

Wagner on the Potomac

For the study and enjoyment of Wagner's Art

August, 2008

Vol. 10 No.2

Chairman's Greeting: As we approach our Tenth Anniversary Celebration on November 6, I note on behalf of the Board of Directors our thanks to the Wagner experts who made our many programs so successful in the past season. I also wish to stress our gratitude to the indefatigable Evelyn Lear for bringing us the 16th Emerging Singers concert. As is our tradition with the August edition of this publication, we inaugurate our recruitment for the next membership year -- 2009 -- by reporting with thanks the names of selected categories from Meistersinger Guild to Patrons. And we call on our Members to renew and for our Friends to join us for the first time! J K Holman, author, *Wagner Moments*

The Wagner Orchestra, (May 17)

An all-day program focused on the Wagner Orchestra was presented at the Goethe-Institut on May 17 with three leading Wagner experts: Jeffrey Swann, Saul Lilientstein and James Ross. Their instructive presentations were warmly received. Jeffrey Swann gave a special impetus to planning for this program at the 2006 *Wagner in der Wildnis* retreat. A capacity audience averaging about 95 persons was present in the auditorium throughout the day. Among the highlights: Maestro Ross – in addition to playing a Wagner tuba – presented a lecture-demonstration on conducting with active audience participation.



Jeffrey Swann



Saul Lilienstein



James Ross



The 16th Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Program (ESP) Concert (June 13)

at the German Embassy, Washington DC

Under the inspired leadership of Evelyn Lear, this program continues to prosper. More than 60 singers have been given rarely available opportunities to perform in public accompanied by Pianist Betty Bullock. Singers in 16th concert were Sopranos Julia Rolwing and Valerie Bernhardt, Tenor Bryan Register and Bass-Baritone Ryan Kinsella.

Wagner in der Wildnis VIII

(June 6-8) (*Tannhäuser*)

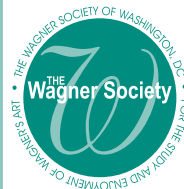
This was the 8th consecutive *Wildnis* weekend! A record number of more than 70 participants were accommodated in the expanded meeting and lodging space at Cacapon Springs State Resort in Berkely Spings WV. The “dream team” Jeffrey Swann (music) and Simon Williams (drama) presented their talks in a well-established format. The focus is on one opera at a time. Previous individual *Wildnis* weekends have discussed each of the *Ring* operas, *Die Meistersinger*, *Parsifal* and *Lohengrin*. This year's *Tannhäuser* will be followed next year by the entire *Ring des Nibelungen* in preparation for the Washington National Opera Francesca Zambello “American Ring.”

Chairman's Garden Party (June 17)

A fitting end to the winter-spring season was enjoyed at the hospitable residence of the Chairman and Mrs. Holman among members and friends. (see photo page 5)

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Programs of the Winter-Spring Season

NOTE: The January 17, 2008 program was postponed due to inclement weather. It will be rescheduled. Ryan Brown, Conductor and Artistic Director, Opera Lafayette, will speak on “*Passion, Magic, and Wagner’s 17th Century Operatic Inheritance.*”

February 14 Dean Jeffrey Buller spoke on *Die Meistersinger.* In keeping with the tradition from previous lectures for the Society, Dean Buller presented a comprehensive and magisterial lecture on Wagner’s prized *Die Meistersinger* with important emphasis on 19th century German themes such as the widespread public attention to dreams.

March 11 Chairman J K Holman spoke on *The Flying Dutchman* at the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage.

April 17 Paul Schofield spoke on *Parsifal.* Mr. Schofield is the distinguished author of the seminal study *The Redeemer Reborn: Parsifal as the Fifth Opera of Wagner’s Ring.* As with his book, his lecture provided original insights to the role of Buddhism in Wagner’s philosophy.

May 17 the Goethe-Institut was the site of a long-awaited all-day program on the Wagner Orchestra. Saul Lilienstein opened the program with a comprehensive lecture on music style that influenced the Wagner orchestra. Jeffrey Swann described the instrumentation of Wagner’s major works. In addition to illustrating the performance of a Wagner tuba, Maestro Ross gave the audience a mini-lesson in conducting that was well received. An exceptionally lively discussion period followed a very brief lunch break. Chairman Holman moderated the program. He noted in a light vein that the day could be dedicated to President Aury Fernandez who agitated for the program for many years! Chairman Jim Holman and Board Member Betty Byrne coordinated planning for this very successful and widely appreciated event, which may be replicated in some form in connection with Society programs in connection with the Washington National Opera 2009 “American Ring” directed by Francesca Zambello.

