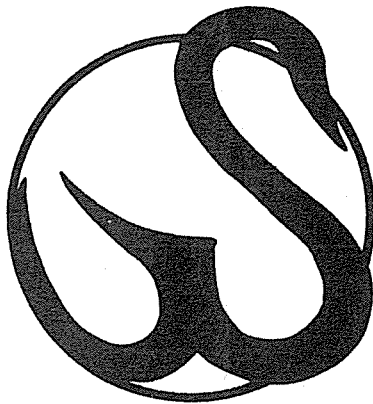


The Wagner Society

IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

Registered Office: 4/22 Read Street, Waverley, 2024



Newsletter

No. 63 JUNE 1996

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PATRON: SIR CHARLES MACKERRAS
HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS: Miss RITA HUNTER, CBE
Miss LEONIE RYSANEK
Prof MICHAEL EWANS
Mr RICHARD KING
Mr REG MALONEY

COMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
16 June	<i>Tristan und Isolde</i> . Historic Compact Disk, Kirsten Flagstad, Lauritz Melchior. Viewing preceded by introduction to be given by Mr Zoltan Szabo.	Goethe Institut 12.30 pm (<i>note time change from last Newsletter</i>)
13 July	Benefit Concert by Sydney Symphony Orchestra with all-Wagner programme (<i>theatre party tickets have been allocated</i>)	Sydney Opera House Concert Hall
14 July	Annual General Meeting followed by newly released CD of <i>Das Rheingold</i> (<i>details page 12</i>)	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
18 August	Tannhäuser video presentation	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
24 August	<i>Der Fliegende Holländer</i> , matinée theatre party	Sydney Opera House 1.00 pm
8 September	<i>Die Walküre</i> . New CD from Karlsruhe. John Wegner as Wotan	Goethe Institut 12.30 pm
20 October	Florence Austral - talk by James Moffat, illustrated by historic recordings	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
17 November	to be announced	
8 December	Christmas party	

COMMITTEE

President	Paul Lehmann	411 7899 (work) 413 1035 (fax)
Vice President	Barbara McNulty	487 1344
Vice President and Treasurer	Olive Coonan	387 6403
Membership Secretary	Janet Wayland	332 3926
Secretary	Ira Kowalski	560 5859
Members	Barbara Brady (Newsletter)	9956 5132
	Shirley Robertson	521 3281
	Ivor Zetler	871 4566 (home) 872 2723 (work)
Public Officer	Reg Maloney	

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

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

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

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

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

PAUL LEHMANN
President

ADDRESS

Please note our permanent address for all correspondence, and the telephone and fax number:

The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc
GPO Box 4574 SYDNEY NSW 2001
Tel: 411 7899 (Paul Lehmann, business hours) Fax 413 1035

All contributions to the *Newsletter* are gratefully received and may be sent to the editor at the above address.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society is delighted to welcome the following new members:

Dr Leonie Aitken, Ms Doris Goss, Dr Andrew Goy, Ms Adele Johnston, Ms Ruth Moss, Mrs Kathleen Newton, Mrs Fay Pisier, Rear Admiral Rothesay Swan, AO CBE, and Ms Irene Vance

DONATIONS

We gratefully acknowledge a generous donation from the following member of this society : Paul Lehmann.

The Society welcomes all donations and they can be addressed to the Treasurer, Wagner Society in NSW Inc at the above address. Donations are tax-deductable and receipts will be issued. If members wish to earmark their donation for a specific purpose (for example, a contribution to the Adelaide Ring) they may indicate this in a covering note.

<i>DONATION FORM</i>	
The Treasurer	
To The Wagner Society in NSW Inc	
GPO Box 4574, SYDNEY NSW 2001	
Please find my cheque/money order attached for \$.....	
being a donation to the Wagner Society in NSW Inc.	
Name:
Address:

Membership Number:
NB: Receipts will be issued and all donations over \$2 are tax deductible.	

