



What a Year!

We celebrated our 20th year in grand style, highlighted by our unforgettable Gala at the Residence of the German Ambassador the **Hon. Peter Wittig** and his wife the **Hon. Humberta von Voss-Wittig**.

Chaired by **Cecilia Amtmann Schultz**, we honored **Maestro Philippe Auguin**, who accepted the Society's highest honor, the Wagner Award, presented to artists and musicologists who have made important contributions to the study and enjoyment of Wagner's music. The Gala sold out, with 80 members and friends raising over \$45,000 toward our underlying mission: the identification and support of young Wagnerian singers.

We have planned an eventful 2019, commencing with the September 30 **Jeffrey Swann** recital. We have planned lectures by prominent scholars and musicians, the 19th annual Wagner in der Wildnis retreat, and the American Wagner Project concert.

In addition to our support for **Delora Zajick's** Institute for Young Dramatic Voices and **Luana DeVol's** American Wagner Project (AWP), Luana and Delora are returning to Washington in December to lead a Master Class—a throw back to how we conducted the Emerging Singers Program from 1999 to 2014. With the Swedish Embassy we are planning to commemorate the 100th birthday of the greatest of modern Brünnhildes, soprano **Birgit Nilsson**. Through **John J. Pohanka** and **John Edward Niles** we have initiated talks with the Miami Music Festival's Wagner Institute to expand opportunities for our young singers.

We hope you will join us for our 21st year. Your membership is vital to our programming. At the same time our support for the AWP and stipends for emerging talent would not be possible without the contributions of our Premium Members. Please consider a Premium Membership if you can, and welcome to our 21st year.

Jim Holman, Chair



Upcoming Events



Jeffrey Swann

Sunday September 30. Jeffrey Swann, renowned international pianist, opens the Society's 21st year with a concert celebrating **The Intimate Side of Wagner**. Selections include Liszt's "Harmonies poetiques et religieuses," "Annees de pelerinage," and Mephisto Waltz; Berg's Sonata No. 1, and Debussy's Arabesques and "L'isle joyeuse."

3:30 Katzen Hall, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Ave. NW. \$20. Free to renewing members and two guests. After Party with modest menu at Cafe Deluxe, 3228 Wisconsin Ave.

Tuesday October 2. Wagner Sliced, Diced and Fried. Clever musical arrangements, borrowings and parodies demonstrate Wagner's humor, creativity and his genius. These include some rare works composed by Wagner himself--the kind of thing that would have been heard in a live performance. The presenter, **Walter Rudolph**, is a senior producer at Classical KBYU-FM in Salt Lake City. 7:30, Goethe Institut, 1990 K St NW but enter on 20th St.



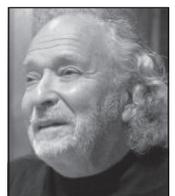
Walter Rudolph



Judith Cabaud

October 18. Isolde's Dream: Mathilde Wesendonck. French-American author **Judith Cabaud** calls on a host of heretofore undiscovered resources to tell the fascinating story of Wagner's muse and platonic paramour. Cabaud, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of NYU, holds a *licence es lettres* from the Sorbonne. In the New York Wagner Society newsletter Katherine Kolb wrote "Cabaud has written this book to right the balance" created when Cosima destroyed all but fourteen of Mathilde's letters. 7:30, Goethe Institut.

November 8. Maestro Saul Lilienstein discusses **Wagner's Sonic Explorations**. Young Wagner learned from Beethoven and Weber, but from *Lohengrin* on there were no models to follow and his fertile imagination took over. With each successive opera he created the state of the art, influencing every major composer of his time and into the 20th century. Maestro Lilienstein will trace the progression of Wagner's orchestral inventions from his youthful symphonies and overtures through all the great works which followed. 7:30 Goethe Institut.



Saul Lilienstein

December 15. The American Wagner Project Master Class. **Luana DeVol** and **Delora Zajick** with the Society's **John Edward Niles** will bring the AWP's most promising singers to Washington for a week of coaching, culminating with an all-day Master Class. 10:00 – 4:00. Arts Club, 2017 I Street NW.

