

Wagner on the Potomac

For the study and enjoyment of Wagner's Art

January 2004

Vol. 6 No.1

The Study and Enjoyment of Wagner's Art



Chairman Holman at the Smithsonian Podium

Chairman's Greeting: As we reach the midpoint of our 2003-04 season, I think we can say without reservation: "So far so good!" The *Ring* Seminar at the Smithsonian was a splendid kickoff to the season, universally applauded by both Members and new friends.

We also look forward with great enthusiasm to events yet to come. We have engaged wonderful speakers from January to May. The 8th Emerging Singers Concert, the 4th Annual *Wagner in der Wildnis* retreat, and the 6th Annual Banquet fill out a true feast for Wagner fans. *And*, we have tickets for Members both for the Met *Ring* in May, and the Bayreuth Festival in August!

So, it only remains for me to say: THANK YOU for your continuing support and to hope that we see you often in 2004.

*Smithsonian Associates Seminar cosponsored
with Wagner Society of Washington DC
Der Ring des Nibelungen: Wagner's Epic Vision
Washington, DC September 19 to 21, 2003*

Despite the threats of Hurricane Isabel, capacity audiences of pre-registered Members and friends took part in the seminar. German Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger hosted an elegant reception for the seminar in his Residence. Prominent academic and performing arts experts made presentations at the three-day event, which concluded with the 7th Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers concert; singers were accompanied by the Friday Morning Music Club Orchestra conducted by Maestra Sylvia Alimena. (See additional reports of the seminar on page 2.)



The 7th Emerging Singers Concert concluded the Seminar weekend. In photo left to right: Thomas Stewart; Mary McLaughlin, Program Coordinator, The Smithsonian Associates; baritone Charles Robert Austin; soprano Caroline Wisnant; Friday Morning Music Club Conductor Sylvia Alimena; tenor Roy Stevens; and Evelyn Lear.

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Membership through December 31, 2004

2004

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www.wagner-dc.org

Metropolitan Opera 2004 Ring (May 3-8) AND Bayreuth Festival 2004 (August 20-28)

(Tickets for Members – see inside)

Programs of the Autumn 2003 Season

September 19 – 21, 2003: *Der Ring des Nibelungen: Wagner's Epic Vision* was the *leitmotiv* for the three-day seminar cosponsored with The Smithsonian Associates at the Smithsonian Institution. A capacity crowd of Members, friends and prominent experts took part in lectures, panels, discussions and debate about Wagner's art. The seminar concluded with the 7th Emerging Singers Concert. The keynote by Seattle Opera General Director **Speight Jenkins** created a lively spirit for the sessions moderated by Society Chairman **Jim Holman**, which included:

- **Professor Carolyn Abbate**, Princeton University, spoke on "The *Ring* as Cinema."
- Maestro Peter Mark, Virginia Opera, spoke on "Conducting *Die Walküre*."
- Winnie Klotz, Metropolitan Opera, and **Phillip Raines**, Wagner Society Director, spoke on performance aspects of Wagner's operas.
- **Professor Irmgard Wagner**, George Mason University, presented a paper authored by **Professor Donald Crosby** on the cultural context of the *Ring*.
- Professor **Jeffrey Buller** spoke on "Much ado about *Nothung*." (Note: the Crosby and Buller papers are on www.wagner-dc.org).
- **Cori Ellison**, NYCO dramaturg, spoke on The Washington Opera's *Die Walküre*.
- **Two roundtables:** (1) **Speight Jenkins, Irmgard Wagner, and Saul Lilienstein** on Wagner's art and (2) **Thomas Stewart**, with soprano **Jennifer Wilson** and Washington Post music critic **Tim Page**, on "Singing in the *Ring*."
(Video tape recordings of all presentations are available to the public at the Martin Luther King Library, 901 G Street, NW, Washington DC.)



German Embassy Minister K. Peter Gottwald; Mrs. Gottwald; Smithsonian Institution Associate Director Carol Bogash; and Chairman Jim Holman .



Washington Post Critic Tim Page, soprano Jennifer Wilson and Thomas Stewart in panel "Singing in the Ring"

Other Autumn 2003 Programs at George Washington University Furger Hall

- October 30, 2003 Cori Ellison, dramaturg for Washington Opera *Die Walküre* on "A Ride with the Valkuries"



- **December 11** Dr. Nicholas Vazsonyi, University of South Carolina lectured on "The Wagner Industry and the 'Audience of the Future'".



- **November 13, 2003** "A Wagner Night at the Movies" led by Phillip Raines presented "the sacred (Culshaw's Ring Resounding recording of the Solti Ring) and the "profane" (Anna Russell's Wagner satires and parodies), WSWDC Board of Directors members Betty Byrne, Aury Fernandez and John Pohanka presented a panel discussion.