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Society acknowledges with thanks receipt of the following publications from Wagner societies and related organisations: *Kulturchronik*: News and Views from the Federal Republic of Germany, No. 1 1966; *Leitmotive*: the journal of the Wagner Society of Northern California, Vol. 9 no 3-4, Fall-Winter 1995; *Newsletter, Richard Wagner Society of South Australia*, Nos. 93-95 March-May 1996; *Wagner* (The Wagner Society, UK) Vol. 17 no. 1, Jan 1996; *Wagner News* (The Wagner Society, UK Nos. 113-114, Feb-Mar 1996); *Wagner News* (Toronto Wagner Society) Vol. 7 No.4, Feb 1996; *Wagner Notes* (Wagner Society of New York) Vol. xix No. 2, Apr 1996, and a collection of Austrian Wagner Society Year Books as follows: Richard Wagner und Granz, 1983; Richard Wagner Jahrbuch, 1988 and 1994; Österreichische Richard Wagner-Gesellschaft Nachrichtenblatt, 1971-1974 and 1979-1980; ERDA: Egon Wayrer-Rauland; Die Elektra-Partitur von Richard Strauss, by Kurt Overhoff.

TANNHÄUSER SCREENING ON 18 AUGUST (with English subtitles)

Yes, it is a modern production; yes it is a producer's concept (with the now customary number of gimmicks) but as one who has seen its first production I urge you to overcome your hesitation and come to this screening. If you have ever felt any dissatisfaction in the productions you have seen -- (including the last one at Bayreuth where, despite Wagner's text and his many writings on its interpretation, that Tannhäuser is portrayed as the complete villain : Elizabeth is the only one who is moved by his song while the society which condemns him escapes censure)-- I am sure that you will find this production thought-provoking and seriously meant to satisfy Wagner's sentiments on the problems of the artist in society. Not only that, the cast is superb with Rene Kollo, Waltraud Meier, Nadine Secunde, Bernd Weikl, with Zuben Mehta conducting. David Alden recently received further acclaim for his new Tristan and Isolde at the ENO with Elizabeth Connell, George Grey, Jonathon Summers as Kurwenal and Mark Elder conducting.

SHIRLEY ROBERTSON

Below is an extract from the review by Rodney Milnes in *Opera*, Festival Issue, October 1994:

Munich: Alden's debut. 'The combination of Wagner, David Alden in his German debut and a supposedly stuffy festival audience was potentially explosive, and there was indeed some booing in the Nationaltheater at the final curtain of Tannhäuser on July 6, the opening night of the Munich Opera Festival. But here was also loud cheering, recognition that this was a thoroughly serious undertaking and not a piece of provocation (opera doesn't have to be marketed in Munich, so there was no need of frivolous and misleading pre-publicity), and a generally appreciative reaction in the press. Even the tabloids - and German tabloids still carry opera criticism - made a real effort to evaluate a challenging staging, and the broadsheets went to town with thousands of well-considered, not to say deadly earnest words. And rightly: despite reservations over one or two tics this was amongst Alden's very best work'.

16TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Goethe Institut, 90 Ocean Street, Woollahra, on Sunday July 14th at 1.00 pm.

VOTING RULES

At the Annual General Meeting the office bearers (namely, President, up to two Vice Presidents, Treasurer and Secretary) must be elected, together with four additional Committee Members if sufficient nominations are received.

If the number of nominations does not exceed nine members those members are automatically declared elected to the committee. Similarly the office bearers go into their specified positions if no one else is nominated to the same position. In the case of two or more nominations to positions of office bearers a ballot will be held on the day of the annual general meeting.

Financial members may vote by proxy given to a financial member if unable to attend the Annual General Meeting.

If more than four members are nominated for the Committee a ballot will also need to be held.

NOMINATIONS AND PROXY VOTES SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY MONDAY 1ST JULY 1996

PROXY

**The Secretary, The Wagner Society in NSW Inc
GPO BOX 4574, SYDNEY, NSW 2001**

I cannot attend the 16th Annual Meeting to be held on 14th July 1996 but give my proxy vote to

.....

who is a current financial member of the Society, membership number:.....

Date.....

Signed.....

Address.....

.....
(nominated member)

NOMINATIONS

**The Secretary
The Wagner Society in NSW Inc
GPO Box 4574
SYDNEY NSW 2001**

We, the undersigned members, hereby propose and second respectively

.....

for election as

.....

or a member of the committee of the Wagner Society in NSW Inc.

