

Richard Wagner

in Bayreuth

World Heritage Opera House

Festspielhaus on the Green Hill

Arrival at the Station

Richard-Wagner-Stops in Bayreuth

Tourist-Information

Richard Wagner's *Tannhäuser* was performed here already in 1860, in the presence of *King Maximilian II of Bavaria*. And in 1870, when Wagner was still living in the *Villa Tribschen* in Switzerland and was on the lookout for a venue for his Festspiel, the conductor *Hans Richter* recommended it to him on account of its unusually large stage. But when Richard and Cosima visited Bayreuth's Margraval Opera House in 1871, they saw instantly that its late Baroque ceiling painting of *Apollo and the Muses* was scarcely the right frame to stage the *Ring des Nibelungen* (*Ring of the Nibelung*). But the legacy of *Margravine Wilhelmine*, the beloved sister of *Frederick the Great* and a multi-talented woman of great spirit who oversaw its building, proved such an attraction and the town of Bayreuth delighted them so much that the Wagners decided to enter into negotiations for land on which to erect a Festspielhaus.

The laying of the foundation stone of the new Festspielhaus on 22 May 1872 was celebrated in the Margraval Opera House with speeches and a performance of *Beethoven's Ninth Symphony* conducted by Wagner himself, ending with a rousing rendition of *Schiller's Ode to Joy*. Hundreds of musicians and singers who shared Wagner's utopian dream and who had flocked to Bayreuth from Berlin, Leipzig and other cities filled the stage on which Cosima and all 5 children were likewise seated. The opera house was as full as in the days when the margravine court had gone there to delight in a ballet, an opera or a comedy.

On 22 May 1873, again Richard's birthday, Cosima wrote in her diary: "Went to the opera house, it was packed and looked very elegant ... and then surprise followed on surprise ... he had no inkling of any of it, our secret was a complete success. After the performance we gathered at the *Anker*." Another entry in the diary reads as follows: "In the evening went to an amateur performance at the lovely opera house with R. and the two older children. The performance was not bad at all" (26 March 1873).

The opera house, one of the finest in Europe, was at last reawakened from its slumbers in 2012, when it was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Margravine *Wilhelmine of Bayreuth* had the Margraval Opera House built in 1746–48/50. Owing to extensive restoration work, there are unlikely to be any tours of the theatre before 2017. An exhibition on the history of the building, its UNESCO World Heritage status and the restoration work now in progress is set to open there in May 2013. Info: sgvbayreuth@bsv.bayern.de, www.bayreuth-wilhelmine.de Schlösser- und Gartenverwaltung Bayreuth-Eremitage Ludwigr. 21 (New Palace), 95444 Bayreuth, +49-(0)921/75 969-0



Dining à la Wagner

Recommended Reading

Wagner & the People of Bayreuth

Richard Wagner & Bayreuth

Richard Wagner ... Life & Works

Some of the restaurants and hotels in and around Bayreuth that were there in Wagner's day are still in business today. Writing in her diary on 19 July 1878, for example, Cosima describes how "Went to the *Eremitage* with our friends ... there was a table decked with flowers set for us in the bower by the lawn ... we were glad to be able to dine there rather than in the garden." And the entry for 28 June 1879 reads as follows: "Around 7 o'clock went to the *Bürgerreuth* and there supped by moonlight."

The atmosphere of days gone by still is present in all these places – and in the Franconian cuisine that is served there. So those who, during the Festspiele, fancy dining alongside musicians and singers as well as "natives" or "visitors" – depending on your perspective –would do well to make a note of the following addresses:

Bürgerreuth / Hotel & Italian Ristorante / Rinaldo & Stephanie Minuzzi Country inn since 1839 on the Green Hill above the Festspielhaus with a garden full of linden trees / **An der Bürgerreuth 20**, 95445 Bayreuth *Tel.* +49-(0)921-78 40-0 / www.buergerreuth.de

Eule / Restaurant (à la Wagner) / Harald Kaiser Beer tavern estab. 1838; later a popular location for artists **Kirchgasse 8**, 95444 Bayreuth (town centre) / *Tel.* +49-(0)921-95 80 27 95 www.eule-bayreuth.de / Tu.-Sat. 6-10 pm, Wed.-Sun. 11 am-2 pm

Goldener Anker / Eva Graf Traditional hotel, estab. 1753, next to the Margraval Opera House Hotel, Restaurant & Bistro / **Opernstr. 6**, 95444 Bayreuth *Tel.* +49-(0)921-78 77 74 0 / www.anker-bayreuth.de

Weihenstephan / Restaurant / Ramon Lchnbeuter Traditional haunt of artists since 1908 / Franconian cuisine Terrace in front of the building / www.restaurant-weihenstephan.de **Bahnhofstr. 5**, 95444 Bayreuth / *Tel.* +49-(0)921-8 22 88 / *open daily*

Hotel Fantaisie / Restaurant & café/ Fam. Ulrich Herath Next to the Schlosspark Fantaisie (Fantaisie Palace & Park) The original room where Wagner stayed in 1872 has been preserved. **Bamberger Str. 5**, 95448 Eckersdorf / *Tel.* +49-(0)921-75 86 448-0 *Closed on Mondays* / www.fantaisie.de (5 miles from Bayreuth)

Eremitage / Hotel & Schlossgaststätte / Fam. Jöckel, Michael Waigel Beer Gardens & Terrace in the Schlosspark Eremitage / Café Orangerie April-Oct. open from 11 am-8.30 pm / www.eremitage-bayreuth.de **Eremitage 6 (in the park)**, 95448 Bayreuth / *Tel.* +49-(0)921-79 99 70

Only Jesus Christ and Napoleon have been the subject of more books than Richard Wagner, it is said; apparently not even Goethe or Shakespeare can compete. The works listed here are thus no more than an introduction to the subject. Many standard works such as *Cosima's diaries* or Wagner's autobiography *Mein Leben* (*My Life*) are out of print.

