

WIDE OPEN OPERA

WAGNER'S

# TRISTAN & ISOLDE

2012

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# TRISTAN UND ISOLDE

**Drama in three acts by Richard Wagner**  
**Sung in German with English surtitles**  
**RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra**  
**Chorus of Wide Open Opera**

**30 SEPTEMBER | 3 OCTOBER | 6 OCTOBER 2012**

**Bord Gáis Energy Theatre**

This production originated at Welsh National Opera and was first performed on 13 February 1993 at New Theatre, Cardiff.

The performance on 30 September will be live-streamed on [platformireland.ie](http://platformireland.ie) to a worldwide audience. A recording of the performance, produced by Still Point, will be broadcast on Saturday 24 November on RTÉ lyric fm. A documentary by Athena Media about the production will be broadcast on Friday 23 November on RTÉ lyric fm.

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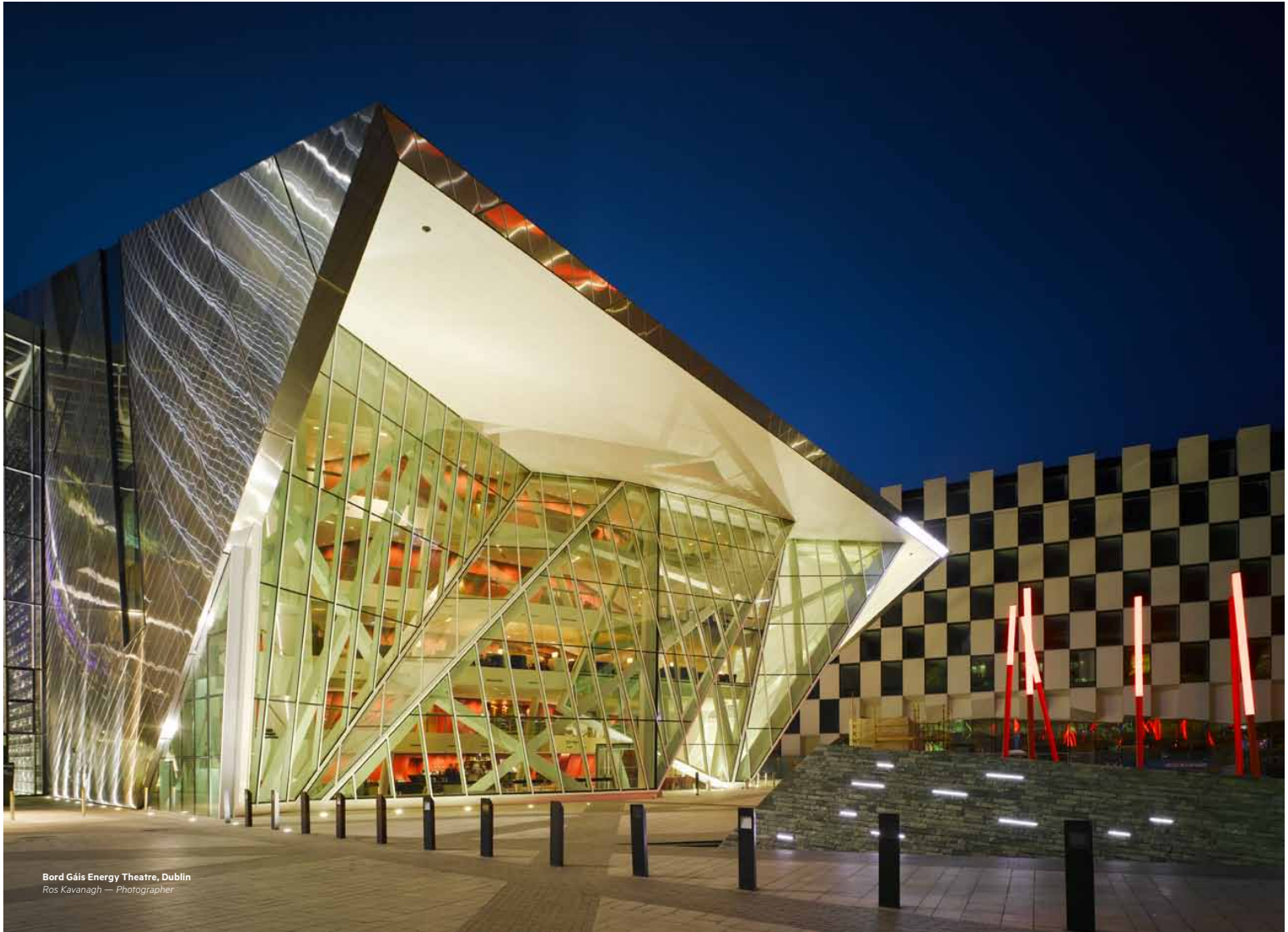
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Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, Dublin  
Ros Kavanagh — Photographer



# WELCOME



I'm delighted to welcome you to tonight's performance of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, the inaugural production of Wide Open Opera. This is an exciting moment for all of us involved in this new undertaking. Not alone does it mark the launch of our new opera company, but it is also an opportunity to perform a work that is one of the supreme achievements of all opera – a masterpiece that audiences have not encountered in Ireland for almost fifty years.

In launching *Wide Open Opera*, it is our ambition to provide unique and imaginative experiences for opera enthusiasts here in Ireland. We hope to capture the creative energies of Irish artists and practitioners including singers, musicians, composers, writers, theatre practitioners and other creative artists. We plan to produce works that will be familiar to audiences, as well as new and challenging experiences. We hope to work on many scales and in many contexts. Our choice of *Tristan und Isolde* as a starting point is a bold statement of our ambition and our confidence in the broad spectrum of artists, practitioners and audiences that all play a role in opera.

When Wagner conceived *Tristan und Isolde*, similar to many of his other mature works, he turned to ancient legends as a source for the story. In this case, it is the mythical Irish princess Isolde, a figure from the Arthurian legends of the 12th century, which was his starting point. In *Tristan und*

*Isolde* there are many elements that are familiar from our history: tense relationships between England and Ireland, betrayal, violence, war, revenge and death. But despite this backdrop, the central focus, as ever for Wagner, is the human condition: love, frailty, transgression, disappointment, yearning and redemption.

Despite a tense beginning to Tristan and Isolde's relationship, the love potion unlocks both characters' inner feelings and propels them headlong into a passionate relationship that causes havoc for those around them, and ultimately death for themselves. Along the way Wagner's musical score luxuriates in a sea of expressiveness, with passionate love scenes, dramatically propulsive episodes and, above all, an aching sense of longing – representing the impossibility of Tristan and Isolde's love. This longing is uniquely captured through new harmonies that Wagner explores which mean that from the opening notes of Act I, nothing sounds fully resolved until the closing bars of Act III.

Night and Day are central elements, frequently referred to by Tristan and Isolde. In the darkness of night everything is possible. Day represents emptiness, distance, frustration; it is spiteful, envious and boring. Night is a welcome visitor. Tristan and Isolde's love is conducted by night. Through eternal night (death), they will finally be fully and permanently united. This glorification of night over day is entirely the opposite of earlier German Romantics – particularly Beethoven, many of whose works involve light triumphing over darkness.

Musically, Wagner's score is astonishingly rich. It calls for a large orchestra, with many offstage instruments. Wagner uses the palette available to him to great effect. Rich string writing, often underpinned by horns, creates a warm and romantic atmosphere. Woodwinds featuring prominent cor anglais and bass clarinet highlight the sense of longing; trumpets and trombones are ever present for the death motif, and percussion and harp are

used sparingly to highlight particular dramatic and emotional moments. I am especially delighted that this rich score will be lovingly realised tonight by the wonderful RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, one of our major partners in this project.

Wide Open Opera is pleased to present a tremendous roster of singers. Our cast is led by Miriam Murphy (Ireland) and Lars Cleveman (Sweden) in the title roles. Miriam is one of Ireland's leading dramatic sopranos. She has sung Wagner for several international companies, but is appearing for the first time in a major Wagner role here in Ireland. Lars has sung Tristan at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, and will appear in the Metropolitan Opera, New York, as Siegfried in 2013. Imelda Drumm (Ireland) makes her Wagner debut as Brangäne, while Canadian baritone Brett Polegato and Austrian bass Manfred Hemm make their first appearances in Ireland. Our cast also involves four other leading Irish singers: Owen Gilhooly, Eugene Ginty, Eamonn Mulhall and Gavan Ring.

These nine artists represent the visible face of our *Tristan* performances. But behind these individuals lies a team of close to two hundred people who have contributed to tonight's performance. These include the creative team, the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, the Chorus of Wide Open Opera, the music staff, our technical team including stage managers, stage technicians and supervisors, flies operators, lighting personnel, wardrobe staff, wigs and make-up artists, props supervisors and small teams of administrative, logistic, marketing and PR supports. I would particularly like to acknowledge the expert work of Gavin O'Sullivan, Michael Kyle and Diego Fasciati, who have been central to the delivery of this production. I would also like to thank the Board of Wide Open Opera for their excellent advice and guidance.

Our partners in Bord Gáis Energy Theatre, particularly Stephen Faloon and Claire Whelan, have been instrumental in helping conceive this production and position it for success.

Their belief at an early stage was vital. We are most grateful to Dublin Theatre Festival for their collaboration and support and to our many media associates: RTÉ lyric fm, Athena Media, Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, Still Point and platformireland.ie.

The Arts Council is the primary supporter of tonight's production. When the Council adopted a new funding programme for opera productions in 2012, I'm not sure if they were expecting something of Wagnerian proportions as one of their first applications. But their response was purposeful and bold, and I believe it represents a new confidence in the creativity and capacity of Irish opera practitioners.

All of our preparations for tonight's performances are designed to offer you, our audience, a unique experience. You are the final piece of our jigsaw. While some who attend *Tristan und Isolde* will be Wagner enthusiasts, it is likely that for many others, this could be their first experience of a live Wagner opera. For everybody that attends, we hope that tonight will provide a moving and memorable experience, and one that will stay with you for a long time to come.

