

The Wagner Society

IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

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



Newsletter

No. 38 FEBRUARY, 1990.

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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
Mr LEONARD HANSEN
Mr RICHARD KING

COMING EVENTS

Thursday, February 8th	Recital - Dennis Hennig Opera Centre Eliz. St.	6.15 p.m.
Sunday, March 11th	Elektra (C.D.) Goethe Institute.	1.00 p.m.
Sunday, April 15th	Parsifal (C.D.) Goethe Institute.	1.00 p.m.
Sunday, May 20th	A.G.M. Rhinogold (Video) Venue to be announced.	1.00 p.m.
Friday, May 25th	Annual Dinner Menzies Hotel	7.30 p.m.

COMMITTEE

President	Olive Coonan	271 3666(B)
Vice President	Leonard Hansen	326 1793
Secretary	Clare Hennessy	747 5664
Membership Co-ordinator	Annette Marshall	042 94 2992
Functions Co-ordinator	Margaret Budge	521 6097
Treasurer	Alma Straube	969 9383
Immediate Past President and Public Officer	Richard King	358 1919
Editors	Jessie Anderson Keith Anderson	449 8801
Committee	Susan Kelly Patricia Moore	909 3817

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

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

SPECIAL NOTICE

As usual we applied to the Goethe Institute late in 1989, to book the Auditorium for our functions in 1990. We have always requested the third Sunday in each month to keep continuity so it was disappointing to hear that because of commitments we could not make firm bookings until after 1st March and that even then, some dates would not be available. The President will hold further discussions in March, and we will make a special mailing to all members when dates are booked. At the moment the only firm bookings are March 11th, when we will play ELEKTRA and April 15th (Easter Sunday) when we will feature PARSIFAL. These are listed in COMING EVENTS on Page 2. The date for our A.G.M. cannot be changed so we will perhaps have to seek another venue. We regret this uncertain start to our 1990 plans, but are sure members will understand that the situation is unavoidable. In the coming months we hope to show videos of the Ring and Tristan and feature Lohengrin on C.D. so please make notes in your diaries. It has been so easy to remember to keep one Sunday free each month but now there will be random choices. The Seminar on Tristan and Isolde is still tentatively planned for June so an application form will be included in the special mailing.

ANNUAL DINNER

Our Annual Dinner - always an enjoyable occasion will again be held at the Menzies Hotel on 25th May, 1990. News is around that the hotel is due for demolition so it is possible that this will be our last night here so do gather a group of friends and come along! Bernadette Cullen, a Bayreuth Scholarship winner, hopes to be our guest and she will be able to tell us about her experiences in Germany while studying there last year.

Our Guessing Competition (Tickets will cost \$1 each) will have three prizes:-

- First Prize: Two tickets for the final night of Lohengrin in October.
Second Prize: The Baton used by Sir Charles Mackerras and a copy of his biography written by Nancy Phelan.
Third Prize: A framed souvenir of a 19th Cent. Bayreuth Booking Plan.

AN APPLICATION FORM IS AT THE BACK OF THIS NEWSLETTER.

RECITAL BY DENNIS HENNIG

The Wagner Society is pleased to support The Opera Guild which is sponsoring a recital by Dennis Hennig at the Opera Centre, Elizabeth Street, Sydney, on Thursday, 8th February at 6.15 p.m. Admission price is \$11. As well as the recital, there will be a discussion and light supper. Apply to the Australian Opera on (02) 699 1099.

FLYING DUTCHMAN IN BRISBANE

At the Lyric Theatre in Brisbane in May there will be performances of the Flying Dutchman with Donald McIntyre in the leading role.

C.D. AFTERNOONS

At 1.00 p.m. on Sunday, March 11th, 1990, the C.D. to be played will feature the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Georg Solti, and starring Birgit Nilsson in one of her most acclaimed roles. This is a startling performance by any standards.

