

Approaches to Richard Wagner's *Ring* for period woodwinds

In 1876 Richard Wagner's opera cycle *The Ring of the Nibelung* (1876) was premiered. But it was not until the world premiere of *Parsifal* (1882) that the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra reunited. Ludwig II provided the Munich Hofkapelle (Court Orchestra) which would explain why the 1882 Bayreuth Festival Orchestra consisted primarily of musicians from Munich. Due to the availability of excellent sources, the instrumentarium of the 1882 formation can be determined much more definitively than that of the premiere performance. Considering this, it is important to note that a diverse woodwind section with musicians from a number of different orchestras, as was the case in 1876, did not exactly correspond with Wagner's ideal. A brief outline of the woodwind instruments of the Munich Hofkapelle from 1882 will be followed by some aspects of performance practice like articulation, grace notes and notated dynamics in Wagner's scores.



Dr. Benjamin Reissenberger studied clarinet at the *Kunstuniversität Graz*, at the *Musik Akademie Basel* and at the *Folkwang Universität der Künste Essen*. After graduating with degrees in music performance and pedagogy, he was admitted to the graduate program in performance, which he successfully completed in 2005.

Numerous CD recordings and radio productions document his active musical life. Performing primarily on copies of historical clarinets, he has appeared with many leading orchestras specializing in historically informed performance, including the *Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin*, *Concerto Köln*, and the *Capella Augustina*.

Benjamin Reissenberger is a founding member of *Himmelfortgrund*, an ensemble of early music specialists led by bassoonist Sergio Azzolini.

In 2014 he was awarded a doctorate in musicology from the *Folkwang Universität der Künste Essen* with a dissertation entitled *Kammermusikalische Klarinettenwerke von Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schumann und Brahms. Eine Studie zur historischen Aufführungspraxis*. Benjamin Reissenberger regularly publishes articles in encyclopedias, books, and journals, as well as giving lectures at international congresses and leading workshops at music conservatories. Since 2017, he has also been an external research advisor for the project *Wagner-Lesarten (Interpreting Wagner)*, in which Kent Nagano will lead *Concerto Köln* in the first performances of Richard Wagner's *Ring des Nibelungen* prepared from the perspective of historical performance practice.

From 2015 to 2018, Benjamin Reissenberger held the position of Specialist in Cultural Management in the arts and culture team of *BASF SE* in *Ludwigshafen*. Subsequently, he worked as orchestra manager of the *Wuppertal Symphony Orchestra*, where he was jointly responsible for artistic program planning. Since August of this year, he has been head of the cultural office of the city of *Neuss on the Rhine* and artistic director of the *ZeughausKonzerte*.