



# The Wagner Society

in N.S.W. Inc.

(Patron — Sir Charles Mackerras)

Postal Address: Box 4574 GPO Sydney 2001

## No. 85, September 2001

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

I present to you today the Annual Report of this our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. It has been a sad and worrying one with growing concern about our financial position. You will recall that at last year's AGM we agreed to increase membership fees because of this concern. I again drew your attention to this in the November/December Newsletter. By February the position was so serious that the Committee was grateful to accept a loan from a Committee member in order to ensure all our financial commitments could be met pending the receipt of membership fees in April.

An investigation of several aspects of our finances was initiated and at the end of April we found proof that deliberate misappropriation of Society Funds had occurred.

As our financial and reporting year ends at the end of March it is not usual to report on matters after that time but in this instance I believe that this matter is sufficiently important for me to complete this report.

Once our suspicions were confirmed the Committee met urgently and initiated action directed at resolving the problems. The Police were informed and I wrote to all members. The response to my letter was very positive and the Committee would like to thank all of you who offered support and help.

Two offers in particular were important. Paul Lehmann, the previous President, offered to act as a mediator and arranged a meeting, that I attended, at which certain admissions were made, some of our books were recovered and an offer of restitution was made. A new member who is a solicitor offered his services 'pro bono' should we need legal assistance. As we don't have the financial resources to fight a civil action in the court this is a very generous offer. I am sure you will join me in thanking them.

Despite numerous promises, all of which have been broken, there has been no restitution and the matter was referred to the Police and our legal adviser towards the end of June.

**Continued p.3**

Bill

Gillespie was awarded an Order of Australia in the last Honour's List.

### Newsletter Highlights

- P. 3**     **In Memoriam: Giuseppe Sinopoli**  
**P.5**     Nicholas Routley at Wagner Lunch  
**P.5**     Conductor -Bayreuth 2001 Ring Adam Fischer  
**P.7**     A Laurel Wreath - SSO & *Götterdämmerung*

**PATRON:**  
**HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS:**

**Sir CHARLES MACKERRAS**  
**Prof MICHAEL EWANS**  
**Mr RICHARD KING**  
**Mr REG MALONEY**  
**Mr HORST HOFFMAN**  
**Mr JOSEPH FERFOGLIA**

**Registered Office: 12/5 Springfield Avenue Potts Point NSW 2011**

COMING EVENTS

<i>DATE</i>	<i>EVENT - 2001</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
August 4 August	No Society meeting <b>CANCELLED:</b> Joint <i>Lohengrin</i> seminar with Art Gallery	Art Gallery of NSW
16 September	<i>Siegfried</i> - Barenboim/Kupfer production	Goethe Institut 1.00 PM
21 October	Discussion led by members who attended the 2000 and 2001 Bayreuth Festivals	Goethe Institut 1.00 PM
18 November	Ms Marie Bashir, Governor of NSW, with Dr Boman and Dr Freiberg: "Psychological Aspects of the Major Characters in Wagner's Ring of the Nibelungen"	Goethe Institut 1.00 PM
9 December	Annual Society Christmas Party Wagner in Hollywood - Movie/Music Quiz	Goethe Institut 1.00 PM
	<b><i>EVENT - 2002</i></b>	
February	Anthony Ernst - <i>Die Feen</i> and <i>Das Liebesverbot</i>	Goethe Institut 1.00 PM

COMMITTEE 2000-2001

President	Barbara McNulty	9487 1344
Vice President	Vacant	
Treasurer and Membership	Roger Cruickshank	9357 7631
Secretary	Dennis Mather	9560 1860
Members	Lindsay Knight	9550 3290
	Julian Block	9337 6978
Newsletter Editor	Terence Watson	9517 2786
	Sandy Dudgeon	9489 0570
Public Officer	Peter Nicholson	9436 1097

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 website addresses used in this newsletter are on the Wagner Society's website)

