembled an unprecedented coalition of supporters to help finance our production.

The lead gift comes from Anthony and Elizabeth Bunker. Tony is a valued member of WNO's board and this gift is the latest example of his support. Once again we have attracted a group of opera lovers to the WNO Meistersinger Syndicate, who have contributed a record amount for any WNO syndicate and their names are listed on page 4. *Die Meistersinger* also marks the first donation by The American Friends of WNO Inc.

Two of the leading roles in this production are supported by grant-giving trusts, with whom WNO has enjoyed a long and happy association. The role of Hans Sachs is supported by The Kobler Trust and the role of Sixtus Beckmesser is supported by The Leche Trust.

We are extremely grateful to all these individuals and organisations for helping make this production possible.

Die Meistersinger is one of the operas closest to my heart and I am thrilled to be presenting it with this magnificent company under the leadership of our vibrant new Music Director, Lothar Koenigs. Welsh bass-baritone Bryn Terfel, singing the challenging role of Hans Sachs for the first time in his career, leads an extraordinary cast.

I look forward to sharing this special occasion with you.

Mae'n bleser gennyf eich croesawu i'r cynhyrchiad newydd hwn o gamywaith Richard Wagner, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, wedi ei gyfarwyddo gan y cyfarwyddwr enwog, Richard Jones. Hwn, mewn gwirionedd, yw perfformiad cyntaf y cwmni, am nad yw'r opera hon erioed wedi cael ei pherfformio gan Opera Cenedlaethol Cymru.

Mae cyflwyno *Die Meistersinger* yn un o'r heriau mwyaf ym myd opera ac mae WNO yn ffodus o fod wedi casglu carfan ddiggyffelyb o gefnogwyr i helpu i ariannu ein cynhyrchiad.

Daw'r prif rodd gan Anthony ac Elizabeth Bunker. Mae Tony yn aelod gwerthfawr o fwrdd WNO a'r rhodd hon yw'r enghraifft ddiweddaraf o'i gefnogaeth. Unwaith eto, rydym wedi denu grŵp o selogion opera i Gynghrair Meistersinger y WNO, sydd wedi cyfrannu swm uwch nag y codwyd erioed gan gynghrair WNO, ac mae eu henwau wedi eu rhestru ar dudalen 4. Mae *Die Meistersinger* hefyd wedi cael y rhodd gyntaf gan The American Friends of WNO Inc.

Cefnogir dwy o brif rolau'r cynhyrchiad hwn gan ymddiriedolaethau rhoi grantiau, y mae WNO wedi cael cysylltiad hir a da gyda hwy. Cefnogir rôl Hans Sachs gan Ymddiriedolaeth Kobler a chefnogir rôl Sixtus Beckmesser gan Ymddiriedolaeth Leche.

Rydym yn dra ddolchgar i'r holl unigolion a'r sefydliadau hyn am helpu i wneud y cynhyrchiad hwn yn bosibl.

Mae *Die Meistersinger* yn un o'm hoff operâu ac rwyf wrth fy modd yn ei chyflwyno gyda'r cwmni rhagorol hwn o dan arweinyddiaeth ein Cyfarwyddwr Cerdd bywiog, newydd, Lothar Koenigs. Mae'r bas-bariton o Gymru, Bryn Terfel, sy'n canu rôl heriol Hans Sachs am y tro cyntaf yn ei yrfa, yn arwain y cast eithriadol hwn.

Edrychaf ymlaen at rannu'r achlysur arbennig hwn gyda chi.



John Fisher

Chief Executive & Artistic Director | Prif Weithredwr a Chyfarwyddwr Artistig

Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg



Opera in three acts by
Richard Wagner

First performance at the Royal
Court and National Theatre,
Munich on 21 June 1868

First performance by Welsh
National Opera of this
production at Wales Millennium
Centre on 19 June 2010

Sung in German with English
surtitles (and Welsh surtitles
in Cardiff)

Supported by WNO's Meistersinger Syndicate with lead gifts from
Anthony and Elizabeth Bunker and The Kobler Trust

All performances start at 4pm

Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff

Saturday 19 June 2010
Wednesday 23 June 2010
Saturday 26 June 2010
Tuesday 29 June 2010
Saturday 3 July 2010

Birmingham Hippodrome

Tuesday 6 July 2010
Saturday 10 July 2010

The performance on Saturday 19 June is dedicated
to the memory of Anne Morgan (1952 – 2010),
who was a member of the Chorus of
Welsh National Opera from 1972 to 2010.

She will be greatly missed by all her friends
and colleagues at WNO.

Welsh National Opera is grateful to the supporters who have made this production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* possible:

Lead gifts:

Anthony & Elizabeth Bunker

Members of WNO's Meistersinger Syndicate:

Patron: Dame Anne Evans	Harriet & Michael Maunsell
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Robert Ashley-Jones and Alex Tindal were loyal supporters of Welsh National Opera for many years, and were founder members of WNO's Meistersinger Syndicate. During the past 12 months, we have been shocked to learn of their untimely deaths and we are saddened that they are not with us for our *Die Meistersinger* performances.

Alex Tindal 1951 – 2009

Robert Ashley-Jones 1949 – 2010

Supporters continued...

The role of Hans Sachs is supported by The Kobler Trust

The role of Sixtus Beckmesser is supported by The Leche Trust

The American Friends of Welsh National Opera Inc



Bryn Terfel and Christopher Purves in rehearsal

Cast

Walther von Stolzing, <i>a young knight</i>	Raymond Very
Eva, <i>Pogner's daughter</i>	Amanda Roocroft
Magdalene, <i>Eva's companion</i>	Anna Burford
David, <i>Hans Sachs' apprentice</i>	Andrew Tortise

The Mastersingers:

Hans Sachs, <i>cobbler</i>	Bryn Terfel
Sixtus Beckmesser, <i>town clerk</i>	Christopher Purves
Veit Pogner, <i>goldsmith</i>	Brindley Sherratt
Fritz Kothner, <i>baker</i>	Simon Thorpe
Kunz Vogelgesang, <i>furrier</i>	Geraint Dodd
Konrad Nachtigall, <i>tinsmith</i>	David Stout
Ulrich Eisslinger, <i>grocer</i>	Andrew Rees
Hermann Ortel, <i>soap maker</i>	Owen Webb
Balthasar Zorn, <i>pewterer</i>	Rhys Meirion
Augustin Moser, <i>tailor</i>	Stephen Rooke
Hans Folz, <i>coppersmith</i>	Arwel Huw Morgan
Hans Schwarz, <i>stocking weaver</i>	Paul Hodges
Nightwatchman	David Soar

Citizens of all guilds and their wives, journeymen, apprentices,
young women, people of Nuremberg

Conductor	Lothar Koenigs
Director	Richard Jones
Designer	Paul Steinberg
Costume Designer	Buki Shiff
Lighting Designer	Mimi Jordan Sherin
Choreographer	Lucy Burge
Fight Director	Ran Arthur Braun
Chorus Master	Stephen Harris
Assistant Conductor	Anthony Negus
Musical Preparation	James Southall
	Stephen Wood
Staff Directors	Benjamin Davis
	Ran Arthur Braun
	Carmen Jakobi
Language Coach	Jacqueline Pischorn
Stage Manager	Julian Johnson
Production Manager	Robert Pagett

Scenery built by Welsh National Opera Workshops with additional
scenery by Cardiff Theatrical Services

Scenic painting by CTS and WNO Workshops

Properties, costumes and wigs by Welsh National Opera

Assistant to Paul Steinberg: Dilára Medin

Costume Supervisor: Jenny Falconer

Additional costumes made by Bristol Costume Services, Stephan
Harrington, Sally Payne, Celia Pierce, Terry Milton, Scottish Opera

Workshops and Theatrical Shoemakers Ltd

Make up provided by **MAC**

Meistersinger portraits by David Massey

Front cover image: View of Nuremberg from the Nuremberg Chronicles

Costume design illustrations by Buki Shiff

Rehearsal photography by Brian Tarr

English surtitles by Simon Rees

Welsh surtitles by Mary Jones

The performance lasts approximately 5 hours 45 minutes

There is an interval of 20 minutes after Act 1

and an interval of 50 minutes after Act 2

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Introduction

Richard Wagner wrote the first draft of his libretto for *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in 1845, basing the story, his sole completely original plot, on details of the lives of the Mastersingers who lived and worked in Nuremberg in the 16th century, in particular the poet-shoemaker Hans Sachs. He composed the music between 1862 and 1867, and the opera was given its first performance in Munich in 1868. Before writing the music, Wagner came under the influence of the works of Schopenhauer, and revised the character of Sachs in the light of Schopenhauer's philosophy of renunciation.

Plot summary

The Nuremberg Mastersingers hold regular song competitions, and the goldsmith Veit Pagner has proposed his daughter Eva's hand in marriage as a prize. The young Franconian nobleman Walther von Stolzing has come to Nuremberg and fallen in love with Eva. He discovers that it will be difficult to pass the Masters' stringent tests, applied by the Marker, Beckmesser, but is encouraged by Hans Sachs, who is fond of Eva too. Beckmesser and Walther compete for Eva's hand, but Beckmesser makes a fool of himself by singing a song he has filched from Sachs's workshop, and Walther wins the prize. Sachs persuades Walther to accept the rank of Master, while giving a warning about foreign influence, and praises German art and German Masters.

Rhagarweiniad

Ysgrifennodd Richard Wagner ddrafft cyntaf ei libretto ar gyfer *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* ym 1845, gan seilio'i stori, ei unig blot cwbl wreiddiol, ar fanylion bywydau'r Meistri Canu a oedd yn byw ac yn gweithio yn yr 16^{eg} ganrif, yn arbennig y crudd o fardd, Hans Sachs. Cyfansoddodd y gerddoriaeth rhwng 1862 a 1867, a pherfformiwyd yr opera am y tro cyntaf ym Munich ym 1868. Tra'n ysgrifennu'r gerddoriaeth, daeth Wagner o dan ddylanwad gwaith Schopenhauer, a diwygiodd gymeriad Sachs yng ngoleuni athroniaeth ymwrthod Schopenhauer.

Crynodeb o'r plot

Mae Meistri Canu Nuremberg yn cynnal cystadlaethau canu rheolaidd, ac mae'r gof aur Veit Pogner wedi cynnig y wobr o law ei ferch Eva. Mae'r Ffranconiad ifanc, y bonheddwr Walther von Stolzing, wedi dod i Nuremberg ac wedi syrthio mewn cariad ag Eva. Mae'n canfod y bydd yn anodd llwyddo gyda phrofion llym y Meistri, a osodir gan y Marciwr, Beckmesser, ond caiff ei annog gan Sachs, sydd hefyd yn hoff o Eva. Mae Beckmesser a Walther yn cystadlu am law Eva, ond mae Beckmesser yn gwneud ffwl o'i hun trwy ganu cân y mae wedi ei dwyn o weithdy Sachs, ac mae Walther yn ennill y wobr. Mae Sachs yn perswadio Walther i dderbyn rheng Meistr, yn rhybuddio am ddylanwad tramor, ac yn canmol celf yr Almaen a Meistri'r Almaen.



Nuremberg castle

Synopsis

Act 1

16th century Nuremberg, on the eve of the Feast of St John, in the church of St Katharine. The knight Walther von Stolzing is in love with Eva, daughter of the goldsmith Pogner. Pogner will give her hand in marriage to whoever wins the singing contest of the Mastersingers' guild. David, Hans Sachs's apprentice and pupil, tells Walther the rules of the contest. The Mastersingers arrive for the day's Trial Song competition. Walther's attempt at a trial song to become a Mastersinger is judged unworthy by the pedantic town clerk Beckmesser, who also wants to win Eva's hand. Even though the cobbler and poet Hans Sachs is impressed by Walther's song, Walther is judged by a majority of the Meistersingers to have failed the test.