20th Anniversary Gala

80 members and friends of the Society gathered at the Residence of the German Ambassador the **Hon. Peter Wittig** and his wife the **Hon. Huberta von Voss-Wittig** to celebrate our 20th Anniversary.



Frederic Harwood with Ambassador Wittig

The event, chaired by **Cecilia Amtmann Schultz**, included a cocktail reception, silent auction, and an elegant dinner prepared by the ambassador's personal chef. Ambassador Wittig welcomed guests with some amusing comments about Wagner's often problematic love of luxury. Chairman Jim Holman presented the **Wagner Award to Maestro Philippe Auguin**. American Wagner Project alumnus tenor **Issachah Savage** offered selections from *Rienzi*.



Left to right accompanist Betty Bullock, tenor Issachah Savage, Wagner Award Recipient Maestro Philippe Auguin, Gala Chair Cecilia Schultz, WSWDC Chair Jim Holman



Chairman Holman with President Emeritus and co-founder Aurelius Fernandez, Janet Fernandez (L), and Ann Hoopes (R)

All proceeds from the Gala support the young singers of **American Wagner Project**, an affiliate of Delora Zajick's **Institute for Young Dramatic Voices**. The Gala netted over \$45,000, including ticket sales, a silent auction and live pledges.

Major donors included **Jan and Elizabeth Lodal** who hosted a recital by pianist Jeffrey Swann. A week at the **Jim and Diana Holman** residence in Sun Valley was won by **Christie Platt**. **Mark and Annie Golden** hosted dinner with **Luana DeVol** and **Delora Zajick**, bid by **Guillermo and Cecilia Schultz**. **Jim and Diana Holman** hosted dinner with Maestro **Philippe Auguin** bid by **Roswitha Augusta** and **Donald Dittberner**. **Roswitha** and **Donald** won dinner with **Saul Lilienstein** and **Lynne Lambert** won dinner with **Issachah Savage**.



Table setting with guests

A half-dozen Washington area restaurants, including the Palm, Al Crostino, Clydes Restaurant Group, Cafe Deluxe, Chef Geoff's, and Old Europe German Restaurant auctioned gift certificates. Tickets were contributed by the Washington National Opera, the Virginia Opera, the National Symphony, the Washington Ballet, Washington Concert Opera, the National Philharmonic Orchestra, Urban Arias, Opera Lafayette, 28 Chairs Baroque Ensemble, Capriccio Baroque, The Metropolitan Opera and Carnegie Hall.



Mark Golden and Co-founder Barbara Karn

Maestro Philippe Auguin Accepts the Wagner Award at the Gala



Maestro Auguin accepts the emblematic Nothung sword from Chairman Holman.

The Society presented **Maestro Philippe Auguin** with the **Wagner Award**, awarded to individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the study and enjoyment of Wagner's art. We honor Maestro Auguin's notable tenure as Washington National Opera Music Director and his superb work conducting the 2016 WNO *Ring*.

About Mr. Auguin the Post's Philip Kennicott wrote "Auguin is the hero of the Washington *Ring*, and it was very satisfying to see him, and the orchestra, rewarded with enthusiastic applause before every act, and lustily after the last curtain." The Post's principal music critic Anne Midgette wrote "Philippe Auguin got things out of the Kennedy Center Orchestra that I didn't think anybody knew could be gotten.... Auguin is one of today's best Wagner conductors."

He studied conducting in Vienna and Florence, and served as assistant conductor under both Herbert von Karajan and Sir George Solti. He brought the *Ring* to the International Beijing Music Festival in 2005. Besides Wagner, he conducts Bruckner, Strauss, Stravinsky and Bartok. He has recorded the complete symphonic works of Gustav Mahler.

Maestro Auguin is the 15th recipient of the Society's highest honor. Other notables include Donald Crosby, Placido Domingo, Evelyn Lear, Saul Lilienstein, James Morris, Jay Hunter Morris, John J. Pohanka, Thomas Stewart, Jeffrey Swann, Jennifer Wilson and Francesca Zambello.

