

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I would like to welcome and say thank you to all our members who are here to-day attending the Tenth Annual General meeting of the Wagner Society in N.S.W. Inc. In my first year as President, I would like to convey my thanks and appreciation for the help and unstinting support of all my committee members as well as Joseph Ferfoggia and Reg Maloney who have helped us stay on a secure financial footing.

During my first year we have had some wonderful and happy events, but also sad ones with losing some of our original and loyal members. As you know, Murray Smith was the instigator of our obtaining the Frank Hinder Lohengrin Collection, and before his death gave another large donation to the Society for the framing entailed to show this work. After some discussion the Committee unanimously decided to call the Collection, "The Murray Smith Lohengrin Collection". It will be available for showing at the Richard King Gallery during October next while Lohengrin is being performed at the Sydney Opera House.

We have continued our Sunday afternoon functions which are developing into friendly get-to-know-you occasions for our members. We have had two Seminars, one on Die Walküre and a Mini-seminar on Tannhäuser and both have been very well attended. We have been very fortunate in having as our Speakers, Dennis Hennig, Professor Michael Ewans, Professor Andrew Riemer, John Clifton-Everest and Werner Baer. A special thank-you must also be given to singers Donald Shanks and John Wegner and also Arthur Carter who chaired the discussion following the Die Walküre Seminar. I am sure we enjoy our Operas and learn so much more from these Seminars. We have had five Compact Disc afternoons for Lohengrin, The Flying Dutchman, Tannhäuser, Electra and Parsifal which everyone seems to enjoy.

For the first time we had a joint Reception with the Australian Opera Guild for Donald McIntyre held in the Northern Foyer of the Opera House. He gave us a very interesting and informative talk on how he progressed to where he is now in his operatic career. We all, of course, consider him to be an outstanding artist. It was interesting for all members present to have had the opportunity to meet such a great artist and he made himself available for anyone who wished to make his acquaintance.

During the latter part of last year's Opera Season we had a successful Theatre Party to Die Walküre, which also featured Marilyn Zschau singing her first Brünnhilde. Then, following this success, I organised another Theatre Party to go to Melbourne to hear Tannhäuser. This featured Lisa Gasteen, a young promising star of the future, as Elsa. Peter Coleman-Wright was a wonderful Wolfram and Anthony Roden sang the role of Tannhäuser. We were entertained at interval by members of the Victoria State Opera and the Melbourne Wagner Society and after the performance all went back stage to meet Richard Divall, the conductor of the performance, for a Champagne Supper.

As usual we ended the year with the Christmas Party at the Goethe Institute. Virginia Lamb and Peter Binnings graciously agreed to perform some Wagner at the annual "get-together". It would be perhaps one of our most successful ventures as everyone knows each other and it is a happy and festive occasion for all concerned.

Now we arrive at the current year where we sponsored Marilyn Richardson in her brilliant performance as Isolde, with a donation of \$5000, matched by a similar donation by our esteemed member, Leonard Hansen. I am sure all members were thrilled at the spectacle of "Tristan and Isolde" by the Australian Opera.

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We then again, joined forces with the Australian Opera Guild to hold a Recital given by Dennis Hennig to play and launch his Tausig Wagner Compact Disc. As you are no doubt aware the Wagner Society has sponsored Dennis' Compact Disc to the tune of \$8000. On the Compact Disc our Logo is prominently displayed and is a form of effective publicity. In the current issue of Gramophone, which is a very prestigious publication, this C.D., Dennis and the Sydney Wagner Society have all received wonderful reviews which will probably sell more C.D.'s than we had ever hoped for. Dennis is a wonderful pianist and is now coming to the fore of Australian audiences and listeners with his other performances which are frequently heard on ABC-FM. He is also greatly in demand as a Speaker at Seminars.

This year we also obtained 15 tickets for Wagner's home ground - Bayreuth. These were dealt with by ballot and everyone was most excited at being able to participate.

Turning to Wagner on the Radio, if it wasn't for Arthur Carter we would not have a musical hour every month on 2MBS-FM. He does this willingly and we are very grateful to him for this unselfish job. This is broadcast on the 3rd or 4th Sunday of each month between 1pm and 2pm.

To finish the year out, why don't all members try and entice one new person to join, which would swell our ranks? At the moment we have 205 single members plus 46 joint subscriptions, which gives us a healthy membership of 297.

It seems to have come to pass that suddenly Wagner is coming into his own where Australian audiences are concerned. Len Hansen, our Vice-President, and I went to Adelaide for the Festival and were received very graciously by the S.A. Musicological Society and the S.A. Wagner Society. Hopefully next year the Victoria State Opera are going to stage Rheingold as the first step to a complete Ring Cycle in 1996. Please keep your fingers crossed that these operas will take place.

In July, we are to be given a very interesting lecture by Fred Blanks on "Cosima and Gustav Mahler and what they expected from each other". A post Seminar on Tristan and Isolde with speakers, Dennis Hennig, Andrew Riemer and Helen Fulton will be held in June.

Finally we are having our Annual Dinner next Friday night at the Menzies Hotel at 7.30 p.m. and if you would like to come, please do so as I have to give the hotel the final numbers next Wednesday.

Thank you for coming and I hope you all continue to give us the support and co-operation to keep our wonderful Society afloat.

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PRESIDENT.