



CELEBRATING
40 YEARS 1980 - 2020



Sunday 23 May 2021, 2:00 pm
Piano recital by Tamara-Anna Cislowska /
Wagner & Wagner Society Birthday Celebrations

Program:

**2.00pm: Wagner-Liszt piano recital by Tamara-Anna Cislowska -
a very special event
to celebrate 40 years since Wagner lovers met in Bayreuth &
agreed to start a Wagner Society in Australia**

**3.00pm: Birthday celebrations for Richard Wagner (208th)
and the WSNSW (40th)**

**St Columba Community Centre
53A Ocean Street (cnr Forth Street)
Woollahra**

WSNSW members \$40 / non-members \$45 / full-time students \$20

Report

Program:

STRAUSS (arr. Grainger): Ramble on The Rose-Bearer (Der Rosenkavalier)
WAGNER (arr. Liszt): Recitative and Romance from Tannhäuser 'Evening Star'
JOE HISAISHI: 'The Road to the Valley' from Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind
LISZT: R.W. – Venezia
LISZT: Am grabe Richard Wagners
WAGNER (arr. Liszt): Elsa's Dream
WAGNER (arr. Liszt): Isolde's Liebestod
VERDI (arr. Liszt): Paraphrase on Rigoletto

The Wagner Society's 40th birthday was celebrated together with The Master's 208th at St Columba on the 23rd of May. As a birthday present there was a marvellous recital of mainly Liszt-Wagner by Tamara-Anna Cislowska – a wonderful performance.

(Originally planned for August 2020 but rescheduled because of Covid-19 lockdowns)

In his introduction to the event President **Esteban Insausti** (Member No 443) reminded us that Tamara-Anna's first mentor and champion was the distinguished Wagner expert

Werner Baer MBE. He was a much-loved foundation member and first Honorary Life Member of the Society and he gave the very first talk to the Society on 6 July 1981. The first function was on 9 March 1981 in the AMP theatrette – a film about the Bayreuth Centenary. The first AGM was held on 22 May 1981.

After the recital Tamara-Anna was thanked by Esteban and presented with Brangayne wines by past Vice President, Honorary Life Member and current Artists' Liaison **Leona Geeves** (87).

Esteban then welcomed Honorary Life Members and Past Presidents **Richard King** (15) (who we flew up from Hobart), **Roger Cruickshank** (669) (who we flew over from Auckland) and **Dr Colleen Chesterman** (649). Other Honorary Life Members present included **Professor Michael Ewans** (Member No 0), **Dr Dennis Mather** (696) (Past Treasurer) and **Dr Terence Watson** (657) (Past Quarterly Editor). Also most welcome were Foundation Members **Dr Susan Kelly** (04) (our first Vice President), **Julie King** (07), **Clare** (our first secretary) and **Margaret Hennessy** (19) and **Jenny Ferns** (34). A special welcome was given to iconic Australian Contralto **Lauris Elms AM OBE** in the audience.

After which the audience enjoyed reminiscences by Richard King (a founder member and second President) and Roger Cruickshank (No.7 who also led the RW birthday toast with some rousing singing), both travelling through the bubbles from Tasmania and New Zealand.

Richard King spoke to us about his introduction to classical music as a boy and his early interest in the Esoteric, Theosophy and Eurhythmics. Richard told us how from an early age he was interested in the deep underlying philosophical and spiritual truths of the myths, rather than the superficial aspects of a singer's personality or technique or a director's neuroses. He mentioned three seminal publications that influenced his thinking and that he believes still have great relevance to the understanding of Wagner and the grand scheme of things.

These are detailed below. All are available from Amazon. Richard's book **Synchronicity and Dreaming: Guidance for our Lives** was introduced in the December 2019 Quarterly.

- **Aspects of Wagner** by **Bryan Magee** 1988 The man whom W.H. Auden called 'perhaps the greatest genius that ever lived' has inspired extremes of adulation and loathing. In this penetrating analysis, Bryan Magee outlines the range and depth of Wagner's achievement, and shows how his sensational and erotic music expresses the repressed and highly charged contents of the psyche.
- **For Freedom Destined** by **Franz E. Winkler** 1974 An in- depth study of the text and music of Wagner's Ring and Parsifal from the perspective of our human potential to evolve toward greater capacity for freedom.
- **Mysteries of the Great Operas** by **Max Heindel** 2013 This Early Work by Max Heindel takes a look at the mystical significance of five famous operas: '*Faust*', '*Parsifal*', '*The Ring of The Niebelung*', '*Tannhauser*' and '*Lohengrin*'. It is yet another classic piece of occult literature by the renowned Danish mystic.

The event progressed towards a conclusion with all the former and present Presidents jointly cutting the superb birthday cake (thanks Barbara de Rome!).

