
THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT - 1993/4

Dear Fellow Members,

I present you with the President's Report at our 14th Annual General Meeting and welcome all members present here today.

Over the last fifteen months we have continued with our video afternoons at the Goethe Institute with a great deal of success. We presented the whole of the Met's new *Ring* which was greatly enjoyed by our Sunday afternoon participants, and was an interesting variation to the other *Rings* we have previously shown. We also conducted two very successful seminars in conjunction with the Friends of the Australian Opera, one on Strauss' *Salome* and the other on Berlioz' *The Trojans*. This association has been fruitful and we look forward to a long partnership in these educational ventures. Andrew Riemer, our old faithful, gave us a very interesting talk in April on *How German is Wagner?* which provoked a great deal of discussion. We continue to thank him for his constant support.

This year we had a break with tradition in having in May a luncheon (actually on the great man's birthday) instead of a dinner. This proved to be one of our better ideas as everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves on a wonderfully sunny day. This has also helped to make the Committee decide that next year's function will also be a luncheon to be held at the Ritz Carlton again. Some members might be surprised at having a political figure (that is, Bob Carr), as our Guest of Honour but his talk and general charm, I am sure, won over all his fellow Wagnerites.

Opera Foundation continues to nurture all promising young artists brought to their attention and we are happy to be able to continue our support to them. Lady (Persia) Galleghan, who has retired as President, will be greatly missed. She invited me as one of her guests to a luncheon at the Queen's Club which was very enjoyable. This was in thanks for all the support given to her and the Foundation by the Wagner Society. I was also invited to Fairwater for the German Operatic Awards where the Wagner Society was mentioned along with the German business houses. Clare and Margaret Hennessy represented the Society as I was overseas. They also represented us at a concert at the Town Hall given in honour to farewell Lady Galleghan's retirement from Opera Foundation.

My heartfelt thanks on behalf of the Committee and all members must go to Annie Marshall who gives us such wonderful and interesting newsletters. Please show your appreciation. Camron Dyer, Ray Josey and Janet Wayland have also contributed in no small manner to this success. I'm sure that we will all agree that the last issue was one of our very best.

It is with some regret that our monthly 2MBS-FM Wagner program is no longer in existence. Arthur Carter broadcast this program for many years and it enjoyed a constant following, not only from our own members but other Wagner lovers in the community.

Since the last Annual General Meeting the Society has donated in the previous fifteen months \$5,000 to the Australian Opera for their production of *Tristan and Isolde*, \$2,000 to Opera Foundation, \$1,000 to the Australian Opera to help *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on its way to Edinburgh and \$250 to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra for the Stuart Challender Trust.

You may not know that the Bayreuth Scholarship was not taken up last year. David Stanhope, who was last year's winner, has been awarded this year's prize and will be going to Germany in October/November. This is mainly due to Rothesay Swan's {Opera Foundation} untiring work in obtaining sponsorship to the tune of \$5,000. The Wagner Society's contribution is the return air fare for the winner.

Ray Josey successfully organised a group booking to Melbourne in April to hear *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Mastersingers of Nuremburg*. He had a special interest as his nephew, Christopher Josey, sang one of the leading roles in *The Dream*. A voice to be followed and watched for, as his talent is undoubted. Thanks to Ray for his help in this venture.

I would be very remiss if I were not to thank my hard-working and long-suffering Committee for all the unstinting support and help they have given me over the last fifteen months. On top of this, over the last five years my position would have been impossible to maintain if it was not for the back-up and co-operation that they have always given me. In particular, I would like to praise Janet Wayland, as Treasurer, whose time has always been available to me when most needed. You may not be aware that Clare Hennessy, after nearly fourteen years on and off the Committee, will not be standing for re-election this year. Clare has held the position of Secretary and Membership Secretary and her input and knowledge into the Society is without equal. I think it is about time that we showed our real appreciation to Clare. Bill Watson, who is also standing down, has helped me greatly with his common sense and logic on a great number of occasions. To Paul and Sue, our Vice Presidents, Annie Marshall, the Minute Secretary, Ray Josey and Margaret Budge, many thanks for your full co-operation this last fifteen months. Margaret resigned in April to go overseas for 12 months and I think everyone knows what a valued contribution she made to our Sundays.

There is only one more matter that I wish to bring to your notice. In March Richard King resigned as Public Officer and the Committee asked Reg Maloney to take this position which he happily agreed to.

Our heartfelt thanks must also be given to Joseph Ferfaglia, our Honorary Auditor, for his continuous help over the last 15 months. He is always on hand to point us in the right direction. Many thanks, Joseph.

I would like to comment on one concern that I have in relation to the running of the Society. I am standing down after 5 years as President and 10 continuous years on the Committee. It saddens me that in a Society such as ours so few people are prepared to take on the sometimes onerous duties of Committee. We cannot expect the few to keep giving their services unflinchingly year after year without the hope that other members are prepared to take over some of these responsibilities. It would please me to find that more of you would come forward to assist in the future development of our Society in an active and practical way.

To the incoming Committee I wish them all the best in their deliberations and decisions which they will make on our behalf. I also hope that the spirit of those who have gone before them will assist them to keep our wonderful Wagner Society viable and true to its ideals.

Thank you.

**Olive Coonan
President**