



The Wagner Society

in N.S.W. Inc.

(Patron — Sir Charles Mackerras)

Postal Address: Box 4574 GPO Sydney 2001

No. 83, June 2001

In Memoriam: Rita Hunter - 29 April 2001

We were all saddened by the unexpected death of Rita Hunter CBE one of our Honorary Life Members. Rita was to have been our guest speaker at the Annual Lunch and was greatly missed; we all drank a toast to her memory. The world has lost an outstanding Brunnhilde, Turandot and Leonora among many roles. We will all remember her warm personality, her wonderful sense of humour and her glorious voice. Our deepest sympathy is extended to her daughter Mairwyn Thomas. **Barbara McNulty on behalf of the Wagner Society in NSW Inc.**

A number of overseas and Australian newspapers carried obituaries to Rita Hunter.



From the UK Daily Telegraph: "RITA HUNTER...was much feted as Brünnhilde in performances of Wagner's Ring cycle given by the English National Opera at the London Coliseum in 1970s; she was a soprano possessed of a large voice - and corresponding physique-and an appreciable acting ability. Her work is preserved in the complete ENO recording of the Ring... in the process of being reissued, and on various solo recitals. She was appointed CBE in 1980."

For the whole obituary see the website: <http://www.dailytelegraph.co.uk> (type Rita Hunter into the search box).

From the London Times: "Blessed with a glorious voice that could fill the largest of auditoriums unaided... Rita Hunter was one of the most celebrated yet unjustly underrated of the large ladies of the opera house. Her soprano was voluminous, rock-steady throughout the range and had a slightly metallic edge reminiscent of her one-time teacher, Eva Turner. For all its Wagnerian power, her voice was always flexible and agile, enabling her to sing Norma and such

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Mozart roles as Donna Anna and Marcellina with impressive ease."

For the whole obituary see the website: www.thetimes.co.uk (type Rita Hunter into the search box)

The following letter was also published in The London Times: "[You] referred to her dramatic last-minute appearance at Covent Garden in May 1972 to sing the role of Senta in *The Flying Dutchman*...this was in fact her debut at Covent Garden, a fact not lost on the audience, who cheered and applauded the announcement with cries of: "About time too!" The fact that she had so little time...coming on stage cold after seven years away from the role, and carried off the performance magnificently, led to many curtain calls." DESMOND TILLYER

Please send tributes to or reminiscences of Ms Hunter to the Editor or email them to webmaster@wagner-nsw.org.au.

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PATRON:
HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS:

Sir CHARLES MACKERRAS
Miss RITA HUNTER
Miss LEONIE RYSANEK
Prof MICHAEL EWANS
Mr RICHARD KING
Mr REG MALONEY

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COMING EVENTS

<i>DATE</i>	<i>EVENT</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
June	No meeting	
15 July	Annual General Meeting - Guest Speaker-Simon Williams Professor of Dramatic Art, University of California at Santa Barbara and Guest Performers-Warwick Fyfe, Bass, and Stephen Mould, piano.	Goethe Institut 1.00 PM
	Parsifal Seminar at Catersfield 20-22 July Guest speaker Simon Williams	Catersfield in The Hunter
August	No Society meeting	
4 August	Joint <i>Lohengrin</i> seminar with Art Gallery	Art Gallery of NSW
16 September	TBA	Goethe Institut 1.00 PM
21 October	Discussion led by members who attended the 2000 and 2001 Bayreuth Festivals	Goethe Institut 1.00 PM
18 November	TBA	Goethe Institut 1.00 PM
9 December	Annual Society Christmas Party Additional entertainment TBA	Goethe Institut 1.00 PM

COMMITTEE 2000-2001

President	Barbara McNulty	9487 1344
Vice President and Newsletter Editor	Terence Watson	9517 2786
Treasurer and Membership Secretary	Roger Cruickshank	9357 7631
Secretary	Dennis Mather	9560 1860
Members	Shirley Robertson	9707 2225
	Lindsay Knight	9550 3290
	Julian Block	9337 6978
Public Officer	Roger Cruickshank	9357 7631

ADDRESS

Please note our permanent address for all correspondence

The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc

GPO Box 4574 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Telephone: 9487 1344 (Barbara McNulty, President)

