

# The Wagner Society

IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

Registered Office: 141 Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo 2011



## Newsletter

No. 51, June, 1993

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**PATRON:** Miss RITA HUNTER, C.B.E.  
**HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS:** Miss LEONIE RYSANEK  
Professor MICHAEL EWANS  
Mr RICHARD KING  
Mr REG MALONEY

## COMING EVENTS

Sunday, June 20th	<i>Das Rheingold</i> video The Goethe Institute	1.00pm
Sunday, July 18th	<i>Die Walküre</i> video The Goethe Institute	1.00pm
Sunday, August 15th	<i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> The Goethe Institute	1.00pm

## CONTENTS

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT - 1992/3	3
ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS	5
NEW MEMBERS	5
REPORT ON THE TWELFTH ANNUAL DINNER - 21ST MAY	5
THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC	
REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31/3/1993	6
THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.	
BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 31, 1993	8
NOTE	9
MUSICAL GLASSES	
LETTERS	
THE NEW GROVE OPERA DICTIONARY	11
THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	11
JOSEF GREINDL	12
DA CAPO MUSIC	13
LONDON'S VIEW OF OUR <i>TRISTAN</i>	15
NEXT YEAR IN WIEN	15
THE RAVENS REPORTING	16

## COMMITTEE

President	Olive Coonan	387.6403
Vice President	Paul Lehmann	552.1424
	Sue Kelly	
Membership	Clare Hennessy	747.5664
Treasurers	Janet Wayland	332.3926
	Bill Watson	
Secretary	Annie Marshall	942.94.2992
	Clare Hennessy	
Catering	Margaret Budge	521.6097
Newsletter	Janet Wayland	332.3926
Member	Ramon Josey	
Public Officer	Richard King	358.1919

## THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT - 1992/3

Dear Fellow Members,

I would like to welcome and say thank you to all of you who are present here today, still showing your loyalty and love of Wagner at our 13th Annual Meeting.

During this twelve months past we have not had an easy life due to Goethe refurbishing and seminars being unable to be held here but hopefully this is in the past and we can look forward to a wonderful, fruitful and financial twelve months.

At our Annual Dinner in May we had Robert Allman and his wife as our guests of honour. He kept us all very entertained with excerpts of his very busy operatic life and the Menzies Hotel lived up to its reputation.

We have had two very interesting talks on our Sunday afternoon get-togethers: one in June by Brian Fitzgerald, who is responsible for the Australian Opera's surtitles - his talk centred on *The Ring* up to the present day; this was followed by Professor John Hughes in February of this year who gave us his impressions of the Kupfer *Ring* together with illustrated slides. This was a very exciting way to start our present year.

My thanks again to Richard King, our Public Officer, for his help and also giving us the Print Room for our reception for Sir Donald McIntyre. I think an enjoyable afternoon was had by all present.

We had a couple of CD afternoons which were not very well attended so this year we are going to have Videos only to see if attendances improve, as we depend on these to help raise finances.

In September Carole Ann Petherick gave us a recital at Clifford Grant's Gallery in Glebe because the Goethe no longer has a piano. It is a lovely venue but unfortunately not large enough to make it a financial success.

The Society was approached by Mark Ellis of the Friends of the Australian Opera to have a joint seminar on *Tristan und Isolde* which we agreed to. It was a wonderfully successful venture socially and financially and we hope to have many more in the future.

In October we were informed by The Opera Foundation that Stephen Bennett was unable to take up his Bayreuth Scholarship due to ill health. In the circumstances, he returned his air fare to the Society. This is completely determined by the Opera Foundation and the Society does not have any choice in this matter.

Our Christmas Party was also a great success with my thanks going to Margaret Budge and Annie Marshall for their catering par excellence. Barbara Brady, one of our members, also must be thanked for her lovely Christmas cake which she made for one of our raffle prizes. Margaret Budge copes, broken fingers and all, and my thanks again go to all of them for their continued efforts in making our afternoon teas so enjoyable.

