

Richard-Wagner-Verband International e.V.
International Association of the Wagner Societies
Association Internationale des cercles Richard Wagner

Richard-Wagner-Verband International e.V. | Sitz: Bayreuth | VR 625



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To
All chairs of the Wagner societies

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Ihr Zeichen /Ihre Nachricht vom

Unser Zeichen /Unsere Nachricht vom

Datum

RF

Berlin, July 2020

Dear Sir/Madam, dear friends of Richard Wagner,

I would like to present to you today a project of outstanding and worldwide importance. It concerns the Wagner Hall and the German Theatre in Riga in beautiful Latvia, which is now once again an independent state, but belonged to the Russian Tsarist Empire during Richard Wagner's lifetime.

Richard Wagner stayed in Riga with his first wife Minna for two years and filled the position Music Director at the theatre. For a while they were safe here from his Prussian creditors.

But Riga's theatre was also the opera house in which Wagner started his musical experiences and began to experiment with a partially covered orchestra pit, which he only could bring to perfection in the Bayreuth Festspielhaus much later. It still plays the most important "musical role" there today.

In Riga, however, Wagner's major expansions and developments in relation to grand opera also began to emerge, especially the text and score for his Grand Opéra "Rienzi", took their beginnings in this place and the first two acts of "Rienzi" were created in Riga.

While fleeing from his creditors from Riga across the Baltic Sea to England and on to Paris, the "Flying Dutchman" was created in his mind's eye, showing unmistakable traits of his own identity and his experiences of the dramatic flight from Riga.

Thus Riga is one of the most formative places of his work alongside Dresden, Venice and Bayreuth.

Let yourself be inspired by the special project of the reconstruction and renovation of the German Theatre with the "Wagner Hall", which is part of an extensive building complex that needs to be renovated.

Above all, the aim was to prevent a shopping centre to replace the theatre, this was already under discussion, despite the building's special historical background. Behind this major global project is none other than former Latvian Prime Minister Maris Gailis, Chairman of the Riga Richard Wagner Society. A large number of comrades-in-arms such as the current president of Latvia, Egils Levits, the Wagner great-granddaughter Eva Wagner-Pasquier, the German-Baltic and the German-Baltic exchange member of parliament Elisabeth Motschmann with the project manager Dr. Konrad Winckler and Mechthild Foet are represented as well as the Richard Wagner Associations and some sponsors who are involved in the reconstruction and renovation of the building complex.

The project was presented to the European Parliament in Brussels and met with great participation and lively interest.

The laying of the foundation stone will take place at the beginning of 2021 and the completion should be in 2024, if all plans can be kept. We want to be present on both occasions and ask our associations to participate.

The total volume of the renovation is 35 million euros. The amounts received by us (we have been asked to do this as a neutral institution) will be transferred in full to the company in Riga and our only task as a neutral association is to receive and forward the funds. We are following the conditions of the EU for subsidies, which may not be paid directly to the projects, but via neutral cultural institutions in Europe such as RWVI. I cordially invite you, your members and friends to participate financially with all your possibilities in this unique project.

We are convinced that the building complex, (5000 square meters of space), after its redevelopment through its conception as an international music center with its own concert hall and diverse training facilities for classical music and musicology under one roof, is ideally suited to revive a great European and worldwide cultural impulse, connected with the name Richard Wagner, especially in Eastern Europe. Here the famous sentence of Richard Wagner once again shows itself to be particularly stringent:

"Kinder, schafft Neues!"

Of course, the complete programme for the renovation of the entire complex is already available and we are pleased to present it to you on our website in English and German.

In cordial solidarity
Yours,



Rainer Fineske
Präsident RWV International