

## No. 90, December 2002

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members

For many of us, this Newsletter and Barbara McNulty's President's Reports have long been synonymous. Only now, writing my first report as president, do I realise how much of Barbara's personality was infused in her reports, making them much more than a hard act to follow.

Those of you who were lucky enough to attend our AGM in July will remember the warmth and affection of the spontaneous ovation we gave Barbara when she stepped down as president. This expressed more than words could our gratitude for her tireless work on our behalf over many years on the committee, which Barbara continues in the role of secretary and as vice president "ex officio".

Most of you, I suspect, think of AGMs as events you're lucky to avoid, but ours in July was very different. Our Society makes regular donations to support young talented Australians studying overseas, such as our support of the Bayreuth Scholarship, and we sponsor artists in local productions. Prior to the AGM, we had the chance to hear, in the glorious and intimate setting of the Paddington Uniting Church, the depth of talent we have helped in a small way to foster, when Lisa Harper-Brown and Stuart Skelton gave a recital, with Francis Greep and Michael Black. It was a delight to hear and see such bright, young talent, and the committee will be looking over the next few months at other ways we may be able to help singers and musicians starting out in their careers.

Our September function was I fear our longest meeting on record, with the showing of the Kupfer/Barenboim/Bayreuth video of *Gotterdammerung*. By the end a little after 6.30pm, only 15 brave souls remained of the original band of 50 who had started out with Siegfried on his Rhine journey hours before. In future we will try to use videos and DVDs with subtitles (even though this may occasionally infuriate members like me who have real problems with the lack of care in current translations of Wagner's texts) and we may consider different ways of showing these productions.

Our October function was an illustrated talk by Anthony Ernst on *Rienzi*, the last of the three works never performed in Bayreuth, which is reviewed elsewhere in this Newsletter. Stuart Skelton had sung the title role in a production at the Staatstheater Stuttgart earlier this year, and included *Rienzi's* prayer "Allmächt'ger Vater, blick herab!" in our recital.

There are two more functions this year. In November Elke Neidhard, director of the 2004 Adelaide Ring, will answer questions about the Ring and opera production generally. Elke doesn't shirk from controversy, and her productions of *Tannhäuser* and *Parsifal* still provoke heated discussion between jaded palettes (like mine) which crave new interpretations and sensations, and those of a more traditional hue.

In December, we have our end-of-year party, including a piano recital and reminiscences by Elizabeth Long. First prize in our raffle is a set of DVDs of the Chereau/Boulez Ring generously donated by Barbara McNulty.

Dr John Casey's talk on the Berlin Kupfer/Barenboim Wagner Festival, which he gave at our annual luncheon in honour of Wagner's birthday in May this year, was reprinted in the September Newsletter. Mr Robert S Fisher, editor of *Leitmotive*, the journal of the Wagner Society of Northern California, has written warmly endorsing John's comments on the staging of Wagner, enclosing past issues of *Leitmotive* with similar commentary. Congratulations, John!

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#### Newsletter Highlights

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PATRON:  
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### COMING EVENTS

|              |  |                            |
|--------------|--|----------------------------|
| November 17  | A conversation with Elke Neidhardt about the Adelaide Ring.*   | Goethe Institut 1.00 pm    |
| December 8   | Elizabeth Long: A piano recital and reminiscences  | Goethe-Institut 1.00 pm    |
| <b>2003</b>  |  |                            |
| January      | No function  |                            |
| February 23  | TBA  | Goethe Institut 1.00 PM    |
| March 16     | DVD of <i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i> ** Deutsche Oper Berlin, conducted by Rafael Fruhbeck de Burgos with Götz Friedrich - producer, Gosta Winbergh - Walter, Eva Johansson - Eva, Victor von Halem - Veit Pogner, Wolfgang Brendel- Hans Sachs; English subtitles | Goethe Institut 1.00 PM    |
| April 13     | Anthony Ernst on <i>Parsifal</i>   | Goethe Institut 1.00 PM    |
| May 23       | Wagner's Birthday Dinner – to be held on the day of Wagner's birth – Friday 23***  | The Women's Club<br>6:00PM |
| June         | No Wagner Society function – possible <i>Meistersinger</i> Seminar at NSW Art Gallery  |                            |
| July 20      | 23 <sup>rd</sup> AGM<br>A seminar on <i>Meistersinger</i> may also be organised with Heath Lees and the New Zealand Wagner Society on Saturday morning 5 July  | Goethe Institut 1.00 PM    |
| August       | No function  |                            |
| September 21 | TBA  | Goethe Institut 1.00 PM    |
| October 19   | TBA  | Goethe Institut 1.00 PM    |
| November 16  | TBA  | Goethe Institut 1.00 PM    |
| December 7   | Xmas party   | Goethe Institut 1.00 PM    |
|              | <b>Goethe-Institut address:<br/>90 Ocean Street Woollahra (corner of Jersey Road)</b>  |                            |

