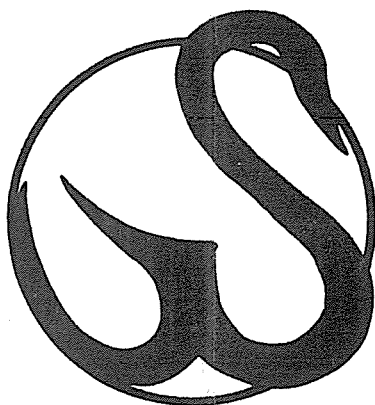


The Wagner Society

IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

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



Newsletter

No. 68, September 1997

Print Post Approved PP242114/00002

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
September 21	“Wagner the Songwriter”: Talk by Arthur Carter illustrated by recordings	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
October 19,	“Wagner Singers Old and New” Talk by Barbara McNulty illustrated by recordings	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
November 16	Lohengrin video (<i>note: this is the program postponed from April</i>)	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
Saturday November 22	Tannhäuser day seminar covering opera, history and art. <i>See application coupon</i>	Art Gallery of NSW 10.00 am to 4.00 pm
December 14	Christmas Party	Goethe Institut 2.00 pm

COMMITTEE

President	Barbara McNulty	9487 1344
Vice President	Paul Lehmann	9552 1424
Vice President and Treasurer	Olive Coonan	9387 6403
Membership Secretary	Janet Wayland	9332 3926
Members	Barbara Brady (Editor, Newsletter)	9956 5132
	Clare Hennessy	9747 5664
	Shirley Robertson	9521 3281
	Barry Walters	9387 6642
	Terence Watson	9517 2786
Public Officer	Reg Maloney	

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Delivered at the Annual General Meeting on 20 July 1997

Dear Members,

The preparation of an annual report by a president of any society is an opportunity to reflect on the preceding twelve months - having asked oneself the obvious question, "What did the society achieve in that time?" And when I asked myself this question my 'memory banks' became virtually saturated with the Adelaide Ring booking procedures.

I have endeavoured to keep members informed through our Newsletter of the basic booking procedures as they evolved from time to time so I believe it is not necessary to repeat the matters stated in those reports except to express my disappointment in the procedure foisted on the public by Qantas and American Express which has resulted in some members refusing to purchase tickets because of their dissatisfaction with the procedure and other members being unable to purchase tickets simply because they could not afford to pay the deposit and balance at the times required - whereas these members may have been able to afford a ticket had they been given more time to pay. I am aware that the Wagner Societies in Perth, Melbourne and Auckland are unhappy with some aspects of the procedure.

However as I stated in the June 97 Newsletter the deposit and times for payments had been fixed by Qantas/American Express and Mr Stephen Phillips could do nothing about these aspects.

Mr Phillips has however advised me that he is aware of the difficulties expressed by the various Wagner societies and that, if Adelaide should repeat the Cycle at some future time, then these difficulties will be taken into account. However I believe it is important not to lose sight of the ultimate goal - namely to have a performance of the Cycle that will make the world sit up and take notice of what Australians can produce. It is my belief that Adelaide can do it - and good luck to them!

As regards the society's domestic matters I am happy to report that we are getting a steady stream of new members - in fact the applications seem to be up on previous years. Members will see from our Treasurer's report that we have continued to support the winner of the Bayreuth scholarship and the major performances of Wagner's works.

We have also been very conscious of the need to plan programs which will be of interest to members and consequently there has been a shift from video presentations to the presentation of talks. Hopefully members will have noted that a seminar on Tannhäuser is planned for Saturday November 22 next at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. The impetus for a seminar actually came from the Art Gallery and I think it is a great credit to our society that the Art Gallery thought fit to make the approach. Members will also note that the seminar will be held in addition to our normal meeting at the Goethe Institut on 16 November next.

I also believe that our society is held in high standing in Sydney's German community. For

example the Consul General of Germany, Dr Otto Roever, and his wife attended our annual lunch to celebrate Wagner's birthday and Olive Coonan, Ira Kowalski and myself were invited to attend a reception in honour of Dr Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

I would like to express my thanks to Countess Ute Baudissin, the Director of the Goethe Institut for making the Institut available to us. She has always expressed great interest in our society's activities and has always been available to discuss any special matters we may wish to raise.

In my last report I thanked all my committee for the hard work and effort that each of them had contributed to the running of the society. I would like to repeat those thanks but I must point out that in the last twelve months the work load of each of the other members of the committee has increased - simply because of the time that I had to devote to the Adelaide Ring bookings.

In fact I am finding that there have been further (self-inflicted) inroads into my available spare time and I have decided not to stand as president for the next year. Put simply I want the time to explore some of Wagner's non operatic music, and also to expand my knowledge of Schubert's music. I have also joined a second choir - the Beethoven Society of Australia - and am considering the possibility of singing in four more performances of the 9th Symphony later this year - two of which will take place in Japan. However, I believe Barbara McNulty has nominated for president. She has my full support and I wish her well.

PAUL LEHMANN
President, 20/7/97

ADDRESS

Please note our permanent address for all correspondence
The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc
GPO Box 4574 SYDNEY NSW 2001
Telephone Barbara McNulty 9487 1344

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:

Mr Julian and Mrs Rosemary Block, Mrs Gretchen Dechert, Lady Finley, Dr John Gregory-Roberts, Miss Simona Hebbard, Dr Irvine Hunter & Dr Lydia Hunter, Mr George & Mrs Marjorie Kossof, Mr Aliro & Mrs Monica Olave, Ms Jan Bowen, Mrs Alynn Pratt and Mr Peter Thomson.

