



WAGNER
SOCIETY
nsw

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JUNE 2015

CELEBRATING THE MUSIC OF RICHARD WAGNER

WAGNER QUARTERLY

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the second Quarterly for 2015.

As many of you will know, we held our Annual General Meeting early this year. This was because a number of the committee members (including myself) were to be overseas in late May, when the AGM is usually held in order to coincide with Wagner's birthday. The AGM ran very smoothly, and I was honoured again to be nominated as president. The one significant change on the Committee was the resignation of Peter Murray, and the appointment of Margaret Whealy. I would like to record my great thanks to Peter, who contributed a great deal to the Society in his several years on the Committee.

I am writing this letter in Vienna, where I am about to embark on my second Ring Cycle for this trip. Earlier this month I was in Dessau, in the old East Germany, for the annual Congress of the International Association of Wagner Societies (called the "Verband"), which coincided with a Ring Cycle there.

I mentioned the Verband in an earlier letter. Over recent years it has become an extremely German-centric organisation, and there appeared to be little benefit to overseas Wagner Societies from belonging to it. Indeed, most of the American Societies have ceased their membership. We, the NSW Society, did too, for a while, but we resumed our membership this year because it appeared that the organisation might be broadening its approach and providing some benefits to distant societies. However it became obvious in recent months that there were severe rifts within the governing board ("the Praesidium") of the Verband, with vitriolic emails being sent from both sides. Fortunately, at the Dessau Congress these issues appear to have been resolved, and the Verband now has a new President and Secretary. The President, Horst Eggers, is based at Bayreuth and enjoys extremely good relations with the Festival management. It now appears likely that Wagner



John Wegner starring as John Wegner

PRESIDENT'S REPORT *Continued page 3*

Patron:	Ms Simone Young AM
Honorary Life Members:	Mr Richard King
	Prof Michael Ewans
	Mr Horst Hoffman
	Mr John Wegner
	Mr Roger Cruickshank
	Dr Terence Watson



The 1998 Adelaide restaging of the Pierre Strosser Ring Cycle (Théâtre du Châtelet, conducted by Jeffrey Tate) with John Wegner as Wotan and Janis Martin as Brünnhilde



John Wegner in one of his famously physical performances as Jokanaan and Cheryl Barker in the title role of Salome in Opera Australia's 2012 production directed by Gale Edwards (Photo: Lisa Tomasetti)



John Wegner as Alberich in Elke Neidhardt's 2004 Ring Cycle in Adelaide



2004 Neidhardt's Adelaide Ring Cycle: Alberich (John Wegner) and Flosshilde (Zan McKendree-Wright)

Societies which belong to the Verband will again start to receive ticket allocations to the Bayreuth Festival.

The Ring in Dessau was an overall great success. I had never heard of any of the singers, or of the conductor, Antony Hermus. But without exception they all performed to an extremely high standard. In particular, Ulf Paulsen as Wotan and Lordanka Derilova as Brünnhilde were extraordinarily good. Paulsen also returned in *Götterdämmerung* as a superb Gunther. The orchestral sound was wonderful. As to the production, it was difficult in *Rheingold* to perceive any particular theme. All performers in that opera (including the Nibelungen, who were young children) were dressed entirely in white. The only piece of colour was a red handkerchief in Loge's jacket pocket. In *Der Walküre* the picture started to emerge of a film background, with Wotan as the director, manipulating the actors. Things started to go seriously amiss at the end of Act II when Brünnhilde refused to follow the director's line. Nevertheless, the *Walküre* scene at the beginning of Act III was huge fun, with the girls helping themselves to drinks at a bright coloured bar - rather reminiscent of the "Wunderbar" in Elke Neidhardt's Adelaide Ring. At the very end of the opera they appeared to abandon the film line, and reverted to genuine acting, with an extremely moving farewell scene between Wotan and Brünnhilde. In *Siegfried* the film theme moved towards on-line virtual reality, but it still remained true to the story. Siegfried was played by Jürgen Müller, who not only had a lovely voice, but also looked the part - young and handsome. The final scenes between him and Brünnhilde were wonderful.

