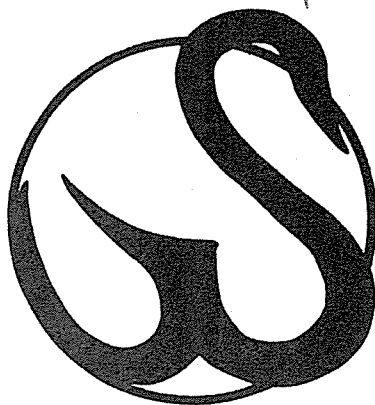


# The Wagner Society

IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

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



## Newsletter

No. 75, June 1999

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

## COMING EVENTS

<i>DATE</i>	<i>EVENT</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
June 20	Da Capo Presents : Recycling Richard: talk by Patricia Baillie with live musical accompaniment ( <i>see page 2</i> )	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
June 23 and 26	Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concert version of <i>Siegfried</i> .	Opera House Concert Hall
June 26	Seminar on Siegfried ( <i>application form previously mailed to members</i> )	Goethe Institut 9.30am-2.00pm
July 18	Annual General Meeting followed by video showing of <i>Der fliegende Holländer</i>	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
August 22	Talk by Simone Young, Musical Director Elect of Opera Australia	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
September 12	Talk by Stephen Mould, repetiteur and 1998 Bayreuth Scholarship winner	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
October 17	"Power in The Ring" - Talk by Dr Terence Watson	Goethe Institut 1.00 pm
November 21 (to be announced) and December 12 (Christmas Party)		

### COMMITTEE 1998-99

President	Barbara McNulty	9487 1344
Vice President and Treasurer	Olive Coonan	9344 3470
Vice President and Membership Secretary	Clare Hennessy	9747 5664
Secretary	Barry Walters	9387 6642
Members	Barbara Brady (Editor, Newsletter)	9956 5132
	Roger Cruickshank	9357 7631
	Onofrio Ferrara	97994569
	Shirley Robertson	9707 2225
	Terence Watson	9517 2786
Public Officer	Reg Maloney	

## THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

This year seems to be going from strength to strength. The weekend at Pokolbin was a great success when 17 members were warmly welcomed to Catersfield by our hosts Rosemary Cater-Smith and Alec Cater. Robert Gibson gave two excellent lectures which stimulated much discussion, and our gala dinner became a tour de force when a six o'clock thunderstorm caused a five-hour blackout and we dined by candle-light and marvelled at the skill of the caterers who produced a delicious, multi course meal despite enormous difficulty. I do thank those members who wrote letters of thanks and appreciation - and yes, we will try to arrange another weekend next year. Our heartfelt thanks go to Rosemary and Alec who ensured that everything went smoothly.

In March we opened our own Internet homepage and our thanks go to many people. First to Dennis Mather who suggested the idea to me. Then to Terence Watson and Roger Cruickshank who formed a small sub-committee to carry the task forward with the help of Dennis, John Studdert, and Marc Greyling. Barbara Brady has now joined them to provide liaison with the Newsletter. Marc has done a huge amount of work in launching our page and has offered to undertake responsibility for maintaining it on a voluntary basis. We greatly appreciate Marc's enthusiasm, expertise and generosity. You will find our page on <http://www.wagner-nsw.org.au>. It is now up to us all to contribute views and information to demonstrate our awareness, interest and involvement in Wagnerian events both here and overseas.

As our page was launched we were overwhelmed by an offer from Betty and Reg Maloney to meet the costs associated with its development, an offer we accepted with great pleasure. It is indeed fitting that two of our Foundation Members should be the ones to lead us into the future and we do thank them both.

I regret that I was not at the Annual Lunch this year, but I know Clare Hennessy made everyone very welcome. As you were enjoying your meal I was drinking a toast to the Master in Prague on my roundabout way to the San Francisco Ring with some fellow Wagnerians.

This month sees the two SSO *Siegfried* concerts and we are proud to sponsor Danny Sumegi in the role of Fafner. The response to the concerts has been excellent and we reserved over 100 tickets with Wagner lovers coming from New Zealand, Melbourne and Adelaide.

The first Australasian Seminar on Saturday 26th June at the Goethe Institut, prior to the *Siegfried* performance, will be very well attended. Speakers will be Professor Heath Lees from New Zealand and Robert Gibson from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Bookings are essential, as we shall be serving a light lunch, so please ring Barry Walters on 9387 6642 for information.

