

La Bohème
(La Bohème)

1969

Saturday, September 20, 1969 8:00 PM

Tuesday, September 23, 1969 8:30 PM

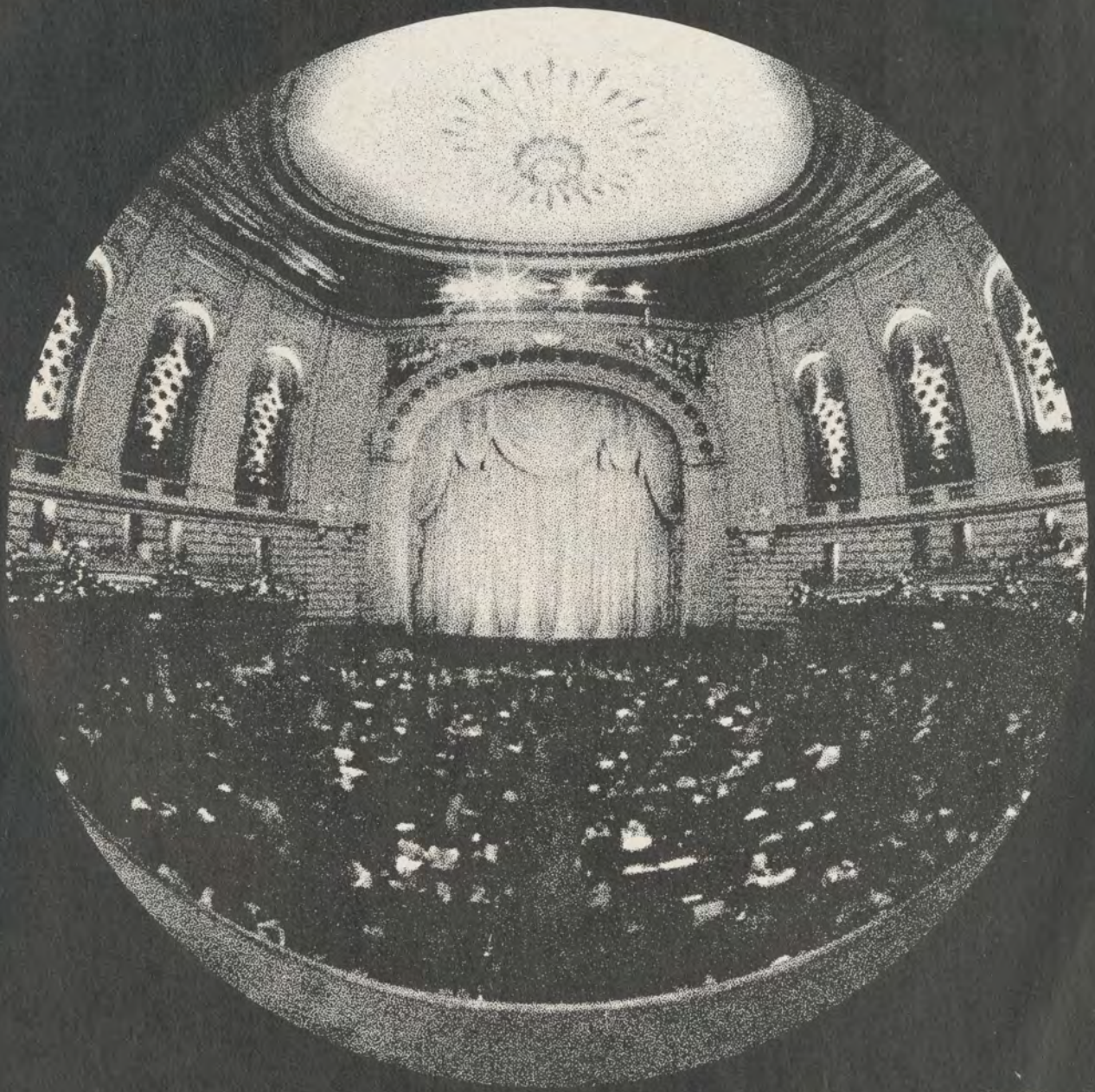
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PERFORMING ARTS

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA



1969

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Original Cinnamon
Freudian Gilt
Thanks Vermillion

