



Annual Report

2022-23



Wagner Society of New York



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COVER

Colorized photograph taken of Joseph Hoffman's set designs (scene 1) for Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* opera in 1876. Public Domain.

Introduction

It gives us great pleasure to present the Annual Report of the Richard Wagner Society of New York for the 2022-23 season. We hope that the information in this Report will provide an accurate and comprehensive understanding of our work and our ambitions.

This is the first year of our service as Chairman and President. We succeed Nathalie D. Wagner, who (with her husband, the late Harry Wagner) has been a tireless leader/servant to the Society for many decades. We all owe Nathalie and Harry an immeasurable debt. We are fortunate that Nathalie has agreed to continue her service on the Board of Directors, and continues as Editor of our flagship publication, *Wagner Notes*.

The motto of the Society is “To teach, to learn, to share.” Our corporate purposes are:

- a) To provide a forum where individuals who are interested in opera or music in general and the musical works of Richard Wagner in particular can share their knowledge;
- b) To sponsor regular events for the presentation of programs concerning Richard Wagner and his music;
- c) To provide opportunities to members of the Corporation and others interested in the music of Richard Wagner to sponsor, participate in or attend performances of his works;
- d) To educate members of the Corporation and members of the public in the musical works of Richard Wagner through lectures, symposia and similar events;
- e) To encourage developing artists deemed promising in the Wagner repertoire.

We hope that you will conclude that, under both former and current leadership, we are fulfilling our charge.



John Ryan
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



F. Peter Phillips
PRESIDENT



Activities

Program Committee

The Wagner Society offers topical educational programs to its members and the public throughout the year. In the 2022-23 Season, the Society offered the following events:

DATE	EVENT
<i>Sept 13, 2022</i>	Chamber Music Festival Recital and Master Class
<i>Oct 11, 2022</i>	Joseph Polisi, discussing his book on the history of Lincoln Center
<i>Nov 1 2022</i>	Panel Discussion on Recent Wagner Productions
<i>Dec 6, 2022</i>	Online Interview with Clay Hilley and Issaach Savage, conducted by Scott Carlton
<i>Feb 11, 2023</i>	Vocal Showcase: <i>Lohengrin</i> (with the Metropolitan Opera Guild)
<i>Feb 17, 2023</i>	Prof. Daniel Goldmark (Case Western Reserve): Wagnerian Tunes in Classic Hollywood Cartoons
<i>March 19, 2023</i>	<i>Lohengrin</i> Seminar featuring Metropolitan Opera singers, musicians, and artists who are part of the current production
<i>April 17, 2023</i>	Prof. Michael Steinberg (Brown University): Wagner and the Nationalism of Feeling
<i>May 21, 2023</i>	Recital, Mezzo-Soprano Shanley Horvitz, with Accompanist Craig Ketter
<i>June 7, 2023</i>	Maestro Thomas Guggeis on the Musical Structure of <i>Der fliegende Holländer</i> , with Prof. John J.H.Muller, IV (Juilliard)

TOP
Prof. Daniel Goldmark,
February 17, 2023

BOTTOM
Piotr Beczala,
March 19, 2023

PHOTO CREDIT
Neil Friedman

Most of these events were livestreamed for members located remotely or otherwise unable to attend personally. Many of them were also recorded for possible future posting on the Society's YouTube Channel.

Publications

The Society also publishes its members-only bimonthly flagship newsletter, *Wagner Notes*, under the capable leadership of Nathalie D. Wagner. *Wagner Notes* is a benefit of membership that is highly valued and anticipated by those familiar with its contents. It includes reviews, articles, notices, photos, announcements of upcoming Society events, schedules of future Wagner productions, and other valuable information.

The Society's web site also provides information to a worldwide audience. Members and others receive periodic announcements of events and other information through electronic communications and notices.

Artists' Committee

The Society acts as trustee for certain restricted-use funds established by individuals seeking to support the careers of promising singers. Grants and awards are made upon audition.

