

Wagner on the Potomac

For the study and enjoyment of Wagner's Art

August 2004

Vol. 6 No.2

Onward and Upward! Programs and Memberships Expanding for the 2004-2005 Season

Chairman's Greeting: Onward and upward! We have lined up a truly exciting 2004-2005 season and have added other events reported in this newsletter as membership benefits.

During the last five years we have offered an expanding range of memorable programs without a single increase in membership dues. I hope you will agree that modest dues increases are now necessary so that we can continue expanding as one of the most dynamic arts organizations in the Washington area.

As always, the Board of Directors joins me in expressing our heartfelt appreciation for the support of our many and growing number of Members. *JK Holman, Chairman*

W

Wagner Society Award Presented to Musicologist Saul Lilienstein

In the festive atmosphere of the Society's 6th Annual Banquet, at the Arts Club of Washington, Saul Lilienstein graciously accepted the award from Chairman Holman. Members, friends, and Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart, who had previously received the award, were present.



Saul Lilienstein with President Fernandez (left) and Chairman Holman (right)

8th Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Concert
with the Friday Morning Music Club Orchestra
conducted by Sylvia Alimena at Schlesinger Hall,
Northern Virginia Community College May 21, 2004.



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The 2004 Season January to June

The season was filled with wonderful events. The Society sponsored four major lectures (reported below), facilitated Members' tickets for the Metropolitan Opera *Ring*, presented the 8th Emerging Singers Concert, staged the annual retreat, *Wagner in der Wildnis IV (Götterdämmerung)*, and closed with the 6th Annual Banquet and Award ceremony. The allocation of tickets for the 2004 Bayreuth Festival was completed, and Members holding tickets began preparations to attend performances in August. Programming and membership reached new heights in the season: we now have close to 600 Members enrolled for the 2004 Membership Year!

Thursday, January 22, 2004 (GWU-George Washington University Funger Hall) **Dean Jeffrey Buller**, Mary Baldwin College, was warmly welcomed for his third appearance with the Society; his last appearance was at the joint WSWDC-Smithsonian Seminar in September 2003. His illustrated lecture titled "**Siegfried: The Wurm Turns**" was characteristically insightful and informative as he described techniques and styles Wagner applied in all his music dramas. (Professor Buller lectured under a program sponsored by the Wagner Society of New York at the 2004 Bayreuth Festival.)

Thursday, February 10, 2004 (GWU Funger Hall) Author **James McCourt** spoke on "**The Wagnerian Femme Fatale**", explaining why some Wagner heroines -- Isolde, Kundry, Brünnhilde and Venus-Elizabeth -- are really out to kill the men they love!

Thursday, March 18, 2004 (GWU Funger Hall) **Professor Edward R. Haymes**, Professor of German and Comparative Literature at Cleveland State University, spoke on the commonality between Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. In a fascinating and original lecture, he explained the many ways that the two great works illuminate each other, noting how both Tolkienists and Wagnerians learn from the substance of these influential masterpieces. Professor Haymes is

the author of a book on the *Nibelungenlied* and co-author of *Heroic Legends of the North*. Readers will want to see the text of his lecture posted on the Society's website: www.wagner-dc.org.

Thursday, April 15, 2004 (German Embassy, Washington, DC) **Pianist Jeffrey Swann**, presented a lecture at the piano titled "**Tristan and the Mystic Experience**", which was applauded by a capacity audience. His performance appealed to both Wagner novices and specialists. Jeffrey Swann participated in our last three *Wagner in der Wildnis* weekend retreats (see page 5). The lecture at the piano was followed by a reception for Members and Friends.