Washington Opera Die Walküre – November 2003



Soprano Anja Kampe, who made her critically praised debut as Sieglinde is here with WSWDC Director Betty Byrne.

Performance and Cast Dinner Party November 5: By special arrangement with The Washington Opera, more than 60 members attended that Wednesday night opening performance. A group of Members also attended the dinner party after the performance with Placido Domingo, Maestro Heinz Fricke, Linda Watson (*Brünnhilde*), Alan Held (*Wotan*), Anja Kampe (*Sieglinde*), and members of the Washington Opera Board of Directors, and friends.

WSWDC Director Betty Byrne and Dallas Society Cofounder Virginia Abdo organized a delightful dinner party in honor of the cast with WSWDC and Dallas Wagner Society Members on November 8.

Die Bayreuther Festspiele

Bayreuth Class of 2003: Last year's generous ticket allotment allowed a substantial number of Members to attend the four operas of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* or performances of *Tannhäuser*, *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Lohengrin*.



Phillip Rochlin Joseph Abell, Ilse Niedermeyer, Cathy Vohs, Bill Pastor, Lynne Lambert, Marie & Richard Sippel

Missing from photos: William Greene, Hank Gutman, William Greene, John Rogers and Maika Siebeck.



Sally Bogacz, Georges Rey, Richard Arthur, Carole Hoover, Lynne Lambert and R.G. Head

Peggy Jones, Oliver Dib, Yoko & Tom Arthur, Carole Hoover, Lynne Lambert and R.G. Head



Bayreuth 2004 Festival: Members wishing to attend this year's Festival must apply and make deposits by February 1 for tickets from our limited allotment. Members to whom we are able to allocate tickets will be advised by February 15. Those who unhappily do not receive tickets this year will be placed on the waiting list for 2005 and their deposits will be returned. (Questions: call 301.907.2600 or see www.wagner-dc.org.)

To benefit the *Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Program Fund*

A Partnership with the Wagner Society of Washington, DC

I/We wish to contribute: \$100 \$150 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 \$2,000 Other _____

Enclosed is check for _____. Make tax deductible contribution payable to: *Emerging Singers Program Fund*

Charge to (check one) VISA or MC Number _____ Expires _____

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The Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Program (ESP)

Concerts & Singers

APRIL 13, 2000 (1st)

Connie Coffelt, *Soprano*
Laura Zuiderveen,
Mezzo Soprano

MAY 2001 (2nd)

Amy Fuller, *Soprano*
Ray Karns, *Bass Baritone*
Amanda Mace, *Soprano*
Jay Hunter Morris, *Tenor*
Paul Mow, *Tenor*

OCTOBER 19, 2001 (3rd)

Alma De Lon, *Soprano*
Jason Detwiler, *Baritone*
Thomas Rolf Truhitte,
Tenor
Jennifer Wilson, *Soprano*
Laura Zuiderveen,
Mezzo Soprano

MAY 3, 2002 (4th)

Nathan Bahny, *Baritone*
Jennifer Roderer,
Mezzo Soprano
Gail Sullivan, *Soprano*
Thomas Rolf Truhitte,
Tenor

OCTOBER 11, 2002 (5th)

Nathan Bahny, *Baritone*
Allison Bolshoi, *Soprano*
Richard Demers, *Baritone*
Lawrence Harris, *Tenor*
David Kelso, *Tenor*

MAY 16, 2003 (6th)

Charles Robert Austin,
Baritone
Michael Hayes, *Tenor*
Roxanne Rowedder,
Mezzo Soprano
Gail Sullivan, *Soprano*

SEPTEMBER 21, 2003 (7th)

Charles Robert Austin,
Baritone
Roy Stevens, *Tenor*
Caroline Whisnant,
Soprano

Inaugurated in April 2000, this partnership with the Wagner Society of Washington, DC has given 22 Wagner singers opportunities to perform publicly in seven concerts presented twice yearly. The German Embassy graciously made its chancery auditorium available for the first six concerts.

Singers audition with Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart, who select the performers and give them vocal and dramatic coaching for the concerts. The singers are also given guidance for developing their careers, including contacts in the opera world. The Program is focused on artists who have already demonstrated both the talent and the commitment over time for careers in opera. The Program is not focused on singers who are already being engaged by major opera houses.

More than half of the singers to date have received financial grants through the Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Fund, which was created in 2001. The Program owes its success to the strong dedication of Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart, who are assisted by Program Director John Edward Niles.



Jim Holman, Thomas Stewart and Evelyn Lear at the 7th Emerging Singers Concert at the Smithsonian Institution.

