

Maximise

your enjoyment and understanding of

Wagner's music

Newsletter No. 125, June 2012

In Memoriam

DIETRICH FISHER-DISKAU 28 May 1925 - 18 May 2012

The internationally acclaimed operatic and lieder baritone has died at the age of 86 - see article inside.

President's Report

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT-PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO 2012 AGM, 20 MAY 2012

Welcome to the second newsletter for 2012.

I think that we can all agree that the Society has had an extremely successful year over the last 12 months. This is represented in an increased number of members, and in the excellence and diversity of our events over the year, thanks to our extremely active Events Sub-committee. And obviously, these factors are strongly inter-related.

First, our membership: at last count, we had 292 current members, 70 of whom have joined in the last 12 months. But the actual figure is much higher, because over 90 of these are shared memberships, which means that there are, in all, about 385 individual members of the Society.

As to events, I am not going to say much about the Society's events over the past year, because many of you have

attended at least some of them. Amongst the many high points have been presentations relating to the Melbourne Ring, from Lyndon Terracini in October last year, and from Maureen Wheeler and Richard Mills in March this year. We have also had some wonderful musical offerings, not to mention Heath Lees' fascinating talk on Wagner's Women earlier this year.

The next 12 months also promises to provide some truly exciting events. Our program for the rest of this year has already been published, and will feature such luminaries of the opera world as John Wegner and John Pickering. And in August the Society's patron, Simone Young, will be coming to talk to us.

All of this has been organised by our Events Sub-committee, to whom we all owe a huge debt of gratitude. They are: Leona Geeves, Tony Jones, Colleen Chesterman and Katie French. Katie is not standing for re-election to the committee, and I would like to record my own and the Society's sincere thanks for all that she has done in the past 12 month, as an active member of the Committee, and particularly of the Events sub-committee.

PATRON:

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS:

Simone Young AM
Prof Michael Ewans
Mr Richard King
Mr Horst Hoffman
Mr Joseph Ferfoglia

PRESIDENT'S REPORT continued p.3 ►

STOP PRESS 1:

Hugely successful event:

Damien Beaumont in conversation with Deborah Humble, Erda & Waltraute in the Melbourne Ring on Sunday, 17 June



Damien Beaumont



Deborah Humble as Erda in Das Rheingold, Hamburg 2008

STOP PRESS 2:

Lisa Gasteen's Sydney concert 15 July 2012 - article inside.

For Your **Diary**

2012		
Friday, 29 (Saturday, 30 June concert now cancelled)	Deborah Voigt in a program of Wagner and Richard Strauss in the Concert Hall, accompanied by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Andrew Davis	Sydney Opera House
From 30 June to 8 August at Chauvel, Cremorne and Dendy Quays cinemas	Repeat HD broadcast of the Metropolitan Opera New York's new production of The Ring Cycle - Sundays at Dendy; Saturday/Sundays at Cremorne; Wednesdays at Chauvel	Times vary – please check with the cinemas, their websites or newspapers
Wellington: Sunday, 22 July (3 PM), Christchurch: Wednesday, 25 July (5 PM) and Auckland: Saturday, 28 July (4PM).	<i>Die Walküre</i> in New Zealand with Simon O'Neill Tickets on sale on Monday, 16 January 2012	New Zealand
Thursday, 9 (1:30PM), Friday 10 August (8PM) Saturday, August 11 (2PM)	Wagner under the Sails: The Opening Gala Revisited – Simone Young conducts the Sydney Symphony with Soprano Christine Brewer in excerpts from <i>Die Meistersinger</i> , <i>Tannhäuser</i> , <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> , and <i>Götterdämmerung</i>	Sydney Opera House
23 August and 25 August	Wagner Society in NSW Patron Simone Young and the Hamburg Philharmonic Orchestra and Hamburg State Opera in two concert performances of <i>Das Rheingold</i> , with a seminar on the day of 24 August and Mahler's 2nd Symphony "Resurrection" on evening of 24 August.	Queensland Performing Arts Centre
2013		
Nov-December 2013	The Ring Cycle – Melbourne: Cycle 1: November 18 to 25. Cycle 2: November 27 to December 4. Cycle 3: December 6 to 13. ##	Melbourne Opera Theatre

Opera Australia has created a new website for its Melbourne Ring Cycle, including a process for registering your application for tickets, if you haven't qualified for other ticketing arrangements: http://melbourneringcycle.com.au/visit_melbourne.

Meetings **Dates** & Coming **Events**

DATE	EVENTS - 2012 EVENT STARTING TIMES MAY VARY PLEASE CHECK THE SCHEDULE FOR DETAILS	TIME & LOCATION
8 July	Off the record and between the lines. Peter Bassett talks about his new book, 1813 Wagner and Verdi: A celebration. Popular lecturer and Wagner expert, Peter Bassett, will entertain us with the details of his newly-published book, accompanied by examples of music from both composers. It promises a fascinating insight into their worlds. DVD at 12.30pm: Act 1 of The Royal Danish Opera's production of <i>Tannhäuser</i> , with Stig Andersen in the title role.	Goethe Institut 2PM
12 August	Our New Patron Visits: Simone Young meets and greets the Wagner Society in NSW; discussion with Francis Merson, Editor, Limelight magazine, moderated by President Jane Mathews DVD at 12.30pm: Act 2 of <i>Tannhäuser</i> , with Stig Andersen in the title role.	Goethe Institut 2PM
16 September	In Conversation with John Pickering on Life in Germany, and Lübeck and Members' Feedback: Bayreuth 2012 DVD at 12.30pm: Act 3 of <i>Tannhäuser</i> , with Stig Andersen in the title role.	Goethe Institut 2PM
21 October	In Conversation with John Wegner No DVD and early start at 1PM.	Goethe Institut 1PM
11 November	End of Year Special Event - Concert with Warwick Fyfe and Lisa Harper-Brown with accompanist Stephen Mould - AT MOSMAN ART GALLERY (corner Art Gallery Way and Myahgah Road) - catered event; no need to bring a plate. No DVD	2PM AT MOSMAN ART GALLERY
<p>Advice about changes to the Program will be emailed to people who have given their email addresses to the Society's Webmaster; the latest updates will also be available on the Society's webpage: www.wagner.org.au. Admission to each event will be \$20 a Member, and \$25 per non-Member, unless otherwise indicated.</p>		
<p>Goethe-Institut address 90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)</p>		



Committee 2010 - 2011

President	Jane Mathews	9360 9822
Vice President	Leona Geeves	9337 6978
Vice President & Newsletter Editor	Terence Watson	8097 9797
Treasurer & Membership Secretary	Dennis Mather	0413 156 700 or 9560 1860
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	Peter Murray	wagner_nsw@optusnet.com.au
	Mike Day	0413 807 533
	Paulo Montoya	0405 196 085
Public Officer	Alasdair Beck	9358 3922

President's Report continued

2013, of course, will be a standout year for all Wagnerians, being the bicentenary of the Master's birth. We are organising some major events to celebrate the occasion. Current proposals feature the following events:

- A Wagnerian concert, probably to be held in March 2013, featuring the Sydney Youth Orchestra and Lisa Gasteen;
- The Sydney Chamber Opera will be putting on a new chamber opera, which will in effect be an adaptation of parts of Act 11 of Parsifal; this promises to be absolutely fascinating;
- The Society will be sponsoring 2 MBS FM in playing all ten of Wagner's mature operas; and
- On the actual birthday, on Wednesday 22 May, we will be organising a full-scale celebratory dinner in the evening, at a venue which is yet to be determined. We would welcome suggestions as to an appropriate venue for the occasion.

All of this, of course, costs money. We have a reasonable amount in our donations fund, but we will need quite a lot more in order to achieve our objectives over the next year or so. I would request that any of you who have any ideas as to how we can raise funds for these projects, please get in touch with me or with one of the other committee members. We would greatly appreciate your suggestions.

The high point of 2013 will undoubtedly be the three Ring Cycles in Melbourne in November/December, which promises to be a truly extraordinary event. Indeed, the May edition of "Opera Now" contains an assessment of the 5 best Rings on offer in 2013: a year which will be positively bulging with Ring Cycles around the world. The five are: Berlin's co-production with La Scala, Milan; Frankfurt; Seattle; Paris.....and MELBOURNE. No mention of Bayreuth!!

Speaking of the Melbourne Ring, there was so much enthusiasm amongst our members to support the Ring and to obtain good seats, that we raised a total of \$42,000 in donations for Opera Australia. This means that your Society is now not only the proud sponsor of Deborah Humble, who will be singing both Erda and Waltraute, but also of a Wagner tuba....

which will have to be specially made for the occasion. We are hoping that Debbie Humble will be able to come to Sydney and entertain us during rehearsal time, but I'm not so sure about the Wagner tuba!

There are many thanks I would like to make. First, to the extremely active committee, which has worked so hard over the past year. The amount of energy which has been generated is truly amazing. You would be staggered at the number of emails which swing between committee members. We are losing two of our members today. I have already mentioned Katie French. The other one is our long-standing vice-president, Julian Block, who has put so much into the Society over such a long period. We owe him an enormous debt of gratitude.

The other office-bearers have been incredible, as have the committee members. I must particularly mention the other vice-president, Terence Watson, who has done such an impressive job of editing and putting out our newsletter on a regular basis. And I am still in awe of the time and energy that Roger Cruickshank has put into the Society over the years. I had absolutely no idea, when I took over as President last year, of the amount of work that was involved. Believe me, it takes a great deal of your time. And I have had the benefit of a much expanded committee

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to assist me. How Roger did it I still do not know. And he continues to put a huge amount of work and wisdom into the Society's affairs. I don't like to think of where the Society would be now without Roger Cruickshank.

The one negative event in the past 12 months was the sudden and totally unexpected decision by the authorities at Bayreuth to cease their previous practice of allocating Festival tickets to Wagner Societies. A number of protest letters were written to the authorities by various Wagner Societies around the world. We wrote one on behalf of all Australian and New Zealand societies, and a strong letter was written on behalf of all North American societies. So

far this has been to no avail, but we have not given up yet. There is a very small number of tickets available from the Friends, but this is completely inadequate to meet even a fraction of the demand from our members. So watch this space, but I have to say that it is a matter of very significant concern.

My final expression of gratitude in this report is to Renata and Herman Junker, who have generously provided the refreshments after each of our meetings. These are of an extremely high order, and they wonderfully set off the stimulating presentations our Events Sub-committee has been organising.