Date.....

Signed.....
(proposer)

Signed.....
(seconder)

Signed.....
(nominated member)

NOTICE OF MOTION

**The Secretary, Wagner Society in NSW Inc
GPO Box 4574, Sydney, NSW 2001**

I/we will be attending the Annual General Meeting on 14th July 1996 and would like the following motion to be placed on the Agenda for discussion under General Business.

.....

.....

.....

Name:

Membership No:.....

JOHN WEGNER AND THE OHR WÜRMER

John Wegner wrote to vice-president Olive Coonan in April enclosing some notes on his busy and rewarding life. As this *Newsletter* goes to press, he will be talking to us at the annual Richard Wagner luncheon and will bring us up to date there, but in the meantime here are extracts from his April letter. Our thanks to Olive for sharing it with us.

“On Sunday 18th February 1996 at 6.00 pm I made my debut at the Leipzig Opera with the role of the Hollander in *Der Fliegende Holländer*. The preparation for this had been hectic for I was offered the role one week before its performance date but had not sung the role for 14 months. Things were made more difficult by my inability to get to Leipzig for rehearsals before the Friday afternoon due to my having a *Prince Igor* performance on Thursday 16th. On arrival, after the five



John as Holländer

hour train trip, I was rehearsed from 4.30 pm till 10.00 by the resident producer, Herr Hoffmann and again on Saturday from 10.00 till 2.00, followed by an evening sing-through of the demanding role with the conductor, Niksa Bareza. At 6.00 pm my debut had begun and the performance went very well. The wonderful thing for me was to notice how much further I had advanced in vocal technique since last having sung the Holländer. Passages that had been near impossible to sing 14 months before were now ‘sitting well’.

John Wegner also writes about his other non-Wagner roles, and the enormous demands put on performers who are asked at short notice to replace a leading artist. On 26th February, a week after the Hollander performance, he was asked if he could return to Leipzig for a performance of Jochanaan in *Salome* to be held on 2nd March. It was not until 1.15 on the following day that the invitation was confirmed because the original Jochanaan was still ill and so he caught the 2.00 pm train, arrived in Leipzig at 7.00 pm and was on stage rehearsing by 8.00 pm that same night. This

had been his debut role in Germany, but one he had not sung for two and a half to three years. The performance on the Saturday went extremely well and he was invited to return for a further performance. In the meantime an urgent request came in to be ready in case another singer were unable to perform Wotan in *Das Rheingold* in Essen on the Sunday - which would have meant a 5 or 6-hour train trip and perhaps an hour's rehearsals. In the event the original Wotan recovered and John did not need to step into the breach but he was ready as standby just in case. He comments that "the difficulties of short-notice-guesting are the time management and stress management issues. You must learn a great deal in a short time; all the cues, when and where to move plus get the role back into your voice. Apart from these things you must also feed yourself



John as Holländer

(a challenge in a strange town) and not tire out the voice. This process is made more difficult by everyone wanting to take up your time with concerns in their specialist area. The wardrobe department wants you, so does the make-up department (for wig fittings etc) and the house producer wants to rehearse the moves, while the music staff and conductor also demand their share of your time. Dealing with the stresses that build up in such a concentrated atmosphere is difficult. You are not given much time to relax and when you do you are usually so wound up that 'Ohr Würmer' (Lit: Ear Worms), or sections of music, keep recycling in your brain and hinder sleep". At the time of writing in April he had just been on stage in Munich singing Donner in the piano/dress rehearsal of *Rheingold* with a magnificent cast including John Tomlinson and was now heading for Karlsruhe to sing *Prince Igor* before returning to Munich for more *Rheingold*. It seems by then it had dawned on John Wegner that he was truly an international opera singer.

THE CHICAGO RING

Having enjoyed the Chicago Walküre in 1994 I set out in March very much looking forward to the Ring, and was not disappointed. The weather was bitterly cold but the buzz in the Lyric Opera foyer augured well.