Act 2

Evening, in the street outside the houses of Sachs and Pogner. Magdalene, Eva's companion, is distressed to learn from David that Walther has failed the test. Sachs, still impressed by Walther's song, returns to his work. He discovers Walther's attempt to elope with Eva, and blocks it. Walther and Eva hide, and watch the proceedings unfold. The nightwatchman announces that it is ten o'clock. Beckmesser arrives and tries to woo Eva by serenading her with his own song, but it is Magdalene who is standing at her window in her place. Sachs marks the faults in Beckmesser's song with blows of his tack-hammer. David, who loves Magdalene, thinks that Beckmesser is serenading his girlfriend, and provokes a riot. Once the riot has dispersed, the nightwatchman once more makes his rounds.

Act 3

At Sachs's shoemaker's shop the following day, David apologises for provoking the riot. He leaves Sachs contemplating the delusion that torments the human race. Walther sings Sachs a song he has had in a dream, and Sachs helps him draft the first verses. They leave to dress in their ceremonial clothes. Beckmesser steals the draft of the song, believing it to be by Sachs himself, so that he can use it in the Prize Song competition. Sachs discovers the theft, but plays a trick on Beckmesser by giving him permission to sing Walther's verses, without telling him that they are by Walther and not by Sachs himself. Eva complains that her wedding shoes pinch, and uses the excuse to meet Sachs and tell him of her affection for him. When Walther sees Eva, he is inspired to compose the last part of his song. Sachs leads a quintet to 'baptise' Walther's song.

In the festival field, a procession opens the day's events, with shoemakers, tailors and bakers singing of their trades. Sachs is greeted by the people of Nuremberg with a performance of his own song, 'Wach' auf!. The Prize Song competition begins. Beckmesser sings first, garbling the words he took from Sachs's workshop. The crowd mocks his performance, and he blames Sachs for writing the verses. Sachs calls Walther forward as a witness that he is not to blame, and Walther sings the song in its true form, winning the contest and gaining Eva's hand in marriage. Eva presents him with the winner's garland. Walther refuses to join the guild of Mastersingers until Sachs persuades him to do so, in a final declaration in which he praises 'holy German art'.



Bryn Terfel, Andrew Tortise, Amanda Roocroft and Anna Burford in rehearsal

Wagner's wonderful unity

Lothar Koenigs interviewed by Simon Rees



SR How do you create a balance between singers and orchestra? And are there moments where Wagner uses 'chamber music' textures in the orchestral writing?

LK Much of the music in *Meistersinger* is indeed chamber music. The orchestra has double woodwind, including piccolo, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, harp, organ and a little percussion. This is rather a 'smaller' Wagner orchestra than we find in, for instance, the *Ring* cycle.

SR Some critics have identified over 30 Leitmotifs in *Die Meistersinger* – others have found more than 60! Is it important to be able to recognise these themes, or are they identified by words and context as the opera is performed?

LK It all depends on how you count them. Taking about 40 as a starting point would be realistic. These motifs are quite easily recognisable. In my opinion it is not necessary for the audience to know all the motifs by name and by their exact usage.

SR In Act 1 Wagner sets out the rules of the Mastersingers' competition. David tells us a lot about the way to write a song, Kothner tells us a lot about the competition itself, and Pogner tells us even more about why he is presenting Eva as the prize. How do you avoid making these scenes seem too long?

LK We should trust the music. It is anything but long-winded.

SR The riot at the end of Act 2 must be one of the most complicated scenes in opera. How do you control the chaos as the fugue develops?

LK A formal analysis would help. If the bass line is in the right place, much of the problem is solved.

SR The quintet in Act 3 is one of the most sublimely beautiful pieces Wagner ever wrote. What makes this music so effective?

LK Tender woodwind phrases play gently around the vocal parts. Time seems to stand still. You never want it to end. Everything strives upwards.

SR Is Beckmesser's music – in his Act 2 serenade, and his Act 3 Prize Song – really as bad as everyone says? After all, Wagner does use the theme of 'Den Tag seh ich erscheinen' for the fugue at the end of Act 2.

LK Beckmesser's music is certainly unusual, but not bad at all!

SR There is a heavy burden of history on *Die Meistersinger*, more perhaps than on any other opera. How do you confront this?

LK Again and again we have to free Richard Wagner's works from decades of misuse and misunderstanding – not only with regard to Bayreuth, but wherever in the world Wagner's works are performed – in order to envision his work, to capture something of the span between what happened in the past and a utopian ideal.

SR How does the political material of Sachs' last speech fit in with the overall comic atmosphere of the opera?

LK *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* was and remained Wagner's only large-scale 'komische' opera. Although it is his brightest and most cheerful creation, it has too often been overwhelmed by chauvinistic pomp, so that Hans Sachs' defence of the 'holy German art' has at times become an embarrassment, both inside and outside Germany, sometimes to the point of being unbearable.

SR Do you see Wagner's Nuremberg as a historically accurate portrait of the city in the 16th century?

LK The Nuremberg of *Die Meistersinger* is to a certain extent an historic reality, and one cannot ignore its 16th century setting. But at the same time, the theatrical Nuremberg of the 19th century is a model of a democratic society, where the knight Stolzing becomes a burgher and it is the people (on the festival meadow) who give the deciding vote in the art competition and contribute to its progressive development.

SR How is Wagner's opera connected to his nationalist politics?

LK Wagner's concept of *Die Meistersinger* is based on the assumption that a united Germany would have to be created by democratic means and not, as in 1871, by means of war. Wagner conceived the idea of *Die Meistersinger* during his revolutionary period in 1848, for which he had to atone during his 12-year exile from Germany.

SR What is the main artistic conflict in the opera?

LK In *Die Meistersinger* two opposite worlds are being confronted with each other. Their collision produces the actual material for the conflict: it is the artistically productive spirit of the people (Hans Sachs) versus the petty bourgeois who practises art as a handicraft (Sixtus Beckmesser).

SR Wagner wrote both words and music. Are they a unified whole?

LK Music and libretto, independently, are equally important factors, which blend together in this work with a wonderful unity. With its tendency to polyphony, the musically dramatic dialogue is what dominates as it flows ever onwards, characterised by motivic exposition. Motives are used in a psychological way. Some parts of the text, especially those which are important for the understanding of the plot, are treated in the style of strictly rhythmical recitative.

Translated by Jacqueline Pischorn.





Directing *Die Meistersinger*

Richard Jones in conversation with Simon Rees

SR What is the significance of the figures on the front cloth?

RJ They are all German, or – with a few exceptions (Billy Wilder, Offenbach) – from German speaking countries. They are all original artists. They have revised their art forms, their areas of thinking, or changed how their discipline has been perceived. They are both rule-breakers and rule-makers. It's a more diverse list than Wagner may have been inclined to – and certainly many of them would have resisted being represented on the front cloth of a Wagner music drama. What's important, though, is they are avatars – conduits. They are the future Walther von Stolzings who will work against the establishment but be absorbed into it. This is the process, and it is poignant how institutionalised these masters are to become. I'd like to think that the audience will identify and reflect on the achievements of these Germans during the show.

SR What is the importance of the Nuremberg setting, whether or not in the 16th century?

RJ It's important for the designers and me to show a Nuremberg where the rules that govern art and craft have become stuck. It's a community

where most have amnesia about the idea that rules should be dynamic or re-created. Less important for me is to represent a socially realistic 16th century. I've always thought that theatre, as opposed to cinema, is less effective in achieving social realism. Wagner's Nuremberg is more anachronistic than historically accurate for me. We are supposed to be in the 16th century, but after the Prelude we hear a Bach chorale. The opera is possibly more about the 19th century and about 19th century ways of thinking about artists and about art than the 16th century.

SR How do you read Hans Sachs's character?

RJ Genial, subversive and depressive. He's awake – the most awake and perceptive of any Wagner character except possibly for Erda in the *Ring* – who ironically spends most of her time sleeping. With a natural clarity he spots Beckmesser's delusion and narcissism, David's nattering and gluttony, and the pedantry of the Mastersingers. While the average Nuremberger can move him by singing his Lutheran hymn, he is also deeply shaken to witness them rioting in the alleys of the city.



Nuremberg 1938



Nuremberg 1945

The two days of his life shown in the opera are supremely testing for him. Turning up to the cathedral meeting – if only to preserve the spirit of master song – he experiences the transformative effect of Stolzing's poetry. He has been in a comfortable inaction as regard to his relationship with Eva – and then Eva asks him if he will be her back-up plan should Stolzing (who she currently finds more erotic) not succeed. He is denounced by Eva for not supporting Stolzing, when he did. He sees worryingly depressing parallels between Beckmesser's situation and his own. His sabotaging of Beckmesser's serenade is a consequence of his discomfort about the similarity of their positions, and his sexual and artistic jealousy for Stolzing. He overcomes his overwhelming disinclination to the behaviour of human beings, commits to the day, commits to making the more plausible relationship of Stolzing and Eva work, teaches Stolzing the rules of master song (and himself the rule of

deferring to nature) and secures Stolzing's victory in the singing contest, and then the guy turns round and says 'I don't want to join your Rotary Club.' It's a difficult two days for Sachs.

SR The ending of the opera has been seen as problematical, especially since the Second World War and the associations of *Die Meistersinger* with Nazism.

RJ Yes, the end is tricky, isn't it? – and not only because of its resonances with National Socialism. I don't think it's useful to remind ourselves that Wagner's support of German unity was libertarian in the context of when he lived. Nor can we excuse him with the popularly held belief that his wife petitioned him to end the piece as he eventually did. The problem is that the opera (as any Broadway show doctor would point out) ends twice. Structurally it's been nigh on perfect up to Stolzing's winning of the song contest, and possibly should end there. What follows is a finger-wagging



diatribe that could be said to be not quite congruent with Sachs's behaviour up to that point. I fear that an audience may, on a subconscious level, sense this. Yesterday a chorus member, playing one of the apprentices, told me she found the music full of amplitude and delicacy up to this point. Many German directors have made

what commentators and critics call 'interventions' at this difficult moment – but *Meistersinger*, with its unlikely mixture of philosophy, comedy, and sentiment is probably the least of Wagner's music dramas to be available to intervention that isn't awkward. As I say – it's tricky.

MEISTERSINGER
Design S#2 - Apron



'HANS SACHS'
Bryn Terfel



'HANS SACHS'
Bryn Terfel



A Meistersinger Miscellany

Simon Rees

Abgesang – Aftersong, the concluding section of the 'Bar', following two 'Stollen'. The Abgesang should have a melody that contrasts with that of the Stollen, but it may contain musical references to the Stollen phrase.

Bar – The basic strophe form of the Master song, in three sections, AAB, the A sections being the Stollen, collectively called the Aufgesang, the B section the Abgesang. The complete song may be made up of three or more AAB stanzas.

Beckmesser, Sixtus – Town Clerk of Nuremberg, and the Marker at the Meistersingers' competitions. It is Beckmesser's duty to mark mistakes, using chalk on a blackboard, to determine whether or not a song is of sufficiently high quality to gain its singer a prize. Beckmesser's opposition to Hans Sachs, and his courtship of Pogner's daughter Eva, leads him to make a fool of himself in front of the entire population of Nuremberg.

Chorale – The opening Chorale, 'Da zu dir der Heiland kam', is the concluding part of the service for St John's Eve that opens Act 1. The Chorale in Act 3, 'Wach' auf!' is a setting of words by Hans Sachs himself, and is sung in his honour to start the Johannistag festival. Sachs wrote the words to celebrate Martin Luther, the 'Wittenberg nightingale'.

David – Hans Sachs's apprentice, who is learning shoemaking and poetry from his master, and getting regularly beaten with the strap when he makes mistakes. He is in love with Magdalene, who brings him food and consolation.

Eva – Daughter of Pogner, the goldsmith. Pogner has put Eva forward as the prize in the Mastersingers' competition: she will marry the winner, if she finds him acceptable. If not, she must remain a spinster for life. Eva is fond of Hans Sachs, but has fallen in love with Walther von Stolzing, a nobleman who has recently joined the community of Nuremberg merchants. The link between Eva and the Biblical Eve is made clear in Act 2 when Hans Sachs sings 'Jerum! Als Eva aus dem Paradies'.

Flieder – The elder growing outside Hans Sachs's workshop, which fills the air with its perfume.

Geselle – the Gesellen are the journeymen of Nuremberg, a stage between apprentice (Lehrbube) and Master. They take a notable part in the riot at the end of Act 2.

