We are so proud. Our Issachah Savage, Emerging Singers Program (ESP) and American Wagner Project (AWP) awardee of 2013-14, just won First Prize at the recently completed Seattle Opera International Wagner Competition. Daniel Brenna, ESP 2005, is singing the role of Siegfried in the upcoming Washington National Opera (WNO) “American Ring.” And Jay Hunter Morris is featured on the DVD of the Metropolitan Opera’s “Ring” and is coming to Washington for the upcoming “Dutchman.” Their triumphs, and many others’ (see page 5) are the fruition of the Emerging Singers Program, a collaboration founded in 1999 among the great Thomas Stewart, his wife soprano Evelyn Lear, and the Wagner Society of Washington DC, to find and nurture American singers with the potential to sing Wagner. With their deaths, the mantle has been assumed by Dolora Zajick, Luana DeVol, and the American Wagner Project. I wish Tom and Evelyn were still with us to see this.

This coming year, Francesca Zambello, WNO’s Artistic Director, has invited us to participate in the run-up for the “Dutchman” and “American Ring.” We continue lectures with our friends at the Goethe-Institut, while we celebrate the 15th anniversary of our unique and fabulously successful Wagner in der Wildnis retreat. Help us continue to find and nurture the next generation of great American singers while advancing the understanding and appreciation of Wagner’s genius. Please join us.

Jim Holman, Chairman

Upcoming Events to Note

- **Saturday September 27**, pianist Jeffrey Swann and soprano Eudora Brown. To mark the 100th commemoration of the start of WWI, they will perform music from “The World on the Brink of Abyss – Music in 1914.” Selections include Ives’ “Concord Sonata – Thoreau,” Scriabin’s “9th Sonata – The Black Mass,” and works from Debussy and Janacek. American University Katzen Arts Center, 4400 Massachusetts Ave. NW. 7:30. Free of charge to new and renewing members, $25 to non-renewing members, and $35 to non-members
- **February 21-March 10**, Dolora Zajick stars in Poulenc’s “Dialogues of the Carmelites.” WNO.
- **February 2015**, Antony Walker, Conductor of the Washington Concert Opera (WCO), discusses with Jim Holman “Guntram,” Strauss’ Most Wagnerian Opera. (Walker is conducting WCO’s “Guntram” and WNO’s “Carmelites.”
- **March 7 - 21**, “The Flying Dutchman,” with Eric Owens, (Alan Held 3/19) and Jay Hunter Morris. WNO.
- **March 12**, A Conversation with Eric Owens, followed by a reception. Arts Club, 7:30. Eric is singing the role of the Dutchman for the WNO.
In its 14th year, *Wagner in der Wildnis* studied “Götterdämmerung,” again starring the dream team of international concert pianist Jeffrey Swann and Prof. Simon Williams, Chairman of Theater and Dramatic Arts at UC-Santa Barbara. Coordinated by the Society’s Lynne Lambert and Jackie Rosen, the weekend included three viewings of “Götterdämmerung”—Act 1 from Pierre Audi’s 1999 Netherlands “Ring,” Act 2 from Patrice Chereau’s 1981 Bayreuth production, and Act 3 from Daniel Barenboim’s 2013 La Scala production, directed by Guy Cassiers. Special recognition was given to WSWDC board member Mark Golden, who has ensured the quality and reliability of the sound and video essential to *Wildnis*.

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**FRANCESCA ZAMBELLO RECEIVES WSWDC’S WAGNER AWARD**

Francesca Zambello, Artistic Director of the Washington National Opera, is the 12th recipient of the Society’s Wagner Award, presented to individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the understanding and enjoyment of Wagner’s art. Chairman Jim Holman made the award September 15 at the cast party following the WNO’s “Tristan und Isolde.” Ms. Zambello is a true Wagnerian. She conceptualized, produced and directed the “American Ring,” which WNO performed one opera a year starting in 2006. It was performed in its entirety in 2011 by the San Francisco Opera. Last year she directed WNO’s production of “Tristan und Isolde” with Irene Theorin and Ian Storey. Last summer she produced “The Flying Dutchman” at Glimmerglass, with Jay Hunter Morris as Erik, a role he will reprise this year with WNO. And in 2016 she is bringing the “American Ring” to WNO in three cycles.

