

# The Wagner Society

IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

Registered Office: 141 Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo 2011  
Telephone enquiries: 358 1919 (Bus. Hours)



## Newsletter

24 - 1987

No. 25. MARCH, 1986.

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PATRON: SIR CHARLES MacKERRAS  
HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS:  
WERNER BAER  
RITA HUNTER  
LEONIE RYSANEK  
MICHAEL EWANS

COMING EVENTS

Sunday	March 15th	Goethe Institute 1.00 - 5.00 p.m. Recorded music - Strauss.
Good Friday	April 17th	Goethe Institute 1.00 - 5.00 p.m. Parsifal - full opera.
Friday	May 15th	Annual General Meeting 6.30 p.m. Print. Room, 141 Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo.
Friday	May 22nd	Annual Dinner 7.30 for 8.00 p.m. Menzies Hotel.
Sunday	June 21st	Goethe Institute 1.00 - 5.00 p.m. Tristan and Isolde - full opera.

COMMITTEE

President	:	Richard King	358 1919
& Co-Editor	:		
Vice-President	:	Janet Wayland	357 4806 (B)
Editor	:		332 2926 (H)
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	:		326 1793 (H)
	:	Michel Arnould	326 1793
	:	Keith Anderson	449 8801
	:	Jessie Anderson	449 8801
	:	David McCulloch	665 4212

\* \* \* \* \*

DONATIONS

RECEIVED DURING LAST QUARTER.

Mr Bryan Campbell.

Our gratitude is extended to the above members who we hope will accept this publication of their names as our acknowledgement for their support.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:-

Mr & Mrs I Brady	Mr Stuart Asquith	Mr F McDonald
Miss Tracey Wilson	Mr & Mrs C. Evatt	Miss K M Browne
Mr Andrew Pell	Ms Ann Lau	Mr & Mrs F Theeman
Mr Keith Elvy	Mr & Mrs G Lithgow	Mrs Marlene Baumgartner
Mr Ian Maxwell	Ms J Affleck	Miss Ute McPhee

THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES FOR 1987SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE PLANNINGSUB-COMMITTEE

On the day of the Christmas Party at the Goethe Institute the Planning Sub-Committee distributed copies of the proposed programme of activities for 1987. To assist those who were unable to be with us on December 14th we reproduce this information as complete as possible to date. Keep watchin your Newsletter for further confirmation.

It was decided to play the Wagner on Compact Disc for the third Sunday of the month to avoid clashes with other Societies programmes.

March 15th - Sunday at Goethe Institute. 1.00 p.m.  
Music program - Alpine Symphony - Richard Strauss  
- Saløje - full opera.

q.v. Dec. 86 Newsletter

April 17th - Good Friday at Goethe Institute. 1.00 p.m.  
Music Programme - Parisfal - full opera.

May 22nd - Friday at Menzies Hotel. 7.30 - 8.00 p.m.  
Annual Dinner.

June 21st - Sunday at Goethe Institute. 1.00 p.m.  
Music Programme - Tristan and Isolde - full opera.

July 5th - Sunday at Goethe Institute. 3.00 p.m.  
reception for Michael Hampe

July 19th - Sunday at Goethe Institute. 1.00 p.m.  
Music Programme to be announced

\* N.B. ALL MEMBERS. The committee decided to combine the events of August 9th and 16th. The Seminar on 'Lohengrin' will now be held on August 9th and the day will finish with the reception for Elizabeth Connell.

September 4th - Friday at Sydney Opera House  
Performance of Lohengrin

September 20th - Sunday at Goethe Institute. 1.00 p.m.  
Recorded programme to be announced.

September 26th - Saturday at Sydney Opera House  
Performance of Lohengrin followed by reception hosted by Wagner Society.

October 18th - Sunday at Goethe Institute. 1.00 p.m.  
Recorded programme of Wagner shorter works including Wesendonck Lieder and Siegfried Idyll

November 15th - Sunday at Goethe Institute. 1.00 p.m.  
Recorded music programme to be announced

December 13th - Sunday at Goethe Institute  
Christmas Party.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Last year's break with the tradition of combined A.G.M. and Dinner seemed to meet with approval all around. It would be safe to say that the Committee found it much more satisfactory to concentrate the mind on one thing at a time.

The 1987 Annual General Meeting will therefore be held at the PRINT ROOM - 141 Dowling St., WOOLLOOMOOLOO on Friday 15th May at 6.30 p.m.