Hanslick, Eduard – the critic who formed one of Wagner's models for Sixtus Beckmesser. Hanslick was of part-Jewish ancestry, and Wagner mentioned this in his later anti-Semitic

writing. However, Wagner originally conceived of the Marker's character before becoming hostile to Hanslick. In a draft of the libretto, the Marker is called Hans Lick, an obvious reference to the critic. Debate continues to rage about whether Wagner caricatured Hanslick as a Jew or as a critic, and how much of Beckmesser's character is based on him.

Infinite Melody – Wagner's much-derided term for a form of melodic development through continual variation that resists closure through interrupted, deceptively resolved or ambiguous cadences. It is most closely associated with the *Ring* cycle and with *Tristan und Isolde*, where it follows the lead of the text, written continuously without a marked, formal division into separate numbers. In *Die Meistersinger* Wagner achieves a compromise between Infinite Melody and the constraints of metre, rhyme and stanza form.

Johannistag – St John's Day, or Midsummer's Day, 24 June, an important festival, celebrated in Nuremberg with public fairs, dances and bonfires. The song contest is held on this day, which is also Hans Sachs's name day.

Kothner, Fritz – Meistersinger and baker, who gives the roll call to the assembled Meisters at the first Freieung, or Song Trial.

Leitmotiv – as many as 60 Leitmotifs have been identified in *Die Meistersinger*. Several of the most important are stated in the Overture, often given the names 'Mastersingers', 'Art', 'Mastersong', 'Lyrical', 'Guild', 'Love question', 'Love' and 'Youth'. Many of the others are derived from these. Oddly, David's list of names for the traditional tunes used by the Mastersingers is very like that of the conventional names given to Wagner's own Leitmotifs.

Lute – Beckmesser plays the lute, both when serenading Eva and when competing in the Mastersong competition. Wagner intended a guitar-lute hybrid to be used, tuned like a guitar, but from early performances onward a special kind of harp, the Beckmesserharfe, was devised, similar to a folk harp and strung with brass strings. A Seattle production gave Beckmesser a lutenist, who was told to play very badly. In this production, Beckmesser has a mandolin on stage.

Meistersinger – A member of a city guild, made up of townspeople who have qualified through competitions to take the title of Master, by singing a particular form of song in front of a jury made up of other Masters, and marked by the Marker. All of the Nuremberg Mastersingers are craftsmen or tradesmen, a tradition that



Walther von Stolzing, a nobleman from Franconia, hopes to break.

Nachtigall, Konrad – one of the two Mastersingers with a particularly apt name – Nightingale – (the other being Vogelgesang, or Birdsong). Nachtigall is a Spengler, or tinsmith.

Nuremberg – at the time of the opera, an Imperial Free city in Franconia, and the centre of the German Renaissance. The city passed to Bavaria with the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806. Used by Hitler for his Nuremberg Rallies, and the site of the Reichstag which passed the anti-Semitic Nuremberg Laws. Severely damaged by Allied air raids between 1943 and 1945, the medieval centre of the city was systematically destroyed by the RAF and the USAAF on the night of 2 January 1945. After the war, much of the city was restored to its pre-war appearance, and the international tribunal of the Nuremberg Trials was held in the Palace of Justice.

Ortel, Hermann – Mastersinger and soap-boiler. Soap-boilers practised their smelly trade on the outskirts of town, alongside the tanners and skinners, where the fumes from boiling fat and lye would not trouble the neighbours, and where they

could get their raw materials from the nearby slaughterhouses.

Pegnitz river – the river flowing past the walls of old Nuremberg, through the meadows where the song competition is held.

Pogner, Veit – the goldsmith, father of Eva, who puts up his daughter as the prize for the song competition. His name means 'crossbow maker', and a 'Pogner' is shown in the *Ständebuch*.

Quell – the fountain described by Walther as the source of musical inspiration.

Ruskin, John – described *Die Meistersinger* in a letter to Georgina Burne-Jones in 1882: 'Of all the bête, clumsy, blundering, boggling, baboon-blooded stuff I ever saw on a human stage, ... and of all the affected, sapless, soulless, beginningless, endless, topless, bottomless, topsiturvies, tongs and boniest doggerel of sounds I ever endured the deadliness of, that eternity of nothing was the deadliest, so far as the sound went. I never was so relieved, so far as I can remember in my life, by the stopping of any sound – not excepting railway whistles – as I was by the cessation of the cobbler's bellowing.'

Sachs, Hans – 'Hans Sachs war ein Schuhmacher und poet dazu.' Hans Sachs (5 November 1494 –

19 January 1576), the cobbler poet of Nuremberg, the most famous of the Mastersingers. Sachs was a prolific poet and dramatist, writing some 4200 Meisterlieder, as well as plays and religious tracts. One of his most interesting works is the *Ständebuch*, or *Book of Trades*, in which he described each of the trades practised in Nuremberg, with illustrations by the printmaker Jost von Amman. His famous poem on Martin Luther, 'The Wittenberg nightingale' is quoted in Act 3, in the chorale 'Wach' auf!' the only part of the libretto that is not by Wagner.

Schopenhauer, Arthur – Schopenhauer's philosophy influenced Wagner through his great work *The World as Will and Representation*, which Wagner read in 1854. Schopenhauer's philosophy of renunciation influenced Wagner's description of Hans Sachs and his decision to turn away from Eva and allow her to marry Walther.

Stollen – the first part of the Bar stanza. Its form is repeated (the two Stollen forming an Aufgesang) before the concluding Abgesang. The word Stollen also means a cake, a pit-prop, a tunnel, a boot stud, or the calkin or cleat of a horseshoe.

Stolzinger, Walther von – A Franconian nobleman who has come to live and work in

Nuremberg, and who seeks admission to the guild of Mastersingers in order to win the hand of Eva Pogner. His surname derives from 'Stolz' = 'Pride', and he is perceived as innocently arrogant. His first name reminds us that he learned his skill at singing from the books of the great medieval Minnesinger, Walther von der Vogelweide.

Tristan and Isolde – '*Mein Kind, von Tristan und Isolde kenn' ich ein traurig Stück. Hans Sachs war klug und wollte nichts von Herrn Markes Glück.*' – 'Child, I know a sad story about Tristan and Isolde. Hans Sachs was clever, and didn't want King Marke's fate.' Hans Sachs invokes the fate of King Marke in his renunciation of the possibility of marrying Eva, and the music refers to Wagner's own opera on the subject of Tristan and Isolde.

Unsinn – Nonsense. The great example of nonsense in the opera is Beckmesser's garbled version, half-remembered, of the draft of Walther's prize song. As Beckmesser grows more and more confused, the nonsense becomes greater and greater, until he is howled down by the crowd.

Vogelgesang, Kunz – another aptly-named Mastersinger (Mr Birdsong), a furrier. According to Sachs in the Book of Trades, 'the furrier makes and lines coats, cloaks, hoods and other garments



Bryn Terfel and
Raymond Very in rehearsal



with such furs as sable, marten, lynx, ermine, polecat, wolf and fox, and from goatskins.'

Vorspiel – there is a Vorspiel or prelude to each act of *Die Meistersinger*. The first includes melodic material relating to the Masters and Walther, contrasting the pompous, self-satisfied conservative burghers and the romantic revolutionary nobleman who challenges their artistic certainties. The Vorspiel to the third act is a deeply meditative portrait of Hans Sachs.

Wahn – delusion or madness. Hans Sachs sings about its ubiquity: wherever he looks, in ancient books of history or in the world around him, he sees examples of such madness.

X-Factor – only the latest of a series of song competitions dating back thousands of years. Competitive singing was practised in ancient Greece and Rome, among the Celts in all part of their diaspora, within the Meistersinger communities of Germany, in the Eisteddfodau of modern-day Brittany, Cornwall and Wales, and the title of Bard or Mastersinger was always fiercely challenged and defended.

Young Germany – an intellectual movement to which the young Wagner belonged. During his Young German phase, he

developed his ideas about the craving for love and the way in which it shapes lives and personalities, an idea that survives in his thought as far as *Die Meistersinger* and beyond.

Zorn, Balthasar – Mastersinger and pewterer. His surname means 'anger'. As Sachs describes in the Book of Trades, 'the pewterer melts the pewter, then pours it into moulds for flagons and bottles, keys, keyrings, platters, pitchers, salt cellars, candlesticks and other useful items for the home.'

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Conceiving *Die Meistersinger*

Barry Millington

Wagner was not the first, and certainly not the last, person to find inspiration in the bathtub. Baths were part of the regime prescribed by Wagner's doctor for his various abdominal complaints, when he checked into the Pension Kleeblatt at Marienbad (now Mariánské Lázně) in 1845 with his wife, dog and parrot in tow. It was during this now famous summer holiday that Wagner did the background reading that would lead also to *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal* – he had a number of volumes with him from his impressive library in Dresden – and his first encounter with the cobbler-poet Hans Sachs and the mastersingers of Nuremberg was actually more in the way of a self-imposed distraction, to mollify his doctor, than anything else.

While the inspiration for *Lohengrin* came to Wagner in the bath, if his autobiographical account is to be believed, that for *Die Meistersinger* materialised on one of his daily walks. Having dipped into the *History of the Poetic National Literature of the Germans* by Georg Gottfried Gervinus, he conceived a comic scene in which Hans Sachs wreaks

revenge on the pedant who serves as the official "marker" for the guild singing contests, critiquing the marker's own performance with blows of the hammer on his last. Those who find this scene in Act 2 somewhat tiresome – literally heavy-handed, thigh-slapping humour at its most teutonic – may be surprised to find that this is the very scene that set Wagner's creative juices flowing.

Be that as it may, the scenario began to take shape: a narrow, twisting Nuremberg alley was sketched in, together with the cobbler's neighbours, commotion and a street fight. Before he knew it, Wagner had down on paper his first sketch for *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* which, with irreproachable self-restraint, he put to one side first to write *Lohengrin* and then to embark on the massive *Ring* tetralogy. Humour was not, however, in the forefront of Wagner's mind in those years of revolutionary struggle and suicidal pessimism. And in fact it wasn't until 1861 that he retrieved the comic sketch from his bottom drawer and began to knock it into shape.

There are several particularly interesting points to note about the 1845 sketch. Only Sachs is named: the other chief characters are referred to as "the Marker" and "the young man" (his lover is "the girl"). Sachs himself is only a shadow of the richly drawn character we know from the finished opera. Not trusted by the Masters, he is something of a cynic and acts with a degree of malice towards the Marker. What he conspicuously lacks at this stage is the benevolent wisdom and engaging humanity that we find in the opera. His final address to the Masters and the populace on the festival meadow is delivered,

according to the sketch, "half-ironically, half in earnest", as he "defends the good things in the Masters' work". Six years later, Wagner refers to this sketch in his essay *A Communication to my Friends*, and there Sachs is said to make "a humorous defence of the art of Mastersong", closing with the much-discussed lines to the effect that even if the Holy Roman Empire were to dissolve into mist, there would still remain "holy German art". It is interesting, given the deadly serious nature of the role of "holy German art" in Wagner's world-view in the 1860s that the reference to it here should be a supposedly "humorous" one.



Der Schumacher, woodblock by Jost Amman,
from Hans Sachs's Book of Trades

The angry frustration of the "young man", challenging the archaic practices of the Mastersingers' guild with his rule-breakingly spontaneous effusions, was undoubtedly coloured by Wagner's own struggles against the artistic establishment of the court in Dresden. The love element is an important one but it is not as yet integrated with the themes of creativity and artistic reform.

When in 1861 Wagner, by now in Vienna, returned to the subject, he set down first a prose draft (probably between 14 and 16 November) and a few days later (18 November) a third, slightly revised prose draft. It was while he was in

Vienna that he took the opportunity to study Jacob Grimm's *Über den altdeutschen Meistergesang* (On the Old German Meisterlieder, 1811), which gave him further historical material for the text, as did Johann Christoph Wagenseil's *Nuremberg Chronicle* of 1697 (a particularly rich source of information on the ancient crafts and guilds and other aspects of Nuremberg).

