

## THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

This is the last newsletter for 1994 and it ushers in some significant changes for 1995 and beyond. Our most pressing problem, that of finding a new venue for our monthly meetings, has been resolved after much searching. From January, our new venue will be the Metcalfe Auditorium (ground floor) in the State Library of NSW in Macquarie Street. A very fine central city location. The library is unable to accommodate us for three dates in 1995. However, we expect that the Opera Centre or the Goethe Institute will become available. The change of venue is not without its problems, viz the extra expense for our Society. The cost is more than twice that of the previously generous rate at the Goethe. After much consideration, it was considered the best available for our requirements. Consequently (and unfortunately) we must increase the annual membership fee and the entrance charge to our meetings (see separate notice) if we are to fulfil the major objectives of our Society, viz to raise funds for the Bayreuth Scholarship, other sponsorships and to expand the influence of our Society by fostering a greater love of Wagner's music in the community. To this end we are embarking on a new membership drive from December. Our new brochure is at the printer and will be available by the time you read this Newsletter. Please try to recruit a new member from among your friends, and give the Society a great boost.

For those of you who were unable to attend the September 18th talk by Moffat Oxenbould, you missed a wonderfully candid talk on the problems of performing difficult (aka Wagner) operas in Australia. Not surprisingly, money was the major problem. Mr Oxenbould was quite correct in remarking that Australian audiences are very receptive to unfamiliar operas. The problem seems to be in sustaining that interest. He was disappointed with the public's response to the return season in Sydney of *Tristan und Isolde* and the 1994 *Mastersingers* in Melbourne. Although initial bookings for the *Mastersingers* were not encouraging, they picked up somewhat after a wonderful press and "word of mouth". This is where our Society and others around the country - in Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth - should become effective in doing **much** more to create a **sustaining** love of Wagner's music and humanity.

Mr Oxenbould also gave us a tantalising glimpse of the Australian Opera's 1996 season and beyond - a new *Flying Dutchman*, directed by Barry Kosky (Director of the 1996 Adelaide Festival). Considered something of an 'enfant terrible' of Australian theatre, I think we can expect some riveting and controversial theatre. Look out for his *Nabucco* in 1995!! There is the possibility of a *Tannhäuser* or *Lohengrin* in 1997. Possible return seasons of *Tristan* and *Mastersingers* should, in my opinion, be re-mounted in collaboration with Lyric Opera in Brisbane or State Opera in Adelaide. Adelaide has already seen the *Tristan*. Which brings me to the news of a most exciting **concert** performance of *Parsifal* at the 1995 Brisbane Biennial, with a great lineup of local and international artists. I urge anyone who can to take advantage of the special Wagner Society booking price (see separate notice). We are told by the booking office of the Queensland Performing Arts Centre that tickets are becoming scarce, so please return your application before 10th December. We only have an allocation of twenty-five seats at this time.

Is there anyone in Sydney who is not familiar with Robert Gay's stimulating talks on just about any musical subject? Well, if you missed his latest one for us on the Liszt/Wagner relationship make a note in your diary now for 2nd April next year when Robert will be discussing, with

musical extracts of course, Wagner's earliest operas *Der Feen*, *Das Liebersverbot* and *Rienzi*. It is depressing in a city the size of Sydney that the resources cannot be found to mount even a modest production of these early seminal works. Any entrepreneurs out there?

Another date you should all put in your diaries for next year. Leo Schofield has very kindly accepted our invitation to be the Guest of Honour at our annual lunch on 21st May 1995. I am sure you are all aware that Mr Schofield has become the darling of Melbourne after some initial hostile reaction to his appointment as Director of the Melbourne International Festival. His frequent public support over many years of Wagner's music has always delighted us and we hope by May next year that he will be in a much better position to tell us something of that *Ring* in 2000.

Finally I would like to thank all those who sent copies of the many world-wide reviews of the new *Ring* at Bayreuth and other operas. Unfortunately we do not have the space to publish them all. We are very grateful however to Mrs Hilda Perini who has given us her impressions with (translated) reference to Joachim Kaiser's *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* review. Our thanks also to Bill Watson for his very positive review and not forgetting Margaret Budge with her welcome review of the Châtelet *Ring*.

I hope to see a big turnout for our annual Christmas "bash" on 4th December. To all members I wish you a very happy time over the Christmas break and a very prosperous 1995.

**Ray Josey**  
**President**