

The Wagner Society

IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

Registered Office: 141 Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo 2011
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Newsletter

No. 30 February, 1988.

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PATRON: SIR CHARLES MACKERRAS
HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS: Mr WERNER BAER M.B.E.
Miss RITA HUNTER C.B.E.
Miss LEONIE RYSANEK
Professor MICHAEL EWANS

COMING EVENTS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26th.	"SALOME" Opera Theatre	7.30 pm
SUNDAY, MARCH 20th	Video - "Parzifal" Goethe Institute	1.00 pm
SUNDAY, APRIL 17th	Wagner Lieder Talk by Dorothy McCormack Goethe Institute	2.30 pm
FRIDAY, MAY 13th	Annual Dinner Menzies Hotel	7.30 for 8.00 pm
SUNDAY, MAY 22nd	Annual General Meeting followed by "Rheingold" Goethe Institute	1.00 pm

COMMITTEE

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Treasurer	Joseph Ferfaglia	938 2030
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	Olive Coonan	387 6403
	Keith & Jessie Anderson	449 8801
	Michel Arnould	326 1793

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

ACTIVITIES DURING 1988

This listing could be subject to alterations if arrangements change beyond our control. Always check your recent Newsletter.

- FEBRUARY Friday 26. Performance of "Salome" at the Opera Theatre. 7.30pm
- MARCH Sunday 20. Video afternoon. Probably "Parzifal", at the Goethe Institute. 1.00 pm.
- APRIL Sunday 17. A talk by Dorothy McCormack on Wagner Lieder at the Goethe Institute.
- MAY Friday 13. Annual Dinner at the Menzies Hotel. 7.30 for 8.00pm.
- MAY Sunday 22. Annual General Meeting followed by "Das Rheingold" at the Goethe Institute. 1.00 pm.
- JUNE Sunday 19. "Die Walkure" at the Goethe Institute. 1.00 pm.
- JULY Sunday 17. "Siegfried" at the Goethe Institute. 1.00 pm.
- AUGUST Sunday 21. "Gotterdammerung" at the Goethe Institute. 1.00 pm.
- SEPTEMBER Sunday 11. All-day seminar on "Die Meistersinger" at the Goethe Institute concluding with a reception for Sir Charles Mackerras.
- OCTOBER Saturday 1. Performance of "Die Meistersinger". A theatre party at the Opera Theatre. 5.30 pm.
- OCTOBER Friday 14. Performance of "Die Meistersinger". A theatre party at the Opera Theatre. 5.30 pm. Possibly followed by late supper with the cast.
- NOVEMBER Sunday 20. To be announced.
- DECEMBER Sunday 11. Christmas party at the Goethe Institute. 2.30 pm.

BAYREUTH - 1988

To those members who applied for tickets to Bayreuth this year we regret to say that the Society's application was unsuccessful. No doubt the increased demand in the first year of a new production has resulted in this being an "off" year for us and we can only hope for better luck next year.

There will be no individual notification.

CHANGE OF DATES FOR NEWSLETTER

If the time between newsletters seems to be shorter it is no illusion. It is only 2 months since the last issue!

For several reasons it has been decided to bring publication forward by 1 month. In past years the two most significant events in our calendar, the Annual Dinner and the Annual General Meeting, have fallen into an unfortunate gulf between the March and June Newsletters. Information, voting forms and, most essentially, your membership renewal forms (which must be in by April 1st), have previously been carried in the March issue and we hope this extra time will make your planning easier.

All the relevant forms for nominations to committee, membership renewal, Annual Dinner reservations etc, can be found on the back pages of this issue. Please make note of these dates & return your cheque as soon as possible.

COMING EVENTS

SALOME- Tickets are still available for A Res. seats on February 26th. Phone Murray Smith on 358 2763.

PARZIFAL- This superb recording of Wolfgang Wagner's Bayreuth production features Siegfried Jerusalem, Hans Sotin and Eva Randova. H

WAGNER LIEDER- Dorothy McCormack to give an illustrated talk on various aspects of Wagner's music, his lieder in particular. Afternoon tea will be served afterwards and Admission is free. Commences 2.30 pm.