**Fergus Sheil**

Artistic Director—Wide Open Opera

# CAST

## IN ORDER OF VOCAL APPEARANCE

Sailor	Eamonn Mulhall
Isolde	Miriam Murphy
Brangäne	Imelda Drumm
Kurwenal	Brett Polegato
Tristan	Lars Clevean
Melot	Eugene Ginty
King Marke	Manfred Hemm
Shepherd	Owen Gilhooly
Steersman	Gavan Ring
Chorus of sailors, knights and attendants	

# CREDITS

Director and Designer	Yannis Kokkos
Conductor	Fergus Sheil
Revival Director	Peter Watson
Original Lighting Designer	Guido Levi
Lighting realised by	Paul Woodfield
Original Assistant Designer	Muriel Trembleau

Chorus Director & Assistant Conductor	Andrew Synnott
Répétiteur	Rupert Dussmann
Fight Director	Eimear O'Grady
Stage Manager	Julia Carson Sims
Deputy Stage Manager	Diarmuid O'Quigley
Assistant Stage Managers	Bronagh Doherty, Conleth Stanley
Executive Producer	Gavin O'Sullivan
Company Manager	Diego Fasciati
Production Manager	Michael Kyle
Chief Electrician	Kevin Smith
Wardrobe Supervisor	Mary Sheehan
Assistant Wardrobe Supervisor	Nicola Burke
Wigs and Make-up Supervisor	Patsy Giles
Master Carpenter	John Hayel
Head Flyman	John Riemer
Props Supervisor	Bronagh Doherty
Trainee Music Staff	Killian Farrell Karen Ni Bhroin

Scenery built and painted by Cardiff Theatrical Services Ltd  
 Properties and costumes made by Welsh National Opera  
 Engineering by Metalmasters (UK) Ltd Plymouth  
 Armour by Robert Allsopp  
 Additional Costumes by Classic Cuts  
 English surtitles by Simon Rees  
 Programme edited by Aine Sheil

The performance will last approximately 5 hours 10 minutes  
 During the performances on 30 September and 6 October,  
 there will be an interval of 25 minutes after Act I and an interval  
 of 45 minutes after Act II. During the performance on 3 October,  
 there will be an interval of 45 minutes after Act I and an interval  
 of 25 minutes after Act II.

Members of the audience are requested to turn off all mobile  
 phones, pagers and digital alarms.

Wide Open Opera would like to thank Newpark Music Centre,  
 Goethe-Institut Dublin and Trinity Church Network at The  
 Exchange for rehearsal facilities and to acknowledge the  
 assistance of the Abbey Theatre, Wagner Society of Ireland  
 and Christopher McQuaid.

# SYNOPSIS

## AT A GLANCE

### Background story

Before the opera opens, Irish princess Isolde is engaged to Morold, an Irish warrior. Cornwall lies under a bond of fealty to Ireland until Tristan, nephew of King Marke of Cornwall, kills Morold. During the fight, Tristan is wounded. He is nursed back to health by Isolde, who realises that he is the killer of her fiancé. Isolde wants to avenge Morold's death, but cannot bring herself to do so because Tristan gazes longingly into her eyes. Once healed, Tristan proposes that King Marke should marry Isolde and make peace with Ireland. King Marke agrees, and Tristan travels to Ireland again to bring Isolde to Cornwall.

### ACT I

The opera opens with Tristan and Isolde's journey from Ireland to Cornwall. Isolde orders her maid Brangäne to prepare a death potion that she and Tristan will share. Instead, Brangäne prepares a love potion. When Tristan and Isolde drink it, their suppressed desire for one another becomes apparent, and they realise that they are in love.

### ACT II

Tristan and Isolde's love affair continues in Cornwall, but they are betrayed by Melot and discovered by King Marke, who is deeply hurt. Tristan allows Melot to wound him, and is then taken by his faithful attendant Kurwenal to his native Kareol in Brittany.

### ACT III

Near to death, Tristan waits in Kareol for Isolde. She arrives, but is too late to save him. She dies over his corpse, singing in rapture about him.



*Tristan und Isolde* in rehearsal. Wide Open Opera (2012) with Miriam Murphy (Isolde)  
Rehearsal photographs by Anthony Woods appear throughout the programme



Lars Cleveman (Tristan) and Miriam Murphy (Isolde)

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# ACT I

**On board a Cornish ship sailing from Ireland to Cornwall**

Tristan, a Cornish knight, is taking Isolde, an Irish princess, against her will to Cornwall. She is to become the bride of his uncle, King Marke of Cornwall. A young Cornish sailor can be heard singing about a sad Irish maid. Isolde hears the song; angrily assuming that the sailor is mocking her, she calls for a storm to destroy the ship. When her maid Brangäne attempts to calm her, Isolde orders her to bring Tristan to her. Brangäne goes to summon Tristan, but he refuses to see Isolde, arguing that he must remain at the helm of the ship. His attendant Kurwenal taunts Brangäne, singing with obvious pleasure about Tristan's victory over Morold, Isolde's dead fiancé.

Brangäne returns to Isolde, who has heard Kurwenal's words. Enraged, Isolde tells how Tristan came to her after killing Morold, wounded and under the false name of 'Tantris'. Isolde and her mother were renowned for healing powers, and Tristan wanted Isolde to treat the wound from which he was suffering. In the process of nursing him, she discovered that a sword splinter found in Morold's head matched a missing section of his sword. Realising that he was Morold's killer, she tried to bring herself to kill him in revenge, but could not. Now that she has been humiliated and promised to King Marke, she wishes she had carried out the deed. Again, Brangäne seeks to comfort her, and tells her there is no shame in marrying a king. She reminds Isolde that her mother has provided a special casket of potions as remedies for difficult situations; the casket includes a love potion, but Isolde commands Brangäne to prepare the death potion instead.

As the ship nears its destination, Kurwenal appears and tells the women to prepare for landing. Isolde declares that she will not disembark until Tristan has been to see her to seek pardon. Tristan obeys her command and arrives to see her. Isolde speaks of Morold, and Tristan offers her his sword with which to kill him and finally exact revenge. Instead, Isolde offers a drink of atonement. Tristan realises what she is offering him, and agrees to share the drink. Isolde expects it to kill both of them, but Brangäne has secretly prepared the love potion instead of the death potion. As the drink takes effect, Tristan and Isolde are overwhelmed with passionate feelings for one another, and can finally admit to being in love. Unwilling now to part, they have to be separated by Kurwenal and Brangäne in preparation for the ship's landing and King Marke's arrival.

*Interval*

# ACT II

## Outside King Marke's castle in Cornwall

It is night time, and Isolde and Brangäne listen to the receding sounds of a night hunt. Isolde asks Brangäne to extinguish their torch: this is her sign to Tristan that it is safe for him to join her. Brangäne is wary, cautioning Isolde that the hunting party is not yet far enough away and that Melot is spying on her and Tristan. Isolde protests that Melot is Tristan's friend, and that he has arranged the hunt in order to give them an opportunity to see each other. Brangäne expresses regret at having given Tristan and Isolde the love potion, but Isolde tells her that the power of love was stronger than any of her actions. Since Brangäne is hesitating to extinguish the torch, Isolde does so herself, and directs Brangäne to keep watch.

Tristan rushes in and the lovers are united in rapture. They praise the night, which banishes the dreary world of reality, and sing longingly of eternal union in death. Brangäne reminds them that day is approaching, but they are too enraptured to take heed. Their ecstatic duet is interrupted by Kurwenal, urgently bidding Tristan to save himself. Melot, King Marke and a group of courtiers arrive, and the lovers are discovered. King Marke is deeply shocked at having been betrayed by his nephew and most trusted knight, and asks Tristan to explain his behaviour. Tristan is evasive, instead asking Isolde if she is ready to join him in the realm of eternal night. She agrees, and he kisses her. Melot is enraged, and threatens Tristan; Tristan does not defend himself and is mortally wounded by Melot.

*Interval*



Imelda Drumm (Brangäne)



Brett Polegato (Kurwenal) Above  
Lars Cleveman (Tristan) and Fergus Sheil (conductor) Below

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# ACT III

## Tristan's ancestral home in Kareol, on the coast of Brittany

A ship has carried Tristan and Kurwenal to Kareol, Tristan's ancestral home in Brittany. Tristan's wound has not healed, and he lies near death, with Kurwenal in attendance. Kurwenal has realised that Tristan's wound will not heal unless Isolde treats him once more. He has sent for her, and has posted a shepherd to keep watch for the arrival of her ship. The shepherd plays a sad tune on his pipe. He would change to a joyful tune if he saw Isolde's ship approaching, but since the sea is empty, he continues to play mournfully.

Tristan awakens from his unconscious state and asks where he is. Kurwenal tells him that he has brought him home to Kareol. Tristan's thoughts turn to Isolde, and Kurwenal reassures him that she has been sent for. Delirious, Tristan thinks that he can see her ship, but the shepherd continues to play the melancholy tune. The tune reminds Tristan of his parents' death and his own near-death experience at Morold's hands. He wonders about his destiny, and curses the potion he has drunk, which, he says, has made him suffer endless yearning. Exhausted by his frenzy, he collapses again; semiconscious, he imagines once more that he has seen Isolde's ship. This time, however, Tristan is right. The shepherd's tune changes, and a ship is seen approaching. Kurwenal goes to bring Isolde ashore and in delirious excitement, Tristan rips the bandages from his wound. Isolde enters, and Tristan dies in her arms. She attempts to revive him and then collapses herself.

The shepherd announces that a second ship is arriving, and a steersman warns that King Marke and his men are approaching. Brangäne enters, followed by Melot. Kurwenal kills Melot, attacks King Marke's courtiers and is himself killed. King Marke laments the needless deaths, while Brangäne informs Isolde that they have come to bring Marke's forgiveness. Isolde does not hear her words. In a state of rapture and transfiguration, she dies praising Tristan.





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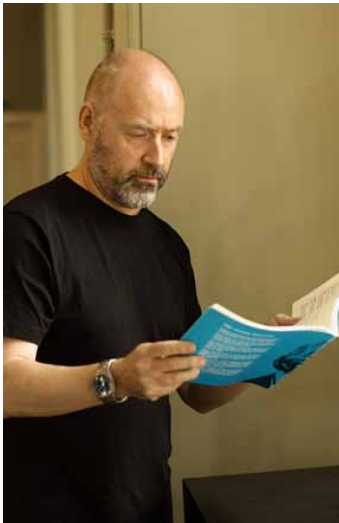
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The Chorus of Wide Open Opera Above  
 Lars Cleveman (Tristan) Below left  
 Miriam Murphy (Isolde) and Peter Watson (revival director) Above right  
 Miriam Murphy (Isolde) and Rupert Dussmann (répétiteur) Below right

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## YANNIS KOKKOS ON TRISTAN UND ISOLDE

Under the title of *Tristan und Isolde*, Wagner wrote the words: 'an action in three acts', a reference to Calderón's 16th-century Spanish dramas. This word 'action' reflects his intense will to create a theatre that would unite philosophical ideas and poetry with a concrete celebration of the human being through the total expression of movement and feeling: the human body set in action by music and words, just as in Greek tragedy.

