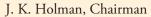
Wagner on the Potomac

The Wagner Society of Washington DC

August, 2013

Greetings from the Chairman:

The Richard Wagner Bicentennial is half over, and what a celebration it has been! Programs with the National Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony, and National Philharmonic, Saul Lilienstein's "Verdi and Wagner," and "Lohengrin" seminars, and talks by Barry Millington, the conductor Asher Fisch and soprano Dolora Zajick. We re-shaped the Emerging Singers Program and found a bright new star, Issachah Savage. We capped the first six months with the birthday gala at the home of the German Cultural Attaché and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Bertram von Moltke. In September the celebration continues, and we invite you to celebrate with us. Welcome to the Wagner Bicentennial, Part 2.





Richard Wagner (AKA Chairman Jim Holman) and Jeffrey Swann at the May 22 Bicentennial celebration

The Richard Wagner Bicentennial Continues

Upcoming Events to Note

- September date TBA, a conversation with WNO's artistic director Francesca Zambello.
- September 19 "Wagner and Diaghilev: 'Gesamtkunstwerk' and the Ballets Russes," with Juliet Bellow, Asst. Professor of Art History, American University. Goethe Institut.
- October 10-12 National Symphony Orchestra performs Act 3 from "Parsifal" conducted by Christoph Eschenbach with the Washington Chorus.
- October 26 at the National Gallery of Art, a talk by Prof. Carolyn Abbate, co- author of "A History of Opera" and an authority on Wagner and film.
- November 23 at the Library of Congress Coolidge Auditorium, Alex Ross, New Yorker magazine music critic, speaks on "Wagner and American Culture." 2pm.
- Fall, 2013 Jim Holman speaks on "Wagner's Music in the Movies." National Gallery of Art.
- Fall, 2013 West End Cinema series of Wagner and Verdi films, TBA.
- May 30 June 1, 2014 Wagner in der Wildnis-"Götterdämmerung."



Bicentennial Year Membership Offer – Two Memberships for the Price of One. See page 7.

Autumn 2013 Events

Sunday September 15, 2013 cast party and dinner for "Tristan und Isolde" after the matinee performance. Cosponsored by the Washington National Opera and the WSWDC. \$75 for members. Magic Gourde Restaurant. Reservations required.



Deborah Voigt sings Isolde in WNO production.



Francesca Zambello, WNO Artistic Director.

Friday September 27, our new season opens with a piano concert by Maestro Jeffrey Swann. Entitled "A Love Letter to Richard Wagner on his 200th Birthday," the concert includes the "Wesendonck Lieder." The United Church, 1920 G Street NW, Washington. 7:30 with a reception to follow. Free to new and renewing members. Open to the public. \$35 for nonmembers.



Jeffrey Swann plays Wesendonck Lieder, Sept. 27

The 2012-2013 Season: A Retrospective by Bonnie Becker

Piano Concert by **Maestro Jeffrey Swann:** "Evoking the Infinite." Works by Bach, Fauré, the "Liebesnacht" and "Brangäne's Watch" from "Tristan und Isolde," and Schubert's "Sonata in B flat." The United Church. September 21.

Evelyn Lear Memorial Program. GWU Funger Hall. October 12. (See page 3).

National Symphony Orchestra conducted by **Christoph Eschenbach**, presented the **"Wesendonck Lieder."** Kennedy Center. October 11-13.

Paul duQuenoy, author of "French Muse: Music, Society, and Nation in Modern France," spoke about French admiration of Wagner and his enduring influence despite some years of rivalry and conflict between France and Germany. GWU Funger Hall. November 15.

Father M. Owen Lee. The legendary opera scholar and WSWCD awardee was the subject of commentator Iian Scott's 2012 videotape interview amply illustrating Father Lee's contribution to "the study and enjoyment of Wagner's art." Goethe Institut. January 16.

Saul Lilienstein, in recognition of the 200th birthday for both Wagner and Verdi, began a six session course on the parallel development of the two composers. Smithsonian Ripley Center. January 30.



The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra presented an all Wagner program which included

Maestros Saul Lilenstein and Asher Fisch

the first act of "Die Walküre" conducted by Music Director **Marin Alsop**. Music Center at Strathmore. February 16. Jim Holman gave the pre-concert talk.

Saul Lilienstein presented an all-day symposium on the music, characters, and themes of "Parsifal" as preparation for the simulcasts by the Metropolitan Opera on March 2 and 20. Goethe Institute. February 21.

Barry Millington, editor of the "Wagner Journal" and author of "Sorcerer of Bayreuth: Richard Wagner and his Work and World," discussed his latest work. Goethe Institute. March 1.