The American Wagner Project of 2018

By John Edward Niles



John Edward Niles

Founded in 2013 as a partnership between the Wagner Society of Washington DC and **Delora Zajick's Institute for Young Dramatic Voices**, the **American Wagner Project** identifies and nurtures large and dramatic voices, the kind of voices not generally sought by conservatories but necessary for the big operas of Wagner, Strauss, and Verdi. The AWP is a successor to the Thomas Stewart and Evelyn Lear Emerging Singers Program, which we established in 2000 to guide these unique talents to the world's opera stages. Participants are selected by **Delora Zajick, Luana DeVol**, and the Society's **John Edward Niles** through national auditions. This year from July 9 to July 28 at the University of Nevada Reno each participant selected one or two roles from a Wagner opera and received intensive coaching in voice, German diction, movement, and acting.



Delora Zajick

Tuition is free except for first year singers. However, living expenses and travel are not provided and all singers depend on their own resources, sponsors or grants.

The Society is the Institute's largest single source of funding. This year we spent over \$35,000 on the AWP including a \$15,000 block grant, \$10,000 in grants to individual singers, and costs associated with auditions and the recital at the Swiss embassy. We awarded **Eugene (Trey) Richards** \$5,000 to cover his trip to the Melchoir competition in Denmark and to audition for European opera companies. We awarded \$5,000 to **Isaachah Savage** who in 2018 covered the role of Lohengrin for the Chicago Lyric Opera.

Participants who have gone on to major careers include Jay Hunter Morris (2001), Daniel Brenna (2005), Jennifer Wilson (2001, 2004), Rebecca Teem (2007), Issachah Savage (2012-13), and Solomon Howard (2015)

AWP Singers for 2018



Amber Opheim is a soprano who completed a Masters in vocal performance from Chicago's DePaul University. She holds a fest position at Konzert Theater Bern Switzerland. At AWP she is learning the role of Sieglinde. She can be seen on YouTube.

Roman Lalcic is a bass-baritone from the Republic of Moldova. With AWP he is studying the role of Wotan. Mezzo soprano **Jillian Yemen**, in her second year with AWP, is studying the role of Erda in both *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*. **Eugene (Trey) Richards**, in his third year, is preparing Wotan/the Wanderer. Besides the Melchior competition and auditions at German companies, he retained an agent who is arranging auditions such as Wotan in Pforzheim's upcoming *Das Rheingold*.



Elizabeth Baldwin, an Ohio native, was praised as "ferociously talented" by the San Francisco Examiner. She has participated in the San Francisco Opera's Merola program and was a National Semi-finalist in the Met's National Council Auditions. She recently sang Sieglinde with Miami Music Festival's Wagner Institute.

The American Wagner Project 2018 Recital

Thursday March 8, 2018 the Swiss Ambassador, **His Excellency Martin Dahinden** and **Mrs. Anita Dahinden** hosted the Fourth Annual American Wagner Project Concert at their residence featuring three singers who participated in the 2017 American Wagner Project.



L to R Ambassador **Martin Dahinden**, accompanist **Betty Bullock**, soprano **Jillian Yemen**, tenor **William Green**, baritone **Eugene (Trey) Richards**, **Luana DeVol**.

Baritone Eugene (Trey) Richards sang selections from *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*. Soprano Jillian Yemen sang a selection from the *Wesendonck Lieder*; tenor William Green sang *Mignon*, a lied by Wagner and Pierre de Ronsard. William and Jillian together sang selections from *Parsifal*, Act 3.

AWP Master Class Coming to Washington

The Society is bringing part of the American Wagner Project to Washington. We are planning a week of coaching under the direction of Luana DeVol, Delora Zajick and John Edward Niles. The week culminates Saturday December 15 with a Master Class, one in the morning for two singers and an afternoon class for two additional singers. The classes will be open to our members; an evening dinner with Luana, Delora, John and the singers is under discussion.



