

# Richard Wagner Museum Lucerne

## Collection of historic musical instruments

Welcome to the country manor in Tribschen! Pay us a visit and discover not only the fascinating world of the famous composer Richard Wagner, but also a variety of precious musical instruments. You can view two extraordinary collections under one roof and also take time to linger in the magnificent surroundings of the manor on Lake Lucerne and enjoy the magic of Central Switzerland's Alps.

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### Richard Wagner in Lucerne

Richard Wagner chose the country manor in Tribschen on Lake Lucerne as his residence for six years. In April 1866, the composer moved into the empty house and filled it with life. He lived on this grand estate, which is surrounded by a park and located directly on the lakeside, with his second wife Cosima and their children. At times the house was also the meeting point for very prominent figures, such as Franz Liszt, Friedrich Nietzsche, Gottfried Semper and King Ludwig II of Bavaria, who were some of the composer's closest friends. In 1872 Wagner left what he called the "idyll in Tribschen" in order to put the plans for his own festival theater in Bayreuth into effect.

One month after Richard Wagner moved into the manor in Tribschen, he was joined by his mistress, Cosima von Bülow. Initially her stays were only brief visits, as it was necessary for her to return to Munich to her daughters and her husband, Hans von Bülow. With time Cosima decided to move into the Tribschen manor with her children. In 1867 their daughter Eva was born and on 6 June 1869, Wagner's only son - Siegfried - was also born in Tribschen. Shortly thereafter, Hans von Bülow consented to a divorce,

leaving nothing more to stand in the way of the two lovers formally establishing their own family. Their wedding ceremony was held in St Mathew's Church, a Protestant church in Lucerne, on 25 August 1870.

Today, the building houses a collection of memorabilia from Richard Wagner and his stay in Tribschen; it is exhibited on the ground floor of his former residence.

## Who was Richard Wagner ?

Richard Wagner was born in Leipzig on 22 May 1813 and died on 13 February 1883 at the age of almost 70 in Venice during a stay in Italy.

He is among the most famous composers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and his name is known all over the world. He devoted his life to creating a new language in music, and was the originator of the musical drama. His life's journey led him all over Europe. He lived in Switzerland for several years, initially in Zurich and then later in Tribschen near Lucerne. In Bayreuth Richard Wagner's lifetime dream became a reality: he had his own "opera house" built in this city, where his works continue to be performed exclusively every year. The festival in Bayreuth was held for the first time in 1876, and still attracts an audience from all over the world during the summer months today.

Richard Wagner married twice during his lifetime. His first wife, Christiane Wilhelmine Planer, called Minna, was a beautiful actress and several years older than he. She died of heart failure eight years after she had separated from Wagner. Cosima, his second wife, was the daughter of the famous composer and piano virtuoso Franz Liszt. The marriage ceremony between Richard Wagner and Cosima von Bülow took place in Lucerne in 1870. Their daughter Eva and son Siegfried were born in Tribschen near Lucerne. Isolde, their oldest daughter, was born in Munich.

## Richard Wagner Collection in Tribschen

The exhibition on the life and work of Richard Wagner can be viewed on the ground level of the manor. Various exhibits of historic photographs and paintings are on display in five rooms on this level, together with a valuable collection of original manuscripts (letters and musical scores). Several items of Wagner's clothing, as well as pieces of furniture from his stay, have been preserved and are also on display. A bronze casting of the well-known Wagner bust by Friedrich Schaper can also be seen and, last but not least, the gem of the collection: his Erard grand piano from Paris.

The score for *Siegfried Idyll* is one of the most important exhibits on display. Richard Wagner composed this piece, which he originally called *Tribschener Idyll*, as a symphonic birthday greeting for his wife Cosima for her 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday. It premiered on the manor's staircase in Tribschen on 25 December 1870. On her birthday, Cosima was awakened by the gentle sound of the "Idyll".

Richard Wagner completed the *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in Tribschen and was also able to take up his work on *Der Ring des Nibelungen* again after having put it aside for 12 years. His literary works during his stay in Tribschen include essays such as "Deutsche Kunst und deutsche Politik" (1868), "Über das Dirigieren" (1869), "Beethoven" (1870), "Über die Bestimmung der Oper" (1871) and his autobiography "Mein Leben", which he dictated to Cosima. These publications can be found in the extensive collection in the museum's library.

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