

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The month of January 1983 was dominated by the personality of Leonie Rysanek, that dynamic Prima Donna of the Vienna State Opera, who came to Sydney to sing the title role in "Tosca". Madame Rysanek's long career in Wagnerian roles gave us special reason to pay tribute to her, and honour her with honorary life membership of the Society. In fact, it was Leonie and her husband Ernst-Ludwig Gaussmann who honoured us with their gracious presence, and interest in our work, and it was such a pity that so few members turned up at the dinner to witness it. Their gift to us, the book of the making of the film 'Elektra', will illustrate the stature of our guests (it is kept at the Wagner Society Office for all members to see) so perhaps next time they return to Sydney, they will receive from us the whole-hearted response they deserve.

February has been an equally exciting month, the inauguration of the Wagner Society Scholarship being the high-light. This prize is being given in conjunction with the Metropolitan Opera Auditions conducted by Opera Foundation Australia, so that it ensures that the most capable young singers are eligible. Apart from aiding promising singers in their careers, the scholarship should provide for the future a healthy band of well trained artists to perform in the growing number of Wagnerian Operas being staged by its various Australian opera companies. One such singer,

Lisa Gasteen, regional winner in last year's auditions, gave a farewell recital on the 11th February, before flying to Los Angeles for the finals. Her rendition of Elsa's dream showed what a fine voice she has, one we are sure to hear more of in the future.

The first ordinary general meeting takes place on March 15th. Please come along, not only with your ideas and suggestions for a more active society, but also with offers to help your hardworking committee in its management.

Leonard Hansen