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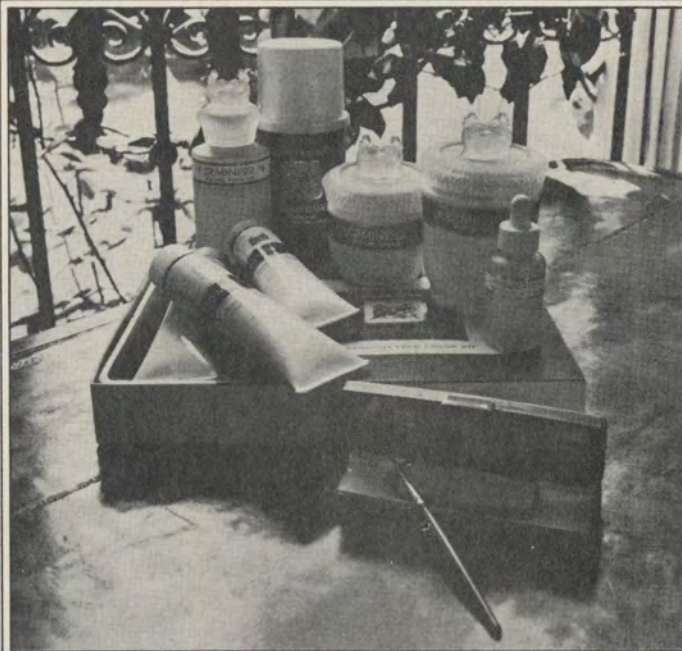
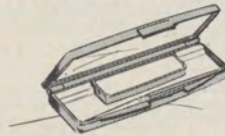
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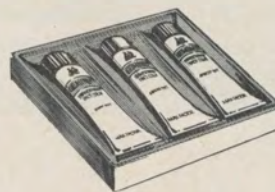
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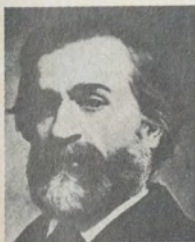


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PERFORMING ARTS

SAN FRANCISCO'S MUSIC & THEATRE MONTHLY
SEPTEMBER 1969 / VOL. 3 NO. 9

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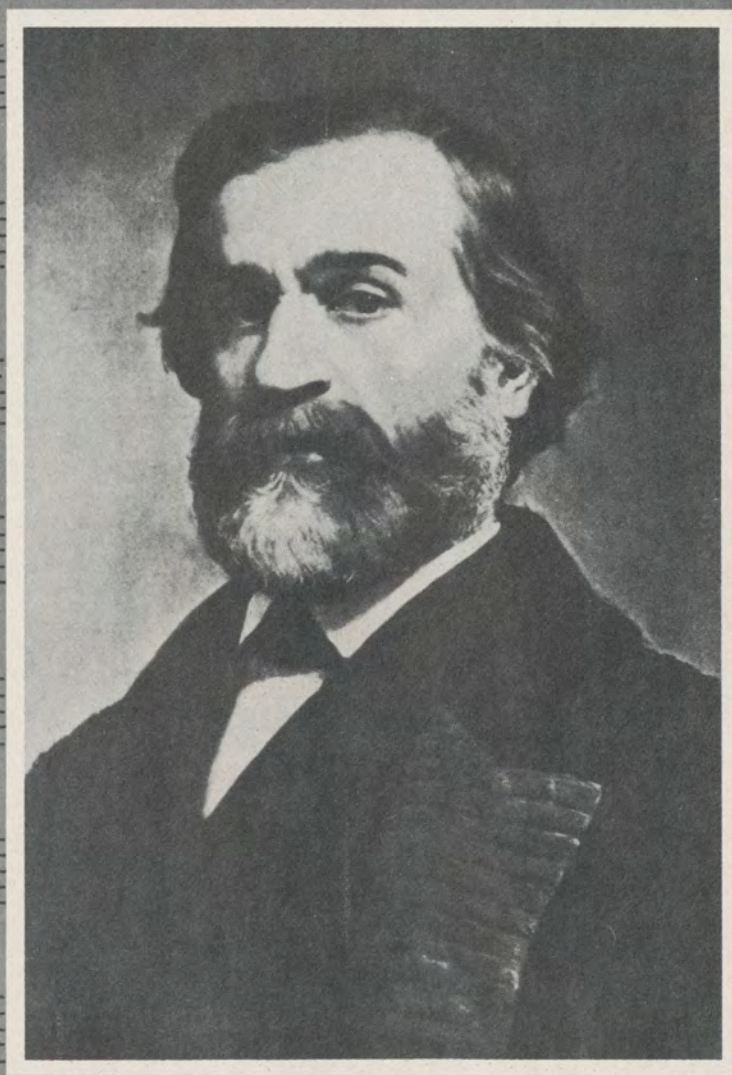
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A Decade in the Life of Verdi



by WILLIAM WEAVER

1871-1881, years marked by marital — and extramarital — as well as professional problems, the period of "Aida" and the "Manzoni Requiem"

