

## **Minutes of Wagner Society Meeting held on 7 September 2016**

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

Committee members welcomed Richard on his return from convalescence.

### **Minutes of Last Meeting**

Item 6 – Events: Sir John Tomlinson's knighthood should be inserted; and the dinner to mark the production of Die Meistersinger was on 23 March, not 23 September.

### **Matters Arising not covered elsewhere**

We should credit the photographer when using photographs in Wagner News but otherwise only needed to obtain permission when using a picture covered by copyright.

### **Treasurer's Report**

There were no accounts as the bank statement for August had not yet arrived. We were running a deficit but were not overdrawn. We needed to sell more tickets for the autumn events to break even.

### **Membership Report**

Neil said that 29 new members had joined in August. 43 memberships were about to expire and it was hoped that most if not all would re-join. Neil had contacted overseas members about re-joining. We had 669 members. 188 memberships had expired and Neil had written to all of them to ask them to re-join.

We did not have all Gift Aid forms, which was worrying as this was an important source of funding. Ray offered to help Neil locate them.

### **Website**

Cormac said that the noticeboard was working. It contained links to events. Feedback had been largely positive.

The website contained material about Wagner but nothing about his works. Richard would ask Charlie Furness Smith if he could write some articles. It was also suggested that we could ask the Verband if we could use some of the material on their website.

It was agreed that our website should include links to the websites of the Scottish and Wagner Manchester societies.

## Events

We had sold 55 tickets for the Stuart Skelton event. The next event was the talk by Paul Dawson-Bowling on 6 October. Paul had asked if we could provide a CD player. The committee felt that taking someone's CD equipment to the Farmers' Club and then home again was a tall order. It was agreed instead that we would ask him for a playlist and try to play the music via a portable device. Neil would take cash payments on the door and wine, crisps and peanuts would be served on arrival.

Dame Gwyneth Jones had assured us that Humphrey Burton would be available for the talk on 8 November. The event was being held jointly with the Royal Over-Seas League who would provide a drink afterwards.

The room for the singing competition at ROSL on 27 November was being provided for free. Jan would negotiate with the ROSL over the cost of teas. It was agreed that dinner for the judges would be provided afterwards; and Andrea would take Susan Bullock and Richard Berkley-Steele to dinner after they had judged the auditions.

The Christmas Party would be at Neil's on 7 December.

The joint annual dinner with the Mahler, Liszt, Alkan and Berlioz societies would be held on 17 January. We did not have prices yet.

Jan was looking at possible venues for the Meistersinger dinner in March. She was awaiting costs from ROSL and was due to see the Farmers' Club.

There was also a possible event in a pub with the brass section from Longborough.

The committee considered other possible events. It was unlikely that we would have time to organise another event for January. Suggestions were:

- (i) an event with Bryn Terfel as suggested for February;
- (ii) an event with some of the entrants from our singing competition;
- (iii) someone from Opera Prelude to give a talk;
- (iv) a screening of the Berlin Ring; and
- (v) some singers Neil had met in Bayreuth would sing at an event if they were also appearing in the UK.

The Inner Temple and the RAF Club were suggested as possible venues for other events.

## **Advertising**

David submitted a summary of the costs of placing advertisements in various music publications. It was agreed we should concentrate on using Opera and Opera Now.

It was agreed that we would have a whole page ad in the December issue of Opera (published in November) to boost interest in the singing competition. Jan would draft it with input from Cormac. The November issue, published in October, would have a half page issue.

It was suggested we should consider placing ads in programmes for amateur and Wagner opera productions.

Cormac would talk to the BBC about including a leaflet in next year's Proms guide.

David would contact The Big Issue about placing an ad in an issue; Jan would ask them about inclusion of an article.

## **Wagner News**

Ray was formally thanked for having edited the latest edition. Ideas for the next edition included: more on the recent Bayreuth Festival; an interview with Catherine Forster by Michael Bousfield; something on Brexit; something on the archives; a chat with Katie Stephenson; and something by Anne Evans (Richard would approach her).

## **Relationships with other Wagner Societies**

Jan would write jointly with Andrea to invite members of other Wagner Societies to attend our dinner in March.

## **Richard Wagner Verband International**

A number of issues had to be addressed:

Someone had to be the contact for acquiring tickets for the Bayreuth Festival;

We should ask Andrea to talk to us about the work of RWVI and her involvement;

The Bursary;

Who would attend the next congress in Budapest on behalf of the Society?

## **Society Archive**

We didn't know if members were accessing the archive, which is held in Yorkshire. It was agreed that Richard would write to the archivist before any further decision was taken.

### **Any Other Business**

Wagner Journal – Neil had not contacted Barry Millington but would do so. It was possible that we might be able to part-subsidise subscriptions for members.

Jan would talk to David Nice about possible reciprocal adverts.

Could we sell merchandise at our meetings? It was agreed we should give this more consideration.

Richard would try to review Roger Scruton's book for Wagner News.

John Crowther had suggested we survey Society members. It was agreed we should consider this further at another meeting.

Tickets for events – it was suggested that non-members should pay extra for attending our events, to give them an incentive for joining and preserve a benefit for members. It was agreed we would look at this further.

Charity Commission – David noted he would have to file our accounts with them by the end of October. This would not be a problem.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 18 October at 6.30pm.