

CALGARY OPERA

Opera in Context

Das Rheingold Resources

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Wagner's Complicated Legacy

Stephen Fry – Wagner & Me

(Wavelength Films in association with the BBC, 2010)

A worthy introduction to Wagner's life and complicated legacy, hosted by Jewish actor, director, and writer Stephen Fry during his first visit to the Bayreuth Opera House and Festival.

Alex Ross on the Wagner Vortex

(New Yorker Festival, 2012)

<https://www.newyorker.com/video/watch/alex-ross-on-the-wagner-vortex>

WAGNER: The Terrible Man and His Truthful Art

(University of Toronto Press, 1999)

A worthy introduction to Wagner's life and complicated legacy, hosted by Jewish actor, director, and writer Stephen Fry and documenting his first visit to the Bayreuth Opera House and Festival.

Aspects of Wagner

(Oxford University Press, 2009)

A concise and insightful analysis of the ways in which Wagner has inspired both greater adulation and more intense loathing than any other composer.

The Basics

Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung: A Companion

Edited by Stewart Spencer and Barry Millington

(London: Thames and Hudson, 1993)

This is the must-have/latest-and-greatest translation of *Ring* Cycle libretti with extensive footnotes, rejected texts, and essays worth pondering.

The Tristan Chord

By Bryan Magee

(New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000)

Dive into one of the most enlightening explorations of Wagner's work and its relationship to 19th-century philosophy, with a particular emphasis on Schopenhauer's influence.

Wagner's Ring: Turning the Sky Round

By M. Owen Lee

(New York: Limelight Editions, 1998)

A brief and extremely illuminating overview of each of the operas in the *Ring* cycle based on Father Owen Lee's intermission radio features for The Metropolitan Opera.

The Sorcerer of Bayreuth: Richard Wagner, his work and his world

By Barry Millington

(New York: Oxford University Press, 2012)

A comprehensive and illuminating overview of the essential aspects Wagner's life and works through up-to-date specifics that inspire further inquiry. An eminently enjoyable read.

A Few Curiosities

Ragnarök, the End of the Gods

By A. S. Byatt

(New York: Canongate, 2011)

A modern-ish retelling of the Norse Sagas – a great Sunday afternoon read.

Expecting Someone Taller

By Tom Holt

(London: Orbit, 1987)

Are curses meant to be broken? When Malcolm Fisher runs over a badger, who it turns out is Fafner & Fasolt's little brother, Malcolm inherits the Tarnhelm and the Ring and unleashes a maelstrom of dramatic consequences. Thoroughly tongue-in-cheek and laugh-out-loud.

Wagner & Co.

Cosima Wagner, the Lady of Bayreuth

By Oliver Hilmes, translated by Stewart Sepncer

(New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010)

The devil is in the details, and many in this book have never seen the light of day. From meticulous research in the Bayreuth archives emerges an engaging biography and revealing portrait of Wagner's second wife.

The Wagner Clan, the Saga of Germany's Most Illustrious and Infamous Family

By Jonathan Carr

(New York: Grove Press, 2007)

Complex legacies herein – and that’s an understatement. From the 1848 uprisings to present-day Bayreuth, this is a compelling tale of the ebb and flow of a German nation and one of its most infamous families.

Winifred Wagner, a Life at the Heart of Hitler’s Bayreuth

By Brigitte Hamann, translated by Alan Bance
(New York: Harcourt, 2005)

A most informative study of the axis of evil that was Wagner-Bayreuth-Hitler, this biography of Wagner’s powerful and misguided daughter-in-law draws on previously unavailable sources and is well worth a read.

Bayreuth, a History of the Wagner Festival

By Frederic Spotts
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994)

A rather honest and extensive history of the operatic festival founded by Richard Wagner in 1876, “warts” and all. Find out why Bayreuth is more than an opera house, a place of pilgrimage, and a living museum.

Richard Wagner, Self-Promotion and the Making of a Brand

By Nicholas Vazsonyi
(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Before social media and 24-hour reporting, there was the promotional powerhouse of Richard Wagner. This succinct, scholarly work shows how he developed a unique and long-lasting niche for himself and his works.

Worth Exploring – On Myth

The Power of Myth, with Bill Moyers

By Joseph Campbell
(New York: Anchor Books, 1991)

Contextualizes the use of myth as a mode of creative expression throughout history and across the globe. Discover what the *Ring* has in common with other times, places, and peoples.