WHEN LA SCALA in Milan announced its program for the 1870-71 season, there was no opera by Verdi included in the list. This absence was remarkable because since 1842, the year of *Nabucco*, with the sole exception of one season, La Scala had performed at least one Verdi opera — and often three or four — every year. But the Milanese public of 1871 was treated instead to a very mixed bag: *Don Giovanni*, *Lucrezia Borgia*, *The Barber*, *Faust*, *Norma*, *L'Africaine* and two fairly recent works, Franco Faccio's *Hamlet* (first performed at Genoa in 1865) and *Il Guarany* by Carlos Gomes, which had had a highly successful Scala premiere the previous season. The novelty for 1871 was *Elisabetta d'Ungheria* by one Jules Beer; it did not survive its disastrous opening night.

The program illustrates the musical taste of the time, and the lack of a Verdi opera takes on a symbolic significance, even if he was present again at La Scala the following season, which opened with *La forza del destino* and included the triumphant Italian premiere of *Aida* only six weeks after its first performance in Cairo. Though the year 1871, which culminated in that exciting, internationally-heralded first *Aida*, should have been a satisfying one for Verdi, it actually marked the beginning of a difficult, largely unhappy and crucial time in the composer's life. In that year he was fifty-eight, no longer the vigorous young lion who had swept all before him, and not yet the Grand Old Man he was to become in the 1880s.

Verdi's letters — of which hundreds have now been published — are rarely personal and almost never introspective, but those of the 1871-1881 decade are especially curt. And they are often pessimistic and bitter. Privately, Verdi's life was poisoned by unhappiness at home, by his wife's suffering and jealousy because of his love — which may or may not have existed — for Teresa Stolz, the first Italian *Aida* and the first soprano of the *Requiem*. It was a time, too, when Verdi was estranged from old friends and had a drawn-out quarrel with Ricordi, his publisher. Professionally, the situation was still more complex; and, again, a musical event of the 1871 season has a symbolic force.

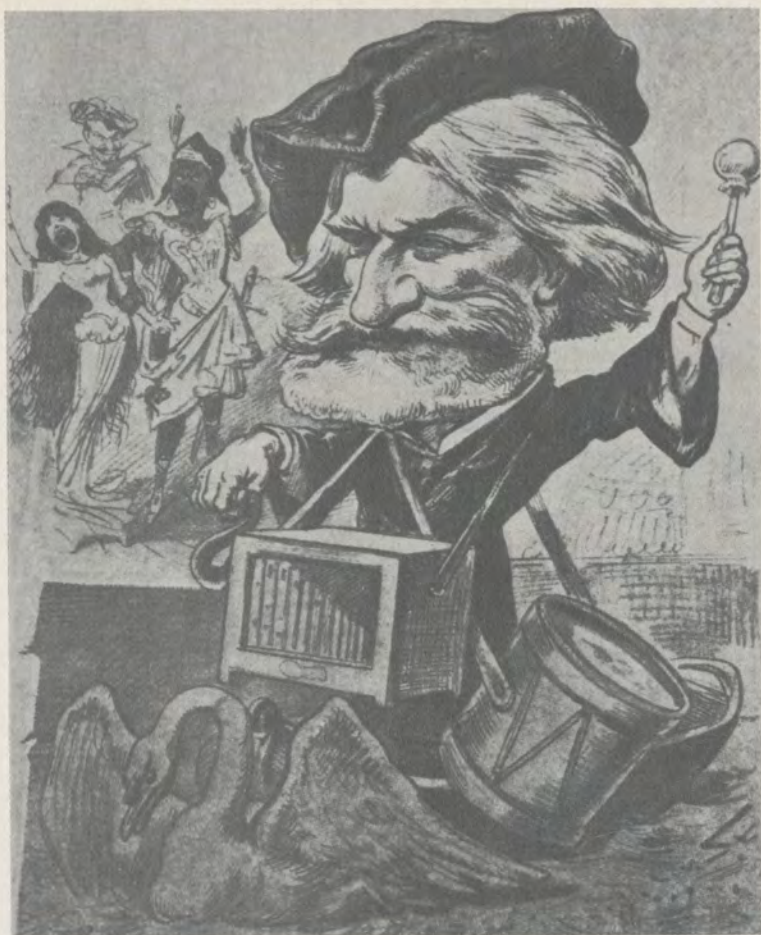
On the night of November 1, 1871, at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna, Wagner's *Lohengrin* was given, in an atmosphere of electric excitement and