\*Ms Neidhardt has suggested that she would answer questions from Members. If you have questions already, please send them to the President so that Ms Neidhardt can prepare answers; otherwise bring your questions to the meeting. Members may also like to bring along a video copy of their favourite &/or most hated scene from a Ring Cycle production for concrete examples to the discussion.

\*\* We will try to find subtitled performances for videos, but not all recordings include them, so feel free to bring a libretto to help in following the plot. In the future, we will endeavour to use DVD recordings since most have subtitles.

\*\*\* Because of the costs associated with putting on a birthday lunch on a Sunday, the Committee has decided to move the celebration to a weekday evening. Further details will be provided early in 2003.

### COMMITTEE 2002-2003

|                                    |                     |           |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| President and Membership Secretary | Roger Cruickshank   | 9357 7631 |
| Vice President & Secretary         | Barbara McNulty OBE | 9487 1344 |
| Vice President                     | Julian Block        | 9337 6978 |
| Treasurer                          | Elle Rasink         | 9369 1779 |
| Members                            | Sandy Dudgeon       | 9489 0570 |
|                                    | Colin Jones         | 9665 0059 |
|                                    | Dennis Mather       | 9560 1860 |
|                                    | Monica Olave        | 9879 5209 |
| Newsletter Editor                  | Terence Watson      | 9517 2786 |
| Public Officer                     | Peter Nicholson     | 9436 1097 |

### FOR YOUR DIARY

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Wagner Concert <i>The Ride of the Valkyries</i> | Sydney Symphony Orchestra under Edo de Waart – Thursday 27 March 2003 - see below for application form  | Sydney Opera House<br>8:00pm   |
| <i>Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg</i>           | Conductor - Simone Young; Hans Sachs - Bruce Martin; Walther von Stolzing – Jürgen Müller; Sixtus Beckmesser – Michael Lewis; Miriam Gordon-Stewart; David – Steve Davislim; Fritz Lothner – Warwick Fyfe. See below for Wagner Society booking | Capitol Theatre,<br>Haymarket Sydney –<br>July 2, 5, 8, 11, 16,<br>19 2003 |
| <i>Götterdämmerung</i>                          | The Perth International Arts Festival 2003 – details below  | Perth Feb 13 and 15  |
| The Ring Cycle                                  | State Opera of South Australia announces the production team for Wagner's Ring Cycle - Adelaide 2004  | Adelaide 17 Nov to<br>11 Dec   |

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT continued**

I had the pleasure of attending a performance of *Die Freischütz* in September with Mr Richard King, a former president of the Society and an honorary life member. Richard may be moving from the South Coast to Tasmania soon, and in cleaning out his linen cupboard, he came across a most remarkable item - a costume from Bayreuth! Herr Reinhard Heinrich, who was costume designer for the production of *Die Meistersinger* given by the Federal German government to Australia to celebrate the bi-centenary in 1988, brought with him a sailor's costume - trousers, jacket and sailor's cap - from the 1978 Kupfer production of the Flying Dutchman, for which Hr Heinrich was also costume designer. We are having the item appraised with a view to selling it by auction.

2003 will be Edo de Waart's last year as Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and, unexpectedly perhaps, Simone Young's last year as Music Director with Opera Australia. Both are passionate supporters of Wagner's works and will leave their organisations and Sydney concert-goers enriched. While we may mourn their departures, we must wait and see whether their successors will continue to champion Wagner's works.

There have been two further developments in the matter of the misappropriation of Society funds, which was reported to the NSW Police Service last year. In July, the officer in charge of the investigation wrote and advised that, despite evidence gained, he had decided to use his discretion not to further investigate the matter, as in his view a prosecution would not be in the public interest. Based on medical advice and other matters set out in his letter, the Committee has agreed with this Police advice. I would like to record my thanks to the Police officers involved in this difficult investigation, to the current and former members of the Society who gave statements and assisted the Police, and to Mr Anthony Gregg, who acted "pro bono" on the Society's behalf.

