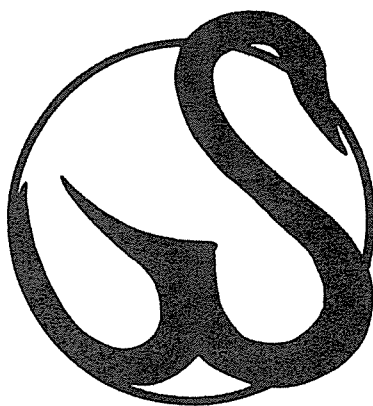


The Wagner Society

IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

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



Newsletter

No. 72, September 1998

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

COMING EVENTS

<i>DATE</i>	<i>EVENT</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
September 20	Antony Ernst: "Götterdämmerung and some production difficulties in staging the Ring"	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
October 18	<i>Götterdämmerung</i> video	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
November 15	Video: <i>The Ring for Television</i> (Chéreau production), followed by Richard Wagner Market (see page 12)	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
December 13	Christmas Party	Goethe Institut 2.00 pm

COMMITTEE 1998-99

President	Barbara McNulty	9487 1344
Vice President and Treasurer	Olive Coonan	9387 6403
Vice President and Membership Secretary	[awaiting confirmation]	
Secretary	Barry Walters	9387 6642
Members	Barbara Brady (Editor, Newsletter)	9956 5132
	Roger Cruickshank	9357 7631
	Onofrio Ferrara	97994569
	Clare Hennessy	9747 5664
	Shirley Robertson	9707 2225
	Terence Watson	9517 2786
Public Officer	Reg Maloney	

THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 1997-98

Dear Members,

It came as quite a shock to realise that twelve months have passed since our last Annual General Meeting and that it was time to prepare the Annual Report for the period April 1997 to March 1998. The year has been busy and I think successful.

Perhaps the most important thing to record is the growing interest in and understanding of the works of Richard Wagner. This is evident at concert and opera performances as well as seminars, and augers well for the future of our Society.

During the year we had large groups attending the two concert performances of *Walküre*, both of which were outstanding. Several members reported they got more out of these performances than from other staged versions they had seen.

The new *Tannhäuser* earlier this year provoked a range of reactions and considerable discussion. Many people loved it, some hated it, and others found it rather like the curate's egg: not so good in parts. Whatever one's response to the production, the consensus was that the music was excellent and a welcome addition to the repertoire. More importantly, many people who would not normally attend an evening of Wagner went to see what all the fuss was about and became converts.

We were delighted to be invited by the Art Gallery of NSW to co-host a seminar on *Tannhäuser* at the Gallery in November 1997. It was a most successful day, a delightful venue and delicious lunch and teas were served by the art gallery Volunteers. The seminar had been a suggestion of Jean Whitehouse, a long time member of the Wagner Society and of the Art Gallery, and we were pleased to dedicate the day to her memory as she had died some months earlier.

Another long time member we mourned was Lady Gallaghan, Persia to her many friends, who made enormous contributions to many aspects of life in this State, particularly music. Her gaiety, generosity and charm are all sadly missed.

During the year we strengthened our relationship with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Opera Australia. Our association with Opera Foundation Australia continues and we were pleased to provide an airfare for the 1997 scholar, Elizabeth Campbell, to allow her to study in Germany for her forthcoming role in the Adelaide *Ring*.

The future holds much Wagner in store. The Adelaide *Ring* is our next treat and we are proud to be listed as a major sponsor of this historic undertaking. Next year we shall have a concert version of *Siegfried*, and there are whispers (or should I say 'forest murmurs') of a *Götterdämmerung* and a *Parsifal* in 2000 and perhaps a *Tristan* in 2001. The music of Richard Wagner is indeed alive and well in New South Wales as we move into the new century.

Our Society is also prospering. Our membership is increasing steadily and attendances at meetings have been very encouraging. Despite an unavoidable increase in the costs of using the

Goethe Institut we have been able to maintain our charges for membership and meetings at current levels and make significant contributions towards the various performances we have seen and enjoyed. Our special thanks go to those members who make personal donations to the Society throughout the year.

We are also grateful to the Goethe Institut for making us so welcome as this is an ideal venue and we express our appreciation to Countess Ute Baudissin, the Director, and her staff.

We are also grateful to the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr Otto Roever, and his staff for their ongoing support and interest in the Society.

