



# The Wagner Society

(Patron — Sir Charles Mackerras)

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NEWSLETTER NO. 11

1st JUNE 1983

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Patron:	Sir Charles Mackerras	<u>Committee:</u>
President:	Leonard Hansen	Michel Arnould
Vice President:	Sue Kelly	Jean Byrne
Secretary:	Clare Hennessy	Richard King
Treasurer:	Murray Smith	Jean-Louis Stuurop
		Janet Wayland

Honorary Life Members: Werner Baer M.B.E.  
Leonie Rysanek

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Wagner Society's second full year of operation came to an end in this, the centenary year of Richard Wagner's death. I am pleased to say that the Society was in a strong position to take part in the festivities arranged to mark the occasion, and what's more, was duly recognised by the larger and older bodies organising them. I refer firstly to the A.B.C. who willingly gave us an opportunity to share the limelight at their all-Wagner concert on the 28th January. We were allowed to set up a table in the foyer of the Sydney Town Hall to sell commemorative posters, attracting much attention, and gaining quite a few new members in the process.

Then there was the Australian Opera, who, without reservation, "loaned" their special guest artiste Leonie Rysanek to us for a radio interview and a most successful and entertaining dinner on the 5th February. It was on this occasion that Honorary Life Membership was bestowed on Madame Rysanek.

Thirdly, the German Community, and the Consul-General in particular, have been especially attentive in getting our co-operation to add cultural content to their centenary celebrations. It was, of course, through the consulate that we acquired the Wagner centenary posters.

The Wagner Society is now firmly established on the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust's list of organisations to receive grants, and indeed, during the year ended 31st December 1982 the Trust distributed to us \$3,035. This amount was of course donated primarily by you, our members, and I believe it was a great achievement, deserving the warm thanks of us all.

The Australian Opera in it's latest annual report has also paid tribute to the Wagner Society for the financial support it has regularly given. I note that we are the only Music Society, apart from the Guild and the Friends, who make donations to the opera.

With radio-station 2MBS-FM we also have a good reputation. They now consult us before embarking on major Wagner broadcasts. For this we have to thank member Arthur Carter for his indefatigable work in preparing the monthly Wagner Society programmes, to Leona Geeves and Michael Ewans who have contributed articles on our behalf, and Werner Baer for his introductions and commentaries. Our commitment to the radio station is an ongoing one, and there is always plenty of room for more participation by our members in compiling programmes.

Perhaps the most important step taken by the Society this year, and one which has increased the Society's standing quite considerably amongst other music bodies, is the establishment of the Scholarship, a prize of \$1,000 to be awarded to the finalist in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions who shows the most potential as a Wagnerian singer. We are very fortunate that our Patron, Sir Charles Mackerras, has consented to be our chief adjudicator, and will present the prize, on Sunday 28th August at the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall. With him on the panel will be committee members Sue Kelly and Janet Wayland. The scholarship is to be awarded annually - provided standards are met - to a singer who has applied in the approved manner, and can show that proper use will be made of the prize money.

Our donation to the Australian Opera of \$1,000 is less than in previous years, when we have given \$2,000 toward each of their concert performances, but it is now aimed at a specific project - the financing of the artwork of a special poster publicising "Die Walkure". We have submitted the names of two competent artists to the Opera Company, and look forward to seeing not only this work completed, but the posters for the other Ring operas which we have also agreed to finance over the next three years, thus contributing to a very historic documentation of this Ring production.

In March this year we held the first of our General Meetings, and it turned out to be a great success, with some lively discussion during general business. If we could get more of this at each meeting, I'm sure the Society will keep its vitality and interest for members.

Much work has been going on behind the scenes for almost 12 months for that event we never thought could happen - a Wagner Society tour to Bayreuth. For this we have to thank the staff of Neutral Bay Travel, Werner Baer who is tour leader, and the German Consul-General. Naturally all efforts will be made to make this an annual event.

Our relationship with other Wagner Societies is developing strongly. We correspond regularly with the Wagner Society in England, and the Wagner Institute International. Contact has also been made with the Cercle Nationale Richard Wagner in Paris, and the New York Wagner Society. In Australia, the Wagner Society in Victoria is becoming more active, and ways of co-ordinating our activities are being looked at. A group of Adelaide enthusiasts has contacted us regarding the formation of a society there, and in Western Australia it is possible that Mr Vincent Warriner could organise a group as a result of the interest in his Bayreuth tour.

