Ludwig II

– The Visionary King of Bavaria

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Foreword

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I. Ludwig the Keen Scientist

Although some of his fantasies were anachronistic, King Ludwig was surprisingly aware of the technological revolution in his own times. In fact, he was fascinated by technology, and founded the Royal Polytechnic University of Bavaria in 1868 (it was to become the Technical University of Munich in 1970). In his own eccentric way, he was in touch with the latest developments in science, and was willing to make use of them for his particular purposes. He understood the advantages of electricity, appreciated the advances taking place in civil engineering and in communications, and he took an active interest in the Great Paris Exposition Universelle staged in 1867. Nor was he a passive spectator. Engineering drawings in the hand of the King himself have survived, which bear witness to his scientific awareness and to a surprising natural ability.

The Picture alongside depicts the king’s sleigh arriving by night under the snow, illuminated by the first electric light bulb ever used in a moving vehicle. It is also probably the first representation of electric lighting per se in a painting. Of course, the purpose was not to light the way ahead, but rather to show the King and impress onlookers by further illuminating his legendary presence.

Famously, he invited Mr Siemens to provide him with an electric lighting system, and the King’s early interest in electricity was surely instrumental in developing public awareness of its potential. He was also keen on the telephone, and urged his architects to develop the very latest constructional methods of the day. In fact, in his attitude towards technical progress, he was a modern king, often well ahead of the other monarchs of his time. He was probably the first to use an electric bulb on the move, although the prime purpose in his case seems to have been to allow the crowds to see him rather than to see more clearly the way ahead. At any rate, his sleigh is said to have been the first vehicle ever
equipped with an electric light. In order to keep abreast of the technical innovations of his times, the King travelled incognito to Paris to attend the famous ‘Exposition Universelle’ of 1867 under the pseudonym of the Count of Berg, and was reputedly quite irritated when crowds recognised him. In fact, the new techniques of decoration and architecture were a great inspiration to him. The King personally insisted that architects should make use of the most modern methods, whilst at the same time not revealing the techniques they had used, so as not to spoil the illusions created by their boldness. They were expected to hide away modern methods of reinforcement, so that technology could be harnessed in the service of aesthetics, but at the same time hidden away, as are the machines of a theatre. In this respect, the King was very modern: we also like to take advantage of technology, but hide away its complexities.

The King’s keen interest in science has been the subject of recent studies, and is recounted in several books. This may serve to correct a somewhat naïve perception of the King as an enemy of technical progress which is perhaps the most glaring inaccuracy to be noted in the famous poem by Verlaine (see below).

In fact, the King was very attached to the comforts of modern living, many of which were pioneered at the court of Bavaria. In the gardens of
Nymphenburg, the castle where he grew up, are the first truly modern public baths. Likewise, in the construction of the castle of Neuschwanstein, the King made use, behind the medieval décor, of the most advanced amenities and conveniences which were available at the time. The castle boasted a distribution of drinking water for all floors, a central heating system to keep the rooms warm, a hot water system and there were even telephones for the king to summon his servants without having to leave his private rooms.

In addition to his interest in applying science and technology for constructional, theatrical and decorative purposes, the King was fascinated by the dream of flight, as were many in his own time. Thus, one forms a picture of Ludwig not entirely as a recluse but also as a thinker captivated by many aspects of the spirit of his own times.

A presentation of Ludwig, the scientist-King, will be made by Prof. Dr. Gerd Hirzinger of the Institut für Robotik und Mechatronik Oberpfaffenhofen, Director of the Deutsches Zentrum für Luft und Raumfahrt, who will also draw on the work presented in recent books by Jean Louis Schlim.
II. Ludwig the Good European

Franco-Bavarian relations were an important feature of European politics before 1870 and were perceived in several European capitals as a valuable counterweight to the relentless rise of Prussian power. The relation between Bavaria and France was rooted in ancient history. The Wittelsbach family rose to prominence as the ‘Princes des Deux Ponts’ (Zwei Bruchen), strongly connected to the European city of Strasbourg, and the electors of Bavaria were further elevated to royal status by Bonaparte after the battles of Iena and Friedland. This connection explains in many ways his fascination for all things royal and French.

Despite this background, Ludwig was no friend of warfare, and did all he could to avoid the unhappy confrontation between Prussia and Bavaria, for fear it would compromise the independence of the southern kingdom. His conception of Europe was surely that of a federation of locally governed regions or kingdoms and, as such, was perhaps not too different from the model now proposed for Europe. He certainly saw the perils of the rising tide of nationalism, although he could do little to resist it.
A number of French historians have studied the political background to the special relationship between France and Bavaria, and how things began to go wrong with the policy around the time of the King’s accession to the throne. In particular, it was pointed out by Jacques Bainville that the foundation for the power of France in the seventeenth century was laid by the astute negotiations of Cardinal Mazarin. This wily politician understood that the division of Germany into many principalities would serve the future of the Bourbon monarchy and he negotiated the treaty of Westphalia with this aim in mind. With the rise of Prussia in the eighteenth century, this subtle European balance was disturbed, and France sought, by giving support to Bavaria, to counteract the change and preserve its European position. This explains why Bonaparte, who inherited this situation, was keen to elevate Bavaria in importance in his new European order.

Thus, Ludwig was keenly aware of the threat to his own kingdom posed by Bismarck’s policies, and possibly also of the danger for the whole of Europe, but there is no doubt that he felt marginalized by the course of history in his own time. There is evidence that he well understood the larger game being played around him, and indeed that Bismarck himself considered the young King to be quite astute. In several situations, Ludwig acted to minimise the damage to the interests of Bavaria, though he could do little to stop the inexorable rise of nationalism. Today, we would probably take a more sympathetic view of his efforts to slow down the progress of militarism in Europe. The history of his gradual withdrawal into a dream world is closely connected to his profound disappointment with state politics, as Bavaria was turned from an independent kingdom into a more humble province of Germany. He clearly understood that his kingship would one day evaporate, but he had no intention of accepting that fate.

The picture alongside shows a facsimile of King Ludwig II’s signature in German (compare it with his signature in French below).
Franco-German relations in the time of King Ludwig, and the interest the French still feel today in this exceptional monarch help to explain why French poets and authors have often referred to him. King Ludwig made a total of three journeys to France, the first in 1867 to the International Exhibition, as noted above, the second in 1874 to see Paris and especially to study Versailles, and the third in 1875 to Reims, when he developed an interest in Jeanne d’Arc. Ludwig II apparently justified his visit to France in 1867 on the grounds that, his kingdom having just lost a war against Prussia, the trip was necessary “merely not to omit anything that might help the position of Bavaria”. Prussia, on the other hand, feared that the king might be making overtures to France, while Napoleon the IIIrd (mindful of the special position of Bavaria) treated him as a very special guest. Although his real wish was to visit Versailles, he did not get the chance to do so until after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, when he returned to Paris incognito under the name of the count of Berg, despite a cholera epidemic, and celebrated his 29th birthday in Versailles. His identity was of course far from being secret. The fountains of Versailles were turned on especially for his birthday, much to the annoyance of the French press, because it involved a cost of 50,000 francs, borne by French taxpayers. There was comment that this money should really have come from the government of Mr Bismarck, because of the 5 million gold francs of war damages recently imposed by Prussia on France, and this comment shows how French public opinion, because of the rise of nationalism, was beginning to forget the role of Bavaria as a traditional ally, and to view Ludwig simply as a German.