Arthur Carter must also be thanked for his tireless efforts in producing our excellent programs on 2MBS every month and also making possible our trip to Melbourne to hear *Lohengrin* in November.

During this year we had two more deaths of our esteemed members. Betty Berriman was a foundation member and we have given a donation to Narrabri High School to perpetuate her memory. Betty was Headmistress of that school for many years. Dennis Hennig also passed away after a long illness but fortunately we have his wonderful compact discs to hear and remember him by.

This year we again received 15 tickets for Bayreuth. Everyone who applied to the Society for same were eventually accommodated.

The tax exemption for our Society's donations is at present in Canberra's hands and we should have been granted same in the next few months. A notice will be inserted in the Newsletter with particulars when we know more and then your donations will be tax deductible.

I attended, as President, an Opera Foundation Dinner which was held in Parliament House in February. This was held to celebrate the Opera Foundation donating their first \$1,000,000 to help singers further their careers here and overseas. This was a very prestigious event where the Wagner Society was mentioned on numerous occasions for their continuing support.

I now come to the sad news. Reg Maloney has decided to retire as our Honorary Auditor. The Committee unanimously granted him Life Membership of the Society for all his efforts on our behalf. Reg was Member No. 1 so you can see how long he has helped us function.

My thanks now go to Clare Hennessy, our membership secretary, for lending the Video which was shown at the Christmas Party and also for keeping our members in a financial state.

I wish to thank the following mentioned as I could not carry out my duties as President without the unstinting help and co-operation of my Committee members. These wonderful people are Paul Lehmann, Sue Kelly, Arthur Carter and Bill Watson. My special thanks to Janet Wayland, the Treasurer, for her careful keeping of the Society's funds. I have already thanked Margaret and Annie, who has to cope with me at meetings as Minutes Secretary.

To finish my long ramblings, I believe it is an accurate assessment of the facts to say that over the past few years there has been an upsurge of interest and consequently of appreciation in the music drama of Richard Wagner in this country. I suggest that a significant factor in this matter is the achievement of this Society as illustrated in my report today.

May we hope and pray for a continuation of this enthusiasm in the years to come.

Thank you for listening.

Olive Coonan  
President

## ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

As the executive of the Wagner Society in NSW Inc. was proposed and seconded to their positions on the Committee unopposed, they were automatically designated to those positions at the Annual General Meeting. This left three ordinary Committee members to be elected from four nominations, so a ballot took place at which Raymond Josey, Margaret Budge and Bill Watson were successful. Reg Maloney was returning officer, assisted by scrutineers Judy Ferfaglia and Sue Gillies.

## NEW MEMBERS

Dr Rupert Clive Edwards, Clive & Elizabeth Evatt, Adam Owens, Justice Jane Mathews, Hugh Wayland, Betsy Ann Conti, Thomas William Field, Donald Melley, Martin Richter, Robert Michael Trupp.

## REPORT ON THE TWELFTH ANNUAL DINNER - 21ST MAY

There is much to be said for the familiar, the tried and true, and The Holiday Inn (Menzies Hotel) is becoming our familiar haunt when we gather to celebrate the Master's birthday.

To help us celebrate Richard Wagner's 180th Anniversary our Guest of Honour was John Pringle, one of the best-known and best-loved singers in Australian opera. Though he claims not to be a Wagnerian singer, John's fresh interpretation of Beckmesser will be remembered for many a year and he delighted everyone with his repertoire of anecdotes about the unplanned little dramas that conductors and singers cope with to keep the show going. The Guest of Honour's duty of drawing the Raffle was happily performed towards the end of the most enjoyable evening.