Finally two of our members have been ill recently: Betty Maloney and Elizabeth Jones, and we do wish them both a speedy recovery.

**BARBARA McNULTY**

### DONATIONS

We acknowledge with grateful thanks a generous donation by Sue Gillies.

The Society welcomes all donations and they can be addressed to the Treasurer, Wagner Society in NSW Inc at the address below. Such donations help us to carry out our objectives of promoting the performance of Wagner's works; for example, contributions to the *Ring Cycle* in Adelaide and the forthcoming *Siegfried* concert. Donations are tax-deductible and receipts will be issued.

### NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:

Mr Hugh Hallard, Ms Naomi Kaldor, Mr Andrew Murray and Lady Shehadie.

### STOP PRESS: JUNE 20 FUNCTION:

DA CAPO PRESENTS : Recycling Richard: a light hearted anecdotal look at dealing in music books - with special reference to Wagner. Followed by a scena, an early Wagner song from the Paris period, *Les Adieux de Marie Stuart*.

Patricia Baillie came from an academic background in philosophy to the book dealing world, and founded Da Capo Music in 1984. Da Capo currently sells to more than 25 different countries.

Camille Merçep, soprano, has a day job at Da Capo. She is a New Zealander of Croatian background. She has performed with the OA, and in 1996 was a finalist in the International Conductor's and Musician's Competition in Lugarno, Switzerland.

Glenn Amer, pianist. Glenn has accompanied Rita Hunter, Horst Hoffmann, and for Marilyn Richardson's master classes. He is currently vocal coach at the Australian National Academy.

### 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)

Website: <http://www.wagner-nsw.org.au/>

All contributions to the *Newsletter* are gratefully received and may be sent to the editor at the above address. The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of this Society. Copyright permission for extracts from publications will be sought by the editor where appropriate.

### ADMISSION TO THE GOETHE INSTITUTE

When functions begin at 1.00 pm the door will remain open until 1.20 pm. We are obliged to keep the door locked when no-one is in attendance but a committee member will return to the foyer briefly at 1.40 pm to check for latecomers. Please do not press the buzzer.



## SIEGFRIED SEMINAR

This is the first function presented jointly by the Wagner Society of New Zealand and the Wagner Society in New South Wales. Details of the seminar to be held on 26th June starting at 9.30 am were enclosed with the membership renewal forms. If you have not already forwarded your application coupon and would like to attend, please telephone the Secretary, Barry Walters, on 9387 6642.

Copies of Peter Bassett's book: *A Ring for the Millennium*, will be available for sale at lunch time if you missed out in Adelaide. Also available for sale will be the Bayreuther Festspielhaustuch. This is the Wagner scarf designed by Donald Campbell, a Sydney designer, which was launched at the International Wagner Verband Meeting in Budapest early in May. In blue and cream silk with a navy border the scarf is a faithful representation of the Festspielhaus ceiling. Barbara McNulty reports that it is quite beautiful and comes with the endorsement of Gudrun and Wolfgang Wagner. Also on display at the seminar will be the poster by Randy Larcombe, photographer, designed as a memento of the Adelaide Ring. It is a montage of scenes from the production and members may place orders after viewing the sample.

### REPORT FROM 1998 BAYREUTH SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

The Wagner Society regularly pays the return overseas airfare for the scholarship winner. Last year's winner, Stephen Mould, repetiteur, has written a detailed account of his experiences in Germany and we include some extracts, courtesy of Opera Foundation Australia who awarded the scholarship.

"...I went to several performances of the Frankfurter Oper, and also in Darmstadt and Wiesbaden. I also had a couple of sessions with Norbert Abels, Chefdramaturg in Wiesbaden, to consult him about an article I am writing for the Opera Australia *Wozzeck* programme. In Munich I also attended rehearsals and performances, and worked with two Kappellmeisters from the Gärtnerplatz Theatre on Strauss's *Capriccio* and also on *Tristan* and *Parsifal*. I attended performances of the *Ring Cycle* in Berlin, and also rehearsals of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and spent several days undertaking research in their archive and music library. I attended rehearsals and a couple of performances in Dresden. I then spent a short time in Bayreuth and was able to look around the museum and archive. I did some study in Hannover with Johannes Mikkelson, who is engaged there as chorus master and is also a musical assistant each year at Bayreuth. We worked on *Die Meistersinger* and *Parsifal*, as well as *Elektra*, which I will be assistant conductor for next year in Sydney."