The Committee has worked hard. Paul Lehmann has been an ideal Vice President. Olive Coonan is tireless as our Honorary Treasurer and can turn her hand willingly to any task that needs doing. Barry Walters is a marvellous Secretary and I would be lost without him. Terence Watson is bringing fresh ideas to the program, which is in sure hands. Our meetings would be far less interesting without the work of Shirley Robertson who provides our delicious afternoon teas. Barbara Brady is a most efficient Newsletter editor, always on the lookout for interesting material to include, with Clare Hennessy as an able assistant. Janet Wayland works diligently in the background keeping our membership files up to date - and this is no easy matter.

Reg Maloney continues as our Public Officer and Josef Ferfoggia as our Auditor, and we thank them both for their continuing interest and support.

Paul and Janet are retiring from the Committee this year and will be sadly missed as they have both made very significant contributions to our Society over many years.

Lastly I must express my appreciation to you all for your support.

BARBARA McNULTY

ADDRESS

Please note our permanent address for all correspondence

The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc

GPO Box 4574 SYDNEY NSW 2001

Telephone: 9487 1344 (Barbara McNulty, President)

E-Mail: bradywav@acay.com.au (Barbara Brady for *Newsletter* items)

All contributions to the *Newsletter* are gratefully received and may be sent to the editor at the above address; copyright permission for extracts from publications will be sought by the editor where appropriate.

**THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 1998**

1997	CURRENT ASSETS	1998
200.00	Prepayments: functions - theatre party	3619.00
567.00	Prepayment: luncheon May	1000.00
1107.15	Cash at bank	298.86
22905.97	Investment	30011.85
1471.14	Public Donation Account	317.25
730.00	Stocks: P/S brochures and raffle tickets, envelopes, etc.	230.00
6956.00	46 items Lohengrin set design/frames	6956.00
120.00	8 Wagner T-shirts	120.00
34057.26		42552.96
	FIXED ASSETS	
185.00	Filing cabinet	185.00
(185.00)	less depreciation	(185.00)
990.00	Set of speakers	990.00
(990.00)	less depreciation	(990.00)
695.00	Typewriter	695.00
(695.00)	less depreciation	(695.00)
100.00	Urn	100.00
(100.00)	less depreciation	(100.00)
0.00		0.00
34057.26	TOTAL ASSETS	42552.96
	less CURRENT LIABILITIES	
135.00	Prepaid membership	230.00
0.00	Prepaid theatre party	2365.00
135.00	TOTAL LIABILITIES	2595.00
33922.26	TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS AS AT 31/3/98	39957.96

ACCUMULATED FUNDS ANALYSIS

Surplus as at 31 March 1997	33922.26
Plus surplus for Year 1997/1998	6035.70
Surplus as at 31 March 1998	39957.96

THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC
REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 1998

1997	CURRENT ACTIVITIES	1998
8275.00	REVENUE - MEMBERSHIP	8920.00
	Less administration costs:	
1724.65	Newsletters: printing and distribution	1646.66
879.90	Printing, stationery, postage and telephone	1624.39
74.74	Bank charges	63.71
352.20	Subscriptions	318.40
545.02	Insurance	550.00
16.00	Written-off: Answer Phone	0.00
30.00	Statutory and other fees	35.00
4652.49	Surplus / (Deficiency)	4681.84
	REVENUE - OTHER	
732.50	Sale of Wagner T-shirts	0.00
975.00	Sale of books, CDs, journals, etc.	0.00
4247.00	Lectures and functions	4810.10
11601.00	Theatre parties	4970.00
3809.00	Annual luncheon May 1997	3520.00
1303.00	Annual competition 1997	1116.00
1201.68	Bank / Investment interest	1116.76
23869.18		15532.86
	LESS EXPENSES	
564.00	Wagner T-shirts	0.00
550.00	Books, CDs, journals, etc.	0.00
2620.89	Lectures and functions	3566.61
10575.70	Theatre parties	3646.00
4589.55	Annual luncheon May 1997	3595.50
22.35	Annual competition 1997	150.00
328.00	Miscellaneous, advertising and publicity	67.00
4618.69	Surplus / (Deficiency)	11025.11
9271.18	TOTAL CURRENT ACTIVITIES	4507.75
	SURPLUS / (DEFICIENCY)	9189.59

1997	PUBLIC DONATIONS AND INVESTMENT ACCOUNT REVENUE	1998
1050.00	Donations	850.00
5.10	Interest	2.37
1055.10		852.32
	LESS EXPENDITURE	
3350.00	Sponsorships and donations	3993.00
5.53	Bank charges	13.21
	TOTAL EXTRAORDINARY ACTIVITIES	4006.21
(2300.43)	Surplus / (deficiency)	(3153.89)
6970.75	TOTAL SURPLUS / (DEFICIENCY) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31/3/1998	6035.70

DETAILS OF DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIP

Bayreuth Scholarship Winner C. Campbell	1993.00
Opera Australia	<u>2000.00</u>
	<u>3993.00</u>

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.

