ENTERING THE MUSICAL PICTURE: RICHARD WAGNER AND 19TH-CENTURY MULTIMEDIA ENTERTAINMENTS

ANNO MUNGEN

Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz

> Yes, Wagner is not only an incomparable painter of external nature, of tempest and storm, rustling leaves and dazzle of waves, rainbows and dancing flames. He is also a great seer of animate nature, the eternal human heart.[1]
>
> Thomas Mann on *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1937)

LANDSCAPE IN SIMULATION. Richard Wagner's musical heritage consists of a number of works for the theater. His operas should be conceived as bursting, lively, and effective music-theater events rather than a sounding fulfillment of an ideology. Nevertheless, Wagner's numerous theoretical statements are still in the center of the exegesis of his operatic work. In order to gain a new understanding of Wagner's music[2] it is challenging to follow other indications than those left by the composer himself. This essay's goal is to link Wagner's pictorial conception of music drama to a different sort of art, which has never taken into consideration to analyze Wagner's work: 19th-century multimedia entertainment shows.[3] For this purpose, popular spectacles like the Panorama, the Diorama, and the Pleorama are discussed in regard to Wagner's stage work.

The landscape shown on these pictures is put to a large-scale representational state of simulation in order to offer the audience another world and to temporary substitute the real one. Wagner's approach to music theater is a very similar one. In a different way he also replaces the actual state of being with a different reality. That is why Wagner can be looked at as the musical painter of landscapes and the human soul, as Thomas Mann interpreted Wagner's music. Both conceptions – that of multimedia entertainment shows and that of Wagner's operas – are asking the audience to be part of the theater event and to enter the picture which is created partly by the author and partly by the spectator/listener himself. This article deals with some of the strategies, how the human being was intrigued by the theatrical event and convinced being part of a musical picture.

PANORAMA, DIORAMA, AND MUSIC DRAMA. The Panorama, invented at the end of the 18th century in England and soon installed in cities all over the world, can be considered the major pictorial mass medium of the 19th century. Showing large-scale, 360° painting and giving the impression that the spectator was watching a real city or landscape, the Panorama became extremely popular, and only the new fascination for the movies at the beginning of the 20th century was able to overcome the older one for the Panoramas. The word Panorama, translated from the Greek as "all-round view", was used both as a term for the building where the huge paintings were exposed and for the exhibited pictures themselves. After entering the building the visitor of a Panorama approached a platform which was supposed to be the elevated point of the shown city – a tower for example – or the landscape. From this platform the spectator would take a look on (the picture of) that topography. The subjects of exhibited pictures were cities from all over the world and war scenes. It might be said that the Panorama was the first medium of globalization, since people did not need to travel to a certain place in order to experience a view of a remote city or a battlefield.

The Panorama paradigmatically represented the new consciousness of the fast-changing world. Especially the notion of space and time changed dramatically since the beginning of the 19th century as it was also picked up by the optical media of that era. The high speed of technological improvements of the time are coming to mind, such as the develop-

ment of railways and steamboats. Motion was an intrinsic part of the Panorama and can be understood in two ways: motion as an illusionary journey to a remote landscape or city of the picture shown (despite the fact that one stayed at the home city) and motion as physical movement in the building where the image was located. The spectator of a Panorama entered the picture, became part of it, and found himself literally within the image itself. He moved around in order to enjoy various views of the represented scene. Considering this new mobility, the Panorama and other media express the new spirit of the time in the following sense: one wanted to overcome personal limitations, to "de-limit" (*entgrenzen*)[4] and let the eye wander. The Panorama was the paradigm of a new desire for vastness, a vastness that, though artificial, was most fascinating for the people.