DONATIONS

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-deductible and receipts will be issued. If members wish to earmark their donation for a specific purpose they may indicate this.

**THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 1997**

1996	CURRENT ASSETS	1997
0.00	Prepayments: functions	200.00
500.00	Prepayment: luncheon May	567.00
1458.52	Cash at bank	1107.15
16239.42	Investment	22905.97
421.57	Public Donation Account	1471.14
560.00	Debtors	0.00
800.00	Stocks; P/S brochures and raffle tickets, envelopes	730.00
6956.00	46 items Lohengrin set design/frames	6956.00
<u>0.00</u>	8 Wagner T-shirts	<u>120.00</u>
<u>26935.51</u>		<u>34057.26</u>
	FIXED ASSETS	
185.00	Filing cabinet	185.00
(185.00) 0.00	less depreciation	(185.00) 0.00
990.00	Set of speakers	990.00
(990.00) 0.00	less depreciation	(990.00) 0.00
695.00	Typewriter	695.00
(695.00) 0.00	less depreciation	(695.00) 0.00
100.00	Urn	100.00
(100.00) 0.00	less depreciation	(100.00) 0.00
230.00	Answer phone - Written off	0.00
(214.00) 16.00	less depreciation	0.00
<u>16.00</u>		<u>0.00</u>
<u>26951.51</u>	TOTAL ASSETS	<u>34057.26</u>
	<i>less:</i> CURRENT LIABILITIES	
0.00	Prepaid membership	135.00
<u>0.00</u>	TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>135.00</u>
<u>26951.51</u>	TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS AS AT 31/3/97	<u>33922.26</u>

ACCUMULATED FUNDS ANALYSIS

Surplus as at 31st March 1996	26951.51
Plus surplus for year 1996/1997	<u>6970.75</u>
Surplus as at 31st March 1997	<u>33922.26</u>



**THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC
REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 1997**

1996	CURRENT ACTIVITIES	1997
8510.00	REVENUE - MEMBERSHIP	8275.00
	Less administration costs:	
1901.68	Newsletters: printing and distribution	1724.65
1104.35	Printing, stationery, postage and telephone	879.90
68.28	Bank charges	74.74
46.00	Depreciation of fixed assets	0.00
410.88	Subscriptions	352.20
545.02	Insurance	545.02
	Written-off Answer phone	16.00
<u>30.00</u>	Statutory and other fees	<u>30.00</u>
<u>4403.79</u>	Surplus / (Deficiency)	<u>3622.51</u>
	REVENUE - OTHER	<u>4652.49</u>
0.00	Sale of Wagner T-shirts	732.50
0.00	Sale of books, CDs, journals etc	975.00
9602.00	Lectures and functions	4247.00
6363.00	Theatre parties	11601.00
3336.00	Annual luncheon May 1996	3809.00
1526.50	Annual competition 1996	1303.00
<u>62.56</u>	Bank interest	<u>1201.68</u>
20890.06		23869.18
	LESS EXPENSES	
0.00	Wagner T-shirts	564.00
0.00	Books, CDs, journals etc.	550.00
7543.70	Lectures and functions	2620.89
4911.00	Theatre parties	10575.70
3340.00	Annual luncheon May 1995	4589.55
0.00	Annual competition	22.35
<u>0.00</u>	Miscellaneous, advertising & publicity	<u>328.00</u>
<u>15794.70</u>	Surplus / (deficiency)	<u>19250.49</u>
<u>5095.36</u>	TOTAL CURRENT ACTIVITIES	<u>4618.69</u>
<u>9499.15</u>	SURPLUS / (DEFICIENCY)	<u>9271.18</u>

1996	PUBLIC DONATIONS AND INVESTMENT ACCOUNT	1997
	REVENUE	
1150.00	Donations	1050.00
<u>1028.41</u>	Interest	<u>5.10</u>
2178.41		1055.10
	LESS EXPENDITURE	
10935.65	Sponsorships and donations	3350.00
<u>13.22</u>	Bank charges	<u>5.53</u>
<u>(8770.46)</u>	TOTAL EXTRAORDINARY ACTIVITIES Surplus / (deficiency)	<u>(2300.43)</u>
<u>728.69</u>	TOTAL SURPLUS / (DEFICIENCY) FOR THE YEAR	<u>6970.75</u>

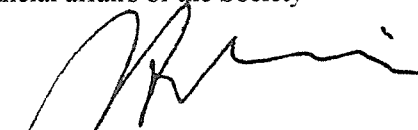
DETAILS OF DONATIONS and SPONSORSHIP

S.S.O. Benefit Concert	500.00
Airfares - Bayreuth Scholarship	2250.00
Opera Foundation	100.00
S.S.O. Walküre Concert	<u>500.00</u>
	<u>3350.00</u>


 Olive P Coonan (Hon. Treasurer)

AUDITOR'S REPORT

After having examined the books and records of the WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC., in my opinion the above balance sheet and attached statement of revenue and expenditure represent an accurate state of the financial affairs of the Society


 J Ferfaglia (hon. Auditor)
 (Retired Accountant)

RITA HUNTER has released a new CD: *The Rita Hunter Private Collection - Vol. One: Live Recordings 1968-1993*. Serial No. MCD085. Released by MOVE Records of Melbourne it contains arias by Mozart, Verdi, Wagner, Bellini, Richard Strauss and Puccini. While the disc quality varies, as the extracts are taken from tapes recorded by Miss Hunter's husband John Darnley-Thomas, it is a record of a glorious voice at its best and fills a gap for those who have long regretted the sparsity of Miss Hunter's recordings.

**WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC
FINANCIAL MEMBERS AS AT 31 JULY 1997**

Dr L Aitken; Mr P Alger; Mr & Mrs D W Allen; Dr & Mrs G Amigo; Mrs J Anderson; Mrs S Baer; Mrs C Bailey; Ms P Baillie; Mrs M Baumgartner; Mr & Mrs J Block; Dr B Boman; Dr M Bookallil; Ms J Bowen; Mr & Mrs I Brady; Miss L Brauer; Mrs M Bridges; Revd A R Caulfeild Browne; Mr & Mrs J Buchanan; Mrs M Budge; Mrs A P Byrne; Mr A Carter; Dr J H Casey; Miss A Casimir; Mr & Mrs A Cater; Dr & Mrs G Chesher; Dr & Mrs R T Clarke; Miss D Cleaver; Mr A Cohen; Dr & Mrs R Cohen; Mr A Collette; Mr D Colquhoun; Mr & Mrs M Connery; Mrs O Coonan; Mr. & Mrs R Cooper; Mr & Mrs R Cousens; Mrs M Crane; Mr Roger Cruikshank; Mrs J Darlington; Mrs G Dechert; Mr & Mrs H Derichs; Mr B G Dexter; Mr H Donaldson; Mr S Donohoe; Dr and Mrs N Dorsch; Mr John Drew; Mr B C Ducker; Mr H Ebert; Mr G Evans; Mr C A & Mrs E Evatt; Mrs J Ferfoglia; Mrs J Ferns; Mr and Mrs O. Ferrara; Lady Finley; Mr G Fleischer; Mrs N Fleming; Dr & Mrs G Fletcher; Dr S Freiberg; Mr R Gastineau-Hills; Ms L Geeves; Mr R Gibson; Ms S Gillies; Miss M Glacken; Ms D Goss; Dr A Goy; Mr & Mrs K Grant; Miss N Grant MBE; Dr J Gregory-Roberts; Mrs J E Griffin ; Prof & Mrs P Hall; Mr & Mrs A Hamlin; Mrs S P Handley; Mrs M Harris; Mr & Mrs B Hartnett; Dr F & Dr P Harvey; Mr S Hatcher; Mr C J Heathers; Miss S Hebbard; Miss C Hennessy; Miss M Hennessy; Miss M Hiscock; Mr & Mrs E Holliday; Mr T Hudson; Miss C Hughes; Drs I & L Hunter; Mr E Insausti; Mr J Iredale; Mrs C Jackaman; Mrs Z Jackson; Mr & Mrs D Jamieson; Ms Adele Johnston; Mr A N Jones; Miss E Jones; Misses D & I Kallinikos; Mr K J Kelleher; Dr S M Kelly; Mrs M J Yung-Kelly; Mrs B Kiessling; Dr & Mrs D King; Mrs V King; Dr K Koller; Mr & Mrs G Kossof; Ms I Kowalski; Mr K Baldenhofer & Mrs E Kraefft; Ms T A Kram; Mrs R Kruszelnicki; Mr P A Lehmann; Ms E Lenthall; Dr L A Le Leu; Mrs M Lichtenbergers; Mr & Mrs H Littman; Mrs E Long; Mr B R Love; Ms J MacKenzie; Mr A Mackerras; ; Mr G Magney; Mrs B Maloney; Mr E Manass; Mr J Mant; Ms Jennifer Manton; Mrs A Marshall; Mr C W Dyer & Dr R C Mason; Ms S Mason; Dr D Mather; Justice J Mathews; Dr I Maxwell; Mrs D McBain; Mr T McBride; Dr D L McCarthy; Mr J McCarthy; Mr A McDonald; Mrs P McGaw; Mr. J.M. McGrath; Mr B McKenzie; Mrs B McNulty; Mr N Mercer; Mr & Mrs W Merretz; Dr L P Milewski; Dr & Mrs T A Mitchell; Mr J. Moessis; Mr F Montgomery; Ms P Moore; Mrs E M Moser; Mr C Muché; Mrs J Mulveney; Mr D Mutton; Mr & Mrs W F Naylor; Mr P and Ms B Nicholson; Mr G A Nicoll; Ms M A Nicoll; Mr W Norris; Mr & Mrs A Olave; Mr B E Parsons; Mrs H Perini; Mr C Piper; Mrs F Pisier; Mr A J Pittorino; Mr P Thompson & Mrs A Pratt; Mrs C Preece; Mr G Ramsay; Ms J E Read; Mr K Reed; Mr G Richards; Prof. & Mrs A Riemer; Mr & Mrs G Roberts; Mrs S Robertson; Mrs E Robinson; Ms B de Rome; Mr & Mrs J Sachs; Mrs M Saunders; Mr S Sheffer; Ms N Siano; Mr J A Simmonds; Mr R Smallwood; Mr A Smith; Ms N E Smith; Mrs P. Maclaren-Smith; Mr & Mrs W Spiller; Mr & Mrs R Staniland; Mr R Steele; Ms Christiana Stoldt; Ms A T Straube; Mrs E Sullivan; Dr & Mrs W Suthers; Mr & Mrs A J Sutton; Rear Admiral and Mrs R. Swan; Ms A Swebbs; Mr G Symons; Mr D G Tabrett; Mr B Tarver; Mr C Terrasson; Mr and Mrs G. Thomas; Mrs P E Thompson; Mr R Stone & Mr J Thomson; Miss J Tomkinson; Mr D J Triggs; Mr & Mrs B Walters; Dr T G Watson; Mr W and Dr E Watson; Mr and Mrs H Wayland; Ms L Webster; Ms A Weeden; Mr & Mrs T. Wheeler; Ms J Richters & Mr A. Whelan; Mr R Whitelaw; Mrs M Whitlam; Mrs A Williamson; Mr G L Wilson; Mr & Mrs A Woodward; Mr J Yarwood;; Dr I Zetler; Dr A Ziegler

