
THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

I would like to comment on the forthcoming tour of Australasia by German pianist Stefan Mickisch especially since Mr Arthur Carter's letter (page 11) indicates disappointment that the tour does not include Sydney. I am pleased to report that I have been in friendly communication with Mr Mickisch who wrote to this society in January advising of his proposed recitals in Adelaide and Melbourne and inquiring if a Sydney recital might be organised (without however giving precise dates). My reply of 30 January (in German) asked him for specific dates and his reply to me of 1 April supplied them. In the meantime our committee considered whether we were in a position to sponsor a recital which meant financing venue, accommodation, performance fees and finding the audiences, and in our assessment it was not in the best interests either of the society or of Mr Mickisch to attempt this. He is a pianist of considerable skill (he sent me a one of his CDs and a committee member had heard him play in Bayreuth in 1995) and he is entitled to an audience far wider than our society attracts to its regular monthly functions.

Before receiving Stefan Mickisch's letter of 1 April (translated by a society member and reproduced on page 11) we consulted other musical organisations who told us the dates conflicted with the international piano competition, virtually ruling out suitable venues, audiences and personnel to do the organising of a concert.

Of considerably more interest to me is the possibility of a recital by Stefan Mickisch in Sydney in March/June 1997. The spade work for this has already begun and members will be advised should the concert become a reality. I might add that we were aware that the playing of the *Rheingold* CD at the ABC studios last year could have exposed the society to a considerable financial loss and we were only able to proceed after a committee member offered to underwrite the cost. We would like to hear from any member willing to underwrite the whole or part of the costs of arranging a recital by Mr Mickisch next year. We hope to purchase a number of Stefan Mickisch's CDs and will advise members when they are available.

On a different note, I have discovered a Wagner Archives site on the Internet which is just being developed. I have contacted that author and he is very interested in publishing some of the material presented at our seminars. Publication however will not take place unless the presenter of the paper agrees and I am happy to announce that one of our distinguished members, Andrew Riemer, has agreed to the publication of his papers and is now perusing the drafts so that any errors in the reproduction can be corrected. As I pen these notes I am in the process of contacting other presenters for their views. No one knows how many people are connected to the Internet but the current "guesstimates" that I have seen put the number at 40,000,000 plus or minus a few million. I leave it to each of you to speculate how this can promote the cause of Wagner's music - and perhaps score a few "brownie points" for our society.

PAUL LEHMANN
President