This idea of the Panorama can be seen in close relation to a similar kind of a holistic approach to music theater being developed at the time.[5] The topic to be discussed here concerns the context in which the character of an opera or a music drama appears on stage, the environment surrounding the character. First, this environment is to be looked at as a concrete space which is to be designed in a certain way to represent the landscape the singer/actor is exposed to. Second, "theater" in a more abstract sense becomes a forum that reflects the world in a broad and very general sense referring to the Baroque tradition of *theatrum mundi*. The Panorama is able to function on both levels of meaning as an illustrative model.[6] Especially Wagner's conception of vastness and grandeur in combination with the social and political background in his *Ring des Nibelungen* can be interpreted as such an approach. The *Ring*-cycle with its four vast and extended music dramas can be interpreted as a kind of Panorama,[7] which does not provide a view of a city or landscape from a real platform, but which might be looked at as a Panorama of the world, in which Wagner becomes the center of this perspective: the author *as* platform. He takes the spectator to a remote but nondescript time and to, in this case, an equally familiar and unfamiliar place, namely the Rhine topography, hidden in mythology. This pretension equaled a formerly unknown degree of *Entgrenzung*. It was the rather demanding attempt to grasp the world's creation and its apocalypse in a chain of large images that went beyond the scope of time.[8]

Two aspects will be discussed to relate Wagner's work to the multimedia conception of image theater of that period:[9] first, an essential technical/practical feature of the visual media and its performance will be related to Wagner's conception of music drama; and then, in a second step, Wagner's score will be looked at. A musical excerpt from *Die Götterdämmerung* will be analyzed with regard to the idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* and its relation to entertainment media.

The following example will demonstrate the outstanding theatrical and political significance of the idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* for Wagner's theatrical conception. The outer architecture of the audience's hall of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus in the way it was built (designed by Otto Brückwald) differs significantly from earlier conceptions, which were essentially based on Semper's designs. It makes the Festspielhaus look more like a circus or a Panorama building than a conventional theater. The Panorama was designed for mass-media features to attract a great number of people, while the theaters (especially the 18th-century court theaters) in Germany usually were only designed for a smaller and selected audience. Looking at the Bayreuth Festspielhaus Johann Ignaz Hittdorff's famous Panorama building for Paris especially comes to mind.[10] The outer architecture of the Festspielhaus removes social distance as well as does the interior. In opposition to the Baroque tradition of the court theater with its hierarchal structure, the layout of the auditorium of the Festspielhaus is based on classical models. The dispersion of boxes in a half-round guarantees the recipients to be seated in something what could be called a "democratic" structure. The Panorama model was aimed at the masses and replaces in fact the court model of theater. From a music historian's point of view, the sinking of the orchestra pit in Bayreuth, installed primarily for optical and secondarily for acoustical reasons, is the most revolutionary part of the Festspielhaus.[11] An other important new solution for the same building in relation to the ongoing performance was the conception of light. The auditorium was completely darkened at the Festspielaus for the first time.[12]

Looking at these important changes in theater and especially in opera history and considering the conception of invisible music, a different form of media theater comes into play at this point. The Diorama, as developed in Paris by Jacques Louis Mandé Daguerre, was another form of image theater which, generally speaking, had an important impact on scenography and the entire aesthetics of the theater.[13] The set designer and inventor of photography, Daguerre, presented his first Diorama shows in Paris in 1822. Although many major cities in the world, like London, Berlin or New York, copied the highly sophisticated idea of the Diorama, Daguerre's invention can be considered as the French answer to the Panorama medium. The visitor of a Diorama entered the auditorium and took his seat at the theater-like space of the especially for this purpose designed buildings, which were also called Dioramas. The light in the auditorium was darkened. The spectator was offered a large screen painting showing a landscape scenery or the interior of a church. The canvas screen of more than 200 square meters was partly transparent. It was designed and painted in order to create special light effects. The light was added and taken away to and from the image in order to present changes of the shown picture. Again, motion was a substantial part and the most intriguing feature of the show. A landscape with a village and the Alps in the background for example would start in darkness representing a morning scenery. The light was added constantly to give the impression of a sunrise and was taken away later to simulate a sunset. A whole day would pass in front of the spectator's eye in about ten minutes. The Diorama's attempt at realism was assisted by characteristic

noises and by incidental music both added from off-stage to the scene. Especially the acoustic background helped to recreate the feel of a space which was lost because of the darkness. The multimedia *mise en scène* was installed to offer a simulation of reality, while the border between art and life was torn down. After the first picture of the Diorama was over, the whole auditorium would move around to another screen and the second picture was presented.