1st Prize	2 tickets to <i>Die Meistersinger</i>	Patricia Baillie
2nd Prize	Bust of Wagner	Sue Gillies
3rd Prize	CD Tausig/Wagner - Dennis Hennig	Margaret Whitlam
4th Prize	CD Complete Piano works of Wagner (Stephan Moller)	Mrs C Jackaman

In spite of the fact that the raffle tickets were mailed without cost or prize information, we managed to take \$522.00. Thank you everyone for your generosity.

**THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC**  
**REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDING**  
**31/3/1993**

1992	CURRENT ACTIVITIES			1993
4771.00	Revenue - Membership			5095.00
	Less Administration costs			
1348.49	Newsletter - Printing/Distribution		1460.22	
454.82	Stationery/Postage/Telephone etc		722.90	
26.41	Bank Fees		35.77	
275.00	Depreciation of fixed assets		149.00	
250.00	Subscriptions		250.00	
359.50	Insurance		384.50	
20.00	Statutory and other fees		20.00	3022.39
2036.78		Surplus/(deficiency)		2072.61
	Revenue: Other			
8.00	Sale of books, CDs, Journals etc		125.00	
2691.60	Lectures and Functions		3727.00	
2744.60	Theatre Tickets		3978.00	
3000.00	Annual Dinner May 1992		2695.00	
825.00	Annual Competition May 1992		289.00	
7.05	Bank Interest		15.16	10829.16
9316.25				
	Less Expenses			

48.00	Books, CDs, Journals etc		50.00	
2061.44	Lectures and Functions		3017.30	
2084.60	Theatre Tickets		2562.00	
3340.25	Annual Dinner May 1992		3057.20	
96.00	Annual Competition May 1992		24.00	
118.80	Miscellaneous		119.25	8829.75
7749.09				
1567.16		Surplus/(Deficiency)		1999.04
3603.94	TOTAL CURRENT ACTIVITIES:	Surplus/(Deficiency)		4072.02
	EXTRAORDINARY ACTIVITIES			
	Revenue			
105.00	Donations		895.00	
1279.71	Interest on Investment	(Net of statutory fees)	748.69	1643.69
1384.71	Less Payments			
3487.00	Sponsorship (see note)		0.00	
0.00	Donations		250.00	250.00
2102.29	TOTAL EXTRAORDINARY ACTIVITIES	Surplus/(Deficiency)		1393.69
1501.65	TOTAL	SURPLUS/ (DEFICIENCY) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31/3/93		5465.71

NB: Sponsorship payment of \$2295 was not used and therefore returned to the Society

**THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.  
BALANCE SHEET AS AT MARCH 31, 1993**

1992	CURRENT ASSETS			1993
300.00	Pre-payments - Annual Dinner May 1993			300.00
0.00	Cash at Bank			1783.54
17040.85	Investment			15944.54
0.00	Debtors (re Subledger)			2450.00
	Stock			
175.00	4 books Cosima & Wagner @ \$25 ea		100.00	
506.65	2 Libretti & music score		506.65	
30.00	1 Elektra video tape		30.00	
540.00	30 copies Wagner in Australia @ \$15 each		450.00	
24.00	14 CDs Hennig Recital @ \$25 each		350.00	
6956.00	46 items Lohengrin set - designs/frames		6956.00	8392.65
	Fixed Assets			
	Filing Cabinet	185.00		
	Less depreciation	185.00	0.00	
	Set of speakers	990.00		
	Less depreciation	990.00	0.00	
	Typewriter	695.00		
	Less depreciation	695.00	0.00	
	Furniture	832.00		
	Less depreciation	291.00	541.00	
	Urn	100.00		



	Less depreciation	80.00	20.00	
	Answerphone	230.00		
864.00	Less depreciation	76.00	154.00	715.00
26436.50	total assets			29585.73
	<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
252.68	Bank Overdraft			0.00
68.80	Accruals			0.00
1900.00	Prepaid Membership (1993/94)			250.00
670.00	Prepaid Annual Dinner (May 1993)			0.00
0.00	Prepaid Seminar (Salome, April 1993)			325.00
2891.48	<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>			575.00
	<b>TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS - 31/3/93</b>			29010.73
	Accumulated Funds Analysis			
	Amount at 31/3/92	23545.02		
	Surplus for year 92/93	5465.71		
		29010.73		

J Wayland  
Hon Treasurer

Auditor's Report: I have examined the books and vouchers relating to the Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc., and hereby certify that the above Balance Sheet and the attached Statement of Revenue and Expenditure represent an accurate account of the financial affairs of the Society.

