

Thomas Quinlan and the ‘All Red’ Ring: Australia, 1913

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Algernon S. Rose in an address to the Annual Conference of the Society of Musicians, held in Dublin in 1893 spoke of Britain’s need to spread her wings:

Even as a parent should care for his child, so ought the British Musician look ahead to protect the welfare of his musical descendants ... Should not Englishmen ... endeavour, not merely to protect their territorial interests but to strengthen those ties of blood relationship which exist between the Mother Country and her offspring, by nourishing a healthy circulation of sympathetic intercommunication? ... a Migratory class, if drawn into its ranks would furnish an ambassadorial element for Greater Britain which is now lacking. Such travellers possess exceptional facilities wherever they go for making known to resident performers the power for mutual dignity and advantage, which a Union of English-Speaking musicians throughout the world might effect.¹

Rose’s plea was vigorously taken up by English entrepreneur Thomas Quinlan (1881–1951) some fifteen years later when he embarked with his opera company in 1912 on the first of two extraordinary tours of ‘Greater Britain,’ singing ‘in English to English speaking peoples all the time, never leaving the red portions of the geographical map.’² Quinlan’s first ‘All Red’ tour began in South Africa in 1912 and then moved to Melbourne and Sydney; this part of the tour was presented in conjunction with the Australian impresario J.C. Williamson. On his second

¹ Algernon Rose, ‘Greater Britain Musically Considered. A Paper Read at the Annual Conference of the Incorporated Society of Musicians’ (Derby: P. B. Chadfield & Son, [1895]) 2–3, 12. Rose was the son of a partner in the UK Broadwood piano company.

² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 Oct. 1913, 21.

trip in 1913–1914, Quinlan had Wagner's *Ring* in his repertory. He again went first to South Africa before Australia, but his visit was curtailed by the violent Rand miners' strikes, which he witnessed first hand.³ Significant strikes also prevented him travelling to New Zealand in late 1913. He toured Canada on his way home in early 1914, in two trains put especially at his disposal by the Canadian Pacific Railway.⁴ However, his Canadian season was abandoned in Montreal in March, principally because he overestimated the interest in opera sung in English in non-English speaking cities. The company returned to the UK, promising to return later that year with the aid of Canadian subsidies.⁵ This never eventuated. Quinlan's grandiose plan of performing nine *Ring* cycles in six months had to be forgotten.

Who was Thomas Quinlan? Trained as an accountant, he was also a singer and from 1909 the manager of Thomas Beecham's Orchestra in London. From 1910 he managed *The Beecham Opera Comique Company* that basically toured the English provinces.⁶ Previous to and concurrent with this he worked as an impresario and manager of the Quinlan International Concert Agency which managed the concert contracts in America and elsewhere of Caruso, Kreisler and Sousa's Band amongst others.⁷ Quinlan managed Sousa's band's tour to Australia, New Zealand and South Africa in 1911 and thus would have been familiar with the issues involved in an Empire circuit.⁸ In 1911 Quinlan broke from Beecham, with whom he had a difficult relationship, and formed his own English-language opera company, opening in Liverpool.⁹ He continued to tour the provinces where he was reported as impressing 'on the midlands the realisation that opera is a high art just the same as [is] oratorio.'¹⁰

In no time at all, Quinlan announced his ambitious proposal of an Empire tour. One can only surmise that his Concert Agency provided him with money to enable the tour since his touring party comprised singers, soloists and chorus, full orchestra, as well as all the costumes, properties and scenery required for a full season. Louis P. Verande (b. 1870), a well-known Covent Garden director accompanied him as stage manager.¹¹ Costumes were designed by Dorothy Carleton Smyth (1880–1933) an authority on historical theatrical costumes. Quinlan claimed he used the largest scenic studio in London to research his costumes. The sets for all the operas were designed by the modernist designer Oliver Percy Bernard (1881–1939) who also accompanied the party.¹² Quinlan had to pay salaries, ocean fares, and copyright fees. It was a colossal undertaking.

³ See Jacques Malan, ed., *South African Music Encyclopaedia*, vol. 4 (Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council/OUP, 1996), 365. This part of the South African trip was understandably a financial disaster.