In August, Insolvency and Trustee Service Australia sent a report listing the Society among the creditors in a bankrupt estate, in the amount of \$35,000. They advised that no dividend was expected to be paid, and that an investigation of the bankrupt's affairs had found nothing to benefit creditors.

These two letters have brought this sad affair to a close, and the Committee will now focus on the Society's future, a sentiment strongly endorsed at the AGM.

Finally, may I wish each of you a very happy and safe New Year, and the very best for 2003.

**Roger Cruickshank October 2002**

## **DONATIONS**

The Society welcomes all donations and they can be addressed to the Treasurer, Wagner Society in NSW Inc at the GPO address above. Such donations help us to carry out our objectives of promoting the performance of Wagner's works. Donations are tax-deductible and receipts will be issued. A donation has gratefully been received from the following member: Tony McDonald

## **NEW MEMBERS**

Professor Maurice Cashmere (877), Mr David and Mrs Sabina Full (883), Dr June Donsworth (884), Ms Meredith Stokes (885), Mrs Marie McCann OAM (886), Dr Robert B Hampshire (887), Alexander Feld (888), Michael Millard (889), Phillip Bacon (890). Would new members please make themselves known to Committee Members at Society events to facilitate introductions? [Ed]

## **NOTES ON THE BAYREUTHER FESTSPIELE 2002**

This was our first experience of the Festspiele and we were grateful to the Wagner Society for the opportunity of attending. The Bayreuth experience was wonderful but challenging, beginning with five consecutive nights at the Festspielhaus. We saw *Meistersinger*, *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser* and the Ring: our two free days were after *Walküre* and after *Siegfried*. I understand that this was unusual and that there are normally more free days. I am an opera addict, but I must say that I found this schedule a little punishing and would have appreciated a few more days off.

Our first evening was *Meistersinger*, the last revival of the Wolfgang Wagner production: Herr Wagner was there to take curtain calls at the end and was warmly received. The production and sets (also by Wagner) were traditional: there was a large curved backdrop on which were projected images of church frescos (Act One), Nürnberg rooftops (Act Two), and, most impressively, forest foliage with dappled sunlight for the final scene of Act Three. Here one could feel the atmosphere of nature and particularly the forest, so important to German literature and legend, which one can still experience throughout Germany, but which was notably missing from the recent Sydney production of *Der Freischütz*. Christian Thielemann conducted, rather sedately; Robert Holl was a phlegmatic Sachs. Emily Magee as Eva was young and vibrant, with Endrik Wottrich suitably dashing as Walther - I had no trouble believing in these two as a couple.

*Lohengrin*, conducted by Sir Andrew Davis, was for me probably the most satisfying experience of the Festival. Again, the production (by Keith Warner, with sets by Stefanos Lazaridis) was traditional. We were transported to medieval times where mythical swans and knights of the grail fitted well with the historical characters. During the Prelude, the

curtain rose to display a truly magical dense forest, dark and brooding; it sloped on all sides down towards the front of the stage, where a small clearing led to a pool. As the shimmering and weaving phrases grew more solid and declamatory, a silver swan rose slowly from the pool, before descending again as the music ebbed away.

The Saxon army in serried ranks was lowered from above on a frame – impressive but rather static, as only the first row or two were actual singers; the rest were dummies. Robert Dean Smith was heroic, good-looking and youthful as Lohengrin; Roman Trekel an impressive herald. Both Petra-Maria Schnitzer as Elsa and Linda Watson as Ortrud sang and acted well. King Henry (Stephen West) was portrayed as an ageing, frail Amfortas-like character, not the commanding figure we had in Siegfried Vogel in Sydney. The set for the non-forest scenes was a platform which tilted alarmingly, not unlike a raft being tossed by stormy seas. The singers at times seemed in real danger of falling off.

In *Lohengrin*, as in many of the performances, I missed the onstage trumpets (not to mention the groups of brass in the upper loges) we enjoy in Sydney. In fact, I would say that the recent Sydney productions of *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser* stand up quite well in comparison with those in Bayreuth.