to great acclaim. Though the opera was almost a quarter-century old and could no longer be considered a revolutionary work, its production in Italy was revolutionary. It was the first time a Wagner opera had crossed the Alps; the thin end of the wedge had been driven firmly home. What's more, the conductor of that *Lohengrin* was Verdi's one-time friend Angelo Mariani, former lover of Teresa Stolz and now, in Verdi's eyes, the arch-enemy. Wagner's Italian publisher was the firm of Lucca, arch-enemy of Ricordi and publisher also of another Verdian enemy of the past: Meyerbeer.

Lohengrin was given in Italian, of course, and the translator was Arrigo Boito, who as a very young man had furnished Verdi with a text for his *Inno delle nazioni* (1862), but who, a year later, with an occasional poem, *All' arte italiana*, in honor of his friend Franco Faccio, aroused Verdi's wrath. Its description of the decadent state of Italian music and its eulogy of the rising generation were clearly an affront to Verdi, who continued to refer to the poem in letters for some years afterwards. In 1871, the wound still rankled. Wagner himself, after the Bologna success, poured salt into the wound by sending Mariani a photograph with dedication and by writing, for publication, a "Letter to an Italian Friend" which augured a future union between "the genius of Italy and the genius of Germany." The "Italian friend" was Boito, who dutifully translated the letter for an Italian magazine.

The story of Verdi's attendance at one of the Bologna *Lohengrin* performances has been told before, but remains important. Though he tried to keep his presence a secret, he was spotted on the train by some Milanese music-lovers; he then ran into Mariani on the platform (and rebuffed him) and — thanks to a crass maneuver of Ricordi's local agent — he was given a long, loud ovation during an intermission in the theatre. Singers and orchestra, pardonably unnerved, were not at their best that evening, and Verdi's score of *Lohengrin* — still preserved — is scrawled over with stern comments. Still, he could not dismiss *Lohengrin*.

And the situation worsened when, after the first Italian performances of *Aida*, some critics suggested that Verdi had been infected by the malignant disease of *wagnerismo*. Another rankling wound, to which he referred much later in a letter to Ricordi:



A typical 1870s German view of Verdi, depicting him as a vulgar Italian street musician riding the crest of Wagnerism. Wagner is represented by the Swan from "Lohengrin", the first of his operas to cross the Alps into Italy. After the La Scala premiere of "Aida" — represented by the two singing figures at top left — some Italian critics accused Verdi of being nothing more than a Wagner imitator.



Stefano Gobatti, whose opera "I goti" brought about one of the freak incidents of Italian 19th Century operatic history

"You speak to me of results achieved!!!!!! What results? . . . I'll tell you. After having been away from La Scala for 25 years, I achieved boeing after the first act of *Forza del destino*. After *Aida*, an infinite amount of idle chatter: that I was no longer the Verdi of *Ballo* (that *Ballo* which was booed when first given at La Scala); that it was terrible if you didn't stay until the fourth act . . . that I didn't know how to write for singers; that the only tolerable things were in the second and fourth acts (nothing in the third) and that, after all, I was an imitator of Wagner!!! A fine result after 25 years of my career to end up an Imitator!!!!"

This accusation may have inspired the special pains Verdi took with the subsequent Italian productions of *Aida*; and perhaps for the same reason he personally took the opera to Paris, where it was enthusiastically received. Perhaps these same criticisms were responsible for the String Quartet which Verdi wrote in Naples in 1873, as if to show the younger generation that he

could compete with the Germans on their own ground, and which he would not allow to be performed publicly in Italy until after it had been heard — and appreciated — in Paris, Cologne and Vienna.

If these accusations acted, in one way, as a stimulus, they also dampened Verdi's creative impulses, and his letters are full of his determination to stop composing. It is quite possible that if Alessandro Manzoni hadn't died on May 22, 1873, and if he hadn't been one of the few men whom Verdi worshiped, *Aida* would have been the composer's last major work.