Following requests for a repeat of the Knappertsbusch C.D. of PARSIFAL we will play this wonderful, spacious interpretation on Easter Sunday, 15th April. The cast includes George London : Martti Talvela : Jess Thomas : Hans Hotter : Gustav Neidlinger and Irene Dalis. Nobody could be blamed for recalling the "good old days" when hearing this C.D.

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL FRINGE EVENT

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE IN VENICE.

A new play about Richard Wagner by Paul Sherman who acts as Gabriele D'Annunzio re-incarnating Richard Wagner in Venice.

6 P.M. SMALL PRICE THEATRE 6 P.M.
(one hour show)

CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
97 Grote Street
ADELAIDE

\$8 - Concessions \$5 (incl BASS Booking Fee)

Dates: Feb 25 : 26 : 28 : March 1 : 4 : 5 : 7 : 8 : 11 : 12 : 14 : 15.

BREGENZ FESTIVAL - AUSTRIA 1990

On the floating stage there will be 21 performances of The Flying Dutchman with various casts between 22nd July and 22nd August 1990. Some of our Committee members saw this production by David Pountney and Stephanos Lazaridis in 1989 and thoroughly recommend it to those who will be in Europe in 1990. Booking enquiries can be made through the Austrian Tourist Bureau or direct to Austria Postfach 311, Platz der Wiener Symphoniker A-6901, Bregenz, Austria.

* * * * *
*
* Due to certain misconceptions about the availability *
* of tickets to Dress Rehearsals of Australian Opera *
* productions, a word of explanation may be timely. *
* Tickets to these Dress Rehearsals are available only *
* to Opera Guild members, Donors, Patrons and Staff on *
* an individual basis, by application to the Admin- *
* istration. The Wagner Society does not receive any *
* rehearsal tickets in its own right. The Society, by *
* dint of its sponsorship of the Australian Opera's *
* Wagner productions, is rewarded with a small number *
* of complimentary tickets to that particular current *
* opera. These tickets are always put to the benefit *
* of the Society either as Raffle prizes or used as *
* honoraria for our excellent speakers at the annual *
* seminars. Committee members have never had special *
* privileges in this regard. *
* OLIVE COONAN. President. *
* * * * *

CHRISTMAS PARTY REPORT

More members than ever attended our Christmas party in December last year. It was a very happy occasion which highlighted the fact that people from all walks of life have become friends due to their interest in and love of the music of Wagner. The Society would like to thank Virginia Lamb and Peter Binning who entertained us with a recital of arias from The Ring and Tristan and Isolde and a duet from the Flying Dutchman. We all enjoyed the fine afternoon tea provided and sampled our special Christmas Cake.

Dennis Hennig, whose recording, (sponsored by the Society,) on C.D., of the Tausig Transcriptions of Wagner's Music became available just prior to the party, attended to autograph copies sold. It is pleasing to report that all copies were quickly sold and that we are ordering more!

The highlight of the afternoon was, without doubt, the drawing of the Guessing Competition with prizes being two sets of two tickets for Tristan and Isolde (Opening Night) also a Christmas Cake and Champagne, a Calendar featuring German Castles and a C.D. of Wagner Orchestral Music. The winners were:-

Tickets	-	T. Hudson	-	Blacktown.
Tickets	-	G. Bower	-	Pymble.
Cake	-	B. Brady	-	Wollstonecraft.
Calendar	-	F. Keep	-	Wollongong.
C.D.	-	S. Kelly	-	Centennial Park.

BAYREUTH SCHOLARSHIP

The winner of this year's Bayreuth Scholarship is Lisa Gasteen, who sang the role of Elizabeth in Tannhäuser in Melbourne. The Society is pleased to pay her fare to Germany so that she may further her studies and gain experience in the performance of Wagner Operas. We wish her every success for the future.