Perhaps for the same reason, or because of the unofficial nature of his visit, Ludwig was not hosted by the then President of France, General MacMahon, who had quelled the uprising of the Commune. Although Ludwig II did not really like Paris, he took advantage of his stay there to visit the tomb of Napoleon, who had been responsible for the elevation of Bavaria to a full monarchy, and he spent some time in the Louvre.

King Ludwig’s visits to France had a great influence on his architectural taste, and may have helped develop his fascination for the French Monarchy. In attempting to understand why, one should bear in mind the origin of the relationship between France and Bavaria, which (as noted above) follows from the master-plan of Cardinal Mazarin. The treaty of Westphalia is the cornerstone of this grand design, which laid the foundation for the power of the sun-King Louis XIV. There is thus an intimate relationship between the foundations of the ‘Grand Siècle’ and the traditional friendship between France and Bavaria. Indeed, this intimate relationship may also explain why the name ‘Ludwig’ was in
favour at the court of Munich, and certainly explains why Ludwig himself experimented a good deal with his own signature.

The picture alongside shows a facsimile of King Ludwig II’s signature in French

III. Ludwig – the Legend in French Poetry

The legend of the ‘modern Hamlet’ or ‘artist-King’ developed very fast after his tragic and mysterious death. In the vanguard were some of the greatest names of French poetry, beginning with Verlaine, who was moved by the tale of his disappearance to write a famous sonnet with his own interpretation of the story and the motives behind it. This was echoed from a more remote standpoint by Apollinaire in his ‘Chanson du mal-aimé’ which focuses more on Prince-Regent Luitpold, whose more ambiguous role the poet seems not to have been quite aware of. Gradually, as they were attracted to the legend, Europeans became more aware of the huge aesthetic and artistic legacy. Ludwig’s relationship with the theatre was an excellent backdrop for poets, critics and biographers. His mythical taste for grandeur and for ethereal palaces fired the imagination of his contemporaries. After Verlaine and Apollinaire, Pourtalès and Cocteau were inspired to develop the psychological ramifications of the myth. As more layers of interpretation were added, accuracy was often sacrificed for effect, and some aspects of the legend do not always fit the facts. Not unexpectedly, poets have concentrated on the darker sides of the King’s character, and on the human tragedy of his struggle against his own times, but in so
doing, capture only a part of the King’s complex personality. The enduring nature of King Ludwig’s legend can be followed through to modern contemporary ‘hyper-classical’ poets like Chaunes and Sylvoisal, whose book of sonnets ‘La Furie Française’ (2004) contains a number of references to King Ludwig. Chaunes takes the mythical connections a step further in his most recent work, a long poem entitled ‘Le Paradis des Filles’ (2006), which contains a series of ‘double-sonnets’ devoted entirely to King Ludwig’s legend, seen from a characteristically French perspective.

The presentation of these works at ESOF2006 will include readings and a commentary (in the form of a short play), spoken by the contemporary poets Chaunes, Sylvoisal and Nick Norwood. The bilingual actress Sophie Daull (a recent performer at the Comédie Française in Paris) will read original poems (both in French and in German) dedicated to King Ludwig and to his legend (English renderings will also be projected). A brief presentation of these and other related poems is given below.

**French literary texts and poems on Ludwig II.**

**Cocteau (Journal, le 22 octobre 1943)**

« Admirable mort de Louis II. Le roi, devenu un Charlus, un Wilde, une femme à barbe comme Verlaine échappe à ses contemporains en se noyant et en noyant son grotesque docteur aliéniste. Il entre, d’un saut, dans le lac glace des légendes

« Louis II et Elizabeth. Les grands tragédiens frivoles, qui adorent la beauté sans comprendre où elle se trouve. Ces grands comédiens sans théâtre, poussés sur le théâtre du monde vers un dernier acte funeste et qu’ils écrivent de leurs propres mains. »

English rendering:
“Admirable, the death of Ludwig II. The King, having turned into a character like Charlus, Wilde or the bearded lady Verlaine, escapes from his contemporaries by drowning himself and his grotesque psychiatrist. In a single jump, he plunges into the icy waters of his own legend.”

“Ludwig II and Elizabeth: two great and frivolous tragic actors, who both love beauty but don’t quite know where to find it. Two great performers lacking a proper stage, forced to act on the theatre of life itself, and to pursue their show until its ultimate end which they must write with their own hands.”

Cocteau was later to expand on this diary entry and to write a play entitled ‘L’aigle à deux têtes’ which, however, revolves more around the story of the Empress Elizabeth than around the life of King Ludwig. However, the diary entry is interesting, because it evokes the famous platonic relationship between King Ludwig and Empress Elizabeth which was already a well-established part of the ‘Ludwig legend’. The satisfying feature of this relationship (which certainly existed) was to establish as a theme a kind of poetic monarchy, unfulfilled in real life, but attainable through the magic of literature.

**Apollinaire (La Chanson du Mal-Aimé – 1903)**

Apollinaire was a friend of the surrealist painters and a resolute modernist. He experimented with the graphical impact of poetry and was among the first to suppress punctuation, either because he felt it interrupts its flow, or because of the visual blemishes it produces. Despite his innovative attitudes, he retains a strong classical taste for rhyme and metre. *La Chanson du Mal-Aimé* is generally regarded his finest poem. The date 1903 is given by the poet himself in the first few verses as the date of its composition (Et je chantai cette romance en 1903 sans savoir Que mon amour à la semblance Du beau phénix s’il meurt un soir Le matin voit sa renaissance). The reference to the Ludwig legend in this poem is somewhat inaccurate: Apollinaire apparently accepts opinions spread around at the time of the King’s death suggesting an obvious parallel between his state of mental health and that of his unfortunate brother Otto. There is little connection between the real theme of
Apollinaire’s poem and Ludwig’s legend, but the story of the King of Bavaria is introduced as an example of the fickleness of fate, which leads the human race down a horrible path towards some pre-ordained destruction. Thus, the tragic destiny of kings is part of a bigger picture. In some way, they suffer more than others, because they are seen by the poet as more exposed to ‘outrageous fortune’. The Prince Regent Luitpold appears in this poem as an old (and consequently: wise) caretaker of the ill-fated family, whose tragedy he must understand better than anybody else. There is an allusion to the death of the King, but it is presented almost as though it had happened for no particular reason, rather as events are introduced in a fairy tale as sudden misfortunes which befall the characters of the story. In fact, the reason for the introduction of Ludwig in this poem is rather simple: as a modernist, Apollinaire finds it difficult to introduce a romantic theme. He therefore hides behind the tragic and nearly contemporary figure of the King to achieve his purpose.