Udo Bernbach, *Richard Wagner in Deutschland. Rezeption und Verfälschungen*, Stuttgart 2011
Udo Bernbach, *Mythos Wagner*, Berlin 2013
Dieter Borchmeyer, *Das Theater Richard Wagners*, Stuttgart 2013
Dieter Borchmeyer, *Richard Wagner. Werk – Leben – Zeit*, Ditzingen 2013
Daniel Brandenburg et al. (ed.), *Das Wagner-Lexikon*, Laaber 2012
Sven Friedrich, *Richard Wagners Opern. Ein musikalischer Werkführer*, Munich 2012

Martin Geck, *Wagner. Biographie*, Berlin 2012
Martin Gregor-Dellin, *Richard Wagner, sein Leben, sein Werk, sein Jahrhundert*, Munich 2013 (new ed.)
Thomas S. Grey (ed.): Cambridge Compendium to Wagner, 2008
Thomas S. Grey (ed.): Wagner and his World, London 2009
Brigitte Hamann, *Winifred Wagner oder Hilders Bayreuth*, Munich 2002
Joachim Kaiser, *Leben mit Wagner*, Frankfurt a. M. 2013
Eckhart Kiem (ed.), *Richard Wagner und seine Zeit*, Laaber 2003

Marcus Kiesel (ed): The Richard Wagner Festival Theatre Bayreuth / Das Richard Wagner Festspielhaus Bayreuth, Düsseldorf 2012
Laurenz Lüttken (ed.), *Wagner Handbuch*, Kassel 2012
Hans Mayer, *Wagner*, Frankfurt a. M. 1998
Barry Millington: Richard Wagner, London 2012
Barry Millington, The Sorcerer of Bayreuth: Richard Wagner, his Work and his World, OUP 2012

Anton Seljak, *Richard Wagner and das Judentum*, Books on Demand 2012
Bernhard Shaw, The Perfect Wagnerite, Dover 2010
Nicholas Vazsonyi (ed.): The Cambridge Wagner Encyclopedia, 2013
Egon Voss, *Richard Wagner*, Munich 2012
Nike Wagner, *Wagner-Theater*, Berlin 1999
Peter Wapnewski, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, Munich 2012

The Libretti of the individual music dramas are available from either *Reclam* or *Schoen-Verlag*.

Brief guides to Bayreuth (including a city map):
Sylvia Habermann, Elmar Hahn: A day in ... Bayreuth. Veisshöchheim 2013
Bernad Mayer, Gert Rückel: Tours on Foot. Bayreuth. Bamberg 2009
Michael Schmälzle: Bayreuth (english, french, german). Gudenberg 2012

Nowhere else in the world is there an opera house built specifically for the works of just one composer. This was a dream that Richard Wagner had to fight for. In those days copyright was still in its infancy and many theatres laid on performances with almost no rehearsals at all and singers who were not particularly good at singing, let alone acting. Musicians were paid servants' wages and since there was no social safety net were constantly in fear of losing their livelihood. Wagner's music dramas were therefore regarded as virtually unplayable for most opera houses in those days. Performances were often amateurish – at least when measured against the master's own professionalism and avant-garde perfectionism.

The Festspielhaus, a brainchild of the ex-revolutionary Wagner who wanted it to have a mysteriously concealed orchestra pit, fantastic acoustics and an auditorium modelled on a Greek amphitheatre where nearly 2000 people could sit and focus intently on what was happening on stage, was built in 1872–1876 by *Otto Brückwald* according to plans drawn up by *Gottfried Semper*. From the outside, however, it looks more like a factory than an opera house. The first Festspiele planned for 1873 had to be postponed several times until, in the summer of 1876, sufficient funding from the various Wagner societies, patrons, donors, concert revenues, royal lines of credit and the virtually unpaid collaboration of numerous performers and musicians had been secured.

Emperors, kings, princes and plutocrats – they all made the pilgrimage to an artist who held up to them an archetypal, revolutionary, utopian mirror clad in mythic garb: at the first Festspiele of 1876 it was the *Ring* tetralogy's account of the downfall of the "Germans" (gods, mortals, dwarves, giants and epic heroes) brought about by their pursuit of money and power and the triumph of "cognitive love" (represented by Brünnhilde), while at the second Festspiele of 1882 it was *Parsifal's* ancient Christian message of the redeeming power of suffering and empathy.

Yet the deficit that Wagner had to bear in 1876 was huge, the gulf between ambition and reality wider than ever, and the message of the rapturous music barely understood. Without *Cosima*, who as general manager and director after Wagner's death staged productions of all his other works, too, and over a period of 23 years established a tradition that her son *Siegfried* could build on in 1906/08 and after him his widow *Winifred* in 1930, the Festspiele would not have the unparalleled status it enjoys today.

Wagner's grandsons *Wieland* and *Wolfgang* rescued the tradition and shared the management of the Festspiele from 1951 until Wieland's death in 1966. As directors, moreover, they ushered in a more modern approach to Wagner. *Wolfgang Wagner*, until 2008, invited many an avant-garde director to stage productions at the Festspiele. Still in family hands, the Festspiele is now run by the 2 great-granddaughters *Katharina Wagner* and *Eva Wagner-Pasquier*.



