

The Wagner Society

IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

Registered Office: 4/22 Read Street, Waverley, 2024



Newsletter

#61 DECEMBER 1995

Print Post Approved PP242114/00002

PATRON: SIR CHARLES MACKERRAS
HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS: Miss RITA HUNTER, CBE
Miss LEONIE RYSANEK
Prof MICHAEL EWANS
Mr RICHARD KING
Mr REG MALONEY

COMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
10 December, 1995	Christmas Party	The Opera Centre 480 Elizabeth Street 2.00 p.m.
11 February, 1996	Talk by: Richard Gill accompanied by two members of the AO Chorus	The Goethe Institut 90 Ocean St, Woollahra 1.00 pm
17 March, 1996	Video: "Conductor", with commentary from a conductor (details to be announced)	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
14 April, 1996	Video: <i>Parsifal</i>	Goethe Institut 12.30 pm
26 May, 1996	Richard Wagner birthday celebration lunch Guest-of-honour: John Wegner	Ritz Carton Hotel Macquarie Street 12.00 for 12.30
16 June 14 July 18 August 8 September 20 October 17 November 8 December	Programme not yet confirmed but to include AGM on 14 July, Lohengrin video with Paul Frey, Tannhäuser video, Walküre video. Note also SSO Benefit Concert on 13 July with all-Wagner programme, and <i>Der Flieglinde Holländer</i> performances by the Australian Opera between 12 August and 28 September.	Unless indicated otherwise, functions will be held at the Goethe Institut

COMMITTEE

President	Paul Lehmann	411 7899 (work) 413 1035 (fax)
Vice President	Barbara McNulty	487 1344
Vice President and Treasurer	Olive Coonan	387 6403
Membership Secretary	Janet Wayland	332 3926
Secretary	Ira Kowalski	560 5859
Members	Barbara Brady (Newsletter)	9956 5132
	Shirley Robertson	521 3281
	Ivor Zetler	871 4566 (home) 872 2723 (work)
Public Officer	Reg Maloney	

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members.

It was a great start in July with the talk by our own Sydneysider/Australian Simone Young. True we had an article about her in our March newsletter and an appreciation for her talk in our September issue but I still believe it is worth recording the wonderful impact she had on those members lucky enough to be with us on that occasion.

I have been fortunate to represent the Society at the regional finals of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, the German Operatic Aria awards and a National Vocal Symposium organised by the Opera Foundation of Australia. The finals and the awards are a showcase for today's young singers and no doubt we will hear and see many of them on the opera stage in years to come. The Symposium was an opportunity to meet some 20 young artists who had been selected (Australia wide) to attend master classes organised by the Opera Foundation. The teachers at this class were our own Dame Joan Sutherland, together with (from New York) Madame Marlena Kleinman Malas, Mr Robert Cowart, Mr Michael Parker and (from Brisbane) Ms Anna Sweeney. This was a social evening to meet and chat with the participants and teachers. The Opera Foundation deserves a great "pat on the back" for arranging such a fantastic opportunity for our young singers.

Congratulations for this year's winner of the Bayreuth Scholarship, Mr Steve Walter who is a repetiteur with the Australian Opera.

The C.D.- playing evening at the Eugene Goossens hall at the ABC was I believe a "first" for the society. It was entirely the idea of Dr Ivor Zetler who did 99% of the organising. Financially we will probably "break even" - however I believe it did raise the profile of the society in areas where the society was perhaps unknown. Thanks of course are due to all those who contributed to the evening. Polygram, for donating the prizes, Audio Excellence for the Hi Fi, Dr Tom Wenkart of Macquarie Health Corporation for a hefty donation for printing and catering costs and Damien Pignolet for the catering. Also very special thank you for a "quiet behind the scenes" contribution from David Gyger who so generously made copies of the libretto available.

I am happy to report that:

1. On 13 July 1996 the S.S.O. will be holding a benefit concert which will be exclusively Wagner. One of our members (who plays with the percussion section of the orchestra and is heavily involved in arranging the concert) has sent me a copy of the 1947 performance conducted by Eugene Goossens. It is planned to replicate that concert. More details of this will be published later, and Secondly

2 next year it's back to the Goethe Institut. In short we have not been able to get confirmation that the Metcalfe will be available next year whereas the Goethe Institut has given us written confirmation of available dates.

Hope to see you all that the Christmas Party - remember IT IS AT THE OPERA CENTRE.

PAUL LEHMANN

ADDRESS

Please note our permanent address for all correspondence, and the new telephone and fax number:

The Wagner Society in NSW Inc
GPO Box 4574 SYDNEY NSW 2001
Tel: 411 7899 (Paul Lehmann, business hours) Fax 413 1035

All contributions to the *Newsletter* are gratefully received and may be forwarded to
The Editor at the above address.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society is delighted to welcome the following new members:
Dr & Mrs Richard Cohen, Dr Dennis Mather, Ms Nancy Elizabeth Smith

Financial members whom we regret were omitted from the September list are Ms Jean Whitehouse and Mrs J.E. Griffin.