## FOR YOUR DIARY

<i>Lohengrin</i>	Opera Australia. <b>Cast:</b> Lohengrin, Glenn Winslade; Elsa, Lisa Harper-Brown; Telramund, John Wegner; Ortrud, Bernadette Cullen; Heinrich, Donald Shanks. Conductor Sebastian Weigle, Director Andrew Sinclair.	Fri 10, Tue 14, Fri 17, Wed 22 & Sun 26 mat Aug Sun 1 & Thurs 6 Sept - Sydney
<i>Parsifal</i>	State Opera of South Australia <b>Cast:</b> <i>Parsifal</i> Poul Elming, <i>Amfortas</i> Jonathan Summers, <i>Kundry</i> Margaret Medlyn, <i>Klingsor</i> Daniel Sumegi, <i>Gurnemanz</i> Manfred Hemm. Conductor Jeffrey Tate; Director Elke Neidhardt.	22, 26mat, 29mat Sep 02mat October 2001 - Adelaide
Wagner Spectacular	Simone Young conducting the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra, <i>Tristan Act 2</i> (Horst Hoffmann & Lisa Gasteen), <i>Tristan</i> Prelude, Siegfried Idyll and "other orchestral masterworks from Wagner's music dramas."	Friday 26 October 7.30pm - Sydney
<i>Tristan und Isolde</i>	Opera Australia. <b>Cast:</b> <i>Tristan</i> , Horst Hoffman; <i>Isolde</i> , Lisa Gasteen; <i>Brangane</i> , Bernadette Cullen; <i>Kurwenal</i> , Daniel Sumegi; <i>König Marke</i> , Bruce Martin. Conductor Simone Young; Director Neil Armfield.	November. Tues 13, Sat 17, Tues 20, Fri 23 - Melbourne
The Ring Cycle	State Opera of South Australia announces the production team for Wagner's Ring Cycle - Adelaide 2004 - see p.4	Adelaide 17 Nov to 11 Dec

**STOP PRESS: LOHENGRIN SEMINAR**

The *Lohengrin* Seminar planned in conjunction with the Art Gallery of NSW for August 2001 has been **cancelled**.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT continued**

It has become clear that the misappropriation occurred over a number of years and you will ask how such a thing was possible. I can only reply by saying that the Committee has always operated on the basis of trust, a trust that was betrayed. The Auditor and Committees were deceived over a long period of time.

As a result of this experience our financial systems have been strengthened and great care is being exercised to ensure that there is no repetition. It has been a severe shock to all of us and demonstrates that continual vigilance is necessary to ensure proper governance. We are all very aware of our responsibilities.

These problems aside the past year had many positive aspects. Our birthday lunch at the Women's Club in May 2000 was a great success, a delightful venue and a delicious meal. Our guest speaker Tim Calnin, the Artistic Administrator of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, entertained us with background glimpses into the *Ring* Concerts the orchestra has been presenting.

In June our guest was Paul Curran, an international opera director, in Sydney working on *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Paul gave an interesting talk about his experiences in overseas opera houses with particular emphasis on his time in Russia.

July saw our Seminar in conjunction with the Art Gallery of NSW on *Götterdämmerung* which was well attended with all participants enjoying the very pleasant venue and the warm welcome of the Friends of the Galley who provided a most enjoyable lunch. Our thanks go to Craig Brush, the Functions Manager of the gallery, for his support.

In September many of us attended those wonderful performances of *Götterdämmerung* given by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Edo De Waart and sung by Heinz Krause – Siegfried, Elizabeth Connell – Brünnhilde, Peter Coleman-Wright – Gunther, Elizabeth Campbell as Waltraute and Ekkehard Wlaschiha as Alberich.

These *Ring* Concerts have in many respects been the most significant artistic achievements in Sydney for many years and our congratulations and thanks have been conveyed to the orchestra and conductor.

Our September meeting was a lively panel discussion on *Götterdämmerung* with our special guest Bill Gillespie - Head of the Academy of performing Arts, Edith Cowan University, Western Australia - and our own members Peter Nicholson and Dr Terence Watson.

In October we celebrated our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary when Horst Hoffmann and Adele Johnston accompanied by Fiona McCabe presented a most enjoyable recital. We are indeed fortunate to have artists of this calibre who are willing to donate their time and share their talents so generously and we do thank them. At the same time we are very aware that they are professionals and I would hope that once our finances are stabilised we will be in a position to offer them an appropriate fee.

The year ended with a very pleasant Christmas party enlivened by Barry Walters walking us through many of the

residences Richard Wagner graced in many countries.

Sadly we record the deaths of Sarah Handley and Lady Finley during the year.