As was impressively demonstrated by Wolfgang Schivelbusch, the most important point of the Diorama idea was to replace the actual reality with a different one and to expose the audience to a complete artificial world as represented by the the painting as well by the whole setting and situation of the performance. The Diorama was a medium of simulation. Darkness was essential for the multimedia performance of a painting like the Diorama for different reasons. Complicated "light games"[14] as the Diorama required this condition in order to allow the effect of adding or taking away light to or from a picture. In addition, darkness supported the illusion that the recipient was located *inside* the demonstrated situation. The darkness, like in the movie theaters today, made him forget the actual, theater-like environment. The French essayist Jules Janin described this phenomenon in 1839 with the following words: "Daguerre nous a fait entrer dans l'interieur des tableaus, dont, avant lui, on ne voyait que la surface".[15]

At the same time as image concepts were improved and perfected in the manner described above, the idea of music made invisible – picked up many years later in the Bayreuth Festspielhaus – was taken up various times and different contexts. Considering the numerous maneuvers undertaken to deceive the senses in the Diorama, it is almost self-evident that the production of music and noises in Daguerre's theater remained invisible too. This is not to suggest that Wagner adopted the idea of "invisible music" directly from the Diorama, since here, the musical part itself was much too insignificant. Also, there were other, further developed architectural concepts that were more closely related to Wagner and his architects (e.g. Semper and Brückwald), such as Schinkel's Schauspielhaus in Berlin. However, the Diorama was equipped with another feature that was somehow similar to the aesthetic ideas related to the sunken orchestra pit, even though the two concepts differed in regard to the concerned perceptive levels. The so-called "visual tunnel" of the Diorama, a totally dark draft-like room laid out with black fabric, preceded the image screen and was found also (somewhat different but installed with the same purpose) in the Panorama. As Schivelbusch explains, this room-in-between served to neutralize the sense of distance and to create the impression of endlessness via total avoidance of light – despite the fact that a spatial distance had in fact been created. This, the visual tunnel in the Diorama, guaranteed a comparable approach to the stage event as did the "visual tunnel" of Wagner's "mystical abyss". The sunken orchestra pit diminished the optical distance by means of the orchestra, what in turn added music to the images on stage from the "off".[16] This invisible music helped the recipient to forget his real environment in order to allow a closer relationship to the action on stage or on screen. Again, the audience was suggested to be part of the image. Considering all these strategies, the Paris Diorama of 1822 – although the performance of one picture lasted only a relatively short time – prefigured the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* in an ideal manner.

As already mentioned, the acoustical repertoire of Diorama performances was quite simple: alphorn or organ playing was combined, according to the content of the picture, with sounds of cow bells, glacier rattles, and thunder. The connection to the four-and-half hours of music theater in *Die Götterdämmerung* does not seem obvious at a first glance, and a relation between the two cannot be primarily based on musical evidence. Yet, both media tend to create a different state of being while simulating another reality. In the Diorama, the audience is integrated into the setting, it is surrounded and even caught by the image. Wagner also had a very similar attitude towards the desired effect on his audience. He himself wanted the spectator and listener to be part of the stage, as he claimed in *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*.[17] To prove this similarity by comparison to the Diorama idea to Wagner's musical work, the symphonic interlude, the so-called Siegfried's Rhine Journey, and its integration in the dramatic context with its introduction of mimic gesture introduction will be analyzed from a musical/scenical point of view.