But even before Verdi had finished the Manzoni *Messa da Requiem*, he was subjected to another irritation. In that fatal 1873, the ever-enterprising Teatro Comunale of Bologna was the scene of one of the freak events of Italian 19th-century operatic history. In the autumn of that year, a young man of twenty-one showed up at the theatre with the manuscript of an opera, *I goti* ("The Goths"), and — giving some money to the management — came to an agreement with them about its production. The unknown composer was named Stefano Gobatti, and his opera was soon to become a national *cause célèbre*, because the Teatro Comunale tried to go back on the bargain. As a local newspaper told the story:

"The population soon took the part of Gobatti, who seemed the victim of injustice and powerful hatreds. It was the talk of the town, and the sad story circulated: this young composer, who had come to Bologna after stripping himself of everything he had, with torn shoes, only the shirt on his back and a threadbare jacket of black corduroy, supporting hunger and hardships of every kind to collect the six thousand lire that the management had demanded, and now he was lost, without hope, on the street . . ."

Finally, at the very end of the season, *I goti* was staged, and the eminent Bolognese critic Enrico Panzacchi wrote: "We can register the triumph of *I goti*. I have written the word *triumph* because the dictionary does not give me a more effective word to describe the outcome of the evening. The *fifty-one* curtain calls the composer had are nothing compared with the rest . . . Old opera-goers can scarcely recall similar enthusiasm . . ."

The frenzied reception of *I goti* offered journalists another occasion for taking digs at Verdi, who unburdened

himself to his friends on the subject of Gobatti. The opera went the rounds of the Italian theatres, and when it came to Genoa, Verdi and his wife went to hear it. The composer's comment was summed up in these words: "the most monstrous musical abortion ever composed." And his wife, no doubt echoing Verdi's thoughts, wrote to a friend: "Don't speak to me of *I goti!* That is another disappointment and mortification. The success that its *partisans* wanted to make of that opera is a wicked deed and a collective lie. I had heard so much about it that I wanted to go to a performance. I almost had an attack of nerves and I left the theatre more than ever firm in my new belief: *not to believe in anything.*"

I goti vanished soon after its initial run. In 1875, Gobatti had a fiasco with an opera called *Luce*, and in 1881, an even worse failure — in Bologna, too — with *Cordelia*.

Another rising composer in those years was Amilcare Ponchielli, for whom Verdi had a bit more respect. In 1872, a revised version of his first opera, based on Manzoni's *I promessi sposi*, had a success at Milan's Teatro Dal Verme; but Verdi called it "a pastiche of two periods, in which the music is always older than the period in which it was written. Therefore, no *initiative*, no *individuality.*" Grudgingly, he admitted: "But it's an opera written by a man who knows music."

In 1874, Verdi conducted the first performances of his *Messa da Requiem* in Milan. The reception was enthusiastic, but not absolutely unclouded. Hans von Bülow, who was in Milan at the time, wrote a spiteful article for the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, which was promptly translated into Italian:

"The second event of the season," Bülow wrote, "will be the performance, tomorrow, of Verdi's *Requiem* in the church of San Marco, turned into a theatre, and directed — exceptionally — by the composer, Senator Verdi. With this Mass, the omnipotent architect of Italian artistic taste hopes to sweep away the final remains of Rossini's immortality, which gets in his way. His latest opera, in churchly dress, will be entrusted — after the fictional compliment to the poet's memory—for three evenings to world admiration, after which a troupe of tame soloists will journey to Paris, the esthetic Rome of the Italians. A quick, stolen glance at this new emanation of *Il trovatore* and *La traviata* has deprived

Beautiful antique Oriental seed pearl rope, a necklace with drops of sapphire beads and tassels of pearls with gold tops set in rubies and diamonds



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Arrigo Boito, to whom Verdi was once antagonistic, later collaborated with him on such masterpieces as "Otello" and "Falstaff"

us of any wish to attend this Festival."

Verdi's reaction, in a letter to Giulio Ricordi, was typical:

"To tell the truth, if these Germans are so insolent, the fault is chiefly our own. When they come to Italy, we so swell their natural vainglory with our raving, with our enthusiasm, with our unreasoning epithets, that they naturally must believe that we can't breathe or see the light unless they bring us their sun . . ."

All during this period, Verdi's letters indicate that he has no intention of writing another opera. In March, 1876, he wrote to his friend Arrivabene:

"What is this talk of my composing again? Listen, my dear Arrivabene, I don't want to make a pronouncement, but it is very unlikely that I will compose any more . . ."