Voie lactée ô sœur lumineuse
Des blancs ruisseaux de Chanaan
Et des corps blancs des amoureuses
Nageurs morts suivrons-nous d’ahan
Ton cours vers d’autres nébuleuses

Les démons du hasard selon
Le chant du firmament nous mènent
A sons perdus leurs violons
Font danser notre race humaine
Sur la descente à reculons

Destins destins impénétrables
Rois secoués par la folie
Et ces grelottantes étoiles
De fausses femmes dans vos lits
Aux déserts que l’histoire accable

Luitpold le vieux prince régent
Tuteur de deux royautés folles
Sanglote-t-il en y songeant
Quand vacillent les lucioles
Mouches dorées de la Saint-Jean
Prés d’un château sans châtelaine
La barque aux barcarols chantants
Sur un lac blanc et sous l’haleine
Des vents qui tremblent au printemps
Voguant cygne mourant sirène

Un jour le roi dans l’eau d’argent
Se noya puis la bouche ouverte
Il s’en revint en surnageant
Sur la rive dormir inerte
Face tournée au ciel changeant

Juin ton soleil ardente lyre
Brûle mes doigts endoloris
Triste et mélodieux délire
J’erre à travers mon beau Paris
Sans avoir le cœur d’y mourir

Verlaine

The most famous poem devoted to King Ludwig II is probably this sonnet by Verlaine. Indeed, it can be regarded as the beginning of the whole ‘Ludwig legend’ in European Poetry. Such was the prestige of Paul Verlaine as ‘le Prince des Poètes’ and the leading Symbolist that his vision of events created a new atmosphere and a new way among artists of interpreting the destiny of the King. Verlaine was much attracted for many reasons towards the character of Ludwig, and he projected on the King many of his own aspirations and failings. This intuition makes his poem one of the most perceptive psychologically, but also leads him to some incorrect conclusions. The circumstances surrounding the final moments of King Ludwig are interpreted by Verlaine in a clever way, referred to somewhat obliquely in the diary note by Cocteau (above). This sonnet must have been written quite soon after the death of King Ludwig, probably on
the basis of newspaper reports of the time. Despite this incomplete source, Verlaine was able to untangle much about the circumstances of this tragic event. He is able to set the scene, and captures some essential ingredients of this fascinating story. Thus, his sonnet became the starting point of a durable poetic myth concerning the King’s tragic death. Verlaine, in a few admirably chosen words, summarises the key aspects developed later by other poets and writers.

à Louis II de Bavière

Roi, le seul vrai roi de ce siècle, salut, Sire,
Qui voulûtes mourir vengeant votre raison
Des choses de la politique, et du délire
De cette Science intruse dans la maison,

De cette Science assassin de l'Oraison
Et du Chant et de l'Art et de toute la Lyre,
Et simplement et plein d'orgueil en floraison
Tuâtes en mourant, salut, Roi, bravo, Sire!

Vous fûtes un poète, un soldat, le seul Roi
De ce siècle où les rois se font si peu de chose,
Et le martyr de la Raison selon la Foi.

Salut à votre très unique apothéose,
Et que votre âme ait son fier cortège, or et fer,
Sur un air magnifique et joyeux de Wagner.

Having praised the poem, it is perhaps worth noting some of the shortcomings, or at least inaccuracies in Verlaine’s account. The most obvious one concerns the relationship between Ludwig and Science or common reason, depicted by Verlaine as persecutors of the King, who would, according to the poet, have been a martyr of a higher faith. This interpretation is clearly incorrect, and reflects Verlaine’s own prejudices as a catholic poet. As we have seen, Ludwig was in fact a keen student of the science of his time, and in no way opposed to its introduction ‘dans la maison’. In fact, Ludwig’s problem was quite the reverse of what the poet suggests. He was too far in advance of his own times, as the following episode, recounted by Martha Schad in her recent book about Ludwig II, demonstrates this rather clearly: Together with Friedrich Brandt, the court engineer, he conceived the notion of a flying machine, which would have
carried him over the Alpsee near Hohenschwangau. Appropriately enough, the flying gondola was to be modelled in the shape of a peacock, carried by a rope and pulley arrangement. Ludwig wrote to his engineer: “Really to fly through the air with you…. That is my fondest wish: you and I removed from this earth”.

Unfortunately, because the path he envisaged crossed over the Alpsee and no ground support was available, the plan had to involve buoyancy provided by a balloon to carry part of the weight. This scheme, though in no way inconceivable, proved beyond the technology of the time.

His desire to fly was turned against the King, and became evidence for his mental illness in the hands of his detractors. It served to prove his “excessive imagination, which completely disdains all limits of reality and possibility.” In truth, the King was not so far from reality. By 1891, a mere five years after his death, Otto Lilienthal performed one of the first flights, over several hundred yards.

Verlaine’s sonnet rendered in German:

Sire, einziger König, würdig des Jahrhunderts Achtung,
Ihr starbt, ein Recht auf Herrschaft, das versagt Euch blieb,
Zu rächen, aber auch des Geists Umnachtung,
Darin Euch solche bittere Erkenntnis trieb.

Erkenntnis mörderisch für Poesie, Gesang,
Die Künste allesamt, Gebete schier,
Und so, in hochgemutem Überschwang
Habt sterbend Ihr getötet. Gruß Euch, Sire!

Ihr wart ein Dichter, ein Kämpfer, ein königliches Blut
In einer Zeit, wo Könige nichts bedeuten als Entehrung,
Ein Märtyrer jenes Rechts, das im Glauben ruht.

Gruß Euch in dieser einzigartigen Verklärung!
Mög Eure Seele wahren ihren strahlend stolzen Flug,
Zu dem Wagners Musik empor sie trug.

(Übertragen von Helmut Domke)

http://www.koenigludwigzwei.de/gedicht_1.html

2005-4-22
Verlaine’s sonnet rendered in English:

I salute you Sire, the last real King of our age.  
You died avenging your own true reason  
Of all things political, of the delirium and rampage  
Of Science and its unwelcome intrusion

Into our lives – Science, the inhibitor of religion,  
The foe of Music, of the Arts, of the Poetic mission.  
But, with a simple and noble flush of courage,  
You killed your aggressor. Bravo! What a message!