A few days later I had a completely different Wagner experience when I went to *Das Liebesverbot* at the Leipzig opera. This was the first time I had ever seen this rarely performed opera, written when Wagner was only 21. As with all his works, he also wrote the libretto. It was essentially a comic opera, and was similar in style to the Italian operas of the day, upon which Wagner later turned his back. Musically

it was exceptionally good, particularly given the age of the composer at the time. Also this was a wonderful production, which brought out the burlesque in the work. Those of us who saw it all agreed that had it been written by, say, Donizetti, it would have long been part of the established opera repertoire.

Finally I would like to remind our members of the several important causes which we, as a Society, have been supporting....providing opportunities for talented young musicians to advance their careers in the German (and specifically Wagner-related) operatic fields. We can only continue this work with the support of you, our members. So I urge you, as the financial year is coming to an end, to seriously consider making a tax-free donation in order to ensure that your Society can continue this good work.

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS:

John Wegner, Honorary Life Membership - P.5

- Leona Geeves and Terence Watson

2016 Revival of the Ring Cycle? - P.6

- The Editor, Terence Watson

Telenzeit: Report - P.7

- Babara deRome and Roger Cruickshank

For Sale: Rare Arthur Rackham - P.8 Wagner Volumes

Auditor's Report and Annual - P.9 Financial Statements

International Thanks for Cameron - P.10 Dyer's Raven's Reporting

COMMITTEE 2014 - 2015

President	Jane Mathews	9360 9822
Vice President	Leona Geeves	9957 4189
Vice President	Colleen Chesterman	9360 4962
Treasurer & Membership Secretary	Dennis Mather	0413 156 700 or 9560 1860
Secretary	Mike Day	0413 807 533
Members	Tony Jones	0412 572 624
	Jenny Edwards	9810 6033
	Nick Dorsch	0419 751 694
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	Margaret Whealy	0414 787 199
OTHER FUNCTIONS		
Public Officer	Alasdair Beck	9358 3922
Consultant	Roger Cruickshank	0414 553 282
Newsletter Editor	Terence Watson	8097 9797
Webmaster	John Studdert	wagner_nsw@optusnet.com.au

FOR YOUR DIARY

2015

Meeting on Monday 15 June Concert Details: Wellington Fri 12 June 6.30pm; Christchurch Wed 17 June 7.00pm; Auckland Fri 19 June 7.00pm	For Members able and willing to cross the ditch, the Christchurch branch of NZ Wagner Society will host an informal meeting featuring Simon O'Neill and Christine Goerke, soloists in the NZSO Wagner Gala Concert being conducted by Pietari Inkinen in the Hornbrook Arena on Wednesday 17 June. Details of the three concerts at www.nzso.co.nz/concerts/concert/wagner-gala/	NB venue and time for the meeting to be confirmed
20 & 22 June	WONDERFUL NEWS - Sydney Symphony is building on the success of its previous operas in concert to perform <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> . David Robertson will conduct Christine Brewer as Isolde, Stuart Skelton as Tristan, Katarina Karnéus as Brangäne, Derek Welton as Kurwenal, and Stephen Milling as King Marke, with Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and S Katy Tucker's visual enhancement. Echoes of Bayreuth with two intervals including an hour-long dinner break!	Sydney Opera House @ 8pm
November 25, 27 & 29	Sydney Symphony with Edo de Waart: Prelude to Act 1 <i>Lohengrin</i> .	Sydney Opera House @ 8pm

COMING EVENTS 2015 - STARTING TIMES MAY VARY

PLEASE CHECK THE SCHEDULE FOR DETAILS.

