

Experience Richard Wagner – A Symposium in Abu Dhabi

Tuesday, 29 January 2019

Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi

14:00 – 14:15pm	Opening remarks by H.E. Ambassador <u>Ernst Peter Fischer</u>
14:15 – 15:00	Lecture by <u>Prof. Dr. Ulrich Berner (University of Bayreuth): <i>Wagner and Islam</i></u> , with Q&A.
15:00 – 15:45	Lecture by <u>Dr. Ronald Perlwitz (Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi): <i>The Romantic Influence of Richard Wagner's Ring</i></u> , with Q&A.
15:45 – 16:00	Coffee break
16:00 – 16:45	Lecture by <u>Prof. Dr. Jeongwon Joe (University of Cincinnati): <i>Wagner and Film</i></u> , with Q&A.
16.45 – 17:30	Panel discussion with Minister of State H.E. Zaki Nusseibeh, Katharina Wagner, <u>Prof. Dr. Ulrich Berner</u> , <u>Dr. Ronald Perlwitz</u> , <u>Prof. Dr. Jeongwon Joe</u> (moderator: <u>Dr. Ronald Perlwitz</u>)
17:30 – 18:00	Coffee break with snacks
18:00 – 19:50	Film screening: <i>The Life and Works of Richard Wagner</i> , Germany 1913, dir.: Carl Froelich, runtime 90', German intertitles with English translation Introduction by <u>Prof. Dr. Jeongwon Joe</u>
20:00 – 23:30	Film screening: <i>Ludwig</i> , Italy, France, Germany, 1973, dir: Luchino Visconti, runtime 238', Italian with English subtitles

Speakers



**Prof. Dr. Ulrich Berner,
(Universität Bayreuth)**

Ulrich Berner is Professor (emeritus) of Religious Studies at the Faculty of Cultural Studies at the University of Bayreuth. He studied Theology, Philosophy, History of Religions, and Indology. Before moving to Bayreuth, he taught at the universities of Göttingen, Hamburg, Bonn, and Bremen. He is an affiliated senior fellow at the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS). His own research interest focuses mainly on European religious history from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance and the appropriation of classical mythology and philosophy, and interreligious dialogue in medieval and early modern times. Another focus of interest is Method and Theory in the Study of Religion, as distinct from Theology. As a university teacher he designs interdisciplinary seminars in cooperation with colleagues from various disciplines, such as Islamic studies, musicology, theatre Studies and ecological modeling. His current research project, carried out with colleagues from Anthropology, Sociology of Religion, and Islamic Studies, focuses on Sacred Space in Durban and beyond.

His recent publications include:

„Wagner und Bayreuth. Religion auf der Opernbühne?“, in: Adrian Hermann/Jürgen Mohn (Hg.), *Orte der europäischen Religionsgeschichte*, Würzburg 2015, 185-207.

„The Bishop and the Politician. Intra- and Inter-Field Dynamics in 19th century Natal, South Africa“, in: Magnus Echtler/Asonzeh Ukah (eds.), *Bourdieu in Africa. Exploring the Dynamics of Religious Fields*, Leiden/Boston 2016, 139-165.

„Das Christentum in der Antike. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Perspektive“, in: Klaus Fitschen et al. (Hg.), *Kirchengeschichte und Religionswissenschaft. Methoden und Fallbeispiele*, Leipzig 2018, 135-154

Abstract

Wagner and Islam

It is well known that Richard Wagner was deeply interested in and well informed about Buddhism, having read, for instance, the works of French Indologist Eugene Burnouf. During his stay at Paris Wagner also developed an interest in Islam, especially in the encounter of Islam and Christianity in medieval Southern Italy and Sicily. His interest resulted in the draft for the opera *Die Sarazenin* (The Saracen Woman) dealing with the last phase of Christian-Muslim coexistence and cooperation in this area. Although never finished and composed, this draft represents an important step in the development of Wagner's conception of religion, leading ultimately to the *Parsifal* and the theoretical essay on *Religion and Art*. It seems reasonable and rewarding to take *Die Sarazenin* as the point of departure for reflections along two different lines: first, by relating Wagner's presentation of Islam to the historical context of Islamic/Christian coexistence in medieval times; second, by relating his final conception of religion to recent versions of Islam that are emerging in the Islamic/Christian encounter in modern times.