DONATIONS

We gratefully acknowledge generous donation from the following supportive
members of this Society.

A. & W. Hamlin
Dr Sue Kelly

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Society acknowledges with thanks receipt of the following publications from Wagner societies and related organisations: Richard Wagner Society Inc (Victoria) *Annual Report* of the President, Greg Reinhardt; *Wagner* (The Wagner Society, UK) Vol. 16 No. 2, May 1995; *Wagner News* (The Wagner Society, UK) Nos. 109 - 112, May-Dec. 1995; *Wagner News* (Toronto Wagner Society) Vol. 7 No. 1-2, Aug-Oct 1995; *Wagner Notes* (Wagner Society of New York) Vol. xviii nos 4-5, Aug-Oct 1995; *Newsletter*, *Richard Wagner Society of South Australia*, nos. 87, 88 & 89, Aug-Sep 1995; *Kulturchronik*: News and Views from the Federal Republic of Germany, No. 4, 1995; *Leitmotive*: the journal of the Wagner Society of Northern California, Vol. 9 no. 1, Spring 1995.

1996 VENUE

We are pleased to announce a return to our previous venue at the Goethe Institut, Woollahra. The Wagner Society felt very much at home there for many years and is glad that the Goethe can accommodate us once again. Please note function dates in your 1996 diary.

Career change for Ortrud

The Australian Financial Review for Tuesday 14 November reports that Ms Stella Axarlis, managing director of Bilcon Engineering, was presented with the 1995 Australian Quality Award for a Small Enterprise by the Minister for Industry, Science and Technology on 13 November. Ms Axarlis was an international opera soprano for more than 20 years before her astonishing career move into heavy industry. She will be remembered as the Ortrud in the 1988 production of *Lohengrin*, with Stuart Challender conducting and Horst Hoffmann as Lohengrin

Der Ring des Nibelungen
The State Opera of South Australia, Festival Theatre, Adelaide, 1998

1998 Cycle Performance Dates

Opera	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Das Rheingold	18 November	27 November	5 December
Die Walküre	19 November	28 November	7 December
Siegfried	21 November	1 December	9 December
Götterdämmerung	24 November	4 December	12 December

The Society is in close touch with the State Opera of South Australia and intends to offer some financial support for the 1998 *Ring*. We will keep members informed of developments and of our possible role as tour organizers of group bookings to one or more of the cycles. Ticket details will be available in mid 1996. The State Opera of South Australia will then send out a subscription brochure for ticket applications to those on its mailing-list (which includes this Society) prior to general distribution. The State Opera of SA publishes a quarterly newsletter called *Backstage* whose *supplement*, July 1995, includes an application form for their mailing list. We have devised our own form, below, to gauge initial interest. Tickets will only be available for a full cycle, not individual operas, and prices have not yet been fixed. Information about the principal artists will be included in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.

1998 ADELAIDE RING	<u>Expression of interest</u> - Post to Wagner Society in NSW Inc GPO Box 4574, Sydney 2001
1. I would be interested in a group booking for tickets only for any of the cycles..... the first..... second..... third cycle.....	Name Address Phone number..... Number of persons.....
2. I would be interested in a group booking including transport, accommodation and tickets for any of the cycles.....the first..... second..... third cycle.....	Prefer train Prefer air Own transport, prefer motel with parking
3. I will apply direct to Adelaide to be placed on the SOSA mailing list .	If you don't have the official form, send a letter to The State Opera of South Australia, The <i>Ring</i> Cycle Mailing List, GPO Box 1515, Adelaide SA 5001 or Fax 08 231 7646. Supply the following information: Name, postal address, phone day and evening, fax. And add if applicable: - I am currently an Opera Subscriber of the.....Opera Company.

Bayreuth Revisited

I set out for Bayreuth in August with some ambivalence. My first *Ring*, last year, had been an overwhelming experience despite, or perhaps because of, the vagaries of the production. Would a return so soon be an anticlimax? I need not have worried because as the first notes of Rheingold sounded I was once again enthralled in the magic which is Wagner.

The first thing I noticed was that the Festspielhaus had been refurbished and was now resplendent in new paint which made it look much bigger and lighter. The ceiling, a delicate shade of green, was beautifully decorated and somehow the theatre felt much cooler despite the heat outside - a welcome change. As usual with a new *Ring* there were numerous changes - some subtle and some quite extensive - but without exception they were positive and smoothed away much which had distracted from the first performances. Many of the costumes had been changed, the Rhinemaidens and Gutrune in particular had a completely new wardrobe. Fricka had lost the "birdcage" on her shoulder which had been a cause of much criticism in *Walküre*, and Brünnhilde now wakes in Siegfried with one blue breast which matched the glorious shimmering blue silk sail which replaces her large silver shield.

There were also several major changes: in Rheingold the whole of the Niebelungen scene had been rethought and instead of the mass of bodies huddled within the well of the set, which had been difficult to see, the Neibelungs now rise up from below in a two-tier platform each in his own cage - like battery hens - a very powerful image of servitude and suffering. Again in this scene the transformation of Alberich into the serpent had been rather less than satisfactory last year but now as the stage grew completely dark, two huge green eyes opened, from under the raised dome of the 'earth', and swivelled this way and that with great effect.

