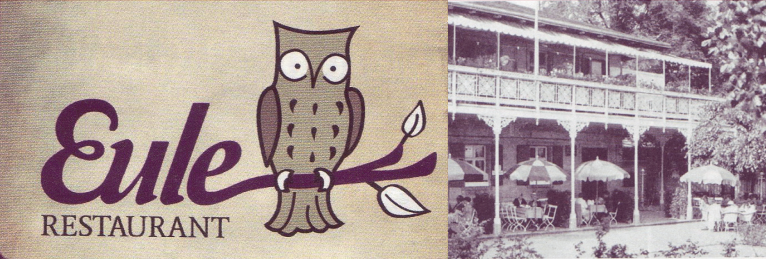




Excursion to Wagner City Bayreuth



Dining à la Wagner

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 is still present in all these places – and in the Franconian cuisine that is served there. So those who, during the Festspele, 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
Phone +49-(0) 921 - 78 40-0 / www.buergerreuth.de

Eremitenklause / Angelika & Hans Jöckel
Near the Eremitage, franconian cuisine & a lovely beer garden
Eremitenhofstraße 29, 95444 Bayreuth
Phone +49-(0) 921 - 79 997-0 / www.eremitenklause-bayreuth.de

Eule / Restaurant (à la Wagner) / Harald Kaiser
Beer tavern estab. 1838; later a popular location for artists
Kirchgasse 8, 95444 Bayreuth (town center)
Phone +49-(0) 921 - 95 80 27 95 / www.eule-bayreuth.de

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

Manns Bräu / near the Friedrichsforum (behind the Hofgarten)
Friedrichstraße 23, 95444 Bayreuth
Phone +49-(0) 921 - 15 55 83 63 / www.mannsbraeu.de

Schinner Braustuben / near Villa Wahnfried
Richard-Wagner-Straße 38, 95444 Bayreuth
Phone +49-(0) 921 - 67 673 / www.schinnerbraustuben.de

Wolffenzacher / Traditional Restaurant (Sternplatz)
Franconian cuisine between Villa Wahnfried & Margravian Opera house
Badstrasse 1, 95444 Bayreuth
Phone +49-(0) 921 - 6 45 52 / www.wolffenzacher.de



World Heritage Opera House

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 Tribtschen* in Switzerland and was on the lookout for a venue for his Festspele, the conductor *Hans Richter* recommended it to him on account of its unusually large stage. But when Richard and Cosima visited Bayreuth's Margravial 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 Margravial 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.

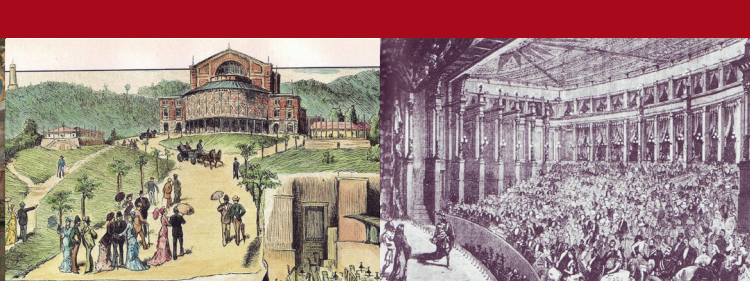
On 22 May **1873**, again Richard's birthday, Cosima wrote in her diary: "Went to the opera house, it was packed and looked very elegant ... and then surprise followed on surprise ... he had no inkling of any of it, our secret was a complete success. After the performance we gathered at the *Anker*." 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".