The committee has had a very busy year and I would like to thank them individually and collectively for their support. Roger Cruickshank, our Treasurer, has been a tower of strength, we owe much to Roger in sorting out the financial problems we have faced. He has been untiring in his investigations and his wonderful sense of humour has kept us all going. Dennis Mather as our Secretary is also tireless and his laptop computer has become an intrinsic member of the Committee. Terence Watson will retire as Vice-President this year but will continue his work as Editor of the Newsletter and assisting with the website. Shirley Robertson continues to provide the delicious afternoon teas we enjoy at each meeting and will do so in the future though she has now resigned from the Committee. Lindsay Knight helps wherever necessary and despite work constraints continues to here whenever we need him. Julian Block is a new Committee member co-opted during the year and we have come to rely on his legal expertise and advice. I would also like to thank Marc Greyling for his assistance, on a voluntary basis, in maintaining our website which can be very time consuming but which is a very valuable contact point for the Society on an international level.

Our Auditor Joseph Ferfaglia has served the Society since its foundation and his contribution has been enormous. He will retire after a very difficult year and we thank him very sincerely.

We were sad to say farewell to Dr Otto Roever, the German Consul-General, and his wife on their return to Germany but welcome their replacement Dr Wenzal. We continue to enjoy the facilities of the Goethe Institut and we thank Dr Goll and his staff for their support at all times. As well we are pleased to maintain our liaison with the Opera Foundation and continue to support the Bayreuth Scholar who this year was Michael Black.

I would like to give a special thank you to all those members who gave donations during the year. Donations to the Society are of course tax deductible and we rely on them to a large extent to be able to support and encourage performances of Wagnerian works within Australia.

This time last year I indicated to you that I would not be seeking another term as President because I believe that change is healthy for any organisation. However as the extent of our problems became clear several members asked me to reconsider and stay at least until matters were resolved. Accordingly I have again nominated and if it is your wish I will endeavour, with the assistance of the Committee, to ensure the future of the Wagner Society. Thank you.

As delivered to the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting

**Barbara McNulty July 2001**

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Some 70 Members attended the Annual General meeting on 15 July, 2001 including several Foundation Members who made a special effort to be present. Barbara McNulty presented the Annual Report which is printed elsewhere in this Newsletter. In moving the adoption of the report Roger Cruickshank outlined the broad details of the problems the Committee had identified during the year and drew attention to the strain the last few months had placed on the Society's Office Bearers and Auditor.

There was considerable comment and discussion by Members about the problems and despite the seriousness of the situation everyone took a very positive attitude concerned essentially with the future of the Society. A motion Proposed by John Studdert and Seconded by Peter Nicholson that ' This meeting supports the Committee's actions to recover the Society's misappropriated funds' was carried without dissent and with applause. A second motion to review the Rules of the Society and bring recommendations to the next AGM was also approved.

After the election of the Committee the meeting was closed. At this point we were to have had a recital but because the piano at the Goethe Institut was locked it was necessary for us all to move to the home of Helen and Peter Hall a short walk away. Here we enjoyed a wonderful recital by Warwick Fyfe and Stephen Mould. Warwick sang a selection of songs by Richard Wagner, Hans Pfitzner, Franz Liszt and Carl Loew which we all enjoyed. Many Members commented that it was very special to enjoy such a recital in the intimate setting of Peter and Helens's home.

After afternoon tea Simon Williams, Professor of Dramatic, University of California, Santa Barbara, gave a most interesting address: 'Assailing the Hero: the Directors approach to Wagnerian Opera'. Simon looked at contemporary approaches to staging Wagnerian opera with particular reference to German Director's and four recent productions of *Lohengrin*. It was a very full afternoon but a very successful one.

**Barbara McNulty July 2001**

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**END THIS DISCORD, POLITICIANS URGE WARRING WAGNERS**
**DONATIONS**

The Society welcomes all donations and they can be addressed to the Treasurer, Wagner Society in NSW Inc at the GPO address above. Such donations help us to carry out our objectives of promoting the performance of Wagner's works. Donations are tax-deductible and receipts will be issued.