Under the heavy contextual pressure of our own times, expressing the world through a belief in art becomes a kind of resistance movement. In the same way Wagner, like the early Romantic poets, transformed despair into a violent gesture of beauty.

What particularly attracts me to the opera is its incredible mixture of materials: it is a masterpiece made up of high but at the same time commonplace sentiments. The whole of this terrible tale is not just a love story but a story of a great betrayal, the betrayal being almost on the same level as the love-dimension in the legend. Everyone except Marke has betrayed somebody.

The writing of *Tristan und Isolde* was certainly influenced by Wagner's love affair with Mathilde Wesendonck, but this was not the essential motive force of the whole work. The idea was conceived before this affair, but it would not have developed in the same way without Mathilde's influence, which gave a special colour to its intimate expression. The opera embodies not only Wagner's guilt in the face of Otto Wesendonck, Mathilde's husband, but his feelings about the three most important women in his life. It is incredible that Minna Wagner (from whom he was separating), Mathilde

Wesendonck (his beloved of the moment) and Cosima von Bülow (his future wife) were all present at the first reading of the original poem.

This brings us to another dimension of 19th-century attitudes towards society and sentiment: in his immense egotism Wagner finds in *Tristan und Isolde* a kind of justification for his own attitude, as if he himself had drunk the love philtre. As for drinking a death potion, Wagner's idea of death was a romantic one, and he only conceived of it in a poetic dimension. He certainly did not have a death-wish: what he had drunk in his youth was an elixir of life. The extraordinary thing about Wagner is that although when young he was not remarkably gifted, he made the decision to become the Aeschylus of modern times, construct a new drama, and become the new Poet with a capital P – and he did it! It is incredible to imagine the systematic way in which he built his life.

One cannot say that the work is morally flawed: it exists beyond morality. *Tristan und Isolde* is an extraordinary flower that grows in dirty soil. Perhaps that is what gives it its richness and ambiguity. This is something you can see in the literary works of the time, for instance in Flaubert's novels – King Marke as a 'legendary' Monsieur Bovary! I would like our production to work on many levels: the level of medieval legend, of a dreamlike, psychological voyage, of 19th-century bourgeois drama. In some of Eisenstein's sketches for his films there is a continuous red line running behind the figures, and this represents the line of the music. I love Eisenstein and his opposite Tarkovsky for the way both produced moving images with a profound sense of music.



Richard Wagner reading *Tristan* – Undated drawing by Rainer Ehart (born 1960), showing (left to right): Richard Wagner, Mathilde Wesendonck, Cosima von Bülow (Wagner's second wife) and Minna Wagner (Wagner's first wife)

akg-images/©Ehart

My choice of using a frame, comprising a smaller proscenium arch inside the larger one, had two intentions. The first was to create a stage with two levels referring to the stage of classical tragedy and also to Meyerhold's conception of Wagnerian space: the body of the actors appearing like moving sculptures in front of the images painted at the back of the stage. This frame is a way of making the stage a little smaller in order to make it bigger. What is important in 'frontal' theatre is not what is on stage, but what you imagine beyond the stage. This frame controls the proportions of the stage, and makes it proper to a particular production. It is also an intimate acknowledgment to the greatest Wagnerian designer, Adolphe Appia.

I work in a very cinematographic way, not in terms of cinematic spectacle, but in the way it is organised grammatically, the way in which one image follows the other and is linked to it. I like to bring in these other dimensions, but to make them specifically theatrical. I have no interest in technological innovation for its own sake, but only if it is necessary to what is to be said.

Meyerhold described a director embodying the creativity of a sculptor and an architect, and I would add those of a painter, a writer and a film-maker, integrating all these elements but not expressing them directly. These form the background to a simple contact with the actors in the space. They are instruments of work and nothing more. One tries to take these instruments everywhere, in the way that Antonioni used the human figure in a landscape to express the way the human body exists in the modern environment of the city or the countryside. I also feel very strongly that the figures of Tristan and Kurwenal in Act III are Beckett-like. The kind of modern despair that Beckett expresses can be used in connection with the timeless despair of Tristan.

The same is true of Isolde's transfiguration. This is something that we feel more strongly now, when there is a search for spirituality, one that is not specifically religious. Isolde's transfiguration and communion in love is a personal achievement in the midst of a great solitude. It is her own transfiguration, not that of Tristan.

The story of Tristan and Isolde has various mythological roots. If Morold, for instance, is a kind of Minotaur, then Isolde is Ariadne, and Tristan is the Theseus who kills the monster and delivers the country from the cruel tribute. The part of the story in which Tristan, wounded by Morold, came to Ireland to be healed by Isolde, when she knows that he was the murderer of her betrothed but falls in love with him at a single glance, is an important one because it connects this story with those of the underlying legend. This gaze is also a theme of the directing eye, to see who is looking at whom, and the gaze is the principal connection throughout the work. The primal scene between the lovers is her refusal to kill him: at first she wishes to, but then she refuses. The theme of silent, unspoken love is one that I want to use as a leitmotif, since everything comes from this primal scene.

Wagner was not consciously writing a psycho-drama, but he worked with a deep knowledge of symbols, and in that respect Tristan comes closer to Jung's mythological analysis than to Freud. Wagner creates a pure form of the Tristan myth by taking away all the superfluous elements of the story, leaving the essence of the legend. He wrote his poem in the same way: there is not a word more than is needed, not even in King Marke's superb long monologue! I would like to keep this density of images, maintaining the equilibrium between abstraction and realism.

Wagner is also a visionary, and I will try to give both a minimal and a large-scale expression to this dimension. This is not a minimalist production, except that I will work with only such elements that I think necessary in telling the story and leaving a place for the imagination.

The world of *Tristan und Isolde* is an interior world, a world inside the head, a world of dark intuitions. Wagner was fond of the Greek world and I will try to discover the darkness and violence behind the clarity, the irrational behind the rational. This is one of the most important things in Greek philosophy and spirit – modern as well as ancient. Wagner had a profound understanding of Greek tragedy, but I was also impressed by the way in which his poetry is of Racinean construction as well: some parts are like *Phèdre*! Strangely, the construction of the plot is closer to Racine than to the Greeks.

I read the opera as a tragedy of light and darkness, the inverse of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. It is important in staging the opera to have the opposition between the daylight of Act I and the night of illusion of Act II. The daylight of Act III is the dispersal of illusion. When Isolde returns, at first she brings darkness but then she brings light, and in bringing the light she betrays him. The second time she comes to heal him, but she can only heal him in the darkness, and instead

she enters the light of her transfiguration. The light is the truth, and in the end she becomes the light. The end of the opera is the end of illusion. The transfiguration is love, being united in death, leaving behind those humans who are not loved. Somewhere Kurwenal, dying, has a chance. Marke is left in utter despair.

*This interview of Yannis Kokkos by Simon Rees was first published in Welsh National Opera's programme for Tristan und Isolde in 1993.*

# AN UNHEALTHY OBSESSION

Christopher Morris



James Stewart and Kim Novak  
in Alfred Hitchcock's film *Vertigo* (1958)  
Paramount Pictures/Album/akg-images

It's customary for critics to issue spoiler alerts when their reviews threaten to reveal crucial plot twists. A century and a half after its premiere, *Tristan und Isolde* has long since given up its plot secrets – for the record, they both die in the end – but from the very earliest writings on the opera, critics and commentators have felt compelled to offer an alert of a different kind. Wagner's three-act tragedy, they warn us, may not be good for an audience's psychological or physical well-being. Wagner himself set the tone when he wrote to Mathilde Wesendonck during the later stages of composition: 'This *Tristan* is turning into something *terrible*! This last act!!! – I fear the opera will be banned – unless the whole thing is parodied by bad performances. Only mediocre performances can save me! Perfectly good ones are bound to drive people mad.' The cynical reader might regard this letter as the earliest attempt at publicity for the opera. Mathilde may have been Wagner's confidante (and possibly a lover) but she was also the wife of his patron, someone who needed to know that his support

was paying dividends. Yet the truly astonishing thing is that Wagner's words – the kind of self-mythologising that might so easily have armed his critics – actually proved prescient. Granted, audiences don't appear to have fallen into actual collective delirium, and the experience of French composer Emmanuel Chabrier, who famously burst into tears on hearing the Prelude, is extreme. Yet the reception of *Tristan und Isolde* is peppered with written accounts searching for the right words to capture the intensity of the experience; it is a story of spectators transported and transformed. No other opera can match the language or behaviour associated with *Tristan*.

So is this enthusiasm just a self-fulfilling prophecy in which audiences and critics, aware of the opera's reputation and keen to get in on the act, assume the behaviour that was expected of them? Is it a cultish enthusiasm propelled along by key influential voices that whip followers into a frenzy?

In part, yes. Wagnerism has always had the character of a cult, and it would be easy to allow the rhetoric of the most ardent disciples to conceal a more distanced admiration for the opera, not to mention resistance. When Mark Twain found himself surrounded by besotted Wagnerians at a performance of *Tristan* at Bayreuth in 1890, he wondered if he was the 'last sane person in a community of the mad'. Twain seems to speak for the alienated and unmoved, while highlighting the impression that the passion for *Tristan* amounted to a form of brainwashing. Yet he adds an important caveat: 'By no means do I ever overlook or minify the fact that this is one of the most extraordinary experiences of my life. I have never seen anything like this before. I have never seen anything so great and fine and real as this devotion.' A strong endorsement indeed, especially coming from an author renowned for his scepticism and sardonic wit. And it pinpoints what is perhaps the key issue for any critical assessment of *Tristan*: where does the hype end and the reality begin? Or to put it another way: is this opera as special as its admirers claim, and if so, why?