We anticipate four participants: Amber Opheim, Roman Lalcic, and Elizabeth Baldwin all participated in the 2018 AWP summer institute. They will be joined by soprano **Alexandria Shiner**, who joined the Washington National Opera's Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist program in 2017. Last season she sang the title role in the Domingo-Cafritz production of *Alcina*, and Berta in *The Barber of Seville*.

Wagner in der Wildnis 2018

by Aurelius Fernandez

The 18th annual Wagner in der Wildnis weekend took place at Cacapon State Park near Berkeley Springs WV the weekend of June 2. A capacity crowd of 70 gathered to study Wagner's masterpiece *Tristan und Isolde* under the guidance of pianist Jeffrey Swann and professor of drama at UC Santa Barbara Simon Williams. This year's program included presentations by members **Peggy Jones**, **Erik Sundquist**, and **Mark Golden** on Tristan's minor characters. Participants also viewed DVDs of Patrice Chereau's Act 1 at La Scala, Daniel Barenboim's Act 2 at Bayreuth, and Zubin Mehta's Act 3.



Left to right **Aury**, **Lynne Lambert**, **Peter Scherer**, **Erik Sundquist**, **Roswitha Augusta**, **Matthew Chen**, **Dominique Dillenseger**, **Linda DeRamus**.

President Emeritus Aury Fernandez led a discussion of recent Wagner books and described his role as a supernumerary to King

Marke in WNO's 1999 production of *Tristan und Isolde*. The weekend, coordinated by **Lynne Lambert**, featured an appreciation of **Jackie Rosen**, who has retired after a decade as the Society's Office Manager.



Lynne Lambert

Marc Nicholson continues his essential contribution to preserve the Wildnis lectures for the WSWDC web page. Recent



Marc Nicholson

presentations are also available on CD and may be ordered from the WSWDC office.

2019 Wildnis will be June 14-16 at Capacon. The topic will be **Wagner and Modern Culture**. Jeffrey and Simon will explore Wagner's influence on literature, art, dance and music. Jeffrey suggests some preparatory reading: Proust *In Search of Lost Time*, specifically *Overture* and *Swann in Love*; Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, *Blood of the Walsungs*, *Tristan* and the essay "Greatness and Suffering of Richard Wagner." He also suggests any book on the Symbolists, the Belle Epoque, and Hart's *Structure and Motif in Finnegans Wake*. Wildnis 2020 will be June 5-7.

Jackie Rosen Retires

At the home of Chairman Jim Holman and Diana Holman, the Board, founding members, and members of Jackie's family gathered to acknowledge the Society's appreciation of her decade of service as our Office Manager. She managed the membership database, the membership finances, helped with mailings, hosted our monthly presentations, and with Lynne Lambert coordinated Wildnis. We are grateful for her long service and wish her a bon voyage.



Bayreuth 2018

The Society has again secured tickets to Bayreuth's third cycle the last week in August. This year's operas were *Die Meistersinger*, *Lohengrin*, *Tristan*, *the Flying Dutchman*, and *Die Walküre*. Attending from the Society are Colin Dunham, Frederic Harwood & Nedda di Montezemolo, Barbara Karn, Stephen Kent, Michelle Krisel & Paul Hare, Peter & Sylvia Scherer, and Dick and Cathy Soderquist. We encourage all members to apply. At this time it is not clear whether the *Ring* will resume in 2019 or 2020.

The Wagner Society's Working Board

Chairman **Jim Holman** leads the board and books the monthly lectures. **Bonnie Becker** works membership. **Betty Byrne** does publicity and mailings. **Jim Giragosian** manages the website

including email blasts. **Mark Golden** does sound for Wildnis. **Frederic Harwood** writes the newsletter. **Lynne Lambert** manages finances and chairs Wildnis. **Helen McConnell** reviews membership levels. **John Edward Niles** manages the American Wagner Project. **John Pohanka** directs special projects. **Guillermo Schultz** manages the Bayreuth relationship.

The Board welcomes **Will Stewart** as the Society's new office manager.