Oliver P. Conan
Hon Treasurer

[Signature]
Auditor

**WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC
FINANCIAL MEMBERS AS AT 31 JULY 1998**

Mr R J Accola; Mr P Alger; Mr & Mrs D W Allen; Mr & Mrs M Allman; Dr & Mrs G Amigo; Mrs J Anderson; Mr C Andrew; Ms S Ansell; Mrs S Baer; Mrs C Bailey; Ms P Baillie; Mr & Mrs D Balog; Mrs M Baumgartner; Ms M Baxter; Dr W Brooks & Mr A Beck; Ms S Beesley; Dr B Boman; Dr M Bookallil; Ms J Bowen; Mr & Mrs I Brady; Miss L Brauer; Mrs M Bridges; Mrs J M Brown; Revd A R Caulfield Browne; Mr J Bryant; Mr & Mrs J Buchanan; Mr R Buckdale; Mrs M Budge; Mrs A P Byrne; Mrs B Carfrae; Hon. R J Carr MP; Mr A Carter; Dr J H Casey; Miss A Casimir; Mr & Mrs R Chalmers; 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; Mrs N Conigrave; Mr & Mrs M Connery; Mrs O Coonan; Mr. & Mrs R Cooper; Mrs M Crane; Mr R Cruikshank; Mr C Jones & Mr P Curran; Mrs J Darlington; Mr & Mrs M Day; Mrs G Dechert; Mr & Mrs H Derichs; Ms B de Rome; Mr B G Dexter; Mr H Donaldson; Mr & Mrs BHK Donovan; Dr and Mrs N Dorsch; Mr J Drew; Mr B C Ducker; Ms H N Dunlop; Mr H Ebert; 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 W Fyfe; Ms S Gabriel; Mrs I Garofali; Mr R Gastineau-Hills; Ms L Geeves; Mr R Gibson; Mr W Gillespie; Ms S Gillies; Miss M Glacken; Ms D Goss; Dr A Goy; Mr & Mrs K Grant; Miss N Grant MBE; Dr J Gregory-Roberts; Mr L Knight & Mr M Greyling; Mrs J E Griffin; Mr & Mrs I Gzell; Prof & Mrs P Hall; Mr & Mrs A Hamlin; Mrs S P Handley; Mrs M Harris; Mrs S Hartnett; Dr F & Dr P Harvey; Mr S Hatcher; Ms M Hayton; Mr C J Heathers; Miss S Hebbard; Miss C Hennessy; Miss M Hennessy; Mrs W Hinds; Miss M Hiscock; Mr & Mrs E Holliday; Mr T Hudson; Miss C Hughes; Drs I & L Hunter; Mr E Insausti; Mrs C Jackaman; Mr & Mrs D Jamieson; Dr E Janssen; Ms A Johnston; Dr & Mrs B Jones; Miss E Jones; Mrs E Jumikis; Misses D & I Kallinikos; Dr S M Kelly; Mrs V King; Dr & Mrs D King; Dr K Koller; Ms I Kowalski; Mr K Baldenhofer & Mrs E Kraefft; Mrs R Kruszelnicki; Ms S Lee; Mr P A Lehmann; Dr J Leigh; Ms E Lenthall; Mr & Mrs H Littman; Mrs E Long; Mr B R Love; Ms J MacKenzie; Mr A Mackerras; Mrs P Maclaren-Smith; Mr G Magney; Ms L Maher; Mrs B Maloney; Mr E Manass; Mr J Mant; Ms J 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 McCarthy; Mr A McDonald; Mr R McDonald; Mrs P McGaw; Mr. J M McGrath; Mr B McKenzie; Mrs B McNulty; Mr N Mercer; Mr & Mrs W Merretz; Dr & Mrs T A Mitchell; Mr J. Moessis; Mr F Montgomery; Ms P Moore; Mrs E M Moser; Mrs J Mulveney; Mr D Mutton; Mr & Mrs W F Naylor; Dr B & Mr C Newton; Mr & Mrs P Nicholson; Ms M A Nicoll; Mr G A Nicoll; Mr W Norris; Mr & Mrs A Olave; Mr B E Parsons; Mrs H Perini; Mr P Phillips; Mr C Piper; Mr P Thompson & Mr A Pratt; Mr G Ramsay; Ms J E Read; Mr K Reed; Mr G Richards; Mr & Mrs G Roberts; Mrs S Robertson; Mrs M Saunders; Ms C Segura; Mr S Sheffer; Ms N Siano; Mr J A Simmonds; Mr R Smallwood; Mr & Mrs W Spiller; Mr & Mrs R Staniland; Mr R Steele; Ms C Stoldt; Ms A T Straube; Mr J Studdert; Mrs E Sullivan; Dr & Mrs W Suthers; Mr & Mrs A J Sutton; Rear Admiral and Mrs R. Swan; Ms A Swebbs; Mr C Terrasson; Mrs P E Thompson; Mr R Stone & Mr J Thomson; 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 C F Westrip; Mr R Whitelaw; Mrs M Whitlam; Mrs A Williamson; Mr Gary L Wilson; Mr D Delany & Mr A Wong; Dr I Zetler; Dr A Ziegler.

