

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

Since becoming President I have been on a steep learning curve and I do want to say a sincere thank you to all those who have offered congratulations, assistance or advice.

It has become very clear that the smooth running of the Society is dependent on the enormous voluntary contribution made by the committee. We all know how hard Olive Coonan works as our treasurer and on anything else that needs doing. The high standard of the Newsletter is a credit to Barbara Brady who now will have the help of Clare Hennessy. Janet Wayland works quietly in the background looking after membership matters and Shirley Robertson never fails to provide delicious afternoon teas. Barry Walters has cheerfully accepted the role of Secretary and Terence Watson will organise the program. I would like to express my appreciation to each of them and I am really looking forward to the coming year.

As you all know the purpose of our Society is to promote an understanding of the works of Richard Wagner and to encourage their performance wherever possible and 1998 will see us make very significant efforts to meet our obligations. We have promised to give \$10,000 to the State Opera of South Australia to assist their production of *The Ring*. The allocation of seats for those going to Adelaide next year - again thanks to Olive - is now finalised. Several members attended the preliminary seminar in Adelaide in September and we were all struck by the enthusiasm and excitement of those involved in planning this historic Wagnerian milestone.

As well we have advised Opera Australia that we will donate \$2,000 to assist in the new production of *Tannhäuser* in February.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra is planning a major Wagner concert in each of the next three years and I was delighted to be invited to meet with Mary Valentine and Michelle Wade to discuss their plans and to look at ways in which the Orchestra and the Wagner Society could work more closely together. The 1998 concert is on the 8th April and will feature Simone Young and Elizabeth Connell in a program of Strauss and Wagner. A request to assist in the costs of this performance, while strongly supported in principle, has been referred to the Committee as our resources are severely stretched. However we have received the offer of a donation to assist and I wonder if there are any other members who would be interested in this special project.

Olive Coonan and I spent a delightful few hours at the home of the German Consul General, Mr Otto Roever, and Mrs Roever to celebrate Germany's National Day and it was most interesting to meet with people from the Consulate and from the Goethe Institut who have a great interest in Wagner and the work of our Society.

Lastly I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a successful and healthy new year.

BARBARA McNULTY

1.11.97