Wagner 2013 Bicentenary Donation Appeal

2013 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Richard Wagner and will be a significant international musical occasion. The Wagner Society hopes to pledge major support for the 2013 Wagner Bicentenary Celebrations. To achieve this, we have set up a 'Wagner 2013 Fund' and we need your support to help make this possible.

Making a donation to the 'Wagner 2013 Fund' will ensure the Society's contributions to the celebrations will be world class. We are considering a number of possible exciting projects. One of them involves supporting a major international artist participating in Opera Australia's Ring performances in November and December 2013. We will also continue to promote the life and works of Richard Wagner through performances and events in Sydney.

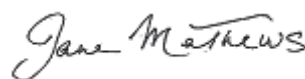
Donations are fully tax-deductible and can be made by cheque or money order by direct debit; details of the Society's bank account and postal address are given below.

BANK DETAILS

Westpac Banking Corporation,
Paddington NSW Branch
Account Name: The Wagner Society
BSB: 032040
Account Number: 911323

Our postal address is:
GPO Box 4574
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Thank you for considering this request for support - any donation to the Wagner Society's 'Wagner 2013 Fund' will make a difference.



The Hon Jane Mathews AO
President
Wagner Society in New South Wales

THE DONATION FORM IS PRINTED ON THE INSIDE BACK COVER OF THE NEWSLETTER

or can be downloaded at the Society's Website:

www.wagner.org.au/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=84&Itemid=68

Donations

The Society welcomes all donations and they can be addressed to the Treasurer, Wagner Society in NSW Inc, at the Society's GPO Box address shown on the back page of this Newsletter. Such donations help us to carry out our objective "to promote the music of Richard Wagner and to encourage a wider appreciation of the significance of his achievements." Donations are tax-deductible and receipts will be issued. The following donations have been received to the end of May 2012: Wendy Ashton; F. John Augustus and Kim Ryrie; Philip Bacon; Carole Bailey; Marlene and Paul Baumgartner; Jane and Philip Beeby; Ms Patricia Bellamy and Ms Carolyn Bloch; Phillip Bennett; Julian and Rosemary Block; Barbara and Ian Brady; Gabriella Bremner-Moore and Michael Moore; Frances Butcher; Mr Neil & Dr Marcia Cameron; John Casey; Maurice Cashmere; Ann Casimir; E/Prof Michael Chesterman; Rae and Russ Cottle; Alexander Cozzolino; Roger Cruickshank; Michael Day; Heinz Ebert; Jenny Edwards; Clive Evatt; Jennifer Ferns; Brian Freestone and Charles Brady; Ingrid Garofali; Richard Gastineau-Hills; Nance Grant MBE; Hugh Hallard; Alan Hauserman and Janet Nash; Margaret and Clare Hennessy; Patricia and Roy Hodson; Glenn Horne and Rujjiraporn Ekpunyaskul; Theo Hudson; Anthony Jones and Julian Liga; Gillian and Brian Jones; Naomi Kaldor; Despina and Iphygenia Kallinikos; Susan Kelly; Richard King; Julie King; Hannelore Laundl; Gary Linnane; Juliet Lockhart; Erin Flaherty and David Maloney; Jennifer Manton; Libby Manuel; Jane Mathews AO; Phillip McEachran; Pam and Ian McGaw; Mary Meppem; Patricia Moore; Kate Nockels; Diana-Rose Orr; Neville Pollard; Kenneth Reed; Garry Richards; Heather and Peter Roland; Lorraine Royds; Mitzi Saunders; David and Daniella Shannon; Ivan Shearer AM; Peter Geoffrey Stephens; Tony and Rosalind Strong; Douglas Sturkey; Richard Toltz and Doreen Toltz; Isolde Tornya; David Triggs; Terence Watson; Ann Weedon; Flora and John Weickhardt; Ross Whitelaw; Gary Wilson; Kylie Winkworth; Anna Ziegler.



In Memorium: **Dietrich** Fisher-Diskau

28 May 1925 -18 May 2012

Compiled by Terence Watson

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, 86, a renowned baritone died in his sleep Friday at his home in the southern German city of Starnberg. Born May 28, 1925, in Berlin, Fischer-Dieskau studied music until he was drafted into the German army in 1943. After he became an American prisoner of war in Italy in 1945, he gave recitals at military camps. He quickly rose to prominence after World War II, beginning in 1947 with a concert of lieder, or art songs, and at the Berlin opera (for example, Hans Sachs under Eugen Jochum during the 1975-76 season). He soon became a fixture at European opera houses. He also performed at Germany's annual Wagner opera festival in Bayreuth from 1954 to 1956 as the Herald (Lohengrin), Wolfram (Tannhäuser), Kothner (Meistersinger) and Amfortas (Parsifal), and had appeared 123 times since 1951 at Austria's Salzburg Festival. Fischer-Dieskau ended his long career, during which he also worked as conductor and writer, with a farewell concert in Munich in 1992. One of Fischer-Dieskau's first and most moving portrayals on disc was as Kurwenal in Wilhelm Furtwängler's legendary 1952 recording of *Tristan und Isolde*.

He recorded all the songs of Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Hugo Wolf and Strauss suitable for a male voice. He worked on them first with Gerald Moore, doyen of pure accompanists, and then was partnered by a host of distinguished solo pianists and the conductor Wolfgang Sawallisch, each of whom inspired him to refreshingly new insights. This truly incredible output was the result of an inquiring mind, an insatiable desire to tackle any and every song he could find, and to be a proselytiser for the art of lieder and singing in general, all these underlined by an instinctive wish to achieve perfection in his craft. More than that, he was an inspiration to the vast number of singers who have followed his example in this field, and made the singing of lieder a common experience.

Fischer-Dieskau... had one of the most sublime baritone voices ever to grace the concert platform or opera house; he was also a towering musical intellect and a crucial cultural figure in the post-war reconstruction of Germany and its rehabilitation within the international community. Onstage, he projected a masculine sensitivity informed by a cultivated upbringing and by dispiriting losses in World War II: the destruction of his family home, the death of his feeble brother in a Nazi institution, induction into the Wehrmacht when he had scarcely begun his voice studies at the Berlin Conservatory. ...it was wholly appropriate that, in 1971, he became the first German musician to perform in the state of Israel. He was no less significant in the reconciliation between Britain and Germany. Thanks to his warm friendship with the pacifist composer Benjamin Britten, Fischer-Dieskau was the baritone soloist in the premiere of the composer's *War Requiem* in the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral in 1962.

His style was, however, idiosyncratic and controversial. While nobody disputed the thoughtfulness of his musicianship, his supremely sensitive colouring of text, his subtle sense of rhythm or his immaculate breath control, many found his delivery over-artful and lacking in simplicity and spontaneity. His Wagner lacked the power of his older contemporary Hans Hotter, while his Verdi never achieved a truly Italianate legato line. The French critic Roland Barthes wrote a famous essay deploring "the perfection of his cultured expressiveness" and complained that his singing seemed to draw "only on his lungs — never the tongue, the glottis, the teeth, the mucous membranes, the nose".

Gerald Moore once wrote that Fischer-Dieskau "lives music, thinks music, talks music", but he also had many incidental interests, reflecting his wide reading and breadth of culture. He wrote or compiled 10 books, including his memoirs (translated as *Echoes of a Lifetime*, published in 1989), a critique of the relationship between Wagner and Nietzsche, and several studies of the song repertory.

"He has deeply moved countless people around world for more than half a century through hundreds of concerts and recordings," German Culture Minister Bernd Neumann said. Neumann said Fischer-Dieskau's recordings of works by composers such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Schubert and Richard Strauss have set benchmarks for generations of singers to come, adding that his famous representation of Schubert's "Winterreise (Winter Journey)" remains unforgettable. Lev Bratishenko, classical music critic at the *Montreal Gazette*: "One of my earliest musical memories is hearing Fischer-Dieskau sing *Der Atlas* and involuntarily curling into the fetal position, half from terror and half in awe at the beauty of his voice. I may have even fallen off the chair."

The above report is compiled from information in the following online news reports:

Los Angeles Times <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/may/20/local/la-me-passings-20120520>

The Guardian www.guardian.co.uk/music/2012/may/18/dietrich-fischer-dieskau

The Telegraph www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/culture-obituaries/music-obituaries/9275911/Dietrich-Fischer-Dieskau.html

New York Times www.nytimes.com/2012/05/19/arts/music/dietrich-fischer-dieskau-german-baritone-dies-at-86.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all

CBC Music <http://music.cbc.ca/#/blogs/2012/5/Fans-react-to-the-death-of-Fischer-Dieskau-86>

The Independent www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/dietrich-fischerdieskau-baritone-hailed-as-the-greatest-lieder-singer-of-the-20th-century-7766909.html

AAP Berlin www.tributes.com/show/Dietrich-Fischer-Dieskau-93818783



Great Wagner Conductors: A Listener's Companion - **Jonathan Brown** - Two Reviews

Canberra: Parrot Press, 2012, ISBN 9780987155603,
AUD \$59.95. 800 pages.

We are privileged to have two reviews of this, probably unique, book by an Australian Wagner enthusiast. The two reviews complement each other to give us a comprehensive assessment of the value of this contribution to Wagner studies - Editor.

REVIEW BY LOUIS GARRICK

Great Wagner Conductors, by retired lawyer and Australian diplomat Jonathan Brown, is a lengthy (c.800-page) general interest volume on twenty-two conductors who specialised in Wagner, from Wagner's time to the 1960s. In the preface Brown acknowledges he is neither a musician nor a musicologist; he is a listener writing for other listeners. In other words, it is a book written by an obsessive enthusiast.

The choice of conductors is mostly even-handed and intelligent. Balanced across generations and geographies, they range from Wagner's immediate disciples, such as Hans von Bülow and Hans Richter, to more recent household names like Otto Klemperer and Karl Böhm, to less familiar names like Albert Coates and Karl Muck, who predated the golden age of operatic recording. Curiously, Brown includes two conductors who have, despite their stature in twentieth-century music, not been remembered for their Wagner, Arturo Toscanini and (composer) Richard Strauss.