ANNUAL DINNER- Our special guest of honour, Reinhardt Heinrich, will ensure the success of our 8th Annual Dinner with some insights to the new production of "Die Meistersinger" preparations for which he is presently working on.

The Guessing Competition (tickets enclosed in the Newsletter) will be drawn on this night and the prizes are:

- 1st Prize: A framed original drawing of a costume design for Meistersinger by Reinhardt Heinrich.
- 2nd Prize: 2 tickets for 'Die Meistersinger'. Premium Reserve - night of your choice.
- 3rd Prize: Bust of Richard Wagner.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING- It was not possible to celebrate Wagner's birthday on the evening of the Annual Dinner - (1988 being a celebration of another birthday!) - so our A.G.M., you will notice, falls on The Day, May 22nd, and what more auspicious day to launch the first of the Ring cycle Sunday afternoons! Keith Anderson has chosen some very fine recordings for our critical enjoyment.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

TRANSLATED FROM THE "GESELLSCHAFT DER FREUNDE VON BAYREUTH"ANNUAL REPORT 1987

Excerpts: Herr Werner Herzog, guest at the Annual meeting of the Society of the Friends of Bayreuth, attempted to answer the many questions directed to him on his new perception of 'Lohengrin' and how his production may have opened a door to show new and different aspects of this difficult and fairy-tale 'Lohengrin'.

Here follows a transcript of that discussion.

"I would like to make a short remark in advance. I am very grateful that I was offered to do this work. Of my personal background I want to say to you that I do not come from a family with a musical tradition. I had to grope autodidactically and on my own, search, out of fascination, into the music.

My way into the music really followed like this. In the main it was through Bach, Schuetz and then above all Gesualdo. I was relatively innocent of Wagner, but - I have said this already several times - I accepted the Lohengrin production immediately after I heard the prelude.

I can tell you what impression it made on me. There is a parallel example: I attended a stage orchestra rehearsal of Parsifal. It was the first time in my life that I heard and saw this. There were very few spectators in the hall and I have damaged their house because, when Kundry howls for the first time and sings, I did not see her before because she was half hidden. And then this sound, which perhaps already is music of the next century, I was so frightened that I tore out of their anchorage half the row of seats in which I was sitting. In that way I feel extraordinarily deep emotions. - I am not a Wagner expert, but I am the one who in the house tore the row of chairs out of their anchorage.

Another thing:

From the few operas which I have seen until now, I have the feeling that there is a wrong development. That the direction - so I believe - seems to be over emphasized; to have become its own, nearly didactic element. I am not in favour of that, and I hope that I achieved, in this production, a balance which in the end has to look like this:

When the whole world has changed into music that is optically, humanely, musically - that is when the whole world has changed into music - then Opera has been created. And this was always the aim of my work."

In answer to a question from one of the members on what perception Herr Herzog had in creating the bridal bower:

"I have always had the feelings that we should create pictures which have no boundaries. For me it was imperceivable that the bridal bower would be a closed room, also with doors that open, where the murderers enter. We therefore tried to create a world, and also to give the spectator a room-feeling which knows no boundaries. For example during the 2nd act the ocean arrives from somewhere and nowhere and recedes again to nowhere; the starry sky is outside and in a ruined cathedral, which stands in a much bigger-dimensioned cathedral, a sort of heaven cathedral. Therefore there should not be any boundaries.

It is, of course, strange that the bridal bower should be in a sort of snow-scape where there are only remains of lawn. We wanted to transmit the mood that there is something like hearts that turn to ice, a coldness, and a near no-relationship that becomes terrible when it starts

to snow. They are nearly frozen to death, that cling to each other. Basically only destroyed ones remain.

The reason to have the bridal bed in the open was to visualize the danger. Therefore we placed the wolves, which then suddenly appear, as Telramund and his four murderers. We tried not to present something realistically, but to visualize inner landscapes. Of course this is very debatable."