For her steadfast and brilliant rendering of the operas of Richard Wagner, and her stunning work as a director and producer of operas, WSWDC is proud to present her the Wagner Award. She joins previous recipients former chair of the WNO board John Pohanka, Prof. Donald Crosby, pianist Jeffrey Swann, maestro Saul Lilienstein, bass baritone Thomas Stewart, soprano Evelyn Lear, bass baritone James Morris, maestro Heinz Fricke, tenor Placido Domingo, impresario Martin Feinstein, and author Father M. Owen Lee.

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**BAYREUTH INTERRUPTUS by Guillermo Schultz**

I met with the CEO of Freunde von Bayreuth (“Friends”). The issue of ticket allocations to the societies was discussed during the May board meeting of the Festival Society. Of the four members, State of Bavaria, City of Bayreuth, Friends, and the Federal Government, it is only the last which continues to oppose such allocations. They will suspend their financial contribution to the Festival were such allocations to be made.

Nevertheless, the issue remains on the table for future discussions. There may be some allocations for 2016. The allocations would have to include the German societies, and would be proportional to membership. Currently the only way to get Bayreuth tickets is through their box office or by joining Friends.

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**THE WILDNIS LEGACY PROGRAM**

In 2012 Society member Marc Nicholson, concerned that the priceless and absolutely unique recordings of the Wildnis lectures would be lost to posterity, received approval from the Board, and from Jeffrey Swann and Simon Williams, to fund a permanent on-line archive of the Wildnis lectures. Drawing from Aury Fernandez’ comprehensive archive, Marc and Frederic Harwood worked with a sound engineer and our webmaster Jim Giragosian to put the archives online. The archive will soon include all of Wagner’s works.

The archive is available through the Society’s web-site (www.wagner-dc.org), and can also be found by searching Google or YouTube (keyword “WSWDC lectures” or “Wildnis lectures.” If you Google “Wagner lectures” the lectures will appear, but down the list, around 7th place). The Society, its members, and Wagnerians everywhere are indebted to Marc Nicholson for his vision, initiative, and funding to preserve this essential resource.
ISSACHAH SAVAGE AWARDED FIRST PRIZE AT SEATTLE OPERA’S INTERNATIONAL WAGNER COMPETITION

On August 7, Issachah Savage, our Emerging Singer of 2013 and 2014 American Wagner Project Recipient, won First Prize at the International Wagner Competition, also winning the Audience Prize and Orchestra Prize. In his competition bio he credited WSWDC-IYDV American Wagner Project, the Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, and Thomas Stewart, Evelyn Lear and Dolora Zajick, among others, for their support.

June 11, at the Arts Club, Issachah presented his valedictory concert to the Society, with pianist Frank Conlon. Selections included “Mein lieber Schwan” from “Lohengrin,” his Seattle winning selection. Having completed two summers as an AWP Resident, he recently sang the role of Radames for the Houston Grand Opera, Opera North Carolina, and the Boston Symphony. Summer 2013 he participated in San Francisco Opera’s Merola Program for gifted young singers, and sang the Finale to “Lohengrin” in Merola’s Grand Finale. This past year he sang in the world premiere of Wynton Marsalis’ “All Rise” with Kurt Masur and the NY Philharmonic, and with Marin Alsop’s Baltimore Symphony in Gershwin’s “Blue Monday.”

In March-April of 2015 he will sing Don Riccardo in the Metropolitan Opera’s “Ernani,” conducted by James Levine. Issachah’s triumphant year more than justifies the investment WSWDC made to help him become, in just a few short years, one of opera’s most exciting young tenors.

THE AMERICAN WAGNER PROJECT by John Edward Niles

With the passing of our great partner and beloved friend soprano Evelyn Lear, 2013 was a transition year for the Emerging Singers Program. Under the leadership of the Society’s John Edward Niles, the Society has forged a partnership with mezzo Dolora Zajick’s Institute for Young Dramatic Voices (IYDV) to create, with soprano Luana DeVol, the WSWDC-IYDV American Wagner Project.