June 6-8 *Wagner in der Wildnis (Tannhäuser)* (see page 1) The historic Eighth Annual weekend retreat at Berkeley Springs WV was enormously successful. Expanded meeting and lodging space, compared to previous years, made it possible to accommodate more than 70 participants. The “dream team” of Jeffrey Swann (music) and Simon Williams (drama) presented its characteristically insightful and enjoyable lectures. An introductory paper was presented by Chairman Jim Holman. Betty Byrne directed the traditional “Saturday Night Live” enactment of the *Tannhäuser* libretto in English by *Wildnis* participants. Aury Fernandez served as the moderator for all events during the weekend.

June 13, 2008 The 16th Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Concert was presented at the German Embassy (see pages 1 and 5) . Among the highlights of the concert was the entire Siegfried Act 1 scene iii, the Siegmund/Sieglinde Duet, performed by soprano Julia Rolwing and tenor Brian Register. Soprano Valerie Bernhardt sang excerpts from *Die Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung.* Baritone Ryan Kinsella sang the Dutchman’s Monologue. As with singers engaged in the Program, Ms. Lear provided – in addition to invaluable professional singing guidance – important recommendations for singers to develop their careers.

Upcoming Programs of the Autumn 2008 Season

(See our fliers and website -- www.wagner-dc.org -- for additional details.)

September 19 at 7:30 pm at the German Embassy.

An Evening with Jeffrey Swann whose presentation at the piano is titled, “*The World of Nature: Wagner, Schumann, Liszt, Debussy & Messiaen.*”

October 16 at 7:30 pm at GWU/MPA

Saul Lilienstein will speak on Brahms and Wagner.

October 23 at 7:30 pm at the German Embassy.

The 17th Concert of the Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Program.

November 6 at 7:30 pm at the German Embassy: The 10th Anniversary Wagner Society Celebration.

Our 10th Anniversary gives us much to celebrate! Diane Stanley is chair for the event. Members and friends on our mailing list will receive invitations.

November 13 at 7:30 pm at GWU/MPA

A documentary film and panel discussion will be chaired by Donald Arthur concerning The Bayreuth Festival 2007 *Die Meistersinger* production directed by Katharina Wagner.

December 4 at 7:30 pm at GWU/MPA

Iain Scott, internationally renowned Wagner expert from Toronto will be welcomed back again to present a lecture.

Tour of the *Deutsche Oper Berlin* for Society Members

Board Member Tom Arthur advises that “Mr. Carsten Jenß, dramaturg who is working with Katharina Wagner on the new production of Respighi’s *Marie Victoire* for April 2009, has kindly offered to all Wagner Society members a specially escorted and private backstage tour of the *Deutsche Oper Berlin* to be conducted by Mr. Jenß in English. If you are visiting Berlin and would like a tour of the big house, please contact Carsten at 49-30-34384-225, or by e-mail at jenss@deutscheoperberlin.de.”

New Venue for Fungler Hall Programs!

We have a new venue for the monthly lectures previously presented at Fungler Hall on Thursdays. Unless otherwise noted, the Thursday programs will be presented in Room 310, The George Washington University Media and Public Affairs Building (GWU/MPA) at 805 21st Street, NW Washington, DC (across from Lisner Hall).

New Telephone and Fax Numbers

The new numbers are: **Telephone 703-370-1923. Fax 703-370-1924.** The old numbers have been disconnected. Your telephone and fax messages will be answered by Office Manager Jackie Rosen.

New Logo and Tenth Anniversary Report!

A new WSWDC logo will be unveiled with our **Tenth Anniversary Report** to be released on the eve of our November 6 celebration at the German Embassy! Watch this space!



The Study and Enjoyment

The 16th Evelyn Lear & Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Concert (June 13)



At the German Embassy, left to right: Tenor Bryan Register, pianist Betty Bullock, soprano Julia Rolwing, soprano Valerie Bernhardt, EVELYN LEAR and bass-baritone Ryan Kinsella accept the applause of the appreciative audience.

“Youth Demographic” Welcomed to WSWDC! (June 17)

Chairman's Garden Party attended by new members of the “Youth Demographic” (left to right) Iris Sonberg, Rodrigo Trevino, Anne Jorstad and Amor Ben Farid.

