



The Richard Wagner Society of South Australia Inc.

NEWSLETTER 319 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2022

Patron:
Deborah Humble

We hope our members and their families and friends, have all had a safe and pleasant Christmas and New Year? As 2022 hasn't started off very well, the Committee, after much discussion, has decided to postpone the Society's first event of the year, the Wake, from February 20 until a date in April, which is yet to be decided. By then, it is hoped, the situation with Omicron will be much improved. The event should be worth waiting for, as a group of members, led by Warwick Cooper, has been working up a live and multi-media Wake presentation on the world-wide reaction to Wagner's "Death in Venice". Full details will be given in the next Newsletter. The Society also hopes to arrange an event leading up to the ASO concert in July (see. P.3)

Fortunately, the Society's end-of-year lunch was held before the full impact of the Omicron variant had arrived in South Australia, and the event went very well. See the report on P. 2.

Some members already have tickets to see Melbourne Opera's production of *Die Walküre* in February. But there's an opportunity for those unable to make the trip to also watch the performance, as Australian Digital Concert Hall will be streaming it online on 9 February! There is a cost, but it is claimed that "all livestreaming proceedings go to Melbourne Opera direct". Tickets that provide 72-hour access are available from: <https://australiandigitalconcerthall/#/item/81221>

A couple of noted Wagner singers and a well-known conductor all died towards the end of last year. See their brief obituaries on P.3-4.

A reminder that membership fees fall due on 1 February, and a Membership Application/Renewal Form was sent out with Newsletter 318. Fees remain at: Ordinary: \$55, Concession: \$40 and Joint: \$80. We thank all members who have already renewed, especially those who included a donation to the Public Fund. However, some members are yet to renew. If you have mislaid the form, please contact us, or you can renew online on: <https://www.wagnersa.net>. Online renewals require an email address, a Visa or Mastercard number and CVV number. Receipts for online payments will be issued automatically via email. Please give your details in full on the form, including an up-to date email address if you wish to receive Newsletters electronically.

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End-of-year Lunch 2021

There were five nicely decorated, well-spaced tables in the auditorium at Living Choice Fullarton on 28 November, around which thirty members and guests fitted well for the Society end-of-year lunch. Penny Hewson, who had organised the booking and, along with Helen Halley, chose the menu and provided the decorations, welcomed everyone, also taking the occasion to especially thank and wish well the Society Treasurer and Webmaster Andrew Fergusson, who has had some health problems. She also presented him with a bouquet.

Penny was followed by the President, Dr Geoff Seidel, who had chosen the topic "An Idyllic Christmas" to celebrate the first performance of Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll* at Tribschen, Lucerne, on Christmas Day 1870. Most were already aware that it was a birthday/Christmas gift to his wife Cosima, and Geoff read an extract from the book "Cosima Wagner" by George R. Marek, in which she described that first performance.

Geoff then directed attention to a "new" large bust of Wagner placed near the entrance.

This had originally been made for his late friend Michael Harrison, but was now passed on to Geoff, so would be appearing at future Society functions.

A screen and projector had already been set up, and guests were then invited to turn to watch extracts from three films, all of which featured the *Siegfried Idyll*. Geoff had organised a little quiz from these, so details weren't given until after the quiz questions had been distributed (one per table), the answers collected, marked and the prize awarded. As expected, this quiz resulted in much discussion and comments in between the two courses of the meal.

The first extract, in Italian, with subtitles, was from the film *Ludwig*, 1973, directed by Luchino Visconti, the second from Tony

Palmer's 1983 television miniseries *Wagner*, both recreating (very charmingly) the original performance of the *Siegfried Idyll*, while the third was a short scene from *The Boys from Brazil* during which the music was played. Apparently not many members had seen this film, but some recognised the actors!

The quality of the meal is always first class. Helen and Penny chose from a reduced menu which was something new for many as it was an 'alternate drop'. But once everyone saw their meal and exchanged, if they chose, with the person nearby, everyone was happy. With precision service, spatial awareness with seating arrangements, we thoroughly enjoyed the food and delivery from Living Choice once again.

In closing the afternoon entertainment, Geoff showed a book he'd bought, a pocket issue of *Tannhäuser*, actually an expanded poem. And, as he'd brought his guitar, Geoff and Penny led in the singing of *Silent Night*, one verse first in German, then in English. Finally everyone was wished a "Happy Christmas" with hopes for better times in the New Year.