NEW YORK RING 1997 - METROPOLITAN OPERA

Spring in New York was a delightful surprise. It is New York at its best, cherry trees in full bloom are found in unexpected places and tulips and daffodils proliferate making that very busy city seem much friendlier and welcoming. A walk through Central Park to the Art gallery or the Frick, with the trees resplendent in their new leaves and birds and squirrels busy on the grass is a great place in which to dwell on the previous night's performances and savour again the many vignettes that make up Wagner's masterpiece.

This was my first 'traditional' Ring, produced by Otto Schenk and conducted by James Levine and familiar through excellent video recordings. Booked for the third cycle I arrived at the end of April to meet friends, half way through their cycle and full of enthusiasm and excitement, emotions I was soon to share.

Rheingold was excellent, beautifully sung by a cast most of whom are Bayreuth regulars. The setting for the Rheinmaidens worked well and Joyce Guyer, Jane Bunnell and Wendy White with Ekkehard Wlaschiha as Alberich made a realistic aquatic group. James Morris is a peerless Wotan and Hanna Schwarz an admirable Fricka. The Loge of Siegfried Jerusalem and the Erda of Brigitta Svendén were very well sung with clearly defined characterisation. One small quibble was a feeling of disappointment that the rainbow bridge, which was indeed a vibrant rainbow, was symbolic only so that the gods wandered to Valhalla through what appeared too to be a small gate on the side of the stage.

Die Walkure came alive immediately. Gary Lakes was a large Siegmund and an excellent foil for Deborah Voigt's Sieglinde which made the developing passion inevitable while Matti Salminen gave Hunding an edge that made this a very emotional triangle. Hildegard Behrens as Brünnhilde was perhaps my greatest disappointment. Clearly she was having difficulty and while there were long periods when this was forgotten and the beauty of her voice shone through too often at critical moments the problems were apparent. James Morris and Hanna Schwarz brought a very different interpretation to their second act confrontation when Fricka was portrayed not as angry or shrewish but as a woman deeply distressed by a situation that offended her sense of propriety. The scene between Brünnhilde and Siegmund and that between Wotan and Brünnhilde were both poignant and deeply moving and the fire demanded by Wotan for Brünnhilde's mountain top would have deterred all but a very brave heart.

Siegfried began with the announcement that Miss Behrens was ill and would be replaced by Penelope Daner. Graham Clarke is a marvellous Mime and the first act was a triumph with Siegfried Jerusalem as a wilful and wayward Siegfried but without the boorishness so often seen. While the bear was nondescript this is the first *Siegfried* that I have seen when the anvil actually split when struck by Notung - a decided improvement. James Morris as the Wanderer was again inspiring as were Ekkehard Wlaschiha and Brigitta Svendén. Penelope Daner was a poor Brünnhilde. Her voice was adequate but her tendency towards large gestures made one afraid that she might hit Siegfried or worse, throw herself off the stage into the orchestra pit. Rumour suggests that maestro Levine was afraid of the latter!

Götterdämmerung was another triumph. Brigitta Svendén, Michelle DeYoung and Frances Ginzler were excellent Norns and Hildegard Behrens returned in much better voice though Siegfried Jerusalem was obviously tiring. The setting for the Gibichung hall was magnificent and Alan Held -

Gunther, Eric Halfvarson - Hagen and Marie Plette as Guttrune gave an incisive account of this very dysfunctional family. The destruction of the hall was a very graphic depiction of a world in chaos and a fitting prelude to Valhalla's flames.

A traditional production has much to offer particularly as a balance to more minimalist approaches which so often require a level of understanding which may or may not be there. The 'surtitles' on the back of the seat in front were excellent and their very immediacy, I found, illuminated several scenes in which I have sometimes felt somewhat at a loss. The orchestra under Levine supported the singers and gave the complexities of the score a delicacy and richness of texture that was hard to fault; all in all it was a wonderful experience which I am still enjoying in retrospect.

BARBARA McNULTY

STOP PRESS FROM BAYREUTH

Our reporter from the first cycle tells us that John Wegner sang an excellent Donner, beautifully expressed, musically satisfying and tellingly acted. John has been invited to return. It is to be hoped that rehearsal requirements for Wotan in the Adelaide Ring leave room for him to perform in Bayreuth in 1998.