John Garfield and Joan Crawford in Jean Negulesco's film  
*Humoresque* (1946) Warner Brothers/Album/akg-images

One answer might be found in its famously intense music. If Wagner had wondered about the sobering effects of a bad performance, his one-time ally Friedrich Nietzsche suggested that only the words and staging of the final act protected the audience from the intensity of the music. Would it be possible, he asked with more than a hint of hyperbole, 'to imagine a human being who would be able to perceive the third act of *Tristan und Isolde*, without any aid of word and image, purely as a tremendous symphonic movement, without expiring in a spasmodic unharnessing of all the wings of the soul?' Nietzsche was only the first to ask such questions about the music of *Tristan*, although most commentators have been too struck by the extraordinary voices in this opera – the legendary demands of the principal roles are themselves part of its aura – to relish the idea of a performance without them. As for doing away with images, many have shared Nietzsche's desire for a *Tristan* purely for the ears. On the other hand, the opera has inspired some of the most effective and innovative productions in modern stage history, while its music has played a part in some extraordinary cinema: Joan Crawford commits suicide to the strains of *Tristan* in Jean Negulesco's *Humoresque* (1946); Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) is essentially a modern retelling of the *Tristan* legend, complete with a score by Bernard Herrmann that lifts material almost directly out of the opera; and the *Tristan* Prelude is repeated throughout Lars von Trier's apocalyptic *Melancholia* (2011).

If there is a consensus about the music of *Tristan*, it is that Wagner takes one of the founding principles of Western music – the building and eventual release of tension – and expands it to unprecedented timespans. It is really only in the opera's closing moments, in the great outpouring of ecstasy in Isolde's *Liebeshod* ('love-death'), that the music finds release in the harmonic stability that it has largely evaded until then. That the score builds and releases tension so provocatively and powerfully makes it a potent musical counterpart to

the erotic nature of the narrative. One of the themes in the reception of the opera, however, is that this pattern is more than a representation or illustration of something happening on stage. Rather, the music can be understood to unfold like desire itself, embodying, in a direct and visceral way, the very dynamics of sexual experience. While the more prudish early critics and commentators worried about the moral impact of attending a performance of this 'indecent' music, others delighted in the opera's capacity to push boundaries and court scandal. Meanwhile, novelists upped the ante with scenes depicting the compromising effects of Wagner's score. As she listens to the second-act love duet, the title figure of George Moore's *Evelyn Innes* (1898) feels her body transformed: 'The gnawing, creeping sensuality of the phrase brought little shudders into her flesh; all life seemed dissolved into a dim tremor and rustling of blood.'

It was the bonds forged between love and death that would prove the most strikingly modern feature of the opera. Central to the nascent science of psychoanalysis, the entwining of the erotic and the lethal also underpins the *fin-de-siècle* culture of decadence, at once condemned as a sign of morbid degeneration (with *Tristan* as exhibit no. 1) and embraced as hedonistic indulgence of unhealthy pleasures (with *Tristan* in the vanguard).





How Sir Tristram Drank of the Love Drink.

'How Sir Tristram Drank of the Love Drink', from illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley (1872-98) for Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1893)

In the latter camp were artists like Aubrey Beardsley, whose work would celebrate the opera in erotically charged reflections of the *Tristan* legend, and Thomas Mann, whose 1903 novella *Tristan* features a consumptive heroine all-too taken by Wagner's music. Playing through the opera on the piano induces an erotic experience too powerful for her fragile body: she suffers a relapse and dies.

What has struck so many observers, though, is not just that *Tristan und Isolde* anticipates these modern obsessions, but that it seems to embody the very idea of obsession. It does this in part through sheer scale, daring to suspend psychological states and project them over dangerously long durations. But it also defines its themes with breath-taking clarity. Wagner may have based his text on Gottfried von Strassburg's medieval courtly romance, but he strips away much of its historical detail, leaving characters and situations almost as archetypes.

The result is an opera unencumbered by historical minutiae or distracting sub-plots. From the shame and alienation in the first act (Isolde tells us that hers is a 'death-devoted heart'), to the ecstatic sexual abandon in the second, to the bleak, nihilistic emptiness of the third, *Tristan* seems to probe conceptual, emotional and sensual extremes with a distilled

directness that evidently lost little of its persuasive power in the twentieth century. Somehow it remained radical and shocking. Hardly any wonder that writers from one end of the century to the other – from novelist Marcel Proust to philosopher Roger Scruton – would make a case for *Tristan* not simply as one of the greatest operas ever written (many musicians would concur here), but one of the greatest of all works of art.

In our heterogeneous culture, claims of greatness for single works of art may have become meaningless. Besides, don't we live in a postmodern era characterised by irony and reserve? We pride ourselves in resisting such intense, indulgent 19th-century passions, such sensual and morbid extremes. We regard them from a distance, with a wry smile. Except that something in *Tristan und Isolde* keeps chipping away at our postmodern veneer, keeps forcing us to confront what the ironic surface conceals. Just as the love potion releases Tristan and Isolde from their courtly manners and worldly concerns, so this opera seems to touch on primal stirrings that we knowing denizens of the digital age believe we have left behind. Perhaps those health warnings are as essential as ever.

*Christopher Morris is a musicologist based at University College Cork. He is Associate and Reviews Editor of The Opera Quarterly and author of Reading Opera Between the Lines: Orchestral Interludes and Cultural Meaning from Wagner to Berg (2002) and Modernism and the Cult of Mountains: Music Opera Cinema (2012).*

## IRELAND'S QUEEN AND HER ART'S MAGIC POWER

Mark Fitzgerald

In May 1881 Arthur de Gobineau, remembered today (if at all) as author of the racist *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*, found himself in a bitter argument with Richard Wagner over his remark that the Irish, whom he would have considered of a lower order than the English, were incapable of working. Cosima Wagner's diary reports that an enraged Wagner retorted that he would not work either under conditions such as those in which the Irish found themselves, before launching a scathing attack on the English gentry. Some time later the Wagnerian tempest abated, with Gobineau declaring their disagreement to stem from their differing viewpoints: Gobineau looked at matters merely as a businessman, whereas Wagner viewed matters as a philosopher. For his part Wagner admitted that he did not know the problem in detail, though whether he was referring to some later point of the argument or to knowledge of the contemporary state of Ireland is unclear from Cosima's elliptical account. If, however, we take it that Wagner had no particular knowledge of contemporary Ireland, was his anger merely the reflex reaction of a sometime revolutionary, now composer to the bourgeoisie, or was he thinking of his own Irish maid, similarly caught in a world of oppression?



Wagner's main source for his opera, *Tristan und Isolde* by Gottfried von Strassburg (?–c1210), tells that Isolde, daughter of Gurman, King of Ireland (other versions give her other kingly fathers), lived in Dublin. Indeed for those of a romantic turn of mind, the legend of Isolde still infuses the streets of the city. The most important tower in the 13th-century Anglo-Norman city walls, the remains of which lie under an apartment block on Lower Exchange Street, was named after Isolde. Up until the 16th century an area located in the Phoenix Park was known as Isolde's Hill, while close at hand shaded by a great hawthorn tree was Isolde's font. But it is an area embracing the Liffey, just outside the Park gates, that is most readily identified with the legend by Dubliners today, namely Chapelizod.



The Young May Moon Over Chapelizod  
Woodblock print by Tom Macken — [www.tommacken.com](http://www.tommacken.com)



Tristan and Isolde House, Chapelizod

For many attempting to extrapolate the etymology of this place name, the word derives from the Irish Séipéal Isóid, which is translated as the Chapel of Isolde. Several sources mention a Chapel of Isold or other variants of the word which once existed here, and from this have sprung a series of competing histories of the place name: Isolde's father built a chapel at this place in memory of her; Isolde built the chapel herself on land belonging to her father; it marks the spot where Tristan asked for Isolde's hand in marriage; it is the site where Isolde was buried. For those who prefer a more prosaic or even accurate explanation, the name could have derived from Séipéal an Dísirt, indicating the isolation of the spot at one time, or it may have been called after a Lazar or leper hospital or colony, or it may memorialise a family whose surname was Izod or some variant thereof.

Whatever the truth may be, it is clear that local admiration for the legend in its various forms and possibly some measure of civic pride in the Irish connections of the heroine resulted in attempts to link her directly to specific locales of the city. Wagner on the other hand does not seem to be too concerned with such national detail. Indeed, he jettisoned all the scenes of the work set in the capital, instead opening the work geographically somewhere in the middle of the Irish Sea, the lack of anchorage acting as an effective image both for the characters' state of mind and the harmonic adventurousness of the music.

Ireland becomes a mysterious place of savage leaders, healers, beautiful women and magic, but it is also a land that has fallen from its position of power. The death of Morold has wrested Cornwall from its bond of fealty to the Irish. The marriage of King Marke to Isolde is to bring peace between the two lands, but on terms that are humiliating. The Cornish vassals have become the victors and Isolde is the prize handed to Cornwall to ensure peace between the two countries.



Even Brangäne fails to see that being sent off to marry an unknown man whose nephew has killed the one to whom she had been betrothed might bring grief to Isolde. The inability to grasp such issues of pride, nation and love only emphasise for Isolde how far her country has fallen below the level of her revered ancestors, to a state where she can view them as a 'degenerate race'.

The opera opens with an ambiguous and melancholy sailor's song of an Irish maid whose sighs waft the ship across the sea; this is taken by Isolde as a personal insult, but could instead refer to Irish maids left behind by Tristan's men who had enjoyed the pleasures of conquest while waiting to set sail back to Cornwall. And yet the sailor's words 'wilde minnige Maid' could well apply to Isolde. She may have become enslaved due to circumstances, but she is willing to force events rather than waiting meekly for them to unfold. Her angry attempts to engineer an encounter between herself and the reluctant Tristan before their journey's end and her determination to poison both of them, undermined by Brangäne, form the core of the first act. This journey towards a moment of death-wish forms the pattern for the following two acts but the role of Isolde changes subtly. In the second act she is again the instigator of events. She ignores Brangäne's prescient warning that the night hunt has been organised by Melot as a trap for the lovers, and quenches the torch as a signal to Tristan to join her. Instead of Irish ancestors or the powers of her mother, however, it is the goddess of love whom Isolde invokes. Nation and all other trappings of identity become irrelevant to the lovers as they attempt to dissolve notions of the self in an act of total identification with each other. The third act, in symmetrically balancing the action of the first, relegates the physical figure of Isolde to a minor role, who reappears only at the close to complete the dissolution of self, although she dominates Tristan's cyclical despairing monologues.