2018 Career Updates of "Our" Singers

Issachah Savage (AWP 2013-14) covered the role of Lohengrin for the 2018 Lyric Opera of Chicago, sang Narraboth in Los Angeles Opera's *Salome*, and will sing Siegmund in Opera National de Bordeaux *Die Walküre*.

Jennifer Wilson (ESP 2001, 2004) sang *Brünnhilde* in Opera Taiwan's *Die Walküre* and the Odense Symphony's *Die Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung*.

Jay Hunter Morris (ESP 2004) sang the role of Erik in the *Flying Dutchman* for Cincinnati Opera, Dallas Opera and Atlanta Opera. He sang the role of Aegisth in the Met's *Salome*.

Bryan Register (ESP 2007-08) is singing the role of Enee in a new production of *Les Troyens* for Semperoper Dresden. For Tokyo's Niki Kai Opera Theater he sang the role of Tristan.

Daniel Brenna recently sang the role of Siegfried in *Ring* productions at Theater an der Wien and San Francisco.



Wagner Award winning pianist **Jeffrey Swann** opened the WSWDC 20th anniversary season with **Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations***, a reprise of his highly acclaimed New York performance reviewed in New Yorker magazine. Katzen Arts Center, American University with an after-party at Café Deluxe, September 17.

The Holy Grail as a metaphor for desires beyond reach was discussed by WSWDC Chairman **Jim Holman** in a pre-concert lecture on **Wagner's Quest** in conjunction with the **Baltimore Symphony Orchestra** performance of selections from *Parsifal*. Music Center at Strathmore, October 8.

With vintage audio-visual clips and insights from his book *Grand Opera: The Story of the Met*, **Charles Affron**, emeritus professor at New York University, spoke about the years of **Fremstadt to Flagstaff: Wagner at the Met, 1908-1941**. Goethe Institut, October 12.



WSWDC Board member **Mark Golden** and his wife **Annie** hosted the Society's premium contributors at an Oktoberfest party to express appreciation for their support for the Society and the American Wagner Project's young singers. Hornets Nest, Clifton, VA October 29.

The **Georgetown University Orchestra**, directed by **Angel-Gil Ordoñez** joined the **Post - Classical Ensemble** and presented **Selections from Wagner's *Parsifal* and *Die Walküre*** featuring bass baritone **Kevin Deas** and tenor **William Green** (an alumnus of the American Wagner Project). Gaston Hall, Georgetown University, November 19.

Popular Smithsonian lecturer and Wagner Award winner **Saul Lilienstein** had **Wagner on the Mind in Eastern Europe** in discussing how Wagner's innovations influenced the operas and symphonic works of Smetana and Dvorak. Goethe Institut, December 6.



The **20th Anniversary Gala**, hosted by the **German Ambassador Dr. Peter Wittig** and chaired by **Cecilia Schultz**, featured tenor **Issachah Savage**, a silent auction, and dinner. **Philippe Auguin**, music director of the Washington National Opera during the four-opera **Ring** cycle in 2016, became the Society's 15th recipient of the Wagner Award. Residence of the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, January 31.

Maestro Philippe Auguin shared how he readied himself for **Conducting Verdi's *Don Carlo*** and gave insights into the mental and musical preparation needed before the curtain rises. Goethe Institut, February 12.

Swiss Ambassador the Hon. Martin Dahinden hosted the **Fourth Annual American Wagner Project Concert** which featured three singers from our American Wagner Project. Jillian Yemen, Eugene (Trey) Richards, and William Green performed selections from ***Die Meistersinger*, *Die Walküre*, *Parsifal*** and two lieder by Wagner. Residence of the Swiss Ambassador. March 8.

Jim Holman, author and WSWDC chairman, discussed **Wagner and Religion: Salvation and Redemption**, highlighting how Wagner's innovative and unique music expressed traditional Christian beliefs. Goethe Institut, May 23.

A garden party in her honor marked the retirement of **Jackie Rosen**, WSWDC office manager and event planner extraordinaire, providing an opportunity for the Wagner Society to recognize her administrative contributions and personal attention to Society members for more than a decade. Home of Diana and Jim Holman, May 30.