Website: <http://www.wagner-nsw.org.au>

(all website addresses used in this newsletter are on the Wagner Society's website)

FOR YOUR DIARY

<i>Lohengrin</i>	Opera Australia. Cast: Lohengrin, Glenn Winslade; Elsa, Lisa Harper-Brown; Telramund, John Wegner; Ortrud, Bernadette Cullen; Heinrich, Donald Shanks. Conductor Sebastian Weigle, Director Andrew Sinclair.	Fri 10, Tue 14, Fri 17, Wed 22 & Sun 26 mat Aug Sun 1 & Thurs 6 Sept - Sydney
<i>Parsifal</i>	State Opera of South Australia Cast: <i>Parsifal</i> Poul Elming, <i>Amfortas</i> Jonathan Summers, <i>Kundry</i> Margaret Medlyn, <i>Klingsor</i> Daniel Sumegi, <i>Gurnemanz</i> Manfred Hemm. Conductor Jeffrey Tate; Director Elke Neidhardt.	22, 26mat, 29mat Sep 02mat October 2001 - Adelaide
Wagner Spectacular	Simone Young conducting the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, Tristan Act 2 (Horst Hoffmann & Lisa Gasteen), <i>Tristan</i> Prelude, Siegfried Idyll and "other orchestral masterworks from Wagner's music dramas."	Friday 26 October 7.30pm - Sydney
<i>Tristan und Isolde</i>	Opera Australia. Cast: <i>Tristan</i> , Horst Hoffman; <i>Isolde</i> , Lisa Gasteen; <i>Brangane</i> , Bernadette Cullen; <i>Kurwenal</i> , Daniel Sumegi; <i>König Marke</i> , Bruce Martin. Conductor Simone Young; Director Neil Armfield.	November. Tues 13, Sat 17, Tues 20, Fri 23 - Melbourne
The Ring Cycle	State Opera of South Australia announces the production team for Wagner's Ring Cycle - Adelaide 2004 - see p.4	Adelaide 17 Nov to 11 Dec

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

The last few months have been a very difficult and distressing time for the Committee, but I am glad to be able to tell you that there is reason to hope our problems may be resolved. We have recovered some of the financial books and certain admissions have been made. An offer of restitution has been received and arrangements for the return of the missing funds are being negotiated. It is hoped that this matter can be resolved within a few months, but at the same time the investigation of our financial affairs is continuing. I would like to thank all of you who rang or sent messages of support and offers of help to the Committee - they were greatly appreciated. The Committee has accepted the resignation of Mrs Olive Coonan as an Honorary Life Member of the Society.

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On a happier note, we congratulate Francis Greep who is this year's winner of the Bayreuth Scholarship. Francis is a Repetiteur with Opera Australia and will study in Europe. We are delighted to assist him with a return airfare.

Our Annual Lunch to celebrate the birthday of Richard Wagner, whose music brings us all together, was held at the Women's Club on Sunday 20th May when 50 members gathered to enjoy a delicious meal. We thank the Committee of the Women's Club for making us so welcome and, in particular, Judy Hislop for her patience and helpfulness.

We are greatly indebted to Professor Routley from the Music Department of the University of Sydney, who agreed to be the speaker at our lunch at very short notice. His remarks on '*Parsifal* and Ritual' were a great preparation for our Seminar in July at Catersfield and the performances of *Parsifal* in Adelaide later this year.

As usual, a highlight of the lunch was the raffle. Prizes were a weekend for two at Catersfield donated by Rosemary Cater-Smith and Alec Cater and won by Sandra Beesley, a Bayreuth Scarf donated by its designer, Donald Campbell, and won by a very happy Leona Geeves. The Wagner watch was won by Robert and Margaret Woodward and a bottle of champagne by Miriam Harris. Our very grateful thanks to Rosemary and Alec and to Donald for their generosity.

Our next meeting is the Annual General Meeting to be held at **1:00pm** on 15th July at the Goethe Institut. After the formal meeting we will enjoy a recital by Warwick Fyfe and Stephen Mould and a short talk by Professor Simon Williams from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Several of our members have advised us that they will not be renewing their membership because they find it too difficult to attend meetings. Included in this group are Nancy Williamson, Jack Floehl, John Heathers and George and Susan Amigo. We thank them for their support and wish them well. Their many friends here will miss them.