Dr. Ronald Perlwitz

(Head of Music and Arts Department, Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi)

From the beginning of his studies Dr. Ronald Perlwitz has always combined his interest for music with his interest for literature. In 1998, he obtained the Agrégation for German in France and in 1999 began teaching at the University of Picardy in Amiens, France, for the Department of German Language and Literature. His thesis, obtained in 2003, is based on the works of the German Romantic writer and composer E.T.A. Hoffmann. In 2004, Dr. Perlwitz was named Associate Professor at the Sorbonne University in Paris (Paris IV).

In 2006, he accepted the mission to Abu Dhabi and played a key role in the launch and establishment of Paris Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi. Since 2012, he has also been teaching at University of Bayreuth, Germany, where he obtained his postdoctoral lecture qualification. His main research field is German Literature and Music of the Romantic Age, Comparative Literature, Aesthetics of Music and Opera History. Since 2014, Dr. Ronald Perlwitz is Head of Music Programme at the Department of Culture and Tourism in Abu Dhabi and responsible for the Abu Dhabi Classics Season, Bait Al Oud Concert Series, Emirati Music Series, and the Umsiyat Concerts. He is also co-founder of the Richard Wagner Society Abu Dhabi.

Abstract

The Romantic Influence of Richard Wagner's Ring

With *The Ring of the Nibelung* Richard Wagner composed an epic cycle of four musical dramas in the spirit of the Greek tragedy. The very idea to revive the Nordic Mythology and the Nibelungenlied nevertheless emanates from the thinking of the German Romanticism around Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel and Novalis at the end of the 18th Century. The conference will focus on the romantic influence on the *Ring* in general and on *The Valkyrie* in particular and will also analyze how the romantic interest for the Arabic World translates into the genesis of *The Valkyrie* and into the way Wagner revisits his mythological sources.



Prof. Dr. Jeongwon Joe
(University of Cincinnati)

Jeongwon Joe is Associate Professor of Musicology at the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music. Her primary areas of specialization are contemporary music and film music, especially, the relationship between opera and film. Dr. Joe is the author of *Opera as Soundtrack* (Ashgate, 2013; Paperback edition and e-Book published by Routledge, 2016). She is also co-editor of *Between Opera and Cinema* (Routledge, 2001) and *Wagner and Cinema* (Indiana University Press, 2010), whose Spanish translation was published by Fórcola Ediciones in 2018. She serves on the editorial board of *Cambridge Opera Journal* and an associate editor of *The Journal of Film Music*. She published articles on such topics as Bill Viola's *The Tristan Project*, Milos Forman's film *Amadeus*, Philip Glass's opera *La Belle et la bête*, Gérard Corbiau's film *Farinelli*, and David Lynch's film *Blue Velvet*. Her current research projects include "Voice Without Bodies; Bodies Without Voice: The Symbolic Real in Opera," an essay to be published in the collection *Slavoj Žižek and Music* and another essay "Authorial Power of the Voice and Music in Chan-wook Park's *Oldboy*" to be published in *Music in Action Films: Sounds Like Action!* edited by James Buhler and Mark Durand.

Abstract

Wagner and Film

W. Stephen Bush noted, "Every man or woman in charge of the music of a moving picture theatre is consciously or unconsciously a disciple or follower of Richard Wagner" (quoted in Matthew Wilson Smith's article "American Valkyries: Richard Wagner, E. W. Griffith, and the Birth of Classical Cinema," p. 229). My lecture focuses on cinematic elements in Wagner's operas, including *The Flying Dutchman* and *Parsifal*, and how they influenced certain film directors and film music composers. For instance, I argue that the instructions for the Dutchman's entrance song in Act 1 foreshadowed the "Mickey-mousing" technique in film, as they read "... the first notes of the ritornello in the aria accompany the Dutchman's first step on shore; ... with the first crotchet of the third bar he takes his second step, ... the third and fourth steps coincide with the notes of the eighth and tenth bars" (quoted in Mary Ann Smart's book *Mimomania: Music and Gesture in Nineteenth-century Opera*, p. 177). I also explore different effects of Wagner's music in certain films, including Jean Negulesco's *Humoresque* (1946), Jonathan Glazer's *Birth* (2004), and Lars von Trier's *Melancholia* (2011). Bill Viola's *The Tristan Project* (2004) is not a film but Viola's video images serve as the visual component of the opera, replacing live onstage performance. I discuss this work to demonstrate how Viola's visual temporality supports Wagner's musical temporality based on my interview with Viola.



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