Stephen comments that he was able to undertake a lot of important preparation work for key operas in the German repertoire which he had not previously worked on, and which he will be preparing in Australia over the next few years.

We wish him success in his continuing career with Opera Australia, and look forward to hearing more from him at our September function.

**19TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Goethe Institut, 90 Ocean Street, Woollahra, on Sunday 18 July 1999 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 retain 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 bearer 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 FORMS SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY FRIDAY 2ND JULY 1999**

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**PROXY FORM**

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

I, .....  
(Member's name)  
of .....  
(Member's address)

Membership number.....

Member's signature.....

cannot attend the 19th Annual General Meeting to be held on 18 July 1999 but nominate as my proxy to vote for me

.....  
(Proxy's name) who is a current financial member of the Society

(Address).....

.....(Date)

**NOMINATION FORM**

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.....  
(Secunder)

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 18 July 1999 and would like the following motion to be placed on the agenda for discussion under general business:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Name:

.....

Membership number.....

## APRIL AND MAY FUNCTIONS

At our April meeting Peter Nicholson presented a wide-ranging overview of the composer whose pre-eminence he sees as destined for the classical imperium.

As Peter put it: "... because our civilisation does not like puzzles, and wishes to rationalise whatever has provoked it to think or feel, our best critical efforts have reduced one of the greatest creative and cultural phenomena of Western culture to manageable proportions". We are hoping that Peter's talk will be made available to members in printed form at some time in the future.

On 23rd May we celebrated the birthday of Richard Wagner. This is an important annual event and we make a point of inviting as our guest of honour someone with something worthwhile to say about opera. This year we were fortunate enough to enjoy the company of Adrian Collette, General Manager of Opera Australia. Other special guests included Mr Collette's wife, Victoria, and Dr Otto Roever, Consul-General of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The official welcome was given by Vice President Clare Hennessy who also conveyed an apology from our President, Barbara McNulty, who is overseas enjoying lots of opera including the San Francisco Ring. Clare, as a foundation member, also extended a personal welcome to those present and said how pleased she was to see Members Number 1 and 1A, Betty and Reg Maloney, with us. She commented that it seemed hard to believe it is nearly 20 years since the Society was formed, and is still strong. At the conclusion of the function Clare moved a vote of thanks to Olive Coonan for all her work in organizing the lunch.

Adrian Collette began his address with the question: 'Is the Wagner Society a secret society? Or, perhaps more accurately, is it in danger of becoming a secret society - with its own arcane rituals, customs and rights of association?' As he pointed out, the Society contains those who have an extreme interest in the life and work of Richard Wagner, those who see him as one of a number of genius composers, and those who value discourse about a shared interest - and the communal responsibilities and pleasures that a commonly declared interest bestows. When Mr Collette answered his own question with 'No'! he made the point that we are the most active participants, responding to the work of a composer who demands that we listen, sacrifice time, study, compare, make judgements about what's good and bad, and spend vast amounts of money for a ticket as well as for Wagner's staging.

But if the pendulum is swinging against all this, it is swinging in the direction of popular opera. Not surprisingly, the resources of Opera Australia were mentioned - the successes in raising funds through sponsorships and the box-office and the determined efforts by the General Manager to popularise opera by such means as special events for a large audience in a large space (opera in the park) and taking opera to the bush. It is to be hoped that popular opera which becomes more accessible to a wider public can be balanced by the production of the Wagner operas which we, as a minority, hold so dear.

We hope to make the full text of Adrian Collette's talk available on the Society's Website.

### THE PROBLEM WITH *RHINEGOLD*

*Argument: "Preliminary evening" or not, this opera goes nowhere. It has neither a central character to engage our sympathy, nor a central conflict to occupy our minds.*

My first experience of Wagner was an inherited three-record set of *Rhinegold*. It was a Decca/Solti production, in German of course, and I didn't understand a word of it. But the music alone was of such grandeur that I guessed something quite wonderful was going on. The Valhalla theme in particular, especially near the end, sang of some mighty and very beautiful accomplishment. To my untutored ear it ranked with the finale to Beethoven's *Fifth*, or the last movement of *Sheherazade*, as an expression of some ineffable glory.