The opening of Das Rheingold with gymnasts on bungy ropes disporting themselves behind a scrim which gave a very realistic impression of moving water, was a most satisfactory Rhine setting. Elizabeth Futral, Emily Manhard and Robynne Redmon singing from the shadows of the stage, and Ekkehard Wlaschiha, an experienced Alberich, combined in a convincing opening which set the mood for the next few nights.

James Morris (Wotan), Marjana Lipovšek (Fricka), Tina Kiberg (Fria and Sieglinde) Matti Salminen (Fasolt, Hunding, Fafner in *Siegfried*, and Hagen), Poul Elming (Siegmund), Graham Clark (Loge), Dennis Petersen (Mime) and Nancy Maultsby (Erda and First Norn) were all excellent. The slight disappointment was Siegfried Jerusalem who was suffering from a cold and had little voice in Siegfried but gave of his best in *Götterdämmerung*.

The revelation was the debut of the English soprano, Jane Eaglen as Brünnhilde in the second cycle only. Just 34, she has a big voice, rich and powerful but beautifully controlled and creamy in tone, without any apparent weakness. Her appearance was a tour de force. The astonishment of her success is that she sang the cycle, not only for the first time, but without any stage rehearsals. She had sung Walküre once in Seattle, in Siegfried once last year in Chicago, but this *Götterdämmerung* was her first.

The production did not appear to have a unifying theme but treated each scene individually. In general it was satisfying but occasionally the back projections, used to signify changes of mood, became tiresome - particularly when they were not consistent. For instance a magnificent winter tree in the beginning of Walküre became a treeless, flower-filled meadow at the end of the scene. Also, the use of laser light did not appear to fulfil any specific purpose.

Several scenes were very well handled when gymnasts were used to create visual pictures, especially the transformation of Alberich when shining abstract placards came together to produce a cartoon serpent and a toad hopping from rock to rock. Similarly the Woodbird was an origami bird carried across the stage or seen distantly through backdrops. The Giants had huge metal helmets and gauntlets held above them and Fafner's dragon was a Dinosaur skull and backbone which swooped across the stage. Young gymnasts dressed in red and using trampolines were used to great effect in Walküre as they leapt and tumbled and threw glittering spears between screens in the background as the Valkyries gathered.

The orchestra, under Zubin Mehta, was adequate though the all important horns had very obvious problems at inappropriate moments. However the very high quality of the singing made these lapses of less significance. Overall it was an exciting Ring and created much animated discussion between tables at meals in the hotel and in the theatre during intermissions.

BARBARA McNULTY

WAGNER AND THE RAILWAY.

When the first railway in a German state was opened in 1835, Wagner resided in Magdeburg where he had moved from Leipzig in July, 1834 as music director with Heinrich Bethmann's theatrical company. To travel there over about 115km would have been by horse-drawn road coach along whatever bumpy thoroughfare existed at the time (it is unlikely he would have walked as did Bach on his famous journey to and from Lubeck). Wagner was 22-years-old when the first German railway of only 6.05km was opened from Nürnberg to Fürth, in Bavaria on 7th December, 1835. He probably did not even know of the event at the time: he was busy on the score of *Das Liebesverbot*, a two act comic opera not seen much nowadays, and no doubt pursuing the hand of singer Minna Planer, also a member of Bethmann's company, who became his first wife in 1836.

The first passenger railways in the world were opened in England in 1825 and 1830; in France in 1828, and Belgium in 1835. The Bavarian enterprise used British technology, and its first steam engine, 'Adler' was built by Stephenson in England. It is preserved in the Nürnberg Transport Museum, but a replica was built in 1935 and is steamed for railway celebrations such as the 150th anniversary in Germany in 1985. More lines were opened near Leipzig in 1837; Berlin to Potsdam in 1838, and Leipzig to Dresden by 1839. The first line in the 1850s north to Saxony linked München via Augsburg, Nürnberg, Bamberg and Hof with Leipzig. A branch from Neuenmarkt to Bayreuth was in place by 1858. Most existing Bavarian trunk routes were complete by 1880.