R Maloney  
Hon Auditor

#### NOTE

As from 1st June, entrance to the monthly functions will be \$5 to members and \$10 to non members with no concessions. Please bring your membership card to all Society functions.

## MUSICAL GLASSES

Sir..... The game of finding the right drink for the music is unlikely to be original, but some reader will know and many, I am sure, will have decided views on the subject. So far I have settled on Burgundy for Handel, Coca-Cola for the Beatles, Beer for Wagner (*pace* Bernard Levin), and, of course, Champagne for Mozart; gin perhaps for Sibelius - but what for Beethoven? And to whom shall we listen with the brandy? (from THE TIMES, London)

*Members are invited to send in suggestions for the next issue of the Newsletter (by 15th August). The best suggestions in the view of the Editors will be printed and a prize will be awarded to the winner.*

## LETTERS

**from Len Dobbs:** In the early 1950s the SYDNEY MORNING HERALD published a paragraph along these lines:

Little comment has been noted following the discovery of a later opera in Wagner's *Ring* Cycle, continuing the lives of those who survived *Götterdämmerung*.

About 1955 I wrote a letter to Ernest Newman requesting more information but had no reply. Have any of our members further knowledge of this report?

**From James A McGlade:** In an article in the London Book News December 1992, entitled *Importance of Being Unfaithful to Wagner*, Edward Said takes up the question of the ban on Wagner's music in Israel.

"Because of his anti-semitic ideology," writes Paul Lawrence Rose, current Heclit professor at Haifa University, "Wagner should not be played in Israel. It contains a distillate of his personality, above all his violent hatreds, and was one of the most potent elements in creating the Nazi mentality that made such an enormity thinkable and performable. That he cast the figure of the Jew in *The Flying Dutchman*, in *Kundry (Parsifal)*, in *Beckmesser (Meistersinger)* and *Mime (Siegfried)* is certainly the case. Listening to his music there is a danger of forgetting the Holocaust." Serious stuff.

"There is a grave contradiction here", responds writer Said. "If it is true that Wagner's music is a distillation of his hatreds, listening to it, far from dissolving memory, should actually remind of what those hatreds were and led to. On this logic a case could be made for not performing Wagner in France or warning husbands not to listen. But what if in fact there is no such specific content of hatred, violence, or cruelty in the music; then Rose's claims are ludicrous."

Are those Jewish musicians who have conducted, sang, played, directed or designed the Wagner operas from Hermann Levi to Daniel Barenboim, Levine and Solti, by implication dupes or scoundrels? To liberate Wagner from anti-semitism in his operas is relatively simple since

Beckmesser, the Dutchman and Kundry are not essentially Jewish characters at all. The Jewish arts can be played without the offensively caricatural traits that were once heaped on them.

Witness the performances in Sydney and Melbourne. Rather than the neurotic black-coated Shylock figure, Beckmesser who barked more than he sang has been replaced with a vulnerable muddled man, uncertain in his learning and singing. There is no offence given; nor is there any valid reason for banning Wagner in Israel.

## THE NEW GROVE OPERA DICTIONARY

*by Michael Kennedy in the Telegraph, London, January 1993.*

A four volume opera dictionary running to 5,424pp, over 6 million words and 12,000 articles by 1300 contributors is virtually unreviewable.