⁴ He visited Vancouver, Alberta, Winnipeg and Montreal.

⁵ *Musical Canada* 8 (Mar. 1914): 310.

⁶ For information on the Beecham Opera comique tour see <www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2001/june01/hatchard.htm>.

⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 May 1912, 4.

⁸ See Paul E. Bierley, *The Incredible Band of John Philip Sousa* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

⁹ For a description of their relationship see John Lucas, *Thomas Beecham: An Obsession with Music* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), 42–3.

¹⁰ F.H. Bond, *Musical Standard*, 38.988 (7 Dec. 1912): 362.

¹¹ In 1910 he directed the controversial Sir Thomas Beecham production of Richard Strauss's *Salome* at Covent Garden. See Katharine Brisbane, ed., *Entertaining Australia: An Illustrated History* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1991), 168.

¹² All information in this paragraph is drawn from Quinlan interview with J.D. Fitzgerald, *Lone Hand*, 2 Sep. 1912, 440. See also Alison Gyger, *Opera for the Antipodes: Opera in Australia 1881–1939* (Sydney: Currency Press/Pellinor, 1990) for coverage of the Quinlan tours.

Quinlan's time in Australia in 1912 was a happy one. His company expressed their satisfaction with it by honouring Quinlan with a public presentation in Sydney stating:

Before returning to the homeland, we, the members of the Quinlan Opera Company, desire to place on record our tribute to your great courage and ability in undertaking and carrying to a brilliantly successful issue an operatic enterprise of an unprecedented character ... The necessarily strenuous activities of this great tour have been considerably ameliorated by the artists' knowledge that they had in you not only a resourceful director, but a truly sympathetic comrade.¹³

The tour was an overwhelming success with the public, although apparently when Quinlan returned to London he was under some financial pressure. He claimed in the press that he had not been able to secure all the necessary financial backing for his new opera circuit because of Oscar Hammerstein's [the first] 'great failure' in London suggesting that Hammerstein had perhaps been a sponsor.¹⁴

Fifteen operas were performed in the 1912 season including *The Valkyrie*, *Lohengrin* and the Australian premieres of Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* and the Paris version of *Tannhauser*.¹⁵ A letter from a Melbourne Conservatorium student in the *Australian Musical News* reveals that normal classes were abandoned for sessions on forthcoming operas, in particular Wagner.¹⁶

The premiere that had the most impact was *Tristan and Isolde*, as a Melbourne critic remarked: 'it was, musically, the greatest work ever heard on the operatic stage in Melbourne.'¹⁷ Australian audiences, in particular Melbourne audiences, were rabid Wagnerites. As summed up by a critic in 1900: 'We live far enough from the art centres of the old world; but even here the man who should think it incumbent upon him to reconcile us by argument to Wagner's theories or to "convert" us to his views, would waste his breath.'¹⁸ Quinlan could not fail to have picked up on this passion for Wagner and this must have encouraged him with his vision for the 'All Red' Ring.

It is necessary to give a brief overview of the operatic scene in Australia before continuing, since it must be stressed that Australians were very familiar with touring opera companies by the early twentieth century.¹⁹ Every new visitor was welcomed, although there were also continual complaints about the lack of a national professional opera company. The major companies to tour prior to Quinlan, were the Montague-Turner,²⁰ Martin and later Fanny

¹³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 Aug. 2012, 5.

¹⁴ Arthur Mason, 'The Quinlan Opera Wagner's "Ring" for Australia,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 June 1913, 7.

¹⁵ I am reproducing Quinlan's English titles for the works.

¹⁶ *Australian Musical News*, June 1912, 29.

¹⁷ *Argus* [Melbourne], 15 June 1912, 20.

¹⁸ *Age* [Melbourne], 2 Nov. 1900, 6. For more information on the love of Wagner in Australia, see Suzanne Cole and Kerry Murphy, 'Wagner in the Antipodes,' *WagnerSpectrum* 2 (2008): 237–68.

¹⁹ The only professional company in Australia prior to the 1880s was run by William Saurin Lyster (1827–1880) an Irish-born impresario who ran a continuous opera company in Melbourne from 1861–1880. See Harold Love, *The Golden Age of Australian Opera: W.S. Lyster and his Companies 1861–1880* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1981).