You were a poet and a soldier. The last king  
Of a century in which monarchs are worth nothing  
And a martyr of true faith and harmony.

Your apotheosis I salute. It was uniquely wise.  
May your soul be proud to enter paradise  
On a gloriously happy Wagnerian symphony.

Verlaine did not return to this subject, but his sonnet was clearly in Cocteau’s mind when he penned his diary entry. In particular, Cocteau, who places far greater emphasis on Ludwig’s homosexuality by comparing him with Charlus, the character in Marcel Proust’s novel, as well as with Verlaine himself, has borrowed from Verlaine’s poem the notion that the King is some kind of refugee from reality, who can only escape by murdering his psychoanalyst. In common with Verlaine, Cocteau regards this, not only as a well-established fact, but also as a perfectly justified reaction of the king to the persecutions of which he has fallen victim.

‘La Furie Française’ by Chaunes and Sylvoisal

The two contemporary poets Chaunes and Sylvoisal pick up many of the threads and poetic themes mentioned so far. For them, Ludwig becomes the arch-symbol of humanity’s inaccessible dreams, with the additional
twist that Ludwig himself plays a dual role, both as an ideal artist and as a character who has crossed through the looking glass into a better world where art and dreams are properly realised.

In the first sonnet, Ludwig appears as a role model proposed on an ironic note by Chaunes (the travelling poet) to Sylvoisal (the poet who never leaves home). An allusion is made to a biographical detail of the King’s life: on reading about the ceremonies of the court of China, where deference to the Emperor reached astonishing heights, Ludwig (with an obvious touch of humour) decided that the Orient held far greater promise for monarchs than Germany, and made it known that he would gladly sell his kingdom of Bavaria and exchange it for an Eastern throne. Had he, in fact, followed this path, maybe he would have left more than just a picture on the walls of his faithful Bavarian subjects, and maybe he would not have had to swim through a lake to reach the better world he craved for. Of course, as the poet observes, it is quite absurd even to imagine ruling on any European kingdom, or perhaps even on any kingdom anywhere on this temporary planet we all inhabit. La Furie Francaise was awarded the Prix José-Maria de Heredia of the Académie Française in 2005 and the Prix Paul Verlaine of the Maison des Poètes in Paris in 2005.

Le roi Louis voulut qu’on vendît la Bavière et que sa monarchie allât loin des frontières du réel s’établir sous les cieux de l’Orient

Et toi tu veux rester terré dans ton village à bâtir un bonheur d’exilé Le voyage remplit ton cœur d’horreur et ton âme d’effroi Songe plutôt à la douleur de ce grand roi

le seul qui fut poète et qui pleura de rage de n’être qu’une image au mur des Bavarois de ce roi qu’on força à partir à la nage vers un monde meilleur pour retrouver ses droits

Il aurait dû quitter l’Europe où la chimère de son royaume le retint Quel inconscient Peut-on même régner sur la terre éphémère
In the second sonnet, Sylvioisal responds by observing that, anyway, Ludwig’s true kingdom was not of this world, despite the fact that he spent his time in the real world living as though he had really been a king. In fact, he was pursued by a tragic and magical fantasy which haunted his dreams, but the reality was that one cannot live amongst shadows without becoming oneself detached from the world.

In truth, Ludwig knew that a real ruler cannot exist without dirtying his hands in some way, and that the true right of kings does not come from reality or even from reason but (very much as argued by Verlaine) from faith itself. Therefore, why bother to travel? The King’s horizon is closed by a barrier of the white lilies he was so fond of.

Of course, it may be that the King will travel in his after-life, driven by nostalgia for the wonderful thoughts which guided him when he built his castles, or by the deep emotions of Lohengrin, following his swan into the sunset.

« Rois, vous n’êtes plus là, bergers vous avez disparu. »

O vous qui, devinant l’inéluctable loi,
Avez étreint le monde au lit d’une eau profonde,
Bien qu’ici-bas, Louis, vous ayez vécu roi,
Votre royaume à vous n’était pas de ce monde.

Vous fûtes entraîné par un sabbat vainqueur,
Poussant votre cheval au travers des bois sombres.
Les mânes et la nuit ont rongé votre cœur,
Car ce n’est pas en vain qu’on évoque les ombres.

Vous saviez qu’à régner on se salit les doigts
Et que le droit naît de la Foi, non de l’esprit.
L’horizon s’est fermé d’une forêt de lys.

Peut-être prisonnier d’une pensée qui brûle,
Vous reviendrez vibrer dans vos châteaux. L’émotion
De Lohengrin suivra le cygne au crépuscule.
Chaunes (2006)

Chaunes pursues the theme somewhat further in a recently published work entitled “Le Paradis des Filles” in which Ludwig reappears, this time as an ally and friend, who will help the poet by guiding him through the underworld in the same way as Virgil did for Dante. In this poem, Elizabeth also appears, as Ludwig’s ideal companion in Paradise, united with him far away from the material world where he is simply a picture on the walls of Bavarian taverns. In fact, the royal couple, who met secretly in this world, will live together publicly in the next, and the King will overcome fate through the ultimate celestial theatre of his resurrection.

O roi Louis sublime ami toujours sensé qui fit ce qu’aujourd’hui on ne peut plus penser tu seras notre guide aux enfers où Virgile vantera l’innocence étoilée de ton style O Louis grand monarque aux inventions subtiles ta cousine rêva de te récompenser d’avoir aimé les arts et d’avoir financé la croisade ici-bas contre les imbéciles

Vous serez-vous connus plutôt au paradis Là-haut la rose est sans épine un saint l’a dit L’amour pourrait unir vos têtes couronnées Louis guéri de l’homme est enfin amoureux d’une femme ô miracle et Munich étonnée verra s’unir au ciel vos destins sulfureux
Louis ô roi-poète au destin malchanceux
perdu sur ta montagne à regarder les cieux
cherches-tu un orient dans le jour qui se lève
ou la consolation de la nuit qui s’achève
Créateurs de châteaux bâtis autour du rêve
de ton règne trop court et de ta vie trop brève
que subsistera-t-il sinon le merveilleux
destin qui te fixa sur ce sommet neigeux

Sombrant sournoisement dans les amours obscènes
resteras-tu pourtant Louis le grand mécène
sous le regard perçant de la postérité
Transformé en icône exilé de l’Histoire
connaîtras-tu un jour une autre éternité
sur les murs des cafés où tes sujets vont boire

Oui tu retrouveras dans le Ciel ta cousine
folle aussi de beauté et pétrie de savoir
dont la vie suspendue tournoyait sans espoir
autour d’un lac hanté par les rois qui déclinent
Tu la retrouveras et ton âme chagrine
sera guérie d’avoir suivi son soleil noir
Sissi qui devina ton secret la plus fine
des femmes que pourtant tu évitas d’avoir