And the musical events around him, in those days, hardly offered any encouragement. A few years later, the great success at La Scala was Massenet's *Roi de Lahore*. The French composer came to Milan for the event and was given a banquet attended by the mayor. One newspaper — which Verdi quotes in a letter, with grim satisfaction — said: "In the year 1879 a foreign composer came here and a dinner was given him with the Prefect and the Mayor. In 1872, a certain Verdi came in person to stage *Aida* and he wasn't even offered a glass of water..."

But there was, still, a strong pro-Verdi current, even among journalists. A few weeks after Massenet's Milanese reception, the critic Filippo Filippi wrote an article summing up the musical situation in Italy. After commenting on the prevalence of foreign operas in Italian theatres, he said: "we are surely not lacking in composers who could sustain with honor and good fortune this foreign competition, leaving aside our greatest star, Giuseppe Verdi, who shines alone and spreads his light throughout the world. We have many young composers of talent . . . and in some, such as Boito, the spark of genius has been struck..."

And he then expressed his hopes for the future: "Let us wish success for the new operas of Ponchielli, Boito, Marchetti, Gomes, let Verdi write at least one more, and Italy — while still taking cognizance of foreign works — will not need them to keep her theatre going, as at present."

In the summer of 1879, a national disaster brought Verdi back to Milan and back to the podium. After terrible floods had caused vast damage in Italy, Verdi agreed to conduct a benefit performance of the *Requiem*, for which Teresa Stolz and Maria Waldmann (the first mezzo-soprano of the Mass) came out of retirement. It was, expectably, a great occasion, and after the performance was over, the orchestra of La Scala, conducted by Faccio, gave Verdi a concert-serenade under his window at the Grand Hotel de Milan. Enchanted, the composer lingered in Milan longer than he had planned, and when he was back at his country house, he wrote: "It seems a dream that I was for twelve days in Milan and that, for a moment, I became an artist again . . ."

Prophetic words, for during those twelve days, the wily Giulio Ricordi arranged for Verdi to meet Boito and, according to a carefully-laid, pre-arranged plan, discuss the possibility of an *Otello* with a libretto by the younger composer-poet. After the meeting, Boito's past sins, his unfortunate poem *All'arte italiana* were forgotten. Faccio — Boito's childhood friend and fellow-rebel — had long since gained Verdi's admiration. Even the despised Gobatti had written the composer and the letter was received kindly. There was peace, too, in the Verdi household. Giuseppina Verdi had got over her jealousy and was now friendly with la Stolz, towards whom Verdi had now adopted a kind



Teresa Stolz, Verdi's supposed paramour during the period under discussion. "Did they or didn't they?" is a question that has never been satisfactorily answered.

of paternal, slightly joking attitude. In 1880, at a moving ceremony at La Scala, Verdi was made an honorary citizen of Milan, and on the afternoon of that day two new, small works of his — settings of the *Pater Noster* and the *Ave Maria* — were performed to universal praise. In 1881, his youthful *Ernani* was revived at La Scala and hailed. Its cast included Francesco Tamagno, the future Otello, and Victor Maurel, the future Iago and Falstaff.

And in that same 1881, his new collaboration with Boito, a revision of *Simon Boccanegra* — a kind of trial balloon for their *Otello*, already begun — was given at La Scala. Filippi's article in *La Perseveranza* began: "Triumph . . ." and went on to say: "The special quality of last night's success lies in its seriousness, in its durability, and the succeeding performances will prove it. The Scala audience did not bow down before an idol, it didn't applaud blindly; it applauded when the melodies fascinated it and the singular power of the music drama penetrated its heart. . ."

A few months later, despite the composer's grumbling, a statue of Verdi was placed in the foyer of La Scala, along with the statues of Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini. He had survived the decade of doubt and melancholy; he had found a new librettist and a new creative energy. The great, final phase of his life had begun. □

Mr. Weaver, a native of Virginia who has resided in Italy for many years, is a contributor to the pages of *High Fidelity*, *Opera News* and *Opera* (London) and is frequently heard on the Metropolitan Opera's Saturday broadcast intermission features. His article "Opera Then, or, The Pitfalls of Nostalgia" appeared in the April, 1969, edition of *Performing Arts*.