DATE	Some events may be subject to change and further detail in the next newsletter	TIME & LOCATION
14 June	Dr David Larkin: Exploring <i>Tristan and Isolde</i> . A workshop focusing on this great work that is being performed in concert form at the Sydney Opera House. (NB: EARLY STARTING TIME). NO DVD PRESENTATION	Goethe Institut 12.30PM
21 June	A social occasion with members from interstate Wagner Societies to celebrate the performances of <i>Tristan and Isolde</i> and exchange information (NB: LATER START TIME 3PM). NO DVD PRESENTATION	Goethe Institut 3PM
July TBC	Sir David McVicar , opera and theatre director will respond to audience questions on his experiences directing Wagner. 12:30 DVD - <i>Lohengrin</i> Act 1 Kaufmann, Harteros, Bayerische Staatsoper/ Nagano	Goethe Institut Time TBC
9 August	Presentation by an Australian artist assisted by the Society - details TBC. DVD - TBA	Venue and Time TBC
13 September	Andrew Ford , composer, writer and broadcaster: Composers today - Wagner's legacy 12:30. DVD - <i>Lohengrin</i> Act 2 Kaufmann, Harteros, Bayerische Staatsoper/ Nagano	Goethe Institut 2PM
11 October	Neil Armfield , theatre, film and opera director: The Melbourne Ring: Looking back . DVD - <i>Lohengrin</i> Act 3 Kaufmann, Harteros, Bayerische Staatsoper/ Nagano	Goethe Institut 2PM
8 or 22 November TBC	Xmas concert and party NO DVD PRESENTATION	Venue to be confirmed 2PM

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.

Goethe-Institut address 90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)

JOHN WEGNER - HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP OF WAGNER SOCIETY IN NSW by Leona Geeves and Terence Watson

At its 7 April 2015 meeting, the Committee of the Wagner Society in NSW was very pleased to accept the proposal by Vice President Leona Geeves to offer John Wegner an honorary life membership of the Society for his achievements in the world of opera and the enjoyment he has given so many opera lovers. The Committee was delighted when John Wegner accepted the offer.

John Wegner is one of Australia's leading operatic baritones, revered by audiences and artists for his ability to deliver exciting, unforgettable stage performances, particularly in Wagner and Strauss roles.

John was helped considerably by the Wagner Society in NSW in his early career and was very generous in coming to talk to Society members at many Sunday functions. He acknowledged this assistance in his recent interview at Opera Australia on the occasion of his award for operatic achievement. Unfortunately John's career was cut short by Parkinsons Disease, which he is treating like a new role.

Born in West Germany, John Wegner graduated as a baritone from the Victorian College of the Arts, but rapidly developed into the rare and much hunted operatic beast, a Heldentenor. From 1981-1992 he was a resident principal artist with Opera Australia, where he performed many leading roles including Escamillo (*Carmen*), Baron Ochs (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and the title role of *Boris Godunov*.

Over a career of more than thirty-years, John Wegner has sung to acclaim in opera houses across Europe and Australia. A resident principal artist with Opera Australia from 1981-1992, John then moved to Germany to study Helden baritone repertoire at Badisches Staatstheater, Karlsruhe where he made his debut as Jokanaan in *Salome*.

He joined Deutsche Oper am Rhein in 2000, performing many major roles including Wotan/Wanderer, Escamillo, Prus, Scarpia, Boris Godunov and Holländer.

John has sung five roles over six seasons at Bayreuther Festspiele, commencing with Donner in *Das Rheingold*, followed by Biterolf in *Tannhäuser*, Telramund in *Lohengrin*, Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde* and Klingsor in *Parsifal*.

He has performed regularly in houses including Bern, Royal Danish Opera, La Monnaie, Prague, Leipzig, Komische Oper, La Scala Milan, Stuttgart, English National Opera, Vienna Staatsoper and London's Royal Opera House.

In Australia, he has received four Helpmann Awards, two Green Room Awards and an 'Opera Performer of the Year' MO Award for his work with Opera Australia and state companies. For Opera Australia, John has made an invaluable contribution to the success of many exciting creative endeavours, in recent years performing roles such

as Claggart in *Billy Budd*, Boris in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, Scarpia in *Tosca*, and Jokanaan in *Salome*. Many member would remember his moving and powerful account of Wotan/Wanderer in the 1998 restaging of the Pierre Strosser Ring Cycle (Théâtre du Châtelet conducted by Jeffrey Tate) for which he won one of the Helpmann Awards. Most of our members would certainly remember with great fondness his remarkable Alberich in Elke Neidhardt's much-loved 2004 Ring Cycle for the State Opera of South Australia, for which he won another of his Helpmann Awards.