Cavaliers chevauchant les coursiers de l’Erèbe
vous sauterez le Styx acclamés par la plèbe
en jetant à Charon une pluie de Louis
et tu l’entraîneras sur l’île aux mille roses
dans un palais encore plus vaste et plus grandiose
où les rois réprouvés se retrouvent la nuit
Louis le Grand Louis le Bon
Louis le Saint Louis le Sage
pourfendeur des qu’en-dira-t-on
et Bien Aimé malgré tes rages
A travers tous les abandons
régnant toujours dans les images
bénies dans les pèlerinages
Louis écœuré par les cons

Louis le noble et le hautain
Louis le fier et l’incertain
Le rêveur et le solitaire
Le lunatique et l’inverti
Le martyr et le converti
Le moderne et le visionnaire

Dernier des rois digne de l’être
fuyant les hommes de son temps
tu n’avais plus que tes ancêtres
pour contempler tes monuments
Tu n’allais pas traîner tes guêtres
du côté des gouvernements
mais plutôt vers le firmament
qu’enfant tu voyais des fenêtres

de tes châteaux dans les nuages
dans un théâtre d’éclairages
peuplé des brumes du matin
dernier des rois à mourir digne
face à la force du destin
disparu dans le lac des cygnes
À toi, de la bouche de qui j'ai
pour la première fois de ma vie,
entendu prononcer le nom du
dernier roi élu de la
royauté,
de sa dignité.

Condamné, qui lui permettrait
qu'il dît - Oui !
était jusqu'à l'être jusqu'à
le temps
si il le

Koi-son, faute de
son fondu, un roi,
de une certaine manière
Koi-Soleil ?

de mégalomanie
flânerie et attente
Royale.

Sylvain
An König Ludwig II. von Bayern
Felix Dahn
(Juli 1870)

The following poem can hardly have given the King great pleasure. It is composed in a highly nationalistic style, and was clearly written as an exhortation to all Bavarians to join the German cause by presenting the proclamation by Ludwig as an enthusiastic endorsement of Chancellor Bismarck’s policies. The king was not in a position to express his real feelings on this sensitive issue after the war with Prussia, but the Bavarians themselves clearly suspected what machinations had really taken place, as the two anonymous poems further down clearly illustrate.

Das war ein Wort aus Königsmunde!
Das war ein Wort aus deutschem Geiste!
Aus Bayerland die hohe Kunde,
Wie sie ganz Deutschland mit sich reißt!

»Nicht soll«, so sprachst du, »Deutschland klaffen!
Verstumme, welsch Verführerwort!
Auf, meine Bayern, zu den Waffen!
Zum Rhein, wir sind die ersten dort!

Was alter Zwist und Wahn gesündet,
Verflogen sei’s wie Wind und Spreu!
Mit Schwertschlag sei’s dem Feind verkündet:
Echt ist wie Stahl die Bayerntreu!«

Das wird dir Deutschland ewig danken,
Daß groß dich fand die große Zeit.
Um deine Schläfe seh ich ranken
Den Lorbeer der Unsterblichkeit.
An eigner Lüge wird zunichte
Lob, Ruhm und Titel, die nicht
wahr;
Dich aber nennt die
Weltgeschichte
Ludwig den Deutschen
immerdar.

An meinen König
Richard Wagner
an Ludwig II.
(16. September 1864)

Richard Wagner understood very well the King’s fondness for verse, and
made use of it to his own ends by a poetic correspondence with Ludwig
in rather typical romantic style. In this poem, he thanks the King – his
greatest benefactor and friend. In fact, Wagner owes him everything:
before meeting Ludwig, he was a victim of fate, surrounded by
incomprehension and persecuted by the meanness of this world. This
poem seems to be a response to a message Wagner himself has just
received from the King. He rather cleverly mixes flattery with the
appearance of a spontaneous response to the King’s kind words, but the
rather complex (indeed somewhat pompous) style betrays an elaborate
effort to woo his protector through the imagery of lyrical verse.

O König! holder Schirmherr meines Lebens!
Du höchster Güte wonnereicher Hort!
Wie ring’ ich nun, am Ziele meines Strebens,
nach jenem Deiner Huld gerechten Wort!
In Sprach und Schrift wie such’ ich es vergebens,
und doch zu forschen treibt mich’s fort und fort,
das Wort zu finden, das den Sinn Dir sage
des Dankes, den ich Dir im Herzen trage!
Was Du mir bist, kann staunend ich nur fassen, wenn mir sich zeigt, was ohne Dich ich war. Mir schien kein Stern, den ich nicht sah erblasssen, kein letztes Hoffen, dessen ich nicht bar: auf gutes Glück der Weltgunst überlassen, dem wüsten Spiel auf Vorteil und Gefahr, was in mir rang nach freien Künstlertaten, sah der Gemeinheit Lose sich verraten.


Was einsam schweigend ich im Innren hegte, das lebte noch in eines andren Brust: was schmerzlich tief des Mannes Geist erregte, erfüllt’ ein Jünglingsherz mit heil’ger Lust; was dies mit Lenzes-Sehnsucht hin bewegte zum gleichen Ziel bewußtvoll unbewußt, wie Frühlingswonne mußt’ es sich ergießen, dem Doppelglauben frisches Grün entsprießen.

Du bist der holde Lenz, der neu mich schmückte, der mir verjüngt der Zweig’ und Äste Saft: es war Dein Ruf, der mich der Nacht entrückte, wie winterlich erstarrt hielt meine Kraft. Wie mich Dein hehrer Segensgruß entzückte, der wonnestürmisch mich dem Leid enttrafft,
so wandl’ ich stolz beglückt nun neue Pfade
im sommerlichen Königreich der Gnade.

Wie könnte nun ein Wort den Sinn Dir zeigen,
der das, was Du mir bist, wohl in sich faßt?
Nenn’ ich kaum, was ich bin, mein dürftig Eigen,
bist, König, Du noch Alles, was Du hast:
so meiner Werke, meiner Taten Reigen,
er ruht in Dir zu hold beglückter Rast;
und hast Du mir die Sorge ganz entnommen,
bin hold ich um mein Hoffen auch gekommen.

So bin ich arm und nähere nur das eine,
den Glauben, dem der Deine sich vermählt:
er ist die Macht, durch die ich stolz erscheine,
er ist’s, der heilig meine Liebe stählt:
doch nun geheilt, nur halb noch ist er meine,
und ganz verloren mir, wenn Dir er fehlt.
So gibst nur Du die Kraft mir, Dir zu danken,
durch königlichen Glauben ohne Wanken!