I would very much like to thank all those members who made a donation when renewing their memberships. Donations are tax deductible and enable us to support performances of Wagner's works such as *Parsifal* in Adelaide where we are sponsoring Rosalind Martin as a Flowermaiden and Squire. We will make a donation to Opera Australia's *Lohengrin*.

Barbara McNulty President 22 May 2001

In Memoriam: Giuseppe Sinopoli - 21 April 2001

A number of international newspapers also had obituaries for Signor Sinopoli.

From the BBC: "The renowned Italian conductor, Giuseppe Sinopoli, has died on stage from a heart [attack] during a performance at the Deutsche Oper in Berlin. He dropped his baton and collapsed from the rostrum during the third act of...Aida. Members of the orchestra went to his aid, but he was dead before reaching hospital.

For the whole article go to www.news.bbc.co.uk and search for Sinopoli.

From The New York Times: "He was 54. He made his Bayreuth debut with "Tannhäuser" in 1985, and he was to have led the "Ring" cycle there this summer. Mr. Sinopoli was to have become the general music director of the Deutsche Opera, Berlin, in 1990, but he left precipitously after a dispute with the company's general director, Goetz Friedrich. Friedrich died last December, and Mr. Sinopoli's performance on Friday evening, which he dedicated to Friedrich's memory, was his first at the house since 1990."

For the whole obituary go to <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/30/arts/30WAGN.html> and search for Sinopoli.

PROFESSOR NICHOLAS ROUTLEY - SPEAKER AT THE WAGNER BIRTHDAY LUNCH

On a happier note, Nicholas Routley, head of music at the University of Sydney, was able to speak at the luncheon. He had already made a presentation on Saturday 19 May to the Victorian Wagner Society. Professor Routley spoke on "*Parsifal* and Ritual", starting from Gurnemann's comment to Parifal that: "Du siehst, mein Sohn, zum Raum wird hier die Zeit" (You see, my son, here time becomes space) as an indicator of Wagner's focus on transformations, how Wagner manipulates musical time to affect the audience's sense of temporal time, how Wagner reverses his agenda in the Ring, where he smashes the old order, and in *Parsifal* restores the old order, and then tackled the gender (im)balance in the opera.

2001 BAYREUTH RING CONDUCTOR IS ADAM FISCHER

The replacement conductor for Signor Sinopoli for this year's "Ring" in Bayreuth is to be Adam Fischer. Mr Fischer

studied piano and composition at the Béla Bartók Conservatory and then went to Hans Swarowsky in Vienna to study orchestral conducting. In 1973 he won the Guido Cantelli competition held by the Milan Scala....He regularly conducted ...in Munich and Vienna. In 1984 he made his debut at the Paris Opera with *Der Rosenkavalier*... and in 1988 at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden...". More information is at www.greatconductors.com/english/fischer.

STATE OPERA OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA WAGNER'S RING CYCLE - ADELAIDE 2004

From their website: "The State Opera of South Australia has announced the production team for...the Ring ...in 2004. It will be conducted by Israeli conductor Asher Fisch and directed by Elke Neidhardt. The scenic designer will be Michael Scott-Mitchell and lighting designer, and associate designer, Nick Schlieper....Maestro Fisch has [conducted] the operas of Richard Wagner and studied the Ring under Barenboim in...Berlin and Bayreuth. He has conducted *Parsifal*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and *The Flying Dutchman* in Vienna, Berlin, Los Angeles and Copenhagen and feels the time will be right in 2004 to take on the greatest operatic conducting challenge....*The Ring*. The production will be rehearsed over...eight months during 2003 and 2004 culminating in three full cycles between 17 November and 11 December 2004. For more information, visit their website at: <http://www.saopera.sa.gov.au/>.