Finally, it is my welcome duty to thank all the committee members - with whom it has been a privilege and a pleasure to work, over the past 12 months - for their co-operation and loyalty. In particular I would like to thank Richard King and Murray Smith for the enormous amount of time they put in as Society receptionists, bookkeepers, treasurers, and office boys, as well as for their generosity in giving their home and gallery over to the Society for its meetings. To Jean-Louis Stuurup I speak for all when I thank him for those wonderful Sunday afternoons at the Concordia Club; to Clare Hennessy for her shorthand and typing and the immaculate minutes book; to Reg Maloney, our auditor; to Margaret Suthers and Ian Hopkins who have indicated they will not be standing for re-election; thank you all for your help.

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#### THE 1983 GUESSING COMPETITION

Participation in this year's raffle was very enthusiastic and members are to be complimented on the large number of tickets they sold. The net gain to the Society from ticket sales was \$765.00, this high figure being achieved to a great extent by the generosity of the donors of the prizes. We are all very grateful to Lady Gallagher for donating the first prize. For the second prize we have to thank EMI Records and a generous group of members at the Annual Dinner. Dr. Sue Kelly gave third prize, and the Wagner Poster that was the surprise fourth prize was also given by a member at the dinner.

The winners were:

- 1st Prize - 2 tickets to Die Walküre : M. Hennessy of Burwood,  
Ticket No. 1483
- 2nd Prize - "Lohengrin" recording : J. Anderson of Turramurra,  
Ticket No. 1135
- 3rd Prize - Wagner Diaries : H. Knoke of Rose Bay,  
Ticket No. 466
- 4th Prize - Wagner Poster : N. Grant of Malvern, Victoria,  
Ticket No. 1765

The winning tickets were drawn by Mrs. Margaret Suthers, a retiring committee member.

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"OPERA ON RECORD - THE ALTERNATIVE BAYREUTH"

It has been very pleasing to see so many members enjoying themselves at these Sunday afternoon programs at the Concordia Club. Good company always adds to the appreciation of a good performance. And to compliment the Bayreuth atmosphere, good German-style meals are available in the restaurant, at lunch time (12.30 pm) or after the performance.

Note these dates in your diary:

- |                |   |                                    |
|----------------|---|------------------------------------|
| June 19th      | - | GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG                    |
| July 17th      | - | TRISTAN UND ISOLDE (Cond. Kleiber) |
| August 21st    | - | TANNHÄUSER                         |
| September 18th | - | LOHENGRIN (Cond. von Karajan)      |
| October 16th   | - | DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG     |
| November 27th  | - | PARSIFAL                           |

All performances start at 1.30 pm.

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SPECIAL FUNCTION FOR KEN NEATE

As announced at the dinner, Mr. Ken Neate is returning to Australia to judge the contestants in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions. Mr. Neate, one of Australia's greatest Wagnerian tenors, has had a long career in Germany, has sung at Bayreuth and at present is Professor of Voice at the Richard Strauss Conservatorium of Music, Munich.

The Wagner Society is honoured that, despite his short stay in Sydney, Mr. Neate has agreed to attend a reception we have organised for him on Thursday 16th June at 6.00 pm at the Print Room, 141 Dowling Street, Sydney. Mr. Neate will give a short talk which should be of great interest, especially as he is the Federal Adjudicator of the singers who become eligible for the Wagner Society Scholarship.

A small charge will be made for attendance at this reception, to cover the costs of the refreshments that will be served during the evening.

Please use the form on page 10 to notify of your intention to attend.

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DIE WALKÜRE - CHANGE IN PERFORMANCE DATE

There has been a change in one of the evenings that a group booking had been proposed to attend the Australian Opera's production of "Die Walküre". Due to the heavy demand of subscriber reservations, and priority being given to interstate bookings, Saturday 8th October - the only Saturday in the season - is already virtually sold out. Regretfully the Opera Company has asked the Wagner Society to accept MONDAY, 10TH OCTOBER as an alternative for the Saturday.