Articles on major composers are by different writers - Mozart by Julian Rushton, Haydn by Peter Brunscombe, Rossini by Richard Osborne, Gluck by several hands, Wagner (comprehensively) by Barry Millington, Handel by Anthony Hicks. Not only composers but long entries on libretti, costumes, design, opera companies and production are covered. Prompters are not forgotten. Every dictionary begins to go out of date the day it is published but this edition is 12 years more up to date than Grove 6 (1980) and largely avoids the charge of being a rehash of part of its parent. \$550.00

*For an easy and quick reference to keep at the bedside, the Oxford Dictionary of Opera, editor John Warrack and Ewan West, at \$25.00, would be a concise and valuable alternative.*

## THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's Annual General meeting was extremely well-attended by members who showed an active interest in the proceedings. Under the new model rules of incorporation the executive members once nominated unopposed automatically retained those positions and the remaining three nominations were balloted (see note page 5).

At the conclusion of business Michael Tesoriero of 2MBS showed us an early film (1913) of Wagner's life. For its time the cinematography was imaginative, using the tricks of the trade with subtlety. Cosima's role in Wagner's life was portrayed with great tact and Wagner's shoes were filled with an amazing likeness by Herr Doctor Becce to the astonishment of us all.

For a life so full of incident and drama as Wagner's, this short film captured most of the significant events, the high as well as the low: his love of animals, his money problems, his encounters with Ludwig, a hint of his liaison with Mathilde Wesendonk.

It would easily bear a second viewing at a later date.

**PARSIFAL ON RECORD:  
A DISCOGRAPHY OF COMPLETE RECORDINGS, SELECTIONS, AND EXCERPTS OF  
WAGNER'S MUSIC DRAMA.**

Compiled by Jonathan Brown. 168pp. ISBN 0-313-28541-1. Hardback Pounds sterling \$35.50.

From Greenwood Publishing Group, 3 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8LU.

The first comprehensive discography on one of Wagner's music dramas, this volume lists all complete performance recordings, all major selections recorded, and hundreds of individually-recorded excerpts, both vocal, and instrumental, from the earliest acoustic recordings to recent laser discs. Many excerpts have never appeared in discographies or other works on Wagner, and pirate recordings have been identified. Precise information is given as to date and place of recording and record numbers as well as performers choruses, orchestras, and conductors. Musical incipits introduce each excerpt. The index provides access to more than 230 singers of the principal roles and over 130 conductors. A lengthy introduction provides a lively and provocative commentary on the recordings.

Written in Australia where *Parsifal* has never been fully staged, the discography was researched in major libraries and archives of Europe and the United States as well as old record shops in New York, London, Paris and Sydney. The result is an important resource for the discographer and record collector, the student of opera and vocal art, and all lovers of Wagner in performance.

Jonathan Brown is an Australian government lawyer and opera lover, currently living in Paris. His other publications have been in his professional specialty, international law.

## JOSEF GREINDL

*Josef Greindl is dead, a Wagnerian Bass, 80*

Josef Greindl, German bass best known for his performances of Wagnerian roles, died on April 16 in Vienna, aged 80, of heart failure.

Mr Greindl's performances as Hunding, Hagen and Fafner in Wagner's Ring cycle and as Pogner in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* were well known to record collectors through his recordings with Karl Böhm, Clemens Krauss and Wilhelm Fürtwangler. He also appeared at the Metropolitan Opera as Heinrich in *Lohengrin* in 1952 and as Pogner the following year.

Born in Munich on December 23, 1912, Mr Greindl made his professional debut there in 1936 as Hunding at the Krefeld Stadttheater. He joined the Düsseldorf Stadttheater in 1938, moved to the Berlin staatsoper in 1942 and went to the Stadtische Oper in 1949. He first appeared at Bayreuth in 1943 as Pogner in *Meistersinger* and was a fixture at the festival during the 1950s and '60s. He also sang regularly at the Vienna State Opera from 1956 into the early 1970s and performed throughout Europe as a recitalist and oratorio soloist.