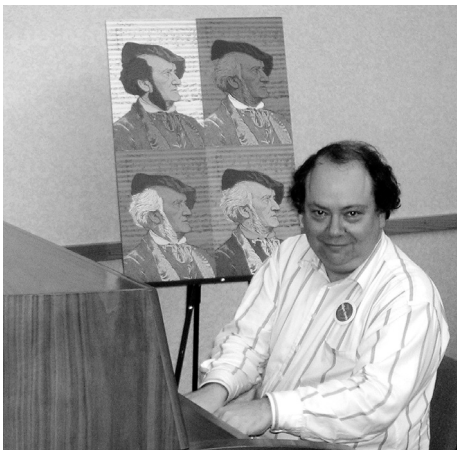
Thursday, May 13, 2004 (GWU Funger Hall) **Irmgard Wagner**, Professor Emerita of German, George Mason University, and current President of the American Goethe Society, spoke on "**Where is Wagner's Faust?**" Her original and stimulating lecture explored why Wagner never composed music to Goethe's *Faust* and whether there are equivalents and parallels to *Faust* in Wagner's music dramas. Professor Wagner made a distinguished contribution to the WSWDC-Smithsonian Seminar in September 2003.

Friday, May 21, 2004 (Schlesinger Hall, Northern Virginia Community College) **8th Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Concert** (see page 4).

Friday, June 4 to Sunday June 6 (Cacapon State Park Lodge, WVa) *Wagner in der Wildnis IV (Götterdämmerung)* - see story page 5 and photos below.

Saturday, June 21, 2004 (The Arts Club of Washington DC) **6th Annual Banquet and Award Ceremony** (see page 1) **Saul Lilienstein** joined the ranks of previous award recipients **Evelyn Lear** and **Thomas Stewart**, **Martin Feinstein**, **Fr. M. Owen Lee**, **Placido Domingo**, and **Heinz Fricke**. Lilienstein is especially remembered by Wagnerians for his CD commentaries on *Die Walküre* and *Parsifal* as well as his *Tristan und Isolde* lectures at the Washington National Opera.

Wagner in der Wildnis IV (Götterdämmerung)



Pianist Jeffrey Swann at the *Wildnis* Piano.



Simon Williams as Hagen appeals to Lynne Lambert as Brünnhilde and Frank Pierce as Gunther reading the libretto. In background Betty Byrne, Director.



Upcoming Programs - The Fall 2004-2005 Season



Dana Gioia

September 23, 2004 (GWU-George Washington, University, Fungler Hall) **Dana Gioia**, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, will discuss how a poet creates an opera libretto. His poetry has been set to music. He collaborated with composer Alva Henderson on the text for *The War Requiem* and wrote the libretto for the

opera *Nosferatu*. Mr. Gioia is also an internationally acclaimed poet, critic, translator, and educator, is also a renowned commentator on American culture and literature for the BBC.

October 8, 2004 (German Embassy) **9th Emerging Singers Concert** (see page 4).

October 21, 2004 (GWU Fungler Hall) **Professor Oswald Georg Bauer** Professor Bauer has a long association with the Bayreuth Festival. He is the author of the classic, *Richard Wagner: The State Designs and Productions from the Premières to the Present* (New York: Rizzoli, 1983). He has organized exhibits about the Festival displayed on five continents where he has also lectured. His Washington visit will be in connection with an extensive lecture tour of the United States.

November 11, 2004 (GWU Fungler Hall) **Paul Fryer**, the distinguished film scholar and critic, returns to WSWDC to present a lecture-screening of the 1912 silent film, *The Life of Richard Wagner*, with a new orchestral score. Dr. Fryer is an expert on opera, opera singers, and the silent-film industry. He is a Senior Lecturer at Rose Buford College, Britain's main provider of degree-level education and training in theatre arts. In 2001, he presented the 1904 film version of *Parsifal* in a lecture hosted jointly by the Wagner Society and the Library of Congress.

December 9, 2004 (GWU Fungler Hall) **Simon Morrison**, Assistant Professor of Music at Princeton University and author of *Russian Opera and the Symbolist Movement* (University of California Press, 2002) will explain why Tchaikovsky's *Sleeping Beauty* is the very antithesis of Wagner's teachings and music. Professor Morrison writes for the Arts & Leisure section of *The New York Times*. He was a guest lecturer at the Institute Pro Arte in St. Petersburg, Russia in 2002.