*Tannhäuser*, the new production for this year's festival, was a bit like the curate's egg. Parts of it were excellent. Roman Trekel, fronting for the second night in a row, was moving as Wolfram. John Wegner was a suitably pugnacious Biterolf.

The production, by Philippe Arlaud, was comprehensible (unlike some aspects of the Ring), but did not resonate with me. This was the Dresden version, so there was no bacchanale: Christian Thielemann again conducted. The initial Venus-Tannhäuser scene portrayed Venus (Barbara Schneider-Hofstetter) as a strange love-goddess: rather than being voluptuous and abandoned, she was elaborately coiffed and dressed, rather like a Christian Dior model of the 1960s – beautiful to look at, but untouchable, while Tannhäuser sat, uninvolved, at the foot of her large bed-like platform. When asked to sing, he picked up a sheet of music and read from it in a desultory fashion, but his heart was clearly not in the exercise and he looked away from Venus. At the sudden keychange which marks the transformation from the Venusberg to the meadow of the next scene, Venus' platform shot backwards and upwards, far into the middle distance, so that she became quite tiny - a breathtaking coup de théâtre that can only be done on large stages such as Bayreuth, the Met or Vienna and that still makes one gasp.

Covered with bright red poppies, the meadow was a cavernous tunnel, with grass and flowers on the ceiling as well as the floor. One reviewer was reminded of Teletubbies. Was it a tunnel of love, or a *vagina dentata*? Certainly, it posed difficulties for the singers' movement (treading on the flowers) and acoustics. The hunters were in a sort of timeless costume with Bavarian hats. They were accompanied by some ladies in 19<sup>th</sup> century dress who realised that this was men's business and started comparing feathers in the background before departing the scene as Tannhäuser was welcomed back to the fold.

Act Two began promisingly with Ricarda Merbeth as Elisabeth, an innocent blonde young girl, not as knowing about the stirrings within her as Maria Pollicina in the Sydney production a few years ago. Kwangchul Youn was an imposing, if youthful, Landgraf. For the entry of the guests I missed the onstage trumpets we enjoyed in Sydney, though we heard later that the set had been so reverberant that carpet had had to be laid down, so perhaps they were a late scratching. The set was similar to the Sydney production's, with the hall resembling a tiered opera house rather than the historical hall at Wartburg (subject of an exhibition at Villa Wahnfried during the Festival). In the centre of the floor, however, was a huge phallic blue pillar. Among the guests, some women were clearly cult followers of Tannhäuser, aroused and intoxicated by his singing, while the majority of onlookers were scandalised. As Tannhäuser leaves for Rome, Elisabeth, still not understanding the feelings he has awakened in her, turns reluctantly towards Wolfram.

Act Three was the most successful. The wonderful introduction set the scene as shadows fell in the meadow, with Tannhäuser's helmet at a wayside shrine. The pilgrims' chorus was impressive, but lost power at the climax when they knelt at their triumphant "Hallelujah!". Roman Trekel as Wolfram sang a heart-breakingly wonderful "O du mein holder Abendstern". Glenn Winslade's Rome narration was robust and ringing – almost too much so, without the exhaustion one might expect - a minor quibble. He gave a wonderful performance in a problematic production.

Jürgen Flimm's 2000 Ring production was in its third season, and I understand that quite a bit has been changed since its first outing. Nonetheless, I found much of it puzzling and obscure in a way that the "minimalist" Strosser Ring in Adelaide was not. It was conducted by Adam Fischer.

In *Das Rheingold*, the Rheintöchter looked a bit drab and all too fleshly, rather than sprite-like. Hartmut Welker as Alberich sang marvellously - a credible late 20<sup>th</sup> century thuggish business opportunist. From the seediness of the first scene we were transported to the Valhalla building site, equally dusty and drab. Nibelheim was glistening and modern – Alberich was doing well in life, impeccably dressed in a smart suit, with an office to match and a workshop floor that was very "now". The fourth scene, with Valhalla now a majestic ship-like fortress looming in the distance, continued in the contemporary industrial mode. The exception to the everyday modern dress was the appearance of the giants

(Johann Tilli as Fasolt and Philip Kang as Fafner), who looked rather like Native American chiefs on stilts. Other singers deserving particular mention are Olaf Bär as a rather lightweight Donner, Endrik Wottrich as Froh, and Arnold Bezuyen as a very vigorous Loge, replacing Graham Clark, who was ill. Michael Howard sang well as Mime. The goddesses were Mihoko Fujimura (Fricka), Anja Kampe (Freia) and Simone Schröder (Erda).