Early rail travel was not particularly comfortable. Passengers were locked in compartments with no choice of companions, carriages had no facilities or heating, and you ate at stations. Being the traveller that he was, Wagner must have made many railway trips moving between the residences listed by Barry Walters in the December, 1995 'Newsletter'. It seems unlikely that he travelled over snow covered mountain passes en route to Venice in a horse-drawn coach accompanied by his faithful piano, as Visconti led us to believe in his film *Wagner*. More likely he used one of the trans-Alpine railways: either that from Vienna to Venice over the Semmering pass, opened in 1854; or the Brenner route from Munich via Innsbruck to Verona, opened in 1867.

Railway operators world-wide gave names to their best and fastest trains for publicity. Publicising particular services by naming train services where they were in competition with other routes started with the famous 'Orient Express' in 1883, which was the first through train to take passengers without change of vehicle from Paris to Munich and on to Vienna, Budapest, Bucharest and later Istanbul. The practice of naming trains became much more widespread in the 1920s with added competition from aeroplanes and road vehicles as well as other railway lines.

What better way to inaugurate the practice in Germany than with trains named *Rheingold*. In this instance, the competition came from a Belgian and French Railways luxury train from Brussels to Basel in Switzerland, via Strasbourg, connecting with the boat from England at Ostende. Smarting from a loss of business, the German Railways inaugurated their own luxury 1st and 2nd class express saloon day train from Amsterdam and Hook of Holland (the connection from London) also to Basel, via Dusseldorf, Köln, Mainz (opposite Biebrich), Mannheim and Freiburg. Twenty-six luxury carriages, some dining cars, were built all over Germany to inaugurate the train on 15th May, 1928. In some years these cars continued their journey further to and from Lucerne, Zurich

and Milan, until the train was withdrawn in 1939. Most carriages survived the war but were rebuilt without their luxurious interiors. Three ended up as Restaurant cars in Czechoslovakia! Six of the cars have been preserved and continue working special trains carrying their train name twice emblazoned along the side of each car in letters about 30cm high.

The *Rheingold* was re-inaugurated in 1951 on the original route with new, but less luxurious carriages. In 1962, the train was considerably upgraded to first-class only and given the honour of using the first German air-conditioned carriages, together with a dome observation carriage, the only one in Europe. This style of carriage was later built in hundreds and can now be seen on many Euro- and Inter-city trains throughout Europe. Unfortunately 'Rheingold' ceased to be used from 31st May, 1987, although all express trains continue to be named. The many German and other farewell passengers on this trip were so incensed by the withdrawal of the famous name, that on arrival at Emmerich (the German/Dutch border) on the last trip, they teamed up to have a party. Many came prepared with screwdrivers and made almost a clean sweep of crockery, ashtrays and an assortment of signs and labels, leaving the German Railway officials fuming.

This is not the only 'Wagner' train. Since World War II, many western German trains have carried names linked to the composer. Since the 1950s, a service known as *Parsifal* has worked in both directions between Paris and Köln (and at times beyond). The only connection with the Ring operas is use of the name *Walhalla* on inter-city trains which provided an early morning departure from Regensburg via Nürnberg for Frankfurt (Main), the Rhur and Hannover, with a return working in the afternoon and evening. This continued until 1991 when, with the general reorganisation of the country on re-unification, the destination was changed to Hamburg, via Hannover; a train with this name now works only in the Hamburg-Regensburg direction.

The names of the opera *Meistersinger* and its leading character, the minnesinger, *Hans Sachs* have been used on various rail services. In 1960 a fast diesel train from Nürnberg to Linz (in Austria) and return first used the name *Meistersinger*, but this did not survive two years. With inauguration of the country-wide hourly Inter-city trains in 1978 the names returned on trains linking Bavaria with the north via Frankfurt (Main) and Köln and return. Again these trains were re-routed to Hamburg in 1991 and their use ceased in 1992. The name of the character *Hans Sachs* was given to a return service of fast first-class only trains between Nürnberg and Hagen (Wupper) via Frankfurt (Main) and Köln from 1960 until the late 1970s; again in 1983 a reduced exposure was given the name when the trains concerned worked only between Nürnberg and München and return. From May, 1992, the name was attached to a return Inter-city train from München to Berlin (East) via Nürnberg and Halle which continues today. The opera *Tannhäuser* is recalled with use of the name *Wartburg* on Inter-city services currently working between Dresden and Saarbrücken, via Leipzig and Eisenach.