Brown has attempted to handle the topic in a more sophisticated way than might have been expected. The conductors are ordered roughly chronologically, and, within that, sub-grouped into geographies and schools of thought. But the individual chapters are not simple biographical profiles. Each chapter is structured so that it unfolds Wagner opera by Wagner opera rather than describing the conductor's career year by year. There are detailed listings of the conductor's performances of Wagner (which opera, which house, when), and woven through these listings is extensive discussion of the conductor's stylistic characteristics and tendencies and what unique approach he brought to Wagner's music. It is a sophisticated approach that, to this reviewer's knowledge, has not been attempted before.

But Brown fails to follow through on the ambition. It is when he attempts to go into depth outlining the traits and idiosyncrasies of these legendary conductors that the book becomes unstuck. He draws on a range of primary sources to do this, for example, reviews from newspapers and music periodicals and personal correspondence of the conductors in which they give an insight into their opinions on Wagner. He also says he exhaustively researched historical recordings to help guide his discussion (a comprehensive discography of them is provided—the most fascinating part of the book). Although it makes for engaging reading, it is not clear what the precise methodology was or what criteria were used for assessing the relevance of primary sources or recordings. Reviews and personal letters need to be carefully and critically contextualised, but here they were not. And as for recordings, it is not satisfactory for the reader to have to simply accept Brown's subjective opinions about whether they are good or not. Brown is not very rigorous and it would seem that his approach to this

topic is simply too ambitious for a general interest book; it requires the tools of a professional musicologist to paint a deep and convincing picture of a long-dead conductor's output.

Some might also question the idea of talking about a conductor's career only in terms of Wagner. All twenty-two of the conductors in the volume conducted other music, and surely we could learn a lot about their approach to Wagner by understanding their approach to other music, their repertoire choices, their opinions of performance practice in general, their opinions on Beethoven, Brahms and Bruckner, indeed, their general taste in music, and so on. Again, the lack of contextualisation is concerning and one wonders whether taking the safer route of writing twenty-two biographical profiles of these conductors, with an emphasis on their Wagner, would have been more successful than what has been attempted.

REVIEW BY COLIN BASKERVILLE

A LISTENER'S COMPANION SENDS COLIN BASKERVILLE TO CANBERRA, BUENOS AIRES, HOLLYWOOD, DRESDEN AND BAYREUTH

This remarkable book with chapters on twenty-three conductors was written in Canberra and in a riverside cabin in the Snowy Mountains well away from the distinguished opera houses performing Wagner operas. His selection of conductors was limited to those born in the 19th Century in the shadow of the composer himself and his heritage and with major careers conducting Wagner operas.

Many opera lovers consider singers first before the conductors. Two Australian singers who feature in the book, Florence Austral and Marjorie Lawrence, are honoured with a portrait and photographs in the National Portrait Gallery. They excelled in Wagner roles. The tyranny of distance resulted in few Australian Wagner opera goers attending live performances in distant lands before the Age of Jumbo Jets and DVDs. Florence Austral's career at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden was long before BBC Radio would transmit live performances. BBC Radio received the Royal Charter to operate from 1927; by comparison Radio Argentina transmitted from Buenos Aires in 1920. Brown's Discography itemizes her studio recordings with the Russian/English conductor Albert Coates. Very few tracks have been transferred to CD.

It is important to understand that the primitive recording technology permitted segments of approximately four minutes. For this reason the listener heard highlights only from Wagner's operas. The author is very brave in assessing the conductors on the basis of listening to primitive discs and reading published reports of the time.

Occasionally the conductors perform in other media: for example, Albert Coates appeared briefly as a pianist in the movie *Song of Russia* (1944) and



conducts a Concerto for Index Finger in the movie *Two Girls and a Sailor* (1944). The internet website YouTube includes audio tracks of Coates conducting Wagner highlights with Lauritz Melchior and Frida Leider. Many of the discs outlined in the Discographies come from private collections. For example, Coates conducts Frederick Schorr in significant Wagner arias on Hänssler Classic CD 94.512. The Quintet from *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* includes Schorr (Sachs), Elisabeth Schumann (Eva) and Lauritz Melchior (Walther). The legendary recording of Wilhelm Furtwängler conducting the opera at Bayreuth in 1943 excludes the Quintet.

The book is a treasure chest for listeners who love delving into discographies of great Wagner maestros. As a matter of course there will be re-releases, restoration and transfers. The author must be commended for his incredible attention to detail and command of the breadth of recordings from the formative years of sound technology. The required research skills in different languages are daunting. The results the author achieved in his dealings with a variety of institutions, libraries and individuals are a major communication triumph.

The second Australian singer mentioned above, Marjorie Lawrence, comes from a different time. By 1936 microphones, new recording equipment and enthusiastic sound technicians are able to record complete operas. These recordings are fraught with technical limitations such as audio interference. Ward Marston, the renowned historical audio technician, remastered the Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires performance of *Parsifal* on the 22 September, 1936. CD: Marston 53003-2 (2002). This is the first complete recording of the opera. Marjorie Lawrence sings Kundry alongside Rene Maison as Parsifal and Alexander Kipnis as Gurnemanz. On 17 September she sang Ortrud in *Lohengrin* and on 19 September she sang Senta in *Der fliegende Holländer*. It is a major recording event to have her singing three complete Wagner roles. Yes, the operas are slightly abridged, but audiences then shied away from complete performances especially at the Metropolitan Opera, New York. She sings in the 1936 Metropolitan Opera *Götterdämmerung* currently available on the Naxos CD label. She is one of the few Australian musicians to be the subject of a full biopic by Hollywood, *Interrupted Melody* starring Eleanor Parker and sung by Eileen Farrell, (M.G.M, 1955).

Fritz Busch was the conductor of all three operas, and is the subject of Chapter 16, "Fritz Busch—Wagnerian cast adrift". Busch's assessment of the above **Parsifal** performance is quoted at length on page 418 where he notes the "dramatic changes of tempo and dynamics". There is a perception that Cosima Wagner dictated speeds to Wagner conductors at Bayreuth. Felix Weingartner claimed he was free of her influence. The author includes an informative **List of Timings** from pages 768 to 781. This confirms the opinion that early Wagner conductors hurried up whereas many conductors today go slowly. Fritz Busch is known for his work in the early days of the Glyndebourne Festival in England. The historic Mozart recordings from these performances are currently in print on CD and treasured by collectors.

you read Brown's chapter on Fritz Busch you discover that Busch conducted *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in Bayreuth in 1924. Brown's meticulous research is able to examine extensive media reporting from these Bayreuth performances. Presumably Siegfried Wagner heard him conduct the work or read about the Dresden performances before he issued the invitation to conduct at Bayreuth.

Fritz Busch conducted in Dresden from 1922 to 1933. He conducted 162 Wagner performances including fifty Meistersingers and twenty-five Tristans. He opened the season with Wagner operas in eight out of eleven opening nights. This shows the popularity of Wagner operas with the public at the time. A footnote mentions a book by Foerster, *Fritz Busch* where Richard Strauss's 1933 conducting of *Tristan und Isolde* in Dresden is compared with that of Fritz Busch's. Dresden, of course, is where Wagner himself conducted and the subject of an extensive Chapter 1 "The Case of Richard Wagner", pages 3 to 52. This contains an invaluable compilation of views about Wagner in action, conducting, staging his operas etc. Wagner's musical legacy is taken seriously in this city.

Jonathan Brown's research skills were sorely tested by the firebombing of Dresden in World War 11. The Staatsoper and Staatskapelle archives located in the city were destroyed. Ironically, excerpts of Fritz Busch conducting the Dresden orchestra in the *Tannhäuser* Overture in a film in 1932 or 1933 have been issued on DVD, p 627.

The Teatro Colon employed another major Wagner conductor Erich Kleiber, the subject of Chapter 17 "Erich Kleiber—Universal conductor", pages 420 to 441. Here "the pace is electrifying, Kleiber is truly in the company of Coates and Bodansky", page 439. By good fortune Max Lorenz's singing of *Siegfried* excerpts in a live performance at the Teatro Colon on 4 October 1938 has been issued on CD and DVD, page 678. Once again the conductor's contribution has been rescued because of interest in the singer. The DVD "Max Lorenz: Hitler's Mastersinger" was recently shown to members before a meeting of the Wagner Society in New South Wales.

Karl Böhm who took over the Dresden position possibly because of Nazi sympathies in 1933 is the subject of Chapter 20, "Karl Böhm: Light at the end", pages 493 to 516. His Bayreuth CD recordings of *The Ring* and *Tristan und Isolde* were recently re-issued. He also conducts *Tristan und Isolde* on DVD as late as 1973 but in a windswept, open air festival staging from Orange, France. Birgit Nilsson, his Isolde, can be seen in the *Liebestod* on a DVD conducted by Hans Knappertsbusch in the Wiener Festwochen 1962. This was recently re-issued on Arthaus 107 347. The Discography lists a Japanese video number but it is notoriously difficult to keep a reference book up to date. Newsreels captured fragments of famous conductors but these are difficult to find. Again: try YouTube!

The author warns the reader that "music criticism in Germany and Austria between 1933 and 1945, when many great conductors were active, has been included sparingly, tainted as it was by extraneous matters of cultural correctness or nationalism." page xvii. Nevertheless the author has done a remarkable, painstaking, job in assessing reviews in three Continents (Europe, South and North America).

At first it is a surprise to read about the triumphs in Buenos Aires; but, then, when



The EMI Great Conductors of the 20th Century Series of CDs quite simply states the conductor's date of birth to date of death (x –y). This information would have been helpful to the reader; also, it might have avoided some perhaps inevitable errors. It seems churlish to note such inaccuracies when the author has done a masterful job of scholarship and persistence to follow up the minutiae of performances and recordings.

Hans Knappertsbusch is the Bayreuth conductor par excellence. His live performances were recorded by Bavarian Radio as well as famous name record companies such as Decca. The sheer number of recorded performances is amazing compared to the limited number of audio offerings from Bayreuth today. These were facilitated by the use of tape and superior German sound recording equipment.

This book is a major achievement, drawing our attention to a wealth of great Wagner conductors and their recorded legacy. It is no surprise that international sales have been brisk. The author's research energy has been prodigious.

There are other conductors who gave memorable performances of individual operas. For example, Artur Rodzinsky (1892-1958) conducted Kirsten Flagstad as Isolde with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. This performance occupies a special place in the memories of opera goers fortunate enough to have attended. Rodzinsky's complete live recording of *Tannhäuser* from Italy is highly regarded by connoisseurs.