Dublin is forgotten in the burning sun of Kareol, but Dublin has not forgotten Isolde. Roads and houses continue to perpetuate the link, while Joyce's night tale *Finnegans Wake* plays havoc with the legend and Wagner's version of it, the *Liebestod* ('Mild und leise wie er lächelt') transmogrified into 'mild Aunt Liza'. And while the absurd proposal in 1998 by Celtic Tiger politicians to make Dublin the international capital of romantic love with Isolde and St Valentine as patrons may have come to nothing, you can exit the theatre tonight, stroll the short distance to the quay and observe the lapping waters of the Liffey on which someone first imagined Tristan/Tantris floating rudderless towards the healing lady of Dublin, a journey which was to lead to intoxication and death.

*Mark Fitzgerald is a lecturer in Music at the Dublin Institute of Technology Conservatory of Music and Drama. His PhD (Trinity College Dublin, 2004) was on the late works of Alban Berg; forthcoming publications include essays on Frederick May, Gerald Barry, Raymond Deane and Ferruccio Busoni. He is executive editor of the forthcoming Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland.*



Ludwig and Malvina Schnorr von Carolsfeld in the title roles of the premiere of *Tristan und Isolde*, Munich, 1865

## THE LIGHT OF DAY: TRISTAN UND ISOLDE IN PERFORMANCE

Áine Sheil

When Wagner began composition of *Tristan und Isolde* in 1857, he had high hopes of securing an early performance of the work. After considering a premiere in Rio de Janeiro, with the work given in Italian as an Italianate opera, negotiations with many other opera houses followed. Strasbourg, Karlsruhe, Hanover and Prague all showed interest, and in Vienna the work was rehearsed at length before it was rejected as unperformable. For Wagner, the process of finding a willing and suitable theatre was akin to the trauma of a difficult birth. In a letter to Liszt written on 13 September 1860 from Paris, he complained that he still didn't know where his *Tristan* would first see the light of day. It was a curious remark, given the contents of the work: in *Tristan und Isolde* night is glorified at the expense of day, and the two principal characters strive towards a state of prenatal unconsciousness.

Despite years of pre-premiere hurdles, *Tristan und Isolde* was eventually staged on 10 June 1865 in Munich with the support of King Ludwig II of Bavaria. Wagner's work emerged

not into the light of day, but into the inflexible lighting of the Court Theatre, where no differentiation between the realms of darkness and light was possible. Nor was the day-night symbolism of the work explored in the scenery, which remained bound to naturalist conventions.

Wagner's reforming instincts stopped short of the visual aspects of theatre, and in this way he could feel satisfied with the *Tristan* premiere. Hans von Bülow, who had prepared a piano reduction of the work and had a thorough knowledge of the score, was an ideal conductor. Most important for the composer was the opportunity to work with Ludwig and Malvina Schnorr von Carolsfeld, creators of the leading characters. Ludwig was fully committed to the production, carrying off the seemingly unperformable role of Tristan with an outstanding grasp of Wagner's wishes. His death just a few weeks after the final performance of the run was an enormous blow to Wagner, who had hoped to continue a close collaboration with him. Those who were hostile towards the composer attributed Schnorr von Carolsfeld's death to the exertions of performing *Tristan und Isolde*, a position that reflected widespread misgivings about the production. Even before its opening night, a parody of the work entitled *Tristanderl und Süßholde* took place that satirised the preparations for the much-delayed first performance and mocked the seriousness surrounding the *Tristan* project.



*Tristan und Isolde*, Bayreuth Festival, 1964. Production by Wieland Wagner, with Wolfgang Windgassen as Tristan and Birgit Nilsson as Isolde

S. Lauterwasser/Lebrecht Music & Arts

In 1874 Weimar was the next theatre to stage *Tristan und Isolde*, and in 1876 Wagner supervised a production of his work in Berlin that was attended by Wilhelm I, Emperor of the now unified Germany. Further performances during Wagner's lifetime followed, including the London premiere in 1882 at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. This was conducted by Hans Richter, and the cast included Hermann Winkelmann as Tristan and Rosa Sucher as Isolde. Sucher also appeared to great acclaim in the first Bayreuth production of *Tristan und Isolde*, directed in 1886 by Wagner's widow Cosima. This production was intended as an authentic reproduction of Wagner's ideas, and for that reason, music was deemed the most important factor. (When Wagner was still alive he had spoken of *Tristan* as the expression of a symphonic urge.) What emerged in Bayreuth was a sometimes uneasy compromise between realism and stylisation: while the sets aimed at a high degree of naturalism, Cosima encouraged minimal movement on the part of the singers. As she explained to the conductor Hermann Levi, who worked on the production, there were no physical gestures that could match the expressive power of the music, and well-intended realism was simply out of place. The characterisation was, however, uneven: Isolde was sung with the required stylisation, but Heinrich Vogl is said to have portrayed the suffering of Tristan with such unbearable realism that some of the audience had to leave the auditorium.

Among those attending the 1886 Bayreuth Festival was Adolphe Appia, who experienced Cosima's production of *Tristan* as a grave disappointment and would later transform the staging of Wagner's work. Like Cosima, Appia believed that Wagner's music was the key to his oeuvre – Wagner had described his drama as 'acts of music made visible' – but the theatrical methods he envisaged were in stark contrast to those practised at Bayreuth. In 1896 Appia drew up a concept for staging *Tristan und Isolde*: it demanded absolute scenic simplicity and aimed to make audiences concentrate on the characters' inner lives. His ideas were not accepted at Bayreuth or by any major theatre until 1923, when Toscanini invited him to stage the work at La Scala, Milan. Appia's largely geometrical sets were spare and stylised, and he used lighting to create sharp contrasts between inner and outer worlds. The Milanese public reacted badly, condemning Appia's approach as 'Calvinist', and in 1930 La Scala replaced the production with a more traditional one.

While Appia's visual abstraction found little immediate support, his emphasis on mind and inner life was not unique. In the fourth of his *Untimely Meditations* Nietzsche described *Tristan und Isolde* as the 'opus metaphysicum of all art', admitting elsewhere to a psychological curiosity that fed his fascination with the work. Thomas Mann also raised the issue of psychology in his major essay *The Sorrows and Grandeur of Richard Wagner* (1933). Arguing that the idea of impending death was enough to liberate Tristan and Isolde's repressed passion for one another, he maintained that plain water would have had the same effect on the lovers as the love potion. Mann's understanding of the drink of atonement would later find embodiment in the work of one of the most influential opera directors of the 20th century. In his post-war interpretation of *Tristan* at Bayreuth, Wieland Wagner (Wagner's grandson) had the protagonists rush into each other's arms without waiting for the love potion to take effect – a gesture seemingly at odds with the music. But Wieland was not interested in achieving absolute unity on stage: his desire to explore the psychological tensions of the characters sometimes led to a separation of music and gesture. His 1952 designs for *Tristan* set new standards of minimalism, and lighting was used to indicate changes in the characters' inner world. In 1962 he produced a new version of the work, this time dominating the stage with imposing abstract sculpture. In both productions Wieland stripped back convention with the intention of revealing something timeless, treating Tristan and Isolde as an archetypal couple fulfilling an ineluctable destiny.

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle combined both the real and the ideal in his production of *Tristan* for the 1981 Bayreuth Festival, particularly in the final scene, where the *Liebestod* was depicted as a delirious hallucination on the part of Tristan. At this point Isolde clearly belonged to the realm of the ideal, while Tristan's



Theatre Royal, Hawkins Street, Dublin, c1910–30. *Tristan und Isolde* was staged here on 1 January 1912

Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

suffering represented the lonely reality of death. Ponnelle's production was replaced in 1993 by a staging by Heiner Müller in which a transfigured Isolde appeared to live on rather than die. The most recent production of *Tristan und Isolde* at Bayreuth was first seen in 2005 and had its last staging this year. Directed by Christoph Marthaler and designed by Anna Viebrock, it places the action in what appears to be a cold, mid-20th-century totalitarian regime in which overt emotion is repressed.

The first production of *Tristan und Isolde* in Ireland was staged in Dublin at the Theatre Royal, Hawkins Street, on 1 January 1912 by the Quinlan Opera Company. Based in Liverpool, this company was one of the prominent touring opera companies of the period: it was renowned for ambitious worldwide tours that included Wagner operas, and in 1913 brought the *Ring* cycle to Ireland for the first time. Evidently its production of *Tristan und Isolde* contained significant cuts, because the performance on New Year's Day 1912 began at 7pm and finished at 11pm. Cuthbert Hawley conducted a cast that included John Coates as Tristan and Agnes Nicholls as Isolde, and a large audience at the Theatre Royal received their performance, described by the *Irish Times* reviewer as 'transcendent', with great enthusiasm.

Two further stagings of *Tristan und Isolde* have taken place in Ireland in the intervening century, both of them at the Gaiety Theatre. In April 1953, a Bavarian State Opera production toured to Ireland as part of the Dublin Grand Opera Society's spring season. The German company brought its own sets and costumes, as well as director Ulrich Reinhardt, conductor Robert

Heger and principal singers including August Seider as Tristan and Erna Schluter as Isolde. These artists were joined by the Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra, and their performance was greeted with tumultuous applause by a capacity audience. In November 1963 DGOS presented *Tristan und Isolde* as part of its winter season. Tibor Paul conducted, Manfred Hubricht directed, Rudolf Lustig appeared as Tristan and Liane Synek sang the role of Isolde.

This production, which is taking place at the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre as part of the Dublin Theatre Festival 2012, originated at Welsh National Opera and was first seen at the New Theatre, Cardiff, in February 1993. As a co-production with Scottish Opera, it opened at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, in May 1994, and subsequently toured to Lisbon, Newcastle and Edinburgh. It has been revived several times by Welsh National Opera in the meantime, most recently to critical acclaim in May/June 2012 at the Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff.