Still available, of course, is the second evening that was notified earlier, FRIDAY 28TH OCTOBER. This is the last night of the season and to celebrate the event the Wagner Society is going to give a supper party after the show, to which members of the cast, the production team and Opera management will be invited. Your committee felt that this was the least we could do to show our gratitude to all those involved in getting the Ring performed. The location for the supper will be in the Northern Foyer of the Opera Theatre, and as it may not finish until after midnight, members who usually use the Park-and-Ride Domain service may prefer to make other arrangements.

Please refer to page 10 for the booking form, which should be returned as soon as possible.

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PROF. MICHAEL EWANS' LECTURE

On Friday 15th July Michael Ewans, now associate professor at Newcastle University, will give another of his very stimulating talks to the Wagner Society. His topic will be "Die Walküre" - a new interpretation, which should be of keen interest for all of us seeing this opera this year, either at Bayreuth or in Sydney, or both.

Professor Ewans, as you will recall from his last year's visit to us, has made a very intensive study of the dramatic content of the "Ring", especially in relation to the Greek tragedies of Aeschylus. He has also investigated the musical patterns used by Wagner to accentuate the drama, and compares them with the styles of other composers.

The results of Dr. Ewans' many years of work have been crystallised into a book "Wagner & Aeschylus", copies of which should be available at a bargain price on the evening of the 15th July. This function will be held in the Music Room at the Concordia Club, Stanmore Road, Stanmore (opposite Newington College, and a few minutes walk from Stanmore Station), and will commence at 6.30 pm. A short general meeting will take place first to allow discussion in open forum of any issue that may be of concern to members. After the lecture, the facilities of the Concordia Club will be available to members of the Wagner Society for light refreshments and dinner, at their own cost. A small charge of \$3 will be made for attendance at Professor Ewans' lecture, and for drinks at its conclusion.

Please use the booking form on page 9.

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THE WAGNER SOCIETY SCHOLARSHIP

The winner of the first Wagner Society Scholarship will be chosen from the finalists in the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, which takes place in the Sydney Opera House Opera Theatre on Sunday 28th August at 7.30 pm. The semi-finals will have taken place on Friday 26th, at another venue.

Sir Charles Mackerras has agreed to be the Society's Chief Adjudicator, and will announce the winner - provided there has been a singer with Wagnerian potential reaching the finals. The general public are invited to attend these auditions, at an admission price of about \$10.00. Because of the Wagner Society's participation in the proceedings, the Council of Opera Foundation Australia will allow our members to attend at a ticket price of \$5.00. No charge is made for attendance at the semi-finals but places must be reserved by application to this office. These events can be heartily recommended, as not only is there the excitement of the competition itself, but also you will have the chance of seeing that great American singer and movie star, Risé Stevens, who is the Metropolitan Opera's Director of Auditions.

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WERNER BAER LECTURES

Mr. Werner Baer MBE, who is artistic advisor on the Bayreuth Tour, will be presenting, for the benefit of the travellers, a short series of lectures titled "Bayreuth 1983". Sponsored by the W.E.A., these lectures will be open to all Wagner Society members and the general public.

The details are: Dates: 16th, 23rd and 30th July (Saturdays).  
Time: 11.00 am to 1.00 pm.  
Venue: W.E.A. House, 72 Bathurst Street, Sydney.  
Cost: \$5.00 per session.

For enrolment and information contact Mr. Michael Newman at the W.E.A. in writing or by 'phone on 264.2781.

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THE ANNUAL DINNER

Once again our Annual Dinner, held this year on Friday 20th May at the Sheraton-Wentworth Hotel, was a very happy and enjoyable occasion. Over 80 members and their friends braved the heavy rain and even heavier traffic to join in this celebration of Richard Wagner's birthday. There was one however, who had unfortunately to remain absent from the gathering, and that was our intended guest of honour Miss Rita Hunter, who had had a nasty fall a few days earlier, and was forced to cancel all engagements.

The dinner nevertheless was not without a star to take the special guest's seat. Mr. Raymond Myers, known to all of us for his many fine performances with the Australian Opera over many years, had accepted our invitation just that morning, despite his heavy day of rehearsals to overcome. But like a great trouper - one can understand why he was awarded the Order of Australia last year - Mr. Myers duly appeared bright and smiling, and kept us entertained for quite some time with his very witty after dinner speech.