DONATIONS RECEIVED DURING LAST QUARTER

The Society would like to thank the following members who have made donations during the previous quarter:-

Ms. Margaret Reid and the late Murray Smith.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome the following new members who have joined during the last quarter:-

Mr. R.P. Cordukes : Ms. M. Keen : Mr. D.M. Gray : Mrs. J.F. Griffen : Mr. C. Coote : Mr. K. Takahashi : Ms. Erika Conlon : Dr. Richard Mason : Mr. Camron Ward Dyer : Ms Moya Crane.

COSIMA COMMENTS ON TRISTAN AND ISOLDE

- contributed by Patricia Baillie of DA CAPO MUSIC.

All these excerpts are from Cosima Wagner's Diary. There is a great deal of critical literature on Tristan and Isolde : these excerpts are somewhat more personal.

January 24, 1869.

After lunch, in the children's presence, R. plays parts of the second act of Tristan. Whether I am becoming increasingly vulnerable or morbidly sensitive, I do not know, but there are certain powerful impressions which I can hardly bear any longer. I literally shudder at the power of genius which suddenly lays bare before us the unfathomable secrets of existence....

March 4.

Later R...reads me the 3rd and 4th acts of Antony and Cleopatra. Well, who would dare to say a single word about that? I am utterly shattered. R. finds something of his Tristan reflected in it - inasmuch as it shows a being utterly consumed by love : in Tristan, time renders it naive and pure, whereas here it appears in a ghastly, voluptuous setting, yet no less destructively.

June 29.

R. also said"...I shall write some plays for the theatre..." "And Parzival?" I asked. "That will be done in my 80th year....but no more music. With my ten scores I should think I have done enough. I am presumptuous enough to believe that, in regard to musical richness and invention, there is little that can be compared, as far as diligence and wealth of detail is concerned, with Tristan and Die Meistersinger.

July 4.

I weep..... and ask R. to play something from Tristan. Deep emotion. tears...relief.

August 4.

Today R. said that now, at the age of fifty, one knew what love was - everything prior to it had been mere amours. During the night I read Tristan and Isolde and R. who knew I had taken the book upstairs with me, played some passages from it below as I read it in bed.

August 7

Letter from the Italian Boito who writes that Tristan was a revelation to him, which reminds us that R. had intended his Tristan for Italian singers (though naturally not the present ignoramuses).

November 19.

Wretched night: worries about Lulu's health. R. also still not well. I suffer gladly. Yesterday evening R. played to me from Tristan, melting my whole soul. He became sad as we considered how musicians fail to take heed of such a work.

January 10, 1879.

"I am going to write a new work".R. exclaims to me. "It begins with the second act of Tristan and ends with Hans Sachs's wedding."

March 6.

After lunch Die Walküre.... in the evening as well. (Wotan's scene with Fricka and Brunnhilde).... In the evening he says: "You can understand that I felt the need, after these parts of the Nibelungen, to leave this element of dreadfulness, and to write Tristan and Isolde, which was, so to speak, just a love scene: indeed I thought of it as an Italian Opera, that is to say, to be sung by Italian singers....and in Rio de Janeiro.

April 9.

In the evening R. played a small passage from Tristan (A-flat major, second act) which so pierced my heart that I was quite unable to write a short note. "My heart bites me like the asp," I said to R. "Yes," he said, "the Symposium (Plato). I, too, thought today of Tristan and the Symposium. In Tristan it is also Eros who holds sway, and what in the one is philosophy is music in the other."

-cont.

December 29.

Family lunch: after that while R. takes his walk, the first act of Tristan and Isolde, played by Richter. In the evening R. reads us the words of it: but we wake up Fidi, and wander through the whole house, looking for a place to read the third act. It is cold downstairs, so we settle in the study, now given over to Professor Nietzsche. But R. finds it too absurd, and he decides to read the third act in a lowered voice. The whole makes a tremendous impression on me. (Fidi very keyed up, dancing, laughing etc.)

March 7, 1871.