Indications of your intentions to attend would help us plan the weating. See last pages of Newsletter for appropriate form.

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ANNUAL DINNER

The Seventh Annual Dinner of The Wagner Society will be held at the Menzies Hotel, and we are delighted to have as our Guest Honour, Alberto Remedios.

A three course meal, with coffee, will be served at 8.00 p.m. and pre-dinner drinks served at 7.30 p.m.

The application form is at the end of the Newsletter so fill it in and return to: 141 Dowling St., WOOLLOOMOOLOO 2011 as soon as possible.

We look forward to seeing you on 22nd May.

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GUESSING COMPETITION

The Guessing Competition tickets enclosed in this Newsletter are to be drawn on the evening of the Annual Dinner. All butts and unsold tickets should be posted with your cheque to The Wagner Society's Woolloomooloo address or brought to the Dinner.

1st Prize: O. Bauer's book - "Richard Wagner - Stage Designs & Production"

2nd Prize: 2 tickets to premiere of "Lohengrin".

3rd Prize: Souvenir plate from Bayreuth.

the winner of 1st Prize has the option of taking either the book or the premiere tickets.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

All Subscriptions are now due and payable before April 1st.

THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA'S "GERMAN PROJECT"

THE WAGNER SOCIETY'S INVOLVEMENT

During 1987 and 1988 the Australian Opera is strengthening its German repertoire with productions of "Lohengrin" and "Kie Meistersinger von Nuernberg". As well ther will be an international exchange of singers, designers, directors and musical staff during the two years.

We have already seen our scholarship winner, John Wregg, go overseas to advance his studies in stage-craft at Cologne and Berlin, and shortly Prof. Michael Hampe, manageing director of the Cologne Opera, will be guest producer for the Australian Opera's "Cenerentola" and next year's "Meistersinger". He will be a special guest at the Wagner Society's meeting on 5th July.

The German Government, in designating this project as its Bicentennial contribution to Australia, has approved a grant of DM800 ,000 to the Australian Opera. The opera management feel that further financial support is desirable to ensure a successful outcome for the project, and is looking to the German business community and cultural organisations to make donations totalling \$200,000 over the two years.

The committee of the Wagner Society has voted for a donation for 1987 to the Aust- ralian Opera of \$5000, specifically to go towards the "Lohengrin" production. A personal donation of a similar amount from one of our members will be added to the society's money, so that a total of \$10,000 will be given in the society's name. This places the Wagner Society as a major sponsor for "Lohengrin", and it will of course receive due acknowledgement and priveleges.

But what of continuing support for "Meistersinger" and for the annual Wagner Society Scholarship from within the society? A steady trickle of donations arrives each month at the office from our small group of loyally supportive members, to whom the committee does express its sincere gratitude.

We would like to now make an earnest plea to all the other members who for some reason have not got around to making a donation - PLEASE make that contribution soon! The livelihood and reputation of the Wagner Society depend on it.

What can you give - \$20, \$50, \$100, or \$250, or \$..?.. Don't hold back, remember it's tax deductible when made to the Australian Elizabethan Trust, using the form below.

As Wagner's star is finally again in its ascendancy in Australia, let's do all we can to keep it on its true course!

Donations to the Wagner Society are Tax-Deductible if they are paid to the Elizabethan Theatre Trust and accompanied by the form below.

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To: The General Manager,  
The Elizabethan Theatre Trust, P.O Box 137, Kings Cross, 2011

Dear Sir,  
Please find enclosed a cheque for \$            representing my donation to The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust. This donation is given un- conditionally. However, it would be appreciated if, when considering your appropriations to the performing companies, preference in the allocation of this donation could be given to The Wagner Society.

Signature . . . . .  
Name . . . . .  
Address . . . . .

### BAYREUTH APPLICATIONS FOR 1987

The news of the Society's successful bid for a group booking for Bayreuth this year must have reached most ears by now. It was our first application in the name of the society and we can only hope this it is the beginning of a regular allocation that would enable us to distribute tickets to members.

Our good fortune, however, was twofold. As a member of the "Friends of Bayreuth", the society was allocated a further set of two tickets. All members were notified that a ballot would be held for these tickets, and that ballot was conducted at the Print Room on the 6th of February in the presence of four committee members and the Society Auditor. The winner was Mr David Bremer, a Melbourne member. Congratulations, Mr Bremer!

