



# The Wagner Society

(Patron — Sir Charles Mackerras)

Registered Office: 141 Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo 2011  
Telephone enquiries: 358 1919 (Bus. Hours)

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NEWSLETTER NO. 15

June 1984

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Patron:	Sir Charles Mackerras	<u>Committee:</u>
President:	Leonard Hansen	Michel Arnould
Vice President/Editor:	Richard King	Judy Ferfaglia
Secretary:	Jean Byrne	Sue Kelly
Treasurer:	Joseph Ferfaglia	Heike Knoke
Honorary Life Members:	Werner Baer M.B.E.	Murray Smith
	Leonie Rysanek	Janet Wayland

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COMING EVENTS: [See tear-off booking slips at end of Newsletter]

Talk by Stuart Challender Tuesday 10th July 1984 at 6.30 p.m.

Goethe Institute, 90 Ocean Street, Woollahra  
Members \$3.00, Students & Pensioners \$1.00 (includes refreshments)

DAS RHEINGOLD Tuesday 24th July at 7.30 p.m.

Sydney Opera House  
A Reserve Tickets \$30.00 (to be paid by 30th June)  
(normal price \$33.00)

Concordia Club Recording Afternoon (Stanmore)

The recording sessions continue on Sundays at 1.30 p.m.  
June 24 Die Walkurie (Herbert von Karajan)  
July 29 Siegfried ( " " " )  
Aug 26 Gotterdammerung ( " " " )  
Sept 30 To be confirmed.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Australian Opera's production of Wagner's Ring Cycle got under way last year with a season of "Die Walkure", rather shakily and not to everyone's liking, but soon improved and more substantial in its revival early this year. In a few week's time "Das Rheingold" will have its premiere and, no doubt, its shortcomings, as this comparatively young Opera company battles to stage one of the hardest works in the repertory. Regardless of the artistic and musical standard set in these productions we have to be grateful that at last a Wagnerian regime has been instituted, and that the general public, although not yet overly enthusiastic, has finally the first hand means to become familiar with the visual presentation of the works. Records, compact discs and even video tapes have spoilt us in their presentation of near perfect performances, and it is hard to accept that stage performances - for many reasons - fall short of our ideals. Even a concert performance, where we supply our own mental imagery, seems more satisfying at times than a theatre presentation. So just as the Australian Opera has taken these grand strides into Wagner's domain and committed itself to a new part of the Ring drama each year, it has recently made it known that there is to be a change in plans, and the next opera "Siegfried" will not take place in 1985. Stunned by this news, and fearful for the fate of the complete cycle, we sought some explanation. It seems that the presentation of the Ring has so strained the artistic and financial resources of the company they have called this moratorium to allow a little breathing space before a fresh onslaught can be made on "Siegfried" and "Gotterdammerung" in 1986 and 1987 respectively. The company is still seriously committed to having the full cycle ready for 1988.

We will not be left without Wagner in 1985 however, as "Die Walkure" will once again be revived in Sydney (with Leonie Rysanek) and in Melbourne (with Yvonne Minton) and "Das Rhinegold" will also be aired again for a short winter season. This will be your chance to show your support for the Australian Opera and the heroic work it is doing against great odds. The Federal Government and the Music Board are considering reducing the monetary allocation to the Opera even more, making it one of the least subsidised companies in the world. When faced with this predicament their choice to put on profitable Italian opera and commercial operetta is understandable. But let us keep our demand for Wagner opera to the fore, so there can be no further shelving of it into the "too hard" basket.

LEONARD HANSEN

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The Wagner Society Scholarship

This prize was announced last year and was to be awarded to a singer showing potential in the Wagnerian repertoire to aid in further studies. The judging panel of Sir Charles Mackerras, Mr Bruce Martin and Miss Elizabeth Fretwell, could find no suitable candidate amongst the contestants in the Metropolitan Auditions, the most suitable competition for voices in Sydney. It appeared this situation was likely to repeat itself in future years.

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The Australian Opera Auditions sponsors the Bayreuth Scholarship which allows a singer, musician or stage producer to visit Germany for further training in a specific role or task demanded by the Australian Opera. After some discussion it was decided that the Wagner Society should join with the Opera Auditions in this worthy cause, and allocate its prize money to the Bayreuth Scholarship winner, but in a specific manner. The Wagner Society would undertake to provide the return air fare to Germany for the student, thus allowing them more funds for study. The Society's interests will be safe guarded to the extent that representatives from the Wagner Society will sit with the Opera Audition panel of judges.

