

Sunday 13 March 2022, 2.00pm

**Masterclass by Christina Henson Hayes
with emerging young singers**

*A Wagner Society in NSW in-person event
at St Columba Community Centre, Woollahra*

Report



Formal photo: Here the artists hold their gifts presented by Leona Geeves - books for Paul McLeod (6th from the right) and Brangayne wines for (L-R) Bradley Gilchrist, Damien Noyce, Ellen McNeil, Ashlee Woodgate, Nathan Bryon, Christina Henson Hayes, Michael James and Anita de Lisen.

An attentive audience was treated to an excellent Masterclass with American voice/operatic coach, **Christina Henson Hayes**. Among those present was our member **Warwick Fyfe** who has been working with Christina to sustain the stamina required to perform Wotan in Melbourne Opera's *Die Walküre*.

Christina specialises in the biomechanical function of the voice, treating patients and teaching voice maintenance to singers. On this day, her expertise was evident as she advised and inspired the soloists: **Nathan Bryon** (tenor), a recent recipient of NSW Wagner Society funding; new member **Paul McLeod** (tenor); **Damien Noyce** (tenor), also a recipient of Wagner Society funding and the new Pacific Opera Jane Mathews AO scholarship winner, **Ellen McNeil** (soprano). They were joined by three of Christina's students: **Ashlee Woodgate** (soprano), **Anita de Lisen** (soprano) and **Michael James** (heldentenor). **Bradley Gilchrist** provided his usual sensitive and supportive piano accompaniment.

Each soloist received valuable individual technical feedback, at all times gentle and encouraging. What one soloist was advised could often be applied universally. Wisdom such as 'Make the audience love your voice' and 'Prepare to be fabulous before you sing', would encourage any singer the world over.

The application of this invaluable individual advice rendered instant improvement; technical tweaks as simple as expanding the chest produced extra tonal quality.

The audience was immediately aware of the difference as each soloist slightly altered their performance by applying Christina's advice.

These valuable lessons will no doubt assist the audience in appreciating future singers. The soloists also will long remember their afternoon with Christina Henson Hayes.