Then came the plot outline in Kobbe's book, then the libretto in translation. What a disappointment! At the beginning of *Rhinegold* a hardworking miner stumbles upon a rich seam and takes it from its giddy, ill-appointed guardians. At the end, some layabout gods glorify themselves at his expense. And in between we have nothing but din - a thicket of uproar, of chop-logic, of deceit, of self-righteousness, of ingratitude, brutality and injustice. In short, we have the makings of a fine comedy. But no one laughs.

Do we have a tragedy, then, and, if so, who is the hero? In Alberich and Fasolt, men struggling against miserable circumstances to enrich their lives, we do have the stuff of tragic heroes. But Wagner dismisses them from the scene well before the climax. They are Calibans, not Cyrano de Bergeracs.

Does the work have a hero in *any* sense? Let's look at the other main candidates in turn. In Fafner we have a hard-headed contractor who demands to be paid, and, in short, is. Nothing heroic there. Fricka brings an icy righteousness to the proceedings, winning a few points for common sense and deportment, but none for risk-taking. Neither she nor her sister Freia (of whose ten short passages in the opera, nine are cries for help) is hero material. Loge, if we can believe him, is a fellow of adventurous spirit, but he applies much of his energies to rather cynical observation of other people's business, feeding his lively taste for scandal. He has no more claim to hero status than Ariel, Puck or Jiminy Cricket.

To Wotan, then. Is he, after all, the hero of the work? On the negative side, at times his conduct seems unbecoming, unworthy of anyone let alone a god. However tentative his agreement to sell his wife's sister may have been, it is contemptible; his reminder to Fricka that he lost his eye in wooing her is mean-spirited; his argument that Fricka wanted Valhalla as much as he did is childishly irrelevant; and his treatment of his building-contractors, Fafner and Fasolt, is churlish.

Wotan is still the main character in the play, and perhaps we should look harder for endearing qualities. Strangely enough, he emerges from the gold robbery with some credit. When he first hears of the gold, even of the power of the ring, he is revolted by the price to pay for forging it - the renunciation of love. And when, a few seconds later, he learns that the price has already been paid by Alberich, his cry: *I must have the ring!* stems not from greed or envy but from an instinct to protect his own race from a man newly capable of destroying it. He has to do what a god has to do. Entirely focussed on this obligation, he dismisses the giants (Freia with them)



together with the whole question of their payment, and is immediately assailed by a second and more urgent call of the same duty: this time to save the gods from the *self*-destruction that the absence of Freia will cause. Wotan has no alternative to the robbing of Alberich! He will pay for Valhalla with the gold, but keep the ring safely with the gods.

He leaves Loge to manage the crime, confining himself to occasional mockery of Alberich and the final wrenching of the ring from his hand. Wotan has a distaste here for what he sees as a necessary duty, in contrast to the vindictive relish displayed by Loge. When the robbery is complete, and after Alberich has cursed the possessor of the ring, Wotan rebukes Loge with *Do not begrudge him [Alberich] his venomous pleasure!* Whatever weaknesses we may find in Wotan, we must admit he took a strong stand against unnecessary violence. Earlier, he had stopped Donner from attacking the giants with his hammer, prevented both Donner and Froh from setting upon Loge, and, later, stepped between Donner and Fafner.

But all these qualities that stamp him as leader of the pack would avail him little in the District Court of Nibelheim. He was, and he knew it, a thief. Worse, and more frustrating to an audience in search of a hero, he was a hypocrite. And however much we may sympathise with him later in the Cycle, as he becomes tangled in the web of his own making, the fact remains that at the end of *Rhinegold* there is little to pity or admire in the god who swaggers into Valhalla.

If it is not to be found in any sort of heroic struggle, where *is* the drama in this “music drama”, as Wagner called it? Many critics argue it is to be found in a great conflict running through the whole Cycle: the conflict between love and power.

I cannot find any love in *Rhinegold*. There is a passing shadow of it in Mime’s plaintive memory of how things used to be in pre-ring Nibelheim: *Carefree smiths, once we used to make jewellery for our women, pretty ornaments, neat Nibelungen trinkets; we used to laugh gaily as we worked.* His community-minded nostalgia suggests a sense of compassion for his fellow-Nibelungs, but Mime being Mime it possibly derives from a heart that is faint rather than soft.