J Büsching's edition of Hans Sachs's plays (1816–19) provided another fruitful source, as did Friedrich Fürchau's life of Sachs (1820). Various contemporary works, literary and operatic, may or may not



Woodblock portrait of Hans Sachs

have provided Wagner with further ideas, but especially deserving of mention is E T A Hoffmann's story *Meister Martin der Kűfner und seine Gesellen* (Master Martin, the Cooper, and his Journeymen), which is set in 16th century Nuremberg.

With the 1861 drafts, in which the scenario is rapidly approaching its final form, the character of Sachs is fleshed out in significant ways. First, as noted previously, the character becomes more sagacious, more charitable, a man who muses on human foibles and who provides a calm, philosophical perspective on the outbreak of riotous frenzy that grips his native Nuremberg. But over and above that deepening of perspective, it is evident that the composer is investing more of his own self in the character. By the early 1860s Wagner had created too his great figure of Wotan, the ruler of the gods, who dominates the *Ring* tetralogy. More than that, he had moved Wotan to the centre of the drama, usurping the hero Siegfried: for Wagner, in the 1850s, the moral struggle faced by the god (for which we may read common humanity) was of paramount interest. Hans Sachs shares with Wotan not only a similarity of voice type (bass-

baritone, as opposed to the heroic tenors of Siegfried and Walther) but also a breadth of vision, a tragic world-view nourished by the composer's own experience in post-revolutionary exile in Zurich. It was during those years of exile that Wagner encountered the love of his life: not his future wife, Cosima, but Mathilde Wesendonck – married, beyond reach, idealised. The relationship, which blossomed while the pair were living in adjacent houses, was almost certainly not consummated, but that only made it all the more intense and creatively fruitful for Wagner. In *Die Meistersinger*, Hans Sachs has to relinquish all claims to Eva, just as Wagner had to give up Mathilde. And what could be more poignant than the scenes in Acts 2 and 3 when Eva playfully teases Sachs about his possible candidacy for her hand. "I'm too old", he says, and indeed a younger, more eligible man is poised to sweep her away. But the emotional undertow of the music tells us that both are torn by the stirrings of an affection that is not merely avuncular. Significantly, it was a renewed encounter with Mathilde Wesendonck – now pregnant once more by her husband, Otto

– that seems to have provided the creative spark needed to embark on the composition of *Die Meistersinger*. The Wesendoncks had invited Wagner to join them in Venice and there they visited the Gallerie dell'Accademia, where Wagner – in general indifferent to visual art – found his attention engaged by Titian's *Assumption of the Virgin*. It made a "sublime" impression on him, he tells us in his autobiography, an impression perhaps enhanced by a perceived resemblance of the face of the Madonna to that of the perforce relinquished lover standing next to him. Two decades later (October 1882) he revisited the scene, commenting that the face reminded him not of the Mother of God but of Isolde in the apotheosis of love. The picture also emphasised the Madonna's "utter inapproachability", despite her "consummate beauty" – further underlining his very personal reaction to the picture (Mathilde's pregnancy of course a visible symbol of her inaccessibility to Wagner). His autobiography tells us that his response to the picture reawakened his old creative powers with a jolt, whereupon he decided to write *Die Meistersinger*. The fact that he

had already announced just such an intention to his publisher, Schott, a week earlier does not in itself nullify the account of his reawakened creativity. Great art can indeed stimulate such creative impulses and the viewing of Titian's *Assumption* may just have provided the requisite catalyst. Could this have been the crucial experience that guided him towards a new conception of his sketch from 16 years earlier? For in the 1861 prose drafts, as mentioned earlier, not only does Sachs attain the status of a worldly-wise philosopher who has seen and suffered much, but the previously unnamed girl is transformed, via the somewhat unprepossessing name Emma Bogler, into Eva, with all the paradisaical allusions one might expect.

In a letter to Mathilde Wesendonck of late December 1861, a month after the Titian "revelation", Wagner tells her she will be "wide-eyed with amazement" when she sees what has become of his earlier sketch for *Die Meistersinger*. "Steel yourself against *Sachs*", he warns her: "you'll fall in love with him!...Yes, one needs to have been in Paradise to know what lies hidden here!"

Amanda Roocroft and Bryn
Terfel in rehearsal





Left to right: Stephen Rooke, Andrew Rees, Rhys Meirion, Geraint Dodd, Arwel Huw Morgan, Paul Hodges, Owen Webb, David Stout, Simon Thorpe and Christopher Purves in rehearsal

Appended to the letter, which is signed "Der Meister!", was a copy of Sachs's Cobbling Song from Act 2.

The joy and pain of love, seen through the prism of the experience conferred by maturity, thus moves to the centre of the drama, alongside the theme of the necessary renewal of art – Walther, the natural, untrained genius, has to learn that while great art may be conceived in visionary dreams, it nevertheless has to be subjected to the regulation of formal structure. But there is more to it than that. For as Barry Emslie shows in his important new study *Richard Wagner and the Centrality of Love* (Boydell and Brewer, 2010), it is impossible to understand Wagner's concept of love without digging deep into his views on nation and race.

This is a problematic area, to be sure, but one that should not be shirked on that account, particularly as it was so central to Wagner's thinking. His view in the 1860s, when *Die Meistersinger* was written, was that Germany was in a state of terminal cultural decline, a process that could be arrested only by the embrace of true

German values – a value system based ineluctably on traditional and exclusive ideas of language and race. "Holy German art" is the watchword and while it is true that the mantra has an almost pacific resonance, it is nevertheless impossible, with the hindsight of history, not to hear in it pre-echoes of the Third Reich. That is to leave open the huge question of the extent to which a 19th century demagogue can be held responsible for 20th century excesses. But it is precisely this nexus of preoccupations that provides the context of Wagner's diatribes against the Jews, a race he believed could never be truly German because in his view they lacked the capacity to love.

It has been argued, not least by the present author, that anti-semitism is woven into the ideological fabric of *Die Meistersinger*. This is not the place to examine that proposition in detail – a whole corpus of literature has done that over the last two decades. But it is impossible to be unaware of the resonances of Wagner's own views on nationhood or of the red threads that link those views to those of the Nazis, who latched

on to *Die Meistersinger* for their own purposes. Those resonances have come to form part of the performing tradition of the work, an aspect with which every director of it has to come to terms.

This is only one aspect – however important – of *Die Meistersinger*. Wagner's penultimate opera is also a radiant affirmation of life, of the joy of love, the pleasures of spring and the creative impulse

associated with both. Encompassing good humour and philosophical reflection, its keynotes are lyrical effusion and a slightly self-satisfied but often stirring harmonic richness. Awareness of its dark underside does not necessarily nullify one's enjoyment: on the contrary, it enhances one's perception of the work's extraordinarily multi-dimensional nature.

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Make 2

**MEISTERSINGER
Design S#10**



**'BECKMESSER'
Christopher Purves**

Andrew Tortise, Anna Burford and
Bryn Terfel in rehearsal



Master-Singers and Master-Poets: the Sport of Art

Mererid Hopwood

Back in the sixth century, King Maelgwn of Gwynedd gathered together the bards and minstrels and summoned these two groups to perform for him. As the poets were his favourites, Maelgwn declared that before the proceedings began, both parties should swim across the river. How did this twist benefit the bards? Well, the poor minstrels had the complication of having to swim with harps strapped to their backs... an unfair disadvantage indeed. And so, as this early account reveals, it seems that wherever two or three are gathered together to practice the art of song, the temptation to turn the event into a competitive, spectator-sport, has proved to be irresistible. And where there is competition, there must be rules and standards against which the participants are assessed. (For 'song', of course, read 'poetry' too. After all, there is a close link between these art forms, and one that is clearly observed in Welsh, where the word for 'poem', *cerdd*, forms the stem of the word for 'music', *cerddoriaeth*.)

From the Punjab to Penrhosgarnedd, it seems that the custom of reciting poems has created frameworks in which the

personal, exquisite response to the art, once shared with an audience, becomes a matter for competition and ranking. Here in Wales we have the ever-popular '*Talwrn y Beirdd*', where '*talwrn*' is the word for the pit in which cock fighting took place. Each neighbourhood has its own team of poets adept at forming extemporaneous verse on all kinds of measures. Between the teams sits the adjudicator – these days known as '*Meuryn*', after the esteemed Robert John Rowlands whose bardic name was *Meuryn*. In front of them is the audience, ready to colour the *Meuryn*'s opinion with sometimes genuinely spontaneous response, and sometimes more strategically played sighs and applause to favour their own team!

The poets must then respond to given themes within a short period of time, sometimes a fortnight, sometimes five minutes. Today these gatherings reach a climax in two events: the final of the annual *Talwrn y Beirdd* radio series, and the final of the *Ymryson*, a week-long play-off held at the National Eisteddfod. At the Eisteddfod, two entirely different competitions are open to poets

as individuals, where you submit your work anonymously to be considered by three adjudicators. The winners of these earn the right to wear the white robes and laurel crown of the Chief Poets at the *Gorsedd*, or sessions, of the Bards.

Thus it soon becomes apparent that a comparison with the *Meistersinger* tradition is enticing. One could, for example, draw similarities between the role of the *Meuryn* and the *Merker*, though mercifully for the Welsh poets, the *Meuryn* operates a system of awards where a point is given for merit, even if sometimes begrudgingly. The *Merker*, however, works on a penal system where, rather as with the modern day driving licences, the more points you have, the worse things are.

The practice of composing words to set forms is also similar in both traditions, but before we turn to the nitty-gritty of rhyme schemes, syllable counting and scansion, perhaps we should pause to ask the basic question: who were these *Meistersinger*, and who are the Welsh bards and what about their training? And already the use of the past tense for the German tradition and the present for the Welsh suggests an important difference.

The *Meistersinger* were craftsmen who probably first came into contact with poetry

and music-making as lay musicians within the church. They grouped themselves together in 'guilds' and 'schools', originally in Mainz then in Worms and Strasburg, until during the 15th century, this custom flourished, sweeping through Swabia in southern Germany, then eastwards to Silesia and into Upper Austria. A particularly famous guild met in Nuremberg, whose members are at the heart of Wagner's opera. The guilds reflected the traditions of the tradesmen's apprenticeship, and poetry was regarded as essentially a craft. You started your career as a *Schüler*, ('apprentice'), then became a *Schulfreund* ('journeyman'), until finally, a few stages further along, you graduated to the rank of the *Meister* ('master'). But let's leave it to David in Act 1 Scene 2 to baffle us with the details!

In order to be promoted from one level to the next, your work would be judged by four 'markers', each concentrating on different aspects of the work – faithfulness to the often Biblical text, prosody, rhyme and tune. As already mentioned, these markers would listen out for breaches of the rules and the winner was the one who had the fewest marks against his name.

The *Meistersinger* claimed lineage to the earlier Middle High German *Minnesinger*, where

Minne is an old word for 'love'. The *Minnesinger*, however, were professionals, linked with the nobility, unlike the *Meistersinger*, who had day-jobs as cobblers or builders or bakers. The work of the *Minnesinger* reached a peak in the 12th century when they produced lasting and beautiful, lyric verse. (The most famous poet from this tradition is perhaps Walther von der Vogelweide, who has quite possibly lent his name to the Walther of the opera.)

What about the Welsh bards? The earliest extant examples of our tradition extend back to Aneirin and Taliesin, who recorded the harsh realities of the life of the Brythonic people in the sixth century. By the tenth century, Hywel Dda, the enlightened king and law-maker, had defined the privileged status of poets. He codified a bardic order which testifies that in Wales too there's an old tradition of ranking poets. This system is listed in Simwnt Fychan's *Pum Llyfr Cerddwriaeth* (circa 1570) thus: *Disgybl ysbâs heb radd* – 'unqualified apprentice'; *Disgybl disgyblaidd* – 'qualified apprentice'; *Pencerdd* – 'master poet'.