Members are invited to contribute to the Scholarship Fund by making a donation, which when made payable to the Elizabethan Theatre Trust on the form supplied, is tax deductible.

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#### Wagner at Woy Woy

This is the title given to Course No. 022 of the WEA Central Coast District Winter Programme. There is just one session on Saturday 30th June from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm, at the C.W.A. Hall, Brickwharf Road, right on the water's edge. Mrs June Jones, who has organised the day, will play a recording of "The Mastersingers of Nuremberg", allowing time in the interval for a picnic lunch on the lawn. Bring your own hamper. A fee of \$10.00 (\$5.00 for pensioners and unemployed) has been set for this class by the WEA, and anyone interested in attending should enrol with the WEA at Old Wyong Primary School, Rankin Street, Wyong 2259, quoting the course details above.

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#### Stuart Challender Evening

On Tuesday 10th July at 6.30pm Mr Stuart Challender, resident conductor with the Australian Opera, will talk to the members of the Wagner Society on "Das Rheingold". In particular he will talk about the preparation of Wagner's original score to suit the demands of the Sydney Opera House pit and Ring conductor Maestro Cillaris. Mr Challender is a fine conductor himself - taking "La Traviata" and "Aida" in the coming season and will be remembered for the special centenary all Wagner concert he conducted last year.

This function will be our first at the Goethe Institute which you will find to be a delightful venue, as well as being conveniently located at the corner of Ocean Street and Jersey Road, Woollahra, about seven minutes walk from Edgecliff Station.

You can be assured of a very pleasant and informative evening, so please do make the effort to come along.

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#### Editorial

Within this newsletter is a questionnaire which we would be pleased if all members would complete and return as soon as possible. This will enable the committee to determine your needs and the direction the Society

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The poem by Paul Knobel, printed below, was written in 1980 when Richard and Cosima's grave was a mound totally covered with ivy. For the one hundredth anniversary of Richard's death, the ivy was cleared away to reveal the stone tomb which was designed by Wagner a few years before his death.  
(Editor)

A volume of Poems by Paul Knobel was recently published and a cassette with readings by the poet.

Enquiries: Orianna Press, Box C467, Clarence Street P.O., Sydney 2000

### COSIMA

When Wagner died  
you clung to his body for two days.  
The Italian doctor said: 'I do not know these people  
but I know no man was so loved by his wife.'

Looking at photographs now,  
for instance, the dreamy one of you leaning on the shoulder of  
the Abbé Liszt,  
or one of you and Daniela in 1860,  
you feel:  
there is something ethereal in this woman,  
not worldly, musical.

Music, art and the world.  
It is said: without you there would have been no Bayreuth.

You did have an ugly nose  
and a double chin -

and your clothes were hardly de haute mode  
despite your French upbringing;

TO: THE GENERAL MANAGER  
THE ELIZABETHAN THEATRE TRUST  
P.O. Box 137, Kings Cross NSW 2011

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed a cheque for \$ 2,500.00 representing my donation to The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust. This donation is given unconditionally. However, it would be appreciated if, when considering your appropriations to the performing companies, preference in the allocation of this donation could be given to The Wagner Society.

SIGNATURE .....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....POSTCODE.....

TO: THE WAGNER SOCIETY  
141 Dowling Street  
Woolloomooloo NSW 2011

I have sent a donation of \$ to The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....POSTCODE.....

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

FOR THOSE WHO MAY NOT  
HAVE RENEWED

The Wagner Society  
141 Dowling Street  
WOOLLOOMOOLOO NSW 2011

I wish to renew membership of the Wagner Society in the following category:

- \$15.00 Ordinary Membership (Annual Subscription)
- \$25.00 Joint Membership (Husband & Wife) Annual Subscription
- \$ 7.50 Pensioner/Young Membership (Under 25) Annual Subscription

Membership renewal is due annually on April 1st.

Mr/Mrs/Miss

\_\_\_\_\_ (full first name and surname in BLOCK LETTERS thanks)

Membership No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

(BLOCK LETTERS)

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Day; \_\_\_\_\_

Evening \_\_\_\_\_

If under 25 - please include birth date \_\_\_\_\_

If a Pensioner, please quote No. \_\_\_\_\_

I/we enclose cheque/postal note/money order, payable to The Wagner Society.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

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BOOKING SLIP : TALK BY STUART CHALLENGER Tuesday 10th July 1984 at 6.30pm

Please reserve me \_\_\_\_\_ seats @ \$3 members, \$1 pensioner/student

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER NO. \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NO: \_\_\_\_\_