The other major changes were in the first act of Siegfried. Previously Mime's workshop had been cluttered with everything you could think of including a couple of shopping trolleys. Now it was bare space with a simple backdrop and minimal props, an anvil, a bench-cum-bed and that was about all. Another distraction was removed when the bear, no longer entering on a swing, walked in and out. Another effective change was the entry of Fafner after Siegfried attacks the Dragon. Originally he just walked out from the back of the Dragon's mouth looking quite hale and hearty but now he crawls out of the hole in the red silk mouth where Siegfried's sword has struck the fatal blow - which makes his ultimate death more plausible.

Perhaps the most important change was a softening of the interpersonal relationships between the characters who now seem to relate to each other at least to some degree though there is still something incongruous in the passionate declaration of the love of Siegfried and Brünnhilde when they stand on opposite sides of the stage barely looking at each other. The singing was excellent and the orchestra in general played magnificently though the horns were having considerable and very obvious difficulty. The one disappointment remains Wolfgang Schmidt as Siegfried who failed to satisfy either vocally or visually though I suspect that if he were dressed and directed more sympathetically his singing would pass muster - just.

Tannhäuser - Wolfgang Schmidt again - was rather pedestrian but Parsifal was excellent and Tristan and Isolde magic from beginning to end. **BARBARA McNULTY**

Kirsten Flagstad Anniversary

The table of coming events does little to indicate the scope and richness of our activities. "Arthur Carter talk on Kirsten Flagstad" was a bald indication of what turned out to be a vastly entertaining afternoon. For our October meeting Mr Carter presented excerpts from his collection of historical tapes to give us Kirsten Flagstad's incomparable singing of Wagner, together with a talk she gave on the qualities of a good Wagner singer and, amazingly, a film clip of Flagstad in Brünnhilde's winged headdress singing snatches from the Walküre after an introduction by Bob Hope. Arthur Carter's audience was presented with a kit of press clippings, a chronology, and a combination of musical analysis, history and anecdote. Two guests (Mr Phil Doran, and Mrs Sheila Mason) who had heard Flagstad sing were encouraged to relate their experiences. Mrs Mason's account of a series of performances of Dido and Aeneas given in a hall attached to the home of Sir Bernard Miles was illustrated by her reading of a "contract" drawn up for the occasion. She tells us that the program conjured up outstanding memories of her brief encounter with this wonderful Wagnerian soprano, who was also a very human and fun-loving person. As the audience found this contract so diverting, we reproduce it here (from a Mermaid Theatre brochure).

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT between KIRSTEN FLAGSTAD, soprano, hereinafter called "the Singer" and the Little Mermaid Company, hereinafter called "the Management"

The Singer undertakes

1. To sing for 20 (twenty) performances the part of DIDO in the opera DIDO AND AENEAS.
2. To assist in the production of the opera and to lend all such aid advice help and assistance as may be deemed necessary to the successful presentation thereof.
3. To use only her best quality voice, fully supported by the breath throughout each performance.
4. To sing all her notes in time and in tune but not to add any notes, grace notes, acciaccaturas, appoggiaturas, upper or lower mordents, shakes, trills, turns, titillations or other embellishments.
5. To let the Management or any part thereof look down her throat with a laryngoscope whenever they need encouragement.
6. To sing to the Management or any part thereof any or all of the songs of Schubert, Schumann, Beethoven, Handel, Bach and Greig, as often as requested.
7. To be obedient, tractable, sweet-tempered and helpful in every possible way, and not to brag about the Vikings.

On their side the Management undertake

1. To treat the Singer in a manner worthy of her great name and fame, to look after her, to nourish, cherish, care for and make much of her. Also to hold her dear to prize treasure cling to adore idolise and dote on her.
2. To appoint as her personal slaves their three youngest members to wit Sarah, Bidy and John who shall wait upon her hand foot and finger.
3. To supply the Singer with all necessary scores, bars, notes and parts of notes, key signatures, leger lines, etc., as shall be deemed necessary for the adequate interpretation of her role.
4. To find her in board-lodging throughout the run of the opera.
5. To supply her with two pints of oatmeal stout per diem, at the following times and in the following quantities, viz. Lunch one half pint, dinner one half pint, and one pint following each performance.
6. To give her plenty of little surprises, presents of flowers, fruit fish and fresh foliage, to recite to her, to write letters and little poems to her also to take every opportunity of making her laugh.

Given under all our hands and with all our hearts, this tenth day of February, one thousand nine hundred and fifty. (Signatures of Kirsten Flagstad, Bernard Miles, members of his family and others).

