

Patron: His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AC  
Governor of South Australia

May 2017

## Welcome from the President

It is with pride and trepidation that I am taking on the role of President of The Friends of the Opera. I first joined The Friends in 1992 which means I have been a member for 25 of the 41 years of its life. Twelve years ago I became a member of The Friends' Committee and for the past three years I have been Vice President, so I come to the role with some knowledge of the organisation.

But that is not enough. You also need boundless enthusiasm, organisational skills, ideas, leadership qualities and an enormous amount of energy, all of which previous Presidents have shown or The Friends would not have lasted for 41 years. I hope that I will be able to live up to the great responsibility placed on me and we will present an inspiring – exciting - uplifting program to support the creative arts in South Australia.

But the Committee is not doing this by itself. We have excellent support of the staff of State Opera, and the backbone of the Association is of course you our Members of the Friends, who show your interest and support by coming to events and enjoying the friendship of fellow opera enthusiasts.

I would also like to pay tribute to our wonderful outgoing President, Pauline Brooks OAM who after three years of outstanding service to The Friends is leaving this position. As I said in a short speech at the *Cavalleria rusticana / I Pagliacci* OVI and our recent AGM, Pauline has brought amazing energy, enthusiasm, knowledge & leadership in all aspects of her Presidency. Thank you Pauline from the bottom of our hearts.



Robina Weir



Newly elected President Robina Weir thanks outgoing President Pauline Brooks

### NEW COMMITTEE 2017

**President:** Robina Weir  
**Vice President:** Beata Byok  
**Secretary:** Kay Dowling  
**Treasurer:** Yvonne McMurray  
**Members:** Pauline Brooks, Marlene Gregory, Helen Haines, Jan Harris, Christopher Stone, John Tuckey, Rene Young

## Key Diary Dates 2017

- May** 21<sup>st</sup>, 2.30pm – State Opera of SA Recital, Ukaria, Mt Barker
- June** 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6pm to 9pm – Soiree at the Barr, historic Reading Room of the Barr Smith Library  
 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> 7pm – *Love, Sex and Death – Cabaret Opera*, State Opera of SA, Opera Studio  
 30<sup>th</sup> and **July** 1<sup>st</sup> 7.30pm – Winter Showcase *In the Dome Room*, Opera Studio
- July** 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm – Cabaret Double Bill, Opera Studio

See the 2017 State Opera of South Australia Season Brochure.

Looking ahead: **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September “A Day in the Hills” at Ukaria, Mt Barker - concert and lunch, 12noon to 4pm.**

## The Friends of the State Opera of South Australia Incorporated Forty First Annual General Meeting: Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2017

The Forty First Annual General Meeting of the Friends of State Opera of South Australia opened and closed with beautiful songs and arias sung by Fiona McArdle, accompanied by Mark Sandon.

Treasurer Yvonne McMurray once again presented her comprehensive Financial Report.

Artistic Director and CEO Timothy Sexton talked about the highlights of the previous season and the difficulties facing the company in 2017 with the closure of the Adelaide Festival Theatre, having to find appropriate venues for mainstage productions. Timothy also pointed out the exciting cabaret style programme to be staged in the Opera Studio this year. He thanked The Friends for their continued and outstanding support for the Company.

After the elections, conducted by Trevor Gregory, Robina Weir took her place as President. Robina paid tribute to past President, Pauline Brooks, and presented her with a bonsai on behalf of The Friends. A wonderful afternoon tea, provided by Committee members, was then enjoyed by those attending the meeting.



Mark Sandon, Fiona McArdle, Robina Weir  
& Pauline Brooks at the AGM

### Highlights from past President, Pauline Brooks' Report:

What is The Friends' report card as 'The Friends of State Opera SA' forty one years on? Have we remained true to the intention, spirit and integrity of our 'founders', have we achieved the vision - so far? In reviewing The Friends' work and activities over the last year in particular, I think we can safely attest to not only achieving those goals but to having brought them to life with energy, creativity and passion.