**TICKETS TO BAYREUTH 1999 THROUGH THE WAGNER SOCIETY
In NEW SOUTH WALES Inc**

- 1) Members eligible to apply must be financial members of two years' continuous membership.
- 2) Only signed orders placed on the form below will be accepted.
- 3) You are responsible for the cost of the tickets once they are received and all payments for these must be made through the Society.
- 4) Tickets will only be sold as a package.
- 5) The Society will add a service charge of \$100.00 per set of tickets to cover the Society's expenses and overheads in ordering and distributing the tickets.

Send to The Wagner Society in New South Wales Inc, GPO Box 4574, Sydney, NSW, 2001.
CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: 30TH SEPTEMBER, 1998

Signature:
Name:
Address:
Phone Number (work and home):
Number of Tickets required:

CONGRATULATIONS ROBERT GIBSON

Robert Gibson, who is a member of the Wagner Society, has just completed his Master's Degree and has been awarded First Class Honours and the University Medal for his thesis on *Parsifal*. Congratulations Robert and good luck for the future.

Robert lectures at the Conservatorium of Music, Sydney University, and has given lectures for us and other community music groups. He will give the lectures on *Parsifal* next year at our weekend in the Hunter.

ON SIEGFRIED

I was surprised to read on page 8 of the June 1998 Newsletter that *Siegfried* rated last in the Wagner on the Web user survey (*Rienzi*, *Das Liebesverbot* and *Die Feen* not included or less than 15 score).

From first hearing this wonderful work via my brand new Solti/Culshaw Decca Sonicstage set in 1961, soon after it came out, it has almost been my favourite. As a young child, I had always loved an illustrated book called *Told by the Norsemen* (or *Tales from the Eddas*) and my imagination was always taken by the god Odin, Nidhogger the dragon and Mimir the giant. *Siegfried* still always seems to me the most Nordic of all the music dramas of the Ring. This was reinforced emphatically by a strongly cast performance I saw on 8th June at the wonderful new Helsinki Opera (opened 1994).

The Finnish National Opera and the Royal Swedish Opera began a collaborative Ring in 1996 and gave Rheingold first and Walkure in 1997. I understand the Finns are now pushing on alone and have now gone at least a step further than Sydney in 1985.

The production is by Götz Friedrich and musical direction by Leif Segerstam, who has very recently been appointed Chief Conductor of the Finnish National Opera, following his corresponding post in Stockholm. All of the amazing technical gimmickry of the Helsinki house was used, but not to distraction. From row 4 in the stalls I could clearly see the blackboard notes that Mime had on how to mend Nothung (stick part one to part two), the spots on the rather mysterious red umbrella that Mime unfurled whenever secret evil potion mixing or wicked intent to deceive was occurring, and the detailed runes on the Wanderer's spear. However there was also real Magic Fire, a huge oozy dragon, and extremely realistic and accurate forging. Also, being close, I could see that the five saucy Woodbirds (four of whom sang solos) were not really naked.