*This is a revised version of an article first published in 2000 in a Royal Opera House Covent Garden programme for Tristan und Isolde.*

*Aine Sheil is a lecturer in Music at the University of York, UK. Her PhD was on Wagner performance and reception, and she has published articles and chapters on contemporary and historic opera productions. She formerly worked in the Publications Department of the Royal Opera House Covent Garden.*

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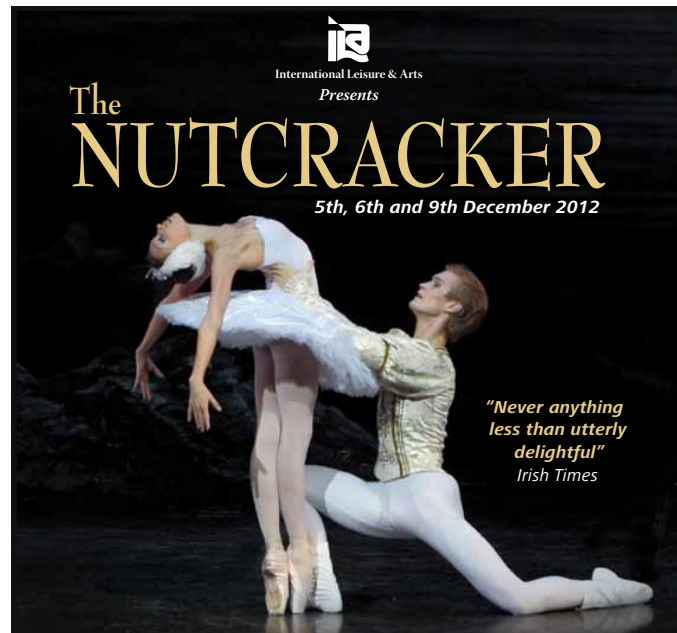
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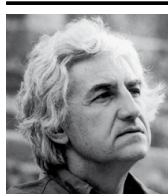
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# BIOGRAPHIES



**YANNIS KOKKOS**  
Director/Designer

Born in Athens, Yannis Kokkos has lived in France since 1963. He studied Set Design at the École Supérieure d'Art Dramatique, Strasbourg, and in 1969 began a long-lasting and prolific collaboration with Director Antoine Vitez, creating numerous productions at the Comédie Française, Avignon Festival, Piccolo Teatro, Milan, and the Théâtre National de Chaillot, with works like *Le Soulier de Satin*, *Électre* and *Hamlet*. His extensive activity as opera and theatre director and set designer started in 1987 and includes collaborations with the world's most important opera houses: La Scala, Milan (*Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Götterdämmerung* and *Iphigénie en Aulide* for the opening of the 1989/90 and 2006/2007 seasons with Riccardo Muti, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Assassino nella cattedrale*); Théâtre du Châtelet (French premieres of Berio's *Outis* and Henze's *The Bassarids*), Vienna State Opera (*Die Zauberflöte*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*,

*Boris Godunov*); Teatro Real, Madrid (*Tancredi*); Bavarian State Opera (Nabucco), Grand Théâtre de Genève (Braunfels' *The Birds*, Janáček's *Mr. Brouček*), Maggio Musicale, Florence (*Die Frau ohne Schatten* with Zubin Mehta). Yannis Kokkos has won numerous prestigious prizes: Prix du Syndicat de la critique (1986) for staging *Elektra*; two Molière Awards (1987) for the design of *Échange* and costumes for *Madame de Sade*; Gold Medal at the Prague Quadrennial for Stage Design and Theatrical Architecture (1987); Laurence Olivier Award (1999) for Best New Opera Production with *La clemenza di Tito* (Bordeaux Opera and WNO); and Prix de la critique internationale pour le meilleur spectacle de l'année (2003) for *Les Troyens*, staged in the first complete version at Théâtre du Châtelet. He is also decorated as Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres (France).



**FERGUS SHEIL**  
Conductor

Fergus Sheil studied music at Trinity College in his native Dublin and conducting with Léon Barzin in Paris. He has appeared in concert with the RTÉ NSO, the RTÉ CO, the Ulster Orchestra, the Irish Chamber Orchestra, the Northern Sinfonia (UK), the Royal Liverpool PO and many other groups. He has worked for Scottish Opera (*Aida*, *L'elisir d'amore*), WNO (*Sweeney Todd*), NI Opera (five new works by Northern Irish composers and writers as part of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad), Opera Ireland (*L'elisir d'amore*), Opera Theatre Company (*The Lighthouse*, *La Cenerentola*, *The Marriage of Figaro*) and Lyric Opera Productions (*Lucia di Lammermoor*, *La bohème*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Aida*, *I due Foscari*, *Attila*, *Nabucco*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *Norma*, *The Magic Flute*, *Carmen*, *La traviata*, *The Merry Widow*, *Don Giovanni*, *Il trovatore*). In 2008 he collaborated with composer

Arvo Pärt and the State Choir Latvia, including on the world premiere of Pärt's *The Deer's Cry*, which was revived for a 2010 Irish tour with the choir. Strongly committed to new music, Fergus has conducted about forty premieres of new works by Irish and international composers. In 2011 he curated and conducted the first opera commissioned by a local authority in Ireland, *Shelter Me From The Rain* by Brian Irvine (music) and John McIllduff (text) for Carlow Local Authorities. This project won the 2011 Allianz Business to Arts award for 'Best Use of Creativity in the Community'. Internationally, Fergus has undertaken engagements in the USA, Canada, South Africa, Australia, UK, France, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Estonia. Plans include tours of Ireland with the RTÉ NSO (Beethoven's Symphony No 9) and the BBC Singers.



**PETER WATSON**  
Revival Director

Peter Watson was born in Tienjin, China, and read French and German at the University of Cambridge. He has been Associate Director of the Welsh Theatre Company, York Theatre Royal and Liverpool Playhouse, and directed many productions in Edinburgh, Leeds, Watford, Nottingham and London's West End. He worked as a guest staff director at the ROH Covent Garden in the 1980s, as a staff director for WNO (1988-93) he directed *Rigoletto* and a revival of *Ernani*. His work with Yannis Kokkos includes revivals of *Tristan und Isolde* for WNO and Scottish Opera, Gluck's *Alceste* and Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* (which he co-directed) for Scottish Opera, *Salome* for Bordeaux Opera, *Don Giovanni* in the Orange Roman amphitheatre, the world

premiere of Apherghis' *Tristes tropiques* in Strasbourg and *La clemenza di Tito* for WNO (which won the Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Opera Production, 1997). He has directed *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for the State Opera of South Australia, Adelaide, *La traviata* for Scottish Opera and Opera Zuid, Maastricht, Eugene Onegin in Malaga, *Le nozze di Figaro* for Boston Lyric Opera and *Il trovatore* for Scottish Opera, the Palacio de Festivales de Cantabria, Santander, and WNO. He has trained at the BBC as a television director, regularly taught and directed at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, London, and has translated several plays from French, German and Italian, notably Brecht's *Mother Courage*, which was performed at the Nottingham Playhouse.



**LARS CLEVEMAN**  
Tristan

Lars Cleveman graduated from the University College of Opera, Stockholm, in 1988 and soon established himself as one of Sweden's leading tenors. From 1998 to 2009 he was a member of the ensemble at the Royal Opera, Stockholm. Among other international appearances, he has performed regularly at the Royal Danish Opera, Copenhagen, as well as at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (title role of *Don Carlos*); Stuttgart State Opera (Siegmund); Concertgebouw, Amsterdam (Siegmund under Lothar Zagrosek); Zurich Opera (Siegfried under the direction of Robert Wilson); Bridgewater Hall, Manchester (Siegfried under Mark Elder, recording awarded Gramophone Award 2010); and Bayreuth (title role of *Tannhäuser*). He has performed the role of Tristan

with the Royal Opera, Stockholm; in concert with soprano Nina Stemme in Copenhagen; and at the ROH Covent Garden. Other repertoire includes the title roles of *Parsifal*, *Otello*, *Stiffelio*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and *Werther*, as well as Froh (*Das Rheingold*), Erik (*Der fliegende Holländer*), Grigory (*Boris Godunov*), the Duke of Mantua, Gustavo (*Un ballo in maschera*), Manrico, Calaf, Des Grieux (*Manon Lescaut*), Pinkerton, Cavaradossi, Don José and Samson. In 2013 he will make his debut at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, singing Siegfried in *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*. Other future engagements include *Tristan* (Gothenburg Opera) and Captain Vere in *Billy Budd*.



**MIRIAM MURPHY**  
Isolde

A native of Co. Kerry, Miriam studied with Dr Veronica Dunne and at the RAM, London, where she won the Opera Gold Medal and numerous prestigious awards. She recently became a Fellow of the RAM. Her debut at the ROH Covent Garden was as Verdi's Lady Macbeth, a role she has also sung for Opera Holland Park and Glyndebourne Festival Opera. She later returned to the ROH as Overseer in Strauss's *Elektra*. She has sung with Paris Opéra (including on tour in Japan), WNO, Opera North, Glyndebourne on Tour, Seattle Opera (Gerhilde, which followed her victory in Seattle Opera's inaugural International Wagner Competition), Wexford Festival Opera

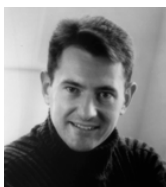
(European premiere of Peter Ash's *The Golden Ticker*) and in Bilbao (title role of *Turandot*). At the NCH Dublin she has appeared as Leonora in *Il trovatore* and Abigaille in *Nabucco*. Miriam's concert appearances have included Verdi's *Requiem* under James Lockhart (Barbican, London), Mendelssohn's *Elijah* (Ulster Orchestra), Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* under John Eliot Gardiner (BBC Proms) and Beethoven's Symphony No 9 (RPO at the Barbican, London). She made her Edinburgh Festival debut in *Elektra* with Edward Gardner and the LSO. Miriam would like to thank the Irish Wagner Society for their generous support in the preparation of this role.



**IMELDA DRUMM**  
Brangäne

Born in Laos, Imelda Drumm studied with Ann-Marie O'Sullivan and Dr Veronica Dunne, and in 1997 was sponsored by Glyndebourne Opera to attend the National Opera Studio, London. She is currently in her third year of doctoral studies in Music in Performance with Dr Veronica Dunne (RIAM/DCU). Imelda has undertaken many international engagements, and has achieved particularly strong relationships with Glyndebourne Opera and WNO. She has been a guest mezzo-soprano at WNO since 1998, performing over twelve principal roles with the company. In particular, she is known for the title role of *Carmen*, which she also performed to critical acclaim for Raymond Gubbay at the Royal Albert Hall, London (2002, 2005).