With a nine-year training period, the status of *Pen-cerdd*, or 'Master-poet', was a highly sought after position. However, in Wales, the poets' apprenticeship did not happen in

the context of a circle such as the guilds of the *Meistersinger*. The aspiring poet would seek a 'poetic father' who would, so to speak, adopt him (and it was, always, a 'him'), until he had learnt the mysteries of the art. (I deliberately reject the phrase 'tricks of the trade'). In this sense, the Welsh tradition is a much more personal affair, and perhaps here 'tutelage' is a better word than 'apprenticeship'. Furthermore, in the Welsh model, this was a training for a profession, not a pastime. A tract dating from the early 16th century known as *Statud Gruffudd ap Cynan* notes, to the penny, the rates of pay for various verse measures, though poets were also offered useful tools such as swords and axes as payment. Later the poet would be given a passport, a sort of 'right-to-roam-certificate', which granted him freedom to travel the length and breadth of the country, while the rest of the Welsh had to stay put within the confines of their own home patch. Often the poet would win himself a very welcome place at the patron's table. Indeed, the tradition of honouring the poet with an elaborate chair lives on to the present day, where the winner of one of the Eisteddfod's main poetry competitions is given a uniquely crafted, throne-like chair, as well as the title '*Prifardd*', 'Chief-poet'.



So much for the similarities and differences in the learning process between the two traditions. What now of the forms and content?

To understand the work of the *Meistersinger*, we must look again at the earlier traditions of the *Minnesinger* who developed quite intricate verse, the basis of which is the *Liet*. This is a single strophe containing two groups of lines followed by a coda. The *Minnesinger* traditionally kept to set themes. The *Kreuzliet* dealt with separation as the knight sets off to fight in the crusades. The *Tageliel* dealt with separation as dawn breaks and two lovers must part. Another aspect of the *Minnesang* was the *Spruch*. This form usually contained a moral, and based itself on social and political matters, though quite often in a personal context. The *Spruch* became a favourite with the *Meistersinger* as it allowed them plenty of scope for pontificating.

The *Meistersinger* claimed to develop the *Minnesinger* traditions, however, they seemed to place more emphasis on complicating the forms than on deepening the sentiment, and the sincerity of the works of the best *Minnesinger* somehow got lost along the way. The *Meistersinger* called the melody *Ton* or *Weis*, and the poems *Bar* or *Gesetz*, and took great pride in varying the length of these from two or three

verses to more than a hundred. The skill was to write a new poem to fit the old tunes, though making them fit was not always easy, as the poor old Beckmesser of the opera finds out.¹

At first, an aspiring *Meistersinger* could only use a set of permitted 12 medieval tunes. However, Hans Folz, a member of the *Meistersinger* guild at Nuremberg, broke this rule and wrote a new tune. Thereafter a candidate who sought the title of *Meister* had to compose an original *Ton* as well as a poem. These tunes were given the most fanciful names such as 'The Tone of the Red Bat' and 'The Tone of the Small Striped Bouquet of Saffron Flowers'. However, despite this development, on the whole, the rules, as laid down in the *Tabulatur*, were almost impossible to bend.

The Welsh forms, at first glance, appear to be even more complex, in that they observe the grammar of the ancient strict metres, where each line depends on a musical interplay of alliteration and rhyme, known as *cynghanedd* (translated, significantly, as 'harmony'). Within the *cynghanedd* discipline, there are four basic line structures: *cynghanedd Groes*, *Draws*, *Lusg* and *Sain*, where the *Groes* and *Draws* depend on alliteration for their music, the *Lusg* on internal rhyme only, and the *Sain* on a

mixture of both alliteration and internal rhyme. A combination of these four types of *cynganedd* then lead to at least 24 official measures and many more unofficial. Perhaps the three most common measures are the *englyn*, the *cywydd* and the *hir-a-thoddaid*. The *englyn* is a compact 30 syllabic stanza arranged in four lines of *cynganedd* with each line rhyming together. (The best examples of the *englyn* can make the haiku seem long-winded.) The *cywydd* is a series of any number of seven syllabic rhyming couplets, where each line is written in *cynganedd*. The *hir-a-thoddaid*, generally stretches to a ten syllabic line, composed in groups of four or six.

I have already referred to the system of *cynganedd* as a 'grammar', which might explain why I believe that it only 'seems' to be more restrictive than the German code. A grammar, after all, is the machinery that drives a language, its careful engineering leads to movement. It's what allows the words of a language to make sense when spoken. *Cynganedd* is in many ways nothing more, nothing less than the grammar of a language within a language, a branch within Welsh, which, once mastered, is as flexible and fluid as any other language. In this sense, its rigidity is only an appearance. Indeed it's the very clear rules of the grammar of

cynganedd that makes it possible for its practitioners to express anything under the sun. So while the poor aspiring *Meistersinger* find themselves tongue-tied and burdened with the dead-weight of the *Tabulatur* leaving virtually no room for the soul to speak, the Welsh poets composing in *cynganedd* are eventually liberated, for they are working with an ever-evolving living language, and though the basic rules of its grammar must be observed, *cynganedd*, at times, almost seems to help the imagination find the expression it needs.

It might also be worth drawing attention to the difference in the relationship between the poet and the public in both traditions. Though in Wales the legendary lolo Morganwg, an 18th century poet who masterminded the Gorsedd y Beirdd ceremonies, compiled a handbook of the rules of the bardic system under the curiously mysterious title *Cyfrinach Beirdd Ynys Prydain* - 'The Secret of the Bards of the Island of Britain', once written, the poems themselves are no secrets, but rather works of art to be enjoyed by all. In the *Meistersinger* context however, no *Meisterlieder*, or 'master-songs', were allowed to be published. Development was thus further stifled as the closed-shop nature of the guilds made it almost impossible for them to influence, or indeed

be influenced by the wider poetry scene, and not surprisingly, the *Meistersinger* eventually disappeared.

The bardic tradition in Wales however lives on, and though there have been periods when the art of *cynganedd* has been unfashionable, it has never disappeared. Each age seems to produce a poet who picks up the pen and pushes the lines a little further. At present, *cynganedd* is enjoying an energy, unprecedented for decades. In chapel vestries and pubs, in schools and universities, you can find budding bards huddled together to learn this mesmerising grammar. Some struggle, others take to it with startling ease, and thank

goodness, every so often, a Walther will emerge to challenge the status quo, and a Hans Sachs to ensure that his challenge is given a just hearing. And now and again a poem is captured, so perfect in its beauty that no sport or competition could ever properly rank it. A poem that is, quite simply, a work of art.

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¹ Here, another of the Welsh traditions springs to mind - *Cerdd-dant* - where the art of composing and singing a new melody while playing a traditional melody as harp accompaniment, calls for a great degree of skill - one for which I remember Bryn Terfel winning a fair share of prizes as a young Eisteddfod competitor!



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Mererid Hopwood as Chief Poet

Singing for the Chief Bard

Rhys Meirion on an incident at the National Eisteddfod.

I have had the honour of singing the tribute to the winning bard of the Chair at the National Eisteddfod of Wales on two occasions. The second time was very special indeed, because a woman had won the chair for the first time in the Eisteddfod's history. Now, because the competition was so male-dominated, the tribute song was in the masculine form, and wouldn't make sense when sung to Mererid Hopwood, the winner, so I went to some senior officials of the Gorsedd to ask their permission to change the gender of the song. There were only a couple of phrases, 'King of the Bards' to 'Queen of the Bards' and 'his chair' to 'her chair'. It was made very clear to me that I was not to change the song in any way. The main reason was that the public would know that I knew the result before the ceremony!





Lothar Koenigs

Lothar Koenigs Conductor

Lothar Koenigs is Music Director of Welsh National Opera. Born in Aachen, Lothar studied piano and conducting at Cologne Conservatory. As a student he conducted several times at Tanglewood Festival. Positions include First Guest Conductor, Orquesta Sinfonica de Chile; Kapellmeister in several German opera houses; General Music Director, Osnabrück until 2003.

Engagements include *La bohème*, *Carmen*, *Eugene Onegin*, *The Magic Flute* (Hamburg State Opera); Italian première Giorgio Battistelli's *Prova d'Orchestra* (Rome Opera), *Turandot* (Sassari), *Katya Kabanova* (Teatro La Fenice Venice); *Wozzeck*, Janáček trilogy (*Jenůfa*, *Katya Kabanova*, *Makropoulos Case*), *Lohengrin* (Opéra de Lyon); Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers* (Ancona); *Don Giovanni* (Dresden); *Idomeneo* (Cologne); *Der Freischütz* (Semperoper Dresden);

Khovanshchina (WNO; Bayerische Staatsoper); *Jenůfa* (La Scala); *Don Giovanni* (Vienna State Opera); *Tosca* (Teatro Sao Carlos Lisbon); led Beethoven Orchester Bonn, Orchestre Philharmonique de Luxembourg, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra Tokyo, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Radio Orchestra Saarbrücken, RAI Orchestra Turin, DSO Berlin, Orchestra dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia Rome, Rotterdam Philharmonic; at request of composer, conducted music by Luciano Berio with Orchestra Sinfonica de Sao Paulo; conducted Orchestra dell'Accademia di Santa Cecilia (Rome), RAI Orchestra (Turin), Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin; toured with Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and Ben Heppner (Wagner programme); debut with Wiener Symphoniker (Bregenz Festival); concerts with RAI Orchestra in Milan, Dresden Philharmoniker in Verona; Kreněk's *Karl*



Richard Jones

V (Bregenz Festival). Recent engagements include *Salome*, *Wozzeck*, *Tosca* (WNO); *Katya Kabanova* (Cologne); *Don Giovanni* (Metropolitan Opera); concerts at Teatro Massimo Palermo; *Elektra* (La Monnaie); *Wozzeck* (Bayerische Staatsoper). Future engagements include *Fidelio*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Turandot* (WNO).

Richard Jones Director

Born in London. For WNO Richard has directed *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Queen of Spades* and *Wozzeck* which was WNO's first new production in the opening season at Wales Millennium Centre. Richard has also directed operas at ROH, ENO, Opera North, Scottish Opera, Brussels, Bregenz, Berlin, Amsterdam, Munich, Paris, New York's Met, La Scala, Milan, Chicago and San Francisco. He has directed theatre in the West End and at the Old Vic, RNT, Royal Court, RSC, Young Vic, Public Theatre New



Paul Steinberg

Paul Steinberg Designer

York, three times on Broadway and in Valencia, Spain. He has received Olivier Awards in opera for *Hansel and Gretel* (WNO), *The Trojans* (ENO) and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (ROH), and in theatre for *Into the Woods* (West End) and *Too Clever by Half* (Old Vic); Evening Standard Awards for Outstanding Achievement in Opera for *The Ring* (ROH) and Best Theatre Director for *The Illusion* (Old Vic); Opernwelt Production of the Year for *Giulio Cesare* (Munich); RPS Award for *Wozzeck* and *The Queen of Spades* (WNO). He is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. During the last year Richard has directed *Lohengrin* (Munich); *Annie Get Your Gun* (Young Vic); *The Gambler* (ROH) and David Sawer's ballet *Rumpelstiltskin* (Birmingham Contemporary Music Group).

Paul Steinberg, a native of New York City, studied Theater Design at the Central School of Art, London. He teaches Graduate Set Design at the NYU/Tisch School of the Arts, NYC and is a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome. For WNO he designed sets for *Wozzeck* and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* as well as sets and costumes for *Turandot*. Recent credits include *Peter Grimes* (ENO); *La Calisto* (ROH, Munich); *Il trovatore* (Bregenz Festival); *Il turco in Italia* (Berlin Staatsoper); *Orlando* (Munich); *Tannhauser* (Tokyo, Paris, Barcelona); *Ercole Amante* (Amsterdam); Kafka's *Trial* (Copenhagen); *Don Giovanni* (New York City Opera); *L'Orfeo* (Opera North, Oslo, Glimmerglass). Past productions include *Lulu* (ENO, Frankfurt); *Rinaldo*, *Rodelinda*, *Pique Dame*, *Poppea* (Munich); *Der Schatzgräber*



Buki Shiff

(Frankfurt); *Otello*, *Falstaff*, *Hindemith Trilogy*, *Cav & Pag* (Cologne); *Arabella*, *Il trovatore*, *Madam Butterfly*, *La fanciulla del West* (Antwerp); *Paul Bunyan*, *Acis and Galatea* (New York City Opera, Glimmerglass); *La traviata*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Alpha and Omega*, *Yosef* (Tel Aviv); *Lohengrin* (Paris); *Salome* (Vilnius). Future projects include *La finta giardiniera* (Theater an der Wein); *Falstaff* (ROH, La Scala); *Un ballo in maschera* (Metropolitan Opera); *Pélleas and Mélisande* (St Louis); *Deipamia* (Amsterdam).