After plunging into the author's extraordinary world of *Great Wagner Conductors* readers eagerly await a follow-up volume covering the Great Wagner Conductors of Today.

Another Very Special Wagner Society Event

- Katie French and Editor

Damien Beaumont, ABC-FM's week day presenter of the popular program, 'Afternoons', entertained members at the Goethe Institut on Sunday, 17 June, with his reading of the script 'Sins of the Father', written by London author, Jessica Duchon. It explored the story of Franz Liszt, his daughter Cosima, and her eventual marriage to Richard Wagner. The long-time relationship of Liszt and Wagner eventually turned sour, not only when Wagner stole Liszt's daughter (at the time married to the conductor Hans von Bulow), but when he reputedly stole a musical phrase, which he then turned into a five-hour opera. We heard musical illustrations from the works of both composers, including Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder*, and Liszt's piano transcription of the *Liebtestod* from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and his own song 'O lieb, so lang du lieben kannst'.

Damien trained as a bass-baritone at the Elder Conservatorium of Music in Adelaide with our second guest on this afternoon, mezzo soprano Deborah Humble. We also heard Damien in his other role, as presenter, in conversation with his former colleague, Deborah Humble. Born in Wales, Deborah received her music education in Australia. After graduating from the Elder Conservatorium, University of Adelaide with a Bachelor of Music Performance, she went on to study at the Victorian College of The Arts, University of Melbourne and the Australian Catholic University where she graduated with a Master of Music. She was a Young Artist at the Victoria State Opera in 1995. In 2008 Deborah was a finalist in the International Wagner competition held in Seattle. Future engagements include five roles in two further Ring Cycles in Hamburg, four roles in the Melbourne Ring, *Brigitta (Die Tode Stadt)* for Opera Australia, *Pauline (The Queen of Spades)* for Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ashkenazy, *Durufle's Requiem* and Constant Lambert's *Rio Grande* for Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Catherine (*Jean d'Arc au Boucher* by Honegger) for the Gulbenkian Orchestra in Lisbon and Erda in *Siegfried* at the Theater am Rhein, Ludwigshafen.

The highly entertaining and informative discussion covered much ground in Deborah's blossoming career as a Wagnerian mezzo-soprano. Among many witty anecdotes, Deborah recounted how the "Welt-Ashe," ("a plastic bonsai" in Deborah's words – see the photograph on the cover), fell over as she watered it with the Great Watering Can during the dress rehearsal. It rolled down the stage into the orchestra pit. Deborah was mightily relieved when the conductor, our patron, Simone Young burst into laughter. More seriously, Deborah reminded us how hard a struggle it is to break into the international scene, how much hard work is involved in learning roles and new productions, and how many sacrifices have to be made to succeed. Damien's thoughtful leading questions – and sometimes wry comments – enabled Deborah to range over her whole career so far – one that clearly is heading towards greater roles and opera houses around the world. Deborah's typical Australian humour showed itself many times, but perhaps culminated with the story of the reception after singing Catherine in a Lisbon production of *Jean d'Arc au Boucher* by Honegger, conducted by Simone Young. As they sipped champagne on the French ambassador's terrace, Simone opined "Who would have thought two Aussie chics would ever be here in a place like this!" To celebrate this notable achievement they had another champagne. It can be safely asserted that all the members of the audience are now looking forward to many future opportunities to hear Deborah singing Wagner roles (Brangäne and Fricka are in the wings!).



1813 Wagner & Verdi: A Celebration By Peter Bassett

- Katie French

What follows is a commentary: it is neither a deep musicological nor historical investigation, nor a review. It is a very personal response to a book which describes itself as 'A celebration'.

Visually gorgeous, this publication should come with a warning: BEWARE – it is as seductive as Venusberg, as tantalising as the Flower Maidens, and as splendid to the eye, and the inner ear, as the Grand March from *Aida*. It looks like a 'celebration'- in its coffee-table format, its festive scarlet cover, and its wonderful photographs, both front and back. If it sounds like a potential gift (either for someone you love, or for yourself), it should be. (The book's Designer is Evasio Spagnuolo – could there be a more 'operatic-sounding' name? And he, and author, Peter Bassett, have done wonderful things with the way this book looks, so that it more easily-accessible and appealing to a reader, who will want to dip into it time and time again.)

A highlight is the artwork. If you've had enough reading about the composers' lives and historical times, gaze at the illustrations – everything from lithographs, to vase-portraits, production photographs, to stage sets. There are costume designs, medieval manuscripts, sculptures, and scenes from opera films, tiles from byzantine bath-houses, and magnificent architecture – and portraits of all the key players. One really appealing aspect of the production photographs is that so many of them are 'local'. There is Bruce Martin as Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger* for The Australian Opera in 1993. There is a wonderful reminder of Bryn Terfel's performance as Falstaff for Opera Australia, and a splendid photo of Elizabeth Campbell in the role of a formidable Azucena in the 1996 *Il trovatore*. Sadly, a less than flattering portrait of the (in reality) very pretty Deborah Riedel as Amelia in OA's *Un ballo in maschera*.

There are delightful little boxed 'asides' and side stories—details about E.T.A Hoffmann, or the difference between 'typhus' and 'typhoid'! There are also maps, so essential in books about history, but sadly, the maps are small, as is their print size, with little differentiation in colours, so that they are difficult to interpret. The book also has a very detailed Contents page, but personally, this never compensates for the lack of a good Index in a book. It means, for example, that a reader cannot follow up fascinating, little-known works like Wagner's *Columbus Overture* – all that survives of the incidental music written by a youthful Wagner for a work by his dramatist friend, Guido Theodore Apel. (It also means that discarded, but intriguing works – like *Jesus of Nazareth* or *Achilles* are hard to find.)

The Introduction is conversational in style, and suggests the composers will receive an even-handed approach. The written text in the body of the work is structured logically and helpfully, with many useful sub-headings – the lives of both composers paralleled, juxtaposed, compared and contrasted, both

their biographies, their philosophies, and their works outlined in chronological progression. The history is made relevant, both to the composers' sense of national self, as well as their artistic consciousness.

Each opera of their operas is set within both an historical and biographical context. Detailed synopses are provided - for Wagner's operas by the author, for Verdi's operas from a variety of sources, including Charles Osbourne's *The Complete Operas of Verdi*, Roger Parker's *The New Grove Guide to Verdi and His Operas*, and *The New Penguin Opera Guide* edited by Amanda Holden. Boxed comments on many of the early operas outline their initial reception by both authorities and censors, as well as audiences. Some are fascinating. The title of Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco* (Joan of Arc), was altered to *Orietta di Lesbo* after interference by the Papal Censor, Orietta, the re-named heroine, now of Genoese descent, leading the Lesbians into battle against the Turks!

The section on Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* encapsulates the appeal of this book, and shows how and why it 'works'. Visually, the chapter commences beautifully, with an historical set design for Act III of the opera, a delightful fifteenth-century woodcut of Nuremberg, and a Romantic painting of Walther von der Vogelweide from Neuschwanstein Castle. Then come the author's brief Summary of the narrative, a Synopsis of each Act, and an illuminating musical analysis of the structure of the opera's Prelude. The reader is then treated to pictorial examples of the composer's 'thieving magpie'- approach to his works; the Procession of the Guilds with their Banners in Nuremberg – something that, in fact, had been 'borrowed' from Zurich Festivals, there being no craft guilds in Nuremberg after 1394 it seems! (What a witty insight into Wagner's nature.) Then, there is a return to serious business with an explanation of Wagner's intentions with this opera – his wish to embody the rules which drove his art, countermand his critics, and show that he could be the master of traditional musical forms like the chorale, the toccata and the quintet, as well as compose trail-blazing operas like *Tristan und Isolde*. The rest of the Chapter is wisely gathered under headings in the form of rhetorical questions – perfect 'carrots' for readers who, by now, may be wilting under the information: 'Who is Beckmesser?', 'Is Beckmesser a Jewish Caricature?', 'Is Beckmesser a caricature of Hanslick?'. It is clever organisation and presentation.

The book is full of charming anecdotes, like that of the Wagner's ignominious escape from both creditors and critics in Riga, accompanied by their aptly named Newfoundland dog, Robber. (Like Master: like Dog!) And a depiction of Verdi as the very Model of a Modern Man of Property, not only a Member of Parliament, but a successful landowner and farmer, and purveyor of his own fine pork products, stamped with his own 'GV' brand! In fact, in the section on *La Traviata*, there is a



fascinating parallel between the lives and loves of Violetta and Alfredo, and Verdi and his mistress, the former soprano, Giuseppina Strepponi. Verdi's first wife's father even makes an appearance – Germont-like. However, for Verdi, there is a happy ending.

Not all is light-hearted. There is good, original food for thought, for example in the author's proposing that the fate of the Dutchman, in the eponymous opera, results from his hubristic and defiant spirit of discovery, which 'transgresses the boundaries of knowledge and experience laid down by the Bible and the church' (p69), (a more succinct explanation than many will have read for a long time.)

With the author's reputation for extensive knowledge of Wagner's life and operas, readers may well ask how Verdi fares. Wagner certainly arrives in the world to the greatest fanfare: in the author's words, 'Vivaldi's birth, it was said, had been heralded by an earthquake; Wagner

entered this world to the sound of gunfire'. Verdi's birth is a 'mystery;' however, he exits more splendidly, with Toscanini leading the orchestra of La Scala, and a chorus of 820 in 'Va, pensiero' from *Nabucco*, and a procession of the representatives of the House of Savoy following the funeral car of black and gold.

Is there any discernible favouritism? The chapter which precedes *Parsifal*, is entitled enigmatically, 'Verdi's *Aida* – the perfect opera?' Teasingly, it is a rhetorical question that the author never answers! With 2013 fast approaching, and with it, the Bicentenary of the births of both Wagner and Verdi, we should be delighted to have been presented by Peter Bassett with such a sumptuous record of their lives. It invites us all to join in – a Celebration.

Footnote: As outlined earlier, this commentary has been very much a personal response. I'm sure all Members of the Wagner Society would appreciate it if those who have more musicological and/or historical knowledge would also contribute their responses to the Newsletter.

Cameron Menzies - Report:

Berlin New Music Opera Award 2011 - Opera Foundation Australia (And Wagner Society In NSW Travel Award) and Der Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service - DAAD)

25 October 2011 - December 132011; Berlin, Germany

On arrival to Berlin I met with the following people at DAAD, Ms Katharina Narbutovic (Leiterin des Berliner Künstlerprogramms), Arien Beyn and Ingrid Beirer.