*Die Walküre* opened in a hut that was a mixture of the primeval and the refined. A bleached-timber room (hardly a hut) with louvred windows was furnished with elegant 18<sup>th</sup> century furniture. The room had been invaded by bullrushes behind which the obligatory tree-trunk loomed solidly. Hunding was a modern hunter, dressed in battle fatigues. The appearance was more Chekhov than Wagner. The singing, however, was truly thrilling: Violeta Urmana and Robert Dean Smith, with Philip Kang as Hunding, made this act for me the highlight of the whole cycle. I found it hard to imagine Waltraud Meier and Plácido Domingo (who were appearing in Munich in these roles this summer) being more exciting, but those who had seen them at Bayreuth said that they were.

Act Two, set in a steel-grey, cavernous, cell-like part of Valhalla, showed Wotan (Alan Titus) as a troubled CEO surrounded by stylish office furniture. Mihoko Fujimura as Fricka was impressive and moving. Fricka can sometimes appear rather shrewish and two-dimensional, a "cheap shot" of Wagner's, but here she was noble and dignified; petite but with a wonderful deep mezzo tone which made one quite weak at the knees as she heaped coals of fire on the hapless Wotan. Brünnhilde was also a reversal of the usual form: Evelyn Herlitzius, rumoured to be a former dancer, made an acrobatic entrance. She and her sisters were tough young street-fighters, wiry rather than god-like. She sang powerfully, but the ringing high notes were accompanied by a noticeable vibrato. From the second act of *Walküre* onwards, several scenes of the Ring were set in a desolate landscape with what looked like a barbed wire fence down one side and some army huts in the distance. This suggestion of modern warfare was most strikingly evoked by the stream of young soldiers led into Valhalla by the Valkyries. They were just too similar to the television images we see of present-day conflicts, most recently in Afghanistan. In the Adelaide Ring, the heroes were corpses, but here they were alive, not heroic but everyday young men, trooping inexorably towards death. Brünnhilde, bereft of her armour and clad only in a simple black dress, was laid to rest, not on a rock, but on a pile of helmets and other detritus of war.

The *Siegfried* Siegfried was Christian Franz (Wolfgang Schmidt sang the role in *Götterdämmerung*). He sang and acted well, looking much more like Mime than Siegmund, though this scene was inexplicably set in Hunding's hut. The ash-tree was at a more rakish angle, poking out the back door rather than through the ceiling. Helmut Pampuch replaced an indisposed Graham Clark as Mime, doing sterling service in both acting and singing. The dragon was well done, with billowing parachute silk giving the appearance of a huge menacing caterpillar with a human face. When Siegfried kills the dragon, the caterpillar part disappeared down a hole, leaving Fafner as an old man slumped in a wheelchair.

*Götterdämmerung* began with the Norns in a vast and desolate place, furnished though with Sieglinde's chairs. They were, however, at least dealing with the rope of fate. A niggling problem I had with this production was the number of times singers were expected to sit down while singing, and sometimes do things like eat breakfast (Siegfried) or even smoke a cigarette. This may be appropriate theatrically for a kitchen-sink drama, but it makes it hard for the singers to project in a work like this. Brünnhilde had to sing much of "Zu neuen Taten" while seated.

The Gibichungs were a very bourgeois crowd, all in suits in their glass and steel factory-cum-office. Gunther (Olaf Bär) was a smooth but ineffectual character, unsubtly indicated in this production by his perennial inability to light his cigarette. Hagen (John Tomlinson), in contrast, was a towering figure with a voice to match and an air of Karl Marx about him. During the final scene, he inexplicably stabbed himself with Notung, though it puts an end to the possibility of Alberich's descendants regaining the ring. As smoke and fire appeared, the set gradually opened up to reveal what appeared to be almost limitless space, and the crowd, in everyday clothes now, quietly and simply, walk back towards the embers of Valhalla. A glimpse of a new dawn, and then the curtain fell.