Athena Sings, Wagner and the Greeks

By M. Owen Lee
(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003)

An easy-to-digest book that examines the pervasive influence of classical Greece on our quintessentially German composer, with a focused exploration of Greek drama’s influence on the structural unity and dramatic credibility of the *Ring*.

Wagner’s Ring Cycle and the Greeks

By Daniel H. Foster
(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

An in-depth study of Wagner's use of Greek aesthetics and a thorough analysis of the ways in which he incorporates three of the most important poetic genres – epic, lyric, and drama – in his *magnum opus*.

Worth Exploring – Sources

Wagner's Ring in 1848

By Edward R. Haymes
(New York: Camden House, 2010)

This slender volume includes new translations of Wagner's first draft of *The Nibelung Myth* and the verse libretto of *Siegfried's Death*, which would eventually become *Götterdämmerung*.

Richard Wagner and the Nibelungs

By Elizabeth Magee
(New York: Oxford University Press, 1990)

A detailed exploration of the medieval sources, their 19th-century editions, and associated contemporary scholarship that influenced Wagner's creation of the *Ring* libretti.

Worth Exploring – Interpretation

Finding an Ending, Reflections on Wagner's Ring

By Philip Kitcher and Richard Schacht
(New York: Oxford University Press, 2004)

Two present-day philosophers focus on the *Ring's* life-death paradox and how different forms of love, freedom, heroism, authority, and judgment are explored and tested throughout the work.

Interpreting Wagner

By James Treadwell
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003)

Wagner's works inspire a seemingly endless variety of interpretation. Enchantment, seduction, heroism are a few of this study's lines of inquiry that encourage new and/or deeper connections.

Wagner and the Art of the Theatre

By Patrick Carnegy
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006)

Is it possible to stage a perfect *Ring*? This book is the first comprehensive overview of the history of Wagner onstage, and a helpful examination of the intricacies of producing opera's Mt. Everest.

The Perfect Wagnerite

By George Bernard Shaw
(New York: Dover Publications, 1967 reprint of 4th Edition)

Originally published in London in 1898, G. B. Shaw has provided one of the earliest philosophical commentaries on Wagner's *Ring*. Still relevant today.

Worth Exploring - Media

Wagner: *Der Ring des Nibelungen* Solti Super Deluxe Edition (Decca Records, 2012)

To celebrate Sir Georg Solti's centenary, Decca offers a comprehensive *Ring* collection that includes a few things not available elsewhere. It's a limited edition and a great investment for inveterate collectors.

Wagner: *Der Ring des Nibelungen*

Karl Böhm, Bayreuth (Decca Records, latest release 2010)

CD Box Set: A standout recording made live at the Bayreuth Festival from 1966 – 67. Lots of energy, a faster pace than Solti, but insightful conducting makes this a good option in the box set category.

Der Ring des Nibelungen

Herbert von Karajan, Berlin Philharmonic (Deutsche Grammophon, latest release 1998)

CD Box Set: A different approach than Solti and Böhm, this recording made between 1966 – 70 is lyrical, dramatic without bombast, and well-cast. A studio recording in stereo.

Wagner: *The Ring Cycle*

Reginald Goodall, English National Opera (Chandos, 2001)

A live recording, sung in English, and conducted with sharp attention to detail.

The Golden Ring

Sir Georg Solti, Vienna Philharmonic at the Sofiensaal in Vienna (Decca, 2007)

A documentary that captures the highs, lows, and laughs of Sir Georg Solti's landmark stereo recording.

Wagner: *Der Ring des Nibelungen*

James Levine, Fabio Luisi and Robert LePage, Metropolitan Opera (Deutsche Grammophon, 2012)

The recent, and controversial, production featuring Canadian director Robert LePage's "machine." Even if you're not interested in acquiring the full set, the documentary DVD "Wagner's Dream" is fascinating.

Wagner: *Der Ring des Nibelungen*

James Levine and Otto Schenk, Metropolitan Opera (Deutsche Grammophon, 2002)

Old Faithful. Great singing, a cogent interpretation, and a traditional production.

Wagner: *Der Ring des Nibelungen*

Pierre Boulez and Patrice Chereau, Bayreuth Festival (Deutsche Grammophon, released 2005)

Not at all aligned with Teutonic tradition, this centenary production is one of the most visually engaging and dramatically important interpretations in *Ring* history.