The committee had decided, due to the enthusiastic response, that future distribution of any tickets allocated to the Society from the Festspielhaus Box Office will be by ballot amongst those members who have made application through the Society.

We wish all those successful applicants a bon voyage and a memorable festival.

### LOHENGRIN

Group bookings for the September production of Lohengrin can now be made for Friday 4th September and Saturday 26th September. Please make notes in your diary and watch for the application form in the June Newsletter.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

All Subscriptions are now due and payable before April 1st.

Dear Wagner Society members,

This is a list of the Wagner Society broadcasts planned for the next 6 months. They are transmitted over 2 MBS FM, 102.5 on the FM band. Broadcasts last an hour, commencing at 1.00 p.m. on either the 3rd or 4th Sunday each month. The Society has been airing itself this way for more than 4 years now, and the rationale has shifted somewhat. All of Wagner's output, as recorded, has been presented, a lot of it many times over. Now we seek to publicise the Society itself, playing a modest diet of Wagner every month that happens to be relevant or of interest to members. If you have any program ideas and/or LP recording of Wagnerian music (up to broadcast sound quality, necessarily), then why not let us know about them? Likewise if you have any special requests, they will be most welcome for a "Society Members Favorites" style program.

Arthur Carter

Summary of "Wagner Society Presents" ..... Programmes.

- MARCH "Is there a Tristan in the house?"  
(A comparative survey of tenors in Tristan largely featuring Lauritz Melchior)
- APRIL "The Language of Love"  
Two contrasting expressions of love in Wagner's music - with excerpts from "Tannhauser" & "Tristan and Isolde".
- MAY "Wagner in the hands of the French"  
A collection of wellknown Wagner arias sung (rather well) in the French language with a survey of Wagner's experiences in the French capital etc.
- JUNE "Introducing 'Lohengrin' Part 1"  
A continuous slab of Act I
- JULY "Introducing 'Lohengrin' Part 2"  
The Bridal Chamber Scene & (hopefully) the tenor's two arias from Act III
- AUGUST "Welcoming back Leonie Rysanek"  
A selection of arias from Wagner & Italian operas, with possibly the taped interview from her first visit.

Send your ideas and/or requests to: Arthur Carter  
c/- 2MBS-FM  
76 Chandos Street,  
ST LEONARDS 2065.

### "WAGNER WEEKEND"

One of the suggestions made in the survey conducted on the last "Wagner on C.D." day was that we hold a Wagner Weekend close to Sydney when we can listen to, discuss or debate any aspects of Wagner and his life and music. So far there have been quite a few expressions of interest so we are asking all our members for their opinions. Naturally bookings will have to be made well ahead so we do not anticipate holding one in 1987. We have visited some hotel/motels and have formed an opinion in favour of Ranelagh House, Robertson which has been refurbished, is of reasonable cost and suitable for our purposes. In fact when we visited it, the Wollongong Conservatorium Students were holding a week long Summer School!

Please Let us know whether (1) you like the idea (2) you would come if possible (3) ideas for activities (4) best time of the year (not August, September, October - Bayreuth - Tulip Time etc). before the Annual General Meeting to : Jessie Anderson, c/- Print Room.

1987 HONG KONG ARTS FESTIVAL PRESENTATION OFTHE FLYING DUTCHMAN

Music Director	Kenneth Schermerhorn
Director/Designer	Ralph Koltai CBE
Daland	John Wegner
Steersman	Glenn Winslade
The Dutchman	Malcolm Donnelly
Mary	Irene Waugh
Senta	Phyllis Cannan
Erik	Horst Hoffmann

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra & Festival Opera Chorus.

The impressive Lyric Theatre in the new Academy for Performing Arts was the venue, and the atmosphere was set even before the overture by a tattered canvas sail across the proscenium, instead of a conventional curtain.

The orchestra attacked the music with verve and gusto, but not a great deal of accuracy, and throughout the performance (on the 28th January at least) the conductor now and then lost control of both chorus and soloist. Phyllis Cannan had some pitch problems as well, but generally her performance was strong and convincing. Connelly's dark baritone was perfect for the role, and it had ample strength and volume to convey the varied emotions of the tormented Dutchman. Horst Hoffmann sang Erik's lyrical arias with heldentenor capability, and gave this small part the vitality it so often lacks. The warmth and joviality one expects of Daland just was not there, and John Wegner's light, dry bass voice could not lift this portrayal above mediocrity.