It wasn't clear to me that Flimm has said any more in this production than Patrice Chéreau did in the 1976 centenary production, apart from pointing the finger at contemporary white-collar workers and entrepreneurs rather than nineteenth century industrialists, but I did find it hard to come to grips with and perhaps a repeat viewing might give fresh insights.  
**[Bill Brooks]**

### **KATHERINA WAGNER'S FIRST VENTURE INTO PRODUCING GREAT-GRANDFATHER'S OPERAS**

The following is a synopsis of this review *Another Wagner's Debut, Turning The Plot Around* of Katherina Wagner's debut as a director in Würzburg on 22 September at the Mainfranken Theater. Anne Midgette's summary of the "interpretation" is "Senta is the weird girl in school with funny clothes and strange music on her Walkman. Daland, her father, is a slick operator who's happy to forge a passport or even prostitute his daughter if the price is right. And the dapper Flying Dutchman is a wanted man who is ultimately beaten to death by skinheads wielding baseball bats."

Midgette quotes Ms Wagner as asserting "It's important to me that a work relate to the present day....And I think I've found exactly that in 'Holländer'." "And she has just created a huge scandal." "Senta knew the Dutchman's picture from "Wanted" posters. The natty attire of the Dutchman and his men immediately branded them as misfits: helpless,

trying not to attract attention, they incensed the lowlifes through their sheer otherness, and were beaten to a pulp."

"Ms. Wagner's staging is particularly provocative because she is supposed to bear the standard of the Wagner family." According to Ms Midgette's report, her father, Wolfgang Wagner has "cited Katharina as the only family member he'd consider as a successor, an idea that seemed absurd, given her youth and lack of experience."

The Würzburg chapter of the Richard Wagner Society donated nearly \$20,000 to the Mainfranken Theater to mount a new Wagner production to celebrate its 20th anniversary, including offering a professional directing debut to "Mr. Wagner's chosen heir". "Storms of boos, alternating with bravos, buffeted the production team at the premiere." According to Ms Midgette, most of the critics "had to admit that Ms. Wagner had come up with a serious production".

Ms Midgette also reported that Ms Wagner's "next project [was] starting school in Berlin and that "she would not stage anything at Bayreuth anytime soon". Ralf Lukas, was the Dutchman; Michail Litmanov was Daland; Joanna Porackova was Senta, Gilbert Mata was Eric. The music director of the Mainfranken Theater, Daniel Klajner, conducted.

[by Anne Midgette **The New York Times**, 15 October 2002]

### **RIENZI - PRESENTATION BY ANTHONY ERNST**

Anthony Ernst concluded his survey of Wagner's earliest completed operas with a rewarding and illuminating discussion of *Rienzi, the last of the Tribunes* that premiered in Dresden on 20 October 1842 with the orchestra of the Königlich Sächsisches Hoftheater. Mr Ernst pointed out a number of interesting features of the work and its premiere, including the fact that many of the singers in *Rienzi's* premiere were to sing in many of Wagner's later operas, including Wilhemine Schröder-Devrient and Joseph Tichatschek who helped make *Tristan und Isolde* a success. Mr Ernst noted that *Rienzi* lacked a critical edition and that any contemporary performance had to choose from a variety of versions with multitudes of cuts made at various times to deal with the opera's five hour plus length. Wagner's own reactions to the premiere, which began at 6:00pm and concluded after midnight, included a strong desire to cut the work severely.

Mr Ernst drew out the political strands of both the opera and Wagner's life, including the fact that Wagner made a point of visiting the English Parliament during his visit to London (when he failed to meet Edward Bulwer-Lytton, the author of the novel *Rienzi* for the opera he was already sketching) to see how a relatively democratic system worked in comparison to the more oppressive autocratic monarchies he had so far seen. It was only seven years later that Wagner mounted the barricades for the Dresden uprising of 1849 that resulted in his banishment - a little like *Rienzi* banished from Rome? It was partly this experience of mixing politics with life and art that changed Wagner's interest from writing operas based on history to music dramas based on mythology.