The American Wagner Project will identify singers who have the capability to sing Wagner. Singers auditioned in Washington, New York and Chicago for a chance to participate in the three-week-long summer IYDV workshop held at the University of Utah. In addition to helping some singers with tuition and travel, the Society helps support the participation of Ms. DeVol, who concentrates on the AWP singers’ Wagner repertory, and Marriiane Barnett, the Metropolitan Opera’s German language coach.

THE DOLORA ZAJICK MASTER CLASS

On May 7, five aspiring Wagnerians participated in a Master Class conducted by Ms. Zajick at the Arts Club of Washington DC. Before an audience of 80 Society members and friends, Ms. Zajick coached baritone Brent Stater, soprano Eudora Brown, bass Jeffrey Tarr, mezzo Chantelle Grant, and tenor Joshua Baumgardner. All are participating in this summer’s Institute for Young Dramatic Voices. Additional singers selected for the AWP summer institute are Jeffrey Frens, a tenor from Minneapolis, tenor Brendan Sliger who recently sang the Leipzig “Ring für Kinder,” and heldentenor Daniel Opitz, a music teacher in Arizona.

THE WSWDC EMERGING SINGERS OF 2014-2015

With funds contributed by our Premium Members, the Society has awarded development stipends to Brendan Sliger and Soloman Howard.

Brendan Sliger is a tenor who has sung with local groups such as The Chesapeake Opera, The In-Series, and the University of Maryland Opera Studio. He recently sang Siegmund and Siegfried in Oper Leipzig’s “Ring für Kinder.” The Society believes he has great promise.

Soloman Howard is a bass who recently completed a three-year residency with the WNO Domingo Cafritz Young Artist Program. As a resident, he performed most recently as Sarastro in WNO’s acclaimed “The Magic Flute.” He sang “Rigoletto” with the Chicago Symphony in Grant Park, and he is scheduled to sing the King in the Metropolitan Opera’s upcoming “Aida.” The Society has made a two-year commitment to support his bright future.

“Tristan und Isolde,” WNO, September 15-27, featuring Irene Theorin and Ian Storey, with Elizabeth Bishop and James Rutherford, Kennedy Center.

Following the season opening performance of “Tristan und Isolde,” Francesca Zambello was presented the Society’s Wagner Award at the cast dinner party. September 15.

Drawing on an exhibit at the National Gallery of Art, American University professor Juliet Bellow presented “Wagner and Diaghilev: Gesamtkunstwerk and the Ballets Russes” -- two visions of total art. Goethe-Institut. September 19.


As part of the Wagner Bicentennial, E Street Cinema showed “Ludwig II,” a dramatized biography of the eccentric king of Bavaria, who was Wagner’s essential patron. October 10.

National Symphony Orchestra Music Director Christoph Eschenbach conducted a concert version of the final act from “Parsifal,” performed with the Washington Chorus. Kennedy Center. October 10, 11, and 12.

WSWDC Chairman Jim Holman illustrated the uses and abuses of Wagner’s music in “Richard Wagner in the Movies,” featuring clips from ten films. Goethe-Institut. October 24.


The American Wagner Project, a new partnership between WSWDC and the Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, held its first auditions to identify and support American singers with potential for singing the works of Wagner. Washington National Opera Studios. October 28.

A recent film directed by Italian Gianni Di Capua, “Richard Wagner--Venetian Diary of the Rediscovered Symphony,” documenting Wagner's rediscovery of his own symphony composed before he was twenty, received its US premiere at the Library of Congress. November 7.


The American University Symphony, Chorus, soloists, and faculty member Yuliya Gorenman played “Prelude to Tristan und Isolde” to illustrate music that was revolutionary. National Presbyterian Church. November 10.

As part of the Wagner Bicentennial, West End Cinema featured the opera “Siegfried” conducted by Daniel Barenboim and recorded at Teatro alla Scala in Milan. November 16.


In “Wagner and Rousseau” University of Virginia Professor of English and Comparative Literature Paul Cantor described Wagner’s “Ring” Cycle as a reinterpretation of traditional religious views of the Creation and Fall. Goethe-Institut. March 13.

Internationally acclaimed mezzo-soprano Dolora Zajick, Director of the Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, conducted a master class for soprano Eudora Brown, mezzo Chantelle Grant, tenor Joshua Baumgardner, baritone Brent Stater, and bass Jeffrey Tarr. Arts Club of Washington. May 7.