I thought this was producer's indulgence until I read in Newman that in the first prose sketches the birds were in fact plural, but Friedrich did not do this in either his Covent Garden 1980 or the current Deutsche Oper Berlin productions, both of which however have influenced the new Helsinki one: Wotan above on a split level stage with Erda among pit props in symmetry with the forest trees in Act 3 Scene 1, the details of the smithy, Siegfried wearing a bearskin in Act 1 rather than driving a bear, smashing the whole smithy rather than just the anvil, the huge tentacled dragon, and a rather simple Walküre rock.

A new twist included keeping Wotan/Wanderer in the scene as much as possible. For example, after the riddle scene in Act 1 he stayed in the background over the smithy just to see that the sword was in fact properly reforged by his not quite free hero. In the final scene, his shattered spear, enlarged, with its runes clearly visible, remained beside the Walküre rock

The trouble with *Siegfried* is the second act. Apart from the dragon scene and the woodbird scene and the Forest Murmurs there is rather too much going on between Wotan/Alberich, Siegfried/Mime, and Mime/ Alberich and the humour is rather heavy. It was about this time that I was told by my Finnish companion that the umbrella carried by Mime was probably meant to represent one of the most poisonous varieties of the many Finnish mushrooms (it wasn't in the program notes). She too found the second act slow.

The change in the musical texture, after the twelve year gap in composition from 1857 to 1869 is much more apparent in the theatre than on records, maybe because of the orchestra saving themselves or because of interval fortification by audience and orchestra alike. Certainly it was louder and richer in every respect.

Culshaw talks of nothing more boring than a bad Siegfried but a good one leaves one in a state of high exaltation. Brünnhilde awakening awakens everyone and provided Siegfried is not sung out, the closing love/rape/surrender scene can stir. In Helsinki, the curtain fell just as Karan Armstrong was opening her thighs to Stig Anderson. Both sang splendidly after a little initial below the note attack from the soprano.

Robert Hale gave his usual solid Wanderer/Wotan and of the others Mime (Arild Helleland) was best. Alberich was a rough Kalevi Olli, Fafner a weakish Bengt Rungren and Erda a richly sung but funnily dressed Mette Ejsing.

Leif Segerstam conducted passionately and finely throughout and the orchestral playing was nearly faultless, to my ears better than the Deutsche Oper Berlin, and included a wonderful horn solo in Act 2, and some clever faulty woodwind in the same Act.

I think another problem with Siegfried is that it takes longer to get to know, because it is so rarely performed other than as part of a complete cycle. The Solti recording is still easily the best, more so than any of his others compared to rivals, and I recommend repeated study of it to get to love this mighty Nordic work.

JIM LEIGH

(For a series of comments on the Internet, for and against Siegfried, see: <http://www.zazz.com.wagner> in the section headed: Your Favorite Wagnerian Singers...Ed.)

PARSIFAL at POKOLBIN

With the co-operation of Rosemary Cater Smith and Alec Cater we will be arranging a seminar on *Parsifal* at Catersfield House in the Hunter Valley on 13 and 14 March, 1999.

Catersfield House is situated in the Mistletoe area of NW Pokolbin and has all the facilities to tempt you to the Hunter for a relaxing and informative weekend. Rosemary and Alec will make you very welcome and the house is luxurious with wonderful views and a pool. Robert Gibson MA (Hons) will give two lectures on aspects of *Parsifal* on the Saturday.

The cost will be \$230 per person on a share basis and will include seminar fee, two nights' accommodation, full breakfasts on Saturday and Sunday, lunch, a wine-tasting and a gala dinner (BYO) on Saturday night. An additional fee of \$150 applies to anyone desiring single accommodation.

A booking coupon will be included in the December Newsletter. Catersfield House has room for some 18 guests and rooms will be allocated strictly on receipt of registrations in January. Overflow guests will be accommodated nearby.

RIGA AND THE WAGNER FESTIVAL

The trip to the Wagner Festival in Riga was most successful with sixteen of us setting forth in great anticipation. Our first brief stop was Helsinki where we were able to enjoy only a little of this beautiful city. The highlights were a launch trip around the Harbour and a visit to the famous Rock Church. We also attended a rather strange performance of *The Magic Flute* in the magnificent new opera house.

We had the pleasure of meeting Ilkka Paajanen, the President of the Wagner Society of Finland. Ilkka told us about the great interest in Wagner in Finland; some 50 of their members will go to Riga for the festival. They have just celebrated the centenary of the founding of the first Wagner Society in 1897 though it only lasted a few years. The present society has members spread throughout Finland, the youngest of whom is just 13 years old.