Many well-known composers' names are currently used on Inter-city express trains in Germany, such as Bach, Brahms, Haydn, Liszt, Mozart and J Strauss - but the ultimate honour has been denied Wagner. So when travelling in Germany, keep an eye on the train indicator - your train may be named after a famous composer. My wife and I found this in 1990, when travelling from Mainz via Frankfurt to Nürnberg, (en route to Bayreuth) on the Euro-City Express 25, *Franz Liszt*, a great supporter of Wagner.

IAN BRADY

LETTERS

FROM ARTHUR CARTER

“Members should be alerted to the forthcoming visit by Stephan Mickisch, the German-born piano virtuoso who specialises in Wagner paraphrases and improvisations. Dr Mickisch enjoys a high reputation in his international career and for his piano teaching, and will be giving two recitals only in Australia: in Melbourne and Adelaide but, astonishingly, not in Sydney. These two scheduled recitals are under the auspices of the Wagner Societies in those two Australian cities, as also are his other recitals this year in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Auckland.

For the Melbourne Wagner Society, Dr Mickisch will be playing, besides works by Bach and Schumann, some unique paraphrases of Wagner’s music, to wit, Hugo Wolf’s paraphrase on *Die Meistersinger* - a rarity indeed, and Mickisch’s own themes from *Die Götterdämmerung*. This last-mentioned work is of 33 minutes’ duration and is, I believe, the longest paraphrase on Wagner so far published in the world.

Members of the NSW Society interested in hearing this distinguished Wagner specialist perform can do so at the Melba Hall on Friday 5th July in the evening. If members contact Dr David Gale’s office (03- 9650 1057) at 2 Collins Street, Melbourne, seating will be happily arranged for them. The Adelaide concert at the Elder Hall is on the previous Saturday, 29th June. Let’s hope that the NSW Society, with its abundant membership, can be represented worthily at the “off-shore” concert in Melbourne, by one of the world’s Wagner specialists at the keyboard”

FROM STEPHAN MICKISCH (translated)

“Thank you very much for your informative and kind letter of Jan. 30, to my great surprise written in German. It is a pity, but understandable that you cannot organise a concert of Wagner Paraphrases in June/July, especially as this is also the time of the International Piano Competition. I am sorry as I am also interested in Sydney as a city. Maybe perhaps another time? Organisers here often use venues in a University or conservatorium for concerts; they mostly have about 200 to 300 seats, and often already have a piano available.

I have written explanatory notes about the paraphrases in English which may be used for media releases or in the programme itself (I enclose 2 pages as well as other information). Organisers usually arrange private accommodation for me (also in the USA) so that there are no further costs.

My tour of Wagner paraphrases (additionally Schumann’s Fantasia Op.17 and Bach Fugues and 2 Preludes in Melbourne and Auckland) will commence at the end of April.”.. [here he supplies dates for North and South America, Auckland (23 June) and Adelaide (29 June) and Melbourne (5 July)]. “Organisers in Hongkong, Peking and possibly Singapore are planning concerts for March 1997. The German Consulat in Hongkong extended an invitation for a concert during the Hongkong Art Festival which takes place in spring. There is no possibility for an earlier concert during my present tour (July/August) because of the Chinese New Year and subsequent holidays.

Letters .. contd.

In Peking the conservatorium as well as the German Consulat have expressed their interest. I had to cancel an invitation to Peking as it was for the end of July. I think it possible, however, to arrange something for next spring (Australian autumn).

Would it be possible to consider a concert in Sydney at that time (autumn 1997)? I am happy about your interest in my other recitals in Australia. My concerts in Melbourne on July 5 take place in the Melba Hall, the concert in Adelaide on June 29 in the Elder Hall (University). In Melbourne Dr David Gale, in Adelaide the State Opera (Mr Phillips) and Lillian Scott. I would be very glad to meet members of your Wagner Society at my concerts, and perhaps you also? I shall also offer for sale my CD of the paraphrases at those occasions. (If your society is interested I could send you a parcel of CDs)".