This season's annual auditions for singers who are promising in the Wagner repertoire were organized by Scott Carlton, Artistic Director of Singer Programs, and were held on November 18, 2022. The panel of judges consisted of Mr. Carlton, Ken Benson, Carole Farley, and Eve Queler. The recipients were:

Shanley Horvitz, mezzo-soprano

\$6,000 Robert Lauch Memorial Fund Endowment Award

Katherine Lerner, mezzo-soprano

\$3,000 Ursula Springer Memorial Endowment Fund Award

Kelly Slawson

\$2,000 Encouragement Grant

Julia Wolcott

\$1,500 Encouragement Grant

Jeremy Brauner, tenor

\$1,500 Encouragement Grant

Heather Hjelle, soprano

\$1,000 Encouragement Grant

We are pleased to recognize their talents and wish them the best in their career development.

Affiliated Organizations Committee

The Affiliated Organizations Committee administered the 2023 Bayreuth Stipendium, selecting baritone Joseph Parrish on the recommendation of Assistant Dean Fadwa Hayes of Juilliard's Music Division. Mr. Parrish will participate in activities and opportunities for fellowship and education during the 2023 Bayreuth Festival, and will attend three performances as part of the scholarship program. The Society extends its thanks to members who generously contributed to defray the travel and other costs of Mr. Parrish's participation in this scholarship.

One of the most coveted benefits of membership in the Wagner Society is the opportunity to procure tickets to the Bayreuth Festival. This season, the Committee received and allocated numerous Bayreuth tickets received through the Gesellschaft den Freude von Bayreuth and the Richard Wagner Verband International, both of which the Society supports through institutional membership. The Committee also assisted in the distribution of tickets from members who privately received tickets they could not use. The Committee departed from its past practice of hosting English-language academic lectures at Bayreuth, and is testing a new concept of offering informal sessions with performers during the week of August 21, 2023.

Representatives of the Metropolitan Opera met with the Society to discuss such joint projects as discount tickets to Society members for *Lohengrin* and *Der fliegende Holländer*, and promotion of the Society in the Met marketing materials.

The Society has maintained contact with other Wagner Societies in North America and the United Kingdom, periodically hosting Zoom discussions and seeking collaboration and mutually advantageous new initiatives.

TOP
Prof. Michael Steinberg,
April 17, 2023

BOTTOM
Günther Groissböck,
March 19, 2023

PHOTO CREDIT
Neil Friedman



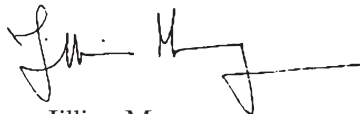
Membership

The Wagner Society of New York is supported by over 600 persons under 494 memberships, comprising 36% regular memberships, 32% memberships under concession discounts (including seniors, students, and non-NYC area residents), 28% special contributors providing additional support through donations \$150 and above, and 4% free or honorary members. Two-thirds of our members reside within 100 miles of New York City, and one-third beyond. We maintain communications with over 1,000 individuals (including former members, other Wagner Societies, and artistic professionals) through electronic and postal mailings.

We are glad that, emerging from the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, membership numbers are approximately back on par with 2020 – and indeed 4% of this season's members are new to the Society. It is noteworthy that, while recent pandemic seasons experienced some minor attrition in overall dues-paying membership, membership revenues nevertheless increased. This was the result of many of our members' increasing their special contributor level, or making outright contributions in addition to their membership dues, in recognition of the challenges that the Society confronted during that period and committing to its continued success. We are grateful for the consistent support of our members, whose dues and contributions constitute by far the largest single source of revenue for our programming.

The Board of Directors has approved modifications to the membership structure and dues levels for the 2023-24 season – the first time that changes have been implemented in many years. We look forward to offering a new category of Digital Membership that will appeal to Wagner fans worldwide, who can livestream our events, receive electronic copies of *Wagner Notes*, and engage with the composers' works on a deeper level – regardless of their distance from New York.