Soprano Dolora Zajick, cofounder of the Institute for Young Dramatic Voices, was Aury Fernandez and Barry Millington

interviewed about her extensive opera career by Peter Russell, Vocal Arts Society artistic director.Goethe Institut. March 14.

Saul Lilienstein presented a day-long seminar titled "Five Great German Romantic Operas," including Wagner's "Der fliegende Holländer." Goethe Institut. March 23.



Bonnie Becker

Hans Rudolf Vaget, professor emeritus

of German Studies, Smith College, presented "Wagner's Conception of the Italian Renaissance." Goethe Institut. April 11.



Marin Alsop, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra music director, led a program titled "Wagner: Composer Fit for A King," including incidents from Wagner's relationship with King Ludwig II. Music Center at Strathmore. April 20. Jim Holman made pre-concert comments.

Music Director Marin Alsop

Piotr Gajewski,

music director and conductor of the National Philharmonic, discussed conducting Wagner and the role of the orchestra in Wagner's operas. Goethe Institute. May 16.



Wagner's 200th Birthday Party, with many guests in creative period costumes, was co-hosted by "Wagner Himself" (a.k.a Jim Holman WSWDC chairman) who

Maestro Piotr Gajewski

joined pianist **Jeffrey Swann** for a four handed performance of Fauré's "Memories of Bayreuth." Residence of the German Cultural Attache. May 22.

National Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of **Maestro Piotr Gajewski** presented an all Wagner concert as a 200th birthday tribute. Music Center at Strathmore. June 1.

Issachah Savage, the 2012-13 WSWDC Emerging Singer, performed selections from Wagner and Beethoven on the Millenium Stage. Kennedy Center. June 2.

Wagner in der Wildnis, the legendary and enormously successful retreat for WSWDC members, focused on "Siegfried" with **Jeffrey Swann** (music) and **Simon Willliams** (drama). Capacon State Park, Berkeley Springs, WV. May 31 – June 2.

Maestro Asher Fisch shared his experiences conducting Wagner from his debut with "Der fliegende Holländer" to his position as music director of the Israeli Opera and Seattle Opera's 2013 "Ring." Goethe Institut. June 15

Seattle "Ring" second cycle included representation of our members. (See page 4). August, 2013.

BAYREUTH INTERRUPTUS by Guillermo Schultz



Guillermo and Cecilia Schultz

While in Bayreuth I had a lengthy meeting with Ina Besser-Eichler, the CEO of the Gesellschaft der Freunde von Bayreuth ("Friends") regarding the assignment of Festival tickets.

She indicated all important policy decisions are made by a board of four representatives: The Federal Government, the Government of the Province/Land of Bavaria,

the city of Bayreuth, and Friends. Last October they met to discuss the issue of ticket allocations for the Wagner Societies. With the exception of the Federal Government, all the other three groups voted in favor of such allocations, for all the reasons we all know too well. Finding itself outvoted, the Federal Government then said that it would simply withhold its funding for the Festival. While this outraged the other three groups, they had not choice but to accept the Federal Government's implicit veto. Each of these four representatives provides an equal amount of financing/subsidy for the Festival, so losing 25% of such funding was clearly impossible.

Federal and Bavarian elections are coming up this September, and there is hope that the newly elected representatives, especially from the Federal Government, may be more sympathetic to allocating tickets for the various Wagner Societies. It is for that reason that the new board meeting of the Festival was scheduled for October, after the elections and appointment of a new board. This is the only hope for a reversal in policy regarding these allocations, and it is clearly a long shot

I was reminded again that the previous allocation system was very unbalanced/unfair in that societies with few members received the same number of tickets as much larger ones. The greatest issue, however, was that the Wagner Societies in Germany, which comprise about half of the 180 Wagner Societies worldwide, did not receive any ticket allocations at all. This clearly needs to be corrected for allocations to resume.



Evelyn Lear Jan. 8,1926 – July 1, 2012

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In Memoriam

October 12, The Wagner Society of Washington DC honored our beloved friend, soprano **Evelyn Lear**, who with her husband the bass-baritone **Thomas Stewart** co-founded WSWDC's Emerging Singers Program. In attendance were her daughter **Bonnie Stewart** and son **Jan Stewart**, along with grandchildren, relatives and friends. Baritone **Richard Stilwell** co-emceed along with Jim Holman. Attendees included Metropolitan Opera bass-baritone **James Morris**, **Julian Wachner** of The Washington Chorus, and **Issachah Savage**, this year's Emerging Singers Program recipient. The memorial featured clips from some of Evelyn's most famous roles including "Der Rosenkavalier's" Octavian, "Marriage

of Figaro," "Lulu" and "Arabella." The memorial ended with a clip from "La Boheme's 'Mi Chiamamo Mimi'"—which Evelyn sang in German. We dearly miss her leadership and dedication to emerging singers.