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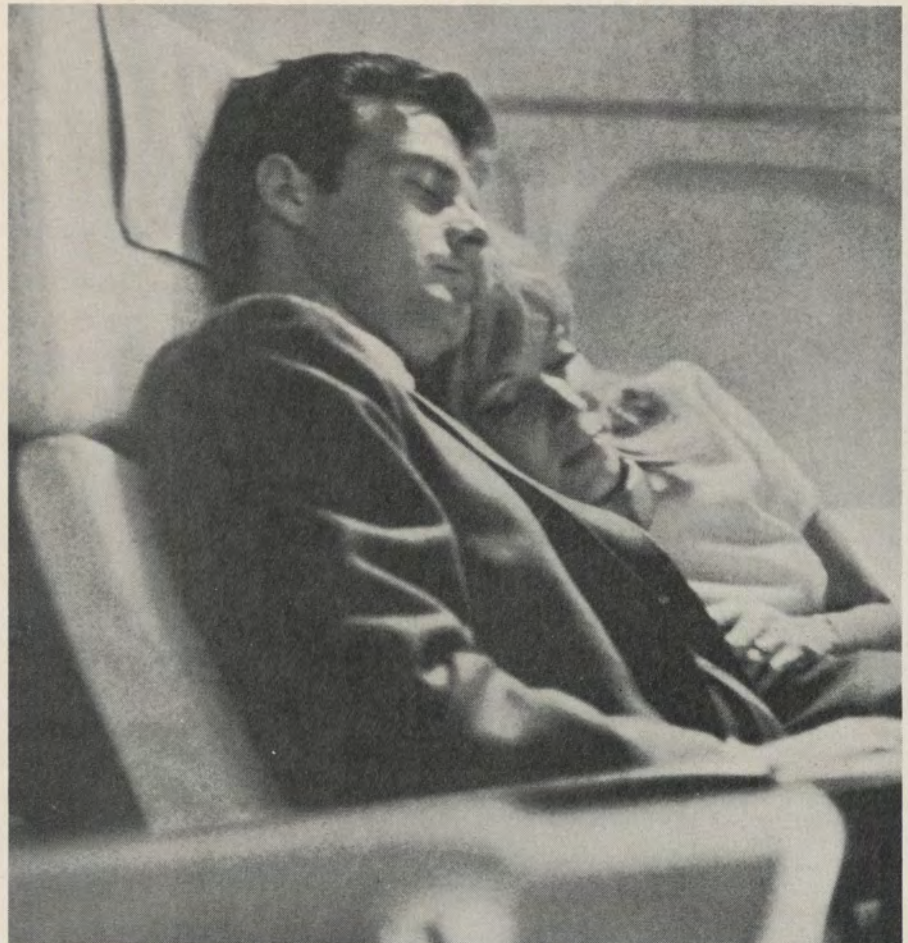


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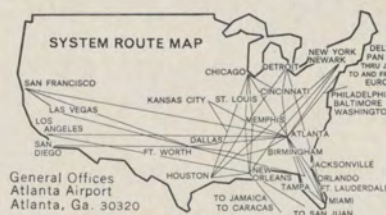
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THEATRE TALK

In a studio canteen, I always get better service when I am playing an emperor than when I am playing a member of the proletariat. — PETER USTINOV

Wit is like caviar; it should be savored in small elegant proportions, and not spread about like marmalade.

— NOEL COWARD

Let's face it, actors are paid more than they're worth. Producers are idiots for paying what we ask. — JAMES GARNER

Actors live in a cocoon of praise. They never meet the people who don't like them.

— ROBERT MORLEY

I was an actress before I entered television.

— DIANA RIGG

I will praise any man that will praise me.

— SHAKESPEARE

The lines of a showgirl's palm may foretell her future, but only the lines of her figure can make it come true.

— JULES PODELL

I'm temperamentally unsuited for films. I don't like the hours — far too early in the morning. At the time they want me for filming, I'm probably biting a fingernail or drinking my first cup of coffee, not in the least wanting to plunge straight into some love scene.

— PETER O'TOOLE

I'd rather play a wicked woman than any other part . . . Evil people may leave a bitter taste in your mouth, but you never forget them. And that's the aim of any actress — never to be forgotten.

— BETTE DAVIS

A play has two authors, the playwright and the actor.

— ERIC BENTLEY

I drink moderately. In fact, I keep a case of Moderately in my dressing room.

— DEAN MARTIN

I'm amazed at how many people imagine that anyone Cockney born can play a Cockney on the screen. Rubbish! That's like saying that anyone who's had a bath can be a plumber!

— MICHAEL CAINE

Other performers are dreaming about getting a star on their dressing room door. I'm still trying to get a door.

— HENNY YOUNGMAN

When an actor is bad, applause makes him worse.

— JULES RENARD

In summer, actors sit around and spend the money they didn't make in winter.