The fact that Wagner uses at the end of the prelude in the transition to the first act of *Die Götterdämmerung* picturesque symphonic elements for the illustration of the sunrise (one of the most frequent subjects in Dioramas as well as in French grand opera[18]) and later for Siegfried's Rhine Journey is certainly no coincidence. The ending of the prologue of *Die Götterdämmerung*, in which Brünnhilde and Siegfried meet, thematicizes space and motion as related to the stage (which is more spatially oriented) and music (which is time related). The orchestral postlude of Siegfried and Brünnhilde's farewell duet is visually accompanied by Brünnhilde's gestures, which serve as an analogous pantomimic postlude to the music. The scene takes place on the top of a mountain in the Rhine valley and Brünnhilde is seen from that elevated position. She follows Siegfried with her eyes as he rides downhill. This action is supposed to be visually present only for her and cannot be seen by the audience. Although the view of a landscape, implied in Wagner's setting, is actually not visible on the stage to the audience, it is suggested musically and supported by Brünnhilde's gestures, in correspondence to the panoramic view based on images known through 19th-century media art. The top of the hill, from where Brünnhilde is watching Siegfried, serves as the platform, and she catches the vastness of the Rhine valley with her eyes. After about fourteen measures characterized by the preceding actions – namely Brünnhilde's love motive – Siegfried vanishes from her sight, as we learn from the stage directions.[19] Seven measures later, while still searching with her eyes,

Brünnhilde receives a motivic signal indicating Siegfried's relative closeness to her. The stage directions say: "Siegfried's horn can be heard from the valley."[20]

This part is, considering the analogue conception of Diorama and music drama, the most intriguing moment of this section in *Die Götterdämmerung*. The horn entrance in this place is coherent to the musical/scenical setting, suggested by Wagner. Based on the fact that the musical perspective is shifting at this moment, the horn solo and the reduced orchestration at this spot mark an abrupt musical change from what has happened before. The music from the orchestra pit, which is music from offstage, is contrasted with music that originates in the scene. The horn solo is incidental music as music founded in the picture, music from onstage. The horn, played by Siegfried, must be located in the theater, in this case, *underneath* the stage.[21] This insertion of incidental music, which lasts only a few measures, motivates Brünnhilde to move once more and to change her perspective. She is able to catch another glimpse of Siegfried again. At exactly this moment, the orchestra starts the interlude, Siegfried's Rhine Journey, which is musically based on the simple horn signal heard before. The horn signal onstage, only appears within this interlude at the moment when the curtain closes. Afterwards, the horns are playing from the orchestra pit and transmit music from offstage to illustrate Siegfried's ride along the river.

The music known as Siegfried's Rhine Journey can be considered – especially after the sophisticated musical/scenical introduction as given through Brünnhilde – as a musical Panorama. Its subject is the Rhine valley topography. Yet, the visual impact of the scenery – the landscape – is only available as a non-theatrical event: the scene and the music are offstage elements. The simple motivic structure of this music, its regular, quick ¾-beat, and the pushing impulse create the image of Siegfried riding away along the Rhine river. As much as the visual impacts of this landscape must be imagined by the audience, also this music, coming from the mystical abyss has to be experienced as part of a scenic reality, which only takes place in the listener's mind. At this point and without Brünnhilde's pantomimic support, it is the spectator's and listener's task to imagine the scenic progression of Siegfried's Rhine journey while experiencing the orchestral music. In contrast to the sunrise in the prologue to *Die Götterdämmerung*, which is happening simultaneously on stage and in the orchestra, Siegfried's Rhine journey as a *visual* phenomenon is to be imagined, and this fact reveals a close relationship to the concept of simulation in the Diorama: the spectator was offered – if we recall Janin's quote – to actually enter the picture. As much as the Diorama image, the music of Siegfried's journey surrounds the listener in the darkened audience's room in the theater: it creates the image around him and finally projects it into his mind. The interlude functions as changing music and leads from one scene to another. From the high mountains of the Rhine landscape, the audience is taken to the Gibichungs' castle in the Rhine valley.