**Kaiserin Elisabeth von Österreich**

History records that the Empress Elizabeth
was very close to her cousin Ludwig. They
exchanged poems, often left hidden in the
Island of Roses, and corresponded under
pseudonyms, with the Empress calling
herself The Seagull and Ludwig, The Eagle.
The Empress hid her poetry in boxes, which
were to remain unpublished until after her
death and, indeed, remained unprinted until
1984. At such a late date, it is interesting to
find confirmation of the close relationship
between the two cousins, as shown by the
following two extracts:
(1) Elisabeth to Ludwig:

Du Adler, dort hoch auf den Bergen,
Dir schickt die Möve der see
Einen Gruß von schämenden Wogen
Hinauf zum ewigen Schnee.

(2) Ludwig to Elisabeth:

Einst sind wir einander begegnet
Vor urgrauer Ewigkeit
Am Spiegel des lieblichsten Sees,
Zur blühenden Rosenzeit.

It is known that the Empress was actually staying at Feldafing, on the other side of lake Starnberg on the 13th of June 1886 when Ludwig was drowned. She did not share at all the positive view echoed by Apollinaire concerning Luitpold’s fatherly role and wrote a stinging attack on Prince Regent Luitpold for hypocrisy, which makes interesting reading today.

Der Prinzregent

Seht den heuchlerischen Alten!
Drükt ihn sein Gewissen nicht!
Thut so fromm die Hände falten
Sauersüss ist sein Gesicht ... (etc)

Interestingly, Elisabeth also feels that the people of Bavaria stood idly by while their own King was deposed, and she calls on the forces of nature (personified by the Alps) to punish them for their shame:

... Eh’ sie ihn zum König salben,
Stürzt mit donnerdem Gekracht
Wenigstens ihr, stolze Alpen,
Tötend über Bayerns Schmach!
The following two poems are in fact two different renderings of the same, with interesting differences, which provide some insight into the attitude of Bavarians towards the history of King Ludwig and, indeed, provide us with the local version of his legend. They begin with a rather direct and simple evocation of the King through his dream castles on top of the mountains, of which Neuschwanstein is stated to be not merely the most beautiful, but indeed the most beautiful of all castles in Bavaria. It is then expressed quite clearly that Ludwig was the victim of a treacherous plot.

Auf den Bergen wohnt die Freiheit, auf den Bergen ist es schön, wo des Königs Ludwigs Zweiten alle seine Schlösser stehn.

Allzufrüh mußt er sich trennen, fort von seinem Lieblingsplatz: ja, Neuschwanstein, stolze Feste, warst des Königs liebster Schatz!

Allzufrüh mußt er von dannen, man nahm ihn fort mit der Gewalt, gleich wie Barbarn hams dich behandelt, und fortgeführt durch den Wald.

Mit Bandarsch und Kloriformen traten sie behendig auf. Und dein Schloß mußt du verlassen und kommst nimmermehr hinauf!

Nach Schloß Berg hams dich gefahren in der letzten Lebensnacht, da wurdest du zum Tod verurteilt noch in derselben grauen Nacht.
Und geheime Meuchelmörder,
deren Namen man nicht kennt,
haben ihn in’ See neingesteßen
indem sie ihn von hintn angerennt.

Lebe wohl, du guter König
in dem kühlen Erdenschoß,
von dort droben kannst du nicht mehr
runter in dein stolzes Schloß!

Ja, du bautest deine Schlösser
zu des Volkes Wohlergehn.
Neuschwanstein, das allerschönste,
kann man noch in Bayern sehn!

\textit{König-Ludwig-Lied}
\textit{(Version 2)}
\textit{Anonym}

In this, the second version of the poem, the argument follows closely the previous version, but then becomes even more explicit in its denunciation of Bismarck’s plot. Indeed, all true Bavarians are invited to drink to the health of the King and Maximillian his ancestor, and Otto (Bismarck) is symbolically to be hanged as the treacherous Chancellor responsible for the evil deed. Never would he have dared face the King himself in single combat. All he could do, says the poem, was to knife him in the back. The last verses switch to the Bavarian dialect, to underline the message.

Auf den Bergen ist die Freiheit,
ja, auf den Bergen ist es schön,
wo unserm König Ludwig Zweiten
alle seine Schlösser stehn.

Allzufrüh mußt er sich trennen,
man nahm ihn fort mit der Gewalt,
von Neuschwanstein, stolze Veste, 
des Königs Lieblingsaufenthalt.

Nach Schloß Berg wurdest du gefahren, 
war deine letzte Lebensnacht, 
da wurdest du zum Tod verurteilt 
in derselben grauen Nacht.

Mit Bandarsch und Kloriformen 
rückten sie behendig aus 
nach Neuschwanstein, edler König, 
nimmermehr kommst du hinaus.

Denn du bautest ja nur Schlösser 
zu des Volkes Wohlergehn, 
doch das schönste it Neuschwanstein, 
das die Bayern je gesehn.

Nun, hier ruhst du, edler König, 
in dem stillen Erdgeschoß, 
hoch da droben kannst du nicht mehr 
auf dein väterliches Schloß.

Kann kein Freund dich mehr besorgen, 
kann kein Fried mehr zu dir hinauf; 
und Neuschwanstein blickt als Waise 
sehnsuchtsvoll zu dir hinauf.

Der Doktor Gudden und der Bismarck, 
den man auch den »Falschen Kanzler« nennt, 
sie hab´n ihn in´n See ´neig´steßen, 
indem sie ihn von hint´ ang´rennt.

Feiger Kanzler, deine Schande 
traget dir ganz g´wiß kein Ehrenpreis.
Denn du stund´st ihm nicht im off´nem Kampfe, wie uns der Rippenstoß von hinten her beweist.

Doktor Gudden war ein Verräter, doch auch er mußt´ mit dir fort. Neuschwanstein, dein Erschaffer, er ist ewig von dir fort.

»Und an Max ham´s vogif, an Ludwig dertränkt, jetzt steht´s nimmer lang o, wird der Otto aufg´hängt

König-Ludwig-Lied
(Wolf Wondratschek: Chuck´s Zimmer. 1974)

In this, a much more modern poem, we enter the German legend of the Swan King and see Ludwig himself reappear as an ideal vision, a kind of celestial figure who descends from the sky to pay a visit to the poet. Surprisingly, Ludwig is responding to a straightforward invitation from the author, who has written him a letter. The King just appears on the doorstep, and they fly off together into an ideal world of love, fantasy and beauty. Not much is left here of the original tale: it is assumed that the reader knows and understands all of this background well enough, so there is no need for the poet to repeat it. Rather, the emphasis is to show that, far from having disappeared, Ludwig is still very much alive.