In answer to the meaning of the final scene when the two women meet, Herr Herzog says:

I have pondered very long how far one can ignore Richard Wagner's instructions or not. A very simple example: The four nobles are to take the slain one in front of the king, but they don't do it, the whole time they only stand there and stare upon the slain one.

Now, in the end it is like this, that I had the feeling as if a great disaster had come over the country like a snow storm, like a great natural catastrophe, and there are really only destroyed ones left. And then, what happens next, there will be a war.

In this situation of icy hearts and nearly freezing to death, all humans cling to each other and, I thought, these two women who have been left behind as destroyed ones should seek each other's nearness. I therefore tried the following which might be of interest to you:

The two women were to walk towards each other and then to fall like two trees, but which don't fall because they lean on each other. But optically it looked so ambiguous and strange, that I abandoned the idea.

You have to understand what happened, in the end, on the stage, out of the situation, Frau Ligenza, who came on short notice, I met for the first time two hours before the first performance. We could only instruct her during the prelude and during the intermissions. I had asked that the two women at the end stiffly and cautiously take one or two steps towards each other, so that at least 6 - 7 m distance would be between them, and that while the curtain falls, they should try to make a gesture of walking towards each other. This, unfortunately, did not succeed. Frau Ligenza simply continued and Frau Schnaut, who noticed it, did not want to leave her alone and so it came practically to a touching at the end.

In spite of this, the scene was essentially all right, even if the two women, in my opinion, came too close to each other.

I must honestly say, that I have to ponder further over this last scene. During August I will watch the production soberly like a normal spectator, because I know that regarding the last scene my thoughts are still in flux.

When it was pointed out that the end appears too negative, that there were positive and comforting things, Mr. Herzog answered:

"The comforting in this production comes, maybe, from the two women, but also from the boy Gottfried. Thought should be given to the dove, which does not appear in our production.

The end has been the subject of long discussions between Henning von Dierke and myself. In the work, as Wagner wrote it, the end comes very quickly, before one really comprehended everything that happened, the curtain has come down.

With this ending I had my special difficulties and I think - please do not take this to be frivolous - that Wagner himself had his problems

with this end. The great motif of redemption which comes so much more to the fore in his later works, appears here for the first time as the dove, but I believe that Wagner in this work was not ready yet, that he had not yet found for himself a quite clear position. I do not know whether this sounds precocious, but I have thought very long about this problem. One could, of course, produce the end according to Wagner's instructions, but even then it would not be without its difficulties.

A member finds fault that Gottfried is left so desolately alone on stage. He asks whether one could not let him go to his sister who has cared for him in former years.

In response W. Herzog:

"I never thought of that; of course this is an interesting variation. I was strongly influenced by the whole situation whereby the boy is practically naked and has such strange white stripes which still originate from the swan. And this boy stands there forlornly and looks embarrassed into space. This is what the boy did, who played Gottfried at the first rehearsals. This helplessness and the boyishness, this touched my heart, and I thought, this is exactly the mood which I need there. An absolutely forlorn boy, who shall suddenly be a leader into war.

That suddenly, brother and sister should find each other, I never thought of that. The sister in the meantime has aged about 15 or 25 years, they practically would not recognize each other.

But, as I said before, I want to think about this ending quietly.

A member is asking why, in the last scene not the slain Telramund but only his clothes are brought before the king.

Herr Herzog:

"We have also thought about this a long time. During rehearsals we had the real Telramund carried in. I thought he had to be left there then, the whole time, until the end; therefore not to be carried in and then out again. If the slain one really stays on stage until the curtain falls - then I think - this aggravates the whole happening and disaster. But strangely this did not look good, something was not right and also the changing of Telramund into a sort of wolf, as he attacked, was hereby eliminated.

We made another trial, we laid one of the wolves on a stretcher and covered it with the coat. When the wolf consequently was uncovered and then covered again, it was a great hilarious success with the approximately 40 spectators present at the rehearsal.

We groped along, I think one should not lay a slain body there to emphasize this motif too much. We thought - the insignia of Telramund - his sword, his shield, his cloak, his wolf's cap - were really sufficient to be laid before the king."