²⁰ Hawaiian-born soprano Annis Montague and her American husband, tenor Charles Turner's company performed in English and toured Australia in 1881–1884 and 1891–1894, see Warren Bebbington, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music* (Melbourne: OUP, 1997), 388.

Simonsen's Royal English and Italian Company,²¹ the Italian Cagli-Pompei Company,²² and George Musgrove's Grand English Opera Company (comprised almost entirely of artists from the English Carl Rosa company). Opera was sung variously in English and Italian, however there were also many occasions when singers sang together in a variety of languages. In 1905 a group of German music lovers in Melbourne drew up a subscription list to enable George Musgrove to bring out a company to sing Wagner in German in Australia, which he did in 1907.²³ Finally, in 1911 the great Australian soprano Nellie Melba formed a highly successful touring company in conjunction with the impresario J.C. Williamson, the Melba-Williamson Company, and toured with 12 operas and singers drawn from all around the world. With the exception of Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette* the operas were all sung in Italian. Melba herself sang with the company in the Puccini and Verdi works.

Most of these companies toured the capital cities of Australia and many large regional towns as well. Quinlan, however, toured only Melbourne and Sydney. Adelaide music lovers pleaded with him to visit them but he would only do so if a subscription list could be organised beforehand, as he could not afford to take risks.²⁴ Given the size of his party, his caution is understandable.

Before departing Australia in 1912, Quinlan posted a letter in major newspapers pointing out that he would be back the following year and was willing to put on Wagner's *Ring*, in English for the centenary year, 'if 1000 (one thousand) subscribers, one guinea for each of the four performances' could be found to provide an advance subsidy.²⁵ He asked less for stalls and gallery tickets but no tickets were issued except for the complete cycle.²⁶ Quinlan grandly proclaimed "'The Ring," which is the supremest expression of music drama, and which should be of incalculable service to the advancement of Australian musical art has to be done on a scale of splendid completeness or not at all. It does not admit of mediocrity.'²⁷ His ambition, as previously mentioned, was to do nine *Ring* cycles in six months across 'Greater Britain.'²⁸

Quinlan obtained his one thousand subscribers easily and returned the following year with (and these figures change in every article) approximately '475 tons of scenery and wardrobe, and 176 people.'²⁹ He clearly created a sense of collegiality and team spirit amongst the members of his company; maybe this was helped by having no super stars, although many fine performers. By 1913, the members of his company knew each other very well, and by the time they arrived in Australia they were already well rehearsed and could thus set a truly punishing schedule, as can be seen from the following list for Melbourne. Opening night on the Saturday was *The*

²¹ This toured throughout the 1880s and early 1890s. They had various incarnations in the 1880s including the New English and Italian Opera Company and the Grand Italian Opera Company. Although it began as a company that employed largely local singers, they later imported Italian singers.

²² Main period of touring was 1882–1883. For further information on all these companies see Brisbane, ed., *Entertaining Australia*, 168.

²³ See Suzanne Cole and Kerry Murphy, 'Wagner in the Antipodes.'

²⁴ *Advertiser* [Adelaide], 11 Aug. 1913, 18. Money was raised, but apparently not enough.

²⁵ He used Frederick Jameson's translation, see *Musical Standard* 36 (Oct.14 1911): 248.

²⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 Aug. 1912, 5. Tickets for the Ring Cycle operas (citing the most expensive) were from 1/1s, 15/- and 10/6 whereas the other operas were 10/6, 7/6 and 5/-. Stated in all the advertisements over the months of August.

²⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 Aug. 1912, 5

²⁸ Mentioned in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 Oct. 1913, 21.

²⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 Oct. 1913, 21.