Another bit of good news is that Deborah Polaski has been engaged to sing in Australia in January 2000.

SEMINAR ON TANNHÄUSER

In preparation for productions of *Tannhäuser* in both Sydney and Melbourne next year we have the opportunity to attend a seminar at the Art Gallery of New South Wales on Saturday 22 November embracing opera, history and art. Speakers include Robert Gibson, Elke Neihardt, Antony Ernst and an art expert. The cost of \$30 to members and \$40 to non-members of the Wagner Society **includes lunch**. Please proceed straight to the Domain Theatre on level 1 (escalators and lifts). Tickets will not be mailed out but a register will be kept at the entrance to the theatre. Please return the coupon to the Wagner Society, GPO Box 4574, Sydney 2001 with your cheque by 1st November.

TANNHÄUSER

I/we wish to attend the seminar at the Art Gallery of New South Wales
(Domain Theatre, level 1) on Saturday 22 November 1997 at 10 am

Enclosed is \$----- covering ----- members at \$30/non-members at \$40

Name.....

Address:.....

Phone:.....

RECENT CD RELEASES

Reputedly the most expensive classical music recording ever undertaken, Sir Georg Solti's second recording of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* has received a mixed reception from the critics. Personally I have derived enormous pleasure from the set though it must be admitted that some of the casting is less than ideal. One of the chief glories of this *Meistersinger* is the conducting and playing of Solti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Solti conducts magnificently. His pacing, shaping and characterising of the score is unerring. The Decca engineers provided demonstration quality sound that is warm and exceptionally detailed.

Walter von Stolzing is sung by Ben Heppner. His glowing and golden tenor voice is a constant joy. To my ears his is the finest Walter to be heard on disc. Further fine performances come from Rene Pape (Pogner) and Herbert Lippert (David). On the negative side Jose van Dam's portrayal of Hans Sachs is light and slightly faceless, certainly not the authoritative character one is accustomed to hearing in this role. With repeated listenings I have come to an increasing appreciation of his interpretation. Another relative weakness is Karita Mattila's Eva whose voice lacks the radiance that this role requires. Reservations notwithstanding, this is a glorious set. [Decca 452 606 2 (4)].

Those who enjoyed Alessandra Marc's live interpretation of Sieglinde earlier this year might want to investigate the new recording featuring the Cleveland Orchestra conducted by Christopher von Dohnanyi. [Decca 440 371-2 (4)]. As in the Sydney Symphony performance, Ms Marc's Sieglinde proves to be the highlight of the production. Robert Holl is cast as Wotan and Poul Elming sings Siegmund. Both perform competently but neither is in any way outstanding. The same can be said of the veteran Anja Silja's Fricka. Less recommendable is the Brünnhilde of Gabriele Schnaut whose voice is marred by a wide and unpleasant vibrato.

Dohnanyi's conducting is a vast improvement on his Rheingold recording, though the measured tempi that he adopts tends to rob the music of the momentum that it requires. The orchestral playing and recording are of a very high quality. Whilst I do not know a completely satisfying version of *Walküre*, The Furtwängler/Vienna Philharmonic performance on EMI remains my first choice.

What a different world one enters when listening to Karl Elmendorff conducting *Götterdämmerung*. This is a live recording made at Bayreuth in 1942. One can only wonder at the composition of the audience at the time! This performance is red hot and laden with atmosphere. Listening to the encounter between Alberich and Hagen (Robert Burg and Friedrich Dalberg) at the start of Act Two will send shivers down your spine. The malevolence leaps out at you. Martha Fuchs is a powerful and distinctive Brünnhilde though some may be distracted by her sometimes unattractive and strained voice. The youthful Set Svanholm is a more than competent Siegfried. Elmendorff conducts with passion and urgency, bringing out orchestral detail that I had previously been unaware of. Considering its vintage, the recording is acceptable though some distortion and background noise must be tolerated. This is one of the great Wagner performances on disc and I urge you to seek it out. [Preiser 90164 (4)].

A disc of Wagnerian bleeding chunks featuring Waltraud Meier and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lorin Maazel has just been released on RCA. I have not yet heard it but my spies tell me that it is quite exceptional. "The most thrilling Wagner to appear in years" according to Alan Blyth of the *Gramophone*. Sounds pretty good!

IVOR ZETLER



KENNETH NEATE 28 July 1914 - 26 June 1997

Australian tenor Kenneth Neate, born in Cessnock, died in Munich on 26 June this year. His first major engagement after World War II was for Covent Garden's first season in 1947 and his subsequent career over the next three decades took him to the principal European opera-houses, to Montreal, New York, Covent Garden (opposite Joan Sutherland in *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 1959) and back to Australia. Neate toured with the J.C. Williamson Company in the 1950s, with the Elizabethan Theatre Trust in 1960 and his final Australian tour was in 1970. Besides other principal tenor roles, Neate's Wagner roles were central to his repertoire: he sang Loge at Bayreuth in 1963, Lohengrin and Tristan for many companies (including Tristan to Birgit Nilsson's Isolde in Stockholm in 1966) and Tannhäuser more than 150 times world wide. After his retirement he taught singing in Munich. (*Extracts from obituary by Elizabeth Forbes in The Independent, 1 July 1997.*)

BARRY MILLINGTON to give keynote address at A WEEKEND WITH THE RING

This is the conference to be held in Adelaide from September 26 to 28 1997. We outlined the program in an earlier newsletter and it is not too late to book (GPO Box 2373 Adelaide SA 5001). Barry Millington is an English writer, critic, broadcaster and lecturer who has written several books on Richard Wagner, is the compiler of that excellent encyclopaedia, *The Wagner Compendium*, contributes regularly to scholarly journals and has also contributed Wagner articles in the *New Grove Dictionary of Opera* and the forthcoming *New Illustrated History of Opera*.