Simon Morrison

February 2005 - Week end of *Tristan und Isolde* at the Virginia Opera, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA.

- **Saturday, February 12:** all-day *Tristan und Isolde* seminar at the Smithsonian Institution jointly sponsor with WSWDC.
- **Saturday, February 12:** (evening program to be announced)
- **Sunday, February 13:** Matinee performance with **Thomas Rolf Truhitte**, Emerging Singer Program participant, as Tristan. Members will be informed of possibilities to attend the cast dinner party after the performance.

Tickets to Wagner Performances!

2005 Seattle Ring -- Members will be informed in September 2004 regarding ticket availability.

2005 Bayreuth Festival -- Members will be informed by January 2005 regarding ticket availability.



The Wagner Society Award at the 6th Annual Banquet



Saul Lilienstein(2004) greets Evelyn Lear(2003) and Thomas Steward(2001).

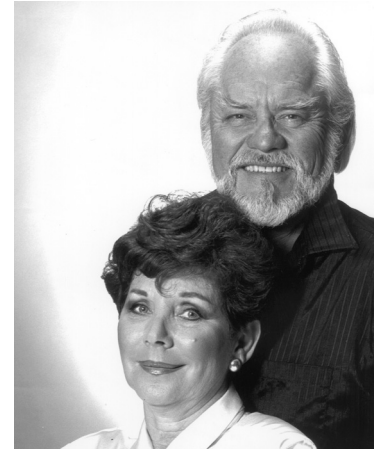


Member McKinney Russell with Beth and Saul Lilienstein.

Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Program (E

The Emerging Singer Program (ESP) is the flagship activity of the Society. Its stunning success has been illustrated in eight concerts sponsored by the Society and in the impressive achievements of the singers reported in these pages. The steadily increasing momentum of the ESP is demonstrated by plans for the 9th Concert (October 8, 2004) and the 10th Concert and Gala (June 2005) reported below.

Singers: apply for participation in this program; see our website: www.wagner-dc.org. All potential participants are auditioned by Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart and receive from them invaluable voice and acting coaching in rehearsals for Concert performances.



The 8th Emerging Singers Concert May 21, 2004 Musical Achievements of Four Talented Singers and The Friday Morning Music Club Orchestra at Northern Virginia Community College

The concert was made possible through the underwriting of two generous Wagner Society Members, Guillermo and Cecilia Schultz.

The 8th Concert evening was praised by Washington Post music critic Joseph McClellan who reported that a "strong impression was made by four young singers", each of whom received critical accolades in his May 24 review. **Conductor Sylvia Alimena** and the Friday Morning Music Club Orchestra opened the concert with the Prelude from *Tristan und Isolde*.

Baritone **Matt Lepold**, in his first appearance in an ESP Concert, sang the opening vocal number of the evening: *Blick' ich umher in diesem edlen Kreise* (*Tannhäuser*, Act II). Tenor **Roy Stevens** in his second appearance in an ESP concert -- he sang Loge at the 7th ESP Concert in September 2003 -- then performed Tristan's lament, *Dünkt dich das?* (*Act III Tristan und Isolde*).

Soprano **Jennifer Wilson** as Elsa from Act II of *Lohengrin* was joined by **Matt Lepold** (Telramund) and **Mezzo Jennifer Roderer** (Ortrud) to sing *Euch Lüften, die meine Klagen entweibte Götter. Hilft jetzt meine Rache* (Ortrud's Curse).

After intermission, **Lepold** sang Wolfram's air: *Wie Todesahnung Dämmerung deckt die Lande* and *O du, mein bolder Abendstern* (*Tannhäuser*, Act III). **Wilson** and **Stevens** closed the program with a performance of the love duet from Act III of *Siegfried*, beginning with *Heil dir, Sonne!*

The four talented singers had benefited from the personal coaching of **Evelyn Lear** and **Thomas Stewart** and were very ably accompanied by the Friday Morning Music Club Orchestra under Sylvia Alimena's skillful direction. The Schlesinger Hall, Northern Virginia Community College, provided an excellent venue for the singers and orchestra.