(See the January 2008 issue for a report of the George Washington University “Junior Wagner Society” and other WSWDC efforts to develop memberships in the “Youth Demographic”!)



W

ment of Wagner's Art

Glimmerglass LIEBESVERBOT Performances Meetings with other Wagner Societies (August 2008)



Wagner Society Presidents Meet: (left) Dr. David W. Cline, President, Richard Wagner Society of the Upper Midwest, with Mrs. Cline. Nathalie Wagner, President, Wagner Society of New York (right). WSWDC President Emeritus Aury Fernandez (center) with WSWDC member Lea McDaniel (upper right).



Iain Scott, Toronto Wagner Society and WSWDC lecturer scheduled for December 2008 was encountered at *Liebesverbot* performance (left to right) Frederic Hardwood, WSWDC Board Member; Lea McDaniel, WSWDC Member, Iain Scott and Mrs. Barbara Scott.

Wagner Society Members at West Coast Program (February 2008)



More than 20 Society members took part in programs including performances of *Tannhäuser* in San Diego and *Tristan und Isolde* in Los Angeles in February. In three days of programs organized by former Board member R G Head and member Carole Hoover, members were treated to various events including dinners, a backstage tour, and lectures by Professor Simon Williams, a long time favorite of *Wagner in der Wildnis* participants. Among participants were (front row left to right: Kathleen Fuller, Carole Hoover, Peggy Jones, Myra Feldman, Tom Arthur (Board Member) and Lynne Lambert (Board Member). Fourth from left in the last row is the organizer of the program, R G Head; Professor Simon Williams is in center of a last row.

Thanks to our Members and Contributors

Special thanks to Meistersinger Guild and Golden Ring members who sponsored the Emerging Singers Concert including the 16th on June 13 and the upcoming 17th on October 23.

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THE Wagner Society of Washington, D.C.

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Your Membership Year runs from January 1 through December 31, 2009, regardless of the time of year you join. To become a Member: mail this form with your check or credit-card authorization to WSWDC, P.O. Box 58213, Washington, D.C. 20037; fax form to 703-370-1924; use the on-line form on our website: www.wagner-dc.org

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CONDOLENCES

The Board of Directors is saddened to report the death of its esteemed Board colleague **Phillip W. Raines**. Phil was a creative Wagnerian who enriched the activities of the Society through his ideas and lectures and by his technical audio-visual support for so many events. He will be greatly missed. He died on July 3, 2008 while listening to his favorite recording of *Siegfried*.

The Board of Directors also notes with sadness the death in the past year of **Ruth Pierce**, **Akos Revesz**, and **Paul Kirkham**, three active members who participated in many *Wagner in der Wildnis* retreat weekends. Finally, we note with deep regret the recent death of **Phil Rocklin**, who was an active senior member who regularly contributed perceptive comments at the Funger Hall lectures and was a member of the first group from the Society to attend the Bayreuth Festival on our ticket allotment in the year 2000.

The Board extends condolences to the families and friends.

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Greetings from President Emeritus Aurelius (Aury) Fernandez *Aufwiedersehen, nicht leb' wohl! -- goodbye, not farewell!*

As I transition to the role of President Emeritus, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all of the members and friends of the Society. It has been for me a decade of many gratifying privileges, beginning with the steering committee I organized in May 1998. That pioneering committee led to the creation of the Society itself, the selection of Jim Holman as chairman, the subsequent development of the Board of Directors and the continuous growth in membership and programs. The Society is a rewarding success and has contributed to my knowledge of Wagner's art beyond any measure I anticipated when it was created. I could not exaggerate my appreciation for this.

As I relinquish all the functions and duties I have fulfilled up to now as a member of the Board, let me pledge my unwavering commitment and support for the mission of the Society. Most of all, I look forward to taking part in future programs and to maintaining the many friendships developed with other Wagner Societies in the U.S. and abroad (including the Bayreuth Festival!) as we have pursued so productively the study and enjoyment of Wagner's art. As Richard Wagner might have said it: *Aufwiedersehen, nicht leb' wohl!* -- goodbye, not farewell!



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Upcoming Events:
Pianist Jeffrey Swann in Concert (September 19)
17th Emerging Singers Concert (October 23)
Tenth Anniversary Celebration (November 6)
Launch of the new WSWDC logo!

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