James Morris, Issachah Savage and Richard Stilwell at the Evelyn Lear Memorial

WAGNER IN DER WILDNIS 2013

70 members gathered at Capacon State Park, near Berkeley Springs WV, for WSWDC's 13th annual "Wagner in der Wildnis," this year devoted to "Siegfried." Again, the Dream Team of concert pianist **Jeffrey Swann** and **Prof. Simon Williams**, chairman of theater and dramatic arts at UC-Santa Barbara, were the stars. Coordinated by the Society's **Lynne Lambert** and **Jackie Rosen**, the weekend



Lynne Lambert and birthday celebrant and Board Member Betty Byrne



Jeffrey Swann at Wildnis



Simon Williams at Wildnis

included three viewings of "Siegfried"- Act 1 from the Schenk production at the Met, Act 2 of Jossi Wieler's Stuttgart production, and Act 3 from Copenhagen's Belch-Holton production. A recording of the lectures is available from the WSWDC office for \$45. Limited copies of "Die Walküre" (2012) and "Das Rheingold" (2011) are also available. Member **Marc Nicholson** is leading an initiative to create an online archive of all Wildnis recordings dating from 2007's "Lohengrin" to the present. The subject of next year's "Wildnis" will be "Götterdämmerung." May 30-June 1, 2014.

WSWDC's 2012-2013 EMERGING SINGER AND THE INSTITUTE FOR YOUNG DRAMATIC VOICES by John Edward Niles

This year the Society focused on the development of a single singer of exceptional promise, the Washington-based tenor **Issachah Savage**. To culminate his year as our Emerging Singer of 2012-2013, on June 2 he presented a solo concert at the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage, accompanied by the pianist **Frank Conlon**. Described by the Washington Post's music critic **Anne Midgette** as possessing a "world-class voice," he has already won the first place award in the Wagner Division for both the Liederkranz Foundation competition and the Gerda Lisner Competition.

In both 2011 and 2102 he attended the Institute of Young Dramatic Voices Summer Institute in Utah, under the tutelage of the great soprano **Dolora Zajick**. WSWDC supported special coaching for him at the Summer Institute, year-long coaching in voice, acting, German, and physical fitness, and funds for auditions. With the Kennedy Center we secured his solo concert on June 2 at the Millennium Stage, where he sang "Rienzi's Prayer" and selections from "Die Walküre," "Parsifal" and "Die Meistersinger" before an audience of 200.



John Edward Niles (left) with Issachah Savage, his wife Shana and neices Anyae and Alysha Chapple.



Issachah Savage

He has been selected as a 2013 Merola Fellow at the San Francisco Opera, where he sang on June 23 for judges including Jane Eaglen. He was one of the few called back for an encore—(he chose Wagner). He wrote from San Francisco "I am not foolish enough to think that I am receiving such attention of my own merit. It is truly the result of the Wagner Society's sponsorship and belief in my talents. I could not have been ready to present Wagner on this level if it had not been for the investment made by the society. A big Thank You!!! I am looking forward to making you proud in the big league someday."

Isaachah sang the role of Radames in Raleigh with ecstatic reviews in May, and will sing the same role for Houston Grand Opera in October-November. You can see Issachah's Kennedy Center performance at free video on demand—see the link on our website or go to www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/videos/?id=M5460.

The American Wagner Project and Institute for Young Dramatic Voices

The Society is delighted to announce the formation of The American Wagner Project as a division of the Institute for Young Dramatic Voices. Under the leadership of the soprano Dolora Zajick and Wagnerian soprano **Luana DeVol**, TAWP's Program Director will be John Edward Niles. We will fund a German-language coach for the Institute, who will teach individual and group classes with a focus on German language skills and repertoire.

The Emerging Singers Program 2013-2014. Building on the great success the ESP had in focusing resources on one singer in 2012-13, the Society is considering a short list of candidates for 2013-2014, one of whom will receive a stipend from the Society to further his or her training and career, and a scholarship to attend the American Wagner Project.



Dolora Zajick

Luana DeVol

WSWDC MEMBERS ATTEND THE SEATTLE "RING."



Front row l to r: Blaine Marshall, Cathy Pastor, Janet Fernandez, Vickie Carlson, Jackie Rosen

Back row: Jean Arnold, Mark Golden, Eliot Marshall, Lisa Black, Ken Johnston, Linda De Ramus, Dominique Dillesenger, John Edward Niles, Bill Pastor, Benno Gerson, Aury Fernandez, Pedro Taborga and Christine Yarrow.