FROM GOETZ RICHTER, President of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra Benevolent Fund. "On behalf of the members of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra Benevolent Fund I would like to thank you and members of the Wagner Society for their donation towards the 50th Annual Gala Concert of the Benevolent Fund. As discussed, your donation will assist with the copying costs of the Goosens transcriptions. We have no reason at this stage to assume that this material does not remain the property of the Benevolent Fund once the copying has been completed.

We are also delighted that the concert is so popular with the members of the Wagner Society and are looking forward to seeing you and members of the Wagner Society at the concert. We would be grateful if you could convey our appreciation and gratitude for the donation to the members of the Wagner Society."

WAGNER PART OF BACHELOR OF MUSIC

Wagner Society member Robert Gibson is teaching a Wagner Seminar at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music for senior students in the Bachelor of Music degree. This is the first time in a number of years that the Conservatorium has offered a subject devoted solely to Wagner. Robert is also involved in post-graduate study in the Music Department, University of Sydney, where he is looking at issues of sexuality and gender in *Parsifal* criticism of the *fin de siècle*.

CDs

A new compact disk set of *The Ring Cycle* performed by the Badisches Staatstheater, Karlsruhe in 1995 and featuring John Wegner as Wotan has just been released in Europe. [Bella Musica, Box no. 10002]. Those members of our society who have already heard this report most favorably on the singing. The performance is conducted by Günter Neuhold and is on 14 CDs. As it is unlikely this set will be readily available in Sydney we propose to import a few copies and would like to hear from members interested in ordering it. Please write to our registered office or phone a committee member and we will find out the price and expected availability date.

WAGNER'S BIRTHDAY

Richard Wagner's birthday on 22nd May was celebrated with Stefan Mickisch's New York recital debut. The publicity for that performance includes an extract from a review published in the *Bayreuther Tagblatt*, August 1995, of Mickisch's paraphrase of *Götterdämmerung*. .. "The pianist played Brünnhilde's final song in such a masterly dramatic way that you almost wished he himself would conduct a performance of the Ring some day". The Richard Wagner Society in Melbourne took over an entire restaurant, La Bruschetta, for its annual birthday celebrations on 22nd May. In Sydney this society lunched together at the Ritz Carlton, Macquarie Street on Sunday 26th May and members agreed this was one of its most enjoyable functions. It was good to note among those present the Cultural Attache to the German Consul, Dr Michael Fernon and his wife Sigrid (who was regularly addressed as Siegfried), Margaret and Gough Whitlam, Melinda and Henry Pritchett from Classics Distribution, Arthur Haddad and June Scott and many longstanding members of the society including Members Number One and One A (Reg and Betty Maloney) and some of the newest members not to mention those who are in the process of applying for membership. The guest of honour, John Wegner, spoke of his recent performances in Germany including the role of Wotan for the Karlsruhe *Ring*. This production made a clear distinction in each opera in the development of Wotan. In *Das Rheingold* Wotan was portrayed as a young entrepreneur, making rules, making mistakes and seeking a power-base in the building of Walhalla. In *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* he becomes progressively more mature and confident. It sounds an interesting concept and is bound to come across in John Wegner's singing to be heard on the Karlsruhe compact disks. The society is fortunate that Mr Wegner has donated two sets of these CDs to us.

Prizewinners

The following raffled prizes were drawn at the annual luncheon:

first prize (a voucher from David Jones to the value of \$300) won by Patricia Baillie; second prize (books) to Sue Kelly, and third prize (CDs) won by Joan Connery.

Australian Opera's Production of Der Fliegende Holländer

The society has been informed that the late Leonard Hansen made a generous bequest to the Australian Opera which is to be used in sponsoring the forthcoming production of *Der Fliegende Holländer*.

Bryan Lewis Campbell

The society records with sadness the death of Mr Bryan Campbell of Ballina after a long illness. His family told us that he always looked forward to receiving the *Newsletter* even though he could no longer participate in society activities.