John Wegner recorded an account of the farewell from Opera Australia on 29 March 2015 in which he said:

"Lyndon [Terracini—Artistic Director, Opera Australia] had a long list of things that happened in my career from which he could ask me questions. I did not have a watch on and I had so many stories to tell, that the session ended after one and a half hours instead of just one hour. The audience laughed quite a lot at my funny stories and we all nearly cried at other time." The comment on John's reminiscences from Kent McIntosh would probably sum up the feelings of many Wagnerians who were privileged to see John in full flight on stage:

"Such a wonderful voice, but as you say, backed up by such incredible stage presence and acting. The man was an incendiary performer in every way... almost hypnotic as he seared his way across stage, particularly in his stock 'dark' characters... and that all the more remarkable as he is one of the nicest men one could ever meet! Such a great afternoon today for one of the great legends of the Australian stage!"

Wagner Society in NSW member and previous committee member Paulo Montoya also remembered a singular talent and person: "Truly special artist and person. Every day watching him rehearse Jochanaan 2-3 years ago was awe inspiring. Wish I could've been there yesterday!"

Fortunately, John has recorded a significant discography for us to continue to enjoy his voice. You can see the details on his website at www.john-wegner.com/John_Wegner_Home_Page/Biog.html, which also contains his biography, and full repertoire with an astonishing list of performances around the world.

You can read John's impressively full biography at Opera Australia's website: https://opera.org.au/aboutus/our_artists/principal_artists/john_wegner.

You can also read John's full account of his farewell function at the Kathryn Morrison Management company's website: www.kathrynmorrisonmanagement.com/John-Wegner.html.

TEILENZEIT: REPORT - SHARE - LISTEN: MEMBERS DISCUSS RECENT WAGNER PERFORMANCES by Barbara deRome and Roger Cruickshank - May 24

For this meeting we had invited our members to talk about recent Wagner performances they had seen. This had been a regular annual event in the days when the Society played a direct role in obtaining Bayreuth tickets for members. Members were invited on their return from Bayreuth, to talk about their experience including comments on the singers, production etc. This time, the brief was to talk about any Wagner performance and we were lucky to have six volunteers sharing their ideas on a wide range of operas around the world. They were supported by slides which illustrated each production. Roger Cruickshank was the Master of Ceremonies.

Marie Leech spoke about two very recent performances of *Tristan und Isolde* at Covent Garden and the Vienna Staatsoper. Both had stellar casts, including in the title roles, Nina Stemme and Stephen Gould in London and Peter Seiffert and Irene Theorin in Vienna. Marie referred to the deluge of criticism which Christof Loy received for his 'incomprehensible and outrageous' Covent Garden production when it was first staged several years ago. Loy's vision was to create two worlds, one private and one public. The internal world of Tristan and Isolde was shown in a minimalist way as a stage with a large curtain at the back which only opened to show an ornate external world whenever this intruded upon the lovers. The production is now generally viewed much more positively and Marie thought it very beautiful.

Terence Watson reviewed the latest Metropolitan Opera production of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (we saw the cinema version) and the Melbourne production of *Der fliegende Holländer*. He focused on singers who 'owned' their roles. Terence was full of praise for Michael Völle's total 'inhabitation' of the role of Hans Sachs but thought that Eva, Annette Dasch, portrayed her innocence by looking like a wide eyed rabbit most of the time. Johan Botha as Walther, was a solid and unconvincing romantic presence, particularly when Beckmesser, Martin Johannes Kränzle, was so engaging. In *Holländer*, Terence singled out Warwick Fyfe as Daland and Bradley Daley, Erik, for embodying their roles so convincingly.

Bill Brooks took us back to two pivotal productions of *Tannhäuser*, staged by Opera Australia in 1973 and 1998. The 1973 production featured Elizabeth Connell as Venus and Pekka Nuotio as Tannhäuser and Glenys Fowles (Shepherd)



Speaker Esteban Insausti, Vice President Leona Geeves, Tim Green and Ms Brejzek

and Neil Warren Smith (Landgraf). Bill illustrated the influence of contemporary culture in the production design. The musical *Hair* was hugely popular at the time and Bill drew our attention to the Cleo Lane style 'Afro' hairstyle worn by Venus and the projections of naked flesh during the Venusberg scene, which were reminiscent of the time.