On then to Riga - and our first function was an official welcome and reception where we were able to meet the presidents of many Wagner societies largely from Germany but also from Latvia. Unfortunately the feature lecture was only in German and we are waiting to see the translated, printed version next month.

Riga is an 11th century city with cobbled streets and delightful old buildings. We found Wagner Street and the Wagner Hall where Wagner conducted during his short stay here in 1837/38. However it must be said that he seems to have travelled very lightly on the ground here as the house he stayed in has gone and there are few obvious signs of his sojourn other than the respect in which he is held.

Five operas were presented in the Festival: *Don Carlos*, *Aida*, *Alcina*, *Dutchman* and *Nabucco*. We didn't see *Don Carlos* but it received rave reviews and it would seem that all five were of a very high standard indeed. The newly refurbished Opera House has a very classical exterior and a delightful horseshoe-shaped interior with a large stage and very good sightlines. All the productions were modern and seemed to go straight to the essence of the opera without in any way detracting from the music or libretto. The singing was of a very high standard. Costumes, lighting and production were excellent. If there was a criticism it would be of the orchestra which was rather uneven with the drummer particularly giving a virtuoso performance which made one wonder if his day job might be in a rock band.

We were able to see quite a lot of the city and surrounding areas and were very privileged to hear the Berlioz Requiem performed in the Cathedral on the Day of National Mourning for those deported to Siberia. The Cathedral is famous for its acoustics and it was a very moving experience.

Our trip concluded with a bus tour to Lithuania which was all too short and then a flight to Tallinn and another brief glimpse of Estonia. The charm of these Baltic States is pervasive and while all three are struggling to establish new industry and once again take their place in the world as independent countries they offer visitors a chance to share very old and proud societies.

I would like to thank Barry Poole from Well Connected Travel for the opportunity to lead this tour and hope members will keep 2001 in mind for the next festival.

BARBARA McNULTY

RIGA. As a postscript to Barbara's first-hand account it is worth adding an extract from Richard Fairman's review in the *Financial Times* of 22 June 1998. He says: "Although it was the most conservative [of the five festival operas], the performance of *Der fliegende Holländer* was the strongest overall, upholding Riga's Wagnerian tradition with honour. A major reason was the debut of Mlada Hudoley, an exciting young soprano, who stole the show as Senta; but the whole cast was sturdy, including Yevgeny Vaslevsky from the Vilnius State Opera as the Dutchman, Brian Jauhianen from the US as Daland and Olegs Orlovs (only recently a chorus member) as a promising Erik."

NEW MEMBERS

The Society is delighted to welcome the following new members: William Gillespie, Ingrid Garofali and Richard Buckdale.

HORST HOFFMANN

In recognition of the great contribution Horst Hoffmann has made to the music of Wagner in this State, the Committee resolved to write and offer him Honorary membership of the Society.

In his reply he said, in part: "I feel so proud to become an Honorary Member of the Wagner Society and I do thank you. As you probably can imagine it is always an honor for me to be able to sing Wagner's operas. I have great respect for his music and feel very fortunate to have many opportunities to actually perform his work".

We welcome him as an Honorary Member and hope that we shall have the pleasure of seeing him occasionally at meetings.

RECORDING REVIEWS

Herbert von Karajan recorded all the mature Wagner operas apart from *Tannhäuser*. A document of his interpretation of this work is now available in the form of a 1963 live recording from the Vienna State Opera (DG 457 682-2)(M). This set is worth investigating because of Karajan's inspired conducting and the quality of some of the singing. Unfortunately the performance is significantly marred by the *Tannhäuser's* less-than-desirable vocal quality. Hans Beirer, a member of the permanent Vienna company, sounds strained and his voice is uningratiating. Gre Brouwenstein's Elizabeth is acceptable though hardly memorable. The balance of the singers are a vast improvement, not surprising if one considers the names involved. Christa Ludwig (Venus), Gottlob Frick (Landgraf), Eberhard Wachter (Wolfram) and the youthful and pure toned Gundala Janowitz as the shepherd. Karajan's Wagner interpretations tend to emphasise the lyrical and chamber music aspects of the score and this *Tannhäuser* is no exception. The Paris version is performed. The overture builds up to a blistering climax and the interpretation as a whole is beautifully paced with the additional advantage of the atmosphere of a live performance. Adequate mono sound. Solti's magnificent Decca recording, one of his finest Wagnerian efforts, remains the first choice in this opera.