The DAAD provided me with all sorts of information about art and new music and new opera composition showings while I was in Berlin. They have a frill program of events that were open to me attending as well. They were exceptionally helpful on arrival and pointed me in the right direction to find more new opera showings than any opera company websites were able to provide.

DAAD is an integral point to have in Berlin as I found the ladies to be utterly helpful and through these DAAD events I met contemporary artists and composers who were in collaborations for new opera and new music. I was able to tap into the "underground" of independent new opera composition and this was exactly what I was interested in finding out about and experiencing how a country's composers were operating out of the mainstream houses.

Klangwerkstatt - Festival für Neue Musik

I worked with Berlin opera composer Laurie Schwartz on a new workshop of her piece *The Tides meets the Shores*. Looking into the use of new opera with pre recorded sounds and pre recorded voice with live components as well. This process with Laurie was delving into and opening up artistic dialogues between how this opera was to be conceptualized, and how as director and composer we approach the music and the drama and

how the "canon" of mainstream repertoire influences and informs this piece.

Interestingly, the combination of form and content and the powerful effective use of these two theatrical devices allowed us as the artists to perform our roles with a freedom and to push the narrative both musically and directionally. Laurie is very experienced and knowledgeable about main stream repertoire opera and as such was very happy to break the so called "rules" of opera to see if new boundaries can be accessed and then as a director my part in this process was to monitor and form how this translates through a space to an audience. The audience was of utmost importance to both of us as I felt and now feel more so since these experiences in new opera that unless you are affecting an audience you may as well be producing opera in a vacuum.

I am still in contact with Laurie and also people within the new opera compositional world in Berlin and we are in conversations about working on future projects there and hopefully in Australia. Gaining a foothold into this network was a very important part of my time in Berlin. Talking with composers and directors and producers at grass roots in the independent world of opera production was a huge reason why I wanted to be in Berlin. I found that seeing as the bigger opera companies such as Staatsoper, Deutsche Oper and even the Komische Oper have such tight funding problems after the GFC in 2008, that there is a real push to be a little more narrative based and less 'regie theatre' and



this has had a real impact on new opera composition in Berlin. The independent scene is thriving as the companies are being more and more cautious.

However what companies such as the Staatsoper are doing is looking into a lot of educational opera and creating opera programs for youth and children. The piece I was a part of with Mi Askin was based in guided song writing with selected youth groups and schools and then taken through story telling such as (beginning, middle and end while making sure there is conflict in the story), looking at arias, duets, trio, quartets, recit and dialogue and then forming an opera based on their own work. Once a piece was set, it was then handed over to a director/theatre maker and professional singers (generally young artists) to perform the work for the children who had created their own piece. Watching the impact of such a process with children having total investment in the piece as well as pride and ownership has the possibility to engage a young opera audience for the future of these companies. It seems to be a generally held thought that young audiences are more willing and exposed to opera in Germany than in Australia, but companies in Germany are also struggling and concerned with producing an opera audience for the future and providing new operas created by the audience is an inventive way to address this issue.

I am very keen to produce such a work here in Australia using these ideas and process I have gained while in Berlin. New opera composition, created by the audience, for the audience is surely a way of keeping opera alive, relevant and potent for Australian audiences as well. I have had initial talks with Victorian Opera about this process and will keep talking to them to see if I can get a program like this happening in Australia.

Directorial processes and conceptualization especially in new opera within Germany is particularly filtered for a German audience. Even if a company like the Komische Oper when it is producing something like the contemporary French piece by Poulenc Dialogue of the Carmelites (1953), it is visually produced so that an audience with a German sensibility can instantly engage visually with the piece even sometimes before they engage with the music. This "cultural filtering" seems to be something that has not really reached Australia. Working on the scientific principle that light travels faster than sound...this visual engagement seems to be very important especially in new works where the audience may take a little longer to aurally connect than they do visually.

I believe I am putting into practice this very principle into my upcoming work here in Australia. I am working on a new opera called *Contact*, being produced by The Arts Centre Melbourne and a new work commissioned by the Malthouse Theatre called *Redfern*, which is based on the 1992 speech by Prime Minister Keating in Redfern, New South Wales. All of my work is informed with the discussions I had in Berlin and with the people and companies I spent time with and that I have formed ongoing relationships with overseas.

During my time in Berlin I met with renowned composer from New York, Richard Einhorn (Voices of Light and The Origin) and after a few

meetings discussing new opera and our thoughts on how it should be produced, he asked me to read a libretto that he was working on composing called *Romeo and Julia* in Cracow, that had been written by a Polish Librettist Krzysztof Pieczynski. He asked me to look at this piece as a director and to talk to him about my ideas for such a work. After a few meetings Richard and Krzysztof asked me to come on board as the director. This piece is being funded and auspiced through a Polish organization that is federally funded called the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in Warsaw, Poland. They are producing this piece in 2013 and are in talks with Gdansk Opera in Poland to produce it with them. This is all to be confirmed very soon through Gdansk Opera and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute. From winning this very important Berlin New Music Opera Award 2011 I have been able to attain professional directing work in Poland on a new contemporary opera in 2013. This certainly would not have happened if I was not in Berlin working on and researching and being allowed to immerse myself in the world of new opera composition in Berlin.

I am very thankful to the Board of Opera Foundation Australia, DAAD, the audition panel Ms Margaret Baker-Genovesi, Ms Anke Höppner and Mr Anson Austin, General Manager Alison Cole and to the sponsors of this very special and unique award, Suzanne & Anthony Maple-Brown and The Wagner Society.

To gain an international credit directing a new opera in Poland is truly an unexpected outcome, but one that I will certainly cherish and to my utmost to build on. This would not have been possible without the generosity of sponsors and the vision of General Manager Alison Cole championing such an award. I will of course keep Opera Foundation Australia up to date with the progress of my work here in Australia and overseas.

Cameron Menzies

Stage Director, Head of Direction - The Opera Studio Melbourne; Artistic Director - Opera, City of Stonnington
Berlin New Music Opera Award (Opera Foundation Australia, DAAD. 2011)
Besen Family Artist Program (Direction) Malthouse Theatre (2010)
Bayreuth Opera Award (Opera Foundation Australia, DAAD. 2008)
Robert Gilder International Artist Management
www.robertgilder.com/ArtistDetail.aspx?artist_id=2328&category_id=1019&location_id=3006

New Members

The following people joined the Society since March 2012:

Wendy Ashton [1071]; Beverley Purvis [1070]; Christine Bishop [1068]; Theodore and Patrina Borrer [1073]; Robert Compton Jones [1078]; Professor Christine Deer [1064]; Dermot and Hilary Hatfield [1074]; John and Barbara Hirst [1075]; Cynthia Kaye [1065]; Patricia Keenan [1076]; Barbara Mackelden [1069]; Adrian Read [1077]; David and Daniella Shannon [1067]; Patricia Smith [1066]; Ray Wilson OAM [1072]



2012 Society Sunday Functions So Far

- A Report By Colleen Chesterman And Leona Geeves

Colleen Chesterman

The Wagner Society started the 2012 events program on 5 February, when 46 members and others came to the Goethe Institute to hear a presentation on *The Souffleuse and the Singer: The working relationship between the singer and the prompt*. Dr Robert Mitchell, who sings with the Opera Australia chorus, gave a detailed and lucid description of the role of the prompter, describing how they not only assist singers with the cues for songs but also how they monitor changes in rehearsals, note any adjustments and assist in musical preparation for the cast. The audience was amazed to learn that Opera Australia has dispensed with a prompter. Sharolyn Kimmorley has had a very broad career, but talked specifically about her experiences as a prompter both in Europe and Australia. She wittily described the practical discomforts of the often airless boxes in centre stage above the orchestra. She told some funny stories, for example when she clamped her hands to her face in horror when the orchestra and conductor seemed to part ways, only to see the whole chorus also cover their mouths. Zara Barrett, a recipient of a Society grant for German language courses, then sang, and quite by chance demonstrated how a singer can lose words even in a song she knows well.

On 25 March, 85 members and friends packed the Goethe Institut to meet Melbourne Ring donor Maureen Wheeler and Ring conductor Richard Mills. They were well rewarded. Maureen Wheeler has written in this newsletter in 2011 of her long-lasting love of opera and her passion for Wagner. She described how a friend had given her CDs of *The Ring*, to which she listened enthralled on a flight to London, an extraordinary introduction! Audience members were impressed by her persistence in a long campaign to get a Ring in Australia (she had missed the Rings in Adelaide, but had joined a renaissance tour to New York). She is thrilled to be able to invest some of the proceeds of the sale of *Lonely Planet* to this project.

Richard Mills talked passionately about the musical demands of *The Ring* and his commitment to spending the next two years to studying the score and working with orchestra and singers. He has a new edition of the score and is making a priority of totally familiarising himself with Wagner's German text. The audience was captured by his passion for understanding the importance of breath and pauses, for his description of *The Ring* as a 'portion of eternity' and his commitment to Wagner's harmonic sense. Also important was his determination in caring for the orchestra and singers, from extending the pit, to using rostered concertmasters, to his plans for a long rehearsal time. Later this year we will hear from some of the Ring soloists. Probably later in 2013, Neil Armfield, the director, has agreed to talking to the Society.

Leona Geeves

Heath Lees delighted us with a slide show and musical excerpts, deftly played on the piano, about Wagner and the women in his life and operas. The latter portrayed women and their undoing – they are raped, murdered, they suicide – they are mother, sister, carer and supporter. Since Wagner dictated his memoirs to Cosima, his second wife, so much detail about the many women who were so important in the composer's life, escaped publication. His first wife Minna Planer was an older actress and opera singer but their marriage was rocky and ended in separation. It was no meeting of minds; that was to come later with Cosima Liszt, who was married to Wagner's friend and colleague, Hans von Bülow when they first met.

Wagner was naturally attracted to wealthy women or women with wealthy husbands, such as Mathilde Wesendonck and Jessie Taylor Lausot. He set five of Mathilde's poems to music and threw leitmotifs from "*Tristan und Isolde*" into two of them. Also for Mathilde he wrote a sonata, which he gave to her husband, Otto! And an "Albumblatt für Frau MW" - a love letter in musical form. He used hidden clues in his manuscripts, such as, "ILDGL - "Ich liebe dich grenzlos," meaning "my love for you has no boundaries." Frau Betty Schott, wife of his music publisher, was also the recipient of a small piano piece dedicated to her and recycling a significant leitmotif. Wagner's life ended in the arms of another woman – in Venice, Carrie Pringle, an English Flower Maiden from his final stage drama, *Parsifal!* This incident received no mention in Cosima's diaries!