Bayreuth 2013

All About Wagner!

www.wagnerstadt.de
www.bayreuther-festspiele.de
www.wagnermuseum.de



"The Festspielhaus is Bayreuth's most famous landmark." "Where would Bayreuth be without Richard Wagner?" This is how Bayreuth seeks to promote itself **today**. – "...How this great master has been a true blessing to our city and into which it him we have to thank when the name of Bayreuth is spoken with reverence by educated people all over the world..." boasted *Theodor Munkner*, mayor of Bayreuth, in his funeral speech on 18 February 1883.

40 years later, that reverence was tarnished by Bayreuth's close ties to *Hitler*. Yet responsibility for Wagner's image does not lie with Bayreuth alone; rather it is shared by the state of Bavaria and by the Federal Republic of Germany as a whole.

Bayreuth at any rate owes its unique status to the courage of those far-sighted men who in 1871 supported the similarly far-sighted town council in its efforts to induce the composer to settle there and who not only welcomed him in their midst on his first visit but thereafter supported him in the realization of his dream of a national theatre for performances of his works. Bayreuth in those days had a population of just 18 thousand. The friendships that Wagner forged with the mayor Theodor Munkner and the bankers *Friedrich Feustel* and *Adolf von Gross*, who both became members of the hastily convened board of directors, proved stable through thick and thin.

In a resolution passed on 7 November 1871, the municipal authorities were empowered to purchase land for the new Festspielhaus. The negotiations for plots at the end of the Hofgarten and on the Stuckberg in St. Georgen had come to nothing when, on 8 January 1872, an excited *Cosima* – still at the *Villa Tribschen* – penned the following entry in her diary: "All of a sudden good news from Feustel the banker and the mayor of Bayreuth! ... They're offering us a different plot for the theatre which is even better than the one selected before and we've already found a place [the Hotel Fantaisie] for the summer." They very nearly left again without concluding a deal, but Cosima was good at liaising and was able to persuade Richard of the advantages of the Green Hill.

In his autobiography *Mein Leben*, Wagner recalled his very first visit to Bayreuth in the summer of 1835, when he was travelling by stagecoach from Prague to Nuremberg. He must have seen the Baroque town centre even then, and in 1864 read the *Siebenkäs* by *Jean Paul*, Bayreuth's most famous poet. When looking for a place to house his life's work in late 1870 – knowing that it would have to be within the domain of his patron, *King Ludwig II of Bavaria* – he chanced to read about the Margraval Opera House of Bayreuth, famed for the size of its stage. Although the opera house proved incompatible with his plans, the decision in favour of Bayreuth was made on his very first visit there with Cosima on 1 February 1871. A year later, the site of the new Festspielhaus and of the Villa Wahnfried had been chosen. On 1 December 1872 Wagner became a citizen of the City of Bayreuth .

1813–1832 Childhood and Youth
1813 Born in Leipzig on 22 May, ninth child. Death of father, Friedrich Wagner.
1814 Mother Johanna Rosine marries Ludwig Geyer. Moves to Dresden.
1821 Death of the step-father. **1822** Pupil at the Kreuzschule in Dresden.
1827–30 Confirmation. Moves to Leipzig. Attends the Nicolaischule. Writes a tragedy *Leubald und Adelaide*. First (clandestine) attempts at composition; lessons in harmony with C. G. Müller, Chorister at the Thomasschule.
1831/32 Student. Gambling and brawling. Counterpoint lessons with Thomas Cantor Chr. Theodor Weinlig. First concert overture is performed.

1833–1842 Years of Travel, Debt and Hunger
1833 With brother Albert in Würzburg. Choirmaster. *Die Feen* (The Fairies).
1834 Music director in Lauchstädt, Rudolstadt and Magdeburg. Meets the actress Minna Planer and finishes his first opera *Die Feen*.
1835 Passes through Bayreuth en route to Nuremberg. Engagement to Minna.
1836 Premiere of *Das Liebesverbot* (The Love Ban) in Magdeburg, marriage to Minna Planer (who passes off her illegitimate daughter Nathalie as her sister).
1837 Music director in Königsberg and Riga. Growing mountain of debts.
1838 Begins work on *Rienzi*.
1839 Flees with Minna and their dog Robber. Storm on the Skagerrak (inspiration for the *Fliegende Holländer* [Flying Dutchman]). London. Paris.

1840–1842 Lives in poverty in Paris. No success in the French capital. Finishes work on *Rienzi* and the *Fliegende Holländer* (in Meudon). Returns to Dresden.
1842–1849 Hofkapellmeister and Revolution in Dresden
1842 Premiere of *Rienzi* in Dresden.
1843 Premiere *Fliegender Holländer*. Kapellmeister of the Royal Court of Saxony.
1845 Premiere of *Tannhäuser*. Marienbad. Prose sketch of *Meistersinger*.
1848 Finishes *Lohengrin* (which Franz Liszt premieres in Weimar in 1850).
1849 May Revolt. Wagner is on the list of revolutionaries sought by the police. Flees via Weimar to Zurich and Paris (without Minna and with Liszt's support).

1850–1859 In Exile in Switzerland
1850 Zurich, Paris. Bordeaux. Abortive plan to flee with Jessie Laussot. Minna comes to Zurich.
1852 Completes libretto for the *Ring*. Conducts in Zurich. Growing circle of friends.
1854 Finishes *Rheingold*. Concept for *Tristan*.
1856 Finishes *Waldkäse*. Begins composition of *Siegfried*.
1857 First prose sketch for *Parsifal*. Otto & Mathilde Wesendonck offer the *Asyl* in Zurich. Works on *Tristan* and *Isolde*. Composes the *Wesendonck Lieder*.
1858 Minna is jealous, the *Asyl* has to be given up. Venice. Works on *Tristan*.
1859 Venice. Lucerne. Finishes work on *Tristan*. Paris. Minna follows him.