Ich habe dem König geschrieben
Ich liebe dich
Ich bin ein Fan von dir
Ich komme
Ist das okay
Die Antwort kam nachts aus dem Radio
Zwei Jahre später
Ich war allein und rauchte noch eine
Da ging die Tür auf im weißen Cafe
Da stand er

33
Versteht ihr
Der König Ludwig II.
Vollkommen unsichtbar und wahnsinnig schön
Wie eine Lady bei Vollmond
Umnachtet vom Föhn
Wir flogen ab in Richtung Paradies
Wir liebten uns in Seitenstraßen
Komm auf mein Schloß
Ich liebe dich
Ich bin dein Fan
Bis wir auch das vergaßen
Vollkommen unsichtbar und wahnsinnig schön
Die Lady nackt auf meinem Knie
Er lebt noch sagen die Bauern
Nur gesehen wurde er nie
Wir liebten uns
Wir gaben uns den Rest
Wir wollten Hochzeit feiern
Komm mit bevor es Tag wird sagte der König


**English Language poems about Ludwig:**

**Nick Norwood**

The contemporary American poet Nick Norwood has written a book of verse under the title ‘A Palace for the Heart’ devoted to Ludwig’s legend. In these poems, the characters of Ludwig’s story speak in the first person, each adding his own commentary to the tale.
Invective Against Swan Songs

King Otto, Ludwig’s successor

The soul, good people, flies beyond the parks
And far beyond the domes of the winter palace.

Waking in a strange, phosphorescent light,
It rises, deliberate, and goes without saying

Like a sleepwalker summoned by the moon
To carry out a nobler office. Snow

Falls silently, and the owl’s downy wings
Make no sound as it swings through the cold night.

Behold, already on the long parades
The carrion birds descend to line the streets.

And the soul, good people, having lately risen
Escapes the walls of speech as another prison.

The New World

In the next poem from the same source, the King appears both as the now eternal legendary figure and also as the innovator and visionary, who knew more about where the world was heading than anybody realised.
Mannlicher, a minor state official

The King, had he but lived, would have invented
The automobile, with a bud vase in the backseat,

A moon roof in the coupe. Even pickup trucks
Would come equipped with an opera window,

And roads built for the sole purpose of winding
Aimlessly into the mountains. Young people

Would park their open roadsters in the dark
And look out on the twinkling lights of the valley.

They would make furtive love on the rich,
Voluptuous upholstery of their fathers. Songs

Written about them would become the new
Standard in music and the real poetry

Of the new era. The whole world would soon
Submit to its charm, until even the old

And the middle-aged were going at it naively
In their cars. Think of them now, their skin exposed

To the night air, a little loose but almost
Like new in the dashboard’s simulated starlight.

A ringing mobile interrupts them: it’s
The King, who’s phoning on the princess model

He keeps by his bed—merely to remind them
He is still alive, that he will never die.
Poems on Jack of None’s website

The Triumph of Ludwig II

It was three days before they drowned you, King,
Three days before they thought “It’s not enough
This cage. We must destroy this dream-washed thing
Who rules our land of stone.” Unkind and rough
They drowned you in the pond, your swan-boat’s moor,
Your only crime a heart too innocent
To ever be royal. Death could not cure
The cannons at your door, and what was spent
From your coffers on castles in the air
Could not be unspent. Ah, what monster penned
Your fairy tale -- the water, cold and fair
That the Prince once loved proved his final end.
  But still your mountain halls, not Bismarck’s mills
  Fuel dreams. What this world cannot pin, it kills.

(From Jack of None’s poetry site on www.clockwork-harlequin.net)

Lohengrin at Linderhof

Pomp and Circumstance, my lad, hold your head high,
Look alive. We are going to court, a court of glass – Why,
Don’t tremble, the war’s over. Watch the mist fade
Like the chosen of Valhalla, wraith-like, that I made
Gallop through storms across my halls in gilt. Is it not fair,
This country, this mountain dream suspended in air...
The trees are shot through with silver. Perhaps it is snow
But I prefer gossamer. Ah, the swans, my court of glass – The lake is like a mirror, so pure – they bow. Alas, They do not sing. Do you know music, my dear boy? Man was meant to walk in music. I will show you my joy, My Wagner. I am music’s slave, and he its master. He makes Me Lohengrin. What, speechless? So all quake Before the thundering of his name, I know. Here I may unmask at last and show It is not Ludwig who is play-acting. I am Lohengrin here, and I may damn That pantomime name of Wittelsbach. What, do you fear To speak to your king? Lift your eyes, boy, and revere The mountains. What is your king but a servant of tyrannical time And death and tedium…opera and the sky are sublime, not my eyes. I’d go, if I could But I am the Prince of Swans, born in a cage. I would Fly, and swim, but instead I break mirrors. Ah, here. As cages go, I like it. But Wagner’s more severe And keeps to my city palace, though I erected whole rooms For him here, golden filigree chambers for the rose-blooms Of his music to flourish in. Such a humble god, Who deigns to walk with a prince on the mean sod Of lowly Bavaria. I have an orchestra, you know But I want to hear your sweet voice now. Speak low So that you do not wake the air. You and I And Tannhäuser are the sole tenants now. My Orchestra will come, but meanwhile don’t stand Dumbstruck – Speak, I command, I am your lord! You are my servant, are you not? Of course you aren’t! You are my swan-boat…I forgot To have hinges added to that door. Don’t bother with the knob. Sit! No chairs? Ah, I see. That was the job Of the furniture-maker, and I sent him home with a prize
Of excess gold. On the floor, then, sit, and lift your eyes. Subordination will not do here on the ground. I suppose stableboys do not waltz, but I shall surround Your heart with music’s sharp illusion, that you may learn To love smoke and mirrors. Now, your turn. I have a mind to listen. Overture! Sound! You’ll do for an orchestra when none’s around. Speak freely, with your voice a violin... What shall a Swan-Boat ask his Lohengrin?

(From Jack of None’s poetry site on www.clockwork-harlequin.net)

This website, by an American group of contemporary artists under the pseudonym Jack of None, features poems on a number of themes of our time, so it is interesting to find, yet again, that the legend of Ludwig is alive and well in the psyche of our times.

**Conclusion**

The many examples we have put together from widely separated scenes illustrate the complexity of Ludwig’s legacy, and show in particular what an inspiration he and the chronicle of his life continue to be to our contemporaries.
The bilingual actress Sophie Daull

The French actress Sophie Daull is one of the participants of the celebration of Ludwig II. She will read poems both in French and in German, and will play the part of ‘The Voice of Poetry’ in the mini-play ‘Ludwig demystified’, which brings Ludwig II face to face with his own legend and the poems written about him.

Sophie Daull, born in 1965, is a well-known artist in Franco-German theatrical circles. She has appeared in Avignon and in Paris, in plays from the classical repertory (e.g. Racine’s *Andromaque* & *Britannicus*) and also in avant-garde or contemporary plays, in which she participates both as an actress and as a creative writer. She is particularly admired for her talents in reciting classical French verse.