In finishing Werner Herzog declares:

"....." "With the general impression of my production I am to a certain extent satisfied because it pretty well shows what I have tried to produce. But there are some places with which I am not satisfied and on which I will continue to work. Of course I am very glad that I will have the opportunity to do this during next year and the year after and I am looking forward to it. On the whole I can say that the work here gave me a great amount of pleasure."

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A most pertinent point made by the Chairman of the Friends of Bayreuth, Herr Dr Hilger, is worth passing on if only to illustrate the reasons for tickets being so scarce in 1988.

"----- during 1988 the ticket problem will be more acute because of the new production of the Ring and growing membership."

Herr Dr Hilger asks that unwanted tickets, for whatever reason, be returned to the Box Office - even on the day of performance.

(We are grateful to Mrs Hildegard Perini for this translation. Ed.)

SOLTI AND LOHENGRIN

Sir Georg Solti has completed his recorded cycle of the mature Wagner operas with a new recording of Lohengrin, released last year by Decca on the occasion of his 75th birthday. Solti's first opera recording dates from 1957 when he conducted the Vienna Philharmonic in Act III of Die Walkure, with Kirsten Flagstad as Brunnhilde. Then followed, in order of release in England, complete recordings of Das Rheingold (1959), Tristan und Isolde (1961), Siegfried (1963), Gotterdammerung (1965), Die Walkure (1966), Tannhauser (1971), Parsifal (1973), Die Meistersinger (1976) and Der Fliegende Hollander (1977). The new Lohengrin (4 LPs, 4 cassettes, 4 compact discs, 223 minutes) features Placido Domingo as Lohengrin, Jessye Norman as Elsa, Eva Randov as Ortrud and Siegmund Nimsgern as Telramund, with the Vienna State Concert Choir and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. A lengthy review in the October 1987 issue of The Gramophone concludes: "In its dramatic vitality, emotional honesty and directness, and its sure integration of the small into the large, this Lohengrin ranks with the best that Solti has given us. The CD format is particularly welcome, since it enables us to hear Acts 1 and 3 on single discs, with sensible track divisions." The CD version was seen in Sydney shops before Christmas, priced \$104.

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STRIP TEASE FOR OPERA

The comic is now set to infiltrate the world of opera. Strip cartoon versions of three of the most popular works in the repertoire, Bizet's 'Carmen', Puccini's 'Madame Butterfly', and Wagner's 'Flying Dutchman', in new and sometimes quite racy translations, are designed to make opera more accessible to a wider audience.

The books in a large format (10 x 11 inches) allow for dramatic illustration and while not aimed at the purist or the regular opera goer they are attempting to debunk the idea that opera is elitist by targeting a new audience.

The venture has the support of the Royal Opera House as part of a larger plan to develop new audiences; 36 more titles are waiting to be transformed into comic strips, and last June a performance of 'Bohm' starring Placido Domingo was shown on a huge screen in Covent Garden piazza for passers-by to enjoy.

Imagine an opera projected onto a screen on the rock face that flanks the Opera House forecourt! It would do more for the community and opera than any mural, and if building new audiences is what matters, the end would surely justify the means.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

As a result of correspondence from Mr Arthur Carter (Dec '87 Newsletter) concerning the poorly attended recital given by Rita Hunter and Alberto Remedios at the Seymour Centre there has been much response and comment and because all have carried a common theme, to print them all would be repetitive. To list the most common criticisms, we trust, will go some way towards explaining why our members stayed away. We cannot speak for the general public but their reasons may have been the same.