Buki Shiff Costume Designer

Buki Shiff was born in Israel and studied at Tel-Aviv University. Since 1984 she has worked as a stage and costume designer in theatre, film, television and opera throughout Israel, Europe and the USA, regularly collaborating with Harry Kupfer, David Alden, Richard Jones and Robert Carson. Her



Mimi Jordan Sherin

Mimi Jordan Sherin

Lighting Designer

opera designs include *Les contes des Hoffmann*, *Faust*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci*, *Boris Godunov*, *Madam Butterfly*, *Don Giovanni* in Tel-Aviv; *Tannhäuser*, *The Coronation of Poppea*, *Rinaldo*, *Rodelinda*, *La Calisto* and *Orlando* in Munich; *Lohengrin*, *Die Meistersinger*, *Tannhäuser*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Der Fliegende Holländer* for Staatsoper, Berlin; *Boris Godunov* for Volksoper Vienna; *The Coronation of Poppea*, *Wozzeck* for WNO; *Lulu* for ENO; *Tristan und Isolde* for Teatro Real, Madrid; *Candide* for Chatelet, Paris; *Wozzeck*, *Der Rosenkavalier* for Komische Oper, Berlin. Awards include Rosenblum prize for Artist of the Year 2008; prize for Stage and Costume Designer of the Year 2004 in Tel-Aviv.

In addition to her costume designs for the stage, Buki has also been involved in design exhibitions in Germany and Tel-Aviv.

Recent designs include *The Gambler* at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden; *Jerusalem* at London's Apollo Theatre; *Annie Get Your Gun* at the Young Vic. Opera credits include productions for Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper, La Scala, Metropolitan Opera, Chicago Lyric Opera, Houston Grand Opera, Welsh National Opera, Royal Danish Opera, Opernhaus Zurich, Bregenz Opera Festival, Opera Australia, Opéra du Rhin, Nationale Reisopera, The New Israeli Opera, Lisbon Opera, Seattle Opera, Washington Opera, Canadian Opera, New York City Opera, Opera North, Opera Colorado and Boston, San Diego, Santa Fe and Glimmerglass Operas. In London Mimi has lit productions for the National Theatre, Young Vic, Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal Court.



Lucy Burge

On Broadway productions include *Julius Caesar*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Our Country's Good*. US regional theatre work includes New York Shakespeare Festival, Baltimore Center Stage, McCarter Theatre, The Guthrie, Hartford Stage Company, American Repertory Theatre, American Conservatory Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, Trinity Rep and Actors Theatre of Louisville. For her work in New York Mimi has been awarded the American Theatre Wing award, 2 Obie awards, the Eddy award, and 5 Drama Desk Nominations.

Lucy Burge

Choreographer

Previous work with Richard Jones includes *Lohengrin* (Munich); *L'Heure Espagnole* and *Gianni Schicchi* (ROH); *Billy Budd* (Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Göteborg). Collaborations with Antony McDonald include *The Ring Cycle* (Nationale Reisopera Holland); *Mary Stuart* (Opera North); *Manon* (NRO); *Rusalka*, *The*



Ran Arthur Braun

Queen of Spades (Grange Park Opera); *Tsarevitch* (South Bavarian Theatres). Lucy has recently choreographed three Art films, *Skeletons*, *The Death of Pentheus* and *Apollo and The Continents*, directed by Philip B Haas (Kimbell Museum Fort Worth, Texas).

Ran Arthur Braun Fight Director

Ran served as a jury member for the 2008 World Artistic Fencing Championship. He was the first Resident Director at the Celebration Barn workshop held by the Society of American Fight Directors. Ran specialises in both historical and theatrical combat and more recently in *Bartitsu*. Since 2003, Ran has collaborated with stunt teams, film productions, theatres, opera houses and festivals in Italy, Germany, Serbia, Romania, Croatia, Netherlands, France, Austria, Estonia, Russia, Belgium, United Kingdom, Israel and USA. He also works as a

producer and stage director. He is a guest teacher for many martial arts, theatre, musical and film schools in Europe. During 2010, Ran produces and co-directs the documentary film *Bartitsu – The Lost Martial Art of Sherlock Holmes* (Italy/USA/UK). Future engagements include Stage Director and Set Designer for Estonian National Opera; Producer and director for a video series *Master Class – Italian Masters of Arms*; Movement Director for Dutch National Opera, Amsterdam; Fight Choreographer for Bregenz Festival and Opera North. Between 2006 and 2008 he worked as a Producer and Head of Stage Management for Teatro Sociale di Como (Italy). Since 2004 he has worked as stage manager, assistant director and fight choreographer for Bregenz Festival. During the summer of 2007 Ran published his first book *Artistic Fencing*.



Anna Burford

Anna Burford Magdalene

Anna was born in Cornwall and studied at Royal Northern College of Music, supported by the Peter Moores Foundation.

Anna made her US debut in 2007 as Cesare *Guilio Cesare* (Seattle Opera). Early European engagements included title role *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Opera National du Rhin); Roswita *Heloise et Abelard* (Opera National du Rhin, Chatelet, Paris); Mrs McLean *Susannah*, Mrs Nolan *The Medium* (Wexford Festival); Cesare (Opera Ireland). UK roles include Ursule *Beatrice and Benedict*, Suzuki *Madam Butterfly*, Page *Salome*, Maddalena *Rigoletto* (WNO); Amastre *Xerxes*, Anna *The Trojans at Carthage*, Maddalena, Dresser / Schoolboy / Waiter *Lulu* (also recorded for Chandos) (ENO). She has also sung in concert performances of many operas including Hecube *Les Troyens* (London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Colin



Geraint Dodd

Davis at BBC Proms); 1st Maid *Elektra* (Edinburgh International Festival); Merope *Oedipe* and Puck in Weber's *Oberon* (Scottish Opera). Recent engagements include Cesare (Glyndebourne Festival); Margret *Wozzeck* in concert with the Philharmonia Orchestra in Paris and at Royal Festival Hall, London; Olga *Eugene Onegin* (Théâtre de Caen). Anna also has extensive concert experience, which reflects her interest in both baroque and modern works.

Geraint Dodd Kunz Vogelgesang

Geraint was born in Rhosllanerchrugog, North Wales and studied at the RNCM in Manchester. Operatic roles include Cavaradossi *Tosca*, Pinkerton *Madam Butterfly*, Duke *Rigoletto*, Don José *Carmen* and Macduff *Macbeth* (WNO); Canio *Pagliacci* (Opera North; Opera Holland Park); Florestan *Fidelio*, Nadir

The Pearl Fishers, title role in Massenet's *Werther* and Rodolfo *La bohème* (ETO); Turiddu *Cavalleria rusticana* (Raymond Gubbay); Calaf *Turandot* and Radames *Aida* (Mid Wales Opera). Geraint has worked with many leading conductors including Owain Arwel Hughes, David Lloyd Jones, Wilfred Boettcher and Stanislaw Skrowaczewski in works such as Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Verdi's *Requiem* and Handel's *Messiah*. He made his concert debut in Europe with the Orquestre de Sinfonica Portuguesa in a performance of Beethoven's *9th Symphony* (Lisbon). Recent concert engagements include Verdi's *Requiem* (Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool) and Gounod's *Messe Solennelle De Sainte Cecile* (National Concert Hall, Dublin). Geraint is a frequent soloist in operatic galas with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra



Paul Hodges

in concert halls throughout Britain, promoted by Raymond Gubbay. Recent engagements include Canio *Pagliacci* for ENO and Beethoven's *9th Symphony* at St David's Hall, Cardiff conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras.

Paul Hodges Hans Schwarz

Paul Hodges trained at Royal Northern College of Music with Nicholas Powell and Frederick Cox. After spending three years with Glyndebourne Festival Opera, during which time he was granted the Leverhulme Award, he attended the National Opera Studio. Paul's operatic repertoire, which he has performed for the regional companies, includes Zaccaria *Nabucco*, Timur *Turandot*, Colline *La bohème*, Padre Guardiano *The Force of Destiny* and Gremin *Eugene Onegin*. In oratorio, Paul has performed *Messiah* in Salzberg; Mozart's *Requiem* in Bouvais,



Rhys Meirion

France; Verdi *Requiem* at many venues. While on contract at ENO as a chorister, Paul understudied many roles and performed the roles of Sparafucile *Rigoletto* and the Hermit *Der Freischütz*. Recent engagements include Commendatore *Don Giovanni* (understudy) and King Marke *Tristan und Isolde* for WNO; Commendatore for Opera de Baugè. Future plans include Sarastro *The Magic Flute* for Opera de Baugè in summer 2010.

Rhys Meirion **Balthasar Zorn**

Born in Wales, Rhys Meirion graduated with a Bachelor of Education and worked as a head-teacher before training as a singer. He completed his studies on the post-graduate Opera Course at Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Rhys joined ENO Jerwood Young Singers Programme in 1999 and was subsequently a Company Principal from 2001 to 2004. Roles included Rodolfo

La bohème, Pinkerton *Madam Butterfly*, Alfredo *La traviata*, Nemorino *L'elisir d'amore*, Nadir *The Pearl Fishers*, Marcello in Leoncavallo's *La bohème*, Duke *Rigoletto*, Tebaldo *Capuletti e i Montecchi*, Tamino *The Magic Flute*, title role *Ernani*, Sailor *Tristan und Isolde*, Rinuccio *Gianni Schicchi*, Italian Singer *Der Rosenkavalier*, Froh *Das Rheingold* and Zinovy *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*.

In 2002 Rhys made his Australian debut as Rodolfo for West Australian Opera and his European debut as Rodolfo for Städtische Bühnen, Frankfurt-am-Main. Elsewhere he has sung title role in Gounod's *Faust* (Hong Kong Opera Society); Rodolfo (Opera Australia); Pinkerton (Lithuanian National Opera). In 2008 Rhys made his debut with Welsh National Opera as Fenton *Falstaff*. Highlights last season include Lorenzo *Fra Diavolo* (Stanley Hall Opera); soloist in the Welsh Proms in Cardiff



Arwel Huw Morgan

singing Arwel Hughes' *Dewi Sant* conducted by Owain Arwel Hughes; a series of concerts in tribute to the renowned Welsh tenor David Lloyd (venues across Wales).

Arwel Huw Morgan **Hans Folz**

A native of Ystalyfera, near Cwmtwrch (Upper and Lower), Arwel graduated in chemistry from Imperial College London. After winning the National Eisteddfod bass competition in 1976, Arwel joined WNO. Roles while at WNO included Angelotti *Tosca*, Hobson *Peter Grimes*, Lictor *Poppea*, Don Fernando *Fidelio*, Parson *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

He then undertook a principal contract at ENO where repertoire included title roles *Figaro*, *Falstaff* and *Don Pasquale*. Arwel has since returned to WNO for Leporello *Don Giovanni*, Paolo *Simon Boccanegra*, Bartolo *The Barber of Seville*, Antonio *The Marriage*



Christopher Purves

of Figaro. Other roles include Snug *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Rome Opera; Aix-en-Provence Festival); Don Bartolo *Le nozze di Figaro* (Opera Zuid; Spier Festival, SA); Fabrizio *The Thieving Magpie* (Opera North); Zaccaria *Nabucco* in concert (National Eisteddfod). In concert, appearances include opera galas at Royal Albert and Royal Festival Halls as well as Teatro Amazonas in Brazil. In collaboration with the pianist Ingrid Surgenor, Arwel performs a lecture/recital entitled *In search of 'Ol' Man River* which covers the life and music of Paul Robeson.

