Dear Members and Friends: This issue of Wagner on the Potomac introduces an exciting new dimension of our activity: The Wagner Journal. Many Thanks to you who have renewed your 2007 membership and to those who will become Members for the first time in 2007. – J. K. Holman, Chairman, author, Wagner’s Ring: A Listener’s Companion and Concordance.

The Wagner Journal

It gives us great pleasure to announce the arrival, and your Society’s support, for the new Wagner Journal. Edited by two eminent Wagner scholars Barry Millington and Stewart Spencer, The Wagner Journal will appear three times per year, beginning March 2007. It will seek to examine Richard Wagner and his works from a variety of perspectives --- musicological, historical, literary, philosophical and political --- and to illuminate the unique appeal of this endlessly fascinating composer. In addition to feature articles, the Journal will include reviews of books, CDs and DVDs, and will periodically offer new translations of Wagner’s prose works.

From the start, the mission of the Wagner Society of Washington, DC (WSWDC) has been “the study and enjoyment of Wagner’s art.” We are pleased to be associated with this scholarly Journal in partial fulfillment of this mission. WSWDC is sponsoring the Journal’s web site, and will also be the exclusive distributor of the Journal in North America. For more information, and to subscribe, please look at the web site: www.thewagnerjournal.co.uk.

WASHINGTON NATIONAL OPERA’s AMERICAN RING

Die Walküre - Saturday, March 24, 2007 - Opening Night and Cast Dinner Party
(Performances also March 28, April 1m, 5, 9, 14, and 17.)

Our Members are eagerly looking forward to the opening night performance and cast party. A stellar cast will be on stage for Director Francesca Zambello’s Die Walküre, the second of four productions of her American Ring for the WNO. For information regarding tickets for the opening night performance and cast party at the German Ambassador’s Residence on March 24, please call (301) 907-2600.

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September 21, 2006 An Evening with Jeffrey Swann, on “Chopin as Proto-Wagnerian” at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany. A characteristically virtuoso performance by a prized performer for the Wagner Society skillfully revealing the subtle connections between Wagner and Chopin.

October 19, 2006 Saul Lilienstein, on ‘The Appropriation of Wagner: Germany in the 1930’s’ at GWU Funger Hall. His lecture illustrated the artistic currents and political distortions of Wagner's music in the 1930s, focusing on Lohengrin and Die Meistersinger.

October 20, 2006 13th ESP Concert and Reception at the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany. A program dedicated to the memory of Thomas Stewart with selections from Die Meistersinger, Lohengrin, Das Rheingold, Tannhäuser, and Tristan und Isolde featuring Deidra Palmour Gorton, soprano; Kara Harman, soprano; Jeffrey Springer, tenor; and Jason Stearns, bass-baritone.

November 8, 2006 Robert Bailey, The Valkyries and Their Infamous Ride at GWU Funger Hall. A professor of music at New York University and a member of the Juilliard School, Graduate Faculty, Professor Bailey demonstrated the penetrating significance of this work in Wagner's oeuvre.

Thursday, December 7, 2006 Donald Collup, “Never Before”: The Life and First New York Career of Astrid Varnay at GWU Funger Hall. He presented his famous documentary on the legendary artist, Astrid Varnay, with illustrative commentary and excerpts from studio recordings and Met broadcasts. Ms. Varnay, who died on September 6, 2006 had said of Mr. Collup’s documentary that “...it tells it like it is.”

The 2007 membership premium for the Golden Ring. Sponsors, Donors and Patrons is a new book edited by Professor John Louis DiGaetani, Inside the Ring: Essays on Wagner’s Opera Cycle. This volume is a collection of superb essays covering many aspects of the Ring, including historical, musicological and staging aspects. It includes an essay by WSWDC Chairman Jim Holman titled “The Golden Ring in a Golden Age”, emphasizing the growing interest today in Wagner’s art.

Thursday, February 15 at 7:30 PM at GWU Funger Hall presented by WSWDC: Professor Donald Crosby will speak on “Wagner in Switzerland,” which were among his most productive years musically. Wagner’s relationships with the Wesendoncks, von Bulows, and Nietzsche will be explored.


March 8 to 23, at the Goethe-Institut: A special Ring Exhibition featuring costumes, images, and video clips from the WNO’s Das Rheingold and Die Walküre.

Thursday, March 22, at 7:30 PM at GWU Funger Hall presented by WSWDC: Thomas May speaks on “Visualizing Die Walküre.” The author of Decoding Wagner, will analyze ideas behind the productions by some of the great stage directors of the past and present.

Saturday, March 24, at 6 PM at the Kennedy Center Opera House The Washington National Opera (WNO) presents Die Walküre; opening night performance tickets are available from the WSWDC. (Additional performances: March 28, April 1, 5, 9, 14, and 17.)

Saturday, March 24, at the Residence of the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany. Opening Night Cast Party for Die Walküre. Tickets are available through WSWDC.

