

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT - 1992/3

Dear Fellow Members,

I would like to welcome and say thank you to all of you who are present here today, still showing your loyalty and love of Wagner at our 13th Annual Meeting.

During this twelve months past we have not had an easy life due to Goethe refurbishing and seminars being unable to be held here but hopefully this is in the past and we can look forward to a wonderful, fruitful and financial twelve months.

At our Annual Dinner in May we had Robert Allman and his wife as our guests of honour. He kept us all very entertained with excerpts of his very busy operatic life and the Menzies Hotel lived up to its reputation.

We have had two very interesting talks on our Sunday afternoon get-togethers: one in June by Brian Fitzgerald, who is responsible for the Australian Opera's surtitles - his talk centred on *The Ring* up to the present day; this was followed by Professor John Hughes in February of this year who gave us his impressions of the Kupfer *Ring* together with illustrated slides. This was a very exciting way to start our present year.

My thanks again to Richard King, our Public Officer, for his help and also giving us the Print Room for our reception for Sir Donald McIntyre. I think an enjoyable afternoon was had by all present.

We had a couple of CD afternoons which were not very well attended so this year we are going to have Videos only to see if attendances improve, as we depend on these to help raise finances.

In September Carole Ann Petherick gave us a recital at Clifford Grant's Gallery in Glebe because the Goethe no longer has a piano. It is a lovely venue but unfortunately not large enough to make it a financial success.

The Society was approached by Mark Ellis of the Friends of the Australian Opera to have a joint seminar on *Tristan und Isolde* which we agreed to. It was a wonderfully successful venture socially and financially and we hope to have many more in the future.

In October we were informed by The Opera Foundation that Stephen Bennett was unable to take up his Bayreuth Scholarship due to ill health. In the circumstances, he returned his air fare to the Society. This is completely determined by the Opera Foundation and the Society does not have any choice in this matter.

Our Christmas Party was also a great success with my thanks going to Margaret Budge and Annie Marshall for their catering par excellence. Barbara Brady, one of our members, also must be thanked for her lovely Christmas cake which she made for one of our raffle prizes. Margaret Budge copes, broken fingers and all, and my thanks again go to all of them for their continued efforts in making our afternoon teas so enjoyable.

Arthur Carter must also be thanked for his tireless efforts in producing our excellent programs on 2MBS every month and also making possible our trip to Melbourne to hear *Lohengrin* in November.

During this year we had two more deaths of our esteemed members. Betty Berriman was a foundation member and we have given a donation to Narrabri High School to perpetuate her memory. Betty was Headmistress of that school for many years. Dennis Hennig also passed away after a long illness but fortunately we have his wonderful compact discs to hear and remember him by.

This year we again received 15 tickets for Bayreuth. Everyone who applied to the Society for same were eventually accommodated.

The tax exemption for our Society's donations is at present in Canberra's hands and we should have been granted same in the next few months. A notice will be inserted in the Newsletter with particulars when we know more and then your donations will be tax deductible.

I attended, as President, an Opera Foundation Dinner which was held in Parliament House in February. This was held to celebrate the Opera Foundation donating their first \$1,000,000 to help singers further their careers here and overseas. This was a very prestigious event where the Wagner Society was mentioned on numerous occasions for their continuing support.

I now come to the sad news. Reg Maloney has decided to retire as our Honorary Auditor. The Committee unanimously granted him Life Membership of the Society for all his efforts on our behalf. Reg was Member No. 1 so you can see how long he has helped us function.

My thanks now go to Clare Hennessy, our membership secretary, for lending the Video which was shown at the Christmas Party and also for keeping our members in a financial state.

I wish to thank the following mentioned as I could not carry out my duties as President without the unstinting help and co-operation of my Committee members. These wonderful people are Paul Lehmann, Sue Kelly, Arthur Carter and Bill Watson. My special thanks to Janet Wayland, the Treasurer, for her careful keeping of the Society's funds. I have already thanked Margaret and Annie, who has to cope with me at meetings as Minutes Secretary.

To finish my long ramblings, I believe it is an accurate assessment of the facts to say that over the past few years there has been an upsurge of interest and consequently of appreciation in the music drama of Richard Wagner in this country. I suggest that a significant factor in this matter is the achievement of this Society as illustrated in my report today.

May we hope and pray for a continuation of this enthusiasm in the years to come.

Thank you for listening.

Olive Coonan
President