She has performed in well-established theatres of the French scene such as that of the Comédie Française ‘Le Vieux Colombier’, in the Latin Quarter and also in such houses as ‘Le Théâtre des Bernardines’ in Marseille or ‘Le Théâtre de L'Echangeur’ in Bagnolet. Remarkably, she is equally at ease in French and in German, and will therefore be especially welcome in this multicultural celebration.

Sophie Daull
PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF THE SESSION (MUNICH 16.7.06)
In the presence of HRH Prince Leopold of Bavaria

Part I Ludwig in his own Time
In the Chair: Professor Wolfgang Heckl – Generaldirektor Deutsches Museum

14:30 INTRODUCTION
A brief welcome and introduction, stating the background to the session, from the Chair.

14:40 LUDWIG, THE INNOVATOR
A presentation of King Ludwig's role in promoting technology through electric lighting, telephones, his interest in aviation, in metal frame construction, of buildings etc. (This connects with his attendance at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1867) The King's interest in Science and Technology and in domestic innovation will be described by Prof. Gerd Hirzinger,

15:05 VIRTUAL WANDERINGS THROUGH VANISHED CASTLES
A virtual reality show, which is introduced both as a technical feat rendered possible by modern software and as an artistic achievement, recreating some of the splendours built for King Ludwig, which have unfortunately been lost. Prof. Hirzinger will provide the commentary.

15:30-15:45 COFFEE BREAK

Part II The Legend of the Swan King
(Organised by Professor Jean-Patrick Connerade President of Euroscience)

15:45 A SHORT PLAY: ‘Ludwig demystified’

The play involves four characters: Ludwig II (Chaunes), Biographer 1 (Nick Norwood), Biographer 2 (Sylvoisal) and the Voice of Poetry (Sophie Daull). The themes of the play concern Ludwig seen as a positive European, through the place he occupies in French poetry and letters, and more generally in Western Literature. Ludwig presents himself from a new standpoint (as a good European, a Francophile, an anti-militarist, and the champion of the local state of Bavaria, etc), reacting against negative judgements from the past. To suggest a reappraisal of King Ludwig’s role and legacy is one of the aims. The script makes reference to Franco-German politics and European history, stressing the special role of Franco-Bavarian relations in preserving a regional equilibrium after the erosion of the treaty of Westphalia. The destruction of this subtle balance by militarism and nationalism resulting from European revolutionary movements and exploited by Bismarck led to tragic events in Europe. Ludwig’s opposition to change was (from this perspective) possibly a wise and prudent position.

The play is multilingual, mainly in English, taking into account that the majority of the audience is English speaking, and that the official language of the conference is also English. It will, however, involve the French poets Chaunes and Sylvoisal, the American poet Nick Norwood and the French Actress Sophie Daull. Poems will be read out in their original languages (aided by English powerpoints, where necessary). Ludwig of course was himself a keen poet and wrote (it is said) idealistic verses, which he exchanged with Empress Elizabeth, his lifelong friend. Here, however, the King will express his own views on his legend, which is still very much alive in Western art, and continues to enrich contemporary literature.

16:50-17.00 Closing Remarks from the Chairman, who will also announce the concert on Monday evening – excerpts from the Ludwig Operetta currently being performed in Munich.
PROGRAMME DE LA ‘JOURNÉE LOUIS II’ AU FORUM ESOF DE MUNICH LE 16.07.2006
En présence de SAR le Prince Léopold de Bavière

Première Partie : Ludwig dans son époque
Président: M. le Professeur Wolfgang Heckl – Generaldirektor Deutsches Museum

14:30
INTRODUCTION
Quelques mots de bienvenue, et une brève introduction pour situer cette manifestation (Heckl)

14:40
UN Roi NOVATEUR
Une présentation du rôle du roi Louis II en tant que novateur et promoteur des nouvelles technologies de son temps, par exemple de l’éclairage électrique, du téléphone, des débuts de l’aviation (faisant référence à son voyage à Paris pour assister à l’Exposition Universelle de 1867). L’intérêt du roi pour les sciences et pour le développement de la technologie sera présenté par le Professeur Gerd Hirzinger, qui vient de publier un livre à ce sujet.

15:05
COMMENT FAIRE REVIVRE LES CHATEAUX DISPARUS
Grâce à la réalité virtuelle et aux nouvelles technologies de l’informatique, on a pu faire revivre la splendeur disparue de châteaux et de jardins malheureusement détruits, que Louis II avait réalisés. M. le Professeur Hirzinger commentera ces images magnifiques.

15:30-15:45 PAUSE CAFE

Deuxième Partie – la légende du roi Louis II
(Présentée par Jean-Patrick Connerade, Président d’Euroscience, Strasbourg)

15:45 UNE SAYNETE INTITULÉE ‘Louis démystifié’

Nous proposons une saynète à quatre personnages : Louis II (Chaunes) Premier Biographe (Nick Norwood), Deuxième Biographe (Sylvoisal), La Voix de la Poésie (Sophie Daull). Le Roi se présente lui-même à deux biographes de notre temps comme un Européen modèle, francophile, anti-militariste et défenseur d’une région indépendante – la Bavière) ce qui suggère sur lui un jugement plus positif que par le passé. Cette remise en question de la version officielle de l’histoire est l’un des buts de la manifestation. Elle est placée dans le contexte de l’histoire des rapports franco-allemands, en mettant l’accent sur le rôle particulier des relations franco-bavaroises et du rétablissement d’un équilibre politique suite à l’érosion des dispositions du traité de Westphalie. La destruction de cet équilibre subtil par le militarisme et le nationalisme qui résultèrent des révolutions européennes fut l’œuvre de Bismarck, et eut des conséquences tragiques pour l’histoire de l’Europe. Dans ce sens, l’opposition de Louis II à cette rupture de continuité peut paraître à la fois raisonnable et prudente.

La saynète sera principalement en anglais, mais plaira aussi à un public polyglotte, ce qui permet, avec la projection d’un texte d’accompagnement rédigé en anglais, de présenter les œuvres des écrivains dans leur langue d’origine. L’actrice française bilingue Sophie Daull, lira des poèmes de Verlaine, d’Apollinaire, de Cocteau, ainsi que des poésies contemporaines françaises et des poèmes allemands consacrés à Louis II. Le roi fut lui-même poète, et entretint une correspondance en vers avec l’impératrice Elizabeth, sa cousiné et son amie fidèle. Cependant, la saynète s’attachera particulièrement à donner l’opinion du Roi sur sa propre légende, qui est devenue un élément important du paysage artistique de notre temps. Le poète contemporain américain Nick Norwood, qui vient de consacrer tout un recueil de poésie à la légende du roi Louis II, participera à cette évocation.

16:50-17.00 Clôture de la séance par le Président. Il annoncera un concert pour lundi soir tiré d’une opérette sur Louis II qui tient l’affiche actuellement à Munich.