In the Steps of the Maestro Richard Wagner's Residences 1839 to 1883

In the forty-four years between his first visit to Paris, at age 26, and his death, Wagner moved house thirty-five times. If we put aside his relatively lengthy tenancies at 13 Zeltweg, Zurich (four years), Tribtschen, Lucerne (six years) and Wahnfried, Bayreuth (nine years), we find that he changed his address over thirty times in twenty-five years. Add to these addresses the great number of his stop-overs, retreats, tours and visits, not to mention hideaways, and we are left wondering how many *Wagner Slept Here* plaques a serious memorialist would require!

Perhaps it would be an interesting project for the Wagner Society in NSW to combine what members know of Wagner's movements throughout Europe, and to produce a definitive, illustrated account of them all in a small publication, profitable to the Society. If this has not already been done, it would be a useful addition to Wagner scholarship, of particular benefit to tourists who like visiting places where great artists lived and worked.

To the extent that my lack of German has allowed, I have done some research in this matter and I list opposite the thirty-five addresses I have found. Jane and I have visited some of these places, in two short European trips, and we have made brief notes and taken a few photographs. Are there other members of the Society who could provide notes, photos, sketches, street-maps or any other material that could lead to a paragraph or two on each address?

Wagner stayed at many other addresses during visits, tours, etc. The ones listed here are his **home** addresses, however temporary his occupancy may have been.

If you do have first-hand knowledge of any of these addresses, or information not found in the standard biographies, and would care to contribute to the project by contacting Barry Walters, 6 Wiley Street, Waverley 2024 (387 6642), please be assured that your contribution would be properly acknowledged, and your photographs and documents looked after and returned to you with the utmost care.

I have listed the addresses by city, showing dates of tenancy where known.

BARRY WALTERS.

SEE OPPOSITE PAGE 

Wagner goes West: Der Ring des Nibelungen in Arizona Sedona, Flagstaff, Grand Canyon, June 2-9 and June 9-16, 1996

Allegro Enterprises, a New York travel agent, has sent us a brochure on the Arizona Ring, to be produced in Flagstaff by Glynn Ross and conducted by Henry Holt, both of whom were responsible for the original Seattle Ring. Allegro has top category tickets reserved for all performances. The cast features dramatic soprano Karen Bureau as Brünnhilde, Edward Craft sings Wotan, Edward Sooter is Siegmund and the important roles of Alberich and Mime are taken by Malcolm Rivers and Paul Crook (all veterans of the Seattle Ring).

PARIS	3 rue de la Tonnellerie*	17. 9.1839 to 14. 4.1840	7 months
	25 rue du Helder	15. 4.1840 to 28. 4.1841	1 year
	Village of Meudon	29. 4.1841 to 30.10.1841	6 months
	14 rue Jacob	1.11.1841 to 7. 4.1842	5 months
	Village of Reuil	8. 6.1849 to ? .7.1849	1 month
	4 Avenue Matignon	? . 9.1859 to ? . 11.1859	2 months
	16 rue Newton	? .11.1859 to ? .10.1860	11 months
	2 rue d'Aumale	? .10.1860 to 12. 7.1861	9 months
	Prussian Embassy	13. 7.1861 to ? . 7.1861	2 weeks?
	19 Quai Voltaire	4.12.1861 to 31. 1.1862	2 months
DRESDEN	7 Topfergasse	13. 4.1842 to 26. 7.1842	3 months
	5 Waisenhausgasse	27. 7.1842 to ? . 4.1843	9 months
	9 Marienstrasse	? . 4.1843 to ? .10.1843	6 months
	6 Ostra-Allee	? .10.1843 to ? . 4.1847	3 yrs 6 mths
	Friedrichstadt	? . 4.1847 to ? . 5.1849	2 yrs 1 month
ZURICH	55 Rennweg	6. 7. 1849 to ? .9.1849	2 months
	7 Otenbachgasse	4. 9.1849 to ? . 9.1849	2 weeks
	3 Steinwiesstrsse	? . 9.1849 to ? . 4.1850	7 months
	Sternengasse*	? . 4.1850 to ? . 9.1851	1 yr 5 months
	11 Zeltweg	? . 9.1851 to ? . 4.1853	1 yr 7 months
	13 Zeltweg	15. 4.1853 to 20. 4.1857	4 years
	The Asyl*	? . 4.1857 to 17. 8.1858	1 yr 4 months
VIENNA	32 Singerstrasse	? . 8.1861 to ? . 9.1861	1 month
	Weihburg Gasse	? . 9.1861 to ? .11.1861	2 months
	Penzing	12. 5.1863 to 23. 3.1864	10 months
VENICE	3228 Campielli Squillini	? . 8.1858 to ? . 3.1859	7 months
BIEBRICH	?(overlooking the Rhine)	8. 2.1862 to ? . 5.1863	1 yr 2 months
STARNBERG	Villa Pellet, Kempfenhausen	15. 5.1864 to 3.10.1864	5 months
MUNICH	21 Briennerstrasse	15.10.1864 to 10.12.1865	1 yr 5 months
GENEVA	Les Artichauts	28.12.1865 to 4. 4.1866	4 months
LUCERNE	Hotel Schweizerhof	? . 3.1859 to ? . 9.1859	6 months
	Tribschen	15. 4.1866 to 22. 4.1872	6 years
BAYREUTH	Hotel Fantaisie,Donndorf	22. 4.1872 to 21. 9.1872	5 months
	Dammallee 7	21. 9.1872 to 27. 4.1874	1 yr 7 months
	Wahnfried	28. 4.1874 to his death	9 years