Sunday, March 25, at 2:00 PM at the Women’s Museum Performance Hall. “Wagner’s Tough Ladies of Opera.” A discussion with WNO’s Christina Scheppelmann and WNO American Ring director Francesca Zambello. $10.

Wednesday, March 28, at 6:00 PM at the Kennedy Center Millenium Stage. Insight Lecture: Die Walküre.

Thursday, April 5, at 5:15 PM at the Kennedy Center Opera House. “O-Zone Lecture” by Saul Lilienstein. Open to anyone holding a ticket to any Die Walküre performance.

Thursday, April 19, at 7:30 PM at GWU Funger Hall presented by WSWDC: Professor David Levin, University of Chicago. Professor Levin, one of the country’s most accomplished dramaturgs, is the Editor of Opera Quarterly and writes extensively on opera, opera and cinema, and opera as theater.

Thursday, May 10 at 8 PM in the Dekelboum Concert Hall at Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland. The 14th Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Concert with University of Maryland Symphony Orchestra. The only piece will be Act III of Siegfried. Tickets are available through the Smith Center. (Call 301.405.ARTS for tickets.)

Thursday, May 17, at 7:30 PM at GWU Funger Hall presented by WSWDC: Professor Alfred Turco, Wesleyan University, a leading authority on George Bernard Shaw will explore Shaw’s relationship to the works of Richard Wagner.

Friday, June 1 to Sunday, June 3: Wagner in der Wildnis VII (Lohengrin) (for Members only) at Cacapon State Park near Berkeley Springs WV. The event will feature the “dream team” Jeffrey Swann (music) and Simon Williams (drama), known from previous Wildnis weekends. An original paper on Lohengrin will be presented by Chairman Jim Holman. Betty Byrne will direct the Lohengrin libretto reading . Aury Fernandez will serve as moderator.

August 20 to 28 (Third Cycle) Bayreuther Festspiele will be attended by a small group of Members (only) who qualify for our limited ticket allotment. The traditional Bayreuth briefing buffet for ticket holders will be held in early August.

(Note: The Gala announced for Spring 2007 will be staged in December 2007 or January 2008.)
The Artisty of Thomas Stewart
Tim Page at Funger Hall
January 19, 2007

Evelyn Lear escorted by bass-baritone Alan Held

Jim Holman and Evelyn Lear at dinner after program

Evelyn Lear with Member Henry Bardach who attended Thomas Stewart’s debut in Capriccio as La Roche at the Juilliard School in December 1954.

Speakers in Spring 2007


David Levin, University of Chicago, speaks on April 19, 2007.

Al Turco, Wesleyan University, speaks on George Bernard Shaw on May 17, 2007.
The Study and Enjoyment of Wagner’s Art

Bayreuther Festspiele 2006

Selected Ring Cycle Ticket Holders (left to right) (front) Peggy Jones, Janet Fernandez, Betty Byrne, Kathleen Fuller, Cathy Soderquist, Richard Soderquist, Richard Fuller (back row) RG Head, Bonnie Becker, Carole Hoover, Donald Crosby, Lynn Lambert, Sally Lund, Frederic Harwood.

Gutrune Wagner greets Aury Fernandez on Third Cycle Opening Night

Selected Non-Ring Ticket Holders (left to right) (front) Aury Fernandez, Pedro Taborga, Marta Taborga, Peggy Joanes, Paula Bortnichak, Kathleen Fuller, Sally Lund, Jose Garcia (back row) Barbara Karn, Ed Bortnichak, Richard Fuller, Lea McDaniel, Frederic Harwood.

Wolfgang Wagner greets Betty Byrne at the Wagner Society of Los Angeles Rheingold dinner party.

“Mailing Exercises” (left to right) Board Member Tom Arthur, Office Manager Jackie Rosen, Volunteer Yoko Arthur and Betty Byrne send program notices to our Members.

Intermission with WSWDC Member Antonio Civit (Madrid), New York Wagner Society Bayreuth Coordinator Vrena Kosodo, Betty Byrne and Janet Fernandez.
The Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart Emerging Singers Program – An Update

A comprehensive update of the Emerging Singer Program was published in the October 2006 issue of The Wagner Singer, which is posted on our website www.wagner-dc.org.

The Board of Directors extends special thanks to Evelyn Lear for her continuing efforts to sustain the Program since the death of Thomas Stewart in September 2006.

JENNIFER WILSON continues to develop her successful career. Commenting on her performance in the title role in Turandot last summer, the music critic of The Australian (national daily newspaper) noted that “…even more vocally commanding at climactic moments was the regally stentorian Jennifer Wilson as Turandot. Her power over the full orchestra was electrifying: a voice of chiseled control in its prime.” Ms. Wilson will make her second major recording in London in the title role in Dukas’ only opera Arianne et Barbe-Bleu. In March, she will sing Brünnhilde in Die Walküre in Valencia under the direction of Loren Mazell. Future engagements include performances in Florence, a concert version of Tannhäuser in Canada and, then, her Covent Garden debut in the title role of Turandot.