Christopher Purves

Sixtus Beckmesser

Christopher Purves studied English at Kings College Cambridge before performing and recording with highly innovative vocal rock and roll group Harvey and the Wallbangers. Operatic engagements include Marco *Gianni Schicchi* (ROH); Figaro

Le nozze di Figaro (Scottish Opera; Opera North); Marcello *La bohème* (Scottish Opera); Papageno *Magic Flute*, Faninal *Der Rosenkavalier* (WNO; Opera North); Podesta *La gazza ladra* (Garsington Opera); Forester *Cunning Little Vixen*; Siegfried *Genoveva*, Dulcamara *L'elisir d'amore*, Lescaut *Manon Lescaut*, Balstrode *Peter Grimes* (Opera North); Count *The Marriage of Figaro*, Zebul *Jephtha*, Germont *La traviata*, title role *Don Giovanni*, a critically acclaimed portrayal of title role *Wozzeck*, General in James MacMillan's new opera *The Sacrifice*, Ford *Falstaff* (WNO); Sharpless in Anthony Minghella's new production of *Madama Butterfly* (ENO); *Alcina* (Bayerische Staatsoper); a controversial production of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* (Glyndebourne Festival). He created the role of Executioner in James MacMillan's *Inès de Castro*, performed *Parthenogenesis* also by



Andrew Rees

MacMillan and *Zaïde* at Edinburgh International Festival where he has also appeared as Cecil *Maria Stuarda* with Sir Charles Mackerras. Recordings include title role *Le nozze di Figaro* (Chandos); *Messiah* with Harry Christophers and The Sixteen. Recent engagements include Nick Shadow *The Rake's Progress* (Garsington Opera); Tonio *Pagliacci* (ENO); title role in a new production of *Falstaff* (Glyndebourne Festival); Nono's *Al gran sole carico d'amore* (Salzburg Festival). Future engagements include Balstrode (Houston Grand Opera); Redburn *Billy Budd* (Netherlands Opera).

Andrew Rees

Ulrich Eisslinger

Andrew Rees hails from Carmarthen, West Wales. Following studies at the RNCM and GSMD Opera Course he became a member of the Jerwood Young Artist's Programme at ENO and became a principal tenor there between 2004 and 2006,



Amanda Roocroft

performing many roles. Elsewhere, roles include Jim *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* (Nantes/Angers and Lille); Boris *Katya Kabanova*, Sergei *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (Stadttheater St Gallen); Sergei (Weimar); Ismaele *Nabucco*, Kudrjas *Kat'a Kabanova* (Opera Holland Park); Cavaradossi *Tosca* (CBSO under Oramo); Pinkerton (Ottagio Festival, New Zealand); Walter/Hugo/Old Woman in Judith Weir's *Blond Eckbert* (NDR Sinfonieorchester Hamburg); created the roles of Ryan in *When She Died: Death of a Princess* (Channel 4) and Lemminkainen in *Swanhunter* (Opera North); Schoolmaster *Cunning Little Vixen* (Longborough Opera); Alfredo *La traviata* (Mid-Wales Opera); The Lawyer *Punch and Judy* (Porto); created many roles in Errollyn Wallen's *Silent Twins* (Almeida Opera); created the role of Dudley *The Cumnor Affair* (Tête a Tête); Nanki Poo *Mikado* (Carl Rosa Opera at Gielgud

Theatre); Macduff *Macbeth* (Chelsea Opera Group). Andrew has recorded the role of Narraboth *Salome* with Sir Charles Mackerras on the Chandos label and features on the Morrision Orpheus Male Voice Choir's recent CD. Future plans include Siegmund *Die Walküre* (Longborough): Doctor *Anna Nicole* and Froh *Das Rheingold* (ROH).

Amanda Roocroft Eva

Amanda Roocroft graduated from the Royal Northern College of Music and has secured an international reputation as one of Britain's most exciting singers in opera, concert and recital. She has recently been appointed professor of vocal studies at the Royal College of Music. She enjoys a close relationship with the Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne Festival, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich and Netherlands Opera.

Roles in these houses have included Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte*, Countess *Le nozze di Figaro*, Donna Elvira *Don Giovanni*, Desdemona *Otello*, Amelia *Simon Boccanegra*, Mimi *La bohème*, Eva *Die Meistersinger*, title roles *Madam Butterfly*, *Katya Kabanova* and *Jenůfa*, Genevieve *Ariodante*, Cleopatra *Giulio Cesare*, Jennifer *The Midsummer Marriage*, Tatyana *Eugene Onegin* and Ellen Orford *Peter Grimes*. Other highlights include Elisabetta *Don Carlos* conducted by Riccardo Chailly and directed by Willy Decker (Amsterdam); Ellen Orford with Sir Simon Rattle and Trevor Nunn (Salzburg); Countess with Bayerische Staatsoper and Zubin Mehta (tour of Japan); Tatyana and Desdemona (WNO); Governess *Turn of the Screw* (Houston Grand Opera); title role *Jenůfa* (Berlin, Barcelona, Madrid and ENO, for which she won the 2007 Laurence Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Opera). Amanda also regularly



Stephen Rooke

appears in concert and recital and has a number of recordings to her name. Future plans include Emilia Marty *The Makropoulos Case* (ENO); Ellen Orford (ROH).

Stephen Rooke Augustin Moser

Born in Newport, Gwent, Stephen Rooke studied at Royal Northern College of Music. Awards include Sir Anthony Lewis Memorial Prize, Webster Booth Award, Alexander Young Award, Curtis Gold Medal for Singing, Clonter Singer of the Year Award, 1990. At college roles included Ferrando *Così fan tutte*, Oronte *Alcina*. Stephen was awarded Eric Vietheer Prize by Glyndebourne Festival Opera. Roles include Števa *Jenůfa* (WNO); Pilade *Ermione*, Chapiltsky *Pique Dame*, Malcolm *Macbeth* (Glyndebourne Festival); Jenik *The Makropoulos Case* (GFO at Brooklyn Academy of Music); Ferrando,

Grimoaldo *Rodelinda*, Don Ottavio *Don Giovanni* (GTO); St Brioche *The Merry Widow* (ROH); Forsyth / Captain Fonnegra in the world première of David Homes' *Friend of the People*, Percy Shelley in the world première of *Monster* (Scottish Opera); Count Elemer *Arabella* (Opera North); Tito *La clemenza di Tito* (ENO); Tom Rakewell *The Rake's Progress* (ETO); Emilio *Partenope* (Early Music Company, Buxton and Convent Garden Festivals); Fenton *Falstaff*, Macduff *Macbeth* (City of Birmingham Opera); The Gardener *The Garden*, Mario Cavaradossi *Exposition of a Picture* (Mecklenburgh Opera); Sam *Susannah* (Midlands Art Centre); Musil *Broken Strings*, Pilgrim 3 *Snatched by the Gods* (Almeida Festival; Scottish Opera); Ende *Esclarmonde* (Chelsea Opera Group); Florestan *Fidelio* (Opera Theatre Company). Stephen also has extensive concert experience.



Brindley Sherratt

Brindley Sherratt Veit Pogner

Born in Lancashire, Brindley Sherratt studied at the Royal Academy of Music. Engagements include Gremin *Eugene Onegin*, Sparafucile *Rigoletto*, Jeronimus *Maskerade*, He-Ancient *The Midsummer Marriage* and Publio *La clemenza di Tito* (Royal Opera House); Balducci *Benvenuto Cellini* with Gergiev and Hobson *Peter Grimes* with Rattle (Salzburg); Rocco *Fidelio*, Superintendent Budd *Albert Herring* and Immigration Officer *Flight* (Glyndebourne Festival); Sparafucile, Sarastro *The Magic Flute*, Ramfis *Aida*, Pimen *Boris Godunov* and Claudio *Agrippina* (ENO); Commendatore *Don Giovanni* and Claudio (Santa Fe); Rocco (Seville); Sarastro (Hamburg State Opera); Gremin and Sarastro (Welsh National Opera); Philip *Don Carlos* (Opera North). In demand on the concert platform he has appeared at the



David Soar

Bregenz, Edinburgh, Lucerne and Salzburg Festivals and at the BBC Proms with leading orchestras and conductors including the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia with Pappano; Mahler Chamber Orchestra with Harding; Rotterdam Philharmonic with Bicket; Ensemble Intercontemporain with Boulez; Monteverdi Choir with Gardiner; Scottish Chamber Orchestra with Nézet-Séguin and Orchestre des Champs-Élysées with Langrée. Future engagements include Ramfis and Narbal *Les Troyens* (ROH) and Sarastro (*Opéra de Bordeaux*).

David Soar Nightwatchman

David studied organ and singing at Royal Academy of Music. After working as a freelance organist, singer and conductor, he joined the Chorus of WNO, where roles included Captain / Zaretsky *Eugene Onegin*, Doctor Grenvil *La traviata*, Bertrand

Iolanta, Sarastro *The Magic Flute*. After studying at the National Opera Studio, David returned to WNO where he is currently an Associate Artist supported by the Chris Ball Bursary and first recipient of the Parry Family Bursary. Roles for WNO include Colline *La bohème*, Zuniga / Escamillo *Carmen*, Bonze *Madam Butterfly*, Brander *The Damnation of Faust*, Bass *The Seven Deadly Sins*, Ferrando *Il trovatore*, Alidoro *La Cenerentola*, The King *Aida*, Lodovico *Otello*, Surin *The Queen of Spades*, title role *The Marriage of Figaro*, Doctor Grenvil, First Apprentice / Doctor *Wozzeck*. David is also singing Sparafucile *Rigoletto* for WNO this season.

Roles elsewhere include Banquo *Macbeth*, Zaccaria *Nabucco*, Alvisé Badoero *La Gioconda* (Opera Holland Park); Donner *Das Rheingold* (Lucerne Festival); Alfonso d'Este *Lucrezia Borgia* (Buxton Festival). Concert repertoire includes Handel's



David Stout

Messiah, *Creation*, *Elijah*; Mozart's and Brahms' *Requiem*; Beethoven's *Symphony No 9* and *Missa Solemnis*; Verdi's *Requiem*; Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* and *The Apostles*; Rossini's *Petite Messe Solennelle*; Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet*; Bach's *Mass in B minor*, *St John Passion*, *St Matthew Passion*, *Christmas Oratorio* and numerous cantatas including *Ich habe genug* for solo bass. Future plans include his ROH debut as Quinault *Adriana Lecouvreur* and Le Duc *Romeo and Juliette* (Salzburg Festival).

David Stout Konrad Nachtigall

David studied Zoology at Durham University and sang with the choir of St John's College, Cambridge before studying with Rudolf Piernay at GSMD (Principal's Prize 2006). His opera roles include Schaunard *La bohème* (ENO/WNO); Speaker *The Magic Flute*, Le Dancaïre *Carmen* (WNO); Flemish Deputy *Don Carlos* (ROH);



Bryn Terfel

Angelotti *Tosca*, Mick *Playing Away* (Bregenz Festival); Don Juan *From the House of the Dead* (Teatro Massimo di Palermo); Papageno *The Magic Flute*, Harašta *The Cunning Little Vixen* (Grange Park); Marcello *La bohème* (Mid-Wales Opera); Marullo *Rigoletto* (Holland Park); Aeneas *Dido and Aeneas* (ETO); Alfio *Cavalleria rusticana* (Endellion Festival); title roles *Falstaff*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Ulisse Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, Opera Director *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (GSMD); Forester *The Cunning Little Vixen* and Guglielmo *Così fan tutte* (BYO). Elsewhere, title role *Eugene Onegin*, Count Almaviva *The Marriage of Figaro*, Escamillo *Carmen*, Belcore *The Elixir of Love* and Prince Yeletsky *Queen of Spades*. Future plans include Nikita *Das Porträt*, Roucher *Andrea Chenier* (Bregenz Festival); Papageno *The Magic Flute*, Falke *Die Fledermaus*, Ping *Turandot* (WNO) and

Manz *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (ROH).