.....*known to have been demolished

A Dresden Visit

You take a Number 9 tram from Dresden to Zschachwitz (about a half-hour's journey), board the punt across the Elbe to Pillnitz, turn your back with reluctance on the Weber Museum and the Pillnitz palace, and find a Number 83 bus for the short journey to the Richard Wagner Museum at Graupa. This is the only preserved residence of Wagner in the eastern part of Germany and is the farmhouse Wagner used to stay in when he was overworked in Dresden and needed a country retreat. The museum's curator/manager recognized that our German would not sustain the standard guided tour so she left us alone to look at the exhibits in glass cases. The museum reflects the years 1842-49 which Wagner spent in Dresden; the (then East German) government acquired the Graupa house and installed the museum in the 1970s. It contains a couple of keyboard instruments, photographs, a portrait by Elsa Treutler, a death mask, illustrations of costumes, programmes, playbills, announcements and photocopies of letters and selected manuscripts. I don't recall seeing any of the political documents which led to Wagner's hasty departure from Dresden. Apart from its role in housing the Wagner collection the museum also presents regular concerts.

Because *Lohengrin* was drafted at the Graupa retreat, more of the exhibits relate to this opera than the others. Indeed, *Lohengrin* was our reason for visiting Dresden in September and we were elated to have the opportunity of hearing it performed in the Semperoper. The building of the opera house had only just been completed when *Rienzi* was first performed (October 1842) and it was here that the Dutchman and Tannhäuser also had their premières. It is said that the Frauenkirche is the church which inspired Wagner to create Parsifal. What you see now is the shell of one corner and piles of numbered stone blocks, ready for the enormous rebuilding project, planned for completion in 2006. The production of *Lohengrin* we saw was a traditional one, in the repertoire of the Sächsische Staatsoper Dresden since 1983. The entire opera was set indoors, with the opening scene in a grand hall (which reminded Ian Brady of the fine nineteenth century Dresden railway station). For my part I was anxious lest we should be deprived of the swan, but the crowds heralded its arrival from the back of the set, and floor-to-ceiling screens were parted so that we could all witness its approach. I am glad to say it was a large baroque silver swan. The singing was of a high standard and the drama was well sustained, particularly by Friedrich and Ortrud. The cast we heard was: Rainer Büshing (King Henry), Hans-Joachim Ketelsen (Friedrich von Telramund), Isolde Elchlepp (Ortrud), Waltraud Vogel (Elsa), and Klaus König (Lohengrin). The Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden was conducted by George Alexander Albrecht, with Christine Mielitz, producer and Peter Heilein, sets and costumes.

The Semper opera house itself is an imposing nineteenth-century horseshoe theatre. It looked splendid illuminated at night. After the original 1841 Semper Hoftheater was destroyed by fire a new opera house was built in 1871-78 from Gottfried Semper's plans (the work was supervised by his son), but Semper Mark II in turn was seriously damaged in the 1945 bombings. It has subsequently been restored to its original state (but with some internal modifications such as removing the divisions between boxes) and was reopened in 1985. It has a grand, tiered interior; the domed ceiling, staircases, bars and promenade areas are handsomely decorated (to Semper's original designs) and you have a wonderful view over the Elbe from the balcony at interval. Securing tickets involved a nerve-racking phone call a couple of weeks beforehand (in German), but we ended up with the best seats in the house. Dresden's 1996 Opera Festival is from 17 March to 8 April and is largely a celebration of Wagner. **BARBARA BRADY.**

TICKETS TO BAYREUTH 1996 THROUGH THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NSW

The Society hopes to receive a parcel of tickets which will be allocated to members who enter our ballot. Members are reminded of the rules relating to the acquisition of tickets for Bayreuth through membership of the Wagner Society in NSW.

- I Only Financial Members of at least 2 years' standing are eligible to apply for tickets
- II Only signed orders placed on the form below will be accepted.
 - A) A deposit of \$100 (one hundred dollars) for each application is also required.
 - B) If tickets are not allocated to you the deposit will be promptly refunded
- III Applications must be made prior to 31st December 1995.
- IV We will apply for performances in the third cycle, ie, middle to late August 1996.
- V You are responsible for the cost of the tickets once they are received. *(Unfortunately, because of the nature of the dealings with the Festival Box Office, we require payment even if you are unable to use the tickets. We will not return tickets to Bayreuth Box Office because there is a risk that such a move may prejudice future orders from our Society. However, if you are unable to go after paying for the tickets we will do our utmost to find someone else to take them over).*
- VI All payments must be made through the Society.
- VII You will be responsible for your own travel arrangements. (A leaflet on available accommodation will be supplied).
- VIII Tickets will be sold as a package (subject to availability).
- IX We will add a service charge of \$100 per ticket to cover the Society's expenses and overheads in ordering and distributing the tickets.
- X In the event of a ballot being necessary one ticket only will be allocated to Financial Members of 2 years standing or more, except in the case of a married couple, when 2 tickets will be allocated.
- XI If a ballot is necessary, it will be conducted in early January in the presence of Committee Members, or any other members of the Society wishing to attend.