Fricka’s heart seems to be stone cold. In the unrelenting barrage of criticism and insult that she directs at her husband and his associates, there is not a syllable of affection, even implied. She has no interest in Wotan’s grand plans. To her, love means fidelity, and she speaks of fidelity using language related to bondage: *Concerned about my husband’s fidelity I must sadly ponder how to bind him to me.* Wotan himself says nothing and does nothing that betrays a loving nature. When Loge tells him that the price of the ring is the renunciation of love, he does “turn away, displeased”, but he does not say anything. And he renews interest immediately and emphatically when told that the awful price has already been paid by Alberich: *I must have the ring!*

Freia, the very goddess of love, expresses none. In her only mention of it, she blurts her revulsion for one of its forms: *Fasolt threatened me, he would come to carry me off as his sweetheart.* Fasolt himself, a barbaric blockhead, is difficult to dislike. Even after Wotan has called him a lout, he stammers out his yearning for a loving relationship, in words and music of great

tenderness. Like Caliban in *The Tempest*, he has dreamed of beauty and he cries to dream again. But even here we have no love, merely a dim and piteous understanding of what such a thing might be.

Alberich, the man who renounces love, never displays it. What he seems to be renouncing is no more than a form of sensual gratification that he imagines would be readily accessible, in any case, to anyone who owned the world.

For an opera that boasts among its cast the Goddess of Love, and is premised on the shocking concept of the renunciation of love, it is strangely devoid of it.

Power, the other half of the dichotomy, does appear in the obvious forms of bullying, sabre-rattling and frequent outbreaks of violence. But the power inherited by Alberich, invested in the ring, and coveted later by Wotan and Fafner, must have been greater than physical strength to be worth its awful price. To be worth the renunciation of love, it must have amounted to omnipotence. It must have exceeded Erda's ability to *know* the future, and empowered its wielder with an ability to *control* the future. How, then, do we account for its utter failure to save Alberich from his chains, or even to advantage him in a short scuffle, as Wotan tears the ring from him with ease? And, as the new wearer of the ring, why was Wotan unable to solve the relatively simple problem of the "Freia chink"? Why couldn't he simply have turned his hat into gold and thrown it on the pile?

As a drama, then, Rhinegold poses a problem for me. In the absence of a hero to attract any sympathy, and in the absence of both the love and the power which critics somehow see there in exciting conflict, I am left to wonder what exists in the drama that the magnificent music is meant to support. A few arguments and a bit of rough stuff is simply not enough.

**BARRY WALTERS**

#### **OPERA AUSTRALIA BEHIND THE SCENES TOURS**

Guided tours at the Opera Centre, 480 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills, are conducted on weekdays primarily for groups, but individuals are welcome to book a place attached to one of the groups. You will see wardrobe - costumes in the making; wig-making; a cobbler - shoes in the making; jewellery - design and fabrication; props manufacture; rehearsal studios (often with working rehearsals under way); sets - design, building and painting - and walk through corridors filled with arias.

There are morning and afternoon-tea tours at 10am and 2pm (finishing with coffee, tea and biscuits) - cost \$10 per person, and luncheon tours weekdays at 11 am (finishing in the Green Room with a home-made lunch including drinks) - cost \$20 per person. Members in other organizations might like to consider this as a weekday function for their societies. To book phone Opera Australia's Friends Manager during business hours on **9699 1099**.

### THE QUINLAN RING

Now that we are no longer so occupied with the first wholly Australian Ring Cycle, it is time to give some thought to the first imported Ring Cycle, brought to Australia by Irish impresario Thomas Quinlan in 1913. Amongst the Society's scrapbooks of newspaper clippings are photocopies of the programmes issued on the opening night in Melbourne for each of *The Rhinegold*, performed on Tuesday, 19 August, *The Valkyrie*, on Friday, 22 August, and *Siegfried* on Monday, 25 August, 1913. These will be made available on our Website.

The story of the Quinlan Ring is a remarkable one. Thomas Quinlan had brought to Australia a complete troupe of opera artists in 1912 with an extensive repertoire. The follow-up visit in 1913 added more works to the repertoire and included a complete Ring Cycle, intended for performance once only in Melbourne and Sydney but eventually with each opera performed more than once. What made the tour remarkable was that the entire company of singers, conductors, orchestra players, administrators and technical staff travelled and rehearsed together in the UK and South Africa and arrived in Australia and performed together without engaging any local artists. When asked about this, Quinlan's explanation was that this was the only way the company could arrive ready to perform at a moment's notice. In all, Quinlan staged 25 different works in an eight-weeks' season in Melbourne and again in Sydney. All the operas were sung in English. The 1913 tour was an undoubted success and would have been repeated in 1915 had it not been for the First World War.

