



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Welcome to the first Quarterly for 2016.

Our last event in 2015 was a highly successful one. Our Christmas concert and party was held at the Glebe Justice Centre on 22 November. A positive feast was laid on, both aurally and gastronomically. We were treated to superb singing by the sopranos Laura Scandizzo and Jenny Bonner and the baritone Soonki Park, accompanied on the piano by Mikey Curtain. There's a photo on page 2. The voices rang out in the resonant acoustic, and the enthusiastic audience reaction said it all. Afterwards we indulged ourselves with champagne and a superb choice of food, provided by our members. The raffle was pulled, and the winner of the first prize, the Arthur Rackham books, was our secretary, Mike Day. I promise that it was a legitimate win: I pulled out the winning ticket myself, and I had no idea whose it was at the time. It was a fitting win, though. Mike has done a great deal of work for the Society, and he had purchased a large number of raffle tickets.

For obvious reasons, we had no activities over the festive season. Our first event this year was held at the Goethe Institute on 21 February. Peter Bassett, the eminent Australian Wagner expert, talked about three Wagner productions in Adelaide: the two Ring Cycles in 1998 and 2004, and the Parsifal in 2001. Peter had a great deal of fascinating information about the different organisational background of the two Rings, which provided one of the principal reasons why the 2004 Ring, the Elke Neidhardt Ring, was never performed again, notwithstanding that it had rave reviews from everybody who saw it. Indeed, I am sure that I am not alone in regarding it as one of the best Ring productions I have ever seen. It was a real tragedy that it was a one-off set of performances, and was later scrapped. Peter also treated us to some amazing DVD images of both Rings - extracts from the performances themselves, as well as peeks at rehearsals, and interviews with people involved in them. All in all, it was an absolutely fascinating afternoon for the 77 people who attended the function. There is a longer report below.

Sadly, I have learned of the death of Julian Block who was a member of the Management Committee of the Society during the presidencies of Barbara McNulty and Roger Cruickshank. On behalf of the Committee and all our members, I wish to extend to his wife Rosemary Block and her children our sincere condolences. I understand that there will be an obituary for Julian in the June issue of the Quarterly. Julian's daughter Jessica has written an obituary for the Sydney Morning Herald at www.smh.com.au/comment/obituaries/obituary-lawyer-julian-block-20160215-gmu4yf.html.

One piece of very positive news is this: that through the Society's membership of the International Association of Wagner Societies (known as "the Verband"), we received a total of 14 tickets to the third Ring Cycle in Bayreuth this year, as well as a few to some of the other operas. This large number might not be repeated. It turned out that some of those 14 tickets had been sent to us in error, but as we had already paid for them by the time this came to light, we were able to keep them. The number of tickets that we receive from the Verband each year depends to a significant extent on the size of our membership, so this provides a

very strong incentive for our members to continue their own membership and also to encourage others to join, thereby increasing the number of Bayreuth tickets we are likely to get each year.

We have a number of fascinating events planned for the year, so I look forward to seeing many of you then. We are now, as you know, dependent upon our members to assist with the catering for these functions. I have been extremely impressed by the quality and quantity of the food thus far. A huge 'thank you' to all who have contributed in this important regard.