She has won many national and international awards, including at the Feis Ceoil and the Esso and Richard Lewis/Jean Shanks Glyndebourne Awards, and she was a finalist in the Veronica Dunne International Singing Competition. Her recordings include *Hansel and Gretel* for Channel 4 TV, *Jenůfa* under Charles Mackerras, and *Falstaff* with Bryn Terfel for Welsh TV station SAC. Recent appearances include *Azucena* under Fergus Sheil (Lyric Opera Productions at the NCH Dublin), upcoming engagements include her debut in November 2012 in the role of Amneris (Lyric Opera Productions at the Gaiety Theatre).



**BRETT POLEGATO**  
Kurwenal

Since finishing first among the men at the 1995 Cardiff Singer of the World competition, Brett Polegato's career has encompassed over fifty operatic roles in the world's most prestigious venues, including La Scala, Milan, Paris Opéra, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, Teatro Real, Madrid, Concertgebouw Amsterdam and Carnegie Hall. He has made a name for himself in a number of dramatic roles, most notably Pelléas, Count Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* and the title roles of Eugene Onegin and *Don Giovanni*. Highlights of Polegato's 2011/12 season include Kurwenal (City

of Birmingham SO), Guglielmo (Perm Opera and Ballet Theatre), Starbuck in *Moby Dick* (Calgary Opera), Sharpless (Seattle Opera), a performance of Zemlinsky's *Lyrische Symphonie* with Montreal's Orchestre Métropolitain under Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Vaughan Williams's *Five Mystical Songs* and Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* in Winnipeg. This season's highlights include Dandini in *La Cenerentola* (Seattle Opera) and Eugene Onegin (Grange Park Opera). Polegato's future roles include Marquis de Posa, a reprise of Starbuck, and Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*.



**MANFRED HEMM**  
King Marke

Austrian-born bass Manfred Hemm has performed Mozart roles at the Vienna State Opera, in Munich, Hamburg, Berlin, Paris, Zurich and other European opera houses, the Metropolitan Opera, New York, Buenos Aires, Tokyo, Salzburg Festival, Aix-en-Provence Festival, Maggio Musicale, Florence, and many other leading venues. He has also received critical acclaim in the bel canto repertoire, with roles including Giorgio in Bellini's *I puritani* (Philadelphia), Henry VIII in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* (Bavarian State Opera, Pittsburgh, Helsinki), Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Munich), Ramphis in *Aida* (Scottish Opera), Verdi's *Requiem* (Sao Paolo)

and Rossini's *Stabat mater* (Gothenburg). Recent engagements include Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte* (San Francisco), Gurnemanz in *Parsifal* (Genoa, Adelaide, Mannheim, Prague National Theater and others), Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier* (Bolshoi Opera, Staatsoper Stuttgart, Den Norske Opera, Marseille, Sydney), Osmin in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (Tel Aviv, Turin, Bari), Rocco in *Fidelio* (Paris) and Hunding in *Die Walküre* (Mannheim). He has worked with conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Armin Jordan, James Levine, Colin Davis, Georg Solti and Herbert von Karajan.



**EUGENE GINTY**  
Melot

Eugene Ginty has sung more than eighty operatic roles, and made his American debut as Tamino in Boston in 1995. He now lives in Ireland, where he has worked for Opera Ireland (Howard Boucher in *Dead Man Walking*; Snout in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Drunken Cossack in *Mazeppa*), Opera Theatre Company, Opera in the Open and Pan Pan Theatre. He recently performed the opera *Van Gogh* with Crash Ensemble at the Canberra Festival, Australia. In the UK, he has worked for ENO, English Touring Opera, Opera North, Opera Holland Park, Garsington Opera, Almeida Opera and Scottish Opera. His early career was spent in the distinguished choirs of Durham Cathedral and St George's Chapel,

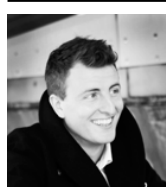
Windsor Castle. He later joined the BBC Singers and appeared many times on radio and television, including in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers* (BBC Proms, 1997). His concerts in London include Beethoven's Symphony No 9 (Royal Albert Hall), Mozart's *Litaniae laetanae* (Queen Elizabeth Hall) and Schubert's *Mondenschein* (Wigmore Hall). Eugene is the tenor soloist on the CD recording of Michael Flatley's show *Celtic Tiger*. Other recordings include Major-Domo/Lordlord in *Der Rosenkavalier* for Chandos, and a live CD recording of Shepherd in *Tristan und Isolde* with the BBC SO (Barbican, London, 2006).



**OWEN GILHOOLY**  
Shepherd

Owen Gilhooly trained with Jean Holmes in Limerick and Conor Farren in Dublin, then at the RCM and National Opera Studio, London. He represented Ireland at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World 2007. In 2009 he made his Viennese debut singing the title role in Conti's *Don Chisciotte* in *Serena Morena* (Musikwerkstatt Wien). Recent roles include Ivan the Illustrious in Rimsky Korsakov's *Kashchei the Immortal* and Baliff in Sibelius's *Maiden in the Tower* (Buxton Festival), Papageno (Opera Theatre Company), King Louis XVI in *The Ghosts of Versailles* and Lord Salt in *The Golden Ticket* (Wexford Festival Opera), Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* (English Touring Opera), Rossini's Figaro (Stanley Hall), Albert in *Werther* (Les Azuriales Opera) and the

General in Luke Bedford's *Seven Angels* (The Opera Group). He has sung in concert with the RTE NSO, Irish Chamber Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Bournemouth SO, Tokyo SO, the RLPO, LPO and with the Philharmonia at the Three Choirs Festival. With the BBC SO he has sung Joseph/Polydorus in Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ* under Andrew Davis, La Paigne/Waiter in *Margot la Rouge*, Bridegroom in Judith Weir's *The Vanishing Bridegroom*, and for the BBC Proms Bill Bobstay in *HMS Pinafore* and Janáček's *Osud*. His recordings include *Joyce Songs* — James Joyce's *Musical Dublin* with the RTE CO and Frederick May's *Songs from Prison* with the RTE NSO. Plans include Guglielmo with Opera Theatre Company.



**EAMONN MULHALL**  
Sailor

Eamonn Mulhall trained at the RCM and National Opera Studio, London. His operatic engagements include the world premiere of James MacMillan's *Clemency* (ROH Covent Garden, Scottish Opera), Prince Saphir in Offenbach's *Barbe-bleue* (Grange Park Opera), a staged *Messiah* and *After Dido* (ENO), Jaquino in *Fidelio* and Soldier in Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* (Opera Theatre Company), as well as Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* (Orchestra of Saint Cecilia), Massimo in *Ezio* (London Handel Festival), Aumônier in Poulenc's *Les Dialogues des Carmélites* (RCM) and understudying Bajazet in Handel's *Tamerlano* (Scottish Opera). Lamplighter in Weinberg's *The Portrait* (Opera North), Count Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*

(ENO) and Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* (WNO). A frequent soloist in concert, Eamonn has sung with many of Ireland and Britain's eminent choral societies. Highlights include *Messiah* (Royal Albert Hall), Puccini's *Messa di Gloria* (RTÉ CO) and appearances with the Irish Baroque Orchestra, the City of Birmingham SO, the Ulster Orchestra, the Irish Chamber Orchestra and the RLPO. His repertoire ranges from Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion*, through Mendelssohn's *Elijah* to Britten's *Saint Nicholas*. He is also a committed recitalist and has given song recitals in Wexford, St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, Scotland and Belgium. He has broadcast live on BBC Radio 3 and RTE lyric fm.





**GAVAN RING**  
Steersman

Irish baritone Gavan Ring studied at the Schola Cantorum and St Patrick's College, Dublin, and is currently completing doctoral studies at the RIAM. His awards include the inaugural NCH Bernadette Greevy Bursary and the Cuisine de France John McCormack Bursary 2011. A Jerwood Young Artist at Glyndebourne Festival Opera and an alumnus Young Associate Artist with Opera Theatre Company, Gavan has performed with Wexford Festival Opera, Scottish Opera, Northern Ireland Opera, Opera Ireland and Lyric Opera Productions. Recent opera credits include Phoebus in *The Fairy Queen* (Glyndebourne Festival Opera), Marcello in *La bohème* (Glyndebourne Festival Opera – cover/Wexford Festival Opera), Yamadori

in *Madama Butterfly* (Lyric Opera Productions) and Pluto in *Orpheus in the Underworld* (Scottish Opera/Northern Ireland Opera). Concert repertoire includes works by Bach, Mahler, Elgar and Fleischmann with orchestras such as the RTÉ NSO, the RTÉ CO and the Irish Baroque Orchestra. In 2012/13 he will train at the National Opera Studio, London. Gavan is kindly supported by the Glyndebourne New Generation Programme, the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon, the Richard Van Allan Award administered by the Musicians Benevolent Fund, the Cahersiveen Festival of Music and the Arts, and Daniel Timothy O'Sullivan & Sons Ltd.



**EIMEAR O'GRADY**  
Fight Director

A graduate of the Gaiety School of Acting two-year Professional Actor Training Course and the RIAM BA in Music Performance (cello), Eimear O'Grady has performed internationally in theatrical and musical genres. As a classical musician, she has toured extensively with ensembles and orchestras. Eimear made her stage debut in 2006, performing *Magdalen*, a one-woman play by Tony Barrow that subsequently toured to the International Theatre Festival in Moldova. Other stage credits include *Titus Andronicus* (Siren Productions), *The Stuff of Myth* (Crazy Dog Audio Theatre), *War of the Roses* (Whiplash Productions) and, most recently, her appearance as a cellist in *Alice in Funderland*

(Abbey Theatre). Eimear is a registered member of Stunt Guild Ireland and has many stunt credits to her name. Her television credits include *The Vikings* (in production), *The Tudors* (Showtime), *Camelot* (Starz), *Ripper St* (BBC), *The Silence* (BBC), *The Clinic* (RTÉ/Parallel) and *Damage* (RTÉ). She has appeared in the films *Asterix et Obélix*, *The Moth Diaries*, *Educazione Siberiana* and *Life's a Breeze*. Her radio credits include *Audio Gothic* and *The Stuff of Myth* (Crazy Dog Audio Theatre/RTÉ) and *London Landscape* (RTÉ).