**Donations have gratefully been received from the following members:** Betty Maloney, Dr Sue Kelly, Russ and Rae Cottle, Sir Nicholas and Lady Marie Shehadie, Irvine and Lydia Hunter, Douglas Jamieson, and Barbara Brady

**NEW MEMBERS**

Alan Salter, Gunter Slamer Jess Block and John Vallentine

**PARSIFAL SEMINAR AT CATERSFIELD**

A most successful *Parsifal* Seminar was held at Catersfield in the Hunter Valley on 20-22 July. The lecturer was Simon Williams, Professor of Dramatic Art, University of California, Santa Barbara.

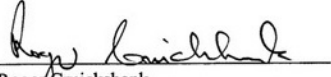
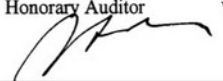
**REVIEW OF THE SEMINAR ON "PARSIFAL THE CROWNING WORK OF WAGNER'S CAREER"**

It is impossible to do justice to Professor Williams' thoughtprovoking lectures on Parsifal held at Catersfield Guest House in the beautiful lower Hunter Valley on Saturday 21 July. It is, nevertheless, worth reporting that the 30 plus members who attended considered themselves suitably challenged by the lectures and certainly came away with new insights into Wagner and this work in particular. Professor Williams' thoughts on the issues, including *Parsifal* as drama or religious rite, the views on the essential nature of the Knights of the Grail, the character of Kundry, the crisis of sexuality in the nineteenth century as it applied to *Parsifal*, and so on, gave participants much food for thought.

The lectures were not confined to *Parsifal*, the character or the opera, and Professor Williams' elaboration of his four models of 'The Hero' in Wagner's operas, the influence of philosophers such as Schopenhauer and Rousseau on Wagner, the importance of redemption in Wagner's works, for example were extremely interesting. That this seminar followed Professor Williams' equally thought provoking lecture to the Society on *Lohengrin* on 15 July calls for a special vote of thanks to our President for facilitating these two events.

That the Society can enable access to lectures of the quality and scope of these is illustrative of the ability of the Society to fulfil its aim, *inter alia*, of encouraging a wider understanding of Wagner's work. Certainly for those of us going this year to Bayreuth and/or Adelaide, Professor Williams' lectures will resonate in our minds. (Simon Williams is the author of *German Actors of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* and *Shakespeare on the German Stage 1587 - 1914*.) [http://www.wagner-nsw.org.au/reviews/ParsifalSeminar\\_July2001.html](http://www.wagner-nsw.org.au/reviews/ParsifalSeminar_July2001.html) John D C Studdert July 2001

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<b>THE WAGNER SOCIETY IN NEW SOUTH WALES INC</b>		
<b>BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2001</b>		
2000	2001	(2001)
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
\$0.00 Stock: publications (calculated on cost not sale price)	\$83.00	
\$7,348.64 Prepayments: functions, seminar, theatre party	\$0.00	
\$0.00 Prepayments: Annual Wagner birthday Luncheon	\$300.00	
\$529.96 Cash at bank	\$12,351.26	
\$28,853.42 Investment Account	\$131.01	
\$810.93 Public Donation Account	\$741.77	
\$80.00 Stock: brochures, raffle tickets, envelopes etc	\$20.00	
\$6,956.00 46 items Lohengrin set designs / frames	\$6,956.00	
\$75.00 Wagner T-shirts	\$75.00	
\$0.00 DEBTORS - UNALLOCATED WITHDRAWALS	\$34,122.41	
\$100.00 Petty Cash	\$100.00	
<u>\$44,753.95</u>		<u>\$54,880.45</u>
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
\$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	
<u>-\$100.00</u> less depreciation	<u>-\$100.00</u>	
\$0.00		\$0.00
<u>\$44,753.95</u> <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<u>\$54,880.45</u>
<b>LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
\$0.00 Annual Wagner birthday Luncheon	\$1,125.00	
\$0.00 Annual Wagner birthday competition	\$464.00	
\$35.00 Creditors	\$2,000.00	
\$95.00 Prepaid membership	\$2,886.50	
\$0.00 Prepaid functions	\$1,800.00	
\$7,290.00 Prepaid theatre tickets	\$3,796.00	
\$0.00 PROVISION FOR WRITE-OFF BAD DEBTS	\$34,122.41	
<u>-\$7,420.00</u> <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<u>-\$46,193.91</u>
<u>\$37,333.95</u> <b>TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS AS AT 31/3/2001</b>		<u>\$8,686.54</u>
<b>ACCUMULATED FUNDS ANALYSIS</b>		
\$36,734.51 Surplus as at 31 March 2000		\$37,333.95
\$599.44 Plus surplus / -deficiency for year 2000/2001		<u>-\$28,647.41</u>
<u>\$37,333.95</u> Surplus as at 31 March 2001		<u>\$8,686.54</u>
 Roger Cruickshank Honorary Treasurer		
<b>REPORT ATTACHED</b>  Joseph Ferfoglia Honorary Auditor		