Among his other major roles were Sarastro in Mozart's *Zauberflöte*, and Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*. He portrayed Moses in the German premiere of Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* in 1959 and he created roles in two Carl Orff works: *Antigonae* in Salzburg in 1949 and *De Temporum Fine Comoedia* in Vienna in 1973.

NEW YORK TIMES 30th April 1993.

## DA CAPO MUSIC 112A GLEBE POINT ROAD GLEBE 2037

*March 1993. A list of some of the books about Wagner currently on the shelf.*

- 1 CONRAD, Peter. *Romantic Opera and Literary Form*. 1977. 183pp. Takes issue with Wagner, drawing on unusual sources. \$20.
- 2 BARTH, Herbert (ed). *Bayreuther Dramaturgie: Der Ring des Nibelungen*. 1980. 445pp. Collection of articles. In German. \$35.
- 3 DEATHRIDGE, GECK, VOSS. *Wagner Werk - Verzeichnis (WWV). Verzeichnis der musikalischen Werke Richard Wagners und ihrer Quellen*. Schott. 607pp. New. In German. \$240.
- 4 DIGAETANI, John Louis. *Richard Wagner and the Modern British Novel*. 1978. 179pp. \$20.  
DIGAETANI, John Louis (ed). *Penetrating Wagner's Ring*. 381pp. \$33.
- 6 DRUSCHE, Esther. *Richard Wagner*. 1983. 192pp. 97pp. of col & B&W photos.
- 7 FEHR, Max. *Richard Wagners Schweizer Zeit*. 2 vols. Erster Band (1849-55) and Zweiter Band (1855 bis 1872). Aarau. 1934 & 1953. viii. 414. 515pp. 52 plates; a few text illustrations. Appendices of letters and documents. In German. \$110.
- 8 FISCHER-DIESKAU, Dietrich. *Wagner and Nietzsche*. 1976. 232pp. Fine. A dual biography tracing the relationship between the two men. \$40.
- 9 GOLDMAN, A and SPRINCHORN, E. Selected and Intro by. *Wagner on Music and Drama: from Richard Wagner's Prose Works*. Original. 1970. edition. 447pp. \$55.
- 10 GOLLANCZ, Victor. *The Ring at Bayreuth: and some Thoughts on Operatic Production*. 1966. 121pp. B&W illus. \$22.
- 11 HERZFELD, Friedrich. *Minna Planer und ihre Ehe mit Richard Wagner*. 1938. 369pp. Some b&w plates; some plates have been removed. In German. \$12.
- 12 KAPP, Julius. *The Loves of Richard Wagner*. 1951. 280pp. 12 plates. Quotes from many letters, including the Burrell collection. \$20.