JASON STEARNS completed well received performances in Leipzig in December 2006 as the Herrufer in Lohengrin. He returns to Gelsenkirchen, Germany for repeat performances of the Count di Luna. In February he will sing in the Los Angeles Opera production of Tannhäuser under the direction of James Conlon. In spring 2007 he appears in the Miami Opera as the High Priest in Saint-Saens’ Samson et Delilah. In summer 2007 he will sing Alfio and Tonio in Boston and Scarpia with the Summer Opera in Washington, DC. He will also appear in November in a recital at the Cosmos Club, Washington, DC.

CAROLINE WHISNANT moves from triumph to triumph in Germany where she is presently engaged at the opera houses in Mannheim and Karlsruhe. She recently sang Brünnhilde in Die Walküre and Götterdämmerung as well as the title role in Elektra, about which a German critic said: “...the way Miss Whisnant handled her father’s ax you would not want to meet her in a dark alley!” She has also sung Brünnhilde in Sweden and next year will be singing in the new Ring at the Frankfurt Neue Oper.

MICHAEL HAYES has recently returned from several successful engagements in California as Cavaradossi in Tosca and from Amsterdam where he sang the title role in Verdi’s Otello. He also sang recently with Kentucky Opera and Opera Tennessee. A critic noted: “…Michael Hayes as Radames, with his expressive tenor, conveyed beautifully the intense conflicts his character experiences” (The Tennessean, 2006). In 2006, he sang with Opera Dayton and the Virginia Opera. He is presently singing with Opera San Diego. He recently sang the title role in Siegfried (final scene) with the Nashville Symphony and will sing the role of Hoffmann in the Contes d’Hoffmann with the Opéra des Nantes.
Interview of Thomas Stewart and Evelyn Lear
September 16, 2006 at their home in Rockville, MD.

The interview was conducted on September 16, 2006 by Jordan Mitek a junior in the Good Counsel High School in Wheaton, Maryland as a school project. The interview revealed many charming professional aspects of Thomas Stewart and Evelyn Lear. Below is the opening excerpt of the eighteen minute interview; the complete transcript is carried on www.wagner-dc.org.

Jordan: When did you first become interested in music?
Tom: Actually when I was in grade school. I started playing in the local band of my grade school and then started singing in church and singing with a small choral group. One thing led to another. I just kept singing more and more and more all through the years. But it started fairly early. I always liked to sing as a child. My mother, I don't remember too much, but in church I would sing all the time

Jordan: What about you, Eve? When did you become interested in music?

Evelyn: In my mother's womb! (Laughter) My mother was an opera singer and her father was a famous singer and I guess the genes just passed on to me. I knew already at the age of three, that I wanted to be an opera singer. I remember walking in front of a mirror in my room. I must have been about eight years old. “You, Evelyn, are going to be a great singer someday.” I don't know. That’s how it started. (end excerpt)

THE WAGNER SOCIETY of Washington, DC
MEMBERSHIP 2007 - TIME TO JOIN AGAIN OR FOR THE FIRST TIME!

The Membership Year runs from January 1 through December 31, 2007, regardless of the time of year you join. To become a member, please complete this form and either mail it with your check or credit card authorization to P.O. Box 58213, Washington, DC 20037, or fax it to 301-907-8671, or become a Member on our website: www.wagner-dc.org.

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Golden Ring Sponsors, Donors, and Patrons As an expression of our appreciation, we would like to send you a copy of John DiGaetani, Essays on Wagner's Opera Cycle. ☐ Yes, please  ☐ No, thanks

Golden Ring only: We are pleased to offer you a copy of the 5-CD set, “Evelyn Lear & Thomas Stewart - A Musical Tribute”. ☐ Yes, please  ☐ No, thanks

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PLEASE REVIEW THE LEGIBILITY OF NUMBERS AND LETTERS YOU ENTERED ABOVE.
Dear Members and Friends:

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The Society gives special thanks to:

Jim Alison, newly appointed program director of WETA-FM for his support of WSWDC while holding that position at WGMS with programs including an interview with Evelyn Lear and Thomas Stewart and special programs on the occasion of the death of Thomas Stewart.

Trautlieb Hülz of the German Embassy for facilitating the Emerging Singers Program concert on October 20, 2006.

We thank Members who made significant volunteer contributions that made our programs possible:

Member Shirley Moyer for transcribing interviews with Thomas Stewart and Evelyn Lear and for assisting with sending membership cards and tax deduction letters to Members.

Member McKinney Russell for assistance in preparing this issue as well as previous issue and The Wagner Singer publication.

Members Jean Arnold who assisted in preparing this issue.

Member Tim Scanlon for video taping our programs.