Bryn Terfel Hans Sachs

Bryn Terfel hails from Pantglas in North Wales and rose to prominence after winning the Kathleen Ferrier Scholarship in 1988 and then the Lieder Prize in the 1989 Cardiff Singer of the World. In 2003 he was awarded the CBE for services to opera and received the Queen's medal for music in 2006. He took the leading part in the opening ceremony of Wales Millennium Centre and has performed twice the Last Night of the Proms and sang Sweeney Todd in the re-opening of the Royal Festival Hall. Having performed in the world's great opera houses, Bryn is especially recognised for his portrayals of Figaro and Falstaff. Other roles include Wotan *Das Rheingold* / *Die Walküre*, Holländer *Der fliegende Holländer*, Méphistophélès *Faust*, title role / Leporello *Don Giovanni*,



Simon Thorpe

Jochanaan *Salome*, Scarpia *Tosca*, title role *Gianni Schicchi*, Nick Shadow *The Rake's Progress*, Wolfram *Tannhäuser*, Balstrode *Peter Grimes*, Four Villains *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, Dulcamara *L'elisir d'amore*, title role *Sweeney Todd*. He is a Grammy, Bafta, Classical Brit and Gramophone award winner. Highlights for 2010 include Scarpia and Wotan (Metropolitan Opera); Falstaff (Monte Carlo Opera debut) and a European concert tour to promote his own album *Bad Boys*.

Simon Thorpe Fritz Kothner

Born in Tasmania, Simon Thorpe studied at the Guildhall School of Music, where he was awarded the Harold Rosenthal Prize. He spent a year at the National Opera Studio. A finalist in the Kathleen Ferrier Competition, he now studies with Robert Dean. Engagements include Escamillo *Carmen*, Pacheco *Inés de Castro*



Andrew Tortise

(Scottish Opera); Zurga *Les pêcheurs des perles*, Alfio *Cavalleria rusticana* (Dorset Opera); Zurga, Lescaut *Manon Lescaut*, Sharpless *Madama Butterfly* (Opera Holland Park); Escamillo, Giorgio Germont *La traviata* (ETO); Donald Billy Budd, Belcore *The Elixir of Love*, Foreman *Jenůfa*, Marcello *La bohème*, Ford *Falstaff*, Pasha Selim *The Abduction from the Seraglio*, Scarpia *Tosca* (WNO); Duke *Roméo et Juliette*, Kuligin *Katya Kabanova*, Sharpless, Marullo *Rigoletto* (Opera North); Guglielmo *Le Villi* (Chelsea Opera Group); Sharpless, Scarpia (Lyric Opera, Dublin); Dr Falke *Die Fledermaus* (London Lyric Opera); *Eternal Light: A Requiem* (Rambert Dance Company). International engagements include The Steward *Flight*, Roucher *Andrea Chénier* (State Opera of South Australia); The Forester *Cunning Little Vixen*, Private Willis *Iolanthe*, Montano

Otello (Opera Australia); Sharpless (Singapore Lyric Opera); Anckarström *Un ballo in maschera* (Cork Opera 2005). Recordings include Second Mate / Arthur Jones *Billy Budd* with Kent Nagano and the Hallé (Erato). Future engagements include Escamillo *Carmen* (State Opera of South Australia), Michele *Il tabarro* (English Touring Opera), John the Butcher *Hugh the Drover* (New Sussex Opera).

Andrew Tortise David

Andrew Tortise was a choral scholar at Wells Cathedral before graduating from Trinity College, Cambridge in 2002. Andrew made his opera debut in 2004 as Apollo *Semele* (Théâtre des Champs-Élysée, Paris). Since then roles have included Marzio *Mitridate* (Salzburg Festival); Ferrando *Così fan tutte* and roles in *Poppea* (Opéra National de Lyon); Eurimaco *The Return of Ulysses* (WNO); lead tenor role

in Mernier *Frühlings Erwachen* (La Monnaie); Lucano *Poppea* conducted by Emmanuelle Haïm; Bach *St Matthew Passion* in Katie Mitchell's new staged version (Glyndebourne Festival); Le Chevalier de Danois *Armide* (Théâtre des Champs-Élysée); Jenik *The Makropoulos Case* (Netherlands Opera); Robert in Richard Jones' production of David Sawyer's new opera *Skin Deep* (Opera North; Bregenz Festival).

Andrew is equally at home on the concert platform and has made a number of recordings. Recent and forthcoming engagements include Novice *Billy Budd* (Netherlands Opera); Ferrando (Glyndebourne on Tour). Future concert engagements include debuts with English Concert and Harry Bicket and with Concert Spirituel and Hervé Niquet singing Handel; a tour of Spain of *Messiah* (Academy of



Raymond Very

Ancient Music); recitals at Aldeburgh Festival with Malcolm Martineau and in Bruges with Richard Egarr.

Raymond Very Walther von Stolzing

Raymond Very hails from Pennsylvania. In the US, he has performed major roles with the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Houston Grand Opera, San Diego Opera, Seattle Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Washington National Opera, New York City Opera, Tulsa Opera, Opera Omaha, Opera Theater of St Louis, Portland Opera, Washington Summer Opera and Pittsburgh Opera. He is also in high demand internationally, having performed with the Royal Opera House Covent Garden; Bayerische Staatsoper; Maggio Musicale, Florence; Salzburg Festival; Wiener Staatsoper; Theater an der Wien; Norwegian Opera; Oper Frankfurt; Deutsche Oper Berlin; Staatsoper Stuttgart; Bilbao Opera, Spain.



Owen Webb

Repertoire includes title roles in *Tales of Hoffmann*, *The Rake's Progress*, *The Student Prince*, *Damnation of Faust*, *Stolzing Die Meistersinger*, Don Juan in Schulhoff's *Flammen*, Don José *Carmen*, Lensky *Eugene Onegin*, Des Grieux *Manon*, Rodolfo *La bohème*, Alfredo *La traviata*, Duke *Rigoletto*, Tamino *The Magic Flute*, Matteo *Arabella*, Boris *Katya Kabanova*, Jenik *The Bartered Bride*, Male Chorus *The Rape of Lucretia*, Alwa *Lulu*, Andres *Wozzeck*, Cassio *Otello*, Christian *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Raymond has appeared in concert with many leading orchestras in the US and worldwide including New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Aspen Music Festival, Amsterdam VARA Radio Orchestra, Vienna Radio Orchestra and Pittsburgh Symphony.

Owen Webb Hermann Ortel

Owen was brought up in Pontlliw, South Wales. He studied at

Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama with Beatrice Unsworth where he won numerous awards. His present teacher is Stephen Roberts. At Welsh National Opera, he was an Associate Artist and the recipient of the Schäfer and Chris Ball burseries during 2005/2006. Roles include First Apprentice *Wozzeck*, Dancaire *Carmen*, baritone *Seven Deadly Sins*, Schaunard *La bohème*, Masetto *Don Giovanni*, Marullo *Rigoletto*, Cappadocian *Salome*, 1st Officer *The Carmelites*, Kuligin *Katya Kabanova*, Helmsman *Tristan und Isolde*, Official Registrar *Madam Butterfly*. Other roles include Sweeney Todd, Papageno *The Magic Flute*, Zurga *The Pearl Fishers*, Escamillo *Carmen*, Guglielmo *Così fan tutte*, Dr Falke *Die Fledermaus*, Seraphin *Veronique*, Lord Tristan *Martha*. In addition to main house productions, Owen performs and leads many workshops for WNO MAX in both mainstream and special needs. Recent projects

include *Through Listening Eyes* which was made into a DVD and won Best short film at the Calgary Film Festival, Canada and *The Merman King*, which has also been made into a DVD. Owen also has extensive concert and recording experience.

Future engagements include *Eyes Open* (short opera film) and *Dumbworld* (new production) by Brian Irvine (Belfast); *The Song Contest of the Birds and Beasts* (new commission) by Mervyn Burtch and Harlequin *Ariadne auf Naxos* (WNO).

Orchestra of WELSH NATIONAL OPERA

Leader David Adams

First Violin

David Adams
Lowri Porter
André Swanepoel
Martin Kegelmann
Robert Tonkin
Susan Plessner
Jane Atkinson
Peter Lilley
Mathias Maurer
Emma Menzies
Catherine Hings
Christiana Mavron
Stephen Payne

Second Violin

Donald McNaught
Ann Jones
Gillian Bradley
Emma Waller
Luke Roskams
Marilyn Shewring
Antony Tarlton
Jane West
Deborah Neath
James Slater

Viola

Philip Heyman
Cédric David
Barry Friend
Stephen Lloyd
Louise Brodrick
Audrey Barr
Yan Beattie /
Louise Hawker /
Zoë Matthews
Ross Cohen

Cello

Pal Banda /
Rosie Biss
Christopher Hodges
Arthur Davies
Simon Davison
Alexandra Robinson
Dewi Watkins
Andrew Elliott
Juliet Tomlinson

Double Bass

Dominic Worsley
Mikeal Price
Mary Condliffe
Simon Phillips
Neil Watson
Peter Devlin

Flute

Jonathan Burgess
Nicola Downton
Barbara Brown

Piccolo

Barbara Brown

Oboe

Catriona Mackinnon /
Daniel Bates
David Probert

Clarinet

Leslie Craven
Daniel Rye

Bassoon

Stephen Marsden
Christopher Vale

Horn

Angus West
Donald Clist
David Shillaw
James Mildred
Neil Mitchell
Jenny Cox

Trumpet

Dean Wright
Martin McHale
Robert Johnston

Trombone

Roger Cutts
John Hendy

Bass Trombone

Alan Swain

Tuba

Jonathan Riches

Timpani

Patrick King

Percussion

Andrew Cookson
Jonathan Helm
Philip Girling

Harp

Katherine Thomas

Organ

Stephen Wood /
James Southall

Stage Trumpets

Robert Ferriman
Jonathan Mainwaring
Simon Sturgeon Clegg
Martin Rogers
Gavin Wells
Adrian Wilson /
Cameron Todd

Steerhorn

Johanna Hirst

Stage Percussion

Anna Newman
Nicholas Baron

Chorus of WELSH NATIONAL OPERA

Chorus Master Stephen Harris

CHORUS

Sopranos

Meriel Andrew
Anitra Blaxhall
Paula Bradbury
Megan Llewellyn Dorke
Claire Hampton
Fiona Harrison
Rosie Hay
Samantha Hay
Emma Mary Llewellyn
Laura Pooley

Mezzos

Amanda Baldwin
Neda Bizzarri
Alison Dunne

Jessica Handley Greaves
Helen Greenaway
Dorothy Hood
Sian Meinir
Nicola Morgan
Sarah Pope

Tenors

Simon Crosby Buttle
Michael Clifton-Thompson
Simon Curtis
Paul Gyton
Philip Lloyd Holtam
Howard Kirk
Huw Llywelyn
Gareth Lloyd

Philip Pooley
Cârthaigh Quill

Basses

Julian Boyce
Laurence Cole
Jasey Hall
Martin Lloyd
Philip Lloyd-Evans
Alastair Moore
George Newton-Fitzgerald
Jack O'Kelly
James Robinson-May
Stephen Wells

EXTRA CHORUS

Sopranos

Anna Brittain
Paula Greenwood
Helen Massey
Angharad Morgan
Frances Morrison-Allen
Shuna Scott Sendall
Charlotte Spink
Christine Thompson

Mezzos

Christine Bryan
Daniella Ehrlich
Alison Henson Jones
Carolyn Jackson
Karen Murray

Louise Ratcliffe
Kelly Sharp
Kate Woolveridge

Tenors

Ieuan Davies
Simon McEnery
Mark Cartwright
Nick Hardy
Kevin Matthews
Paul Milosavljevic
Richard Monk
Tim Ochala-Greenough
Ian Priestley
Richard Reaville
Brett Robinson

Joe Roche
Luther Vaughan
Gary Watkins
Ian Yemm

Basses

Gavin Bailey
Ashley Bremner
Adam Leftwich
Gareth Long
Peter Massocchi
Geraint Miles
Gareth Rhys-Davies
Ian Wilson Pope
Dyfed Wyn-Evans

THE APPRENTICES

Sopranos

Claire Hampton
Fiona Harrison
Samantha Hay
Laura Pooley

Mezzos

Amanda Baldwin
Neda Bizzarri
Alison Dunne
Sarah Pope

Tenors

Michael Clifton-Thompson
Simon Curtis
Philip Lloyd Holtam
Howard Kirk
Huw Llywelyn
Philip Pooley