Selected Singers and Achievements

Charles Robert Austin, baritone, (6th and 7th concerts). His engagements have included roles from *Lohengrin*, *Meistersinger* and *Parsifal* with the Cincinnati Symphony and *King Marke* with the Tokyo Opera; he was the cover for *Wotan* (Alan Held) at this year's Washington Opera *Die Walküre*.

Gail Sullivan, soprano (6th concert) has performed Isolde arias as well as Kundry's narrative. She performed *Senta* in Erfurt, *Venus* in New York and *Brünnhilde* at the Mannes School Wagner Festival. She coauthored *Kein Angst, Baby! A Singers' Guide to German Auditions*.

Roxanne Rowedder, mezzo soprano (6th concert) has covered *Waltraute* and *Fricka* in Seattle.

Michael Hayes, tenor, (6th concert) has performed Erik at Fort Worth, and *Siegfried* for a Nashville Symphony concert. He debuted as *Canino* in the Washington Summer Opera Theatre in 2003.



The 6th Emerging Singers Concert at the German Embassy on May 16th 2003 with Charles Robert Austin, baritone; Gail Sullivan, soprano; Roxanne Rowedder, mezzo soprano; Charles Hayes, tenor; and Thomas Stewart in foreground.



Thomas Rolf Truhitte, tenor (3rd and 4th concerts). Formerly a lyric and dramatic tenor, he has rapidly advanced to major Wagner roles after his ESP performances to include his heldentenor debut in October 2002 as *Siegmund* in the Virginia Opera's *Die Walküre* opposite Jeanine Altmeier as *Sieglinde*. He made his European debut in 2003 singing *Lohengrin* at Spoleto, Italy. He has also sung *Erik* at the Minnesota Opera and is engaged to sing *Parsifal* in Genoa in 2004 and *Tristan* with the Virginia Opera in 2005.

The Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Program (ESP)

Selected Singers and Achievements (con't)



Nathan Bahny

Nathan Bahny, baritone (4th and 5th concerts). His roles have included *Wotan*, *Alberich*, *Telramund* and the *Dutchman*.

Jennifer Roderer, mezzo soprano (4th concert) debuts this year with the Los Angeles Master Chorale, Santa Fe Opera, San Francisco Opera and Los Angeles Philharmonic. Her voice embraces both Wagner and Verdi heroines including *Fricka* and *Amneris*.

Paul Mow, tenor (2nd concert and 2001 banquet) also performed *Bacchus* in the Washington Summer Opera Theatre in 2001. He started his third season with the New York City Opera in October 2003.



Paul Mow

THANKS TO GENEROUS CONTRIBUTORS

The Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Fund established in 2001 to support the Program, has provided grant assistance to selected singers to enable them to develop their careers singing Wagner. Many thanks to all contributors!

Emerging Singers Program Contributors

\$1,000 or more

Thomas & Yoko Arthur
James K. Holman
John Pohanka
Giselle Theberge

\$250 to \$999

Walter Arnheim
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Donald Crosby & Bonnie J. Becker
Aurelius & Janet Fernandez
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Under \$250

Richard Abbott
Joseph Abell
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Judith Agard
Sylvia Alimena
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Katharina Arnhold

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Henry & Cynthia Bardach
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Sally Bogacz
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Thomas Brennan
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John Trattner
Hans Tuch
Ingrid Valtin-Kirn
Don & Daphne Wallace
William & Susan Wasch
Ann Wiczorowski
H. J & Dora Jean Young
Victor Zafra

Upcoming Programs -- January through June 2004

January 22 (GWU Fungler Hall) **Dean Jeffrey Buller**, Mary Baldwin College will be welcomed warmly for his third appearance for the Society. His lecture is titled "Siegfried: The *Wurm* Turns." His Smithsonian Seminar lecture: "Much Ado About *Notbung*", is on our website: www.wagner-dc.org.



February 19 (GWU Fungler Hall) **James McCourt**, a prolific author of books and an opera enthusiast will speak on "The Wagnerian *Femme Fatale*." McCourt's works include the recently published *Queer Street: Rise and Fall of an American Culture, 1947-1985* and the 1971 cult classic, *Mawrdew Czegowchuz*, a send-up of the world of opera.

March 18 (GWU Fungler Hall) Professor **Simon Morrison**, Princeton University Music Department, will speak on "Tchaikovsky's Miracle", a lecture devoted to the Russian composer's inversion of Wagnerian aesthetics in his ballet *The Sleeping Beauty*. Professor Morrison will draw on research completed last year in St. Petersburg, Russia.



April 15 (German Embassy) **Pianist Jeffrey Swann** will lecture and perform at the piano on "Tristan and the Mystic Experience." Swann is well known and appreciated by Members and Friends who attended our last two *Wagner in der Wildnis* weekend retreats. His stimulating insights to Wagner's music are illustrated while he performs at the piano; they are informative for the novice and the specialist. He will also be enjoyed again this year at our *Wildnis* retreat (June 4-6).

