

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

For Wagnerites this year has opened well. Despite differences of opinion about the production we are still talking about *Tannhäuser*. A brief visit to Melbourne in March allowed me to see it again. Simone Young brought all her skill to a beautifully played and sung performance. Lisa Gasteen was a really marvellous Elizabeth. Michael Lewis brought Wolfram to life, while Horst Hoffmann's *Tannhäuser* was excellent in all three acts. An invitation to meet Simone Young after the performance allowed us to express our appreciation and congratulations to Simone, Horst, Lisa and Bernadette Cullen.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra's Strauss/Wagner concert in April was another memorable night and Elizabeth Connell's Immolation Scene was outstanding. Again Simone Young brought a polish to the orchestra that will be long remembered.

Congratulations to Stephen Mould, this year's Bayreuth Scholar. Stephen is a repetiteur and conductor and will be rehearsing the Adelaide *Ring* before he leaves to study in Germany in late November. We wish him a safe and rewarding trip and look forward to meeting him in 1999.

The Board of Opera Foundation Australia recently gave a lunch to thank those who support the Bayreuth Scholarship; guests included the German Consul-General and the Director of the Goethe Institut and I was delighted to join them as your representative.

The level of support at monthly meetings is most encouraging. In March we all enjoyed a moving and visually beautiful performance of *Parsifal* from the Metropolitan Opera, with Waltraud Meier and Siegfried Jerusalem, and we thank Cecilia Segura for making the video available.

Congratulations to Antony Ernst for his first *Ring* lecture which was thought-provoking and stimulating, and which generated much discussion at afternoon tea. Our meeting-room bulged at the seams and it was gratifying to see so many people interested and involved. Our thanks go to Opera Australia for their assistance in promoting the lecture series in their Friends' and Patrons' Newsletter, and to the many Opera Friends who joined us. Please remember that the dates for lectures three and four have been changed to allow Antony to finish the series before he leaves for Dresden where he has a contract for six months to work on *Il Trittico* as assistant producer.

A delightful surprise was a Fax from Peter Häggblom, the Treasurer of the Wagner Society in Finland, who read our newsletter and wrote to say he would be in Riga at the Wagner Festival at the same time my group will be there. The group will have dinner with Ilkka Pajaanen, their President, the night we arrive in Helsinki. Peter will also be in Adelaide for the second *Ring* cycle in November.

Another very nice surprise was a letter from Jessie Anderson who has given me her collection of Wagner Society Newsletters. As Jessie and Keith were very early members this is proving to

be a wonderful source of information for which I am very grateful. Betty and Reg Maloney have offered to fill any gaps in the collection from their own files. I do thank them all very much and have pleasure in conveying greetings from Jessie and Keith to all their friends in the Wagner Society.

The response to our Wagner birthday dinner has been very positive and some 70 people will toast the master on 24 May at the Ritz Carlton Hotel. Our next meeting will be Antony Ernst's second *Ring* lecture on *Die Walküre* and I am sure it will provoke as much discussion as the first so please be sure to come and bring your friends.

BARBARA McNULTY