**Wagner Society Committee meeting 19 September 2018**

In attendance: Ray Godson (RG), Meli Hatzihrysidis (MH), Neil King (NK), Henry Kennedy (HK), Richard Miles (RM), Isabella Pitman (IP), Alan Ridgewell (AR)

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies received from Geoffrey Griffiths

**2. Minutes 17.7.18**

Approved

**3. Matters arising**

None

**4. Chairman’s & Treasurer’s Reports**

The Chairman reported that:

* Progress had been made on the 2019 Singing Competition (reported more fully under Agenda item 11).
* He had had a number of representations (from Paul Dawson-Bowling, Gary Kahn and Trevor Edington) regarding the dispersal of the Library (reported more fully under Agenda item 12).
* He had met Anthony Spooner, who had kindly offered to serve as Secretary, and unreservedly recommended that Mr Spooner be co-opted on to the Committee: he was unable to attend this meeting but would be introduced at the October meeting.

It was agreed unanimously that Mr Spooner should be co-opted on to the Committee.

The Treasurer had previously circulated Income and Expenditure, Budget Variance and Balance Sheet Reports. He reported that the aim was to end year broadly flat in terms of profit & loss & we were on target to achieve that. The revenue from selling surplus Library items would be added to the Society’s Investment Fund.

**5. Vacant Committee Posts**

AR pointed out that the Committee’s workload is increasing, and while some Committee members’ hands are already full, a number of important tasks are not being dealt with: the most important being social media; catering for events, advertising & marketing, website management….

Some of these could possibly be taken on by existing Committee members (at the meeting it was agreed that responsibility for social media will be shared between RM (Twitter); IP (Instagram) & a.n. other to be decided (Facebook), with IP setting up a WhatsApp group to share information.

As the Committee currently has 3 vacancies (9 members vs. a maximum of 12 under the Constitution), we should try to fill them with people who would be willing to take responsibility for these remaining roles, and we should once again ask for volunteers among the membership to bring the Committee up to full strength.

**6. Events**

A list of forthcoming events over the next 12 months has now been circulated, and a flyer has been produced. HK reported, based on his own past experience, that students could be employed to hand out flyers, at a cost of c. £10 per hour, and it was agreed that we would do this outside the ROH during the forthcoming Ring Cycles (depending on cost, we could do 1 Cycle; or all 4 Cycles; or, considering that the audience for each opera within a Cycle is likely to be the same, just one opera of each Cycle). Henry to investigate the availability & cost of ‘flyerers’; AR to produce flyers, including membership details and relevant forthcoming events (e.g. J Deathridge; S Vinke).

NK reported that the Eva Turner will be lossmaking because we are giving away a copy of J Deathridge’s book at cost. But the point is to get lots of people there. It was agreed that we would adopt the same policy for the S Vinke event, if possible using Gary Kahn’s Ring book.

**7. Annual Dinner & Goodall Award**

Goodall Award – RM to check, prior to announcement, that the Grahams are happy for it to be announced that they are the winners.

Also to ask if we can place an announcement in their programme next year.

It was agreed that HK would ask Lee Bisset to do the concert at the dinner, and then give Award. Dame Anne to be asked for her email address.

**8. Wagner News**

AR reported that he aimed to finish & send to press by the weekend of 22/23 September. The new edition will be 112 pages.

**9. Secretary’s Emails / Weekly or Bi-weekly Newsletter**

One of the Secretary’s roles has been to disseminate information to members (e.g. tickets for sale and other notices) by ad hoc emails. Some members have indicated a preference for a weekly or bi-weekly newsletter instead. To be discussed with the new Secretary at next meeting, as in reality, there is a risk that it will not get done at all unless it is in a format that suits the Secretary’s preferences.

**10. Further Prizes for some Singing Competition Finalists**

NK proposed that we regularise the position re the masterclass by paying £500 to both Adam Music as well as Michelle Alexander. This would be met by donations from Committee members rather than from the Society’s funds.

**11. Singing Competition**

NK reported that a sub-Committee comprising Dame Anne Evans (DAE), John Lucas (JL), Malcolm Rivers (MR), NK, AR, HK & RM had met on 10 September to discuss the 2019 Singing Competition.

Matters discussed: Judging panel (neither DAE nor MR wish to be on it); publicity (for both contestants & audience); closing date for applications to be 1 May 2019; auditions / accompanist; prizes; repertoire - tbd both items to be Wagner, or 1 non-Wagner?; arrangements for the day.

DAE had agreed to (& subsequently did) speak to the management of the Wigmore Hall, which would be available on Saturday 23 November (rather than 24th, as originally agreed) at a cost of £500. This venue was felt likely to add significantly to the prestige of the event and £500 seemed a very reasonable price.

The sub-Committee will meet bi-monthly (next meeting on 15 November, thereafter 9 January & 13 March).

**12. Disposal of the Libraries (incorporating item 15.)**

It had already been agreed (at the June Committee Meeting) that the archive (kept by GG) would be catalogued by RG & thinned out; and that the audio-visual library would be disposed of.

No decision was made about the print library but as it has not been consulted in 6 years, and a number of storage options had been considered, with none proving viable, it was proposed that, as far as possible, we distribute it sensitively to other libraries (e.g. Wahnfried for material relating specifically to Bayreuth; The London Library had also expressed an interest in some items).

Gary Kahn (and others) had made strong representations that the library should be kept together, but it was equally strongly felt by some Committee members that nothing in the collection is unique, or unobtainable anywhere else, and that in the long (or even quite short) run, it was not the Society’s business to maintain an extensive archive which had been proved to be of limited interest to members, and for which we did not have storage space. The same Committee members felt that after many months of time-consuming and inconclusive debate, with no decisions being made, we should finally resolve the issue and make a decision to dispose of it. Other Committee members felt that no haste was necessary, and that we should defer a decision until at least the November Committee meeting to allow more time to find a solution.

A vote was taken, and by a majority of 5 to 2, it was decided to authorise dispersal immediately (though as the dispersal process would take time, there was plenty of time to find a longer-term storage solution, if one is imminent).

**13. Selection of Bayreuth Bursary Candidates**

It was agreed to ask Dame Anne Evans and Malcolm Rivers to nominate singers who might wish to attend the Bayreuth Festival; they can also nominate non-singers but we will also advertise this.  Age limit for both to revert to 35.  The Committee will make final decision based on their advice.

**14. RWVI Matters**

It was agreed that for the benefit of members, we should make every effort to develop the strongest possible relationship with Bayreuth, and raise our profile as a supporter of both the festival and the development of young singers. Jacques Bouffier, who has been our representative on the RWVI, had been an extremely helpful ally and a valuable advocate for the Society.  We should consider publishing members’ letters of appreciation in Wagner News.  We should make every effort to ensure Committee representation at the Venice RWVI meeting in 2019.

**16. AOB –** none

The meeting closed at 9.10pm