Colleen Chesterman

On 22 April, 41 members heard three teachers from the Australian Film and Television School (Catherine Gleeson, Andrew Belletti and Edward Primrose) on the topic of 'Emotional Noise' – The relationship between sound, music, visual image and emotions.' It is interesting that this is an important component of AFTRS degrees, as it is widely understood that Wagner has a strong impact on our emotions and imagination. It is apparent that Wagner's sound world has been influential in historic and current film-making. Indeed, George Lucas and John Williams studied leitmotifs as they developed scores for the Star Wars epics.

On 20 May 74 people attended the Annual General Meeting. Following that, we were treated to a concert by Lisa Harper-Brown, accompanied by Stephen Mould from the NSW Conservatorium. Lisa delighted the audience with her interpretations of Elsa's aria from *Lohengrin*, the Wesendonck Lieder and Sieglinde's aria from *Die Walküre*, a role she will be singing in the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra's tour of its homeland in July. The concert was followed by the Society's traditional toast of champagne for Wagner's Birthday!



Other Wagner Celebrations - 2013

- Terence Watson

We all know that all the major opera companies and many orchestras will be performing Wagner's operas, music dramas and even his orchestral music and songs during the bicentenary of his birth in 2013, but there are many other events being planned or even ones that have started as part of those celebrations. The following is a brief overview of some of those offerings – just for interest, or in case you might be in the relevant city at the time. [One despairs, though, of the poor standard of editing of many websites, with many spelling errors and grammatical errors.] As one might expect, Leipzig, the city in which Wagner was born, is taking the lead under the rubric Richard Wagner 2013 in Leipzig. The following information is taken from their new website.

Leipzig is preparing to celebrate the bicentennial of its famous son Richard Wagner with an extensive programme of events. The Saxon city is using the slogan "Richard - Leipzig born and bred" to advertise the anniversary year of 2013.

LEIPZIG HAS ALREADY BEGUN ITS CELEBRATIONS WITH A FESTIVAL CELEBRATING WAGNER FROM 16 TO 22 MAY 2012 The following was the program.

Leipzig attune[d] itself to Wagner's bicentenary jubilee next year by celebrating a 'minor' birthday during the Wagner Festival 2012: On May 22, 2012, Richard Wagner would have turned 199 years old.

From 16 to 22 May, Wagner's native city...put its cultural focus on the composer with a number of concerts and events. On May 16 at 8 pm, festival organiser Richard-Wagner-Gesellschaft Leipzig 2013 invite[d] all music lovers to Fockeberg for the festival opening, when the keys for the 'permanent festival hall,' which will be built on the hill by 2013 [were] handed over. A fixed item on the daily festival programme [was] the "speakers' cube – 20vor12". Every day at 20 minutes to twelve, well-known Leipzigers [spoke] about Wagner and his work at the Wagner memorial base (originally made by Max Klinger) on the promenade which encircles the city centre. Modelled on London's Speakers' Corner, other Leipzigers [were] also welcome to speak. A charity concert for the new Wagner Memorial, which is to be inaugurated on May 22, 2013, [was] organised by Wagner-Denkmal e. V. on May 19 at 8.30 p.m. in the Old Stock Exchange. Wagner's Parsifal [was] on the programme. On May 21 at 7.30 p.m., the annual Bayreuth Scholarships [was] awarded by the Wagner Society during a ceremony in the Chamber Music Hall of the University of Music in Grassistraße 8. On Richard Wagner's birthday, May 22, at 2:30 p.m., the Wagner Society [invited all] to traditional "coffee and cake" in the St Nicholas' Church Yard. The festival conclude[d] on Wagner's birthday with a gala concert performance of the 3rd act of "Twilight of the Gods" at 8 p.m. at the Reformed Church in Tröndlinring 7.

The following details recent initiatives and proposed performances at Leipzig, Bayreuth and Dresden in 2013.

New website: www.richard-wagner-leipzig.de

The website "Wagner in Leipzig", which is dedicated to the composer as a young man, has recently been launched. It provides a detailed overview of things of interest to visitors, and previews the events being organised for the bicentennial year. The site is available both in English and German.

Wagner fans will be especially pleased with the information about upcoming events, which includes details of performances, city walks, exhibitions and a preview of the programme for the Richard Wagner Festival 2013, being held from 16–26 May 2013. The website has a detailed biography of Richard Wagner as well as an overview of the places in Leipzig where he lived and worked. The "Wagner Walks in Leipzig" is a tour devised by the Leipzig Richard Wagner Society, a helpful guide to those wishing to follow the Wagner trail on foot in the city centre or by car in the vicinity. 25 points of interest related to Wagner are pictured and described on a street map.

The website has been developed by Leipzig Tourismus und Marketing GmbH (LTM) together with a number of other partners with the aim of pooling information on all the many activities so that it can easily be accessed by interested online readers. "With this uniform presentation we hope to appeal to music fans from all around the world and get them excited about Leipzig and Richard Wagner", said Volker Bremer, Managing Director of LTM GmbH.

Opening of the Richard Wagner Museum in 2013

The renovated Richard Wagner Hall in the Old St. Nicholas School has been ready to host events since 13 February 2012. The Classical-style hall was created in 1827 and today is the only place associated with the life and work of the young Wagner to survive in its original condition.

On the ground floor of the Old St. Nicholas School a Richard Wagner Museum is being developed, ready for opening in 2013. The new permanent exhibition will be called "The Young Richard Wagner – 1813 to 1834" and will highlight the formative influences the young composer was exposed to in Leipzig and which made him into the artist that went on to thrill the world. This exhibition forms a necessary complement to the Wagner Museum in Bayreuth, where the emphasis is on the composer in his maturity. For the first time in Leipzig, an exhibition will focus in detail on the life and work of the young Wagner, and his early music will be reassessed in this context. The opening of the museum is scheduled for 21 May 2013. The project is part of the "Leipzig Music Trail" initiative.



Worldwide publicity and close collaboration with the Festival city of Bayreuth

The Richard Wagner bicentennial in 2013 will attract worldwide attention, and will be celebrated in Leipzig in suitable style. The many excellent events taking place in Leipzig to mark the anniversary of Wagner's birth are sure to make the city a Mecca for music fans from all over the world. The German National Tourist Board (GNTB) is playing its part by using the Wagner anniversary as a theme in its PR for 2013, working closely with LTM GmbH. Together with the GNTB, another important partner for LTM GmbH is Tourismus und Marketing GmbH in Bayreuth, with both organisations jointly publishing a regular newsletter in English and German in the run-up to the anniversary.

Leipzig and Bayreuth are also collaborating to stage, or present in concert performance, Wagner's three early works – that is, those not now or likely to be presented on the stage of the Festspielhaus. The following information comes from the Intermezzo website: <http://intermezzo.typepad.com/intermezzo/2012/02/bayreuth-2013-wagners-early-operas-schedule-and-ticket-details.html>.

Die Feen will be shown fully staged at Oper Leipzig on 16 February, 24 February, 7 April, 20 April and 24 May 2013, followed by a concert version at Bayreuth on 9 July. Ulf Schirmer conducts, Renaud Doucet directs, and the cast includes Milcho Borovinov, Jennifer Porto and Arnold Bezuyen.

Das Liebesverbot is premiered in Bayreuth on 8, 11 and 14 July 2013, with further performances in Leipzig in the 2013 - 2014 season (dates not yet disclosed). Constantin Trinks conducts, Aron Stiehl directs, and Milcho Borovinov and Martin Petzold are amongst the cast.

Rienzi comes to Bayreuth on 7, 10 and 13 July 2013. Christian Thielemann conducts and Matthias von Stegmann directs. Hardworking Milcho Borovinov turns up yet again, together with the excellent Daniela Sindram and Jennifer Wilson. Robert Dean Smith takes on the title role.

There's also a starry 200th birthday concert at the Festspielhaus on 22 May 2013. Eva-Maria Westbroek, Johan Botha and Kwangchul Youn join Christian Thielemann for extracts from *Die Walküre*, *Rienzi*, *Götterdämmerung* and *Die Meistersinger*.

If you happen to be in Leipzig for *Die Feen* in May 2013, you might also be able to attend *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Ulf Schirmer (Musikalische Leitung) Jochen Biganzoli (Inszenierung)) on 13 April 2013 or 19 May 2013.

Tickets for all (including Leipzig) will be available online and by phone on 27 July 2012 on a first-come first-served basis at www.wagnerjahr-2013.de/en/tickets.html.

You might also be able to attend the Richard Wagner Festival 2013: Chamber music "Akzent" on 26 May 2013 at the Mendelssohn-Saal of the Gewandhaus at Leipzig, that will feature the Sinfonietta Leipzig playing works by Wagner.

In the other city in which Wagner spent much of his younger life, the Dresden Semperoper is staging *Der fliegende Holländer* on June 2013: 15, 19, 28 and July 2013: 01, 07.

Details of these performances, and many others, can be found on the website Wagneropera at www.wagneropera.net/Calendar/Calendar-2013.htm?menu.

Lisa Gasteen & Giovanni Reggioli In Recital

- 13 July 2012 Queensland Conservatorium and 15 July Opera Australia Studio, Sydney

Lisa Gasteen, accompanist Giovanni Reggioli and alumni of the Lisa Gasteen National Opera Summer School are presenting two performances of songs and arias. Proceeds of each concert will go to the National Opera Summer School in November 2012. The first concert is in Brisbane Adult ticket prices: B Reserve: \$95.00, A Reserve: \$130.00, Platinum: \$180.00.

Lisa Gasteen, together with 4 students from the 2011 school, will also sing at a Sydney concert at 2pm on July 15 at the Warwick Fairfax Studio (studio 1) at the Opera Centre, 480 Elizabeth Street Surrey Hills NSW on Elizabeth St, Strawberry Hill. One of the singers will be Sarah Ann who was recently awarded a generous Goethe scholarship from the Wagner Society in NSW to which she has extended her thanks for their generosity and encouragement. There will also be a presentation by supporter David Malouf. It will be followed by finger food, drinks (beer, wine & Juice) and a chance to meet Lisa and mingle with the performers. Prices: A Reserve, General Admission, Admission with function included, \$100.00 or A Reserve, General Admission, Admission no function included, \$80.00. Tickets for the Sydney event are available from Qtix: www.qtix.com.au/event/Lisa_Gasteen_Friends_Sydney_12.aspx or call: (07) 3735 6241.