Early in the morning R. comes to me, hugs and kisses me, and says I can never know how much he loves me.... I laugh, for I had really forgotten what happened yesterday. (R. had "rebuked her sharply" for not caring for her health.) "The ending of Tristan and Isolde - that tells you everything...that explains us to you." We vow never to part for a single day.

June 7, 1872.

R. : "Yes, one can only understand one's life when one is older : when I think what it was that impelled me to sketch Tristan, just at the time of your first visit with Hans to Zurich, while up till then I had been calmly completing the two acts of Siegfried, and when I now look back at the whole chain of events up to the production of Tristan in Munich"....

July 17

A walk with J. Rubenstein: R. questions him about his study of Schopenhauer... I listen devoutly to R.'s teachings.... In the evening Herr R. plays Tristan. All these musicians seem to find it difficult to get the tempo right....

August 30

R. had a very bad night....Fine letter from the King....He applies King Marke's words to the Nibelungen. ("this wonderful work, which my desire etc.").. and R. finds this extraordinarily witty.

September 3.

Visited my father during the morning in the pretty Hofgärtnerai.....then lunched with him and R. at one o'clock...we meet at his house again in the evening....the best of it was that my father played me "Am stillen Herd" and the "Liebestod".

October 12

My father writes...visitors come... Family lunch....my father is pleased with the children...and they behave quite well...In the evening music - my father plays Fugues by Bach, the "A-flat Major"...from Tristan and several of his own compositions.

July 20, 1873.

At our funeral R. says that the concluding message from Tristan and Isolde must be played.

March 31, 1877

For R. all-too-many London problems, which I actively share to the extent that I have to write the letters: Herr Unger sluggish, alarmed by having to learn Tristan! Problems with orchestra parts, nobody yet sure where to obtain them all. And Messrs. Hodge and Essex are getting nervous about the costs.

August 25, 1878.

Our wedding day! The children congratulate us nicely. Loldi gives us a water-colour.... and R. reflects at length on how things were, and how they might have been. "That time in Zurich (1858)" he says. "I was finished with my wife, your relationship with Hans was not yet formed, and you had no children: but I was as stupid as Tristan, and you were that silly goose Isolde."

October 11, 1878.

"You were Isolde", R. says. "You married Marke, with the difference that in this case Marke was the nephew - a curious relationship."

January 17, 1880

When I tell him, in the morning, that I cannot get Brangaene's theme in the first act out of my mind ("wo lebte der Mann"), and sing it to him, he says, "This work has now been published, yet nobody really - no musician - has recognised what kind of music it is." I observe that musicians are too limited in outlook for that, but in their place Tristan has won many fanatic admirers.

January 12, 1882.

R. comes to supper in an animated mood and assures us that he would not hesitate for a moment to sacrifice his works for the sake of the children...not for a single moment.

"Tristan for Isolde, Meistersinger for Eva, the Ring for Siegfried. That is life," he says.



Tristan

TAUSIG'S TRANSCRIPTIONS ON C.D.

A review by Jennifer King of the recent recording by Dennis Hennig of the "Paraphrases and Transcriptions on works of Richard Wagner by Carl Tausig". Jennifer is a music teacher, and a fine pianist with a deep interest in, and love of Wagner's music.



Isolde

As an historical curio these transcriptions and paraphrases of Wagner's works offer a good example of the 19th Century Salon style.

Carl Tausig was born in Warsaw in 1841 and lived until the age of 29, dying in 1871. He was a prodigy who was accepted at the age of 14 to study with Liszt. In 1853 he went to work with Wagner, who was suitably impressed by his skills.

As a performer, Tausig won much support for Wagner in Berlin and promoted the "New German School" of music. His most extensive arrangements were of the three paraphrases on Tristan und Isolde which were particularly admired by Liszt. Of some of the arrangements of the vocal score of Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Wagner complained that they were too difficult for general use! This becomes obvious when listening to Dennis Hennig's splendid performance. He has created in a masterly fashion the bravura of the 19th Century Salon style. He demonstrates great sensitivity of interpretation, showing a variety of playing styles, where transparency of lines are not lost in often dense textures. This is especially noticeable in his performances of the Love Scenes from Tristan and Walküre. His ability to maintain massive double forte passages over a long period, is continuously illustrated through most of the Transcriptions, especially Der Ritt der Walküren and the Kaisermarsch. His technical competence is mind-dazzling!