Not pictured-- Martin and David Bloom, Sue Bogner, Betty Byrne, Burke Dillon, John and Lynne Pohanka, Bea Bobotek, Tim and Ann Scanlon, Dan Sherman, Bonnie Becker, Don Crosby, and Rebecca McCormack

Emerging Singers Program Updates



Brian Register (ESP 2007-8) sang the role of the drum major, to much acclaim, in English National Opera's "Wozzack," the role of Sigmund in Greenwich Symphony's "Die Walküre," and he got strong reviews in the role of Lohengrin for

Savonlinna Opera, Finland.



Jennifer Wilson (ESP 2001, 2004) continues her triumphant international career. In January she sang Brünnhilde in Florence's Teatro Communale productions of "Die Walküre" and "Siegfried" opposite the ESP's Jay Hunter Morris, under the

baton of **Zubin Mehta**. She will sing "Nabucco" at Vienna Staatsoper in September 2013 and again in May 2014, and will sing Isolde opposite **Lance Ryan** in April 2014 at the Frankfurt Oper. In June 2014 she will sing "Die Frau ohne Schatten" in Leipzig. And this past August she sang a much acclaimed Irene in Bayreuth's "Rienzi."



Jay Hunter Morris (ESP 2001) sang Siegfried in the 2013 Metropolitan Opera's productions of "Siegfried" and "Götterdämmerung." In July he sang the role of Erik in Glimmerglass Opera's "Dutchman," and in 2014 will sing the role of Paul

in Dallas Opera's "Die tote Stadt," and for Denver Opera's "Carmen" he will sing the role of Don Jose. He is featured on the Met's DVD of the 2011-12 "Ring."



Rebecca Teem (ESP 2005, 2007) sang in Weimar Opera's "Hansel and Gretel," Deutsch Oper's production of Prokofiev's "The Love of Three Oranges," sang Brünnhilde in Frankfurt Opera's "Ring," and sang Gerhilde in Deutsch Oper's "Die Walküre."

Carolyn Whisnant (ESP 2003) sang Brünnhilde in Düsseldorf Opera's "Die Walküre," the role of Turandot in Mannheim and in Weisbaden, and the role of Färberin in "Die Frau ohne Schatten" in Düsseldorf and Essen.

The Wagner Bicentennial Party

On May 13, over 125 gathered for the 200th anniversary of Wagner's birthday. Under the gracious and generous patronage of **Bertram von Moltke**, Cultural Attaché of the German Embassy, and **Mrs. Von Moltke**, we had a blast! We were serenaded by a quartet of Wagner tubas, led by **Jim Ross** and University of Maryland brass, Jeffrey Swann and Jim Holman played a very spirited rendition of Fauré's "Memories of Bayreuth" for four hands, and John Edward Niles accompanied **Jeffrey Tarr** in "Hagen's Aria" from Oscar Straus' "The Merry Niebelungens." Thanks to the generosity of the von Moltke's, who provided the catering, and **Guillermo and Cecelia Schultz**, who provided the



Richard Wagner would have loved the salute from four Wagner tuba players at the 200th birthday anniversary program. Jim Ross, University of Maryland Director of Orchestral Activities (right) led the quartet.

wine, we made a profit to help replenish the stipend for the Emerging Singers Program.



Left: Richard Wagner, aka Jim Holman, thanks German Cultural Attaché Bertram von Moltke and Mrs. von Moltke for hosting the Bicentennial party.



Janet Fernandez, Kathy Faith, and Bonnie Becker



Cecilia and Guillermo Schultz



Two Wotans, Don Crosby (left) and the Wanderer

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AVAILABLE SOCIETY RESOURCES

The Five Great German Romantic Operas: "Fidelio," "Der Freischutz", "Der fliegende Holländer," "Tannhäuser," "Lohengrin," presented by Maestro Saul Lilienstein. Set of 4 CDs. \$40

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,)

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

Read **The Wagner Connection**, an on-line forum hosted by WSWDC to promote discussion among opera lovers of Wagner's life and work. Open to the public. <u>www.connection.wagner-dc.org</u>. Click Register. The Wagner Society of Washington DC

MEMBERSHIP 2013-2014

A 2 FOR 1 OFFER TO CELEBRATE THE RICHARD WAGNER BICENTENNIAL!

Renew your membership for 2013 now and enroll a new member or a new couple free for a year!

The WSWDC membership year runs from January 1 through December 31 regardless of the time of year you join. Send 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. You may pay online at <u>www.wagner-dc.org</u>.

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Upcoming Programs

Lectures are free and open to the public!

September, date TBA, a conversation about "Tristan und Isolde" with WNO's artistic director Francesca Zambello.

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Fall, 2013, West End Cinema series of Wagner and Verdi films, TBA.

May 30 - June 1, 2014 Wagner in der Wildnis.

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