With a career in Wagnerian roles spanning from "Dutchman" at the Tivoli in 1967 to "Beckmesser" recently at the Opera Theatre, plus many performances in the Ring, Raymond Myers could certainly address the Wagner Society with some authority. He told us not only of his successes, but also of the problems he has in Wagnerian roles, of the great people he has sung with and some of those amazing situations that arise in opera productions. His thoughts on the ideal Wagnerian productions were very sobering indeed. After many questions from his attentive audience it was time to give that rich baritone voice its well earned rest, so Richard King moved a vote of thanks and gave Mr. Myers a small gift with our gratitude for such an amusing evening.

The final event was the drawing of the winning tickets in the raffle, from a barrel fairly bulging as a result of the efforts of our most glamorous ticket seller, Annette Stuurop, who charmed us all into spending a record amount, but for such a good cause.

The evening had been a great success in all aspects.

(P.S.: Rita Hunter is now recovering quite well and has resumed rehearsals.)

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## STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

1st APRIL 1982 to 31st MARCH 1983

Bank balance brought forward:	\$ 2577.53
<b>INCOME 1982-83:</b>	
SUBSCRIPTIONS	\$ 2405.00
DONATIONS	\$ 3273.30
A.G.M. 1982 balance	\$ 795.50
TICKET SALES. COMPETITION balance 1982	\$ 74.80
CONSERVATORIUM RECITAL	\$ 609.89
TRISTAN AND ISOLDE BOOKINGS	\$ 5744.40
DINNER FOR MADAM RYSANEK	\$ 1622.00
LECTURES	\$ 95.00
PIANO ROLL EVENING	\$ 110.80
A.G.M. 1983 advance bookings	\$ 504.00
TICKET SALES. COMPETITION 1983	\$ 394.00
TOWN HALL WAGNER CONCERT	\$ 781.20
RECORDED PROGRAMMES AT CONCORDIA CLUB	\$ 215.50
BOOK AND POSTER SALES	\$ 470.10
BANK INTEREST	\$ 120.55
<b>TOTAL INCOME 1982-83:</b>	<b>\$19793.57</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE 1982-83:</b>	
DONATIONS (AUSTRALIAN OPERA)	\$ 2000.00
COST OF TICKETS TOWN HALL CONCERT	\$ 693.60
A.G.M. 1982	\$ 1953.18
ADVERTISING	\$ 200.00
PRINTING	\$ 1723.75
STATIONERY	\$ 41.30
INSURANCE	\$ 78.00
CATERING. RYSANEK DINNER	\$ 1348.70
BOOKS AND POSTERS PURCHASED	\$ 1316.16
CONSERVATORIUM \$800.00 fee to artists. Advertising \$290.00	\$
RECITAL: \$92.00 programme printing costs plus P.C.	\$ 1272.68
TRISTAN AND ISOLDE TICKETS	\$ 5720.00
POSTAGES	\$ 110.70
LECTURE FEES AND DONATION RE PIANO ROLL EVENING	\$ 80.00
A.G.M. 1983 DEPOSIT WENTWORTH HOTEL	\$ 200.00
BANK CHARGES	\$ 4.39
PETTY CASH	\$ 75.60
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE 1982-83:</b>	<b>\$16818.06</b>
BALANCE AS PER CASH BOOK AND BANK STATEMENT AS AT 31.3.83	2975.51
PLUS RESERVE FUNDS ON DEPOSIT (EQUITABLE GROUP CASH MANAGEMENT TRUST). ORIGINAL DEPOSIT \$3000 PLUS INTEREST TO DATE: \$699.00	
	Total: \$ 3699.00
	<b>Total cash assets as at 31.3.83: \$ 6674.51</b>

A cash/change float is held at the registered office: \$66.00  
 Forty copies of the book, Cosima and Richard Wagner are held in stock at cost, \$25.00 per copy = \$1000.00. The book is available to the members at this price. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!!!

Richard King,  
 Treasurer

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AUDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

I certify that I have examined all books of account and vouchers relating to the Wagner Society for the year ended 31st March, 1983 and confirm that the Financial Statement presented to the Annual General Meeting is, in fact, a true accounting in every detail.

Reg Maloney  
 20th May, 1983