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EXPERIENCE WAGNER THROUGH NEW BOOK

The number of books written on or about Richard Wagner and his work would fill metres of shelving in any library. Most, unfortunately, fall below the radar but every now and again a publication comes along that causes great excitement. One such book was released at the end of 2014 with the enthusiastic support of Dame Gwyneth Jones and our own Sir Donald McIntyre.

At 800 pages with 100 illustrations *The Wagner Experience* is a monumental work and the culmination of a lifetime's work for author Paul Dawson Bowling.

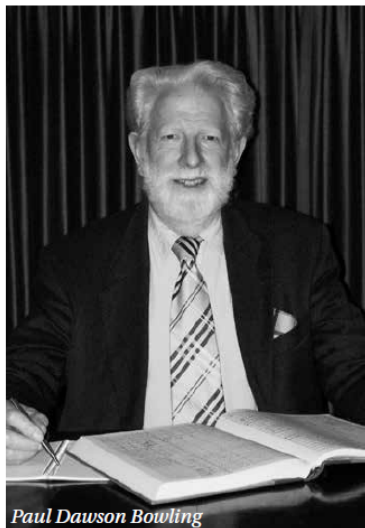
He studied classics at school and classics and philosophy at Oxford, and joined the Civil Service for five years before beginning, aged 29, to train as a Doctor of Medicine. For thirty years he was consequently a family doctor at Faversham in East Kent, where he still lives.

His love affair with Wagner began in 1958 when, still a school-boy, he bicycled across Europe to Bayreuth for the *Ring* and those other great works of Wagner's maturity, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Die Meistersinger*, and *Parsifal*.

For twenty-five years he has been a principal reviewer for *Wagner News*, and has published numerous articles on Wagner in the UK and America; he is also well known as a lecturer.

In his review of the *The Wagner Experience* Barry Millington editor of the *Wagner Journal* picks up the book's different approach to Wagner: 'Paul Dawson Bowling's book draws on a deep knowledge of medical and psychological matters to offer valuable insights into Wagner's inner life and thus into the works themselves.'

The website the-wagnerian.com comments "Expounding in colourful style the stories, the sources and the lessons of Wagner's great dramas, he (Dawson Bowling) offers unusual insights into the man, his works and their meaning, while grappling with the music's almost occult power. Before taking us through the ten great dramas themselves, he discusses Wagner's formative experiences, his aspirations and his mentality; also his first wife Minna and her immense but unrecognised impact. This sets up lenses through which the reader may more accurately view not only Wagner the man and his less appealing aspects, but more importantly his stage works, since, as Dawson Bowling insists, the best encounter with Wagner's dramas is the direct one. Uniquely drawing on a lifetime's experience in General

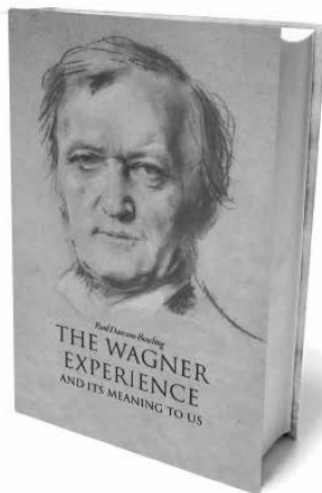


Paul Dawson Bowling

Medical Practice, the author brings a wisdom, humanity and psychological understanding to his study of the life and work of Wagner, with especial reference to the thought of Carl Jung. Above all, this book draws out the vital lessons which Wagner's extraordinary, didactic dramas can offer us. It reveals their lessons as life-enhancing: capable of transforming our society, our lives and ourselves. There is no other book about Wagner quite like it."

Dame Gwyneth Jones writes: "One feels that a very dear friend is guiding you through this journey of Wagner's life, with a desire to share his own love and admiration for the composer in order than you may also share his incredible Wagner experience.

He has done tremendous research and delves into every aspect of Wagner's life and his music dramas. One constantly discovers things that you may somehow have missed in the past, like the fact that Wagner had originally intended the scene in *Das*



Rheingold between Wotan and Erda to be with the three Norns. Also, his descriptions of the wildly intense, sensuous relationship with Minna is a revelation. They met when he was just 21 years old. She was three years older than him and was an extremely beautiful woman and a very talented actress. She went through heaven and hell with him on his various escapades, fleeing because of their debts, being shot at by border guards, causing their carriage to overturn resulting in Minna having a miscarriage which was probably the cause of her childlessness afterwards. Also the near shipwreck on the flight from Riga to London, which was the inspiration for *Der fliegende Holländer*. She was so terrified that she begged Richard to lash her to him, so that they could drown and perish together. No wonder that she became the source and inspiration for all the heroines in Wagner's dramas! She was his muse and in her he saw his archetype, his ideal, the perfect example for Elisabeth, Venus, Elsa, Sieglinde, Brünnhilde, Senta, Eva and Gutrune. Mathilde Wesendonck became his muse for Isolde when the love between Wagner and Minna began to fade, but he continued to hope and believe that each new attraction would bring him that same heightened state of mind and being which Minna had brought him."

In the book's preface Sir Donald McIntyre writes: "Read Paul's book! He has lots of convincing answers to many of these questions Wagner asks. And after reading this book, each of you will be better qualified to come up with your own personal ideas. Paul has challenged us all with his own findings: he has certainly challenged me. He has also provided us with many facts about Wagner as man and artist. 'Ask and you will find.'

Paul has already inspired me to write my autobiography, which I have now started, about my life as a singer, particularly of the works of Wagner. In so doing, I am in a constant state of excitement while exploring deeper. Therefore, what I am most intrigued by is Paul's assessment of Wagner as a man. I confess I didn't know enough about Wagner's life and had read unreliable assessments. However, what I've long been sure of is what I have studied in his works and tried to portray throughout my career: sheer genius!"

The Wagner Experience is available through Amazon.co.uk or directly from www.thewagnerexperience.co.uk website where you can purchase a signed copy for £30 plus p&p, £5 less than the RRP.