The Lisa Gasteen National Opera School, based at Griffith University Conservatorium, was launched in 2011 as a Summer School, but is now adopting a national focus. As well as Gasteen, trainers include John Fisher from NY Met, Giovanni Reggioli from Washington Opera, Siegfried Jerusalem and Sharolyn Kimmorley, as well as physical therapists, agents and other high quality music staff [Colleen Chesterman and Editor].



The Wagner Society **In New South Wales** Incorporated

Income and Expenditure Statement

For The Year Ended 31 December 2011

INCOME	2011	2010	Notes
Membership	21,045	7,915	
Lectures and functions	5,597	4,095	
Donations	19,815	2,687	
Bayreuth ticket sales	19,391	21,455	
Interest	67	34	
Other fundraising income	953	707	
Total Income	66,868	36,893	
EXPENDITURE			
Newsletter	6,244	4,837	
Function catering expense	927	564	
Function room hire	3,377	2,939	
Payments to presenters	1,200	2,477	
Bayreuth ticket expense	20,761	20,655	
Sponsorships	6,317	5,225	
Other Operating Expenses	5,427	1,267	
Total Expenditure	44,253	37,964	
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	22,615	-1,071	
Retained Profits at Beginning of Year	8,022	8,893	
Retained Profits at End of Year	30,637	8,022	

The Wagner Society **In New South Wales** Incorporated

Balance Sheet

As At 31 December 2011

	Note	2011	2010
		\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash Assets – Working Account	\$29,821.00		7,134
– Donation Account	\$306.79		1,008
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		30,128	8,142
TOTAL ASSETS		30,128	8,142
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Bayreuth revenue received in advance	0		0
Refunds payable	0		0
Trade payables	0		0
Membership revenue received in advance	5555		120
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		5555	120
TOTAL LIABILITIES		5555	120
NET ASSETS		24,573	8,022
EQUITY			
Retained Surplus	24,573		8,022
TOTAL EQUITY		24,573	8,022



The Wagner Society **In New South Wales** Incorporated **Statement** By Members of the Committee

The Committee has determined that the Society is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the Committee, the financial report, being the Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet and Notes to the Financial Statements:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated as at 31 December 2011 and its performance for the year ended on that date.

2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:

Hon Justice J Mathews OA
President

Dr D Mather
Treasurer

Dated this 15th day of May 2011

Financial Members of the **Wagner** Society **In NSW** As At **31 December 2012?**

Kay Abrahams [966]; Tom Accola [1055]; Paul Alger [255]; Robin Amm [1062]; Carl Andrew [772]; Peter Anet & Christine Hanson [1029]; Ursula Armstrong [1061]; Lachlan Astle & Neil Matthews [1015]; F. John Augustus and Kim Ryrie [963]; Philip Bacon [890]; Sybil Baer [418]; Carole Bailey [663]; Patricia Baillie [108]; Norma Barne [926]; Glen Barnwell [944]; Douglas Barry [942]; Colin Baskerville [817]; Janette Bates [785]; Marlene and Paul Baumgartner [393]; Margareta Baxter [775]; Jane and Philip Beeby [985]; Sandra Beesley [759]; Ms Patricia Bellamy and Ms Carolyn Bloch [827]; Patricia Benjamin and Roger Smalley [987]; Phillip Bennett [925]; Janelle Berents [1044]; Nicole Berger [1038]; Irma Beringer [975]; Julian and Rosemary Block [745]; Richard Bloor [967]; Audrey Blunden [1043]; Jan Bowen [743]; Barbara and Ian Brady [380]; Claire Brauer [1050]; Gabriella Bremner-Moore and Michael Moore [819]; Bill Brooks and Alasdair Beck [765]; Craig Brush [1053]; A/Prof David & Mrs Diana Bryant [1016]; Susan and James Buchanan [423]; Richard Burek [982]; Glynis Burnett & Rosemary Fallon [1052]; Frances Butcher [918]; Mr Neil & Dr Marcia Cameron [1059]; Bob & Helena Carr [1031]; Julie Carroll [928]; John Casey [114]; Maurice Cashmere [877]; Ann Casimir [501]; Humphrey Charles and Pauline Alexander [951]; Terry and Greg Chesher [685]; Colleen and Michael Chesterman [649]; Julie and Terry Clarke [496]; Elisa Clarke Wadham [1010]; Christopher Coffey [816]; Adrian Collette [734]; Daryl Colquhoun [732]; Joan and Maxwell Connery [334]; Betsy Conti [1048]; Rae and Russ Cottle [843]; Alexander Cozzolino [930]; Peter Craswell [1030]; Roger Cruickshank [669]; Elizabeth and Barry Dale [953]; Rosamund Dallow-Smith & G J Smith [1056]; Catherine Davies [921]; Michael Day [606]; Barbara de Rome [207]; Claus and Luise Diessel [1022]; June Donsworth [884]; Barbara and Nicholas Dorsch [154]; Brian Ducker [487]; Sandy and Phil Dudgeon [788]; Heinz Ebert [378]; Michael & Judy Edgeloe [1035]; Jenny Edwards [1034]; Keith Charles Elvy and Peter John Dunphy [988]; Linda English [1013]; Clive Evatt [624]; Michael Ewans [0.2]; Steve Fargo [964]; William Felbel and Peter Jenkins [893]; Igor Ferdman [949]; Judy and Joseph Ferfaglia [45]; Jennifer Ferns [34]; Dr James Fortune [1057]; Bob Foster [850]; Alan W Freeman [974]; Allan B Freeman [986]; Brian Freestone and Charles Brady [840]; Stephen Freiberg and Donald Campbell [585]; Vic & Katie French [945]; David and Sabina Full [883]; Warwick Fyfe [755]; Wilhelmina Gardner [1002]; Ingrid Garofali [778]; Louis Simon Garrick [971]; Richard Gastineau-Hills [68]; Leona Geeves [87]; Elizabeth George and Dietmar Tucha [1008]; Diana Wang and Peter George [873]; Dr Rod Gillespie [1058]; Miriam Goodwin & Rolf Duels [1037]; Elizabeth Gordon-Werner [878]; Andrew Goy [723]; Robert Graham [904]; Nance Grant M.B.E. [120]; Dennis Gray [938]; Margaret Greathead [1028]; Tim Green [933]; John Gregory-Roberts [748]; Paul Gresham [932]; Joan Griffin [540]; Francis Grill [1060]; Maxwell Grubb [858]; Hugh Hallard [799]; Helen Halley [1007]; Wendy and Andrew Hamlin [593]; Derek Harrison and Marcus Susanto [939]; David & Christine Hartgill [1021]; Pat and Frank Harvey [427]; Simon Hatcher [333]; Alan Hauserman and Janet Nash [876]; Melinda Hayton [757]; Robert Henderson [1005]; Margaret and Clare Hennessy [19]; Patricia and Roy Hodson [894]; Horst Hoffmann [0.3]; Pauline Holgerson [863]; Raymond & Beverley Hollings [1036]; Glenn Horne and Rujjiraporn Ekpunyaskul [948]; Theo Hudson [489]; Deborah Humble [1006]; Irvine Hunter [744]; Agnes Brejzek and Esteban Insausti [433]; Elizabeth Jacka [898]; Douglas Jamieson [90]; Antony and Sally Jeffrey [1023]; Brett Johnson [779]; Anne Jones [861]; Anthony Jones and Julian Liga [455]; Gillian and Brian Jones [751]; Renate and Herman Junker [866]; Andrew Kaldor [991]; Naomi Kaldor [796]; John Kaldor [996]; Despina and Iphygenia Kallinikos [596]; Angela Kayser [845]; Joseph Kelleher [965]; Susan Kelly [4]; Heinz Kestermann [995]; Richard King [15]; Julie King [7]; Anna-Lisa Klettenberg [847]; Kim Appelgren Knudsen [994]; Sylvia and Karl Koller [52]; Ira Kowalski [536]; Francois Kunc S.C. [999]; Olive Laing [1041]; Hannelore Laundl [962]; Marie Leech [916]; Carole and Jim Leigh [452]; Gary Linnane [960]; Juliet Lockhart [1019]; Lynette Longfoot [922]; Bruce Love [468]; Ian MacKenzie [1003]; Lea Maher [1047]; Christine Malcolm [1040]; Erin Flaherty and David Maloney [952]; Charles Manning [940]; Jennifer Manton [718]; Libby Manuel [950]; Annette and Terry Marshall [403]; Peter Mason and Henry Burmester [997]; Camron Dyer [544]; Dennis Mather and John Studdert [696]; Jane Mathews