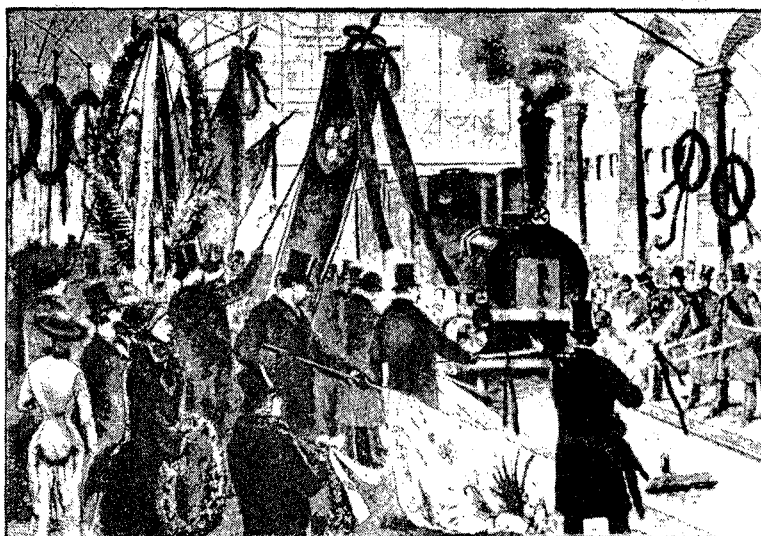
- 1) Admission price (\$30) was too high - particularly at the time of the year when Opera, A.B.C. and Theatre subscriptions are due.
- 2) The unattractiveness of the Seymour Centre as a venue.
- 3) Inadequate publicity - (potential patrons deserve more than "Arias and Duets by Verdi and Wagner" as a description of the programme content.
- 4) Ultimately the responsibility must lie with the organisers.

(Ed.)

IN MEMORIAM

On February 13th, one hundred and five years ago, the body of Richard Wagner began its last journey from Venice to his beloved Bayreuth.

Ceremony and demonstrations of public sympathy attended this journey. As the cortège left Munich to the funeral music of Gotterdammerung it was joined by representatives of the king and government for the final ceremonies in Bayreuth.



NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:-

Ms Dorothy E Cleaver; Mrs Ann MacDonald; Mr Neil McGowan

DONATIONS

RECEIVED DURING LAST QUARTER.

Mr G W Lithgow; Anonymous

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

Following on our commitment to support Australian Opera, especially in the Bicentennial Year, the Committee has voted a donation of \$5,000.00 to sponsor the performance of Bruce Martin in the role of Hans Sachs. Members are invited to show their support for this venture by making their contribution in the usual way through the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust on the accompanying form. It is our hope to match last year's \$10,000 sponsorship for 'Lohengrin' so why not make this your Bicentennial gift?

DATE.....

The Secretary,
The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust,
Post Office Box 137,
KINGS CROSS. N.S.W. 2011.

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed cash/cheque

OR CHARGE MY BANKCARD NO.
MASTERCARD NO.
DINERS CLUB
AMERICAN EXPRESS NO.
VISA CARD NO.
EXPIRY DATE

for \$.....representing my donation to The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust.

This donation is given unconditionally. 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.....in N.S.W....Inc.....

Signature
PLEASE PRINT NAME
AND ADDRESS Post Code

OR

I have made this donation on behalf of my company.

Signature
Title
PLEASE PRINT NAME AND
ADDRESS OF COMPANY Post Code

We would ask you when making your donation in this manner to please send your cheque, made payable to the A.E.T.T. to the Wagner Society's official address for processing before it is passed on to A.E.T.T.
Thank you.

ATTENDANCE FORM

ANNUAL DINNER

I would like to make reservations at \$38.50 each for the Annual Dinner on 13th May, 1988 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 a receipt is required, please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

I/we will be attending the Annual General Meeting on 22nd 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.

- \$20.00 Ordinary Membership (Annual Subscription)
- \$35.00 Joint Membership - Husband & Wife (Annual Subscription)
- \$10.00 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 Evening

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.

SignatureDate \$.....

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 secondfor election as a member of the Committee of the Wagner Society.

Dated this day of 1988.

Signed Signed
Proposer Second

Signed
Proposed Member

PROXY

The Secretary,
The Wagner Society,

Dear Sir,

I cannot attend the 8th Annual General Meeting, but give my proxy vote towho is a current financial member of the Society.

Signed:

Address:

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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