END THIS DISCORD, POLITICIANS URGE WARRING WAGNERS

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung: "Wolfgang Wagner has issued an official statement declaring his indignation at a conversation between his daughter, Eva Wagner-Pasquier, and the Bavarian undersecretary for cultural affairs, Hans Zehetmair, regarding Wagner's successor as director of the Bayreuth Festival. Responding to the threat of 'more serious measures' to achieve an agreement, Wagner angrily noted that Zehetmair 'is prepared to commit a breach of contract...'

"Zehetmair has argued that the state of Bavaria cannot continue to devote taxpayers' money to the festival, given the uncertainty of its future. He has made no secret of the fact that he would like the 81-year-old Wagner to step down by the end of 2002. Despite the fact that all the festival performances are heavily sold out, Wagner is not prepared to give up state subsidies, and pressure over the financial situation is growing. Representatives of both the federal government and the state of Bavaria are demanding a solution to the impasse sooner rather than later. Wagner-Pasquier, Nike Wagner and Wieland Lafferentz are all possible successors". 14 Dec. 2000 See <http://www.bayreuther-festspiele.de/>.

A LAUREL WREATH

Now that the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's presentation of Wagner's Ring cycle has concluded with performances of *Götterdämmerung* last year, it is time to offer up a tribute to what will surely come to be looked on as one of the Orchestra's greatest achievements. When some cultural activity earns plaudits through suspect auspices, there is a virtue in being able to praise the orchestra and Edo de Waart for an experience untouched by compromise or the second-rate. Here, one felt the presence of grandeur and poetry brought about through the highest levels of artistry. We should offer up a golden laurel wreath for such a triumph. Have we earned performances of this eminence if we cannot give a whole-hearted thank you to those deserving of it when the opportunity arises.

Not only should Edo de Waart and the Orchestra be thanked. Surely Mary Vallentine and the board of the orchestra are to be thanked too for having the courage and determination to bring this performance of the Ring cycle to fruition. It must have proved an extremely expensive exercise, but what is money for in the performing arts unless it is aimed at producing performances of this quality. There can be no question that this was money supremely well spent.

These performances left behind the lesser self that wants to criticise and find fault. This was playing and singing which silenced that instinct. What to choose from the splendours offered up: the opening of *Das Rheingold* in a darkened Concert Hall, a Ride of the Valkyries dissociated from cliché, the singing of Jyrki Niskanen in *Siegfried* and of Elizabeth Connell throughout or the thrilling performance of the chorus in *Götterdämmerung*. To single out individual performers is to do a disservice to the whole. The Ring is not about an artist, a conductor or an orchestra, but the beauty and splendour of the world and the mystery of the human, and of good and evil. I felt that, whatever difficulties might have been encountered, here was a group of people - administration, orchestra and artists - given over to the fulfillment of an artistic ideal, an ideal envisaged in Wagner's head and heart in such travail, and brought to a level of serious intent that is the necessary prerequisite for real artistic achievement.

The Olympics was a time of national fervour and celebration. In the midst came the conclusion of this Ring cycle. How Wagner would have loved it, with his hopes for a Festival of the people dedicated to art. Lacking a golden wreath of our own, let us offer up a metaphorical one in gratitude for the good fortune, which gave us these tremendous performances.

Peter Nicholson May 2001.

DONATIONS

The Society welcomes all donations and they can be addressed to the Treasurer, Wagner Society in NSW Inc at the GPO address above. Such donations help us to carry out our objectives of promoting the performance of Wagner's works. Donations are tax-deductible and receipts will be issued.

Donations have gratefully been received from the following members: Sandra Beesley, Julian and Rosemary Block, William Brooks and Alasdair Beck, John Casey, Roger Cruickshank, Nicolas and Barbara Dorsch, Amana Finley, Ingrid Garofali, Leona Geeves, Helen and Kevin Grant, Andrew and Wendy Hamlin, Miriam Harris Siss Hartnett, Frank and Pat Harvey, Jennifer and Maxwell Herford, Brett Johnson, Anthony Jones, Naomi Kaldor, Despina and Iphygenia Kallinikos, Richard King, Robert Lloyd, Bruce Love, Annette Marshall, Jane Mathews, Richard Mason and Camron Dyer, Tony McDonald, Aliro and Monica Olave, Terence Watson, Anna Ziegler.