**ANDREW SYNNOTT**  
Chorus Director  
& Assistant  
Conductor

Andrew Synnott is a Dublin-based composer/arranger/conductor and pianist. He was organ scholar in both Christ Church Cathedral and the Pro-cathedral, Dublin, while studying Music at TCD. He has conducted for Opera Theatre Company (*The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Magic Flute*, *Il mondo della luna*, Michael Alcorn's *Orfeo*, *Bastien and Bastienne*, *Xerxes*, *Acis and Galatea*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Monteverdi's *Orfeo*), Co-Opera (*La traviata*, *Carmen*, *Die Fledermaus*) and Glashtule Opera (*Die Zauberflöte*). He has also conducted at the Buxton Opera Festival and Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. His arrangements of *La bohème* and *The Magic Flute* have toured extensively in Ireland and the UK, most recently with English Touring Opera's

UK tour of *The Magic Flute*. He has just completed composing his first opera, *Breakdown*, written in collaboration with playwright John Breen. Andrew has also written music for theatre (including the Abbey Theatre), dance and radio, and his organ and choral music has been performed worldwide. He has conducted for many theatre productions and musicals, including several Derby Playhouse productions of Sondheim shows that he also arranged. This summer he conducted Kurt Weill's *Street Scene* for Zzere Arts Festival, Portugal. In 2006 he made his Australian debut as conductor for Brisbane Festival's production of *Johnno*. A former artistic director and conductor of Crash Ensemble, a group he co-founded in 1997, Andrew is a member of the vocal faculty at the RIAM.



**RUPERT DUSSMANN**  
Répétiteur

Born in Wales, Rupert Dussmann studied at King's College London, Guildhall School of Music and Drama and at the National Opera Studio, London. He has held permanent positions on the music staff at La Monnaie, Brussels, Stuttgart State Opera and Hamburg State Opera, and also spent nine years working at the Berlin State Opera with Daniel Barenboim. More recently he held the position of Head of Music at the National Opera Studio, London. He also works frequently with Simon Rattle and has had regular

engagements with Netherlands Opera, Theater an der Wien, Vienna, the Salzburg Easter and Summer Festivals, Opera Australia in Sydney and Melbourne, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, New Israeli Opera, Teatro Carlo Felice, Genoa, and Opéra de Nice. He works regularly for numerous young artist programmes (including New National Theatre, Tokyo, and the Jette Parker Programme at the ROH Covent Garden) and has collaborated as a musical assistant on numerous CD recordings for EMI, BMG, Decca and Teldec.



## CHORUS OF WIDE OPEN OPERA

### Tenors

Fearghal Curtis  
Ernest Dines  
Cian Elliott  
Niall Gallagher  
Warwick Harte  
Peter O'Donohue  
Richard Shaffrey  
Cathal Synnott  
Ian Whyte  
Jacek Wislocki

### Basses

John Dempsey  
Eoghan Desmond  
Stephen Fennelly  
Barra Lysaght  
Gyula Nagy  
Aaron O'Hare  
Ciaran Olohan  
Gerald Rogers  
David Scott  
Tim Shaffrey





## RTÉ NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Principal Conductor: Alan Buribayev | Principal Guest Conductor: Hannu Lintu | Associate Artist: Finghin Collins | Creative Advisor: Paul Rissmann

The RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra plays a central role in classical music in Ireland through a busy schedule of concerts and broadcasts. The Orchestra's annual concert season runs from September to May at the National Concert Hall. It includes weekly concerts and pre-concert interviews and talks, *FORTÉ*, the musical discovery educational programme, Late Night concerts, a mentoring scheme for young musicians, open rehearsals and much more. The orchestra also presents Horizons, the contemporary music series featuring works by Irish composers, as well as weekly lunchtime and evening concerts in June and July.

The RTÉ NSO is critically acclaimed at home and abroad for its recordings across a variety of labels, including RTÉ's own lyric fm label: notable have been *International Record Review* 'Outstanding' recommendations (John Kinsella, Seán Ó Riada), Editor's Choice in *Gramophone* (Stanford), Classic FM CD of the Month (Fleischmann), and international press acclaim for RTÉ lyric fm's CD of works for solo clarinet and orchestra featuring RTÉ NSO Principal Clarinet, John Finucane.

The RTÉ NSO 2012/13 season will see the orchestra in performance at the National Concert Hall, the National Convention Centre, the Bord Gáis Energy Theatre and at venues in Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. It will join forces with the National Concert Hall, Pipeworks,

the Contemporary Music Centre, Wide Open Music, Wide Open Opera, the Veronica Dunne International Singing Competition and *The John Murray Show*, RTÉ Radio 1.

In the 2012/13 season, the orchestra will be joined by international artists including pianists Lilya Zilberstein and Kiril Gerstein, cellist Alban Gerhardt, violinists Julian Rachlin, Baiba Skride, Ilya Gringolts and Eldbjørg Hemsing, harpist Xavier de Maistre and conductors Rafael Payare and Jonathan Cohen plus Irish artists including sopranos Orla Boylan singing operatic favourites and Miriam Murphy singing Wagner. Beyond the season events include *Symphonic Rock* (5 October) where rock and pop favourites get the rock star treatment; *An Evening with Eimear Quinn* and *the Dublin Laptop Orchestra* (27 October) with repertoire ranging from Irish traditional to the contemporary; for the first time in Dublin *Rain Falling Up* (10 November), a modern orchestral, choral and visual performance for children in association with Wide Open Music and also the return of last year's sell-out *Three Sopranos Christmas Gala* (19 December) with Celine Byrne, Regina Nathan and Cara O'Sullivan in association with *The John Murray Show*, RTÉ Radio 1.

To see a full listing of RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra events: [www.rte.ie/tso](http://www.rte.ie/tso) · [facebook.com/rtenso](https://facebook.com/rtenso) · [twitter.com/rte\\_nso](https://twitter.com/rte_nso)

## RTÉ NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Elaine Clark, Co-Leader  
Sebastian Liebig, Principal  
Claire Crehan  
Audrey McAllister  
Ting Zhong Deng  
David Clark  
Sylvia Roberts  
Brona Fitzgerald  
Dara Daly  
Camille Bonnard  
Claudie Driesen

### SECOND VIOLINS

David MacKenzie, Section Leader  
Elizabeth McLaren, Associate Principal  
Mary Wheatley  
Rosalind Brown  
Paul Fanning  
Dara O'Connell  
Melanie Briggs  
Evelyn McGroarty  
Elena Quinn  
Orla Ni Bhraoin

### VIOLAS

John Lynch, Associate Principal  
Francis Harte, SSP  
Neil Martin  
Aine O'Neill  
Margarete Clark  
Cliona O'Riordan  
Adele Greene  
Erika Horsley

### CELLOS

Martin Johnson, Section Leader  
Polly Ballard, Associate Principal  
Niall O'Loughlin  
Una Ni Chanáin  
Claire Fitch  
Elizabeth Fletcher  
Louise Dixon  
Edward Furse

### DOUBLE BASSES

Dominic Dudley, Section Leader  
Aura Stone, SSP  
Waldemar Kozak  
Helen Morgan  
Jenni Meade

### FLUTES

Cathiona Ryan, Section Leader  
Madeleine Staunton, Associate Principal  
Sinéad Farrell, Principal

### PICCOLO

Sinéad Farrell, Principal

### OBOES

Sylvain Gnemmi, Associate Principal  
Jenny Magee

### COR ANGLAIS

Deborah Clifford, Principal

### CLARINETS

John Finucane, Section Leader  
Matthew Billing, Principal

### BASS CLARINET

Fintan Sutton, Principal

### BASSOONS

Michael Jones, Section Leader  
Constance Tanner  
Hilary Sheil, Principal

### HORNS

Fergus O'Carroll, Acting Section Leader  
Ian Dakin  
Bethan Warkeys, Principal  
David Atcheler  
Liam Duffy  
Graham Hastings, Section Leader  
Killyan Bannister  
Colm Byrne, Principal

### TROMBONES

Jason Sinclair, Section Leader  
Gavin Roche, Associate Principal

### BASS TROMBONE

Seán Fleming, Principal

### TUBA

Francis Magee, Section Leader

### TIMPANI

Martin Mefrusty, Section Leader

### PERCUSSION

Richard O'Donnell, Section Leader  
Jonathan Herbert, Principal

### HARP

Andreja Malit, Section Leader

### OFFSTAGE TRUMPETS (ACT I)

Lee Butler  
Viv Johnston  
Richard Cowen

### OFFSTAGE TROMBONES (ACT I)

Karl Ronan  
Jonathan Clifford  
Ross Lyness

### OFFSTAGE HORNS (ACT I)

Liam Duffy  
Joseph Ryan  
Kevin O'Hara  
Brian Daly  
Andre Cavanagh  
Kevin O'Carroll

### OFFSTAGE COR ANGLAIS (ACT I)

Deborah Clifford, Principal

### OFFSTAGE TARAGATO (ACT I)

Conor Shell

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WIDE OPEN OPERA

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If you have enjoyed tonight's performance please keep in touch and help us develop some of our future plans.

### Future Plans for Wide Open Opera

In 2013 our focus will be on developing and presenting new operas by Irish artists. We are delighted to partner with NI Opera to present Gerald Barry's stunning new opera *The Importance of Being Earnest* in performances in Derry, Belfast, Cork and Dublin in Autumn 2013. Only a composer of the creative genius of Gerald Barry could get away with adding a new dimension to this cultural icon. His meticulous skill and craftsmanship combined with his wit and humour ensure that this new opera will be an astonishing theatrical experience.

We are also at different stages of developing operas by other Irish artists, including Brian Irvine and John McIluff, Raymond Deane and Gavin Kostick, and Donnacha Dennehy and Enda Walsh. We hope to bring many of these to fruition over the coming years.

We also intend to showcase major Irish singers in outstanding opera repertory, similar to tonight's production of *Tristan und Isolde*. We hope to collaborate again with many of our current partners in achieving these aims.

### Ways you can support Wide Open Opera

**Keep in Touch** Join our mailing list by sending an email to [mailinglist@wideopenopera.com](mailto:mailinglist@wideopenopera.com)  
Like us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/wideopenopera](https://www.facebook.com/wideopenopera) or follow us on Twitter: @wideopenopera

**Give us Feedback** We would be very happy to hear your thoughts and suggestions via our website, Facebook or Twitter

**Don't Keep it a Secret** If you have enjoyed tonight's production and would like to see more, spread the word. Tell your friends and colleagues, tell the media, tell politicians, tell The Arts Council

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BY GIUSEPPE VERDI

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