Brünnhilde's perspective mirrors the audiences' reception of a Rhine Panorama, taken from an elevated position that provides the vastness of that view. The view of the person riding along the Rhine river – Siegfried's perspective – corresponds with another visual experience beginning to develop in the 19th century and being rather cinematic. Forms of Panoramas in motion, such as the Moving Panorama and the so-called Pleorama, were also extremely popular. The Moving Panorama presented a painted screen which was unrolled in front of the audience and usually accompanied with piano music like the movies in the early days of film. Most often river topographies were the subjects of the Moving Panorama assuming that the person who sat in the audience was taking a trip on a boat and enjoying the landscape and cities passing by. In the so-called Pleorama which was introduced in Wrocław and Berlin by the set designer and manager of the Berlin Diorama, Carl Gropius, the spectator – literally spoken – entered a barge which was surrounded by water. On both sides of that boat, canvas screens were unrolled, on which the painted scenery of the Rhine valley suggested to the audience their actual presence at the spot. This virtual Rhine journey of the year 1835 in Berlin was, as well as the Diorama, accompanied by music and characteristic noises, as we read in the description of that Disney-like journey: "Accompanied by the sound of horns, the trip started in full sunshine."[22]

It is possible that Wagner, at his visit to Berlin in 1836, had seen this show, as well as he could have seen either the Paris Diorama show or Panorama exhibits in other cities. Yet, there is no positive evidence to be found in his memoirs, in his theoretical writings or in his letters that he actually did see one of those media picture performances, neither in Berlin nor in Paris. Discussing the question whether Wagner could have been influenced at all based on his own experience, we have to recall the extremely high popularity of those media. First, the journals and newspapers in those days were full of reports, reviews and information on those events. Second, those media pictures were as much – and in the best sense of the meaning of that word – entertaining art forms as it is the cinema nowadays. They were perceived on an everyday basis, and after some decades they had been introduced (and certainly in the 1840s) they were not considered sufficiently as particular sensational or special any more to be mentioned. As we, today, decide very often to go to the movies spontaneously one night and then might have already forgotten about them the next morning (which does not mean that this media experience does not subconsciously infect our thinking and being), people in the 19th century went to see all kinds of multimedia performances as the Diorama or the Moving Panorama without always reflecting their experiences implicitly. Third, and finally, Wagner does mention in a letter to the Bavarian King Ludwig II the Panorama. In this context he uses the Panorama medium as an example to demonstrate that the stage designs in

his work (here referring especially to *Parsifal*) should not just be a nice visual experience itself, like in the Panorama, but should be integrated in the dramatic context. In Wagner's opinion the sets should form a mute background serving the experience of music drama as a whole.[23] Considering this, in the case of the Rhine journey, the music achieves in a way the quality of a "sounding set design" based on the Panorama idea. This symphonic interlude is worth to be listened to on its own with no scenery or singing going on at the same time.

The assignment of the horn as a semantic pattern[24] to the Rhine topography (even if mediated via Siegfried's music as personal motive) is rather unconventional. The use of that same instrument in the Pleorama might help to explain this. Also the simplicity of the horn signal in Wagner's *Die Götterdämmerung*, which forms the utmost contrast to the music by which it is surrounded – especially in the love scene – could be explained by such a reference to a visual media like the Pleorama. Particulary the music in Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* of the horn as part of the action on stage from behind the scene (instead of from the orchestra pit) seems like an invasion into the world of mythos. The horn suggests the topos of traveling related to the very well-known signal of the carriage still evident in 19th-century travel. This invasion appears to be closely related to the sense of realism of the optical media. The state of motion while being on a journey was the topic both of the Pleorama in Berlin and other optical media as the Panorama and Diorama, as well as of the changing music in Wagner's *Die Götterdämmerung*.