The 9th Emerging Singers Concert: October 8, 2004 at the German Embassy

An outstanding roster of singers has been selected by Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart for the 9th ESP Concert. Mezzo **Roxanne Rowedder** returns to perform Waltraute's Narrative (*Götterdämmerung*, Act I). Tenor **Brian Carter**, in his first ESP Concert appearance, will sing *Winterstürme* and *Siegfried bin ich* (*Die Walküre*, Act I). Baritone **Jason Switzer** performs for the first time in an ESP Concert singing

Wotan's Abendlich strahlt der Sonne Auge (*Das Rheingold*). **Rowedder** and **Jason Switzer** will sing the Fricka-Wotan scene (Act I, *Die Walküre*). Tenor **David Smith**, who sang *Winterstürme* and the *Schmiede Lied* at the 6th Annual Banquet and Award Ceremony will sing *Nur eine Waffe taucht* (*Parsifal*). **Smith, Switzer, Carter** and **Matt Lepold** will combine their talents to sing *The Song Contest* (*Tannhäuser*).

The 10th Emerging Singers Concert: Spring 2005

This Concert will be combined with a Gala Celebration to mark the growing success of the ESP and the Wagner Society of Washington DC. A special publication regarding the program will be published in the Fall 2004 in the run up to the 9th and 10th Concerts.

ESP) Expanding Performance Opportunities for Promising Singers

Emerging Singers Update: Steady and Dramatic Progress

Below are selected examples of recent and upcoming roles and engagements of various singers in the Program since the last reports in our January 2004 newsletter (Vol. 6, No. 1):

Charles Robert Austin: (6th ESP Concert 2003 and Smithsonian Seminar September 2003) Rocco in *Fidelio* at Virginia Opera September 2003. King Marke in Virginia Opera *Tristan* in February 2005. Zuñiga in *Carmen* at Pittsburgh Opera in 2004. Beethoven 9th with Nebraska Symphony 2005.



Michael Hayes

Michael Hayes: (6th ESP Concert May 2003) : Sang Otello at Summer Opera Theatre, Catholic University, Washington, DC (2004). Calaf in Virginia Opera autumn 2004. Hoffmann with Cleveland Opera in 2005. Duca in *Rigoletto* with Kentucky and Dayton operas in 2004-2005.

Amanda Mace: (2nd ESP Concert May 2001): Engaged for role of Ortlinde (Bayreuth Festival 2006). Role in *Fidelio* at Chiemgau Festival in 2004. Mahler 8th in San Sebastian in 2004. Beethoven 9th with Hannover Symphony in Fall 2004.



Amanda Mace

Thomas Rolf Truhitte: (3rd ESP Concert October 2001; 4th ESP Concert May 2002) *Lobengrin* at Spoleto Summer 2003. *Tristan* at Virginia Opera (February 2005) as follow on to his *Siegfried* there (September 2003). *Parsifal* in Genoa in 2004. Max in *Freischütz* in Metz in 2004. Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Metz in 2006.

Roy Stevens: (7th ESP Concert September 2003; 8th Concert May 2003) Froh (*Die Walküre*) Berkeley Opera 2004.

Jennifer Wilson: (3rd ESP Concert May 2002; Smithsonian Seminar September 2003; 8th ESP Concert May 2004). *Turandot* at Houston May 2004. Cover for Jane Eaglen's Brünnhilde at Chicago Lyric 2005 *Ring*. *Turandot* at Santa Fe 2005. Helmwigie at Paris Chatelet 2005. Other engagements in USA and Holland.

Laura Zuiderveen (1st ESP Concert April 2000 and 3rd ESP Concert October 2001) La Zia Principessa in *Suor Angelica* at Summer Opera Theatre, Catholic University Washington, DC, summer 2004.