- 13 LAVIGNAC, Albert. *The Music Dramas of Richard Wagner and his Festival Theatre in Bayreuth 1898*. 515pp. Trans. Singelton. Text illus. & music exs. Hinges weak, front few pages loose. \$60.
- 14 LIPPERT, Woldemar. *Wagner in Exile: 1849-62*. With hitherto unpublished letters and documents and sixteen illustrations. Translated by Paul England. 1930. 217pp. \$30.
- 15 LORENZ, Alfred. *Der Musikalische Aufbau von Richard Wagners "Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg"*. Band III von "Das Geheimnis der Form bei Richard Wagner". Berlin. 1931. 195pp. \$25.
- 16 MOROLD, Max. *Wagner's Kampf und Sieg: Dargestellt in seinen Beziehungen zu Wien*. In two volumes. 1930. 395; 278pp. B&W illustrations. In German. \$30.
- 17 PFOHL, Ferdinand. *Richard Wagner: Sein Leben und Schaffen*. Berlin, 1910. viii, 398pp. 16 plates, 4 facsimiles. In German. \$30.
- 18 PORGES, Heinrich. *Wagner, Rehearsing the Ring*. 1983. 145pp. eye-witness account of rehearsals of the 1st Bayreuth Festival. \$28.
- 19 RICHARDSON, Joanna. *Judith Gautier; a Biography*. 1986. xix, 312pp. New PB. \$20.
- 20 SCHUH, Willi (ed). *Die Briefe Richard Wagners an Judith Gautier*. c.1936. 197pp. of which half are an intro on the friendship between W & JB. 8 b&w illustrations. In German. \$45.
- 21 SOKOLOFF, Alice. *Cosima Wagner: Aussergewöhnliche Tochter von Franz Liszt*. 1969. 301pp. B&w illustrations. \$25.
- 22 WAGNER. *Mein Leben*. 2 volumes. Munchen, First commercial edition. 1911. 886pp. in total. Large 8vo. Decorated gilt covers. gilt edges. In German. \$180.
- 23 WAGNER. BURK, John N. (ed). *Richard Wagner Briefe 1835 - 1865; die Sammlung Burrell*. 1953. 826pp. 12 b&w illustrations. Extensive notes by Burk. In German. \$100.
- 24 WAGNER. GREGOR-DELLIN, Martin (ed). *Mein Leben*. Volumes I & 2. 1969. 834pp. Index, facsimiles, notes. In German. the two volumes. \$45.
- 25 WAGNER. LENROW (ed). *The Letters of Richard Wagner to Anton Pusinelli*. 1932. 293pp. Rare book. 1st edition. \$120.
- 26 WAGNER. RICHTER, Hans. *Briefe an Hans Richter. Herausgegeben von Ludwigh Karpath*. Wien. 1924. xviii. 177p. In German. \$45.
- 27 WAGNER. RITTER, Julie. *Briefe an Frau Julie Ritter*. ed. Siegmund von Hausegger. Munchen. 1920. 160pp. Frontis; 1 facsimile. Piece cut from half-title page, o/w good. In German. \$35.
- 28 WESENDONK. KAPP, Dr Julius (ed). *Richard Wagner an Mathilde und Otto Wesendonk; Tagebuchblätter und Briefe*. 1915. 464pp. 6 plates; 3 facsimiles. In German. \$25.

ZELINSKY, Hartmut. *Richard Wagner: Ein deutsches Thema 1876-1976. Eine Dokumentation zur Wirkungsgeschichte Richard Wagners.* 1976. 292pp. 4to Illustrations, facsimiles, drawings, etc. In b&w. \$50.

## LONDON'S VIEW OF OUR *TRISTAN*

Michael Billington, Drama Critic for The Guardian, London, was in Australia recently for the world premiere of Parts 1 and 2 of *Angels in America*. He also caught the AO's production of *Tristan und Isolde* and was equally impressed. His review appeared in late March in Britain.

Strangely, the night after *Angels in America* I was confronted by another epic of love and death that ends on a triumphal note: *Tristan und Isolde* given an exhilarating production by Neil Armfield (arguably Australia's best director) in the Concert Hall of the Sydney Opera House. As Australia's first fully staged *Tristan* in over half a century, it measured up to the grandeur of the work.

I was struck by many things. The ingenuity of Brian Thomson's set, which turned the Concert Hall's problems into an asset: all three acts were staged on a raked, perspex platform surrounded by ruched silk curtains and poised over a shallow pool of shimmering water. There was also a tangible sense of eroticism between Marilyn Richardson's skittishly sexy, flame-haired Isolde and Horst Hoffmann's urgently yearning Tristan (fine singing too from Malcolm Donnelly's Kurwenal). But what hit me most, apart from the orchestral playing under Carlo Felice Cillario's baton, was Armfield's realisation of Wagner's ecstasy: the idea that transcendental passion finally triumphs over time and fate. Like Kushner's epic, it emerged as an optimistic work.