Lee Brauer, Penny Hewson
(photos. Helen Halley, David Murphy)

See Peter Jakobsen's review of the RWS of SA end-of-year lunch at <http://www.thevarnishedculture.com/wagner-and-the-snowy-uplands-of-utopia/>



News from the Norns

So far, the only local performance of Wagner's work scheduled for Adelaide this year, appears to be in the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra Symphony Series concert "Spellbound", in which ASO Conductor Laureate Nicholas Braithwaite will conduct the Maazel arrangement of *The Ring Without Words*. The program also features Australian soprano

Nicole Car singing a selection of Strauss songs. Performances: Friday 29 July at 7.30 pm and Saturday 30 at 6.30 pm. See details on <https://www.aso.com.au>

Opera Australia has announced the 2023 dates for the Brisbane Ring Cycle

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The season will contain three full cycles of the four operas (*Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung*). The first cycle will run from 1–7 December 2023, the second from 8–12 December, and the final cycle from 15–21 December. Each cycle will run with one day's break between each opera. Ticket holders for the postponed production should have been contacted by Opera Australia or their ticketing outlet about transferring their tickets to 2023.

New audiences can join the Waitlist at the Opera Australia website, <https://www.opera.org.au>.

The season will run in repertory with Davide Livermore's production of Verdi's *Aida* (6, 9, 11, 13, 16, 18, 20 December), which also uses the LED screens.

Obituaries.

Norman Stanley Bailey, C.B.E., 23 March 1933–15 September 2021.

Although born in Birmingham, England, the bass-baritone Norman Bailey migrated with his family to South Africa after WW II, where, while studying for a degree in divinity at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, he was advised to change to singing! After further vocal studies at the Vienna Music Academy, also in Düsseldorf and Essen, Bailey spent the first 10 years of his career working with opera companies in Austria and Germany. He made his Royal Opera debut in the 1968/69 season as Hans Sachs in *Mastersingers*, and then appeared with that company for most seasons until 1980/81! Other Wagner roles he sang there were: Amfortas, Kurwenal, Wolfram von Eschenbach and Donner. Norman Bailey also appeared as Hans Sachs for the English National Opera, and famously sang Wotan/Wanderer in the famous 1970-73 Sadler's Wells/English National Opera Goodall *Ring*. Over the years he sang for other U.K. companies as well, like Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, Opera North (including as Landgrave Herrmann in *Tannhäuser*) and made his 1996 debut at Glyndbourne (as Schigolch in *Lulu*.) Internationally Bailey frequently sang the title role in *Der fliegende Holländer* which was recorded with Solti conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, also as Hans Sachs in such venues as La Scala Milan, at the Bayreuth Festival in 1969 and 1970, he made his Metropolitan Opera debut in the role in 1976, travelled to Australia in 1978, and recorded it both with the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Solti, and in English for the ENO with Goodall. Of course Norman Bailey had other bass-baritone roles in his repertoire, including several Strauss works, like Jokanaan in *Salome*. He also became a teacher for several years at the Royal College of Music, London, later at the Brigham Young University, Idaho. Bailey lived in the U.K. with his first wife, Doreen and their three children, but after his remarriage to American soprano Kristine Ciesinski in 1985 he lived in the U.S.A. and became an American citizen, remaining there after her death in 2018. Norman Bailey was awarded a C.B.E. in 1977, an honorary doctorate from the Rhodes University in 1986 and in 2020 the Sir Reginald Goodall Memorial Award for outstanding service to Wagner and his music! Vale.

Clifford Scantlebury Grant O.A.M., 11 September 1930–7 October 2021.