** This biography is an outline only, since space does not allow mention of all his writings, friendships and liaisons.*

1860–1864 Homelessness
1860 Partial amnesty. Wagner is allowed to return to Germany, but not to Saxony.
1861 *Tannhäuser* scandal in Paris. Libretto for *Meistersinger*. Travel. *Tristan* in Vienna abandoned despite numerous rehearsals.
1862 Biebrich. Works on *Meistersinger*. Final separation from Minna.
1863 Concert tour up to Moscow. New home in Penzing near Vienna. Debts.
1864 Flees debtors. Wagner "is finished."

1864–1872 The Turning Point: Ludwig II and Cosima
1864 On becoming king, the young Ludwig II tries to find Wagner. Life-changing audience with the king on 4 May. Ludwig II guarantees Wagner a living. Moves to new home at Haus Pellet on Lake Starnberg. Is visited by Cosima and later by Hans von Bülow. In the autumn takes up residence in Munich (Brienner Strasse 21). Premiere of *Fliegender Holländer*.
1865 Birth of daughter Isolde. Premiere of *Tristan* in Munich (conducted by Hans von Bülow). The Munich court and press rebel against Wagner's adulterous relationship with Cosima von Bülow and royal privileges. Wagner flees to Geneva.
1866 Minna dies in Dresden. Wagner moves to the Villa Tribschen near Lucerne. Works on *Meistersinger*.
1867 Birth of daughter Eva. Finishes *Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Cosima with her children is a regular visitor to Tribschen.
1868 Premiere of *Meistersinger* in Munich. Cosima finally moves to Tribschen together with the 2 von Bülow daughters and begins her *diaries*.
1869 Resumes work on the *Ring* (*Siegfried*). Premiere of *Rheingold* attended by Ludwig II in Munich. Friedrich Nietzsche visits them in Tribschen. Son Siegfried is born. *Siegfried-Idyll*.
1870 *Waldkäse* premieres in Munich. Cosima obtains a divorce and she and Wagner marry in Lucerne on 25 August. Bayreuth chosen for the planned Festspiele.
1871/72 Visits to Bayreuth and decides to move there permanently.

1872–1883 Bayreuth "where my delusions found peace"
1872/73 Moves to Bayreuth. Lives first at the Hotel Fantaisie and on Dammallee. Work commences on the building of the Festspielhaus and Villa Wahnfried. Works on *Götterdämmerung*. Financial woes.
1874 Moves into the Villa Wahnfried. Theatre project is in jeopardy; Ludwig II comes to the rescue with loans. Finishes *Götterdämmerung*. Concert tours.
1875 Rehearsals for the *Ring*.
1876 First Bayreuth Festspiele. Three *Ring* cycles. Huge deficit. Venice.
1877–1882 Conducting engagements in London. Work on *Parsifal*. Ludwig II covers deficit by providing additional loans. Annual trips to Italy. Wagner's operas now performed all over Europe and America. *Bayreuther Blätter* launched in 1878.
1882 Second Bayreuth Festspiele. Premiere of *Parsifal* as sacred festival drama. Spends winter in Venice with the whole family. Franz Liszt and friends.
1883 Dies in Venice on 13 February. Is buried in the park of the Villa Wahnfried.



Hotel Fantaisie

The first 6 months in Bayreuth was a happy time for the 7-member Wagner family, their dog *Russ* and nanny. The banker *Friedrich Feustel* had reserved the second floor of the Hotel Fantaisie for them back in January 1872. The summer 1872 was spent among the peacocks, salamanders and swans in the park, going for walks to the Meierei, bathing in the Herzogweiher pond and exploring the new environs.

The laying of the foundation stone for the new Festspielhaus on 22 May attracted musicians and visitors to Fantaisie and Wagner's birthday. Work on the Festspielhaus and the Villa Wahnfried progressed swiftly. Soon, the first singers were able to rehearse there and famous guests began arriving. It was here that Wagner finished his orchestral sketches for Act 3 of *Götterdämmerung*, here that he continued his autobiography, *Mein Leben*, and here that he wrote his ideas *On Actors and Singers*.

Wagner's own room with its original Biedermeier furnishings can still be viewed or rented even today. *Tourist Information offers 2 special flyers*.

King Ludwig II

Guardian Angel ... Parsifal ... Celestial Friend ... Beloved ... My King ... flowery salutations in Wagner's letters to King Ludwig II of Bavaria.

The 13-year-old crown prince had read both *Opera and Drama* and *Artwork of the Future* and saw his first production of *Lohengrin* at the age of 15. As King of Bavaria, 18-year-old Ludwig dispatched a search party to find Wagner, who at the time was on the run from his creditors. Meeting him in person on 4 May 1864 he promised the composer a life without financial worries. "Only a miracle can save me now". Wagner had written just days previously; and here it was. Ludwig's patronage of Wagner, based on their shared ideals, withstood many a setback and endured until the latter's death. The bronze bust erected in 1875 in front of the Villa Wahnfried attests to the composer's profound gratitude for the king's largesse, which included a regular salary, the discharge of his debts, gifts and gratuities, assistance with premieres and the Villa Wahnfried and loans (later repaid) facilitating the building of the Festspielhaus and the first Festspiele in 1876 and 1882.

Villa Wahnfried ...