In 2016, The Friends showed their support for State Opera SA through sponsoring a mainstage production, *The Magic Flute*; staging fundraising and social events for members with the 'Toast to Forty Years' 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in the Opera Studio; the 'Day in the Hills' lunch and recital at Ngeringa (now Ukaria) Cultural Centre; 'Lunch in the Courtyard' at Coriole Winery, as well as through front of house support and running the fun and bubbly Friends' Bar at the Opera Studio.

In addition The Friends have, in collaboration with State Opera SA, increased involvement and knowledge of members through not only our Newsletters, but also the successful and long running Opera Voices Introductions held prior to each State Opera SA mainstage production. In support of professional development The Friends have continued to provide individual sponsorship to Young Artists. Last year we were delighted to sponsor Repetiteurs Mark Sandon (to attend the Lisa Gasteen Summer Opera School in Queensland), and Penelope Cashman (to attend the 'Bel Canto In Tuscany' course). Both have attested to the immense value of these experiences. The extraordinary talents and hard work of all our Young Artists are our ongoing inspiration and it gives us great joy to see them perform not only in the Opera Studio but also in main stage productions before ultimately moving on to the world of opera nationally and internationally.

'The Vision' of those original Friends could not have been achieved without the tireless and extraordinary work of the Friends' Committee members, who have been the core and heart of the organisation for many years. In addition to organizing fundraising and social events they continue to give generously of their time and resources in staffing the Friends' Opera Studio Bar and other events in the Opera Studio. For their continued dedication, loyal commitment and generosity I give my heartfelt thanks.

As I reach the end of my term as President I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank, for his creative and outstanding leadership, State Opera SA CEO and Artistic Director, Timothy Sexton. His extraordinary energy, talent and vision continue to inspire and lift our outstanding company to new heights. In addition I wish to thank the amazing State Opera SA staff of Deb, Nigel, Jess, Judith, David, and everyone on the team whom assist, support and enable The Friends in all their efforts. They continue to amaze us with their dedication to and hard work for the company! We are all the beneficiaries.



Mark Sandon, Fiona McArdle, Pauline Brooks  
& Timothy Sexton at the AGM

Finally I wish our new President, Robina Weir, the Committee, The Friends and of course, the State Opera of South Australia every success. For this opportunity to serve you in my role as President I thank you all. It has been a privilege.

**Pauline Brooks OAM**  
**President**

**The Friends of the State Opera of South Australia Inc**

## Cavalleria rusticana / I Pagliacci Opera Voices Introduction



Director Andrew Sinclair sharing insights with The Friends

On 29<sup>th</sup> March, members and guests attended the Opera Voices Introduction to the double bill of Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci* at the Opera Studio.

The evening provided an opportunity to learn a little about each of the operas and the production. Andrew Sinclair, who had previously directed this double bill in Adelaide, shared his thoughts on the verismo genre and the appeal of these two works in particular. He went on to discuss the influences on the production of *film noir* and post-WWII Italian cinema.

In addition, an excerpt from *I Pagliacci* was performed by Joanna McWaters and Jeremy Tatchell, previewing their roles as the clandestine lovers Nedda and Silvio, accompanied by the production repetiteur Mark Sandon. As always, the audience then had an opportunity to meet and talk with the artists while enjoying supper and refreshments.



Jeremy Tatchell and Joanna McWaters performing at the Introduction

Christopher Stone

## Handel's Saul

The Adelaide Festival presentation of Handel's *Saul*, in the Barrie Kosky production originally staged at Glyndebourne, impressed local audiences for many reasons. Firstly, the production was a visual treat from start to finish, with moments that inspired gasps and applause. Secondly, the wonderfully versatile Adelaide Symphony Orchestra gave a very sympathetic reading of the too seldom heard score. Thirdly, all of the soloists gave amazing performances, bringing to life the characters of the oratorio, from Christopher Purves' Lear-like Saul, to Kanen Breen's bizarre appearance as the Witch of Endor.