Mastersingers, Monday *Rigoletto*, Tuesday *Rheingold*, Wednesday *Tales of Hoffmann* matinée and *Tosca* evening, Thursday *Samson and Delilah*, Friday *The Valkyries*, Saturday *Faust*, Sunday free, Monday *Siegfried*, Tuesday *Aida*, Wednesday *Tales of Hoffmann* matinée and *Tannhauser* evening, Thursday Charpentier's *Louise* and Friday *Twilight of the Gods*—14 different operas in 14 days, something that would never be attempted today.³⁰

Leading up to Quinlan's return there had been a flurry of activity in Melbourne and Sydney preparing audiences for the *Ring*. Organist Ernest Truman played arrangements of the *Ring* in recitals on the Sydney Town Hall organ.³¹ Arundel Orchard gave public lectures. Many books on the *Ring* and on Wagner's life and works, and scores in English and German became available. Critics quoted extensively from the English press on Wagner, in particular the writings of Ernest Newman. Demand for information on Wagner was high, one young man was driven to steal a book on the *Ring* from the State Library of Victoria. A State librarian caught the hapless thief a few days later, when they were both queuing for tickets for the *Ring*, he with his head engrossed in the book. She contacted the police who imprisoned him for a day!³²

Because of the complicated scene changes, in the *Ring* in particular, Quinlan travelled with his own seasoned stage hands, who were, however, prevented from working in Australia by the Australian Federated Stage Employees Union. One could say that when it came to Australia it was a Red (or pink) Ring in another sense. Quinlan had no choice but to yield to union power.³³

The scenery for the *Ring* had been especially made in Berlin by Leo Impekoven (1873–1943), an artist and set designer who later became quite well known in the theatre.³⁴ The singers for the *Ring* included Englishwoman Maud Percival Allen (1880–1955), who had sung Brunhilde in Richter's English-language production of the *Ring* in London in 1908, American Robert Parker, a colourful figure who paid for his very smart car to be shipped out with him and drove around everywhere with a little stars and stripes flag flying out the front, and handsome young German heldentenor Franz Costa.³⁵ The main conductor was Richard Eckhold (1855–after 1914) who although German (he had played the violin at Bayreuth) conducted Wagner mainly in English in Edinburgh and also at the Metropolitan opera in New York.³⁶ He also had a genial personality, and was often interviewed in the press commenting on the marvellous reception the company had been receiving in Australia:

I have conducted Wagnerian music in Germany, England, America and South Africa, never have I encountered a more sympathetic audience than in Sydney ... Australians are miles ahead of Britons in harmonious mental affinity when it comes to a proper and appreciative interpretation of Wagnerian roles.³⁷

³⁰ See advertisements in the *Age* over August in 1913. The order was not completely fixed. The spelling of the works is taken from the press advertisements—which were not, however, always consistent. For instance, one also finds *The Meistersingers*.

³¹ See *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 Nov. 1912, 3.

³² *Argus*, 24 Oct. 1913, 9.

³³ *Table Talk*, 2 Oct. 1913, 36.

³⁴ Stated in program. See Quinlan Scrapbook, Performing Arts Collection (PAC), Arts Centre, Melbourne.

³⁵ See information on Parker in *Table Talk*, 28 Aug. 1913, 38.

³⁶ See <www.operascoland.org/person/3040/Richard+Eckhold>; H. Saxe Wyndham, *Who's Who in Music* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1913), 73.

³⁷ *Evening News*, 18 Oct. 1913, 10.

It appears that in at least some of the Wagner performances the theatre had been perfumed by a particular scent, *parfum lilas* made by Gutave Lohse in Berlin.³⁸ Although this might suggest a sympathetic Wagnerian gesture, replicating Wagner's love for a scented atmosphere, it seemed to have happened with other operas of the season as well. The stage and all seats were sprayed with the scent and another whiff was puffed out whenever the curtain was lowered or raised.³⁹ Maybe Lohse was a sponsor of some sort for the season; the press was certainly saturated with advertisements for his products in 1913, in particular the *parfum Lilas*.⁴⁰

Although *Rheingold* was sung without a break, cuts to the other operas in the Cycle were deemed necessary to enable people to catch the last tram home.⁴¹ There were gaps in the woodwind and brass sections and only one harp.⁴² Also, deprived of their extremely experienced set changers, the new Australian recruits were obliged to lower the curtain between scene changes—which was seen as a little unprofessional.⁴³ Not only did the Union forbid the stage hands from working but also the entire company was subjected to Australian income tax—as is commented on by a cartoon from *Punch* (see Fig. 1):