More early Wagner with the release of a 1991 recording of *The Flying Dutchman* (DG437 778-2)(F). Giuseppe Sinopoli conducts the Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper Berlin. The star of this performance is undoubtedly Cheryl Studer singing Senta. She is in glorious voice,

firm and lustrous in tone. Her rendition of the part is possibly the finest available on disc. The rest of the cast are adequate but do not quicken the pulse to any great extent. Placido Domingo is in fine voice though his German diction is as poor as it usually is. Bernd Weikl (Dutchman), Hans Sotin (Daland) and Peter Seiffert (steersman) are the other main participants. Sinopoli's conducting disappoints; soft centred may best describe the results. All seems correct on the surface but I found difficulty in becoming involved. Turning to my preferred recording of this opera (Franz Konwitschny conducting the Staatskapelle Berlin on Berlin Classics) one finds a conductor with a far greater ability to phrase, pace and portray the drama of the work. Though it must be admitted that this set also has vocal deficiencies, it has the advantage of a cast that includes Frick, Wunderlich, and Fischer-Dieskau singing the part of the Dutchman. I have reservations about many of the recordings of this work. Klemperer (EMI) is lumbering and bloated, Karajan (EMI) is marred by poor sound and the previously praised Steinberg set on Naxos has diminished in stature with repeated listenings. An historic performance worth seeking out features Hans Hotter's fabled portrayal of the Dutchman and great conducting from Clemens Krauss (Preiser 90250). **IVOR ZETLER**

In his review in the *New York Times* of August 16, 1998 ("A Legend in His Prime at a Legendary Opera") David Hamilton is even less kind than Ivor about the Tannhäuser, Hans Beirer. However, he explains that the originally-scheduled protagonist was to have been a guest, Wolfgang Windgassen, and that Hans Beirer, "Vienna's durable utility heldentenor" was his substitute. *Ed.*

High Standards All Round: Alan Blyth on Wagner and Strauss re-issues. Extract from *Opera*, London, June 1998.

"The high standards attained in German repertory at Bayreuth, Munich and Salzburg during the 1950s are amply confirmed by recent issues from various sources beginning with the appearance - at last - on Music and Arts of the 1956 Bayreuth *Ring*, conducted by Hans Knappertsbusch (CD 1009, thirteen CDs for the price of ten), said to be the best of his cycles on the Green Hill. Considered alongside the recently remastered Decca *Ring*, for which he was discarded in favour of George Solti, this can stand as a what-might-have-been except that it is unlikely that the older conductor, in the studio, would have given so all-enveloping an interpretation as he does in the opera house".

DONATIONS:

The Society wishes to acknowledge with thanks the generosity of the following members:
Sue Kelly and Sue Gillies.

RICHARD WAGNER MARKET DAY

Market Day in Bayreuth on Sunday, 15th November- bring all your excess Wagner recordings, books and other memorabilia to sell or swap. Normal entry fees apply but sellers will be asked to pay an extra \$2 if their goods are valued under \$20 and \$5 if their goods are valued over \$20. The Society will set up tables for the display of goods. The Society cannot accept responsibility for the quality of goods. Find that bargain!

State Library - 10 Nov
7:30?

Taylor
Eng Rych

HERMANN PREY

Hermann Prey, German baritone, died at his home near Munich on 23 July, aged 69. The following extract from *The Times* obituary, 24 July 1998, illuminates his interpretation of *Die Meistersinger*.

“Prey the actor grew in stature and one of his most memorable creations was of the town-clerk Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger*, which he sang at Bayreuth in 1982. With the connivance of the director Wolfgang Wagner he turned Beckmesser from the familiar toad-like figure into a credible suitor for the hand of Eva. There were complaints that Prey made Beckmesser sound too beautiful, and there were even more objections to his reconciliation in this production with Sachs at the end of the opera. But Prey stuck to his interpretation and won international acclaim for it. Covent Garden was lucky enough to hear and see his Beckmesser in March 1990”.

