

Wagner Society in NSW

President's report, September 1981

There is no doubt that the return to Australia of our Patron, Sir Charles Mackerras, to conduct the Wagner concerts, has been one of the most exciting happenings on the local musical scene for many years. The music-loving public reacted instantly and whole-heartedly, buying up all the Sydney tickets weeks in advance, and surprising the A.B.C. and Opera management with its enthusiasm.

In Melbourne also the response was excellent, the Town Hall on both nights rippling with feverish excitement, which was echoed by the outstanding performances given by the orchestra and soloists. The spontaneity of the final ovation was a gauge of the intense pleasure and warm appreciation of the near capacity audiences.

Miss Rita Hunter was presented with a bouquet of flowers on the opening night of her tour, with the best wishes of the Wagner Society. At the luncheon in Melbourne given by the Wagner Society in her honour, she thanked us for our support and said that she in her turn, would do all she could to encourage a fully-staged Ring cycle in Australia and hoped that she would be able to take part in it. Also at the luncheon, a nucleus of Melbourne Wagner Society was formed. In this way the interests of a much larger number of Wagnerites can be served, and the objects of the Society can become more of a reality, due to the greater support of an increased membership. Already there are quite a few new members from Victoria, and for this we have largely to thank Mrs Jill Sinclair and the Friends of the Australian Opera in Victoria for their encouragement, support and warm hospitality.

It has been very pleasing to the Committee to see such a good response to the functions held this year. Since the A.G.M. we have had a music appreciation day. Committee-man Jean-Louis Stuurop has big plans to make these events even more exciting, and deserves your continuing support.

The talk by Mr Werner Baer M.B.E. on July 6th entertained a crowded W.E.A. auditorium with the witty and erudite performance that we have come to expect from this learned musician. Our thanks go to him and his assistant for the night, Tony Healy, for all the hard work that went into the presentation. Members can enjoy more lectures on the Ring by Mr Baer by joining his W.E.A. classes.

Your Committee hopes you will all enjoy the remaining functions for this year, and that you will make someone happy next year — and help your Society — by taking advantage of the special Christmas gift membership vouchers now available.

Leonard Hansen