[622]; Diana McBain [419]; David McCarthy [648]; Anthony (Tony) Francis McDonald [420]; Robert McDougall [1018]; Jenny McDougall [1032]; Phillip McEachran [1049]; Pam and Ian McGaw [548]; John McGrath [310]; Robert McHugh [911]; Mary Meppem [912]; Neville Mercer [737]; Irene and Wolfgang Merretz [115]; Robert Mitchell [1014]; Paulo Montoya [989]; Patricia Moore [515]; Elizabeth Moser [659]; Peter Murray and Andrew Laughlin [958]; Barbara and Peter Nicholson [704]; Kate Nockels [981]; Walter Norris [204]; Monica and Aliro Olave [735]; Diana-Rose Orr [844]; Trevor Parkin [1020]; Suzan and Gary Penny [1004]; Colin Piper [222]; Robyn Pogmore [1033]; Neville Pollard [856]; David Prichard [993]; Marian and The Hon Dr Rodney Purvis [874]; Dagmar Pysik and Richard Button [931]; Kenneth Reed [41]; Garry Richards [366]; Juliet Richters and Alan Whelan [899]; Shirley Robertson [416]; Rainald and Pauline Roesch [1000]; Heather and Peter Roland [855]; Amanda and George Rosenberg [943]; Andrew and Lesley Rosenberg [1012]; Lorraine Royds [823]; John Michael Sanders [972]; Mitzi Saunders [683]; Cecilia Segura [758]; Penelope Seidler [781]; Christine Shale [1001]; Professor Ivan Shearer AM [954]; Sam Sheffer [101]; Marie Bashir [798]; Nizza Siano [619]; Ruth Silver [1054]; Shane Simpson [1045]; Nicola and Amelia Simpson [1009]; Tim Singleton [998]; John Small [915]; Jeffrey Smart and Ermes de Zan [865]; Hannah and Willi Spiller [671]; Lourdes St George [895]; Ross Steele [838]; Peter Geoffrey Stephens [1046]; Meredith Stokes and David Bremer [885]; Richard Stone [615]; Tony and Rosalind Strong [1027]; Douglas Sturkey [902]; Margaret and Bill Suthers [14]; Hugh Taylor [990]; Charles Terrason [439]; Amanda Thane and Glenn Winslade [977]; Pamela and Graham Thomas [957]; Peter Thompson [746]; Mary & Jonathon Threlfall [1042]; Robert Thurling [830]; Garry Tipping [1026]; Richard Toltz & Doreen Toltz [1024]; Isolde Tornya [800]; David Triggs [223]; John Tuckey [1025]; Kay Vernon [1039]; Sarah Ann Walker [1051]; Warren and Susan Walsh [956]; Terence Watson [657]; Victoria Watson [992]; Greg Watters [892]; Ann Weeden [561]; Flora and John Weickhardt [979]; David Whitehouse [1011]; Ross Whitelaw [527]; Deanne Whittleston and Anthony Gregg [839]; Suzanne Williams [929]; Gary Wilson [834]; Neil Wilson [1017]; Kylie Winkworth [976]; Alfredo and T M Zaniboni [946]; Sharon Zelei [937]; Anna Ziegler [443].

Melba Issues Highlights Of Famous Recording Of The 2004 Adelaide *Ring*.

Peter Basset has brought to your Editor's attention the fact that Melba Recordings have recently issued a 2 CD volume of Highlights of their ground-breaking Super Audio Compact Disc recording of the 2004 State Opera of South Australia's production of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, hailed by critics around the world as a stunning achievement. For further information visit:

www.melbarecordings.com.au/catalogue/album/asher-fisch-wagner-der-ring-des-nibelungen-highlights

Peter also alerted us to the fact that Musical Director of the 2004 *Ring*, Asher Fisch, has just been appointed Chief Conductor and Artistic Adviser of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra from 2014. Next year he will conduct the *Ring* in Seattle and *Parsifal* at the Metropolitan Opera, New York. We will keep an eye/ear open for any Wagner concerts Mr Fisch might program for the WASO [Editor].

Wagner On 2MBS FM (102.35)

Members will be delighted to learn that Michael Tesoriero of 2MBS FM is presenting two Wagner operas in his occasional programs on Legendary Met Performances on Wednesdays at 8 pm. On June 20, at 8pm is a performance of *Das Rheingold* from 27 January 1951, with Hans Hotter as Wotan. In July is a performance of *Die Walküre*, from 3 February 1951. Acts I and II are at 8pm on July 11 and Act III at 8pm on July 18. Kirsten Flagstad sings Brünnhilde, Ferdinand Frantz is Wotan, Astrid Varnay is Sieglinde and Gunthe Treptow is Siegfried.

Hamburg Opera's Complete Mature Wagner Operas/Music-Dramas

If you want to "do" all of Wagner's mature operas/music dramas, then you could head to Hamburg Opera, which has just announced a cycle of the mature operas from 12 May (*Lohengrin*) to 2 June 2013 (*Götterdämmerung*). No other opera house has yet (to your Editor's knowledge) announced anything as ambitious as Hamburg Opera's project. You could even try to combine Hamburg's cycle with some of the early operas in either or both Leipzig or Bayreuth. The dates of the other Wagner performances are on Hamburg Opera's website at: www.hamburgische-staatsoper.de/de/2_spielplan/index.php?s=1367359200&t=Kalender&english=1.



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or

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The cafe attached to **Sapho** serves
great coffee and wine and snacks.

Wagner Society In New York's Wagner "Channel" On Youtube

Members might be interested to know that The Wagner Society in New York also has a very interesting and informative "channel" on YouTube with videos of many of its lectures, presentations and recitals, including a roundtable chat with a charming and truly modest Jay Hunter Morris. The Society's "channel" is at: www.youtube.com/user/wсны1.

Let There Be Leitmotifs!

The following comment by Anthony McAlister and his reference to a long YouTube video, with Michael Beckermann, Musical Historian, University College Santa Barbara, exploring the musical techniques of Wagner, might be of use to Members studying their *leitmotifs* for The Ring Cycle.

I recently came across this excellent video explaining the difference between musical motives and the leitmotifs that Wagner skillfully [sic] employed in his operas. A rather compelling case is made for the idea that Wagner's leitmotifs are the precursor to modern film scoring which often utilises musical representations of various characters, places, and objects. Special attention is paid to the last of the Ring operas, Götterdämmerung, wherein Wagner deftly weaves many of the Ring's primary leitmotifs into a new leitmotif at the very end, one that symbolises redemption through love. Quite fitting given that today marks the end of LA Opera's three Ring cycles!

You can find the video on the website: <http://anthonymcalister.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Wagner>

The Raven's Reporting - Compiled by Camron Dyer

There is a regularly updated comprehensive list on the Society's Website <http://www.wagner-nsw.org.au> that takes the list to 2014.

Members will not be surprised, but pleased with the recognition that has come in the most recent edition of New York Wagner Society newsletter Wagner Notes drawing readers' attention to the detailed listings in The Raven's Reporting by Camron Dyer provides in our newsletter. Congratulations Camron and many thanks for your devotion to this immensely useful listing [Editor].

Interesting Wagner Online Resources

Your Editor suggests a number of websites that contain information that might be of interest to Members wishing to extend their general knowledge about Wagner or to explore such things as his use of leitmotifs (see back page for details).





Wagner 2013

Wagner **Society in NSW Inc** Donation Form **2012**

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Email
Membership Number

I wish to donate the following amount to the Society's 'Wagner 2013 Fund'.
 Donations are tax-deductible, and receipts will be issued.
 All donations are acknowledged in our Newsletter

\$ _____

Donation by cheque or money order

Please complete this form and post, with your cheque or money order made payable to

The Wagner Society to:
The Treasurer
The Wagner Society in NSW Inc
GPO Box 4574
Sydney NSW 2001

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Please use your bank's internet banking facilities to send your payment electronically to

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 (This will be printed on the Wagner Society's bank statement)

.....
Signature

.....
Name in BLOCK LETTERS

...../...../2012



ADDRESS

Please note our permanent address for all correspondence

The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc

GPO Box 4574 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Telephone: 9360 9822 (Jane Matthews, President)

Website: www.wagner.org.au

Website enquiries: wagner_nsw@optusnet.com.au

(All website addresses used in this Newsletter are reproduced in the PDF version of the newsletter on the Wagner Society's website in the relevant article - Members Area)

The Brangayne Story

The "Brangayne" and "Ynys Witrin" vineyards lie on the north eastern slopes of the extinct volcano Mount Canobolas, near **Orange in New South Wales**, one of the highest and coldest grape districts in Australia. Often under snow in winter and mild in summer, the cold climate offers ideal conditions for the production of premium grapes, combining generous fruit flavour, acid and length in wines of intensity and elegance. With grapes hanging on the vines often well into May, they produce a subtle and highly complex character in the wines. The long ripening period and the deep, rich volcanic soil, position Brangayne among the few vineyards in Australia capable of producing distinctive cold climate wines of high calibre.

Brangayne came into the Hoskins Family in the 1930s, and for sixty years, Edgar and Winsome Hoskins and later Don and Pamela Hoskins grew pome and stone fruits on the property. Then, in 1994, the fruit trees were replaced by wine grapes.

The planting of the vines was the vision of Don and Pamela, their son David are now part of the management of the vineyard. The 26ha enterprise comprises the two vineyards "Brangayne" and "Ynys Witrin".

"Brangayne" was named by Winsome Hoskins, after the character who attends the tragic Isolde in Wagner's opera Tristan and Isolde, and who prepares a love potion for her. Winsome was a great fan of opera and Wagner in particular, but the family is not sure why she chose the name of a supporting character in the opera. It may have been that she simply liked the name.

"Ynys Witrin" - literally "isle of the blessed and of eternal youth" - was named after the Isle of Avalon in the Arthurian Legend. Both stories are linked to the Troubadours in Medieval times.

In Wagner's opera, Isolde (soprano) is an Irish Princess, who is voyaging from her home to Cornwall, there to become the bride of King Mark of Cornwall. Isolde is attended by her handmaiden Brangäne (mezzo soprano). Brangäne is a wise woman, and holds magic in her hands. King Mark has sent the handsome knight, Sir Tristan (tenor) to escort Isolde to her wedding, which will take place at his castle in Cornwall. But though Isolde is betrothed to King Mark she has fallen deeply in love with Sir Tristan, and he with her. Their grand passion is doomed from the beginning. Isolde and Tristan resolve that the drink of death is the only remedy for their hopeless love, and Isolde asks Brangäne to prepare it for them, but instead Brangäne prepares a love-philter which fills each with irresistible longing for each other.

Brangayne of Orange has kindly agreed to offer Members a 10% discount if they purchase any of our wines. Please call and order by phone (02 6365 3229) and mention your membership of the Wagner Society



B R A N G A Y N E

~ o f O r a n g e ~

Re-Discovering Richard Wagner Through His Music By Saul Lilienstein

A little Wagner music for your stocking? No politics—no Freudian analysis—no arcane discussions of wives, sweethearts, petty hatreds, financial dealings, egocentricities - vegetarianism or choices in satin underwear distracts from the essential core that keeps us going back to Wagner's Music Dramas: the greatness within the music, the majesty of his artistic conceptions. Long awaited recording of Saul Lilienstein's all-day seminar at the Goethe Institut on March 19, 2011. \$40 for the set of four CDs (includes shipping and handling).

You can find further information, and place an order, at the Washington Wagner Society's website: www.wagner-dc.org/?q=node/109.

Associated Wagner Lectures

Sydney Opera Society
- Meets 2pm Presbyterian Church Hall, cnr High and Willoughby Sts, Willoughby
Saturday, 1 September: The Ring Cycle (Part 2) -
Dr Robert Gibson

**Address for Sunday Functions
Goethe Institut
90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)**