The critics raved about the production of the *Ring*, they were not fussed by any little problems (such as the one harp instead of the required six) and their assessment was holistic. As the *Age* critic commented, 'the first Australian production of the greatest musical work ever written for the stage is now accomplished and it is difficult to estimate the debt of gratitude Melbourne music-lovers owe to Mr Quinlan and his excellent company.'⁴⁴

The success was such that a petition was presented to Quinlan headed by well-known music patrons and musicians, Elise Wiedermann and Thomas Pinchoff, for a repeat performance.⁴⁵ It was often stated in the press that the petition came from the German-speaking community, but there were a number of well-known non-Germans as well, such as Alberto Zelman and Fritz Hart.⁴⁶ Quinlan agreed to a second performance, perhaps a foolish agreement since it 'over-taxed' his singers and it was a noticeably weary troupe that then made their way on to Sydney.

Melbourne audiences were even more ecstatic at the second round. On the last night, members of the gallery (the Gods), which had been packed every night, threw down a carefully constructed boomerang on pulleys, decorated with flowers and with a silver plate bearing the good wishes of the gallery patrons.⁴⁷

In many ways Quinlan's tours embody two of the core beliefs of imperial patriotism, heroism and militarism.⁴⁸ The rhetoric surrounding the tours used both by Quinlan and critics

³⁸ Stated in programmes. See Quinlan Scrapbook, PAC.

³⁹ See description in Kristen Otto, *Capital: Melbourne When it was the Capital City of Australia* (Melbourne, Vic: Text Publishing, 2009), 116.

⁴⁰ This does not appear to have been a widely practiced custom, either in Australia or Europe.

⁴¹ *Age*, 18 Aug. 1913, 11.

⁴² See comments in 'Musical Notes,' *The Register*, 25 Oct. 1913, 6.

⁴³ *Table Talk*, 2 Oct. 1913, 36.

⁴⁴ *Age*, 30 Aug. 1913, 14.

⁴⁵ See *Age*, 29 Aug. 1913, 10.

⁴⁶ It is mentioned many times in the press however that the German community would have liked to have heard the *Ring* sung in German.

⁴⁷ *Table Talk*, 16 Oct. 1913, 36.

⁴⁸ 'Introduction,' *Britishness Abroad*, ed. Kate Darian-Smith, Stuart Macintyre and Patricia Grimshaw (Carlton, Vic.: MUP, 2007), 9.

Figure 1. 'Taxing Them', *Punch*, 2 Oct. 1913, 597. Image courtesy of Newspapers Collection, State Library of Victoria



TAXING THEM

(Commissioner Prout Webb has put in demands for income tax from Quinlan's Grand Opera artists)

PROUT WEBB.—"Now, ladies and gentlemen, your high notes, if you please."

THE CO.—"Shame! As if our voices were not over-taxed already."

in Australia is quite consistent. His tours are on a heroic, herculean scale—he leads a small army, he manages his troops, he girdles the earth, and his touring company is like a military despatch, he is the 'Napoleonic Mr Quinlan' bringing opera in English to the outreaches of the British Empire.

Quinlan was also on a civilising mission, although not necessarily a colonising civilising mission, despite his all-red pathways. His travels had started in the English provinces. His desire to advance the general cause of grand opera among the English-speakers of the world included the English themselves (and at one point he planned to hop over the border from Canada to perform to his 'American cousins'—this never happened). Quinlan was convinced that having works sung in English was what was needed to convert English speakers to opera, as he said he was proud of 'having proved that whenever English is spoken there is a vast field for opera in that language.'⁴⁹

Although his civilising zeal could be seen to have had a patronising edge to it, I do not think he meant to be patronising. Indeed he seems to have felt that because of Australia's isolation from European centres and lack of familiarity with much repertoire, they might indeed prove more receptive to new works, as he commented:

⁴⁹ *Advertiser*, 12 May 1914, 12.