Direction was very static though with some effective grouping of the chorus, but there was little excitement in the Act I and Act II finales. Although the "continuous" version of the opera was used, there was an intermission directly after Erik's "dream" aria mid-way through Act II. It was an acceptable compromise, as was the English translation by David Pountney which did not jar too much on the ears.

The set, obviously constrained to a tight budget, was imaginative and effective, and between-act scene changing was carried out by the singers in view of the audience very smoothly. The apotheosis showing the transfigured lover's ascent skywards brought general acclamation.

Leonard Hansen

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SOSA'S "DUTCHMAN" FOR VICTORIA

The State Opera of South Australia's "Flying dutchman". so favourably reviewed by Andreas Ogrowsky in the Newsletter (Sept '86), is being taken to Melbourne in November of this year with many cast changes. Malcolm Connelly will remain the the cast to appear with Marilyn Richardson, Alberto Remedios, Richard Curtin and Connell Byrné.

The idea of a group from Sydney taking a coach to Melbourne has been mooted. So if you are interested in making the journey to see this excellent "DUTCHMAN" please contact Mrs Olive Coonan : Day 33 4092. Evening 387 6403.

"The Flying Dutchman" at Victorian Arts Centre, November 9th to 25th, but note that the only Saturday between those dates is November 14th, so with would be focusing our plans on that date.



### A DESPERATE UNDERTAKING

The spectacle of Mr Augustus Harris making for righteousness with a whole mob of aristocratic patrons hanging on to his coattails is one which deserves to be hailed with three times three. It is difficult to conceive a more desperate undertaking than an attempt to make *Die Meistersinger* a success at Covent Garden. As well try to make wild flowers spring from the upholstery by dint of engaging tremendously expensive gardeners. There are many things needed for *Die Meistersinger*: scenery, dresses, persons with voices of a certain strength and compass, a conductor, a band, etc, etc, etc; but there is one pre-eminent condition, without which all the others are in vain, and that one is the true Wagner-Nuremberg atmosphere: the poetic essence of the medieval life wherein man, instead of serenading dueling, crying "t'amo, t'amo," and finally suiciding (mostly in B flat or G), went his mortal round as apprentice, journeyman, and master: and habitually demeaned himself by doing useful work. Of this atmosphere there is hardly a breath at Covent Garden; and that is the first and last word of the higher criticism on Saturday's performance. But the practical criticism has to consider not whether the performance was perfectly satisfying, but whether it was better worth doing than letting alone; and on this point there must be a unanimous verdict in Mr Harris's favor.

The first step taken was to secure a large sale for the two-shilling librettos by substituting a colorless translation of the German poem, not into English, because the audience would understand that, nor into Polish, French or Russian, because then one or two of the singers could have declaimed it with native familiarity, but into Italian, the least congenial language in Europe for the purpose. How *Johannistag* sounds as *solenne di*, and *Whan! wahn!* as *si, si*, may be imagined. In order to make quite sure of the librettos going off well, the usual opera bills were carefully removed from the stalls, probably not by Mr Harris's orders; for it is due to him to say that petty dodges of this stamp, characteristic as they are of fashionable entertainments in general and of opera house in particular, are just those of which he has striven to rid Covent Garden. It is greatly to his credit that, in order to do as much of *Die Meistersinger* as possible, he dared on this occasion to begin at half-past seven, with the encouraging result that the attendance was more punctual than it usually is at eight, or even half-past eight. Yet, though the curtain did not fall until eighteen minutes past twelve on Sunday morning, chunks - absolutely whole chunks - had to be cut out of the very vitals of the work to get it over in time. The first half of Sachs's *Wahn!, wahn!*, Walter's denunciation of the master's pedantry in the second act, a section of the trial song, a section of the prize song, Beckmesser's scolding of Sachs in the third act, may be taken as examples of the excisions. This could have been avoided only by some such heroic measure as dispensing with the first act altogether: a fearful expedient; but then a single honest murder is better than half a dozen furtive mutilations.

So much for what was not done: now for what was. the honors of the evening went to Lassalle, whose singing was grand, especially in the third act. If he could only learn the part in German, cultivate a cobbler-like deportment about the elbows, and cure himself of his stage walk and his one perpetual gesture with the right hand, he would have very few dangerous rivals in Europe as Hans Sachs. Jean de Reszke, who wandered about the stage as if he had given *Die Meistersinger* up as a hopeless conundrum, but was always anxious to oblige as far as a tenor part or a spell of love-making was concerned, sang charmingly in the last two scenes. The ever condescending Montariol, as David (which he played with much spirit and evident relish), again sacrificed his dignity as *primo tenore assoluto* on the altar of devotion to the management. Abramoff gave due weight to the music of Pagner. Madame Albani is always at her sincerest - that is, her best - in playing Wagner. In the first scene of the third act she got so carried into her part that for the moment she quite looked it; and the quintet at the end was one of the happiest passages of the evening.