Elke Neidhardt was remembered fondly as the brilliant director of the 1998 production. Bernadette Cullen was Venus and Horst Hoffman played Tannhäuser. Bill described the imaginative dressing of the pilgrims as people going on a Cooks Tour and Wolfram, dressed as Schubert. A young Jeffrey Black delivered a very moving performance as Wolfram. Maria Pollicina demonstrated real feeling in her portrayal of Elisabeth.

Heinz Kestermann talked about a 2014 production of *Lohengrin* at Zurich Opernhaus. It was conducted by Simone Young with Klaus Florian Vogt as Lohengrin and Elza van der Heever as Elsa. It was a minimalist production with only tables and chairs. The only swan was an ornament on the table. This did not detract from a powerful experience which was largely due to the very fine singing by Vogt. We heard a recording of Vogt singing "In Fernem Land" and it is clear that he is a singer to look out for. Heinz commended the Opernhaus to us for its excellent productions and opera program.

Esteban Insausti focused on the design elements of two productions of The Ring Cycle. These were the Armfield,

Melbourne Ring 2013 and the Götz Friedrich, Deutsche Oper, Ring 2014. He maintained that directors need to commit to presenting a world to the audience and individual, separate ideas are not good enough—there must be a whole work approach. He felt that it was apparent in the Melbourne Ring that the director and designer were at loggerheads, hence no clear vision was realised.

Esteban demonstrated how common it is for directors to borrow ideas from each other with a clever selection of almost identical staged scenes from different productions of the same opera. For example, he showed the uncanny similarities between the Vaudeville girls in the *Rheingold* in Melbourne and the Barrie Kosky Hanover Ring 2009. Another example was the painted mask of Fafner in *Siegfried* (Melbourne) and something similar in the Ruth Berghaus Frankfurt Ring 1985.

Shane Simpson described his first visit to Bayreuth last year and his disappointment and frustration at the productions, during which he booed a performance for the first time in his life, and he and his wife walked out of *Tannhäuser* at the second interval. The Ring Director, Frank Castorf's vision saw the gold replaced by oil while *Das Rheingold* was set in a petrol station, *Die Walküre* was set on an oil rig while *Götterdämmerung* took place at the New York Stock Exchange. "Incoherence" and "bombast" were some of the

words he used. There was general disappointment with the singers but in particular, Johan Botha and Lance Ryan. Shane thought there was a general lack of direction in the production with the occasional moment of beauty but, overall, it lacked passion and emotion. Shane noted that the director did not take a bow at the end. He commented that, while there was a German language lecture on the day of each performance, none was offered to the many English speakers. Non-German speaking visitors to Bayreuth are still offered a poorer experience than that for the native speaker.

Members were then invited to participate in discussion. Some members, who had attended the same productions as the speakers, had very different experiences and this generated lively discussion. However, it must be remembered that we were seeking the individual experience of each speaker and as such, each was valid. This is what makes the world of opera so fascinating.

The afternoon finished with a toast for Richard Wagner's 102nd birthday and a cutting of the cake baked by Barbara de Rome.

Our thanks to the speakers: Marie Leech, Terence Watson, Bill Brooks, Heinz Kestermann, Esteban Insausti, Shane Simpson and MC, Roger Cruickshank

FOR SALE: RARE ARTHUR RACKHAM WAGNER VOLUMES AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE BY WAGNER SOCIETY IN NSW MEMBER

A member of the Society has very generously donated two volumes of Arthur Rackham's illustrated libretti of the four Ring operas: *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* in Volume 1, and *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* in Volume 2. These are limited editions. They are dated 1910, numbered 96 and signed by Rackham himself. The illustrations are extraordinarily vivid. Patricia Baillie, a highly experienced antiquarian book expert and a member of the Society, has examined the books and written the following comments:

"Two handsome vellum bound volumes, Arthur Rackham: Illustrations of The Ring Libretti. *Der Ring des Nibelungen – Ein Bühnenfestspiel für drei Tage und einen Vorabend, von Richard Wagner*. Two volumes. Contains libretti of: *Das Rheingold* & *Die Valkyrie* (vol. I) and *Siegfried* & *Götterdämmerung* (vol. II). Ruetten und Loenig, Frankfurt A/M. 1910-1911. Limited edition, signed by Arthur Rackham. This is no.96. 25 x 19cm, bound in original publisher's full vellum, gilt titles, t.e.g., others untrimmed. Gilt medallion with 'RW' to front cover.