Alison Gyger's history entitled *Opera for the Antipodes*, Paddington, Currency Press, 1990, is recommended for a detailed account of the Quinlan Ring. To supplement this, the reviews in two Sydney newspapers, *The Bulletin* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* were examined. The distinctive character of the two newspapers emerges - the *Bulletin* going in for whimsy if not sarcasm, and the *Herald* making a feature of outlining the plots in great detail as well as praising (where at all possible) the singers.

The opening nights at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney, were Thursday 16th October, Monday 20th, Wednesday 22nd and Friday 24th October, 1913. Since the Melbourne casts (little if any change in Sydney) will be shown on our Website, we name only the principals in the Sydney cast of *Twilight of the Gods*. The conductor for all the Wagner operas was Herr Richard Eckhold, and the performers were:

Brünnhilde	Maud Perceval Allen	Waltraute	Edna Thornton
Siegfried	Franz (Francis) Costa	Gutrune (Gudrun)	Gladys Ancrum
Hagen	Robert Parker	Norns	Edna Thornton, Winifred Holme, Gladys Ancrum
Gunther	Graham Marr	Rhine Maidens	Alice Prowse, Nita Edwards, Mabel Dennis



Here are some extracts from the reviews. Firstly from *The Bulletin*, Thursday 23 October, 1913.

The Quinlan Opera Co. opened its most important production in Sydney, "The Ring", with the weird prologue, "The Rhinegold", in the customary fashion. Wagner called this the Eve of the Trilogy... Wagner laid out the musical scheme of this prologue as carefully as a gravedigger would arrange the ground plan of a vault. The gods are baritone (the useful Parker) Wotan; Donner, a bass; Froh, who ought to be a tenor; and Loge, tenor-in-chief. Hedmond's voice gives the impression of having a very fine past. As Loge, he sang his most important remarks on the first night with the husky sound of a frog in his throat. As an actor Hedmond is much younger than his tenor. ... There are giants and other myths in "The Rhinegold". But the orchestra, under Eckhold, is so important that it swamps the performance. Wagner has given it every color-tone from the swish of the Rhine to the shimmer of the rainbow movement

The *Bulletin* of Thursday 30th October 1913 wraps up its review of *Twilight of the Gods* with characteristically mocking comments on the drama and some of the singers, but offers generous plaudits to the Brünnhilde: "Perceval Allen, as Brünnhilde has a tremendous night out in the "Ring" terminus. Her vocal work in this great climax is gigantic..."

By contrast the *Herald* on Saturday October 25th, 1913, has something nice to say about all the principal singers in *Twilight of the Gods*. More importantly, it fully appreciates the momentous nature of the occasion:

The first performance here of "The Ring of the Nibelungen" was gloriously completed at Her Majesty's Theatre last night when "The Twilight of the Gods" introduced a crowded audience to the wondrously animated and magically illustrative music of the fourth and last drama of [the] mythological series. The wonders of the evening culminated in a positively thrilling interpretation of the "Funeral March". As regards "The Ring" as a whole, everyone present was impressed by the magnitude of the accomplished task. Herr Richard Eckhold stands first as the inspiring conductor of the orchestra, and admiration must be felt for all the principals, who mastered their parts so as to sing them unflinchingly, although it seems to be Wagner's custom to leave them without the slightest cue for when to come in. Finally, more than a word is due to the organising talent of Mr. Thomas Quinlan, to whose enthusiasm for the art the entire enterprise has been due.