Wagner was now 59 and had never had a house of his own. After purchasing the *Miedelsgrund*, a property neighbouring the *Hofgarten*, on 2 February 1872, he commissioned the architect *Carl Wölfel* to build him the villa of his dreams complete with garden, conservatory, pavilion, fountain, a cottage for the gardener and plenty of space for the composer himself, his wife Cosima, the 5 children, their servants and their guests.

Work on the villa dragged on for 2 years and there were innumerable setbacks; but when Wagner moved in on 28 April 1874, the villa instantly became the haven of peace he had yearned for – and at the same time the headquarters of the worldwide network of patrons and enthusiasts of the Festspielhaus and the Festspiele of 1876 and 1882. The hall, park and recital room attracted social gatherings even after Wagner's death, when first his widow *Cosima* (from 1884), then his son *Siegfried* (from 1906) and later his daughter-in-law *Winifred* (from 1930) took over the reins.

... Museum since 1976

3 marble plaques adorn the façade: "*Here where my delusions found peace / Let this house be named Wahnfried*", – the name Wagner received in golden letters below, above an allegory of the *Artwork of Future*. The central plaque shows *Wotan* the wanderer and philosopher (wearing a hat instead of a helmet) with the ravens of wisdom. *Greek Tragedy* stands to the left and *Musik (Little Siegfried)* with a lyre to the right, with *Cupid (Little Siegfried)* – armed with bow and arrow – at her feet.

The Villa Wahnfried was severely damaged during an Allied bombing raid in April 1945. Fortunately, the library, scores and archive had already been taken to safety. *Wieland Wagner* and his family lived in the villa until his death in 1966. In the neighbouring *Siegfriedhaus*, formerly welcoming numerous guests, including *Adolf Hitler* himself, now lived his mother *Winifred Wagner* until her death in 1980.

To mark the centenary of the Festspiele, the restored Villa Wahnfried was reopened on 24 July 1976 as the *Richard Wagner Museum*.

The Family

"When I think that after thirty years of sterility I should all at once be surrounded by 5 children!" These words, according to *Cosima's* diaries, are those of the proud father. Their own 3 children were all born before their marriage in 1870: *Isolde* (Loldi) in 1965, *Eva* in 1867 and *Siegfried* (Fridi), the family favourite and later director of the Festspiele, in 1869. The 2 elder daughters, *Daniela* (Lusch or Lulu) and *Blandine* (Boni), came from her first marriage to *Hans von Bülow* – once the favourite pupil of her father, *Franz Liszt*, an admirer of Wagner and a famous European pianist and conductor. Richard Wagner's first marriage to *Minna* had been without issue.

"What a joy to us, our children!" he often exclaimed in Cosima's diary. Almost no day went by, nor any outing or journey, without all the children being around. In Bayreuth the family was happily complete.

The Guests

"Guests came and guests went," the libretto of *Waldhütte* tells us. The Villa Wahnfried was a hospitable place. "Lunch with ..." is a very common entry in the diary. The evenings were spent philosophizing and Wagner liked to entertain family and guests by reading or singing or playing his Steinway grand. They had a cook to provide refreshments, for as Wagner himself wrote, "A fat capon soon lifts the spirits." The years of penury really were a thing of the past.

The pianist *Joseph Rubinstein*, the painter *Paul von Joukovsky*, the composer *Engelbert Humperdinck*, the tutor *Heinrich von Stein* and *Hans von Bülow*, the publisher of the *Bayreuther Blätter*, were among the permanent "friends of the family."

During the Festspiele of 1876 and 1882, numerous musicians, patrons and friends crowded Villa Wahnfried and a sumptuous buffet was offered in the hall.

"Guests came and guests went" ... that the "guests went" was also just as well.

The Pets

Richard Wagner loved dogs – as did two other famous scions of Bayreuth, the poet *Jean Paul* and *Margravine Wilhelmine*, the beloved sister of *King Frederick the Great*. *Russ* was a Newfoundland that accompanied Wagner from the Villa Tribschen to Bayreuth; multiples of a sculpture of him by *Ottmar Hört* adorn many a display window, hotel room and garden in Bayreuth. Others of his dogs were called *Marke*, *Brange*, *Faffner* and *Molly*. They were all eventually buried in the garden of the Villa Wahnfried; some even with a little tombstone.

The peacocks *Wotan* and *Fricka* were also imported from Tribschen. The large household of the Villa Wahnfried with its many servants and guests was endowed with a whole barnyard full of hens, pigeons, ducks, pheasants, peacocks and even parrots.

Wagner was a vociferous opponent of vivisection and participated in public debate on the subject. He never became a true vegetarian, however.

The Grave

On 14 March 1873 – the Villa Wahnfried was still under construction – Richard showed Cosima "the place where he wishes our grave to be, where we alone shall rest, side by side ... inseparable for all eternity!" "The final movement of *Tristan and Isolde* should be played at our burial," said Richard in July 1873.

The installation of the vault – now overgrown with ivy – at the far end of the garden of the Villa Wahnfried and close to the Hofgarten, had to be approved by the mayor, *Theodor Muncker*. And whereas progress on the villa was slow, the vault was completed on 8 August. Seated on the balcony, Richard and Cosima could gaze wistfully at this private memento mori.

Richard was buried there on 18 February 1883, whereas Cosima did not follow him until April 1930. The slab is made of granite without any inscription, for – as Wagner meant – "The world knows who rests here."

Every 25 July, the opening day of the Festspiele, musicians of the festival orchestra dedicate a serenade to the composer.