"The renowned illustrator, Rackham, has given us here splendid illustrations of Wagner's heroic Ring

Cycle. There are 64 tipped-in, tissue guarded, colour plates. The set presents very well indeed. There are a few marks and some very light soiling to the vellum bindings and occasional light browning or foxing to some pages. Overall, a handsome copy, in excellent condition, of this rare set.

"Note on the set numbering: For the American and British editions, both also dated 1910 & 1911, some claim that the edition was 1100 or, some, 1150 copies, all signed by the artist. This set is numbered in Rackham's hand as no. 96, making it an early printing of the edition."

Patricia also made enquiries about any other similar volumes of the Rackham libretti. There are currently two sets on the internet market, although it is unlikely that they are as early as no.96. Both are selling for a little over \$A5,000. In the circumstances, we thought that we should make these two volumes available for purchase by our members for the starting price of \$4,000. Anyone who is interested in purchasing these unique volumes should contact Society President, Jane Mathews, by email at mathews@ozemail.com.au.

AUDIT REPORT TO MEMBERS**THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INCORPORATED**

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated, which comprises the Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2014 and the Income Statement for the twelve months ended 31 December 2014, prepared from the cashbook accounting records of The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated, in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards.

The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated Executive Committee is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements noted above and the information contained therein. I have conducted an audit of the financial statements in order to express an opinion on them to the members of The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated.

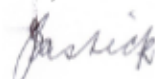
My audit has been performed in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the statements are free of material misstatement. My procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the statements, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the

financial statements are presented fairly in accordance with applicable Australian Accounting Standards so as to present a view which is consistent with my understanding of the financial position of The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated.

It was not practical to establish control over cash received for Membership Fees, Lectures and Functions, Donations and Other Fundraising Income prior to the initial entry into the accounting records. My audit therefore, was limited to the amounts recorded in the records.

Audit Opinion

Subject to the above, I report that in my opinion, the financial statements of The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated are properly drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of The Wagner Society in New South Wales Incorporated as at 31 December 2014 and its results as recorded in the accounting records for the year then ended.



Jan Bastick MIPA AGIA JB

Date: 27/2/2015

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE 12 MONTHS ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2014

	2014	2013
INCOME		
Membership	18,768.00	17,180.00
Lectures and Functions	18,605.00	27,508.00
Donations	4,876.00	45,445.00
Interest	945.00	496.00
Bayreuth ticket sales	6,300.00	-
Other Fundraising Income	335.00	1,820.00
	<u>48,829.00</u>	<u>92,449.00</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Newsletter	10,718.00	7,864.00
Function Catering Expense	2,247.00	2,399.00
Function Room Hire	3,941.00	6,530.00
Payments to Presenters	3,844.00	8,085.00
Sponsorships	22,048.00	76,440.00
Bayreuth ticket expense	5,992.00	-
Other Operating Expenses	9,302.00	8,233.00
	<u>58,092.00</u>	<u>109,551.00</u>
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	<u>- 8,263.00</u>	<u>- 17,102.00</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2014

	2014	2013
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank Accounts		
Working Account	1,964.00	3,233.00
Donation Account	34,703.00	41,770.00
	<u>36,667.00</u>	<u>45,003.00</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Membership revenue in advance	2,571.00	2,644.00
	<u>2,571.00</u>	<u>2,644.00</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>34,096.00</u>	<u>42,359.00</u>
MEMBERS EQUITY		
Surplus brought forward	42,359.00	59,461.00
Surplus/ - Deficit 2014	- 8,263	- 17,102.00
TOTAL	<u>34,096.00</u>	<u>42,359.00</u>

THANKS FROM SYDNEY SYMPHONY FOR TRISTAN UND ISOLDE SUPPORT by Jennifer Drysdale, Philanthropy Manager

Many of our members would have received the following email from Jennifer Drysdale. Your Editor thought it important to record in the Quarterly, since many members not only have bought tickets (some to both performances), but also donated to support the performance—perhaps with some self-interest in encouraging the Sydney Symphony to continue this wonderful practice and to turn it into a tradition. Such a tradition is likely to have at least two benefits: giving local players and singers experience in performing the Wagner repertoire (which is not done that often in Australia, still), and exposing more people to Wagner's works (and so increase patronage of both staged and concert versions of his works).