After a helpful overview of the facts of the real *Rienzi's* life and turbulent times, Mr Ernst then suggested that the figure of *Rienzi* was the first of a number of heroes who incarnated Wagner's interest in the risky relationship between leaders and the crowds they lead. *Lohengrin*, *Tannhäuser* and *Parsifal* can be seen in this light. . [It also raises the interesting parallel between Wagner's own self-image as the heroic "artist of the future" who had an ambivalent relationship with the *Volk* or community that was both the source of the artist's legitimacy and inspiration and the ultimate recipients of the artist's creations. Ed.] [Mr Ernst will talk to the Society about *Parsifal* on 13 April 2003-put this in your diary Ed]

### **PERTH'S 50TH FESTIVAL – *Götterdämmerung* GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**

For details see the September Newsletter or visit the website:

<http://www.perthfestival.com.au/festival/index.cfm/fuseaction/events.categories>. Dates for the performances at Perth Concert Hall are 13 Feb 2003 and 15 Feb 2003. Conductor - Lionel Friend - and cast includes Susan Bullock (Brünnhilde), Alan Woodrow (Siegfried), Sir Donald McIntyre (Alberich), Philip Kang (Hagan), Waltraute / Second Norn (Elizabeth Campbell), First Norn (Liane Keegan), with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and the West Australian Opera Chorus, and directed by Neill Gladwin.

| Ticket Prices – for the indoor performances: |                     |                 |
|--|---------------------|-----------------|
| Standard                                     | Friends of Festival | Conc            |
| Premium \$200                                | Premium \$177       |                 |
| A Reserve \$160                              | A Reserve \$141     | A Reserve \$143 |
| B Reserve \$120                              | B Reserve \$105     | B Reserve \$107 |
| C Reserve \$80                               | C Reserve \$68      | C Reserve \$70  |

### **THE RAVEN'S REPORTING - no report this issue - check again in the March 2003 newsletter**

You can also check the previous Newsletters Nos 88 and 89 (June and September 2002). There is also a regularly updated comprehensive list on the Society's Website <http://www.wagner-nsw.org.au>. However, members might be interested in these two performances-*Rienzi* at the Antikenfestspiele in Trier on 27 and 29 June and 4 and 6 July 2003 and open-air performances of the Ring at the Theater Magdeburg in June 2005.

**Newsletters and Publications –**

Richard Wagner Verband International in China  
Wagner Notes, Vol XXV No 4, Summer 2002 - Wagner Society of New York  
Newsletter Vol 4 No 7 August 2002 - Wagner Society of New Zealand  
Leitmotive, Vol 16, No 2, Summer 2002 - Wagner Society of Northern California  
Newsletter No 14 August 2002 - Wagner Society in Queensland  
Newsletters 155 September and 156 October 2002 - Richard Wagner Society of South Australia Inc  
Wagner News Vol 14 No 1 August 2002 - Toronto Wagner Society  
Kulturechronik No 3, 2002 - Goethe Institut Inter Nationes  
Exchange Edition 5, 2002 - Goethe Institut Inter Nationes in Australia  
Richard Wagner Nachrichten Jahrgang 14/4, Oktober - November 2002

| <b>APPLICATION FORM FOR TICKETS THROUGH THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NSW INC<br/>TO THE SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA <i>THE RIDE OF THE VALKYRIES</i> CONCERT<br/>Saturday, 29 March 2003</b> |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Name/s</b>   |   |
| <b>Address</b>  |   |
| <b>Phone</b>  |   |
| <b>Membership No/s</b>  |   |
| <b>No of Tickets @<br/>\$72 each (a saving<br/>of \$10 to members)</b>  |   |
| <b>Signature/s</b>  |   |
| <b>DEADLINE</b>   | Please ensure your booking, accompanied by a cheque for the appropriate amount is received by the Secretary, The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc, GPO Box 4574 SYDNEY NSW 2001 by <b>FRIDAY, 20 December 2002</b> |

**TICKETS THROUGH THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NSW INC TO OPERA AUSTRALIA'S PRODUCTION  
OF *DIE MEISTERSINGER VON NÜRNBERG* – 5 JULY 2003**

The Society is arranging for a block booking for tickets for members to the above performance. An application form with further details will be included in the March 2003 Newsletter.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Members' Market</b></p> <p>Members of the Wagner Society in NSW are invited to use this space to advertise for sale or purchase second-hand Wagnerian recordings and publications. There is no charge, but please limit advertisements to fifty words.</p> |
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**ADDRESS**

Please note our permanent address for all correspondence  
The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc  
GPO Box 4574 SYDNEY NSW 2001  
Telephone: 9357 7631 (Roger Cruickshank, President)  
Website: <http://www.wagner-nsw.org.au>  
Website enquiries: [webmaster@wagner-nsw.org.au](mailto:webmaster@wagner-nsw.org.au)  
(all website addresses used in this Newsletter will be on the Wagner Society's website)

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