Franz Liszt

Franz Liszt, the composer, conductor and pianist of Europe-wide fame, became a loyal and generous friend of the young Richard Wagner; he popularized *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* in Weimar, helped the revolutionist to flee from Dresden 1849 to Zurich and Paris and organized concerts and transcriptions of his works. United by their yearning for freedom, which was very much in the air of post-revolutionary Europe, Wagner, Liszt and their friend the poet *Georg Herwegh* in 1853 swore blood brotherhood in a solemn oath modelled on that of *William Tell* in Switzerland.

Wagner's demands for money, his marriage to Liszt's daughter *Cosima* (whose first husband had been Liszt's favourite pupil, the conductor and pianist *Hans von Bülow*) and Richard's periodic fits of jealousy of his father-in-law's superego clouded their friendship from time to time. Yet both their love for Cosima (and her love for them) and their shared goals as pioneers of "music of the future" remained strong bonds.

Franz Liszt Museum

Franz Liszt, *Cosima's* father, passed away here in this house, next door to the Villa Wahnfried, on 31 July 1886, three years after Wagner. He had just returned from an exhausting concert tour, to join te marriage of his granddaughter Daniela, and although gravely ill, had been to see his two favourite operas, *Parsifal* and *Tristan und Isolde*, at the Festspiele, staged by his daughter Cosima. He had asked to be buried without pomp wherever he happened to die. A little chapel was later erected over his grave in Bayreuth's *municipal cemetery (Stadtfriedhof)*.

The Franz Liszt Museum opened in 1993 and houses portraits of the great composer, first editions of his works and various documents and objects connected with the great composer. Its holdings, most of which come from the collection of the Munich pianist *Ernst Burger*, were recently digitized and can be viewed online. Another original Liszt grand piano (from 1873) can be admired in the Rococo room of the *Steingraeber House* in the Friedrichstraße.

Wagner and the Jews

The last judgment begins here on earth. If every basely motivated utterance of ours were recorded for posterity, which of us would be in a position to throw the first stone? Wagner certainly held a lot of contradictory views. He was for and against the French and the Germans, princes and socialists, Jesuits and journalists, and – above all others – the Jews.

Yet some of the Jews he was befriended: the poet *Heinrich Heine*, for example, and the professional musicians *Karl Taussig*, *Joseph Rubinstein* and *Hermann Levi*. Others were able to separate work and person: the music directors *Heinrich Porges* and *Angelo Neumann* (who took his Wagner Theater on tour) or the composer and patron *Giacomo Meyerbeer*.

But the fact remains that *Judaism in Music*, a treatise motivated by anti-Semitism, anti-capitalism and professional rivalry, that Wagner published not just once but twice, in 1850 and 1869, reinforced the public seeds of religious, cultural, economic and political anti-Semitism that was to have dire consequences.

Bayreuth Delusion

The anti-Semitism and ethnocentric, nationalist ideology propagated by Villa Wahnfried, the *Bayreuther Blätter*, prominent Wagnerians and the proto-Nazi *Houston Stewart Chamberlain* proved an ideal breeding ground for *Adolf Hitler* and his programme of extermination. As a fan of Wagner and patron of the Festspiele, he even wanted to turn the Bayreuth Festspielhaus into a *German Acropolis*.

After 1945, both Festspiele and city found it difficult to face up to their Nazi-tainted past. Not until *Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's* film about Hitler-friend *Winifred and Gottfried Wagner's* exorciation of the Wagner clan did this change. Bayreuth now hosts a successful *History Workshop* and an open-air exhibition *Silenced Voices*, a congress on *Wagner and the Jews* in 1998 broke the first taboos; the *Richard Wagner National Archive* is open to scholars, Jewish history is worked on, and a new Jewish complex housing the Baroque synagogue, mikvah and a cultural centre is being rebuilt close to the Margravian Opera House.