The annual weekend retreat Wagner in der Wildnis focused on “Götterdämmerung” and featured perennial favorites professor Simon Williams and pianist Jeffrey Swann. Capacon State Park, Berkeley Springs, WV. May 31-June 1.

The first singer sponsored by WSWDC under the American Wagner Project, tenor Issachah Savage, with pianist Frank Conlon, sang his valedictory recital with excerpts from the roles of Siegmund, Amfortas, and Lohengrin. Arts Club of Washington. June 11.
Brünnhildes, Siegfrieds, and Others

Our Emerging Singers Program has played a part in the development of some of today’s ascendent Brünnhildes and Siegfrieds – Jennifer Wilson, Rebecca Teem, Carolyn Whisnant, Jay Hunter Morris, and Daniel Brenna. The contributions from our Premium Members allow us to support promising singers such as these.

Daniel Brenna, ESP 2003, 2005, will sing Siegfried in the 2016 WNO “Ring,” in his American debut. Thomas Stewart helped him land several European engagements, but his career caught fire in 2011 when he sang Aaron for Zurich’s production of Schoenberg’s “Moses and Aaron” under the direction of Achim Freyer, and then the role of Siegfried at the Longborough Festival, praised in the London Times. In the summer of 2012 he sang Despotes for Salzburg Festival’s “Die Soldaten.” Other recent roles include Alwa in “Lulu,” Jimmy Mahoney in “Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny,” and the Drum Major in “Wozzeck.”

Jay Hunter Morris, ESP 2001, is singing Erik in the WNO’s upcoming Dutchman. His rise on the world opera stage has been meteoric since Francesca Zambello cast him as Siegfried in the 2011 San Francisco “Ring.” He sang the role in the 2012 and 2013 Metropolitan Opera “Rings,” appearing on the DVD. He recently sang Tristan to Jennifer Wilson’s Isolde in Valencia, and sang Captain Ahab in the WNO and SFO “Moby Dick.”

Jennifer Wilson, ESP 2001, 2004, was discovered by Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart singing in the WNO chorus, and they launched her triumphant international career. Her Brünnhildes in Valencia (on DVD), Florence, and Leipzig, and her Isolde and Senta have established her as a world class soprano. She has also sung the Dyer’s wife in “Die Frau ohne Schatten” and the title role in “Turandot.”

Carolyn Whisnant, ESP 2002, who moved to Germany in 2002, has sung Brünnhilde and Senta in Mannheim, Frankfurt, Karlsruhe, Essen, Duisburg, Düsseldorf, and Giessen, as well as in Paris, Oslo, Antwerp, and Warsaw. Recent engagements included the title roles in “Elektra” and “Turandot” as well as Barak’s wife in “Die Frau ohne Schatten.”

Rebecca Teem, ESP 2005, 2007, auditioned in 2005 for Tom and Evelyn and her mature voice and outstanding German diction moved them to support her career. Based primarily in Lübeck, she has sung Brünnhilde in Lübeck, Essen, Berlin, Frankfurt, Weimar, and Braunschweig “Rings.” Add the roles of Isolde, Gerhilde, the title role in “Turandot” and Gertrud in “Hansel and Gretel.”

Brian Register, ESP 2007-8, recently performed his first Tristan in Kiel, and has now sung the roles of Erik and Siegmund. He sang the title role in Savonlinna’s “Lohengrin” and has had two engagements at the English National Opera, Florestan in “Fidelio” and the Drum Major in “Wozzeck.”

Cory Bix, ESP 2007, sang the role of Bacchus in this summer’s “Ariadne auf Naxos” at Glimmerglass, a role he previously sang for the Ft. Worth Opera and Hungarian State Opera in 2013. In 2013 he sang Erik in Arizona Opera’s and Los Angeles Opera’s “Dutchman,” sang Edgar Aubry in New Orleans Opera’s “Der Vampyr,” and sang the role of a Jew in Opera Company of Philadelphia’s “Salome.”

Othalie Graham, ESP 2008, performed Isolde at Zagreb, an all-Wagner concert with Oakland East Bay Symphony, and another Wagner gala with Orquestra Sinfônica de Xalapa in Mexico.