Our All Red tour ... is largely educational. I hope to find Australian audiences even more receptive of new music ... than those of Europe, as time goes on. A State subsidy? No, I do not want one. I prefer to be free to follow out new ideas, and to keep on progressive lines. A Government representative would probably insist upon "Travatore," "Maritana," and the "Bohemian Girl" once a week! Mind you, I don't pretend to go in for advanced art and novelties all the time. Salaries must be paid, and the public has every right to its little preferences. I am not the sort of crank who would expect crowded houses for a week consisting of "Mastersingers," "Pelleas and Melisande," "Rhinegold," "Tristan and Isolde," "Boris Godounov," and "Elektra," with "Salome" for the matinee! No, no, moderation in all things. My aim is to please my public and lure them forward at the same time.⁵⁰

He continues:

In my opinion the method to follow in bringing about artistic progress is not simply to give the people what they want. I claim it a duty to show the public what they should want, and to teach them to enjoy and appreciate what is good ... it would be a great mistake to abandon the practice of giving novelties, and to rely only on the standard works.

Many Australian critics were already familiar with the *Ring* from European trips and made this quite clear in their reviews. Others were not familiar with it and feeling perhaps overawed by its sheer magnitude, for many, the perceived bizarreness of the libretto provoked an urge to cut it down in some way. The *Bulletin* reviews, in particular, although aiming to be funny also aimed to deflate pretension: 'Heaven knows what all these silly prehistoric people want with the jingling money ... A God incapable of sterilising a gnome's curse or stopping his wife's tongue is not much of a person to write a four-volume opera about.'⁵¹ Other critics attempted to ground the libretto by associating it with the familiar.

Learning of the wonder of a beautiful woman surrounded by a wall of flame ... [Siegfried] rushes through the fiery barrier with as little concern as a Melbourne citizen through a dust storm, awakens the sleeping beauty with a kiss, and claims her as his own.⁵²

Walhalla is described as a 'pale pink ice-cream [that] trembles through the mist.'⁵³ And in Sydney, 'Rhinemaids circ[e] ... round quite in the style of the Bondi surf ladies ... [although] far more picturesquely attired'⁵⁴ and 'Sydney bathers could find no name for ... [the] swimming strokes [of the Rhine maidens].'⁵⁵

Bulletin cartoons of the time also try to bring the *Ring* down to a personal level. An article in *Punch* suggests that amongst certain members of the population the Wagner craze was seen as a fashion:

You "must" enthuse over Wagner. Of course you go. No, not because it's "the thing" at all—[but because] it is so soulful, so splendid. No, you are not exactly musical,

⁵⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 Oct. 1913, 21.

⁵¹ *Bulletin*, 28 Aug. 1913, 8.

⁵² *Argus*, 26 Aug. 1913, 8.

⁵³ *Bulletin*, 23 Oct. 1913, 8.

⁵⁴ *Sun*, 14 Sep. 1913. See Quinlan Scrapbook, PAC.

⁵⁵ *Evening News* [Sydney], 17 Oct. 1913, 3.

but the "soul" of the thing gets you, etc. Night after night nice, comfortable pleasant persons yawn through huge music feasts that they would understand just as well if played backwards. All the year round they are quite untroubled by anything so inconvenient and upsetting as a soul. But now they are prodding themselves, making desperate excavations to possibly unearth the fashionable necessity. There are a good many worthy folk who will be in need of a holiday rest cure when the season is over.⁵⁶

There were numbers of articles in the press urging people to do their homework before going to the *Ring*. Patrons were told, for example, to make a study of the leitmotifs. This was met with a bit of a backlash from some—and it appears to be mainly those who had never seen the *Ring* before—saying that one should be careful not to 'over study',⁵⁷ and that it was possible 'to enjoy the music without knowing anything.'⁵⁸ Maybe this also forms part of an anti-intellectual stance, expressing the view that one should not have to read all this stuff to appreciate the music, the music speaks for itself, and so forth. But, quite consistently the critics end their reviews with a comment on how overpowering the music is, for instance: '[It] passed so quickly there was not a wearying moment.'⁵⁹

Issues of morality both in the *Ring* libretti and Wagner's life are alluded to and passed over. Overwhelmingly, the critics, the audiences, just could not believe their luck, especially in Melbourne, of having the opportunity to go to the *Ring* twice. The sense of debt to Quinlan is palpable. I also think Quinlan's enthusiastic and convivial personality contributed to the strength of the response.