Next issue of the Newsletter

Our September issue will include a feature on Florence Austral, before the talk by James Moffat, author of *Florence Austral: One of the wonder voices of the world*. (Currency Press 1995, 378pp, \$45). By then there should be news of a CD to be released later this year.

THE RAVENS REPORTING

- Munich *Tannhäuser* - July 6
Parsifal - July 20
Die Meistersinger - July 28, 31
- Aarhus *The Ring* - Danish National Opera (Den Jyske Opera - Musikhuset)
Conductor Francesco Cristofoli, producer Klaus Hoffmeyer and designer Lars Juhl. First cycle August 27, 28, 30 Sept 1 and second cycle Sept 3, 4, 6, 8.
- San Francisco *Lohengrin* - Ben Heppner/Chris Merritt/, Karita Mattila, Elizabeth Connell, Jan-Hendrik Rootering, Tom Fox. Conductor Donald Runnicles, director Laurie Feldman. Sep 28, Oct 1, 4, 6m, 9, 12.
- Copenhagen *Tannhäuser* - Stig Fogh Andersen (Tannhäuser), Tina Kiberg (Elisabeth), Aage Haugland (Graf). Conductor Dietfried Bernet. Sep 21, 28 Oct 1, 9, 15, 21
- Bastille *Lohengrin* - Gösta Winberg, Karita Mattila, Gwyneth Jones, Jan-Hendrik Rootering, Tom Fox, M. Volle. Conductor James Conlon. Nov 22, 25, 28 Dec 1, 4, 7, 10, 13.
- Copenhagen *Die Meistersinger* - Bent Norup, Stig Fogh Andersen, Tina Kiberg, Guido Paevatalu, Christian Christensen, Gert Henning. Conductor Heinz Fricke, director Francesca Zambello. Nov 29 Dec 3, 17, 21, 26, 1996 Jan 23, 29, 1997.
- Amsterdam *Parsifal* - Wolfgang Schöne (Amfortas), Carsten Stabell (Tituel), Robert Lloyd (Gurnemanz), Poul Elming (Parsifal), Günter von Kannen (Klingsor), Violeta Urmana (Kundry). Conductor simon Rattle, director Klaus Michael Grüber, designer Gilles Aillaud, costumes Moidele Bickel. January 28, 31 February 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 1997.
- Brussels *Tristan und Isolde* - Jan 22, 26, 30 Feb 4, 8, 12, 15, 1997.
- Holland *Holländer* - Nationale Reisopera - Enschede Feb 2, Nijmegen Feb 6, Leeuwarden Feb 8, Arnhem Feb 11, Rotterdam Feb 14, 16, The Hague Feb 18, Utrecht Feb 20, Groningen Feb 22, Maastricht Feb 27, Eindhoven Mar 1, 1997.
- Antwerp *Tannhäuser* - Soltesz, David Alden; Gary Lakes, Nina Stemme, Yvonne Naef, Jorma Hynninen. March 1997
- Paris *Parsifal* - Thomas Moser, Kristinn Sigmundsson, Wolfgang Schöne, Gwynne Howell, Jan-Hendrik Rootering, Kathryn Harries. Mar 28, 31 Apr 3, 5, 9, 12, 16, 19, 1997.
- The Met *The Ring* - 3 cycles - April 5, 12, 19, 26; 25, 28, 30 May 3; 5, 6, 8, 10 1997.
- Leeds 96/97 *Tannhäuser* - Opera North - Jeffrey Lawton, Rita Cullis, Anne-Marie Owens, Keit Letham. Conductor Paul Daniel, producer David Fielding.
- Zurich 96/97 *Parsifal* (new production) - Peter Seiffert (Parsifal), Cornelia Kallisch (Kundry), Robert Holl (Amfortas), Matti Salminen (Gurnemanz), Simon Estes (Klingsor). Conductor F. Welser-Moest.
Holländer - Simon Estes, Robert Schunk, Sabine Hass/Gabriele Lechner, Matti Salminen. Conductor de Burgos.
Lohengrin - Anja Silja, Gösta Winbergh, Matti Salminen, Gabriele Lechner. Conductor Ralf Weikert.