The works themselves are illuminating examples of the transcription writing styles of the late 19th century. At his best Carl Tausig successfully captures the lyricism, warmth and passion of Wagner, as is evident in the Liebesscene from Tristan and Siegmund's Liebesgesang from Walküre. Some of the works can only be described as "trite" - some as "thrash and bash"! However the piano itself, cannot recapture the contrasts of tone colour and texture which Wagner creates in his music. This is painfully obvious in Der Ritt der Walküren, (a difficult choice at any time for a piano transcription!). It really is not a successful arrangement, as the layers of ideas become fragmented and muddy, so that one is left with a distorted view of what the work is really like. However, as a concert piece of the past, it certainly reflects the images of swooning ladies and the cartoons of hammerheaded fingers and broken piano strings.

-cont.

The writing is certainly creditable to a pupil of Liszt, the full gamut of the piano is used, 19th century flamboyancy is captured.

The recording is certainly worth adding to your collection, if only as an example of works which promoted Wagner's music in the way most people heard it in his own age. Remember he did not have the benefit of the sophisticated recording techniques of to-day.



- King Mark

BAYREUTH NEWS

-from the Society of the Friends of Bayreuth.

Here are some news items concerning the Bayreuth Festival, taken from the Annual Report, 1989.

During the June 1989 rehearsal period at the Festspielhaus, Wolfgang Wagner's production of Tannhäuser was recorded for television. The project was under the direction of well-known British producer, Brian Large.

In 1990 there will be a new production of The Flying Dutchman under the control of Giuseppe Sinopoli (conductor), Dieter Dorn (producer) and Jurgen Rose (sets and costumes). The cast is as follows:- Bernd Weikl (Dutchman), Reiner Goldberg (Erik), Hans Sotin (Daland) and Elizabeth Connell (Senta).

Tannhäuser will be withdrawn from the program, whether permanently or temporarily remains to be seen. Lohengrin will remain and it is intended to preserve this work on a television recording.

The Ring Cycle will of course continue in the program in the coming years. At the moment discussion is under way about making a television recording of this Ring during 1991 and 1992. A new Tristan and Isolde is planned for 1993, in which Patrice Chereau (producer) will work with Daniel Barenboim (conductor), the latter staying with the current Ring until 1992. No cast was announced, although it is expected the singers will be quite worthy of the great opera.

The next Ring Cycle will appear in 1994, under the direction of Wolfgang Wagner himself. He explained that with to-day's management conditions, one has to engage the singers at least three to four years in advance - without knowing if they will still be able to sing! Herr Wagner emphasised that although there are enough young singers with talent and potential many fall by the wayside because they sing the big roles too early in their career. He is therefore, continually trying to prepare these young and gifted singers gradually and carefully, so that they may safely progress on to big roles at a later date.

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 (Annual Subscription).
- () \$10.00 Pensioner/ Under 25 (Annual Subscription).

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL IS DUE ANNUALLY ON APRIL 1st.

Mr/Mrs/Miss.....
 First Name/Names Surname (Block Letters).
 Membership Number.....
 Address.....
 Post Code.....
 Telephone.....(Day).....(Evening)
 If under 25 please include birth date.....
 If Pensioner please quote number.....
 I/We enclose cheque/money order, payable to The Wagner Society.
 Signature..... Date..... Amount

DONATIONS TO THE WAGNER SOCIETY

Date

The Secretary,
The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust,
P.O.Box 137,
King's Cross N.S.W. 2011

Dear Sir,

Please find enclosed cheque or

- CHARGE MY
 BANKCARD No.
 MASTERCARD No.
 DINERS CLUB No.
 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 if making your donation by cheque to make it payable to the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, but post it to the Wagner Society's official address for processing before we pass it on to the A.E.T.T. We can only accept payment by cheque or credit card and this donation must be separated from any other payment included at the same time. These are Taxation rules and are beyond our control. If you have any doubts about the procedures please contact a committee member. Thank You.