The new options like the traveling facilities of the 19th century, which made the world more accessible, are reflected in the simulated space of the orchestral interlude as shown. This interlude can be understood as an extreme case of *Entgrenzung*, developing further the virtual enlargement of the stage of 19th-century opera: the listener's ear and mind, in this particular moment, goes way beyond the usually closely framed opera stage experience. This sequence of spatial *Entgrenzung* related to landscape iconography is introduced by Brünnhilde's gesture expression towards Siegfried, by human emotion: by fear, excitement and love. But the use of gesture expression as visual feature of emotion and even story telling (we learn through her gestures, that Siegfried is in fact on his journey along the river) can be traced back on the highly visually effective model of French grand opera. The general idea – as the Paris Opèra director Louis-Désiré Veron puts it – of this art form was its desired capability to be understandable by the visually received action on stage.[25]

Visual Conception of Music Drama. In a metaphorical sense, Wagner's operas are "light games". They are requiring their kind of "darkness" – what represents "the mystical abyss" not only in the optical but especially in the acoustical sense – as much as a ship requires water.[26] The recipient is placed *within* the stage action, being seduced by the things happening on stage and in the orchestra pit. He is asked by Wagner to enter this stage image and should become part of the picture. This aesthetic premise was most prominent in Daguerre's concept of image theater as explained by Janin, where light and darkness were becoming such important features of theatrical art as never before. However, the visual as a category of an artwork in the area of theater is rather transitory, since it relies primarily on the performance and only secondarily on the textual structure of a work. Yet, the musical score more and more served as a medium to demonstrate these visual aspects of the work. In any case, the visual was a constitutive category for Wagner, particularly since he attempted to provide visual experiences, such as Siegfried's Rhine Journey, by supplying them in the score. Wagner with his media – music theater – reflects at this point all kind of other picturesque media experience using 19th-century topoi: journeys along rivers in Panoramas with its very popular theme as the Rhine valley and sunrises or sunsets in the Diorama. Wagner in the orchestral interlude of *Die Götterdämmerung* did not need actually to show these landscapes, as the subject concerned one of the popular topoi of images in the 19th century. The visual experience of the recipient created the Rhine landscape, while it was mystically hidden behind the stage.

Wagner can be looked at – as Thomas Mann put it – as a "painter of external nature" and as well "of animate nature, the eternal human heart".[27] If we think of the pictorial media and the importance of landscape for Wagner the first statement can be taken very literal while the second refers to what Wagner creates virtually in the listener's mind. He sets the landscape scenery to opera. To sketch central moments of this visual conception of music theater, where the art of the light and darkness, the art of simulation and the art of imaginative music are closely related, these observations are meant to inspire further philological analysis towards the visual in Wagner's music and to prompt a methodology to investigate in approaches to music through the visual in general.

Notes

[1] Thomas Mann, *Richard Wagner and the Ring* (1937), in: Thomas Mann, *Essays on three decades*, translated from the German by H.T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Knopf, 1948).

[2] This was the goal of the 1998 conference *Wagner at the Millennium* in Adelaide, Australia, where this essay was originally presented in a different version. I owe many thanks to the organizers of this confe-

rence and to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft who sponsored my trip to Australia.

[3] This is a rather complex thematic field and, in this context, only preliminary considerations can be discussed. In his instructive essay, *Der Film: Richard Wagners "Kunstwerk der Zukunft"*, in: *Richard Wagner und ...*, ed. by Siegfried Mauser. Schriftenreihe der Hochschule für Musik München 14 (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1983), 123-147, Norbert J. Schneider discusses aspects in the section "Funktionen der visuellen Schicht" (131). He based his considerations on the following premise: "In Analogie zur Filmmusik, deren Entstehung und Ausformung ein optisch Primäres vorausgeht, ist auch Wagners Musikerleben beim Komponieren stark von vorausgehenden Bildeindrücken geprägt gewesen. [. . .] Anders als im Film, wo das Visuelle als eigenständige Schicht in seiner Aussagekraft erhalten bleibt, werden im Musikdrama den visuellen Momenten, die bei der Komposition so inspririerend vorausgegangen waren, im fertigen Werk nur noch untergeordnete Funktionen zugemessen. Die Bildeindrücke sind quasi synästhetisch in die musikalische Schicht eingegangen." See also: Anno Mungen, *"Bilder-Musik": Panoraman, Tableaux vivants und Lichtbilder als multimediale Darstellungsformen in Theater- und Musikaufführungen vom 19. bis zum frühen 20. Jahrhundert*, Habilitationsschrift, Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz (publication forthcoming). This study includes one whole chapter on Wagner.