During the birthday celebration the Society launched the Wagner Tuba sponsorship drive which aims to raise \$15,000 to help Melbourne Opera purchase two instruments (a similar amount was donated to help purchase the first two tubas - heard to great account

during “Das Rheingold” in February). This company’s Ring venture will culminate in full cycles in 2024 under Maestro Anthony Negus.

From the Wagner Quarterly 161, June 2021



A letter to the Editor from Jenny Ferns, 23 May 2021

Oh, what a lovely party!

Although it seems like only yesterday, to-day we celebrated the Wagner Society in NSW Inc.'s 40th birthday, (as well as Richard Wagner's 208th birthday).

Members and friends, old and new, came together at St Columba Community Centre in Woollahra to mark the occasion.

It was framed around a brilliant piano recital by prominent pianist and broadcaster Tamara-Anna Cislowska. Playing a Yamaha Grand piano, Tamara- Anna gave the instrument such a work-out as it has probably never experienced before. It, and her performance, rose to the occasion with flying colours.

Many other highlights took place during the celebrations, all managed with flawless organization by Society President Esteban Insausti, together with experienced competent committee members, and other member luminaries who were gathered together for the first time.

Speakers and special guests and committee members and conscripts were all acknowledged for their major contributions over the years. The key speaker was past President and Honorary Life Member Richard King. Now hailing from Tasmania, Richard reminded us, in great detail, of the founding events of the organization in Sydney with the wholehearted support he and co-founder, Dr. Leonard Hansen, had from the Verband and the London Wagner Society in sharing their Constitution, around which the NSW Wagner Society's constitution is based. The impact of Wagner's operas and music, including the legends on which many are based, has motivated further study and interest over many years, for Richard and many others ever since.

Clare and Margaret Hennessy brought along albums of photos and memorabilia from various trips to the Bayreuth Festival, recording meetings with famous celebrities during autograph opportunities in their time-out. It is proposed to have these images scanned for placement in the Society's website.

As is typical of the Society's celebrations, a well-run Raffle is an integral part for fund-raising. This time was no exception. With the ambition to raise funds to contribute to the purchase of another two Wagner Tubas to present to the Melbourne Opera Company for next year's "*Die Walküre*" production, people were invited to buy plenty of tickets. Generally, the prizes consist of valuable, pre-loved, donated items from a wide source, mostly Wagner related books, programmes, CDs, DVDs etc.

Past President Roger Cruickshank gave a witty speech about some of the trials and tribulations of the Society and proposed the Birthday toast to the Master, followed by singing Happy Birthday to the Master and to the Society.

This was topped off with the "icing on the cake" in the form of a magnificent, especially baked chocolate layer cake with fondant embellished with a portrait of Richard Wagner himself, prepared by past Secretary Barbara de Rome. This was formally cut by the three former Presidents and the current President and ceremoniously demolished and distributed by the chef herself. A masterful piece of construction and destruction. The afternoon tea, prepared by Committee members and accompanied by suitable beverages, covered a wide range of sweet and savoury delicacies, ranging from vegan and gluten-free to cheese platters and sweets, to suit all tastes.

I look forward to the next decade and another party like this one to celebrate the 50th Jubilee with all those who were there to-day to be joined by the next generation of Wagner lovers and additional newly enrolled Society members.

Roll on May 22, 2031.!

Best wishes

Jennifer Ferns

From the Wagner Quarterly 161, June 2021

WAGNER'S BIRTHDAY AND 40th ANNIVERSARY CONCERT

AT ST COLUMBA ON 23 MAY

Photos by Lis Bergmann, Pauline Holgerson, Leona Geeves and Mike Day



Ross Whitelaw, Esteban Insausti, Pauline Holgerson, Margaret Whealy, Lis Bergman and Leona Geeves at reception



Tamara-Anna Cislowska



Iconic contralto Lauris Elms AM OBE in the audience



Tamara-Anna & Leona with Brangayne wine



Richard King



Dennis Mather, Roger Cruickshank and Esteban Insausti drawing the raffle prizes



Pauline Holgerson, Roger Cruickshank, Leona Geeves and Terence Watson

From the Wagner Quarterly 161, June 2021

About Tamara-Anna Cislowska



Tamara-Anna Cislowska is one of Australia's most acclaimed, ARIA award-winning pianists, performing and recording in Australia and internationally to critical and public acclaim. Earning international prizes in London, Italy and Greece such as the *Rovere d'Oro*, and touring Japan and the USA as cultural ambassador for Australia, Tamara's accolades include ABC Young Performer of the Year, the Freedman Fellowship, an Art Music Award for 'Performance of the Year' (ACT) and the 2015 ARIA award for 'Best Classical Album'. Performing as soloist with leading orchestras around Australia and overseas, as Music Director for special projects and radio presenter on ABC Classic, Cislowska collaborates with leading arts companies such as the ACO and CIRCA, and artists as varied as Anne-Sophie Mutter, Lang Lang, Robert Murray and Dawn Upshaw.