"Thank you so much for your support of our upcoming Opera in the Concert Hall, *Tristan und Isolde*. Whether you have contributed directly to the Tristan und Isolde project or

purchased tickets to one of the performances, every little bit helps.

"We are very pleased to share with you that the SSO through its fundraising campaign has raised \$56,300 towards this magnificent production! And we are especially delighted that Creative Partnerships Australia has matched our efforts with a \$50,000 grant. Together we have covered nearly 10% of the overall costs of this artistic highlight of your SSO 2015 season.

"Should you wish to be a part of the magic, there are still 3 more days before this campaign finishes. Please click here for more details.

"We can't wait to welcome you to *Tristan* in June! Thank you once again for your continued support of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra."

INTERNATIONAL THANKS FOR CAMRON DYER'S RAVEN'S REPORTING

Ms Nathalie D. Wagner, President of the Wagner Society of New York has written to the Wagner Society in NSW through the Society's website:

Subject: The Raven's Reporting

Message: I would like to mention this fine resource in the June issue of Wagner Notes, now in prep. Please let me know you are continuing to publish it, and how readers can access it. Thank you for your kind assistance. I enjoy your newsletter.

John Studdert, our Webmaster has reassured Ms Wagner that the Raven's Reporting will continue to be published in the Wagner Quarterly and on the website (as long as the indefatigable Camron Dyer continues to devote the considerable time and energy to compiling it that he has done for many decades). With luck and time and energy, the Wagner Quarterly will also continue to be published, with the Raven's Reporting featuring regularly to keep Wagnerians on time and course for attending their future Wagner performances

WAGNER SOCIETY MEMBERS – SPECIAL OFFERS AND 10% DISCOUNTS – ASK BEFORE YOU PURCHASE AT:

The Wagner Society Management Committee has negotiated a 10% discount for Wagner Society members: just mention that you are a member!

FISH FINE MUSIC

Fish Fine Music was born in 1982 as two small stores known as The Record Collector. After almost a decade as Sydney's largest classical music retailer, the company expanded to include popular music stores and in 1991 we re-branded ourselves as Fish Fine Music.

Fish Fine Music exists purely because our team has a passion for music. Our policy is to carry the largest classical range of CDs and DVDs in Australia and we remain committed in the long term to the unsurpassed audio quality of the CD format.

We welcome you to both our online store and our two Sydney City locations, and endeavour to bring you the fine music you want with the finest of service.

STORE LOCATIONS:

Level 2, Queen Victoria Building - 9264 6458

The Italian Forum, 23 Norton St,
Leichardt NSW 2040 - 8014 7762

www.fishfinemusic.com.au

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+61 2 9660 1825

Or email Da Capo at: music@dacapo.com.au
or **Meredith Baillie** - on shop@sapphobooks.com.au

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

BRANGAYNE OF ORANGE VINEYARD

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

ADDRESS

Please note our permanent address for all correspondence:

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[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]



Greer Grimsley as Wotan in the 2013 Seattle Ring Cycle



Lise Lindstom with Charles Workman as Erik in *Der fliegende Holländer* at the Polish National Opera 2012

The Wagner Quarterly is laid out, produced and distributed by the friendly and expert team at BEE Printmail
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ADDRESS FOR SUNDAY FUNCTIONS

Goethe Institut, 90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)



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THE MELBOURNE RING CYCLE - IS AUSTRALIA'S SECOND HOMEGROWN RING CYCLE ABOUT TO BE REVIVED = A FIRST?

by The Editor

Your Editor has heard some rumours about a long-hoped for event for many Australian Wagnerians: the revival of an Australian Ring Cycle. After a worthy complete Cycle in 1998 (even though it was a re-staging of the Pierre Strosser Ring Cycle from the Théâtre du Châtelet, conducted by Jeffrey Tate), and a truly memorable Australian production by Elke Neidhardt and her great team in 2004, neither of which were revived, despite great enthusiasm and extraordinarily positive reviews of the Neidhardt Ring, Wagnerians leaving the Melbourne Ring Cycle in 2013 were justifiably apprehensive about the prospects that it would be revived in 2016, as foreshadowed by Opera Australia in its announcement of the 2013 production—let alone in 2019 (seen as perhaps far too in the future to be taken seriously!).