MEMBER'S REQUEST

Alec Cohen lent his early Bayreuth programs to someone two or three years ago and is not sure to whom. They were the programs of the *Ring* cycle, *Parsifal* and *Tannhäuser* for the period 1954/55. If anyone can help locate them please ring Alec on 9416 7669.

WAGNER ON THE COUCH

We have been advised that the Sydney Classical Music Society will present an event entitled *Wagner on the Couch* on Saturday November 1st at 1.30pm at the Opera Centre, 480 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills. A panel of experts will have their say about Richard Wagner's character and personality. They are Professor John Milfull, (European Studies, UNSW), Ms Elke Neidhardt (German opera producer involved in Opera Australia's productions of *Werther* and *Tannhäuser*), Dr John Carmody (Music critic, Sun Herald) and Dr. Martin Kaplan (a psychiatrist who will give his opinion and diagnosis). Admission is \$15. Enquiries: 9380 5871.

SIMONE YOUNG, OA and the SSO

Congratulations to Simone Young on her appointment as music director to Opera Australia. Although she does not take up this official post until 2001, she and current artistic director, Moffat Oxenbould, are in consultation in the meantime - and Miss Young is currently in Australia where she has been performing as guest conductor with the Western Australian Symphony Orchestra, the Melbourne and Sydney Symphony Orchestras.

Although any announcement about concert performances of *Siegfried* and *Götterdämmerung* is premature, the SSO is keeping our appetites whetted by presenting a concert in the ABN AMRO Great Performers series on 8 April 1998 with an all-Strauss and Wagner program. Simone Young will conduct the concert, and Elizabeth Connell sing Brünnhilde's immolation scene; the rest of the program is Thus Spake Zarathustra, the Prelude and Love-death from *Tristan and Isolde*, and Siegfried's Rhine Journey from *Götterdämmerung*.

BAYREUTH SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The winner of the Bayreuth scholarship awarded by the Wagner Society in New South Wales this year is mezzo-soprano Elizabeth Campbell, who is of course well known to Australian opera-goers. Ms Campbell will be travelling to Bayreuth in October to study under two important Wagner teachers: Jean Cox and Anna Reynolds. Her repertoire with the AO has embraced *Carmen*, *Alcina*, *La Clemenza di Tito*, *Tales of Hoffmann*, *Werther*, *Les Troyens*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Die Meistersinger* (Magdalene). In 1997 she sang Count Orlovski in *Die Fledermaus* and Preziosilla in *Force of Destiny*; she also made a splendid Sesto at the performance of *Julius Caesar* that this editor saw on 12 July. At the Brisbane Biennale she will sing Brigit in Korngold's *Dead City*. We look forward to hearing Elizabeth Campbell's performances as Waltraute in the Adelaide Ring (where she will also be covering Fricka).

As a matter of interest, we learn from the September issue of *Wagner News* (UK) that one of three singers awarded a Bayreuth bursary by the Wagner Society in the UK is another Australian mezzo-soprano, Liane Keegan. She has recently been singing with Opera North and sang Waltraute with Scottish Opera in *Die Walküre* during the Edinburgh Festival in August. Ms Keegan has also been engaged to sing three roles in the Adelaide Ring: Erda in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*, and First Norn in *Götterdämmerung* whilst understudying both Waltrautes.

SINGER'S WIN

Congratulations to another Australian singer - and society member - Adele Johnston on winning the City of Melbourne Song Recital Award in May last. The New South Wales singer won from a field of singers from Australia and New Zealand. Her program for the final competition was *Die Sieben Siesel* (Strauss), *Liebesbriefchen* (Korngold), *Widmung* (Schumann) and *Fünf Gedichte von Mathilde Wesendonck* by Wagner.

HANS HOTTER, HANS KNAPPERTSBUSCH and HANS SACHS.

The society wishes to record its thanks to Professor David Nunn whose talk on 20 July following the AGM was full of fascinating information, supported by rare recordings and film clips. As a mini-research resource, he had prepared for the audience copies of a booklet with illustrations and chronologies of the conductor and the singer. Those who stayed away from the annual general meeting missed a treat.

THANK YOU AUNTY

August was Wagner month on the ABC. For four successive Sundays listeners were treated to a production of the *Ring Cycle* on ABC-FM recorded in 1996 at the Berlin Staatsoper with Daniel Barenboim conducting the Berlin Staatskapelle. Principal singers were John Tomlinson (Wotan), Peter Schreier (Loge), Gunter von Kannen (Alberich) Peter Menzel (Mime), Rene Pape (Fasolt), Siegfried Vogel (Fafner), Poul Elming (Siegmund), Waltraud Meier (Sieglinde) Deborah Polaski (Brünnhilde) and Siegfried Jerusalem (Siegfried). As a valuable support to the performances, an appreciation of the musical and dramatic construction of each opera (illustrated by musical themes) was given by Professor Denis Matthews on each afternoon preceding the opera. This series of commentaries had been recorded by the BBC in 1982. The ABC also made Wagner composer of the week in the first week of August. The August issue of their program guide, *24 Hours* contains a very readable interview with John Wegner entitled "How like a god".