NEW MEMBERS

Deanne Whittleston and Anthony Gregg (0839), Brian Freestone (0840), Ian McGaw, Noelene Brasche and Bob Foster.

LOHENGRIN SEMINAR

A reminder: Please keep Saturday 4th August free for the *Lohengrin* Seminar being planned in conjunction with the Art Gallery of NSW to held in their Lecture Hall. You will be sent more information with the AGM material.

PARSIFAL SEMINAR AT CATERSFIELD

A *Parsifal* Seminar will be held at Catersfield in the Hunter Valley on 20-22 July. The lecturer is Simon Williams, Professor of Dramatic Art, University of California, Santa Barbara. He has given the Wagner Society of New York lectures at Bayreuth for the last three years. There is still space for "day-trippers" or Members who want to book their own accommodation. The cost of attending for the day only is \$50 for lunch and the seminar fee. Cheques should be received by the Treasurer as soon as possible to ensure a place. (The Application Form is in the previous Newsletter.)

IN THE EYE OF THE RING

Mithec Video Productions have asked that this 58 minute video be promoted by the Society. They describe it as "useful not only for the initiation to and clearer understanding of the 'Ring', but for the attraction of new members...". It incorporates a tutorial and video guide using extracts of music from the Ring and Arthur Rackham's drawings. The attraction from the Society's perspective is that a commission is payable to the Society for each copy bought by a Member. Brochures will be available at the AGM or contact a Committee member for details.

[While the advertising material suggests that the "running time" is 58 minutes, the footage on the Ring themes and structure runs for a little over 30 minutes, the remaining time being devoted to promotions of the Company's other video products. The video quality is not exceptional but is adequate for "study" purposes. It uses a strictly chronological outline of the narrative while focussing on the characters and events of *Das Rheingold* which means that Wotan trading his eye for wisdom and cutting the runes of power on his spear and the Norns are brought in from *Götterdämmerung* to parallel Alberich's actions at the beginning of *Das Rheingold*. The video is accompanied by a little book with the genealogy of the gods and others and the major leitmotive groups.]

21st ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM will be held at the Goethe Institut, 90 Ocean Street, Woollahra, **1.00pm** Sunday 15 July 2001

VOTING RULES

At the Annual General Meeting, the office bearers (namely, President, up to two Vice Presidents, Treasurer and Secretary) must be elected, together with four additional Committee Members if sufficient nominations are received. If the number of nominations does not exceed nine members those members are automatically declared elected to the committee. Similarly, the office bearers retain their specified positions if no one else is nominated to the same position. In the case of two or more nominations to positions of office bearer a ballot will be held on the day of the annual general meeting. Separate forms need to be submitted for each nomination.

June 2001

Financial members may vote by proxy given to a financial member if they are unable to attend the annual general meeting. If more than four members are nominated for the Committee, a ballot will also need to be held.

NOMINATIONS AND PROXY FORMS SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY 29 JUNE 2001

PROXY FORM

The Secretary, The Wagner Society in NSW Inc, GPO BOX 4574, SYDNEY, NSW 2001

I,
(Member's name)
of
(Member's address)

Membership number

Member's signature
cannot attend the 19th Annual General Meeting to be held on 18 July 1999 but nominate as my proxy to vote for me

(Proxy's name) who is a current financial member of the Society

(Address)

(Date)

NOMINATION FORM

The Secretary, The Wagner Society in NSW Inc, GPO Box 4574, SYDNEY NSW 2001

We, the undersigned members, hereby propose and second respectively for election as President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary or a member of the committee of the Wagner Society in NSW Inc (**circle one position**).

Date

Signed
(Proposer)

Signed
(Secunder)

Signed
(Nominated member)

NOTICE OF MOTION

The Secretary, Wagner Society in NSW Inc
GPO Box 4574, Sydney, NSW 2001

I/we will be attending the Annual General Meeting on 15 July 2001 and would like the following motion to be placed on the agenda for discussion under general business:

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Name

Membership number

THE RAVEN'S REPORTING, COMPILED BY CAMRON DYER

The Raven has flown - to Europe, via China and Japan so there is no update this time. Please remember, there is also a comprehensive list in chronological order on the Society's Website.