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. Since **2020** the extraordinary *Bayreuth Baroque Opera Festival* is there annually presented in September. www.bayreuthbaroque.de

Margravine Wilhelmine of Bayreuth had the Margravial Opera House built in **1746-48/50**. It was given UNESCO World Heritage status in **2012** – as the world's most important and best-preserved example of baroque theatre architecture. More information:

Schloss- und Gartenverwaltung Bayreuth-Eremitage
Ludwigstraße 21 (Neues Schloss), 95444 Bayreuth,
+49 (0) 921/75 969-0 www.bayreuth-wilhelmine.de

For baroque treasures of the region see www.markgrafenkultur.de



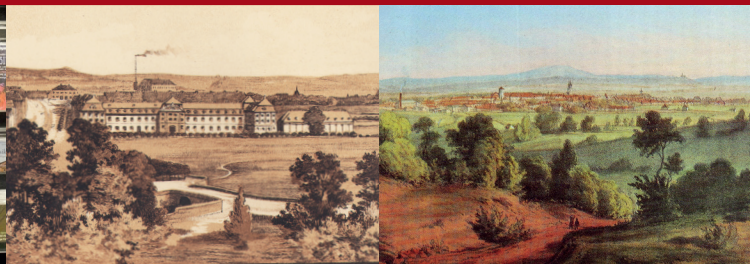
Festspielhaus on the Green Hill

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. It was built in **1872–1876** by *Otto Brückwald* according to plans drawn up by *Gotfried Semper*. Nowadays nearly 2000 people can sit here and focus intently on what is happening on stage. From the outside, however, it looks more like a factory than an opera house. The first Festspele planned for **1873** had to be postponed several times until, in the summer of **1876**, sufficient funding had been secured from the various Wagner societies, patrons, donors, concert revenues, royal lines of credit and the virtually unpaid collaboration of numerous performers and musicians.

Emperors, kings, princes and plutocrats – they all made the pilgrimage to an artist who held up to them an archetypal, revolutionary, utopian pilgrim clad in mythic garb. At the first Festspele of **1876** it was the *Ring* tetralogy's account of the downfall of the "Germans" (gods, mortals, dwarves, giants and epic heroes) caused by betrayal, greed for money and power on the one hand, and by the triumph of "knowing love" (represented by *Brünnhilde*) on the other. At the second Festspele of **1882** it was *Parsifal's* message of the redeeming power of 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. The Festspele would not have the unparalleled status it enjoys today without *Cosima*, who as general manager and director after Wagner's death staged productions of all his other works. Over a period of 23 years she established a tradition that her son *Siegfried* could build on in **1906/08** and after him his widow *Winifred* in **1930**. Wagner's grandsons *Wieland* and *Wolfgang* rescued the tradition and shared the management of the Festspele 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 Festspele. Still in family hands, the Festspele is now run by great-granddaughter *Katharina Wagner* (until **2015** together with her half-sister *Eva Wagner-Pasquier*).



Wagner & the People of Bayreuth

In the daily newspaper (*Bayreuther Tagblatt*) Wagner publishes his thanks to "the dear City of Bayreuth and all its residents ..., the countless families ..., the honoured members of the Wagner Society ..., the strong Gymnasies Corps, the most excellent military musicians ..., its convivial clubs and societies ..., the authorities ..." for their help with the festivities in May **1872** at the laying of the foundation stone. The event had been a windfall not just for local eateries, but also for Bayreuth's very own *Wagner Society* whose membership rose from 120 to 270 that spring alone.

"The ground we built on," said Wagner a year later at the roofing ceremony of the Festspielhaus on 2 August **1873**, "is the confidence invested in me by the people of Bayreuth."

Wagner became a member of the Historical Circle of Local Honorary Citizens. His veneration as a local hero led to his being serenaded by amateur choral societies, orchestras and marching bands whenever an opportunity presented itself. Wagner recruited 25 Nibelungs from the local Gymnasies Corps for the *Ring* cycle performed at the first Festspele in **1876**. They were trained by the ballet master *Richard Fricke* and their adventures behind the scenes were widely circulated in witty anecdotes and caricatures. During the Festspele, countless families vacated their living rooms and bedrooms to accommodate paying guests, some of whom complained about the exorbitant prices being charged.