WAGNER AROUND THE WORLD

1997 INTERNATIONAL WAGNER CONGRESS IN BORDEAUX

Unfortunately there were no representatives from New South Wales at the congress. Apart from concerts and wine-tastings, some major programs of the participating organisations were reported. Of interest is the Bayreuth bursary fund set up to help young performers and others who would otherwise find it difficult to attend the Bayreuth festival. Winners receive free tickets to performances, free accommodation or other financial help, and the possibility to audition for the festival chorus. Bursary holders come from many different countries.

NORWICH.

An earlier issue of this newsletter foreshadowed the transmission of the Norwegian Opera's *Ring* to Norwich. This event took place in June to wide acclaim: (producer Mike Ashman, musical director Heinz Fricke, designer Kathrine Hysing). Following are extracts from first, the review of the last night by John Allison in *The Times* of Tuesday 1 July 1997, and secondly, the review in *The Financial Times* of Saturday 28 June.

"It's not often an audience emerges from the fourth and longest opera of *The Ring* feeling revitalised, but as the Rhine overflowed and Valhalla was engulfed in flames at the close of *Götterdämmerung*, many of the 1,200 who packed Norwich's Theatre Royal on Saturday looked ready to repeat their ten-day adventure. The city's first *Ring*, presented with resourceful flair by the Theatre Royal and Norwegian Opera, is memorable above all for being so refreshingly free of the Teutonic baggage that often weighs Wagner's cycle down." The review makes the point that the conductor Heinz Fricke was able to achieve a musical intimacy not common in larger theatres. "Fricke's pacing was steady throughout and his support of the singers always considerate. None had to shout, and some managed almost to whisper at times, getting words and musical lines across with ease." Without listing the cast, mention must be made of the two principals we will be hearing in Adelaide: "Edward Cook's Siegfried was in stronger voice, having started out as a hard-working but underpowered hero. Best of all was Carol Yahr's alert and radiant Brünnhilde, who over her moving scenes developed into the true heroine of this remarkable cycle."

JOHN ALLISON

Andrew Clark in *The Financial Times* calls this "a simple well-made *Ring*, resourcefully designed and expertly conducted. Of the singers he remarks: "The only world-class performance on stage is Rosemarie Lang's regal Fricka ... "Deiner ew'gen Gattin" gave me the goose-bumps. Hartmut Welker's Alberich almost matches her for nobility of timbre and intelligence of purpose. There are two promising tenors - Jyrki Niskanen's blond, willowy Siegmund and Edward Cook's engagingly naive Siegfried - both of whom sing musically... , but Carol Yahr's Brünnhilde makes a splendid warrior-maiden. The way she charged at Wotan after receiving her sentence in *Walküre*, and her look of virginal curiosity, tinged with fear, in the final scene of *Siegfried* - these will be just two of my abiding memories of the Norwich *Ring*."

ANDREW CLARK

PARSIFAL - Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam and St. Petersburg

Easter is the season favoured for performances of *Parsifal*. The Bradys just missed it as they left Berlin for the Hamburg *Ring* the day before Parsifal's Berlin opening on Good Friday. However, Berlin and Paris were not out of reach for Leo Schofield as members may have read in the *Sydney*

Morning Herald of 10th April. In his judgment, Barenboim's Berlin performance was the more satisfying of the two, with a production by Harry Kupfer and a cast including Waltraud Meier whom he calls "the great Kundry of the age" in a role she has made her own. Rather less tactful than Leo's is the review of the Paris *Parsifal* in the August 1997 issue of *Opera* (UK). "Operatic life in Paris plodded on with a new production of *Parsifal* at the Bastille (April 3). Armin Jordan's four-square conducting had the virtue of speed...The producer, Graham Vick, clearly lacked strong ideas...Thomas Moser in the title role seemed to be stretched to his limits, while Kathryn Harries was stretched well beyond hers...." **JOEL KASOW**.

In his review of the premiere performance of *Parsifal* at the Kirov Opera in the *Financial Times* of 17th March 1997, Richard Fairman writes: "Valery Gergiev, the Kirov Opera's astonishingly energetic artistic director (now appointed to head the Kirov Ballet as well) has raised the standard and profile of his company to the highest international level. In short, he has shown what the "new" Russia can do and another landmark was passed last weekend when the Maryinsky became the first of the country's main opera-houses to stage *Parsifal*, an occasion rich in historic significance. He also makes comparisons: "In a year of important new productions of *Parsifal* in Europe, Gergiev himself can hold his head up high. On balance, his was probably the most satisfying performance, more skilful at pacing the long acts than Simon Rattle in Amsterdam, less content to skim across the surface of the music that Armin Jordan in Paris." **RICHARD FAIRMAN**.

