



# Wagner Society of New York

## Jess Thomas Commemoration

**Friday, October 11, 2002, 7:30 p.m.**

New York Genealogical Society  
124 East 58th Street, New York

### Maestro James Levine, Honorary Chairman

WSNY is honored to present a commemorative program for the great Metropolitan Opera heldentenor Jess Thomas (August 11, 1927–October 11, 1993) on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of his Met debut. In his Met career, Mr. Thomas gave 109 performances of 15 roles and sang all of the major Wagner heldentenor roles to great acclaim. He also sang the role of Caesar Augustus in the world premiere of Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* at the gala opening of the new Met in 1966. He was closely associated with the San Francisco Opera, and when that company mounted a Ring Cycle to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 1972, it built the production around him as heldentenor. His international career spanned roles in the Bayreuth Festival, the Munich Festival, La Scala, and the Vienna State Opera. His book of autobiographical reflections is entitled *Kein Schwert verhiess mir der Vater*; obviously, he was able to forge one for himself.



Jess Thomas as Siegfried

### Program

Prelude: Display of photos, posters, Tannhäuser's harp, and costumes, accompanied by his recordings.

Master of ceremonies: Victor Thomas (son of Jess and Violeta Thomas)

Video on Jess Thomas from San Francisco Opera

Jess Thomas, the artist: biographical sketch by Victor Thomas; presentation of his recordings and video excerpt of his performance in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*

Jess Thomas, the colleague: Mignon Dunn, Met Opera mezzo and colleague in many operas; Günther Schneider-Siemssen, set designer; Luana DeVol, Bayreuth and international dramatic soprano; and Martin Bernheimer, critic, *Opera News* and *Financial Times*

Jess Thomas, the legacy: Luana DeVol and Victor Thomas will perform brief selections (Rolando Garza, pianist) Champagne reception

◆ Donation: Members: \$10.00; non-members: \$15.00; patrons: \$75.00 up. Patron category includes listing in program and reserved seating. All amounts above \$15.00 are tax deductible.

◆ Advance reservations with payment are advisable. Use form below (also available online). Tickets will be held for pickup at door.

◆ Phone: 212/749-4561 Fax: 212/749-1542 E-mail: WagnerRing@aol.com www.wagnersocietyny.com

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### Reservation Form—Jess Thomas Commemoration, October 11

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (day) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

No. of tickets: \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ \$75 and up \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check Enclosed

American Express # \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

I cannot attend but wish to make a contribution to the Wagner Society of New York. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail with payment to Wagner Society of New York, P. O. Box 230949, Ansonia Station, New York, NY 10023-0949.**