What might have pleased local members of the audience most, however, was the contribution of the members of the State Opera Chorus. Their collective all-singing, all-dancing performance was a joy to watch and hear and was a significant factor in the success of the production. We know too well the value of the State Opera Chorus, but it was pleasing to hear Barrie Kosky suggest that they had outshone the Glyndebourne Chorus.

Christopher Stone



### !!!!NEW & EXCITING EVENT!!!!

#### SOIREE AT THE BARR

The Friends of State Opera with The State Opera of South Australia

invite you to a **SOIREE AT THE BARR**, in the historic Reading Room of the Barr Smith Library, The University of Adelaide, North Terrace Campus.

On **Friday June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017 from 6pm – 9pm**. **Cost:** \$65 members \$70 non members.

**RSVP:** 26<sup>th</sup> May 2017 **Enquiries:** Robina Weir ph 0439 981 517

Join The Friends for an evening of fine music, fine food and conversation.

The Richard Wagner Society of SA Inc also invites you to hear **Dr Peter Bassett** speaking on his thesis topic: *PLAYING WITH FIRE: the pursuit of a Wagner performance tradition in Adelaide in the decade 1995-2005 and factors impeding its realisation*, on **Sun 18<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at 2.30pm** in the Church Hall, St Andrew's Church, Church Terrace, Walkerville.



## Friends on the Move

### Opera-based travels with members Robyn and Dick Leeson – Part Two

We travelled on to Reims, for another Offenbach operetta, *Voyage de la Lune*, quite funny of course but we do miss most of the local jokes as we can't understand enough French. Then we went to Rennes, a surprisingly pretty town, for our last opera in France, an early Mozart one, *La Finta Giardiniera*. This was a light and frothy affair, set in a garden appropriately, and most enjoyable. As it was in Italian there were French surtitles which we could read fairly well. The Rennes audience surprised us as they were mostly young (or younger than us) and perhaps because of this, casually dressed.

After a few opera-free days visiting friends near Brest, we headed to Munich for the highlight of our trip, a performance of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* starring the one and only Jonas Kaufmann. It had been quite an effort to get tickets for this, and it was by far the most expensive of our operas, but was worth it. It was a lavish production, set roughly in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and all singers were excellent, especially Jonas of course.

From Munich we travelled to Poland, which we had not visited before, and enjoyed experiencing a new country and culture over the next ten days. We saw two more Wagner operas, *Tannhauser* in Krakow and *Tristan and Isolde* in Warsaw. Both of these were musically great, and had interesting productions set in modern times. The Krakow Opera House is a brand new building, almost entirely coloured a shiny red. The acoustics were excellent in the smallish theatre. They used the spaces very well – for the biggest chorus an extra choir appeared above us (we were in the second balcony) and a troupe of brass higher still in the skylight, all with a direct view of the conductor making a superb full sound. Warsaw has a rather nice art deco theatre, built or rebuilt after the war, like the rest of Warsaw. The action in *Tristan* took place in an elaborate set of a modern warship. There were English surtitles (as well as Polish), a rare treat in Europe. As both these operas started in the late afternoon, we were expecting savoury food to be available in the intervals, but not so – both evenings we had to dine on wine and cake!



Krakow Opera House

So, what's for next year? We will be travelling in North America and have 12 days in New York. We have already booked four operas at the Met, and two concerts in Carnegie Hall.

**Robyn and Dick Leeson**

## Tales of Opera Travels!

Many members of The Friends travel interstate and overseas each year and we know that including a visit to the opera 'en route' is a must! Why not extend the experience and share your 'Opera Travel Tales' through The Friends Newsletter? We would be delighted to hear from you and help turn your story into print.

For further information, contact Friends' President Robina Weir on 0439 981 517.



### Welcome New Members

Irina Gomanyuk  
Mr & Mrs M J McArdle  
Dorothy Farmer  
Beverly Koch  
Helen Tilly  
Kathleen Forwood  
Anna Mazzone



For any enquiries or further information on **The Friends** please contact **0439 981 517**

The Friends Committee gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the **staff of State Opera SA**