Send to Wagner Society in NSW Inc, GPO Box 4574, Sydney NSW 2001. Telephone enquiries to Olive Coonan on 387 6403. If there is a choice would you prefer expensive seats.....Less expensive seats.....

Signature	
Name	
Address	
Phone (work and home)	
Number of seats requested	

LETTERS

FROM STEPHEN WALTER (addressed to Olive Coonan)

BAYREUTH SCHOLARSHIP

"I am writing to ask if you could pass on to the Committee of the Wagner Society my sincere gratitude for contributing so substantially to the Bayreuth Scholarship administered by Opera Foundation Australia. The provision of a return airfare to Germany is very generous, and in my particular case, bracing myself as I am for a whole year of not earning any money from work, I can't tell you what a relief it is to pass that burden on to somebody else!

I am preparing myself as best I can for my twelve months in Germany, taking lessons in the advanced class at the Goethe Institut in Woollahra. I've already enrolled for my first language course in Munich, beginning the day after I arrive in late November. And I'm still hoping to attend Barenboim's *Meistersinger* rehearsals in Bayreuth in July. I look forward to reporting to the Wagner Society on my return late next year.

My particular thanks to you, Olive, for your interest, enthusiasm, and efficiency in communicating with me about the scholarship. The speed with which you get things done is anything but Wagnerian. I'm also grateful for Paul Lehmann's encouragement."

FROM MARIE HISCOCK

"The Kirsten Flagstad afternoon was most enjoyable. Arthur's enthusiasm was contagious, sharing his knowledge and allowing us to see and hear all his archival treasures was so special. The speakers who were able to tell us of their impressions and experiences on hearing Kirsten Flagstad in person were very interesting. All in all a lovely day. Thank you to all concerned.".....

FROM SIR GEORG SOLTI

"I am delighted and honoured that my recording of 'Das Rheingold' has been selected by the Society for tonight's broadcast. Although it is over 35 years ago, I remember as if it were yesterday the sense of challenge and excitement we faced on the night before we started. I was having dinner with the Producer, John Culshaw, in the Imperial Hotel and on the way out we met a distinguished colleague in the recording industry, in charge of artists and repertoire at one of Decca's leading competitors. Since nothing is a secret long in Vienna, we were happy to respond to his question 'what are you recording?'. When we told him he smiled and said 'wonderful work, very interesting but of course you won't sell any...' I think that I speak for all of us involved in that recording when I say that, happily, his proved to be one of the least accurate predictions in the history of recording!"

FROM ARTHUR CARTER

"I write in connection with the Record Review printed on pages 14 and 15 of the September Newsletter, #60. The subheading to this review mentioned the 'Ring' but, while not wishing to cavil, I find the brief 5 line paragraph "reviewing"(?) The Clemens Krauss 1953 'Ring' is devoted in the main to advising details of its availability at some record shop in Sydney and seems to rely on hearsay in assessing the recording's quality, to wit "is **regarded by many** as the finest" (my bold type). Readers of the Newsletter and would-be purchasers of this 40 years + old set should have been alerted to some of its problematic features. (I have owned it in vinyl and CD formats for quite some time).

The major problems with this recording arise because Krauss & Joseph Keilberth were marshalled to replace Hans Knappertsbusch at short notice for the 1953 'Ring' at Bayreuth. So short was the time available that Krauss had little or no full orchestral rehearsals for his one and only performance of the cycle at Bayreuth that summer. The result was that this CD issue, like the vinyls on Foyer label, had to use broadcast tapes of the Krauss cycle itself, with no rehearsal or alternative performance tapes available for editing out fluffs or mishaps as they occurred on stage.

This has led to the set as issued being marred by Freia's completely missing one of her cues in scene 2 of her opera, in Windgassen, still at the time very new to the role of Siegfried, getting markedly out of time with the conductor in the forging scene and again suffering a serious lapse in his narration in "Die Goetterdaemmerung".

More importantly for the standards of the Society's Newsletter, may we not expect a review of such an important work as a complete 'Ring' on CD, to have detailed the cast more informatively, and to have assessed performance values more critically than the perfunctory notice with which Mr Zelter has favored us. It can hardly have been for lack of printing space in a newsletter notable for its wealth of blank pages!

For the reviewer's and readers' information, the current most-discussed 'Ring' of yesteryear seems to be the 1958 Bayreuth performance, with Hans Knappertsbusch conducting. This cycle has now been issued on the Arkadia label, from Italy. Reference to the detailed assessment of this 1958 'Ring' in the "Wagner News" (U.K.) number 111, for this month, will be of a help to Wagner lovers seeking guidance through the maze of 'Ring' recordings now on the market. Could Mr Zelter please follow up with a more informative account of his reasons for vaunting the Clemens Krauss 1953 'Ring' ...