RICHARD WAGNER BONUS TIME ON 2MBS-FM

2MBS and *Opera-Opera* have embarked on a three-month series of special articles and broadcasts to mark the first performances of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* in Australia since 1913. The September issue of *Stereo FM Radio* is packed with matters Wagnerian. First of all there is the broadcast of the Georg Solti/Vienna Philharmonic version of the four *Ring* operas starting with *Das Rheingold* on Wednesday 23rd September at 8.00 pm and followed by *Die Walküre* on 30th September; the 2MBS programme includes synopses of the operas. Alison Gyger will present the *Ring Cycle* and has written about Wagner’s sources for the libretto in a feature article in this September issue. Then there is the broadcast of the Deryck Cooke introduction to the *Ring* in small bites on September 3, 10, 17, and 24. For good measure there are two recording-reviews in the September issue by 2MBS reviewers. Firstly an analysis by John Grant of the remastered Solti *Ring* (Decca 455 555-2 (14 CDs) and secondly a favourable review by George Kennedy of *Adele Johnston Sings Wagner and Korngold Lieder* (MOVE MD 3203). Remember, Adele Johnston is a member of the Wagner Society in NSW. Finally there will be a competition in the October issue, for which the prize is a complete set of the *Ring* with Herbert von Karajan conducting the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Subscribers should check the October issue for more articles and programmes.

THE RAVENS REPORTING, Compiled by CAMRON DYER

Berlin

Staatsoper

The Ring - December 5, 6, 11, 13, 1998, June 4, 6, 10, 13, 1999.*Lohengrin* - February 28, March 30, April 4, 1999.*Die Meistersinger* - March 7, 14, April 17, 1999.

Deutsche Oper

Holländer - Sep 24, Oct 2, 1998 Feb 7, 14, Mar 25, Apr 1, May 2, 7, 11, Jun 3, 1999*The Ring* - October 31, November 4, 8, 14, 1998.*Parsifal* - April 5, 11, 1999.*Tannhäuser* - May 5, June 6, 1999.*Tristan und Isolde* - May 9, 16, 1999.*Lohengrin* - May 20, 23, 1999.

Ravens, continued.

- Birmingham Royal Opera
The Ring - October 5, 6, 8, 10, 1998.
- Bonn
Das Rheingold - November 6, 1998.
Die Walküre - September 6, 13, 27, November 8, 22, 1998.
- Cardiff Welsh National Opera
Tristan und Isolde - June 1, 5. On tour - June 19, 26, 29, July 3, 6, 10, 17, 1999.
- Copenhagen
Tristan und Isolde - November 7, 13, 16, December 7, 14, 1998.
Holländer - March 6, 14, 21, 23, 29, 1999.
- Dresden
Tannhäuser - November 22, 25, December 6, 1998.
Tristan und Isolde - April 1, 5, 1999.
Lohengrin - April 23, 27, May 2, 24, 30, 1999.
- Edinburgh Scottish Opera
Tristan und Isolde - November 17, 21, 1998.
- Glasgow Scottish Opera
Tristan und Isolde - October 17, 22, 27, 31, November 7, 1998.
- Gothenburg
Tannhäuser - November 22, 25, 28, December 1, 4, 8, 11, 16, 1998.
- Hamburg
Holländer - October 29, Nov 2, 6, 10, Dec 22, 28, 1998,
January 19, 22, 1999.
Lohengrin - March 14, 18, 21, 28, April 2, 5, 1999.
- Indianapolis
Holländer - November 6, 8, 1998.
- Kiel
Das Rheingold - December 4, 1998.
Siegfried - January 21, 1999.
- Madrid
Tannhäuser - February 4, 7, 10, 14, 20, 1999.
- Munich
Tristan und Isolde - September 21, 25, 1999.
Die Meistersinger - November 22, 29, 1998, July 31, 1999.
Lohengrin - January 19, 23, 27, 30, February 3, July 2, 7, 1999.
The Ring - April 7, 11, 18, 28; 9, 14, 23, May 2, 1999.
- San Francisco
The Ring - June 9, 10, 13, 16; 15, 19, 22, 24; 20, 23, 26, 29; 25, 27, 30
July 3, 1999.
- Vienna Staatsoper
Parsifal - April 1, 3, 1999.
Das Rheingold - November 29, 1998.
Die Walküre - May 13, 1999.
Rienzi - September 3, 6, 10, 1998, May 21, 27, 1999.
The Ring - September 18, 20, 27, October 4, 1998; Feb 18, 20, 28, March
7, 1999.
Holländer - December 4, 7, 1998, January 28, 30, 1999.
Die Meistersinger - January 6, 10, 13, 1999.
Lohengrin - June 20, 24, 28, 1999.
Volksoper
Die Meistersinger - December 13, 17, 21, 25, 28, 1998.