FRANCESCA ZAMBELLO TO DIRECT WNO’S 2016 “AMERICAN RING”

In May the WNO announced the 2016 “American Ring.” Attending the announcement were Chairman Jim Holman, board members Betty Byrne, Mark Golden, Diane Stanley and Frederic Harwood, Jackie Rosen, and members Donald Dittberner and Roswitha Augusta. The WNO has invited WSWDC’s cooperation with education and programming for this landmark event.

Three Cycles starting April 30 through May 22 are planned, starring Bayreuth’s Catherine Foster and Nina Stemme (third cycle) as Brünnhilde, and Alan Held as Wotan. A note of great pride is the selection of Daniel Brenna, an ESP alumnus, to sing the role of Siegfried.
Meistersingers’ Guild
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Jim and Diana Holman
John and Lynn Pohanka
Guillermo and Cecilia Schultz

Pilgrims Chorus
Frederic Harwood and
Neddi di Montezemolo
Katrina and William Reinhardt

Golden Ring
Betty M. Byrne
Aurelius and Janet Fernandez
Lynne Lambert
Eliot and Blaine Marshall
Robert Misbin and Audrey Pendergast
John Edward Niles
Thomas and Diane Stanley
Jack Sulser and Sally Ann Greer

Sponsors
Adelaida Acevedo
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Roswitha Augusta
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K. Burke Dillon

Suzanne Legault
Roberta McKay
Ilse Niedermayer
Thomas and Catheryn Scoville
Maika Siebeck
Richard and Marie Sippel
Richard Soderquist and
Cathy Nodgaard
Barbara A. Teichert
Mark Villamar and Esther Milsted
William Zeile and Maria Yang

We note with sadness the passing of long-time members and Wildnis participants Rowland Cross, Judy Adelson, Jere Daum, and William C. Martin.

Wagnerians including Leon Botstein, Barry Millington, and Saul Lilienstein.

“Wagner the Mystic” by John Pohanka - the kinship between religious mysticism and the experience of listening to Wagner.

Re-discovering Richard Wagner through his Music, Saul Lilienstein, a set of 4 CDs presented at the Goethe-Institut, March 19, 2011.

“Die Meistersinger.” Saul Lilienstein analyzes its musical architecture, staging, leitmotifs, orchestration, and the characters. 4 CDs.

Quo Vadis, Wagner: Approaching the Bicentennial, compiled and edited by Jim Holman. Essays by prominent

AVAILABLE SOCIETY RESOURCES


Wagner’s Music Dramas and the Jews, with Saul Lilienstein, on DVD from WSWDC, $15. (Do not miss Daniel Barenboim’s “Wagner and the Jews,” June 20, 2013 New York Review of Books,)

Wagner Moments” edited by Jim Holman. Moments of discovery and pleasure from luminaries including C. S. Lewis, Beverly Sills, W. H. Auden, T. S. Eliot, G. B. Shaw, James Joyce, and others.

To order see www.wagner-dc.org or email jackie.rosen@wagner-dc.org

Write for and read The Wagner Connection, an on-line forum hosted by WSWDC to promote discussion of Wagner’s life and work. Open to the public. www.connection.wagner-dc.org. Click Register.
MEMBERSHIP 2015

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The WSWDC membership year runs from January 1 through December 31 regardless of the time of year you join. To become a member, please either mail this form with your check or credit card authorization to WSWDC, P. O. Box 58213, Washington DC 20037, or fax it to 703.370.1924, or access the form and pay online at our web site: www.wagner-dc.org

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• Priority for reserving ticketed Wagner Society programs.

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Upcoming Programs
Lectures are free and open to the public!


Thursday October 16, Jim Holman, “Strauss Was from Venus, Wagner from Mars.” Goethe-Institut. 7:30.


February 21-March 10, the AWP’s Dolora Zajick sings in “Dialogues of the Carmelites.” WNO.


Spring 2015, WSWDC Members’ Banquet honoring Jay Hunter Morris, Arts Club.

June 2015, WSWDC Members’ Garden Party

June 6-8, Wagner in der Wildnis, Cacapon State Park, Berkeley Springs, WV.