

Sunday 31 July 2022, 2.00pm

**Concert with Rebecca MacCallion,
Nathan Bryon, Daniel Macey and
Bradley Gilchrist**

*A Wagner Society in NSW in-person event at
St Columba Community Centre, Woollahra*

The concert was originally intended to be performed by Valda Wilson (soprano), Nathan Bryon (tenor), Daniel Macey (baritone) and Bradley Gilchrist (pianist) at St Columba Community Centre.

Unfortunately Valda Wilson was unable to sing on Sunday due to illness – and at very short notice, Rebecca MacCallion agreed to sing in Valda's place.



Our wonderful event organiser Leona Geeves, with Bradley Gilchrist, Rebecca MacCallion, Nathan Bryon & Daniel Macey holding their gifts from our sponsor Brangayne wines at the concert (photo, Tim Green).

Report

Some time ago I heard that Valda Wilson, one of our Germany- based sponsored singers, was coming here, I approached her with the offer of a concert, which she was delighted to accept. But since it was her summer holiday (in the Northern hemisphere) she didn't want to sing the whole concert. This would involve a lot of work for her and the accompanist, and perhaps learning new repertoire. Totally understandable.

I managed to obtain young tenor, Nathan Bryon, just before he headed to San Francisco on a 2-year scholarship at the Conservatory, and baritone Daniel Macey, both of whom had sung for us before. The trio came up with a stunning concert program involving on Valda's part lots of Wagner and Strauss. As usual our President, Esteban designed a stunning printed program.

Early on the day before the concert I received the call which no one ever wants to receive; Valda had voice problems (which later morphed into Covid). The voice is a very delicate instrument and is subject to all manner of things.

In fact, very few of our concerts have ever gone ahead as originally planned, but I think this was possibly the shortest time I had ever had to replace a singer, although I do recall one time when I was being wheeled into an operating theatre trying to find a replacement singer for a recital! This time names were suggested and our wonderful pianist, Bradley Gilchrist, was consulted of course. His suggestion was a winner. Soprano, Rebecca MacCallion had sung delightfully for us earlier in the year. She and her husband, Bradley Kunda, had moved to Berlin, but had returned home during the pandemic, and I was relieved to find she was still in Australia. I sent her the program selections and she and Brad came up with a wonderful program, juggling what she felt her voice could handle post baby, and importantly, including duets with both our other singers.

At the same time, I had to find a replacement speaker (Covid-19 again) for the Sydney Opera Society (an opera study group) which I run.

Some **eight** hours later – all was settled - phone calls, emails, text messages, Facebook personal messages, even WhatsApp! But we emerged with a singer and a delightful concert, which members have later commented on. Rebecca sang beautifully showing off her pre-loved Barbara Bonney frock (acquired from Ms Bonney's Salzburg boutique – **Bonney und Kleid!**) and afterwards her new baby, Arthur, attending his first concert.

Rebecca sang some lovely French repertoire and Schumann's gorgeous *Widmung*, Nathan sang the wonderful *Adelaide*, and some Mozart, including the *Magic Flute* duet with Daniel, and the *Boheme* duet with Nathan, whose other Lied was Liszt's *Freudvoll und leidvoll*. Daniel sang *O du, mein holder Abendstern*, and some Russian songs. Bradley, as usual, accompanied very sympathetically.

It was a very special afternoon and thank you everyone who contributed to the planning, the added planning and the final event. We are eternally grateful to Rebecca MacCallion for slotting in so seamlessly, and wish her, husband Bradley and baby Arthur a speedy settling into their new home in Berlin. We wish Valda Wilson *Gute Besserung* with no lasting effects, and look forward to hearing her sing when she returns home again. She kindly donated to the WSNSW some CDs featuring her voice, so these will be available for sale at our next event. And I did find a speaker for my Sydney Opera Society; Soprano Jane Ide jumped in to speak about covering opera roles, which she has done quite often!

LEONA GEEVES 29 August 2022 (from Wagner Quarterly 166, September 2022)