[4] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Zur Geschichte der künstlichen Helligkeit im 19. Jahrhundert* (Wien; München: Carl Hanser, 1983), 203: "Die Malerei zu entgrenzen, den Rahmen des Bildes aufzusprengen, das leistete die Malerei noch selber in Form eben des Rundbildes, das keine seitliche Begrenzung hat."

[5] It is certainly no coincidence that Eusebius von Trahndorff, who used the term *Gesamtkunstwerk* in 1827 probably for the first time, develops his aesthetical approach to his topic in a large chapter entitled "Die Oper und das Panorama", see Karl Friedrich Eusebius Trahndorff: *Aesthetik oder Lehre von der Weltanschauung und Kunst* (Berlin: Mauersche Buchhandlung), 319ff.

[6] It should be mentioned that the media of Panorama, Diorama, and stage painting were strongly influenced by each other. Especially the formal disposition in the shape of a half-rounded set design, originated in Panorama painting, was used on stage, e.g., for a performance of Halévy's *La Juive*. See the review in *Berliner Tageszeitung oder immergrüne Blätter für die elegante Welt* VIII/123 (17 October 1837) and Mungen 1997, 110f.

[7] There is no positive evidence that Wagner visited either Panorama exhibitions or Diorama performances. Also it has to be pointed out that Wagner was not particularly interested in painting itself or in Liszt's experiments to compose music after paintings, as the latter did in his symphonic poem *Die Hunnenschlacht*. Yet, Wagner was very intrigued by Listz's Dante Symphony and he was probably aware of Liszt's older conception of this work, where Liszt had planned a kind of a multimedia opera. Wagner was interested in set design only because of its "dramatic intention", as the painter Friedrich Pecht pointed out; see Walter Salmen, "Liszt und Wagner in ihren Beziehungen zur bildenden Kunst", in *Franz Liszt und Richard Wagner: Musikalische und geistesgeschichtliche Grundlagen der neudeutschen Schule*. Referate des 3. Europäischen Liszt-Symposions Eisenstadt 1983. Ed. by Serge Gut (München; Salzburg: Emil Katzbichler, 1986), 152-160, esp. 158.

[8] Operas, such as Gaspare Spontini's *Agnes von Hohenstaufen* and Wagner's *Rienzi* can be interpreted as models which go beyond the conventions of a usual opera performance. For the first time, operas were split up in order to cut the individual performances to a bearable length. The performance of the first act of *Agnes von Hohenstaufen* in 1827 lasted no less than two-and-half hours. For the premiere of *Rienzi*, the total duration was probably around six hours. At first, the opera was divided and performed on two evenings. The total duration of the *Ring* is more than 16 hours. This goes beyond the conventional frame of staged performances. The event requires space in every sense of the word, not only concerning the width and depth of the stage, but also the dimension of time.

[9] All implications of 19th-century media which can be found in Wagner's work can not be discussed at this point. A further examination of the question also in relation to other contexts (as Wagner's theoretical work and the theoretical background of early–19th-century aesthetic of *Gesamtkunstwerk*) is discussed in Mungen, "*BilderMusik*". One other famous example is the use of "Wandeldekorationen" (changing decoration or Moving Panorama) e.g. in the premiere of *Parsifal* in 1882; see Langer, *op. cit.*, p. 98f; Robert W. Gutman attributes – in *Richard Wagner: The Man, His Mind, and His Music* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1968), 185 – this use to the experiences Wagner made by attending performances at the Odéon in Paris.