Dr IVOR ZETLER'S REPLY

"I thank Mr Carter for his comments on my notification of the availability of the Clemens Krauss Ring recording. May I refer him to Alan Blyth's review of this set in the June 1988 *Gramophone*: 'A couple of years ago, when I was at Bayreuth, the American critic John Ardoin boldly declared to me that the greatest Ring on record was undoubtedly the 1953 Bayreuth cycle conducted by Clemens Krauss...I certainly place this one among the select, along with Bohm's, Knappertsbusch's and Furtwangler's...'

It is gratifying to know that someone is reading one's writings, even though they may be misinterpreting the intention of what is written."

Tribute to a 'Ring' City

My aim is not to comment on the merits of the 1995 Seattle Ring Cycle (much has been written of this production, eg, *N.Y. Time*, *October Opera*, *October Opera Now* and *October Opera Australasia*) but to reflect on how a small opera company became world renowned in 1975 for its first production of the 'Ring' and has since earned a reputation as the premier Wagner opera company in the United States, all of which is reflected in the pride the city itself takes in each *Ring* Cycle festival.

The pride is probably firstly to do with history; the uniqueness of such an unprecedented step. A complete *Ring* Cycle, performed as Wagner intended over one week and mounted through the vision of the company's founder Glynn Ross (who next year introduces a new *Ring* at Arizona Opera) in successive cycles in English and German brought this half-million city instant fame and continued to attract visitors every summer for ten years. The second Seattle *Ring* Cycle, controversially different to the first, was begun in 1986, repeated in 1987 and 1991 and now in 1995 has only served to increase the city's pride: Prior to and during the festival the newspapers are full of it, shop windows display posters and books and radio stations and paper run contests: For six weeks this year there was a city search for a gold ring (locally crafted) which was finally tracked down in the Seattle Aquarium. In May Wagner's birthday was celebrated by Seattle Opera and Seattleites in a "bash" with cake for a thousand and another 'original ring' as a prize in a large shopping mall.

This brings me to another reason for the local enthusiasm which I think is mainly due to the efforts of Speight Jenkins, their artistic director since 1983. With a life-time love of Wagner and a hard-to-beat number of visits to Bayreuth behind him he has had the vision of extending the enjoyment of performances by the audience with participation with the community in a myriad of entertaining events related to the 'Ring'. The company has a busy education department and a host of Guild volunteers. With the 'Ring' as a high school subject this recent festival had 500 students attending dress rehearsals - Andrew Porter translation in hand. The young education director Perry Lorenzo gave the most entertaining pre-opera lectures I have ever heard and his band of college student "interns" were on hand.

Meet-the-cast- afternoon teas were run by the director and tours of the theatre and back stage by the production team but the most wonderful day was spent at a seminar given by some of the most famous Wagner writers in the world (Milligan, Spatts, McGee, among others) some fitting Seattle in with a visit to Bayreuth! At every turn one saw the man himself, always talking animatedly, explaining the ever-changing face the Rochoaix Ring had taken and the plans for his Wadsworth production in 2001 - an indefatigable presence! **SHIRLEY ROBERTSON**

Newsletter issue No. 60.

We had problems and difficulties with this issue which are best not elaborated on. The Society apologises to any members or friends whose names were misspelt or dropped, and to the compiler of *Ravens* whose text was halved; this has been rectified in the current issue.