Not that Bayreuth was without poverty. The Wagners had dealings not just with other notables, craftsmen, guests and neighbours; they also sought to ameliorate others' distress wherever they could. As Wagner himself once quipped: "A doctor here will never prescribe a bath or ban a beer since he has no knowledge of the former and is all too fond of the latter" – or so Cosima quotes him in her diary entry for 2 October **1879**.

Some of Wagner's friends decided to make Bayreuth their home. Among them were the conductor *Hans Richter* (at the former Tabulator or courthouse that is now the site of the town hall car park), the choirmaster *Julius Kniese* (at Cosima-Wagner-Strasse 6), *Hans von Wolzogen* the publisher of the *Bayreuther Blätter* (then on Lisztstrasse 2, now the entrance to the Hofgarten) or the educated racist ideologue *Houston Stewart Chamberlain* (at Wahnfriedstrasse 1).

All year round there are many offers getting closer to the time, work and life of Richard Wagner. Wagner fans get their money's worth in and around *Villa Wahnfried*, the *Richard Wagner Museum* and the *Walk of Wagner*... Outside of rehearsal and festival times, guided tours of the Festspielhaus are offered daily. In civic life, however, Wagner plays almost no role at all outside the Festspele. But what is certainly true is that Wagner himself, the Wagner clan and the Festspielhaus are almost as important to the people of Bayreuth as the royal family is to the British.



Arrival at the Station

When Wagner and his family moved to Bayreuth in **1872**, they arrived at the old railway station. In **1876**, the year of the first Festspele, the second railway line (connecting Bayreuth to Nuremberg) and the new station were still under construction. They finally opened in **1879**, and Cosima noted in her diary entry for 23 September: "Drank beer at the new station, which R. is very pleased with. An impressive entrance to the town with a glimpse of the theatre."

The difficulty of getting to Bayreuth (which is still a problem today) did not hinder the steady stream of illustrious guests. *Kaiser Wilhelm I* and *King Ludwig II of Bavaria* both travelled to Bayreuth for the **1876 Ring** cycle by special train and were themselves a spectacle for a large crowd of onlookers. Distinguished guests were all named by name in the public guest lists. It took a while before the town was able to accommodate this sudden influx.

But it was at this station that visitors from afar were welcomed and took their leave. It was here (or on the Neuenmarkt) that the Wagners met *Franz Liszt* on his arrival from Budapest, Rome or Weimar. It was from here that they set off – often in the middle of the night – for Berlin, Dresden, London or Vienna. It was here that they boarded their very own saloon car for the trip to Italy, making the journey for last time after the Festspele of **1882**.

And it was here, on 17 February **1883**, that the train conveying the grieving widow, the children, friends of the family, representatives of the king and the casket bearing Wagner's remains arrived, having made the journey to Bayreuth from Venice via Munich. Still more mourners poured in with each new train to arrive. When the funeral cortege left the station and snaked through the town, past the opera house, to the Villa Wahnfried, the streets draped with black flags were lined with some 20 thousand people – some of them from Bayreuth, but many from much further afield.

"I was the first to recognize the artist the whole world is now mourning; I was the one who rescued him for posterity," was *King Ludwig II's* dictum after the train's in-between stop in Munich.



Bayreuth

Da steckt Wagner drin!

www.bayreuth-tourismus.de
www.bayreuther-festspiele.de
www.wagnermuseum.de



Richard Wagner & Bayreuth

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

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.

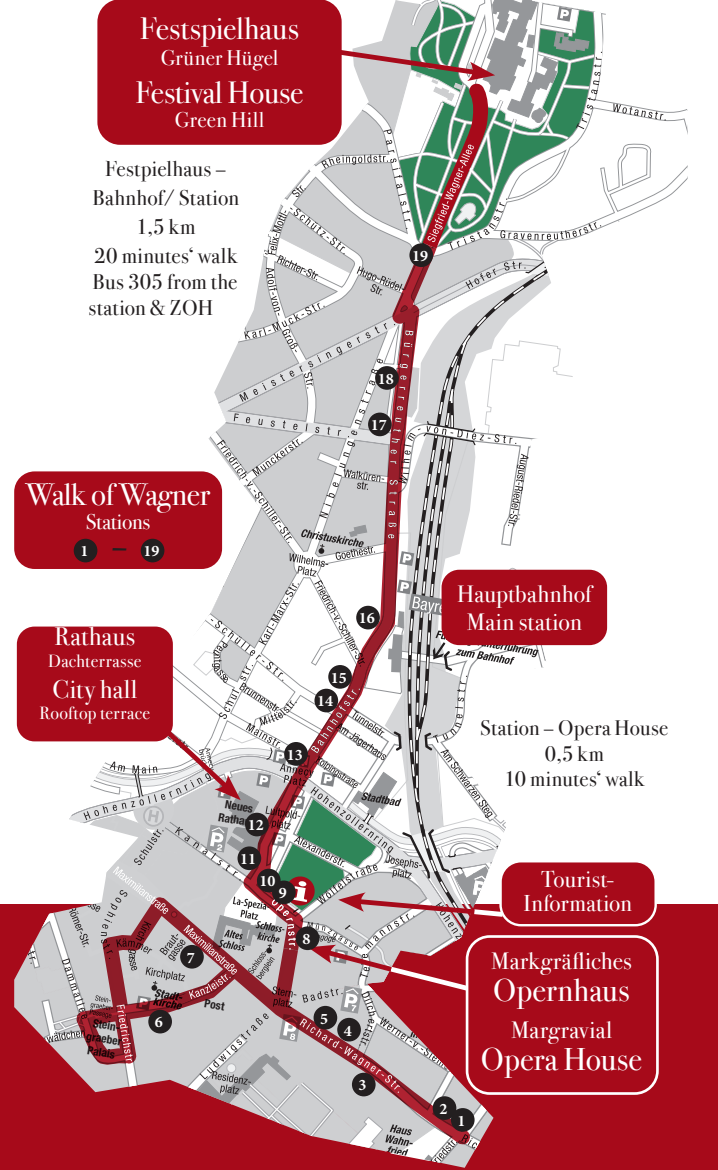
Bayreuth at any rate owes its unique status to the courage of those far-sighted men who in **1871** supported the similarly far-sighted town council in its efforts to induce the composer to settle there. They not only welcomed him in their midst on his first visit but thereafter supported him in the realization of his dream of a theatre for performances only of his works. Bayreuth in those days had a population of just 18 thousand. The friendships that Wagner forged with the mayor Theodor Muncker 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 Tribtschen* – 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 festival." 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 Margravial 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.



Richard Wagner-Stops in Bayreuth



Tourist-Information

Richard Wagner Museum Bayreuth
Richard-Wagner-Str. 48, 95444 Bayreuth
Tue.-Sun. 10 am-5 pm
July & August daily 10 am-6 pm
Nationalarchiv (open for research)
Wahnfriedstr. 2, 95444 Bayreuth
Mon.-Fri. 8.30 am-12.30 pm
Mon.-Thurs. 2-4.30 pm

Trustees: *Richard-Wagner-Stiftung Bayreuth*, Director: *Dr. Sven Friedrich*
Phone +49-(0)921-757 28-0
Mail: info@wagnermuseum.de
www.wagnermuseum.de

- *Haus Wahnfried* (Life & Work of Richard Wagner)
- *Siegfried Wagner-Haus* (the family's and the festival's history in relation to Hitler's antisemitism)
- *Museum Pavillon* (permanent exhibition of the festival's stage history and special exhibitions)
- *Grate* of Richard & Cosima Wagner

Franz Liszt Museum
Trustees: *City of Bayreuth*
Director: *Dr. Sven Friedrich*
Wahnfriedstraße 9 / Lisztstrasse
Phone +49-(0)921-516 64 88
www.franz-liszt-museum.bayreuth.de
July - Aug. 10 am-5 pm
Sept. - June 10 am-12 pm, 2-5 pm

Bus Nos. 302 or 307 to "Wahnfried"

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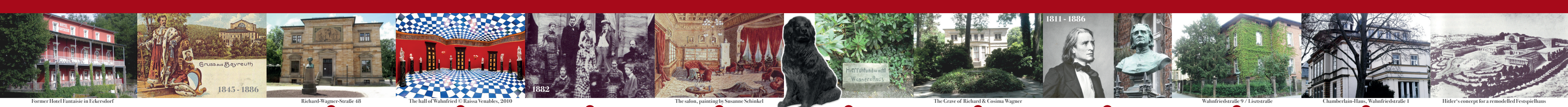
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Richard Wagner Foundation, Bayreuth

Richard Wagner ... Life & Works

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. (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 *Walküre*. 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.



Hotel Fantaisie

The first 6 months in Bayreuth was a happy time for the 7-member Wagner family, their dog *Russ* and a nanny. The banker *Friedrich Feustel* had reserved the second floor of the Hotel Fantaisie for them back in January 1872. Wagner's private room with its original Biedermeier furnishings can still be viewed: www.wagnerzimmer.de

The summer 1872 was spent among the peacocks, salamanders and swans in the park, going for walks to the Meierci, 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*.

Special flyer at Tourist Information.

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 Festspiel 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 Festspiel 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,*" – above an allegory of the *Artwork of future*. The central plaque shows *Wotan* the wanderer and philosopher wearing a hat – with the ravens of wisdom. *Greek Tragedy* stands to the left and *Musik (Cosima)* 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 Festspiel, the restored Villa Wahnfried was reopened on 24 July 1976 as the *Richard Wagner Museum* and enlarged by a new museum wing.

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 1865, *Eva* in 1867 and *Siegfried* (Fidi), the family favourite and later director of the Festspiel, in 1869. The 2 elder daughters, *Daniela* (Lusch or Lulu) and *Blandine* (Bonni), 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 *Walküre* 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 Wolzogen*, the publisher of the *Bayreuther Blätter*, were among the permanent "friends of the family."

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

The Pets

Animal lover Richard Wagner especially 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 (in Switzerland) to Bayreuth. Multiples of a sculpture of him by *Ottmar Hott* adorn many a display window, hotel room and garden in Bayreuth. Others of his dogs were called *Marke*, *Brange*, *Tafner* 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 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 Festspiel, 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 edition, 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 the marriage of his granddaughter Daniela, and although gravely ill, had been to see his two favourite operas, *Parsifal* and *Tristan* and *Isolde*, at the Festspiel, 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 2.

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 befriended: the poet *Heinrich Heine*, for example, and the professional musicians *Karl Taubig*, *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* attack of the Wagner clan did this change. A congress on *Wagner & the Jews* in 1998 broke the first taboos. The *Richard Wagner National Archive* is open to scholars. Jewish history is worked on.

A new Jewish complex (housing the Baroque synagogue, mikvah and a cultural centre) has been rebuilt close to the Margravial Opera House. An open-air exhibition *Silenced Voices (Park of the Green Hill)*, the *Steinplatz-memorial* and the *Chamberlain House* remain political memorials.

Schlosspark Fantaisie Fantaisie Palace and Park

www.gartenkunst-museum.de



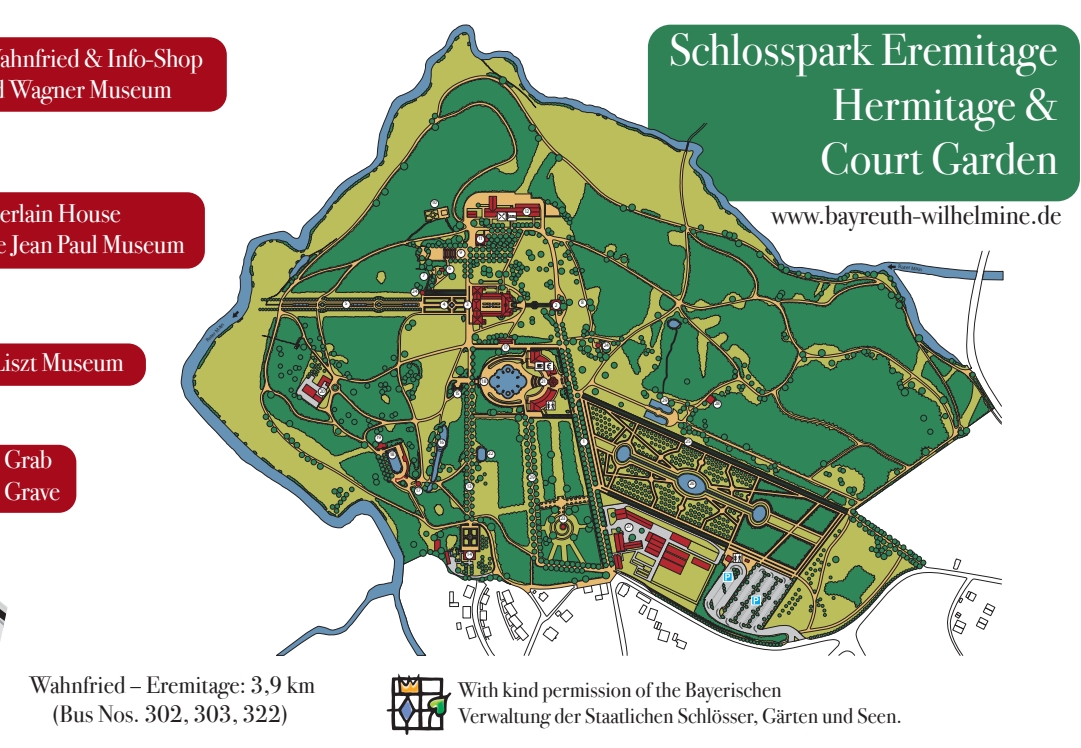
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Wahnfried – City Cemetery: 3.3 km
Wahnfried – Fantaisie: 8.6 km (Bus No. 325)

Richard-Wagner-Stops in Bayreuth



Hofgarten & Neues Schloss Court Gardens & New Palace



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

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 *Mimi von Schleinitz*. Only the portico of the original house (now an agricultural cooperative) has survived.

The house at *Dammallee 5* just a short walk away was supposed to become the permanent residence of *Malwida von Meysenburg* (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 grounds 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 *Liebhards 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 *Großglocken piano* built specially for performances of *Parsifal* was in use from 1881 to 1981.

Udo 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 worshipped Jesus Christ – the suffering redeemer, untainted by sin. However, in Wagner's last opera, *Parsifal*, staged since 1882 as a quasi-sacred festival drama, his message of (self- and group-)salvation has more of a gnostic than a Christian character – in spite of set pieces from the liturgy.

Dining Out

During the festival lots of out-of-town guests had trouble finding board and lodging in the city. The most important *hotels* frequented by the many famous guests who attended the Festspiele were the *Sonne* (Richard-Wagner-Str., where Richard and Cosima first stayed in 1871), the *Anker* (opera street), the *Reichsadler* (on the market square) and the *Schwarze Ross* (Ludwigstrasse).

Wagner's *favourite inn* was the *Angermann* at Kanzleistraße 3, 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* (Fidi) 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 Festspiel 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 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 & children*, 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 Gravin*.

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 Friedrichshal, the Riedelsberg, Sophienberg, Schloss Birken, the Studentenwald or the Komersreuther Chaussee (now Nürnbergger Strasse). Guests were entertained at the theatre, the Eremitage or the Fantaisie.

Excursions further afield to places like Drossenfeld, Creußen, Fränkische Schweiz, the Luisenborg 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.

Enperor 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 "fairy-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 musique is not for everybody, but for all" – but until enough people were prepared to understand that, the poet composer had a hard time.

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 Ritter*, *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 Festspiel in 1876 and 1882 called for more than just goodwill and personal support. Had not the "Fairy tale" *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*", and during the festival season the city is full of flags of all nationalities.

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."