We look forward to the continued, sustained support of the Society by its loyal members, and their ongoing participation in its various activities.


Jillian Murray
REGISTRAR

Finances

In the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, the Society continued to productively function in the post-COVID environment, while also employing the technology gleaned from operating remotely to enhance our reach beyond the New York Metropolitan region.

Total operating revenue for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, was just under \$92,000, or \$7,741 (8%) below the previous year, with expenses of \$75,200, or more than \$18,000 (17%) lower than the previous year's expenses. There were no significant financial non-operating transactions during the fiscal year.

The overall net assets of the Society were \$388,000 at fiscal year-end, approximately \$10,800 higher than on March 31st of the previous year. The most significant portion of our assets are the endowment funds, the uses for which are restricted. Income from the endowment funds is used to fund awards to promising Wagnerian singers in the form of a Lauch Award and a Springer Award. The Kit Gill Fund is also used to fund grants with the expectation that the fund will be fully depleted in the foreseeable future.

The Society is moving to have the timing of our fiscal year better reflect our activities. Accordingly, this year we will be changing our annual period from an April-to-March year to a September-to-August year. Please also welcome our new Assistant Treasurer, Paul Deutschmann, who will assist in this transition.

Many thanks to the members of the Society for their continued support, especially for those that recognize the value and significance of our activities by maintaining membership at the higher levels of subscription, thereby providing much needed funds supporting our activities and grants to singers.



Mark Luis Villamar
TREASURER

Leadership

(As of June 1, 2023)

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors governs the Society.

ITS MEMBERS ARE:

Germán Bravo-Casas

Donald Crawshaw

Alice Kenny

Raymond Ko

John McCarthy

Jillian Murray

Dolores Perin

F. Peter Phillips

John Ryan

Mark Luis Villamar

Nathalie D. Wagner

Officers

The Society's officers are responsible for fulfilling the operational responsibilities set forth in the by-laws.

THE OFFICERS ARE:

Chairman of the Board: *John Ryan*

President: *F. Peter Phillips*

Secretary: *Dolores Perin*

Treasurer: *Mark Luis Villamar*

Registrar: *Jillian Murray*

Committees

The work of the Society is substantially performed by various committees appointed by the Board of Directors.

These Committees and their members are listed below.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee consists of the Chair of the Board of Directors, the President, the Treasurer, the Registrar, the Secretary, and the Chair of the Governance and Nominating Committee. It is convened by the Board Chair at request of any officer, and renders advice or takes corporate action between Board meetings, subject to the limitations in the Bylaws and to the further limitation that it may not authorize the expenditure of Society Funds in an amount greater than \$1,500.

ITS MEMBERS ARE:

John Ryan (Chair)
Donald Crawshaw
Jillian Murray
Dolores Perin
F. Peter Phillips
Mark Luis Villamar

Governance and Nominating Committee

The Governance and Nominating Committee acts as resource to Board in regard to best practices in governance. It also makes recommendations to the Board regarding nominations of directors and officers, and Committees (including membership of Committees).

ITS MEMBERS ARE:

Donald Crawshaw (Chair)
Raymond Ko
Mark Luis Villamar

Affiliated Organizations Committee

The Affiliated Organizations Committees undertakes all responsibilities involving relationships between the Society and other similar entities. It manages the annual Bayreuth Stipendium program and manages the relationship between the Society and the Bayreuth Festival, the Richard Wagner Verband International, and the Gesellschaft den Freude von Bayreuth. It also initiates and maintains mutually beneficial relationships with other Wagner Societies, music and theatre departments of regional universities, the Metropolitan Opera, and other organizations producing or teaching about Wagner's works.