**A MONTH IN BERLIN**

There was a wealth of opera during May in all three opera houses in Berlin. Ian Brady and I reluctantly confined our selection to four of the five Wagner operas (we could have heard the *Holländer* also at the Deutsche Oper) plus one other (*Der Freischütz*) and two superb concerts from the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

*Der fliegende Holländer*. Musical Director: Daniel Barenboim, Producer: Harry Kupfer, Stage Designer: Hans Schavernoch. Dutchman: Falk Struckmann, Daland: Robert Holl, Senta: Anne Schwanewilms, Erik: Jorma Silvasti, Mary: Uta Prieuw, Steersman: Gunnar Gudbjörnsson. Staatsoper Unter den Linden. 13 May.

This was billed as a new production in April 2001 for the Staatsoper, but it turned out to be a variation of Kupfer's 1978-85 Bayreuth production, presenting the drama through Senta's mind. It was Senta's tragedy first and the Dutchman's second. What made it so compelling was the consistency and logic of the production. While Senta had both feet on the ground she interacted more or less normally with the spinning girls, Mary, Daland and Erik, most of whom treated her warily and hesitated to get too close, implying that they were used to her unstable outbursts. But when she climbed to her favourite refuge half-way up the spiral staircase in the centre of Daland's hall and spinning room, she was in control, directing and manipulating her fantasies with calm detachment. The shadowy, faceless Dutchman Daland brought into the house was not the one she wanted. Her Dutchman was the one whose ship's prow pierced the wall of Daland's hall. The first time this happened the impact was stunning - the ship tilted downwards gradually until the Dutchman could be tipped safely onto the ground. The second time was to enable the duet to be sung between the Dutchman on his ship inside the room, and Senta on the staircase.

The innocent celebrations of the seamen and women on shore turned into one of Senta's out-of-control dreams as the Dutch sailors' chorus was accompanied by flashing lights, tilting floor and rocking stage furniture. In the end, Senta's fantasies failed to sustain her and the Dutchman sailed away, leaving her without a prop. No one was surprised when she climbed to the top of the staircase and jumped through the window. The onlookers approached her body just as warily in death as they had in life. Struckmann was an exemplary Dutchman - powerful of voice, passionate in his Act I narration and aria but distant if not disdainful with Daland. Schanewilms, after an initial slight hesitation, sang strongly. A standing ovation for Barenboim and the entire orchestra who came on stage, and then for the singers.

*Tannhäuser*. Musical Director: Jiri Kout, Producer: Götz Friedrich, Stage Designer: Rolf Glittenberg, Landgraf: Stephen Milling, Tannhäuser: Stig Andersen, Wolfram von Eschenbach: Wolfgang Brendel, Elisabeth: Eva Johansson, Venus: Karan Armstrong. Deutsche Oper Berlin, 16 May 2001.

I am afraid I always find the ballet tedious. This one had red flashing lights and creatures in black cloaks. Venus (a Madam first in black leather, later in a red split skirt) was

too mature to engage with Tannhäuser and instead he seemed at a distance for much of the first scene. Andersen had no difficulty sustaining the role but does not have a big voice. On his own he was passable (indeed his Act III long narration was quite moving) but he was outclassed in competition with the knights, especially Wolfram (small wonder when Brendel crossed over to the Staatsoper a week later to appear as our Hans Sachs) and, in his duet with Elizabeth. Johansson, has an astonishing voice. The quality of the performance was lifted enormously with the first notes of "Dich, teure Halle". When she called to the angry knights to hold back she was not front stage with arms outflung, but hidden in the midst of the throng. The impact of her soaring cry from this concealed position was transfixing for us as well as for the characters. The entire width and depth of this house's huge stage was used for this scene inside the hall to great effect. Alas, Tannhäuser lost his mind when he realized the enormity of his crime and ended the scene pulling chairs into a circle and talking to phantoms. He was also given to writing slogans on blackboards.