The Kirov's *Parsifal* was also reviewed comprehensively in the July issue of *Opera* (UK) in which the history of Wagner in St. Petersburg is surveyed. "Gergiev's biggest aim has been to re-introduce Wagner, and with *Parsifal* now achieved, he plans a new production of *Der fliegende Holländer* next year. Anti-German sentiment after WW2, especially strong in long-besieged Leningrad, and the strictures of Stalin's musical thought-police had combined to leave a big, Wagner-shaped hole in the repertory, though a production of *Lohengrin* survived at the Kirov Opera into the 1980s. But Russia once had a great Wagner tradition, which the composer himself started - Wagner conducted an important series of concerts in St Petersburg in 1863, in one of which the Tristan Prelude and Liebestod were heard together for the first time anywhere. The Maryinsky Theatre's first production was *Lohengrin* (1868), and all the major works except *Parsifal*, were to follow...This new *Parsifal* was nearly a Russian premiere". Of the opening night of *Parsifal* he writes "...what made it so memorable was the burning intensity of the orchestral playing under Gergiev. As his Covent Garden *Lohengrin* showed, this conductor has a special affinity for Wagner, and here he caught the score's ecstatic beauty and all the pain too. Each act was carefully paced, and though tempos were seldom fast the performance swept along compellingly. The Kirov Orchestra's tight strings and rounded, blazing brass sounded thrilling - this was an idiomatic, world-class account in a theatre without a living Wagner tradition."

JOHN ALLISON



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, nos 1-3, 1997; *Leitmotive*: the journal of the Wagner Society of Northern California, vol 10 No. 4 Winter 1996; *Newsletter, Richard Wagner Society of South Australia*, nos. 106-108, June-August 1997; *Newsletter, Wagner Society of New Zealand*, vol. 1 no. 8, July 1997; *Richard Wagner Nachrichten*: Österreichische Richard Wagner Gesellschaft, Jahrgang 9/ Folge 3, Jul-Sept. 1997; *Wagner* (The Wagner Society, UK) vol. 18 no. 2, May 1997; *Wagner News* (The Wagner Society, UK) nos. 121-122, June & Sept. 1997. *Wagner Notes* (Wagner Society of New York) Vol.30 no. 3, 1997.

THE RAVENS REPORTING, compiled by Camron Dyer

- Adelaide *The Ring* - 3 cycles in 1998.
November 18, 19, 21, 24; November 27, 28, December 1, 4; December 5, 7, 9, 12.
- Berlin Deutsche Oper
Parsifal - April 10, 13, 19 May 3, 1998.
Lohengrin - April 26, 30, 1998.
Tristan und Isolde - August 31 September 7, 1997.
Die Meistersinger - September 24, 28, 1997. May 17, 21, 24, 1998.
Tannhäuser - October 3, 12, 1997.
Holländer - October 8, 24, 26, 1997. July 2, 5, 1998.
The Ring - 2 cycles - Nov 19, 23, 26, 30, 1997. Feb 25, 28 March 4, 8, 1998.
Staatsoper Unter den Linden
Die Meistersinger - no specific dates - part of Festival 1998, April 5 to 16.
Das Rheingold - September 7, 11, 13 Oct 3, 5, 11, 17 Nov 4, 26 Dec 14, 25,
1997 January 31 April 12 June 6, 27, 1998.
- Bonn *Tristan und Isolde* - new production - opens February 8, 1998.
- Cologne *Lohengrin* - opens January 17, 1998.
Tristan und Isolde - new production - opens March 15, 1998.
- Copenhagen *Tannhäuser* - new production - October 5 [first night].
- Darmstadt *Holländer* - opens June 14, 1998.
- Dortmund *The Ring* - 2 cycles in 1998. June 1 to 7 and June 8 to 14, 1998.
- Flagstaff *Holländer* - September 9, 11, 14, 17, 20 December 11, 13, 16, 1997.
- Hamburg *Das Rheingold* - March 2, 6 May 10, 19, 1998.
Die Walküre - March 15, 19 May 15, 21, 1998.
Siegfried - April 10, 13 May 27, 1998.
Götterdämmerung - April 26, 29 May 31, 1998.
- Helsinki *Die Walküre* - new production - November 14, 17, 20, 24, 29, 1997.
- Liege *Tannhäuser* - May 15, 17, 21, 23, 26, 1998.
- Linz *Siegfried* - concert performance - September 19, 1997.
- London English National Opera
Holländer - September 15, 17, 24, 26, 29 October 3, 8, 10, 15, 17, 1997.
- Mannheim *The Ring* - new production for the 1998/99 season.
- Paris Theatre du Chatelet
Parsifal - September 27, 30 October 3, 6, 9, 12, 1997.
Götterdämmerung - Act 3 - concert performance - March 26, 1998.
- Prague *Tannhäuser* - October 5, 10, 12, 17, 1997, June 13, 17, 20, 1998.
- Seattle *Tristan und Isolde* - August 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 1998.
- Stockholm *Holländer* - opens January 21, 1998.
Tannhäuser - Deutsche Oper Berlin at the Royal Opera - May 7, 9, 12, 1998.
- Tokyo Bunka Kaikan
Holländer - Deutsche Oper Berlin - January 28, 29, 31 February 2, 1998.
NHK Hall
Tannhäuser - Deutsche Oper Berlin - February 5, 8, 11, 14, 1998.
- Utrecht *Parsifal* - new production - opens February 6, 1998.
- Zurich *Tristan und Isolde* - new production - opens December 7, 1997.