ITS MEMBERS ARE:

Raymond Ko (Chair)
Claudia Deutschmann
David Hughes
Ako Imamura

Artists' Committee

The Artists' Committee makes recommendations to Board for grants from Lauch, Springer, Gill and other restricted-use funds. The Chair is responsible for producing at least one recital of a Lauch, Springer or Gill awardee per year, as well as producing programs and interviews as part of the Society's programming. Additionally, this Committee nurtures relationships with performers, filmmakers, composers, theatre professionals, and others whose affiliation with the Society is mutually advantageous.

ITS MEMBERS ARE:

Chair: Vacant

Ken Benson

Carole Farley

Griffin Kaiser

Eve Queler

Edward Seidel

Development Committee

The Development Committee plans and executes initiatives to enhance revenues, including special events. It prepares grant applications as opportunities arise and, with President, fosters relationships with major donors.

ITS MEMBERS ARE:

Henry Strouss (Chair)

Germán Bravo-Casas

John Ryan

Edward Seidel

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee creates the annual budget for Board approval; monitors financial activity and fiscal health of corporation; and makes recommendations to the Board regarding financial matters (including investments) as it deems appropriate.

ITS MEMBERS ARE:

Mark Luis Villamar (Chair)

Don Crawshaw

Paul Deutschmann

Betty Kranzdorf

William W. McGinty

John Ryan

Membership and Communications Committee

The Membership and Communications Committee devises strategies for membership retention and growth, including managing membership value proposition, encouraging membership growth among students and younger people, investigating joint membership with other Societies, and other initiatives. It maintains and updates the Society's web site; manages communications to members and to general public; and maintains an active presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

ITS MEMBERS ARE:

Jillian Murray (Chair)

Susan Brodie

Paul Deutschmann

Betty Kranzdorf

Committees (continued)

Programming Committee

The Programming Committee creates substantive programming for Society members and the public, including the annual seminar. It selects topics and speakers, engages venues, oversees marketing, and executes each event (hosting, venue management, financial accounting, post-event reporting, etc.).

ITS MEMBERS ARE:

F. Peter Phillips (Chair)

Germán Bravo-Casas

Griffin Kaiser

Alice Kenny

Dolores Perin

Edward Seidel

Henry Strouss

Nathalie D. Wagner

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board comprises prominent individuals of substantial artistic and academic accomplishment who have agreed to advise the Society in formulating its activities and policies.

ITS MEMBERS ARE:

Ken Benson

Plácido Domingo

Mignon Dunn

Jane Eaglen

Cori Ellison

Prof. Walter Frisch

Stephen Gould

Speight Jenkins

Maestro Eve Queler

Jeffrey Swann

Prof. Hans Rudolf Vaget

Prof. Nicholas Vazsonyi

Prof. Simon Williams

Francesca Zambello

We actively seek volunteers for leadership positions and hope that anyone interested in furthering the work of the Society will contact the President at: info@WagnerSocietyNY.org

Handwritten musical score with lyrics in German. The lyrics include: "Wag' ich nicht ab, die mich der Götter Willen nicht ablassen, die mich der Götter Willen nicht ablassen." and "Wag' ich nicht ab, die mich der Götter Willen nicht ablassen, die mich der Götter Willen nicht ablassen." The score is written on multiple staves with various musical notations and annotations.

Walküren

Handwritten musical score for the section titled "Walküren". The lyrics include: "Wag' ich nicht ab, die mich der Götter Willen nicht ablassen, die mich der Götter Willen nicht ablassen." and "Wag' ich nicht ab, die mich der Götter Willen nicht ablassen, die mich der Götter Willen nicht ablassen." The score is written on multiple staves with various musical notations and annotations.

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 www.wagnersocietyny.org

Handwritten musical score with lyrics in German. The lyrics include: "Wag' ich nicht ab, die mich der Götter Willen nicht ablassen, die mich der Götter Willen nicht ablassen." and "Wag' ich nicht ab, die mich der Götter Willen nicht ablassen, die mich der Götter Willen nicht ablassen." The score is written on multiple staves with various musical notations and annotations.