*Tristan und Isolde*. Musical Director: Jiri Kout; Producer: Götz Friedrich, Stage Designer: Günther Schneider-Siemssen. Tristan: Stig Andersen, King Marke: Franz-Josef Selig, Isolde: Susan Owen, Kurwenal: Eike Wilm Schulte, Brangäne: Ute Walther, Melot: Morten Ernst Lassen. Deutsche Oper Berlin, 20 May.

We had misgivings when we arrived at the theatre to find a handful of people standing patiently outside hoping to sell their tickets. This was explained by the substitution, because of illness, of both the conductor and Isolde - Kout replacing Intendant Christian Thielemann, and Owen replacing Luana DeVol. Owen, an American, has a record of Wagnerian roles, including Brünnhilde, in European and US houses, but I did not care for her thick, heavy voice. I objected, also, to the staging of each act in deep gloom. Still, there was always Wagner's ravishing music. The audience was kind to the soprano. Only the conductor was booed.

*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Musical Director: Sebastian Weigle, Producer: Harry Kupfer, Stage Director: Hans Schavernoch. Hans Sachs: Wolfgang Brendel, Walther von Stolzing: Francisco Araiza, David: Stephan Rügamer, Eva: Carola Höhn, Magdalene: Birgitta Swendén. Staatsoper Unter den Linden. 2 June.

Hans Sachs was relatively young, and so concerned in every action of those around him that we felt deeply moved by his own reactions throughout the opera. Höhn, bless her, looked and sang like a Botticelli angel. Instead of rising at the beginning of Act I, the curtain fell in a heap, revealing the beautifully composed set of the interior of the church with its congregation. The set had a central upright core containing balconies and stairs at different levels, somewhat over-decorated with works of art. This core was turned for each act to reveal different facets, seen to advantage outside Sachs's house where we caught glimpses of the interior - a world globe, a painting of Adam and Eve nude and other indications that we were



## Newsletter: Wagner Society in NSW Inc

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in the age of the renaissance and that Sachs was prosperous, a humanist and ahead of his time. The distant backdrop of twentieth-century skyscrapers did not seem out of place. Araiza had a pleasing tenor, just big enough to be reassuring, but before the high climax of each version of the prize-song the tempo slowed noticeably and one got the distinct impression that the orchestra got under the voice and lifted it. The joyous final act was full of busy merrymaking until the serious interchange between Walter and Sachs and the bleak treatment of Beckmesser (fine singing and acting from Andreas Schmidt) who was ostracised.

In both houses we felt there was a special quality to the

orchestral sound, probably due to a combination of the size and openness of the pit, the skill of the conductor and players and the balance of the instruments.

I realize that my brief notes do not do justice to the performances and haven't even touched on the supporting roles, but for those attending Berlin's Wagner Festival in April 2002 my notes may whet the appetite for the Staatsoper's productions, cast and superb orchestra.

**Barbara Brady July 2001**

**BAYREUTH - A VERY ROUGH GUIDE**

## Newsletter: Wagner Society in NSW Inc

Well lucky you, you've got tickets, finally, you have arranged your flights and you are almost on your way. You will probably receive a notice with the ticket allocation informing you where you can arrange accommodation in Bayreuth. You can always ask someone where they have stayed, or check the Bayreuth phone book at the new South Wales State Library.

There is a Bayreuth website at [www.bayreuth.bayern-online.de](http://www.bayreuth.bayern-online.de) which lists accommodation, shops and events. There are two other sites at [www.festspiele.de](http://www.festspiele.de) (the site of the Nordbayrischen Kurier, the local newspaper) which has some English content and [www.bayreuther-festspiele.de](http://www.bayreuther-festspiele.de) which as yet has no English content, although it is planned.

### TRAVEL

Assuming you are flying from Australia, you can get to Bayreuth by train from Frankfurt, either from the airport or the main city station. You usually change trains at Nuernberg. If it is an ICE (Intercity Express) train, book a ticket and an extra seat reservation. The smaller local trains run to Bayreuth. Check where your carriage will leave the platform. Timetable and prices on the web at [www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de) or [www.hafas.de](http://www.hafas.de) (there is an English translation).

Once in Bayreuth, try to stay as close to the town as possible, since busses are rare at night and taxis expensive. Get a map and brochures before you go, from the German tourist office.

