Wagner Dream by Jonathan Harvey

Libretto by Jean-Claude Carrière, WNO

Reviewed by Denis Joe June 2013

Sadly, ***Jonathan Harvey*** passed away last December and so did not look like we would get to see the staged premiere of Wagner Dream. After discussion with the composer WNO chose to present the opera in German and the ancient Pali, belonging to the Prakrit language group. It is widely studied because it is the language of many of the earliest extant Buddhist scriptures.

The story within the opera is concerned with Wagner's dying. He has had a row with **Cosima** about the visit of a singer. Wagner goes back to writing the essay he was working on. He thinks back to an opera that he hasn't written on a Buddhist theme. Wagner imagines that he can see Vairochana who becomes Wagner's guide, tell him that the state of one's mind at the moment of death is important to one's incarnation.

Wagner regrets not having written his opera and decides that he must remedy this. He therefore sees the opera in his mind's eye. At this point the opera becomes an ***opera within an opera***.