



The Wagner Society of Washington DC

## THE AMERICAN WAGNER PROJECT: JUST WHAT IS IT?

The **American Wagner Project** is our outreach to develop a new generation of singers able to draw audiences into the music of Richard Wagner. We mean exciting singers of exceptional talent, destined for major careers. We also mean to make a difference in their careers.

The Project has several components that, to succeed, will need to involve all of us:



Dolora Zajick

First is our partnership with **Institute for Young Dramatic Voices** under the leadership of Dolora Zajick. This partnership, now in its second year, involves our funding the German division of the Institute, led by Wagnerian soprano Luana DeVol (be sure to google her!). Our funds will be used for coaching the German opera repertoire and German language and diction. This coming summer the Institute will use our funds to hire Marianne Barrett, who is one of the Met's main coaches for Wagner. In addition to Ms. Barrett, Betty Bullock, who has accompanied many of our concerts in the past, will be joining the American Wagner Project this summer as a pianist/coach.



Luana DeVol



Issachah Savage

Secondly, we will continue to sponsor an individual ready to launch a big career, as we sponsored Issachah Savage in 2013. Grants may, on occasion, be extended to two or three less experienced, but highly promising young singers. Generally we would identify the singers we sponsor from Dolora Zajick's Institute, or we would expect a locally-identified singer to attend the Institute.

Finally, we want to keep our membership in touch with our emerging singers and our partners with two musical events each year. These events could take various forms. We currently are considering a mix of ideas, such as a concert opera with orchestra, featuring artists from the Institute; a star concert; open auditions for the Institute; and a master class.

The American Wagner Project is a natural outgrowth of the Wagner Society's Emerging Singers' Program, co-founded with the late Thomas Stewart and Evelyn Lear. These programs are among the few accepting singers over age 30, the age when big voices suitable for Wagner develop. The goals of the two programs are similar, but the Project's

focus will be on fewer and younger singers, and those who are already proven and nearly ready for prime time. Also, whereas the Emerging Singer Program primarily drew from singers living on the east coast, the reach of the Project is national.

As with all Wagner Society programs, the involvement and support of our membership is indispensable. The board is very excited about the Project, and we hope you will be equally enthusiastic, especially as you get to know Dolora Zajick, Luana DeVol, and the young singers. Roughly 22 percent of our budget supports the American Wagner Project, and if we are to do ambitious offerings, such as a concert version of one of Wagner's operas or even a second musical event a year, we will need your support and participation.

We welcome your questions, thoughts, and ideas. Please address any comments to John Edward Niles at: [johnedniles45@gmail.com](mailto:johnedniles45@gmail.com).