### EVENTS

Bayreuth has two bookshops and one record shop which offer Signierstunden (autograph sessions). There are posters outside the shops notifying in (basic) German who is signing, what their role is, and when. For example, say Mette Ejsing, who sings Erda will sign autographs on a particular day and time. The sessions are usually at 11, 11.30 or noon to give people time to get back and change.

The shops are **Gondrom** in the Maximilianstrasse., also called the Max Strasse (the main pedestrian area), the **Markgrafen Buchhandlung** (on the corner of the Opernstrasse, number 1-3 and the Sternplatz) near the old Margraves opera house) and **die Schallplatte** (the record) which is at the end of the Maxstrasse and round the corner. Take your very heavy program, CD slip, and / or book for signing. But don't worry if you don't have anything, the singers, designers, etc usually have a pile of photos and often in their Wagner roles.

The Margraves opera house is small and glitzy and was featured in the film Farinelli. It usually has concerts or recitals on opera free days, as does Wahnfried (which being a small space tends to book out quickly)

### MUST SEE

**Wahnfried** is Richard and Cosima's house. You can wander through the house, which is a museum / shrine and sit in the music room and listen to recorded music, Wagner of course. In the lovely back garden are Richard's and Cosima's graves as well as that of Russ, the dog. The **Liszt Museum** (the house where Liszt died) is

close by in a street beside Wahnfried. The **Stadtfriedhof** (cemetery) is a short walk from the town centre. It is very decorative like all German cemeteries. This has Liszt's grave as well as those of Siegfried and Winifred Wagner, Wieland and Gertrud and Daniela Thode. There are pointers on the trees to the graves. There is lots more to see – check your brochure or ask someone or enquire at the tourist office in the Bahnhof strasse. There are areas close to town for day trips, such as **Bamberg**, **Nuremberg**, **Pottenstein**, and one of my favorite churches **Vierzehnheiligen** (the pilgrimage church of 14 saints, which is glitzy and a lot bigger than the famous Wieskirche. Bayreuth is also very close to what was formerly East Germany.

### FOOD

Depending where you stay, you will get at least the standard German breakfast of rolls, cheese, jam (in German Marmalade), tea or coffee. You could get lucky and score a boiled egg, sliced meats or perhaps muesli and yoghurt.

### LUNCH

There are plenty of places along the pedestrian zone, such as Nordsee, Wienerwald, McDonalds (if you must) and beer gardens. One of the best food stops is the top floor of the **Hertie** department store, with a panoramic outdoor section. It is self serve, has hot and cold, asian specialities, salads and is cheap and quick. Incidentally, although pointing is unacceptable in Germany, it beats starving.

### SUPPER

After the performance supper can be had at various places near the Festspielhaus and in the town. When or if booking (probably necessary after Goetterdaemmerung) book for after the performance. There is a restaurant behind the theatre where the singers congregate, but the service is slow. **Kropf** is a basic Gaststaette near the Festspielhaus. You should go at least once to the **Eule**, whose walls are covered with Wagner memorabilia.

### INTERVAL SUSTENANCE

Except for *Das Rheingold* and *Der fliegende Holländer*, which have no intervals, all operas have 2 one hour intervals. This is an opportunity to have something to eat and drink and a wander to stretch the legs. There are rolls with bratwurst and german mustard, what we call pretzels (very large & salty) and very expensive plates of canapes. There are also meals, cake, coffee, cold soft drinks, beer, Sekt (German sweet bubbly), champagne and wine.

### PEDESTRIAN ZONE

Be careful—you share it with buses, mail and delivery vans, bicycles and scooters - driving on the other side of the road

### DRINK

Alcohol can be very cheap if you buy it in bottles from a shop, such as the one on the Maxstrasse – you will see the bottles displayed and you can get Jacobs Creek or something similar, if you must. Wine can be very dear if you buy it by the glass or bottle in a restaurant, etc. The glasses are usually small and have a printed measurement line, usually point 2. Sometimes you have the option of buying a larger glass, say point 4. The beer glasses are

usually large and have lines too. Try the local beer Maisels and the local Franken wine.