THE RAVENS REPORTING

- Buenos Aires *Das Rheingold* (new production) - Teatro Colon Anne Gjevang, Eva Maria Bundschuh, Cornelia Wulkopf, Robert Hale, Paul Frey, Helmut Pampuch, Sergey Koptchak, Oskar Hillebrandt. Conductor Franz-Paul Decker and producer Roberto Oswald. December 5, 7, 10, 12.
- The Met *Die Meistersinger* - Karita Mattila, Birgita Svendén, Ben Heppner, Lars Magnusson, Bernd Weikl, Hermann Prey, Jan-Hendrik Rootering, René Pape. Conductor James Levine and producer Otto Schenk. Dec. 4, 8, 12, 16m, 21.
- Prague *Die Walküre* - semi-staged - December 10, 13, 17.
- 1996**
- Copenhagen *Parsifal* - Royal Danish Opera - January 10, 12, 23, 28.
- Stockholm *Parsifal* - January 6, 9, 12.
- Norfolk *Holländer* - Virginia Opera at the Harrison Opera House. January 26, 28m, 31 February 2, 4m.
- Toronto *Holländer* (new production) - Karen Huffstodt, J. Patrick Raftery, Gordon Fietz. Conductor Richard Bradshaw, producer Christopher Alden. Jan 26, 28, 31, Feb 2, 6, 8, 10.
- Austin *Tannhäuser* - January 12, 13, 14.
- Honolulu *Tannhäuser* - January 26, 28m, 30.
- Dresden *Parsifal* - January 7 February 11
- Tucson *Das Rheingold* - Jan 11, 13, 14m
- Phoenix *Das Rheingold* - Jan 18, 19, 20, 21m.
- Berlin *Die Meistersinger* - Deutsche Oper - January 14, 21 February 25.
- Hamburg *Holländer* - Gabriela Benackova, Olive Fredricks, Heinz Kruse, Jürgen Sacher, Franz Grundheber, Kurt Moll. Conductor Gary Bertini, producer Marco Arturo Marelli, designer Marelli and Dagmar Niefind. Jan. 21, 24, 27 Feb. 5, 8, 11, 16.
- Richmond *Holländer* - Virginia Opera at GMU Ctr. for the Arts. February 7, 9.
- Covent Gdn *Götterdämmerung* - Anne Evans (Brünnhilde) and Wolfgang Fässler (Siegfried). Conductor Bernard Haitink, February 27 March 2. Conductor Jun Märkl March 5.
- Munich *Tannhäuser* - February 4, 8,
- ENO *Tristan und Isolde* (new production) - Elizabeth Connell/Mary Lloyd-Davies, Susan Parry, George Gray, Christopher Booth-Jones, John Hudson, Alasdair Elliott, Jonathan Summers, Gwynne Howell. Conductor Mark Elder, producer David Alden and designer Charles Edwards. February 10, 14, 20, 24, 28 March 2, 7, 11, 16.
- Chicago *Götterdämmerung* - February 17, 24 March 9m
The Ring - Three cycles Eva Marton/Jane Eaglen, Tina Kiberg, Elizabeth Byrne, Elizabeth Futral, Marjana Lipovšek, Nancy Maultsby, Siegfried Jerusalem, Poul Elming, Graham Clark, Dennis Petersen, Alan Held, James Morris, Ekkehard Wlaschiha, Matti Salminen. Conductor Zubin Mehta, producer August Everding and designer John Conklin. March 11, 12, 14, 16; 18, 19, 21, 23; 25, 26, 28, 30.

Ravens Reporting ...contd.

- Charlotte NC **Holländer** - Opera Carolina at the Blumenthal Center February 1, 3.
 Denver **Holländer** - Opera Colorado at the Boettcher Hall Feb 24, 27 March 1, 3m
 Hamburg **Tannhäuser** - February 4, 18, 25.
 Dresden Wagner Festival March 17 - April 8, Wagner-Soirée April 6
Die Meistersinger - Conductor Christof Perick. March 17, 21
Holländer - Conductor Peter Schneider. March 27 April 3
Parsifal - Conductor Giuseppe Sinopoli. April 5, 7
 Berlin **Die Meistersinger** - Deutsche Oper - March 3, 10.
Holländer - Deutsche Oper - March 16.
Tannhäuser - Deutsche Oper - March 30 April 5.
 Oslo **The Ring** - Norwegian National Opera. Carol Yahr(Brünnhilde),Kjersti Ekeberg(Sieglinde), Oddbjørn Tennfjord(Wotan),James O'Neal (Loge, Siegmund, Siegfried), Oscar Hillebrant(Alberich). Conductor Heinz Fricke, producer Mike Ashman and designer Kathrine Hysing. April 9,15,20,25; 27,30 May 3,6. Götterdämmerung also March 19, 23.
 Antwerp/
 Ghent **Parsifal** (new production) - Ruthild Engert, Christopher Ventris, Jorma Hynninen, Chris De Moor, Rainer Büsching, Aldo Tiziani. Conductor Stefan Soltesz, producer Marco Arturo Marelli, designer Dagmar Niefind. Antwerp April 2, 5, 7m, 9, 12, Ghent - April 19, 21m, 24.
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 Zurich **Holländer** - April 4, 8, 13, 17, 20, 26 May 5.
 La Scala **Das Rheingold** - Kim Begley, Franz Josef Kapellmann, Viktoria Loukianetz, Katia Lytting, Gudyon Oskarsson, Claudio Otelli, Monte Pederson, Barry Ryan, Kristin Sigmundsson, Falk Struckmann, Violeta Urmana, Heinz Zednik. Conductor Riccardo Muti, director Andre Engel, designer Nicky Rieti. May 30 June 1, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13
 Arizona **The Ring** - Flagstaff - Arizona Opera. Edward Crafts(Wotan),Malcolm Rivers(Alberich), Janice Edwards (Fricka), Karen Bureau(Brünnhilde), Edward Sooter(Siegmund), Leslie Morgan(Sieglinde),George Gray(Siegfried). Conductor Henry Holt, producer Claus König and designers Amy Shock and Peter J. Hall. June 3,4,6,8;10,11,13,15.
 Bologna **Tristan und Isolde** - Heikki Siukola, Gabriele Schnaut, Anne Gjevang, Hans Tschammer, Falk Struckmann. Conductor Christian Thielemann, producer Ruth Berghaus and designers Hans Dieter Schaal and Marie Louise Strandt. June 4,7,9,12,15,18,21.
 Adelaide **The Ring** - 3 cycles in 1998 November 18, 19, 21, 24. November 27, 28, December 1, 4. December 5, 7, 9, 12.