Schlosspark Fantaisie Fantaisie Palace and Park

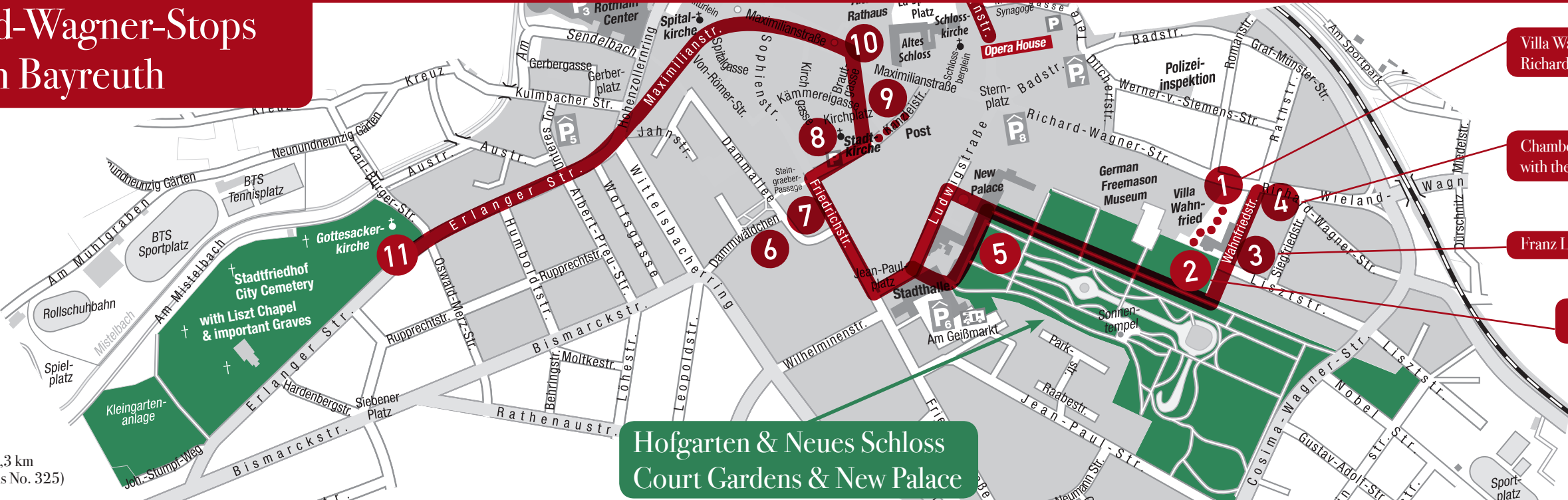
www.gartenkunst-museum.de



With kind permission of the Bayerischen Verwaltung der Staatlichen Schlösser, Gärten und Seen.

Wahnfried – City Cemetery: 3.3 km
Wahnfried – Fantaisie: 8.6 km (Bus No. 325)

Richard-Wagner-Stops in Bayreuth



Hofgarten & Neues Schloss Court Gardens & New Palace

Schlosspark Eremitage Hermitage & Court Garden

www.bayreuth-wilhelmine.de

Wahnfried – Eremitage: 3.9 km
(Bus Nos. 302, 303, 322)

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The Court Gardens

Margravine Wilhelmine's splendid Court Garden behind her *Neues Schloss* was popular with the Wagner family even while they were still living on *Dammallee*, whether for skating in winter or as araway for inspecting progress on the Villa Wahnfried.

When the villa was at last finished in 1874, strolls or long walks in the park by day or by night became part of the almost every day rituals. Blackbird song, military bands or moonlight promenades all merit a mention in *Cosima's diary*. "Walk with R. in the Hofgarten where he took the most wonderful paths so that in our ¾-hour-long stroll, we never went the same way twice" (entry for 12 December 1877).

Thanks to the intervention of *King Ludwig II*, Wagner was able to buy the plot between the Hofgarten and the Villa Wahnfried garden, ensuring that his family henceforth had private access to the park. And the black swans that Ludwig gave Wagner for his birthday were allowed to swim on the Hofgarten canal.

Dammwäldchen 4

From late September 1872 until April 1874, the Wagners lived close to the town centre. The large house was placed at their disposal by the architect *Carl Wölfel*, pending completion of the Villa Wahnfried. It was here that Wagner wrote Act 1 of *Götterdämmerung* and supervised the construction of the Festspielhaus and the Villa Wahnfried; it was here that he negotiated with patrons and met *Feustel* the banker and *Muncker* the mayor for consultations; it was here that he received visitors such as his father-in-law *Franz Liszt*, the philosopher *Friedrich Nietzsche* and his patroness *Mini von Schleinitz*. Only the portico of the original house (now an agricultural cooperative) has survived.

The house at *Dammallee 8* just a short walk away was supposed becoming the permanent residence of *Malwida von Meyenbug* (1816–1903), a lifelong friend of Wagner's. But after just a few months in Bayreuth in 1873/74, the writer and campaigner for democracy and women's rights decided to move to Rome instead.

Steingraeber & Söhne

In 1846, *Eduard Steingraeber* was entrusted with the upkeep of *Franz Liszt's* concert grands in Vienna. In 1852 he founded his own pianoforte factory in Bayreuth, and in Paris 1867 was awarded a gold medal for modernizing piano manufacture. In 1871 he bought the Baroque *Liebharts Palais* on Friedrichstrasse, to serve as his company headquarters. He met Richard Wagner 1872 and in 1876 became an official supplier of the Bayreuth Festspiele. His *Gravlocken piano* built specially for performances of *Parsifal* was in use from 1881 to 1981.

Udo Schmidt-Steingraeber, managing director since 1980, stepped up Steingraeber's manufacture of concert grands; he keeps contact to piano manufacturers and clients the world over and brings the Steingraeber premises to life with some 70 cultural events every year. *www.steingraeber.de/veranstaltungen*
The Steingraeberpassage leading through the old city wall forms a link between the Dammwäldchen and the Kanzleistraße.

The City Parish Church

Wagner's relations with the church and church history remained ambivalent. The Catholic Cosima and Protestant Richard married in a Protestant church in Lucerne in 1870. In 1872 Cosima converted to the Lutheran church in Bayreuth's gothic *Stadtkirche* (city church). The Wagners regarded *Martin Luther* as an "authentically German spirit." The dean of Bayreuth, *Dr. Wilhelm Dittmar*, belonged to their circle of friends, even if Cosima found his sermons rather long.

Wagner's 1849 concept for a drama to be called *Jesus of Nazareth* was never actually realized. We know from numerous diary entries that the family attached importance to repentance and holy communion and to the blessing and confirmation of their children. Richard and Cosima loved and admired *Jesus Christ* as suffering saviour untainted by sin. This is most clearly apparent in his last opera, *Parsifal*, staged since 1882 as a sacred festival drama.

Dining Out

The most important *hotels* frequented by the many famous guests who attended the Festspiele were the *Sonne* (where Richard and Cosima first stayed in 1871), the *Anker*, the *Reichsadler* (on the market square) and the *Schwarze Ross*.

Wagner's favourite inn was the *Angermann* at Kanzleistrasse 3 (now the post office), which was a popular haunt of the officers stationed at the Bayreuth garrison. This was where Wagner brought his singers, conductors and other guests, sometimes with *Cosima* at his side; *Little Siegfried* (Fridi) even had his own special glass. The *Nibelungenkanzlei* was also domiciled there for a while.

