**MINUTES OF 2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**OF THE WAGNER SOCIETY**

**Wednesday 22nd May 2019**

The Swedenborg Hall, Barter Street, London WC1A 2TH

**ATTENDEES:**

The following, Officers and Committee Members were in attendance:

Richard Miles (Chairman) (RM)

Neil King (Treasurer) (NK)

Anthony Spooner (Secretary) (AS)

Ray Godson (RG)

Alan Ridgewell (AR)

Henry Kennedy (HK)

Tom Brown (TB)

Meli Hatzihrysidis (MH)

The meeting opened at 19:00. RM took the chair and welcomed everyone.

**1: Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Isabella Pitman, Committee Member (due to taking her finals at Oxford) and from 29 members.

**2: Approval of Minutes of 2018 Annual General Meeting**

The Minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting (which had been held on 16th May 2018) were put to the meeting and comments were invited from the floor. Michael Hamilton queried why the amended Minutes had not been circulated in the first instance. RM responded that the additional wording had been requested by the President after the initial despatch of the Minutes and the committee agreed to comply with her request.

Robert Mansell proposed the approval of the Minutes, David Holland seconded the proposal and the Minutes were duly approved.

**3: Approval of the Chairman’s Report**

RM briefly summarised his report, which had been published in advance. The Society was in good order, with stable membership numbers, excellent events, an active committee and participating members.

Eric Adler proposed the approval of the Chairman’s Report, Catherine Dobson seconded the proposal and the Chairman’s Report was duly approved.

4: Treasurers Report & Annual Accounts for 2018

The Treasurer’s Report and the Audited Annual Accounts for 2018 had been circulated with papers in advance of the meeting and the Chairman invited questions from the floor.

Geoffrey Herdman asked exactly what the investments where that were mentioned within the accounts and which had fallen slightly year on year. NK responded that the accounts were prepared at the end of 2018, at a time when there was a general dip in the stock market, but that the Society’s investments (along with the market) had subsequently recovered, to the extent of c.£4-5K. The Society’s investments were currently held within the M&G Charifund Fund but we are looking to spread the investment to at least one further fund, yet to be determined, during 2019. This additional fund would also be a charity-specific fund which would have the approval of the Charity Commission.

Michael Hamilton asked why the Erratum to the Accounts had been necessary and why it had not been circulated in the first instance. NK explained that a mistake had been made in the description of the item within the original accounts and that the Erratum detail simply corrected this minor error.

Rainer Kiess proposed that the Treasurer’s Report and Annual Accounts for 2018 be adopted, Wendy Adlerseconded the proposal and the Accounts were thus adopted.

Before the next agenda item could be announced, Adrian Mumford addressed the meeting to say how impressed he was with the thoroughness of the Society’s accounts and how fortunate we were to have such methodical Treasurer. His words were warmly received and applauded by the meeting.

**5: Election of the Officers of the Society to serve until the 2020 AGM**

NK took the chair while the meeting dealt with the election of RM as Chairman, in accordance with the Society’s Constitution. Ray Godson had proposed RM as Chairman and Alan Ridgewell had seconded the proposal. Being the only nominee for the office of Chairman, Richard Miles was elected as Chairman.

At this point RM resumed the chair and the meeting dealt with the election of NK as Treasurer of the Society. Dame Anne Evans had proposed NK as Treasurer and Cameron Burns, Jacques Bouffier and Dr Helen Watson had seconded the proposal. Being the only nominee for the office of Treasurer, Neil King was elected.

The meeting then dealt with the election of AS as Secretary of the Society. RM had proposed AS and NK had seconded the proposal. Being the only nominee for the office of Secretary, Anthony Spooner was elected Secretary of the Society.

**6: Election of Committee Members to serve for a three-year term**

The meeting then dealt with the election of the following members of the committee whose nominations had been proposed and seconded as follows: -

Tom Brown, proposed by Richard Miles and seconded by Neil King

Ray Godson, proposed by Alan Ridgewell and seconded by Catherine Dobson

Being the only nominees for less than the available vacancies on the committee these members were elected as members of the Society’s committee.

**7: Election of Cannon Moorcroft as the Society’s Independent Examiner until the 2020 AGM**

NK proposed that Canon Moorcroft be appointed Auditors for the Society. A point of order was raised by Morley Pecker who commented that he believed, as a principle, that the Treasurer should not propose the election of the Society’s examiners. Morley Pecker then went on to propose Canon Moorcroft himself and the proposal was seconded by Ray Godson. Cannon Moorcroft were duly appointed as the Society’s Examiners.

**8: Member Resolution**

Irene Richards had submitted a resolution in advance, calling upon the Society to give whatever assistance it could to Fulham Opera and, in particular, to their current production of *Meistersinger*. Ms Richards addressed the meeting and outlined in highly committed terms the work of the company and the impact it could have. Her words were echoed by other members present, although it was stressed that this support should be for Wagner productions, not automatically for other composers’ works.

RM called for show of hands in support of the resolution. The resolution was passed unanimously and to applause.

**9: AOB**

1. Neil King pointed out that today’s date marked the anniversary of Richard Wagner’s birth and that cake would be available following the meeting.
2. Ryma Howard noted that the President’s Masterclass, held in Wahnfried last  
   year, had not been reported in Wagner News and queried why this was. AR (editor of Wagner News) responded that this was a matter which was already closed. He also expressed his concern, after looking back through the Society’s previous publications, how much space had been given to internal controversies, which might discourage potential members, or concern current members. The Richard Wagner Verband International organisation (the  
   Bayreuth-based establishment which oversees and coordinates Wagner Societies world-wide) had similarly chosen not to publish the Masterclass article - although it has subsequently been published by Harmony Magazine.
3. Ryma Howard went on to query the occasional spelling mistake or error which might appear in Wagner News and asked why there was not a proof-reading mechanism. AR again responded, apologising for occasional slips but pointing out what great strides had been achieved over the past few years, with Wagner News now becoming an eagerly anticipated publication with scholarly input and learned articles submitted from a wide range of knowledgeable writers. He apologised again for the occasional slip up, and his words were warmly received and applauded.

iv. Dr Richard Carter commented that active discussion should not be discouraged within the Society. AR responded that he agreed, so long as such discussion was scholarly and considered and not just negative comment aimed at the Society.

v. Geoffrey Herdman who, with his wife, were new members of the Society, asked what the issue was that had surfaced last year and had caused the updates etc. of the 2018 minutes. RM responded that he felt it would be wrong to repeat the issues that had arisen at that time, but that he would talk offline following the meeting.

vi. Michael Hamilton stated he was sorry that the President could not be present at the AGM. He knew that she was sorry herself not to be present and that Dame Gwyneth genuinely wished to be seen as a supporter of the Wagner Society and keen to resolve any outstanding issues. RM welcomed these comments.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 19:35 and members joined the committee for cake, drinks and other refreshments.