[10] See illustration in: *Jakob Ignaz Hittdorf: Ein Architekt aus Köln im Paris des 19. Jahrhunderts*. Catalogue of the exhibition in Cologne (Köln: Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, 1982), 189.

[11] See Anno Mungen, *Orchestra: Klangkonzepte für Opernhäuser in Berlin und Dresden*, this Journal, 131-137.

[12] Schivelbusch, 202.

[13] Mungen 1997, 101.

[14] Schivelbusch, 202.

[15] Schivelbusch, 202.

[16] Evan Baker, "Richard Wagner and His Search for the Ideal Theatrical Space", in *Opera in Context: Essays on Historical Staging from the Late Renaissance to the Time of Puccini*, ed. by Mark A. Radice (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1998), 241-278, here 254 and 262.

[17] See Martina Srocke, *Richard Wagner als Regisseur*. Berliner Musikwissenschaftliche Arbeiten 35 (München; Salzburg: Katzbichler 1988), 21. Also: Richard Wagner, *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen*. ed. by Wolfgang Golther (Berlin; Leipzig: Deutsches Verlagshaus [1912]), vol. 3, p. 152.

[18] See for the sunrise topic as well as for the French connection of Wagner's work in general Dieter Borchmeyer, *Die Götter tanzen Cancan: Richard Wagners Liebesvolte* (Heidelberg: Manutius-Verlag, 1992), 18-23 and 75-76.

[19] Richard Wagner, *Die Götterdämmerung*, Taschenpartitur, vol. 1 (London; Zürich; Mainz; New York: Eulenburg, n.d.), p. 157: "Brünnhilde's gesture indicates now that Siegfried has vanished from her sight."

[20] *Die Götterdämmerung*, p. 158.

[21] *Die Götterdämmerung*, p. 158.

[22] Quoted after Erich Stenger, *Daguerres Diorama in Berlin: Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte der Photographie* (Berlin: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1925), p. 40.

[23] "So geht es mir aber in Allem, Jeder weiß es besser und namentlich schöner wie ich, der ich eben ein bestimmtes Etwas, eine ganz sichere, poetische Wirkung, keinen Opern-Theater-Prunk aber will. So mit Decorationen, welche immer so entworfen werden, als ob sie ganz für sich allein dastehen sollten, um etwa wie in einem Panorama, nach Belieben betrachtet zu werden, während ich sie als schweigend ermöglichenden Hintergrund und Umgebung einer charakteristischen, dramatischen Situation wirken lassen will." Quoted after Kaiser 1968, p.102.

[24] The various meanings are discussed in great detail in a separate chapter of Egon Voss, *Studien zur Instrumentation Richard Wagners: Studien zur Musikgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* 24 (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1970), 175-193. However, neither the use of the horn on stage at the spot mentioned above nor the orchestra interlude is interpreted. The connection found in this example horn/Rhine river could be interpreted in a general sense as nature symbolism. In a different context, Voss supports this assumption: "The main function of the horn signal is certainly to demonstrate Siegfried's close connection to nature." See Egon Voss, "*Wagner und kein Ende*" (Zürich; Mainz: Atlantis, 1996), p. 199.

[25] See Manuela Jahrmärker, "Zur Frage der optischen Verständlichkeit in der französischen Oper des 19. Jahrhunderts: Erkundungen am Beispiel von zwei Tableaux aus Opern von Giacomo Meyerbeer", in Günther Heeg and Anno Mungen, eds., Proceedings for the conference "Stillstand und Bewegung" held at the Universität Mainz, Musikabtei-

lung, October 1999 (forthcoming). Jahrmärker quotes Véron's statment concerning the five act grand opera: "cette action dramatique doit cependant pouvoir être compris par les yeux comme l'action d'un ballet". This quote is from Véron's *Mémoires d'un bourgois de Paris comprenant la fin de l'empire, la Retauration, la Monarchie de Juillet, et la République jusqu'au rétablissement de l'empire,* vol. 3 (Paris, 1854), p. 252.

[26] Schivelbusch, p. 209.

[27] See quotation above.