Two sheds were erected close to the Festspielhaus in order to cater to all the guests attending the Festspiele in 1876: the "Wagner-Theater-Restaurierung", however, with capacity for up to 1500 guests was later auctioned off.

The old Town Hall

The 17-century Old Rathaus on the market square is another Bayreuth landmark connected with Wagner. It was here that the town council held the crucial meeting at which the courageous and far-sighted aldermen of Bayreuth, first and foremost the mayor *Theodor Muncker* and the bankers *Friedrich Feustel* and *Adolf von Gross*, decided to give Wagner their support. When assessing just how momentous their decision was, it must be remembered that Wagner was not just a famous composer, but also an erstwhile revolutionary who had spent many years in exile.

The land on which the Festspielhaus was built was purchased on 7 Nov. 1871. Numerous patrons and delegates of various *Wagner societies* met here on 23 May 1872 to pass an important but by no means obvious resolution, which was "to commit all our energies to commencing the building of the theatre and seeing it through to completion." The Old Rathaus now houses the Bayreuth *Art Museum* and a restaurant called *Oskar*.

City Cemetery

Bayreuth's *Stadtfriedhof* on *Erlanger Straße* is also worth a visit.

Alongside the family vault of Wagner's son *Siegfried*, his grandsons *Wieland* and *Wolfgang* and their respective wives, several other well-known Wagnerians and musicians are buried here, among them *Karl Klindworth* (the pianist and adoptive father of *Winifred Wagner*), *Hans Richter* (conductor of the first Festspiele) and *Franz Liszt* (Wagner's father-in-law and a composer and pianist of Europe-wide renown) whose chapel stands alongside the grave of the poet *Jean Paul*.

The family graves include those of Wagner's daughter *Eva* and her husband *Houston Stewart Chamberlain*, his step-daughter *Daniela Thoda*, née *von Bülow*, and Count *Gilberto Gravina*.

The tombs are all situated close to the main entrance and are clearly signposted.

Richard and Cosima Wagner are buried in the garden of the Villa Wahnfried.



Out of Town

"I do so wish to get to know every little corner of our dear Franconia and to arouse in the children an interest in what is close at hand," wrote *Cosima* in her diary on 21 April 1873.

The Wagners' excursions into the countryside, usually with the children, were very popular. Their favourite places included the Waldhütte, an inn beloved of *Jean Paul* called the Rollwenzel, the Feustels' house in Friedrichsthal, the Riedelsberg, Sophienberg, Schloss Birken, the Studentenwald or the Konnersreuther Chaussee (now Nürnberger Strasse). Guests were entertained at the theatre, the Eremitage or the Fantaisie.

Excursions further afield to places like Drossenfeld, Creußen, Fränkische Schweiz, the Luisenburg or Bad Berneck called for the family coach.

Starting in 1876, the family spent several months of every year in Italy's warmer climes, specifically in Sicily, Naples, Siena and Venice, where *Richard Wagner* died in 1883.

Eremitage

Outings to *Margravine Wilhelmine's* hermitage with its orangery and fountains were always popular among the Wagners and their guests.

Emperor Wilhelm I resided in the hermitage when attending the first Ring cycle. And it was here that *King Ludwig II*, too, Wagner's most dedicated patron and impresario, resided during the first Festspiele in 1876 so that he could attend the dress rehearsal and later the 3rd cycle of the *Ring* in the new Festspielhaus.

Being by nature a shy man, the king did not want public sensation; he arrived in the middle of a night on a special train which stopped outside the town. Only Wagner was allowed to meet him, however, and was invited to converse and take strolls with the king. There were ovations in the end, however: when the king drove past the "fairly-lit" Villa Wahnfried on his way to the "Rollwenzel", the people of Bayreuth lit his way with flaming torches and lanterns.

You all must help me!

"His music is not for everybody. But for all of us" (slogan of the *Siemens Wagner* webstream) ...

Having revolutionary ideas and reformist zeal was not enough. What Wagner yearned for most to complete his dramas was a comfortable home where he could work in peace, with "a little luxury" and no money worries. This was not what fate had in store for him. Those who loved him – *Franz Liszt*, *Julie Rieter*, *Otto Wesendonck*, his siblings or his first wife *Minna* – supported him even during his years of flight and penury.

But his Festspielhaus and the staging of the first Festspiele in 1876 and 1882 called for more than just goodwill and personal support. Had not the "Fairytale" *King Ludwig II* and *Cosima* entered his life in 1864, he would probably have had to abandon his plans. Numerous idealistic artists helped and it was here that the patrons and *Wagner societies* proved crucial. The *Richard Wagner associations* and *Society of Friends of Bayreuth* provide a similar network of patrons today.

WagnerWorldWide

Wagner, whose music dramas are shaped by the spirit of Ancient Greece but seek the "German spirit" and "human ideals," and who repeatedly invoked the "world spirit", remained a revolutionary in his reform ideas and critique of power and property structures. He attracted a huge following not just in Europe, but in Russia, the Far East, North America and Brazil.

Wagner's music is now transnational. The Cologne Opera's *2 Ring* cycles for example, touring and telecasting in 2010, were watched by around one billion Chinese. Bayreuth calls itself a "world city *ad interim*", whereas *wagnerworldwide* is the name of a small but globally networked cycle of lectures and study.

While working on *Parsifal* in 1881, Wagner actually raced ahead of himself: "I know no ethnicity," he said, adding "race has had its day, only the blood of Christ can work now." But, as Wagner himself said: "That an epoch is worthy of us depends on us."