An entertaining sidelight to the story of the Quinlan season is the report in the *Herald* of 23rd October of the arrest of a young man who stole from the reference section of the Public Library a book dealing exhaustively with the story of the *Ring*. Unluckily for him, an astute librarian was standing behind him in the queue for *Siegfried*, recognized the book and reported him to the police. **BARBARA BRADY**

**Guessing Game Competition Winners:** Prizes drawn on at the luncheon on 23rd May 1999.

1st prize	Shane Mace	-	2 tickets to the SSO's Siegfried concert
2nd prize	Ross Whitelaw	-	the Wagner watch
3rd prize	Alasdair Beck	-	2 Wagner teeshirts

**REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL WAGNER SYMPOSIUM  
WAGNER AT THE MILLENNIUM**

University of Adelaide 25-27 November 1998

In association with the 21st National Conference of the Musicological Society of Australia

This ambitious Symposium was intended to "focus on current directions and new impulses in Wagner research and on the wider question of the reception of Wagner's work at the close of the millennium. It will thus attempt to offer a reassessment of the place and significance of the composer's work and ideas in our present changing world" (Conference registration form).

The Symposium was generally well organised with a range of associated activities to provide variety and commercial opportunities. There was a large and enthusiastic contingent of people interested in Wagner most of whom seemed to stay to the end even though the Napier Building Main Theatre was not a particularly sympathetic venue.

The International Wagner Symposium Organising Committee deserves the thanks of Australian Wagner lovers for taking on this task. Many well deserved plaudits were bestowed on Ms Christine Rothausser, whose energy and commitment ensured a successful Symposium .

The Program was diverse, catering for those whose primary interests may have been musicological or mythological, psychological or theatrical, cinematic or philosophical. Professor John Deathridge (King's College, University of London) gave the University Foundation Lecture – open to the public and well attended – on "Hitler's Wagner and the Musical Representation of Power". The Symposium concluded with a Round Table discussion (with a few questions from the floor) between most of the presenters and Mr Lionel Friend (Assistant Conductor for the Ring), Mr Stephen Taylor (Assistant Director for the Ring), Professor Dr Eva Rieger and Emeritus Professor Brian Coghlan.

The Symposium dinner was held in the Botanic Gardens, in a suitably octagonal building to take account of all angles on Wagner. In his dinner address, Mr Barry Millington - with disarming modesty from someone who has attempted the same task with far greater success - reminded us of the perils of making public utterances on artistic matters with some deliciously silly quotations from the Ellis translations of the Ring Cycle and some judicious comments about the perils of translation.

The Organising Committee has promised that the proceedings will be published, so if you are interested in finding out what you missed at the Symposium you could contact the Wagner Society of South Australia or send an email to [info@wagner-nsw.org.au](mailto:info@wagner-nsw.org.au) .

**TERENCE WATSON**

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### PUBLISHED REVIEWS

A survey of the recorded history of *Die Meistersinger* is presented by Alan Blyth in the January 1999 issue of *Gramophone* (London). Starting with a 1936 Metropolitan *Meistersinger* with Friedrich Schorr as Hans Sachs, he reviews and analyses many other early performances later reissued on CD, includes two Bayreuth 1943 performances and ends with Sawallisch's 1993 recording for EMI.

In his article 'The Past New-Minted' Alan Blyth reviews historic performances on disc in the April 1999 issue of *Opera* (London). He starts with early Wagner extracts but also covers a wide range of other operas and singers. Of the *Tristan und Isolde* at the Berlin State Opera on October 3, 1947 he writes: "Nobody since has had the pulse of this work so firmly in his bones as Furtwängler..." (Radio Years RY103.04, issued in the UK in December 1998). Extracts from the 1937 *Ring* at Covent Garden are also reviewed (Music & Arts CD 1035). He reports that "Rumours still persist that EMI has this *Ring* complete in its archives. We should be told about that, and about the rest of Walter Legge's pre-war experiments at Covent Garden". The third Wagner recording covered in this survey is Preiser's issue (90266) of extracts from Acts 1 and 2 of a *Götterdämmerung* conducted by Beecham in 1936.

### THE RING DISC

We have been notified by a member, Robert Cousens, that the creator of the *Ring Disc*, the interactive CD-ROM guide to The Ring, Montague (Monte) Stone, has a stock of the CD-Roms that he is selling for US\$50 each (signed, and accompanied by a signed poster and a mouse mat). Robert has provided the following information about payment: It is possible to pay using a credit card through a secure Internet escrow facility at [www.iescrow.com](http://www.iescrow.com). Monte advises that if any member of the Society contacts him to buy a disc and wants to pay by money order, he will mail the disc immediately, without waiting for the money order to arrive. For anyone who wants to order by email (or phone) and pay by money order, Monte's street address is: 107 Main Street, Sharon CT 06069, U.S.A., phone number +1 860 364 2054, Email: [ringdisc@snet.net](mailto:ringdisc@snet.net).