May 13 (GWU Fungler Hall) **Professor Irmgard Wagner**, George Mason University, who spoke at the Smithsonian Seminar, will return for a program asking the question why Wagner never composed Goethe's *Faust*, and whether there are equivalents and parallels to *Faust* in Wagner's various music dramas.

May 21 – 8th **Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Concert** will be presented at the Northern Virginia Community College, Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center. Singers will be Roy Stevens, tenor; Matt Lepold, baritone; Jennifer Wilson, soprano; and Jennifer Roderer, mezzo soprano; they will be accompanied by the Friday Morning Music Club Orchestra conducted by Sylvia Alimena.

June 4-6 – 4th **Annual Wagner in der Wildnis** (Cacapon Resort State Park in West Virginia). The focus will be on *Götterdämmerung*; this will complete our annual weekend study of *The Ring* – one opera at a time! The event will feature again the "Dream Team" of Wagner lecturers: Professor Simon Williams and Pianist Jeffrey Swann. WSWDC Director Bill Pastor will also speak again; his topic is "Wagner and Nietzsche."

June 19 – 6th **Annual Banquet** (The Arts Club, Washington, DC) will include the presentation of the Society's Award to a distinguished person who has contributed to the study and enjoyment of Wagner's art. Previous Awardees are Martin Feinstein, Thomas Stewart, Father M. Owen Lee, Placido Domingo, Maestro Heinz Fricke, and Evelyn Lear.

Renewal and New Membership Application for 2004

(January 1 to December 31, 2004)

(You can also join on our website: www.wagner-dc.org)

Date _____

Check appropriate box: Renewal New Member Gift Membership

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Check Enclosed

Credit Card (check one) Visa MC Number _____ Exp. _____

Membership fees are deductible as federal income tax charitable contribution to extent provided by law.

I am interested in tickets for *Bayreuther Festspiele 2004*

Members' Book and other Premiums

I/We decline premiums. In lieu of books send: WSWDC T-Shirt or WSWDC latte cup

PATRON \$75 check one box:

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|--|---|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Spencer Stewart and Barry Millington, <i>Wagner's Ring</i> | |

SPONSOR \$250 or more: check two boxes above

Members of record as of February 1, 2004 – Tickets available

Metropolitan Opera *Der Ring des Nibelungen* Cycle 3, May 5 – 8, 2004. We have a limited allotment of tickets. Deadline to apply: February 15, 2004. See our website www.wagner-dc.org or call 301.907.2600. There is still time to become a member to qualify for tickets!

Bayreuther Festspiele 2004: *Der Ring des Nibelungen, Parsifal, Der fliegende Holländer and Tannhäuser* Cycle 3 - August 20 to 28. Applications and deposits for tickets are due by February 1, 2004. Members who receive tickets for this year will be notified by February 15, 2004; those who do not will be advised and placed on the waiting list for 2005. There is still time to become a member to qualify for tickets this year!

Wolfgang Wagner: *An Appreciation*, edited by Larry Lueck, President, the Wagner Society of Hawaii, was published in late 2003. The book presents 20 informative essays, rare illustrations, and important historical appendices. WSWDC Director Phillip Raines contributed an essay. A very good read!

The Society gives special thanks to:

Board of Directors:

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- + Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart for continuing dedication to the Emerging Singers Program, the flagship of our partnership activities.
- + Carol Bogash, Mary McLaughlin and their staffs for cooperation in presenting the seminar cosponsored with The Smithsonian Associates.
- + Maestra Sylvia Alimena and colleagues for facilitating our growing partnership with the Friday Morning Music Club.
- + German Embassy Minister K. Peter Gottwald for hosting the reception for the Smithsonian seminar and Trautlieb Hülz and her German Embassy colleagues for generous cooperation and support.
- + The Washington Opera and all friends there who facilitate our mutually productive relationship.
- + Dr. Barbara Parish Karn, who served on the Board until the end of 2003 contributing ideas and efforts to develop the Society since 1998.
- + Finally, Wolfgang and Gudrun Wagner for their continuing support, which enables our Members to attend the Bayreuth Festival.

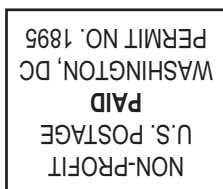
(We note sadly, and with condolences to his family, the death of John C. Green who took part in the creation of the Board in 1998.)



The Wagner Society of Washington, DC
PO Box 33051
Washington, DC 20033
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Metropolitan Opera 2004 *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (May 3-5) (see page 7)
Bayreuther Festspiele 2004 (August 20 to 28) (see page 3)
8th Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Concert (May 21, 2004) (see page 6)

TICKETS!



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