Signor Mancinelli, who was literally dragged twice across the stage in agonies of dorsaflexion, had evidently taken great pains. With fresh impressions of Richter and Faccio rife in the house, his limitations inevitably made themselves felt, especially in the overture and first act, where the orchestra, being in a continual bustle, requires the smoothest and most sympathetic handling to prevent it getting on one's nerves. And the waltz and procession music in the last scene where much to slow: a grave fault at midnight, with watches popping in and out all over the house and the end still distant. The staging of this last scene, by the way, was excellent. The chorus, if the substitution of women for boys must be accepted without a murmur, acquitted themselves very well; but the riot in the second act would have been better if it had either been sung note for note as written, or, as usual, frankly abandoned as impossible and filled up according to the vociferative fancy of the choristers. A combination of the two plans resulted in a failure, both in accuracy and *laissez-aller*. Such misplaced nocturnal buffooneries as the emptying of vessels from the windows on the crowd, and the subsequent clowning of the nothing-if-not-stolid watchman, should be at once stopped. M. Isnardon as Beckmesser set a bad example in this way; and his chief opportunity of really funny acting - the exhibition of the miseries of acute nervousness before the public in the last scene - was entirely missed.

The audience kept together wonderfully at the end, considering the lateness of the hour; and their conduct in suppressing ill-timed applause and insisting on silence after the fall of the curtain until the very last chord was played, was quite delightful. The proceedings ended with a tremendous ovation to Mr Harris, who fished out of the wing a stout gentleman generally but erroneously supposed to be Wagner. The assembly then broke up in high good humor.

George Bernard Shaw  
Published in "The Star" (15 July 1889)

#### IN WAGNER'S WORLD

everything is over  
before it began  
there is no beginning

love pervades everything  
and sadness that

bombast and rhetoric  
beat on the drums

the world which is so hollow  
is really rich

2. v 86  
Paul Knobel

NOMINATION TO COMMITTEE

The Secretary,  
The Wagner Society,  
141 Dowling Street,  
WOOLLOOMOOLOO, NSW, 2011.

Dear Sir,

Please take notice that we, the undersigned members, hereby respectively propose and second ..... for election as a member of the Committee of the Wagner Society.

Dated this ..... day of ..... 1987.

Signed ..... Signed .....  
Proposer ..... Seconder .....

Signed .....  
Proposed Member

PROXY

The Secretary,  
The Wagner society.

Dear Sir,

I cannot attend the 7th Annual General Meeting, but give my proxy vote to ..... who is a current financial member of the Society.

Signed: .....

Address: .....

SUBSCRIPTIONS

All Subscriptions are now due and payable before April 1st.

ATTENDANCE FORM

ANNUAL DINNER

I would like to make ..... reservations at \$31.00 each for the Annual Dinner on 22nd May, 1987 at 7.30 p.m.

I enclose my cheque for \$.....

Name .....

Address .....

Note: Entree cards will not be issued. A guest list will be kept at the door. If receipt is required, please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

I/we will be attending the Annual General Meeting on 15th May.

I would like the following motion to be placed on the Agenda for discussion under General Business.

.....  
.....  
.....

Name .....

Membership No: .....

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The Wagner Society  
141 Dowling Street,

WOOLLOOMOOLOO 2011.

I wish to renew membership of the Wagner Society in the following category.

- [ ] \$18.00 Ordinary Membership (Annual Subscription)
- [ ] \$30.00 Joint Membership - Husband & Wife (Annual Subscription)
- [ ] \$ 9.00 Pension / Under 25 Annual Subscription.

Membership renewal is due annually on April 1st.

Mr/Mrs/Miss .....  
First Name Surname (Block Letters)

Membership No: .....

Address .....  
..... Postcode .....

Telephone ..... Day ..... Even

If under 25 please include birth date .....

If a pensioner please quote no. ....

I/we enclose cheque/postal note/money order, payable to The Wagner Society.

Signature ..... Date ..... \$ .....