Although many critics mocked the libretto, for others, and these are the majority, the message of the *Ring* was extremely pertinent to the present day. While the *Argus* suggested, for instance, that the *Ring* was 'permeated with many things for which everyone who wishes to get away from the materialism of modern everyday existence must be for ever grateful',⁶⁰ *Table Talk* saw higher ideals in the *Ring*:

It shows the great modern problem of the power and the curse of wealth, the warfare between the greed for gold and the nobler passions of mankind, summed up under the name of love ... There still exists moral, artistic and intellectual freedom on the earth, but its battle against greed and avarice is constant.⁶¹

Quinlan certainly did not have to lure audiences forward to attend his *Ring*. They were ready and waiting; there was, it was reported, 'a great popular demand ... for ... Wagnerian music.' And also, above and beyond his 'bold enterprise' in putting on the *Ring*, Quinlan was seen as 'doing an immense work in stimulating the growth of the musical atmosphere so sadly needed in this part of the world.'⁶²

Quinlan planned to return to Australia in 1915 with amongst other works: Wagner's *Parsifal*, Albert's *Tiefland*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Strauss' *Rosenkavalier* and a symphony orchestra of

⁵⁶ *Punch*, 18 Sep. 1913, 43.

⁵⁷ *Evening News*, 17 Oct. 1913, 3.

⁵⁸ *Sun*, 30 Sep. 1913. See Quinlan Scrapbook, PAC.

⁵⁹ *Evening News*, 17 Oct. 1913, 3.

⁶⁰ *Argus*, 30 Aug. 1913, 20.

⁶¹ *Table Talk*, 7 Aug. 1913, 36.

⁶² *Adelaide Register*, 25 Oct. 1913, 6.

seventy hand-picked instrumentalists.⁶³ The outbreak of war intervened. When he had trouble getting trains to transport his company in the English provinces in late 1914, he disbanded the company. In 1915 he went into receivership and the Harrison Frewin Company purchased his theatrical properties.⁶⁴

The production of the Melbourne *Ring* in 2013 was a great achievement and it was wonderful to see the excitement it caused in the city. But think back to the idealistic ambassador, Quinlan and his operatic army. What an extraordinary achievement his *Rings* were. He deserves to be better known.

⁶³ He publicised his planned return trip widely.

⁶⁴ Paul Rodmell, *Opera in the British Isles 1875–1918* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), 165, 169. According to an account in the *Argus* 7 Sep. 1926, Quinlan's wife (then living in Australia) applied for separation from her husband in 1926, based on desertion. She claimed that her husband now resided in a mental asylum. A tragic end for a man so full of ideas and energy.

REVIEWS

Nelson R. Orringer. *Lorca in Tune with Falla: Literary and Musical Interludes.*

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Reviewed by **Beatriz Pomés Jiménez**

A picture is a poem without words. (Horace)

Today artistic disciplines are often studied and practised in a compartmentalised manner, which allows for a large degree of specialisation in very specific fields of knowledge. The disadvantage of this tendency is, however, that connections and interrelations between different disciplines are not always valued or even noticed. In this context, Nelson R. Orringer's *Lorca in Tune with Falla* is a refreshing and inspiring addition to the literature. Orringer focuses on the cultural interaction between music and poetry, providing a detailed analysis of mutual creative influences between two of the most recognised Spanish artists: the musician Manuel de Falla (1876–1946) and the poet Federico García Lorca (1898–1936). Orringer states: 'Unfortunately, with few exceptions, specialists in music and poetry have failed to sense the active, ongoing connection between the arts of both creators. To begin to correct the omission, produced by a division of knowledge contrary to the art of Falla and Lorca, is the purpose of this book' (p. xi). The author's stated aim leads him into research that goes beyond the usual domains of biography and study of composition. Orringer also takes into consideration the personal lives of both artists as well as the impact that their friendship had on their respective creations. His examination of manuscripts, letters, concert notes, unpublished articles and personal score collections contribute greatly to this analysis.