Two pairs of perennial favorites—***Tristan und Isolde***, and pianist **Jeffrey Swann** and Prof. **Simon Williams**, highlighted the 18th annual **Wagner in der Wildnis**. Cacapon State Park Lodge, Berkeley Springs, WV, June 1-3.

Delora Zajick's Institute for Young Dramatic Voices and its affiliate **The American Wagner Project** led by **Luana DeVol** and **John Edward Niles**, was held at the University of Nevada, Reno July 9 – 28.

The **National Symphony Orchestra** and **Wolftrap Opera** mined Wagner to create a short-form **The Best of Wagner's *Ring*** with a pre-concert lecture by musicologist **Saul Lilienstein**. Wolftrap National Center for the Performing Arts, July 28.

Chairman Jim Holman is Awarded the Golden W

At its 2018 Congress in Innsbruck the **Richard-Wagner-Verband-International**, representing the world's Wagner Societies, presented our Chairman Jim Holman the coveted Golden W for his twenty years' leadership at the helm of the WSWDC. Jacques Bouffier, international vice-president and president Horst Eggert expressed appreciation of Jim's leadership in placing WSWDC in the forefront of the world's Wagner Societies.

Jim is giving **four Wagner lectures** at American University's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Dates are September 26 and October 3, 10, and 17. Learn more at Olli-dc.org

2018 Annual Fund's Premium Members & New Members

The Wagner Society of Washington DC is committed to developing emerging Wagnerian talent. We could not fulfill that mission without the help of our Premium Members, our most generous donors. We thank the following individuals who supported our 2018 Annual Fund.

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Welcome 2018 New Members

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David Vespa



Donald Clagett

The Society is grateful to acknowledge a \$5,000 gift from the **Hollister Clagett Family**

Foundation for the Performing Arts. Charlotte Hollister, a long-time Society member, loved the music of Wagner and was an enthusiastic participant in Wildnis every year including the year of her passing.

The Gala's Leading Donors were

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**2019 Membership Is Now Open
Join or Renew Today**

**Premium Memberships support the AWP program and stipends for young singers.
In 2018 we contributed over \$35,000 to the AWP and its emerging singers.
Please help us achieve our mission by selecting a comfortable and generous
membership level.**

**The WSWDC membership year runs from January 1 through December 31. You may join/renew online at www.wagner-dc.org,
or mail the application to Box 11842, Washington DC 20008. WSWDC is a 501C3 Charitable Organization.**

Renewing New Member

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- Invitation to the Bayreuth Festival
- Free monthly lectures
- The WSWDC newsletter and news of society events
- Emails & mailings for Society events
- Invitation to Wildnis Retreat and American Wagner Project events
- Free entrance with a guest to Jeffrey Swann's September concert

Premium Members (Meistersingers' Guild, Pilgrims' Chorus, Golden Ring, Sponsor and Patron) also receive

- Priority selection for Bayreuth Festival tickets
- Priority for Wildnis lodging
- Priority seating at AWP events including Master Class
- Special events for Premium Members

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Gala Photos

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Selections include works by Liszt, Debussy, three Brahms intermezzi, and Berg's Sonata No. 1. 3:30 Katzen Hall, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Ave.

October 2, Wagner Sliced, Diced and Fried. Walter Rudolph, senior producer at Classical WBYU in Salt Lake City presents clever musical arrangements, borrowings and parodies that demonstrate Wagner's genius. Goethe Institut 7:30.

October 18, French-American author **Judith Cabaud** calls on a host of hitherto undiscovered resources to tell the story of Wagner's muse and platonic paramour in her book **Isolde's Dream: Mathilde Wesendonck**. Goethe Institut, 7:30.

November 8, Maestro Saul Lilienstein discusses **Wagner's Sonic Explorations** – the progression of Wagner's orchestral inventions. Goethe Institut, 7:30.

December 15, The American Wagner Project Master Class conducted by Luana DeVol, Delora Zajick, and John Edward Niles. 10:00 – 4:00. Arts Club, 2017 I (Eye) St NW.



The Wagner Society of Washington DC

www.wagner-dc.org

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