Over the top! Wagner in der Wildnis IV (*Götterdämmerung*)

The bucolic West Virginia countryside provided an inspiring and relaxing setting for our fourth annual retreat (June 4-6). We met again in the Cacapon State Park Lodge near Berkeley Springs, encouraged by the success of previous retreats featuring *Das Rheingold* (2001), *Die Walküre* (2002), and *Siegfried* (2003). Thus, we completed this year our four-year journey and exploration of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. We are planning *Wildnis V (Meistersinger)* for June 2005 -- at Cacapon again.

The 45 participants of *Wildnis IV* included Members from the Washington DC and New York City areas, along with the speakers and guests. The study and enjoyment of Wagner's art reached new heights! Wagner's music dramas -- focusing on *Götterdämmerung* -- were explicated by Pianist Jeffrey Swann (mostly music) and Professor Simon Williams (mostly drama) in their formal lectures. Jeffrey and Simon stimulated lively discussion among participants throughout the weekend in the meeting room, the dining room, countryside strolls, and chats on the patio.

A highlight of the weekend was the traditional Saturday night reading aloud of the libretto in English by a stellar cast of willing *Wildnis* participants under the skillful direction of Board Member Betty Byrne. As in previous years, this was an informative and entertaining exercise performed with seriousness of purpose that gave important insights to Wagner's art. The reading cast also included Matt Lepold of the recent 8th Emerging Singers Concert

Board Member Bill Pastor presented an original lecture on "*Wagner and Nietzsche*" and distributed comprehensive printed hand-outs for future reference. In the final session, Board Member RG Head led a discussion of planning for *Wildnis V*. The Moderator (*Ringmeister!*) for the weekend was President Aury Fernandez.

MEMBERSHIP 2005: Time to join again or for the first time.!

The Membership Year runs from January 1 through December 31, 2005, regardless of the time of year you join. To become a member, please complete this form and alternatively (1) mail it with your check or credit card authorization to P.O. Box 33051, Washington, DC 20033, or (b) fax it to 301-907-8671 or (3) become a member on our website: www.wagner-dc.org.

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The Wagner Society 6th Annual Banquet and Award Ceremony at the Arts Club of Washington (June 21, 2004)



Drinks on the patio before dinner. (left to right) Susan Pulaski, Webmeisterin Nancy O'Hara, Frederic Harwood, Winfield Swanson and Philip Pulaski.



Board Member RG Head pours wine for (left to right) Board Member Lynne Lambert, Members Oliver Transue and Don French and Webmesisterin Nancy O'Hara.

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The Board of Directors at the 6th Annual Banquet and Award Ceremony with Saul Lilienstein



The Board of Directors assembles for a photo with Saul Lilienstein 2004 Wagner Society Award: (left to right) Lynne Lambert, John Pohanka, Betty Byrne, Aury Fernandez, Founder Janice Rosen (former board member), RG Head, Saul Lilienstein, Jim Holman (partially hidden in background), Phil Raines, John Edward Niles, Eliot Marshal and Bill Pastor. (Missing from photo: Tom Arthur, Hank Gutman and Bill Kugler).

The Society gives special thanks to:

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Betty Byrne
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Founder: Janice F. Rosen
Webmeisterin: Nancy O'Hara
Intern: Laura Purdy
Editor: Aurelius Fernandez

- + John and Lynn Pohanka, Guillermo and Cecilia Schultz and Jim and Diana Holman for generous financial contributions in the past year.
- + Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart who make possible the Emerging Singers Program.
- + Maestro Peter Mark, Virginia Opera, for help in developing our *Walküre* and *Tristan* programs.
- + Schlesinger Hall, Northern Virginia Community College for providing the venue for the 8th ESP Concert.
- + Carol Bogash, Mary McLaughlin, and their staffs for assistance with our Smithsonian Institution programs.
- + Member Jerry Floyd for his skillful professional advice, assistance, and writing for this newsletter.
- + Founder Janice Rosen for research, drafting, and developing ties with the MLK library for program videos, and Tim Scanlon who films them.
- + Our growing number of volunteers!

Congratulations to Board Member Betty Byrne, the Washington National Opera Volunteer of the Year!!



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