Born in Sydney, Australian bass Clifford Grant studied at St Andrew's Cathedral School, continued singing studies at Sydney Conservatorium, later in Melbourne and began his career with New South Wales Opera and Victorian Opera. In those days he was also obliged to work as a salesman, sang at weddings and such, gave recitals on ABC Radio and in the early 1960s joined the Channel Nine Singers! He joined the Joan Sutherland/J.C. Williamson Opera Company as principal bass in 1965, then travelled to the U.K. and was taken on as principal bass with Sadler's Wells Opera Company from 1966, making his debut at the Royal Opera House in 1974 and at the Metropolitan Opera in 1976. Clifford Grant had further studies with Otakar Kraus in London, and sang many of the major bass roles during his career, including King Henry the Fowler in *Lohengrin*, Pogner in *Mastersingers* and as Fafner, Hunding and Hagen in the Goodall Wagner *Ring* Cycle at the English National Opera! He also appeared on several recordings. Having lived and worked mainly in the U.K. until 1976, Grant then returned to Australia with his family and joined Opera Australia where he sang principal roles until retiring in 1990 to run his own art gallery, as he was also a very talented artist and had held several one-man-shows in London and Sydney! He returned to live in London in 1991 and sang

his final role with Opera North in 1993 (as Alvisé in Ponchielli's *La Gioconda*), then moved back to Sydney in 2000. He was awarded the O.A.M. in the 2008 Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to the Performing Arts. Clifford Grant married twice, had three children from his first marriage, which ended in divorce, and was separated but not divorced from his second wife, who reported that they remained firm friends and part of his extended family. Described also as a skilled craftsman, keen fisherman, joker and generous colleague, Clifford Grant will be missed by many. Vale.

Bernard Johan Herman Haitink, C.H., K.B.E., 4 March 1929 – 21 October 2021.

Born In Amsterdam, the young Bernard Haitink studied the violin, continuing at the Amsterdam Conservatorium where he also studied conducting. From there, he joined the Netherlands Radio Symphony Orchestra as a violinist, but in 1954-55 he also took a course for conductors, and in 1955 was appointed second conductor of the Netherlands Radio Union (which ran the conducting courses). In 1956 he was called in to conduct a concert with the Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam, which resulted in other appearances with that orchestra. As Principal Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra he made his American debut in 1958 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and first appeared in Britain in 1959 on tour with the Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam, with whom he made his first recording that year. Haitink was made Principal Conductor of the Concertgebouw Orchestra ("Royal" was conferred in 1998) in 1963, he toured and made many recordings with them until 1988 and in 1999 was named Honorary Conductor. After some political ups and downs, he was still scheduled for some guest appearances in 2016/17!

Now internationally recognised as a conductor, Haitink's career developed substantially, both in his home country and abroad, especially in the U.K., where he became a guest conductor, eventually Chief Conductor with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, made his debut at the Glyndebourne Festival Opera in 1972, and became Chief Conductor in 1978, a post he retained until 1988. He first appeared with the Royal Opera Company at Covent Garden in 1977, was appointed Chief Conductor in 1987 and remained in association with that body until 2002!

During this long tenure at Covent Garden he conducted a wide range of operas from Mozart to Britten including Wagner's *Lohengrin*, *Parsifal*, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and *Tristan und Isolde*. Although stating in 2004 that he would no longer conduct opera, Haitink returned in 2007 with *Parsifal*. He conducted 90 concerts at the London Proms! Meanwhile, he also retained a long association with the Wiener Philharmoniker, Bayerischer Rundfunk Symphonieorchester and the Berlin Philharmoniker, and numerous other international orchestras, and over the years was involved in many recordings with them, in a large repertoire of symphonies, piano concertos and operas, and including Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. From the U.K. Bernard Haitink was awarded an Honorary K.B.E. in 1977 and made a Companion of Honour (C.H.) in 2002; from the Netherlands: The Erasmus Prize in Holland in 1991, Honorary Medal for Arts and Science of the Order the House of Orange-Nassau in 2000 and Veriniging van Schouwburgen Concertgebouwdirecties (Netherlands) 2007, and Musician of the Year 2007 (from *Musical America*) and a U.S.A. Grammy Award in 2008. Haitink had five children from his first marriage, which ended in the 1970s, there were two rather short-lived marriages in the following decades, while his fourth wife Patricia was with him from 1994 until his death in London. Vale.

	PROGRAMME FOR 2022	
9, 11, 16 February at 6.00 pm, 13 February 2.00 pm	Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne	Melbourne Opera <i>Die Walküre</i> . c. Anthony Negus
14, 17, 24 May at 6.00 p.m., 21 May, 12.30 pm.	Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne	Opera Australia <i>Lohengrin</i> with Jonas Kaufmann, c,
29 July at 7.30 pm, 30 July 6.30 pm.	Adelaide Town Hall	ASO concert "Spellbound" c. by Nicholas Braithwaite. Includes "The Ring without words"

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