If you ask for lemonade, you will be served Fanta, so ask for white lemonade (weisse Limonade) or by its name, such as Sprite or Seven up. A Schorle can be apple juice and soda water and quite refreshing. Coke is sometimes served with a floating slice of lemon. A spritzer is wine and mineral water. Mineral water can be still or fizzy. If you want the latter, ask for Sprudelwasser. Tea is often served with lemon, which tastes better than the milk, which is almost always UHT and sometimes condensed. The range of coffee served is not as great as at home. Avoid the cherry coke.

### SHOPPING

This can be fun in Germany. The hours are strictly controlled by the government, but have been relaxed somewhat. Most shops open from 9.00am to 5.30pm or 6pm Monday to Friday, on Saturday from 9am to 1pm (or 4pm for department stores). All shops are closed Sundays. Small shops may have a Ruhetag, that is a day where they are closed each week. Some shops open on Thursdays until 8pm. Some smaller shops and restaurants may not take American Express or other credit cards. Supermarkets may charge extra for plastic bags and the use of the trolley, but you can take your own bags or buy a cheap cotton tote. Some smaller shops may close for August summer holidays. What we regard as normal customer service can be unusual, although the occasional shop assistant has been very helpful in Bayreuth.

### EMAIL

Big cities have internet cafes, some more than others, although they are not as prevalent as Sydney. The 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Hertie has a cyberbar and there is another internet cafe in a side street.

### BANKING

There are many banks in Bayreuth. There are also ATMs – they are called geld automats and dispense money on Visa, Mastercard, Amex, Cirrus (=Maestro). The latter accepted my St George card. There is also a Thomas Cook office and a carefully concealed American Express office, which is in a travel bureau in the Rotmain Center, a newish shopping mall at the far end of the Maxstrasse.. Although it has been there for two years, no other Amex office knows it exists, not even the Munich branch. Both post offices have ATMs.

### SOUVENIRS

Of course you will buy CDs and books, but nice souvenirs are very hard to find, although there are some carefully concealed under the counter and often not where you might expect to find them. Good chocolates in fancy Bayreuth plastic boxes from the Café Oetter in Bahnhofstrasse just down from the station towards the town. Hertie also has some boxed chocolates in its ground floor confectionery section, as does Hussel. The tourist office has a selection of souvenirs, but they for some reason hide their badges (lapel pins) under the counter as well as their cotton totes. There are some very expensive watches & jewellery at shops in the town.

Kitschy souvenirs such as Teeshirts and car stickers can be bought from a shop near the station.

The New York Wagner society sells souvenir badges and watches at its lectures at the restaurant near the Festspielhaus. The panoramic photos which are taken from the musicians' balcony is available from the newsagent / stationer in the Bahnhofstrasse. The Rosenthal shop this year had Wagner wall plates in sepia tones and crystal champagne flutes with Bayreuth Festspielstadt carved on them. They were on special and inexpensive and mine survived the trip home.

### TRANSPORT

Busses are probably the most common means of travel for Australian visitors. You can buy bus stripcards from the Hertie confectionery counter. You have to punch (in a machine on the bus) every line for each trip. The busses run about 3 times per hour. To the Festspielhaus, take the Hohe Warte bus; catch the return bus on the other side of the street but it has a different number. At night they are less frequent, have letters instead of numbers and follow a very different route. You can also hire cars in the town, but remember they drive on the other side of the road. Above all, don't try to do too much and enjoy your Bayreuth Wagner experience.

Leona Geeves July 2001

**21<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The AGM will be held at the Goethe Institut, 90 Ocean Street, Woollahra, **1.00pm** Sunday 15 July 2001

**THE RAVEN'S REPORTING, COMPILED BY CAMRON DYER**

*The Raven has flown - to Europe, via China and Japan so there is no update this time. Please remember, there is also a comprehensive list in chronological order on the Society's Websit*

**APPLICATION FORM FOR TICKETS TO THE BAYREUTH FESTIVAL 2001  
through the Wagner Society in NSW Inc.**

Holding Deposit	\$2000 incl. \$100 handling fee*	\$2000 incl. \$100 handling fee*
	<b>Applicant 1</b>	<b>Applicant 2</b>

Name		
Address		
Phone	(day)	(day) (night)
Membership Number		
Signatures		
<p>*Based on the average cost of last year's allocation of sets of tickets plus 10% to cover ticket price increases. The Society levies a \$100 charge to cover administrative and related costs.</p>		