To summarise:

Cost of Ring disc, mouse pad and poster: \$US50

Fee for i-escrow, if used (necessary for credit card payment): US\$5

Postage for Ring Disc and mouse pad, paid by money order: US\$9

Postage for Ring Disc and mouse pad paid through i-escrow (inc.insurance): US\$14.95

Postage for poster, if wanted: US\$2

(For a description of the Ring Disc, see *Newsletter* No. 70, March 1998).



**Ravens ... continued from back page**

- St Petersburg *The Ring* - June 2000. The cycle[s] begins with Das Rheingold on June 27, 2000. Part of Stars of White Nights Festival. No other details.
- Vienna *Rienzi* - October 26, 30, 1999, January 22, 25, 28, 2000.  
*The Ring* - Oct. 29, Nov, 1, 7, 14, 1999; March 29, April 2, 8, 16, 2000.  
*Lohengrin* - February 3, 6, May 1, 5, 9, 2000.  
*Tannhäuser* - March 22, 26, 30, 2000.  
*Holländer* - April 3, 7, May 23, 26, 2000.  
*Parsifal* - April 20, 22, 26, 2000.

**The Ravens Reporting, compiled by Camron Dyer**

Please note that this listing does not cumulate and should be read in conjunction with Newsletter No. 74. (A fuller listing may be found on our Website).

- Bayreuth     *Lohengrin* - July 25, 31, August 7, 13, 16, 25, 1999.  
              *Holländer* - July 26, August 1, 9, 15, 21, 26, 1999.  
              *Parsifal* - July 27, August 3, 8, 12, 20, 1999.  
              *Tristan und Isolde* - July 28, August 4, 10, 19, 28, 1999.  
              *Die Meistersinger* - July 29, August 2, 6, 18, 24, 27, 1999.
- Berlin        Deutsche Oper  
              *Holländer* - October 27, 30, November 6, 1999, May 18, 24, 2000.  
              *The Ring* - January 7, 13, 19, 27; 9, 16, 23, 30, 2000.  
              *Tannhäuser* - March 11, 19, 2000.  
              *Parsifal* - April 20, 23, 30, 2000.  
              *Lohengrin* - May 21m 28, 2000.  
              *Tristan und Isolde* - June 1, 4, 2000.  
              Staatsoper  
              *Tristan und Isolde* - April 16, 24, 2000.
- Birmingham     WNO,  
              *Tristan und Isolde* - June 26, 1999.
- Bristol        WNO  
              *Tristan und Isolde* - July 6, 10, 1999.
- Brussels       La Monnaie are planning a *Ring* production for 2003, 100 years after the first *Ring* at La Monnaie.
- Chicago        *Tristan und Isolde* - Jan 31, Feb 4, 8, 13, 16, 19, 23, 26, Mar 1, 4, 2000.
- Dallas         *Die Walküre* - November 18, 21, 23, 27, 1999.
- Helsinki        *The Ring* - May 17, 21, 28, June 4; 7, 9, 12, 15, 2000.
- Karlsruhe       *The Ring* - October 2, 4, 10, 18, November 4, 7, 15, 21, 1999.  
              *Tristan und Isolde* - July 8, 12, 19, 22, 2000.
- Llandudno       WNO  
              *Tristan und Isolde* - July 17, 1999.
- London         The Royal Opera  
              *Holländer* - opens March 21, 2000.  
              *Die Meistersinger* - opens May 16, 2000.
- Longborough, England  
              *Das Rheingold* - June 25, July 2, 11, 1999.  
              *Die Walküre* - June 26, July 3, 11, 1999.
- Munich         *Die Meistersinger* - July 31, 1999.  
              *Lohengrin* - July 2, 7, 1999.
- New York        The Met (*Dates from Internet, not yet confirmed with the Met - Ed.*)  
              *Tristan und Isolde* - November 22, 26, 29, December 3, 6, 11, 14, 18
- Oxford         *Tristan und Isolde* - June 29, July 3, 1999.
- Sacramento     *Holländer* - November 20, 22, 24, 1999.
- San Francisco   *The Ring* - June 9, 10, 13, 16; 15, 19, 22, 24; 20, 23, 26, 29; 25, 27, 30  
              July 3, 1999.
- Southampton    WNO  
              *Tristan und Isolde* - June 19, 1999.