BAYREUTH REVIEW

BAYREUTH SHOULD BE THE THEATRE OF HOPE!

(Wagner expert Dieter Borchmeyer sees conceptual errors in Kupfer's Ring Cycle. Has the work lost its value?)

Considering that so much of importance has been written about the "Ring" recently, I must admit that I am somewhat disappointed to see that some fundamental conceptual errors were committed which really were not necessary. Here are some examples:-

The Rhinemaidens are corrupt from the outset.....this is not what Wagner had in mind. If the world is shown to be rotten right from the start, it cannot improve ever so the work loses its value as an expression of hope. To him it is a misunderstanding to depict the Rhinemaidens as prostitutes. In reality they are creatures of nature, harmless and somewhat malicious, just as creatures of nature tend to be.

A second major error is a detail which was previously found in the Patrice Chereau production..... Wotan manipulates the Woodbird. Chereau had Wotan hang him up in a cage in the woods. Kupfer has him fly up from Wotan's Spear (technically this detail is unfortunately very disruptive). Thus the paradoxical situation - what Wotan originally wanted happens to him by his renouncing it and now cannot occur. When the God turns pessimist, indeed nihilist - turning his back on the race of the Walsungs - he says that now it is all over. In this situation, when he isn't looking for a free human any more, Siegfried appears. Therefore not even the Woodbird is a creature which is controlled by Wotan. This is very clear from the text. There is proof for it.

For Borchmeyer, Kupfer's Ring has a fundamental result : Nature must be represented as a power which counteracts the corruption of civilisation. What is the point of theatre if theatre does not represent hope any more? In his production Harry Kupfer - no matter what he says that he wants to show - has expressed the view that nothing can ever change with mankind.....the world is so structurally messed up that nothing will ever improve. The children with the torches (in the final scene of Götterdämmerung) are going into a meaningless future. Wagner's theatre conveys hope which is what this Ring has betrayed. I find this very depressing. Bayreuth should be the theatre of hope.

A review by Marieluise Mueller
in the Nordbayerischer Kurier.

-Translated by Ute Hoffman

* * * * *
*
* Sadly our Society has lost another of *
* our members. Trevor O'Brien passed *
* away in November. We would like to *
* extend our sincere condolences to *
* his family and friends. Trevor was *
* a very keen Wagnerite who supported *
* this Society at all times. *
* *
* * * * *

ANNUAL DINNER ATTENDANCE FORM.

I would like to make reservations at \$40.00 each for the Annual Dinner on 25th May, 1990 at 7.30 p.m. at Menzies Hotel.

I have enclosed 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.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS FRIDAY, 4TH MAY, 1990.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

I/We will be attending the Annual General Meeting on 20th May, and would like the following motion to be placed on the Agenda for discussion under General Business.

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

Name.....Member Number.....

NOMINATIONS.

THE SECRETARY,
THE WAGNER SOCIETY,
141 DOWLING STREET,
WOOLLOOMOOLOO.2011.

Dear Madam,

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 thisDay of.....1990.

Signed.....Signed.....
Proposer Second

Signed.....
Proposed Member.

PROXY.

The Secretary,
The Wagner Society.

Dear Madam.

I cannot attend the 10th Annual meeting, but give my proxy vote towho is a current financial member of the Society.

Signed.....
Address.....

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 Signature..... Date..... Amount

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 DINERS CLUB No.
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EXPIRY DATE

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

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THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN N.S.W. INC.

.....

Signature Please print Name

and Address Post Code.....

OR

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Signature Title

PLEASE PRINT NAME AND ADDRESS OF COMPANY

..... Post Code

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