

Minutes of Wagner Society Committee Meeting held on 4 July 2016

Present: Neil King (Treasurer), Cormac Cawley, Ray Godson, Geoffrey Griffiths, Jan Leigh, David Pope (Secretary).

Neil King took the chair.

Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 15 June

Item 9 – Jan clarified that she had not agreed to design a leaflet.

With this change, the minutes were agreed.

Minutes of AGM

Agreed.

Treasurer's Report

Neil reported that we were receiving a steady stream of new applications for membership; four had joined today.

He asked that the new signatories to the bank account completed their details as soon as possible. We could not pay for anything until these had been completed.

He had not yet completed the accounts for June as the bank statements for last month had yet to arrive.

Membership

Neil had written to all members that had paid less than the full rate for subscription (largely due to their paying by standing order and not updating the amount when the subscription was increased). He had received some rude responses but others had paid the full membership rate.

Neil had written to all those whose memberships had expired over the last year; he had also written to the recipients of complimentary copies of Wagner News and asked them to consider becoming members. Two had joined.

We now had 648 members, counting the 73 joint members as one membership.

It was felt that we needed to have a new design for leaflets advertising membership. David volunteered to ask Barry Millington if the leaflets could be enclosed with copies of the Wagner Journal.

Website

Cormac reported there had been a lot of contact from members seeking to sell spare tickets for Bayreuth. He stated that it was possible to send only two mailings a day

via Mailchimp. However, it did not appear that many members were reading the mailings.

Cormac added that we needed more content on the website and should look to start the forum, although this would need a number of moderators, not just committee members.

It was noted that we could upload articles from previous editions of Wagner News and Wagner magazine, although there might be copyright problems in some cases. It was agreed that Geoffrey would try to identify suitable articles from old editions. It was also suggested that we could commission articles on the theme of 'my favourite Wagner book'.

Events

(i) Complimentary tickets

Jan said she thought all those assisting at Society events should be given complimentary tickets. She asked that she be given discretion for allocating these, for example to the spouses of singers and presenters. Neil said that the practice of allocating complimentary tickets had been over-generous in the past but he accepted that this could be left to Jan. Agreed.

(ii) Programme

July – Stuart Skelton would be singing at the event, as well as talking with David Nice.

September – Paul Dawson-Bowling had agreed in principle to give a talk.

October – Jan is to meet the Royal Academy of Music and the Guildhall School to discuss the feasibility of staging an event at their premises. Booking the ROSL was expensive without the help of Dame Gwyneth Jones.

November – Humphrey Burton had been confirmed for the talk with Dame Gwyneth. The ROSL had quoted a price of £20 per head for tea at the singing competition. This was felt to be too much and it was agreed that Jan would ask them to quote a price for tea and biscuits only.

Jan reported that Andrea Buchanan was proposing to stage part of Act 1 of Die Walkure during the interval, at a cost of £1,500. It was noted that we had provided entertainment during the interval at each of the two previous singing competitions but there was concern over the cost of Andrea's proposal. After discussion it was agreed that instead of Die Walkure, we would ask the winner of the 2015 competition – Katie Stevenson – to give a short recital. We would offer another date to those that had been pencilled in for Die Walkure at the singing competition.

January – the joint dinner with other societies might not happen due to lack of interest on their part.

February – Anthony Negus had agreed to give a talk on a Saturday.

March – it was agreed to organise a dinner on 23rd March to mark the new production of Die Meistersinger at Covent Garden. We would plan for 50 attendees but this could be increased if there was sufficient interest. The ROSL had quoted a fee of £80 per head, including wine. Other venues suggested were the City Club and the Royal Overseas Yacht Club.

Wagner News

It was agreed that we needed to include an obituary of Alberto Remedios. Paul Dawson-Bowling had offered to write one. Jan would write something on Brexit and a review of the Opera North Ring. Neil would write a piece on 'why I like Wagner'. A member had submitted a review of Tristan at the Coliseum. We would also seek short reports from members attending Bayreuth. David pointed out that this was the 40th anniversary of the Chereau Ring at Bayreuth. He suggested that we should commission a piece from someone that had attended the production in 1976. It was suggested that we should approach Jeffrey Tate, since he had worked on the production.

New committee members

There had been no new volunteers.

Date of Next Meeting

10 August 2016.