After a generally positive response to the 2013 Melbourne Ring (with most reservations directed at the lack of or understated direction of the work by Neil Armfield and his creative team), most attendees left the performances seriously considering whether or not to attend a revival, should there be one. Would there any point expending too much energy on considering the options (a possible Melbourne Ring in 2016 *versus* a large number of international performances) and making a decision to keep one's diary free for November-December 2016 on the off-chance that Opera Australia would commit to the revival—and so miss out on Wagner performances in other houses not yet announced and not to mention Stuart Skelton helping to open the 2016 Metropolitan Opera season in September by singing Tristan with Nina Stemme!

Nevertheless, your Editor has heard rumours that point to the 2016 revival of Opera Australia's Melbourne Ring Cycle slowly edging towards its official announcement. First, there were names—very important names: Wotan (American Bass-Baritone Greer Grimsley) and Brünnhilde (American soprano Lise Lindstrom)—and American Ring Cycle, by default?? To the delight (and relief, perhaps,) of most of the first audience and those contemplating attending any revival, Warwick Fyfe is mooted to reprise his twisted Alberich, Stefan Vinke his thrilling Siegfried: most of the other major roles will see them filled by familiar faces.

Then there was rumoured "confirmation" that Neil Armfield would return to direct to direct his production: would there be scope and/or interest in taking the Bayreuth route of director's taking the opportunity given by revivals to "tweak" their productions, sometimes in response to audience members' comments? Great joy will no doubt welcome the "confirmation" that Maestro Pietari Inkinen will return to conduct; let's hope that he is given an orchestra of at least comparable proficiency, commitment and enthusiasm as that assembled for the premiere.

A web search for information about Greer Grimsley and Lise Lindstrom quickly discovered their websites (<http://greergrimsley.com/?q=node/10> and <http://liselindstrom.com>) with photos (see the back page), biographies and repertoire. According to his website, Grimsley "recently sang

the eminent role for the Metropolitan Opera's Ring Cycle in Robert Lepage's landmark production in the spring of 2013, directly followed by Stephen Wadsworth's production for Seattle Opera, his 3rd complete Cycle for the company in the last decade." His other roles include Jokanaan in *Salome*, the Dutchman, Telramund in *Lohengrin*, Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde*, Amfortas in *Parsifal*, and this year his début as Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Similarly, Lindstrom has many heavy roles in her repertoire ranging from Turandot to Senta to Elektra and Brünnhilde, and Venus in *Tannhäuser*. Australian audiences will be able to audition Lindstrom as Turandot for Opera Australia in Sydney in June and July 2015; however, for Grimsley, local audiences will have to wait (if rumours be true) until November 2016.

The rumours also suggest the Ring Cycle will again be performed in three rounds starting on Monday, 21 November and ending on Friday, 16 December (Beethoven's Birthday!), with a total of 5 lay days in each round. The prices, a little more expensive for 2016, range from around \$2100 to about \$1000.

Let's hope that the information is released soon so that we can check our bank balances and diaries to make sure that we can attend (again).

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE AN RESOLVED ENIGMA

to be held at the

Goethe Institut, 90 Ocean St,
Woollahra (cnr. Jersey Road)

Sunday June 14th, 12.30pm

DR. DAVID LARKIN (Sydney Conservatorium of Music)

12.30pm - **Part 1**

What's that chord? Tristan and the harmonies of desire

1.30pm - **Recital - Emilie Lemasson**, soprano

Christopher Curcuruto, baritone and **Bradley Gilchrist**,
accompanist

Richard Wagner

Im Treibhaus, Träume, Liebestod, Kurwenal selections

2.00pm - **Afternoon Tea**

2.30pm - **Part 2**

Wagner the Schopenhauerian: night, death, and the
place of music.

3.45pm - **Finish**

DAVID LARKIN

David is a lecturer in Musicology at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. He is a specialist in German music of the nineteenth century. His research interests include program music, compositional influence, music aesthetics, and the reception of 'progressive' composers, with particular focus on Franz Liszt, Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss.