

## **Report on RWVI Kongress, Innsbruck 19-25 June 2018**

Founded in 1992, the Richard Wagner Verband Internationale (International Association of Wagner Societies) is a confederation of Wagner societies around the world from as far afield as New Zealand. Each year a Congress is held to report on the activities of the various societies, and to hold the AGM. Those attending this year from the Wagner Society of Scotland were Derek Williams (Chair and delegate) with Committee Members Dale Bilsland (2nd delegate) and Tim Gould. Notables who attended included Eva Wagner-Pasquier, great granddaughter of Richard Wagner, and we had the opportunity to talk with her at some length in the informal parts of the Congress.

Hosted by the relatively young Innsbruck-Bozen Wagner Society, this year's Congress was held in the alpine Tyrol district's stunning capital city, Innsbruck, with a concert programme prepared by its Chairman, Professor Ekkehard Kappler.

On our first night, we were treated to a bawdy comic student production of *Die lustige Nibelungen*, with the Congress officially launching Thursday 21 June at the Crystal Foyer of the Congress Innsbruck venue, initially with a brass fanfare, followed by music sung by Johannes Wimmer (Bass), superbly accompanied by Annedore Oberborbeck (Violin) and Magdalena Hofmann (Harp).

Next morning, after the Assembly of Delegates, there followed a 1 hour guided-tour bus journey to Erl, where we were treated to a full-scale concert rehearsal of music from *Tannhäuser*, and after dinner, an evening concert of Wagner's music, performed by the Tiroler Symphonieorchester at the Tyrolean Festival Hall under the baton of Gustav Kuhn. The performance was of such a high standard that the audience rose to its feet in a standing ovation.

The Symposium on Saturday morning comprised "Stockhausen on the way to Wagner" given by Magdalena Zorn (Munich) and "Nitsch [the composer] and Wagner" given by Leopoldo Siano (Cologne), with questions from the audience at the end of each. That evening a militaristic performance of *Rienzi* was presented at the Tyrolean Landestheater in collaboration with the German theatre company, Pfalztheater Kaiserslautern.

On the last day, back at Innsbruck Congress venue, Claudio Büchler conducted the Innsbruck Universitatorchester in an outstanding student concert presenting works by Bellini, Wagner and Bruckner. This was followed by a sumptuous lunch at the Messe Innsbruck while final speeches were given by Ekkehard Kappler and RWVI President Horst Eggers, we were again entertained, this time by a quartet of Clarinet, Viola, Accordion, Tuba playing music by Wagner.

The next RWVI Congress will be held in Venice from 28 November to 2 December 2019. Given that this was where Wagner died, and that the Palazzo Ca' Vendramin Calergi houses the second largest Wagner museum in the world, alongside the historic nature of the city itself, this should be a Congress of exceptional interest. Members are warmly encouraged to attend.

A complete version of this report along with photographs and videos will be uploaded to the website in due course.

**Derek Williams (Chair)**