## NEXT YEAR IN WIEN

Opera lovers on tour expecting to catch some Wagner in Vienna during that city's 1993/4 season will need to time their visit carefully. *Der fliegende Holländer* receives a new production next year - March 24, 29, April 2, 5, May 26 and 30. Gabrielle Benackova as Senta is opposite the Dutchman of Jaako Rykanen.

The Staatsoper's *Parsifal* can be seen March 31, April 3 & 10, with what is today's outstanding cast - Waltraud Meier, Poul Elming, Kurt Moll & Franz Gründheber. Maestro Schirmer conducts.

*The Ring* is to be staged twice in Vienna's new season - September 5, 8, 11 & 19 - with Robert Hale, Hildegard Behrens, Poul Elming, Kurt Rydl, Heinz Zednik, Waltraud Meier, Wolfgang Schmidt, Runnicles conducting. Then in June 1994 Christoph von Dohnannyi is in charge as Gabrielle Schnaut portrays Brünnhilde opposite Siegfried Jerusalem (who also sings the role of Loge). James Morris sings Wotan. Others include Waltraud Meier, Poul Elming, Matti Salminen, Jane Eaglen & Marjan Lipovsek. June 5, 12, 18 & 26 (1994).

If that *Ring* looks too taxing, the Volksoper will stage (June 1st 1994) *Wagners Ring an einem Abend*, with their ensemble conducted by Märzendorfer. Should be entertaining and not very time-consuming!

Arthur Carter

## THE RAVENS REPORTING

*Here we offer advance short items/performance news of interest to Wagner lovers.*

- Vienna** Staatsoper - the first cycle of their new *Ring* June 11, 14, 17, 20. The 1993-94 season contains two more cycles - Sept 5, 8, 12, 19 and, in 1994, June 5, 12, 15, 26.
- Paris** Chatelet - a new production of the *Ring* cycle will appear in 1994. Cycle dates are Oct 31, Nov 1, 4, 6 and Nov 8, 9, 11, 13.
- Madrid** Teatro De La Zarzuela - *Der fliegende Holländer* June 20, 23, 25, 28, 30. Featuring Mechthild Gessendorf, Barbara Bornemann, Manuel Cid, Simon Estes, Manfred Schenk and conductor Rosa Marba.
- Bayreuth** *Tristan und Isolde* - new production for this year with Siegfried Jerusalem and Waltraud Meier taking the title roles. The conductor is Daniel Barenboim, producer Heiner Muller and directors Erich Wonder and Yohji Tamamoto. July 25, 31, Aug 6, 12, 17, 28.
- Bayreuth** First details of the 1994 *Ring*. Premier cycle July 26, 27, 29, 30; second cycle Aug 11, 12, 14, 16; third cycle Aug 22, 23, 25, 27. James Levine is to conduct with Alfred Kirchner in charge of staging. The cast includes John Tomlinson (Wotan), Deborah Polaski (Brünnhilde) and Wolfgang Schmidt (Siegfried).
- The Met** We hear that Franco Zeffirelli is scheduled to produce *Tristan und Isolde* in 1994 - his first Wagnerian staging.
- Gwyneth Jones** The enduring Wagnerian soprano of our time has just appeared in Tokyo (as Brünnhilde) and returns there to sing *Isolde* (Sep 24, 29, Oct 6) and *Ortrud* (Oct 2 and 4).

An all star *Hölländer* is about to be issued on DG with Giuseppe Sinopoli conducting: Cheryl Studer, Bernd Weikl, Placido Domingo (Erik), Hans Sotin, Peter Seiffert (Steersman) and Ute Priew (Mary).

Christoph Von Dohnanyi's *Ring* cycle recording for Decca has begun with *Die Walküre*. The work has been recorded with Gabrielle Schnaut as Brünnhilde, Robert Hale as Wotan, Poul Elming as Segment and Alessandra Marc as Sieglinde. *Das Rheingold* is scheduled for recording this year.