— HARRY HERSHFIELD

To play a character you have to go on on the first day and — bang! — you have to have it. You can't develop it slowly.

— ALAN ARKIN

The secret of playwriting can be given in two maxims: stick to the point and, whenever you can, cut.

— SOMERSET MAUGHAM

I'm often tempted to declare that the staging of even a greater number of bad plays might prove a boon; more good ones might turn up.

— HAROLD CLURMAN

At first I went into show business as a producer for the sole reason of meeting pretty girls.

— BILLY ROSE

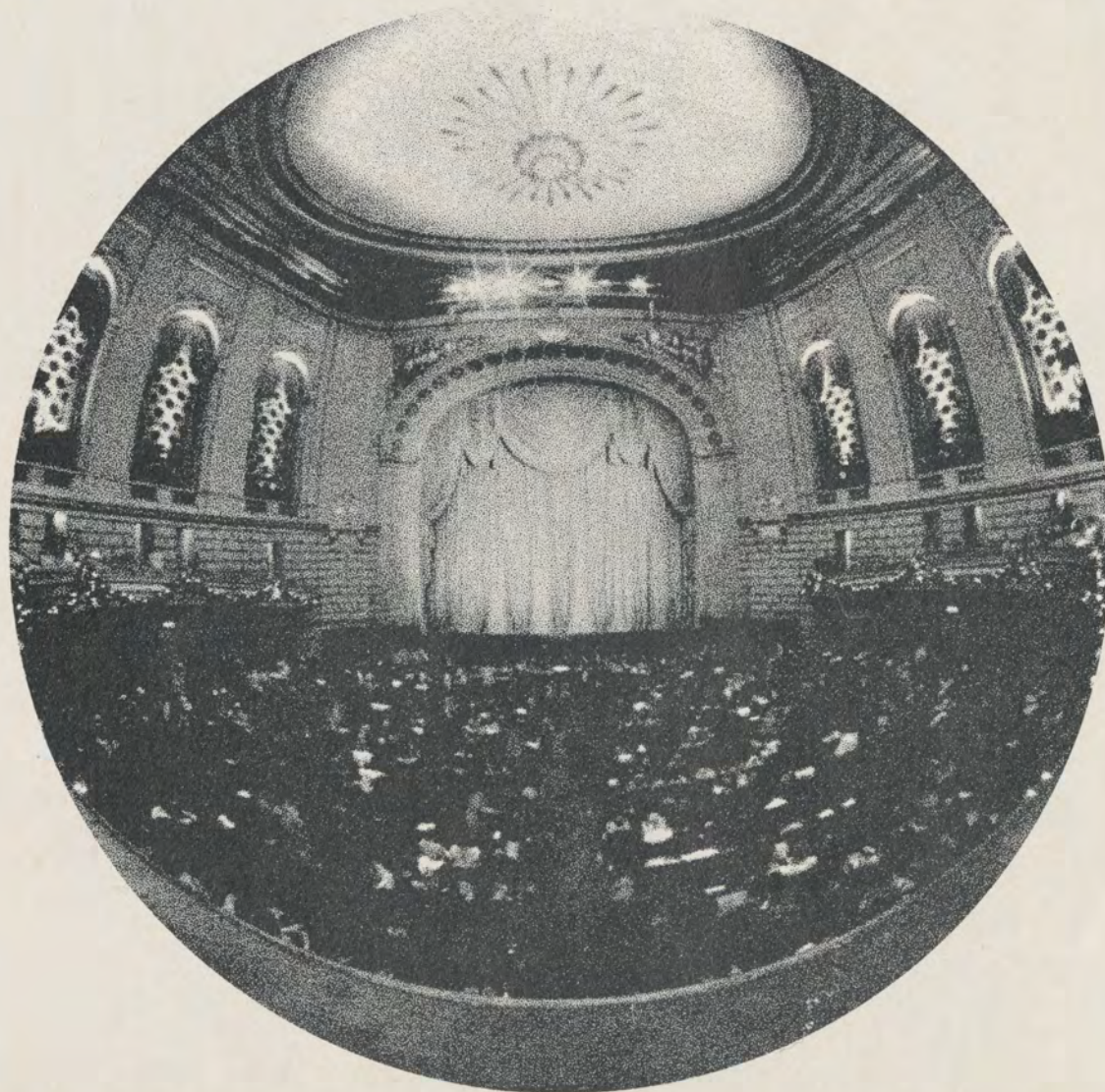
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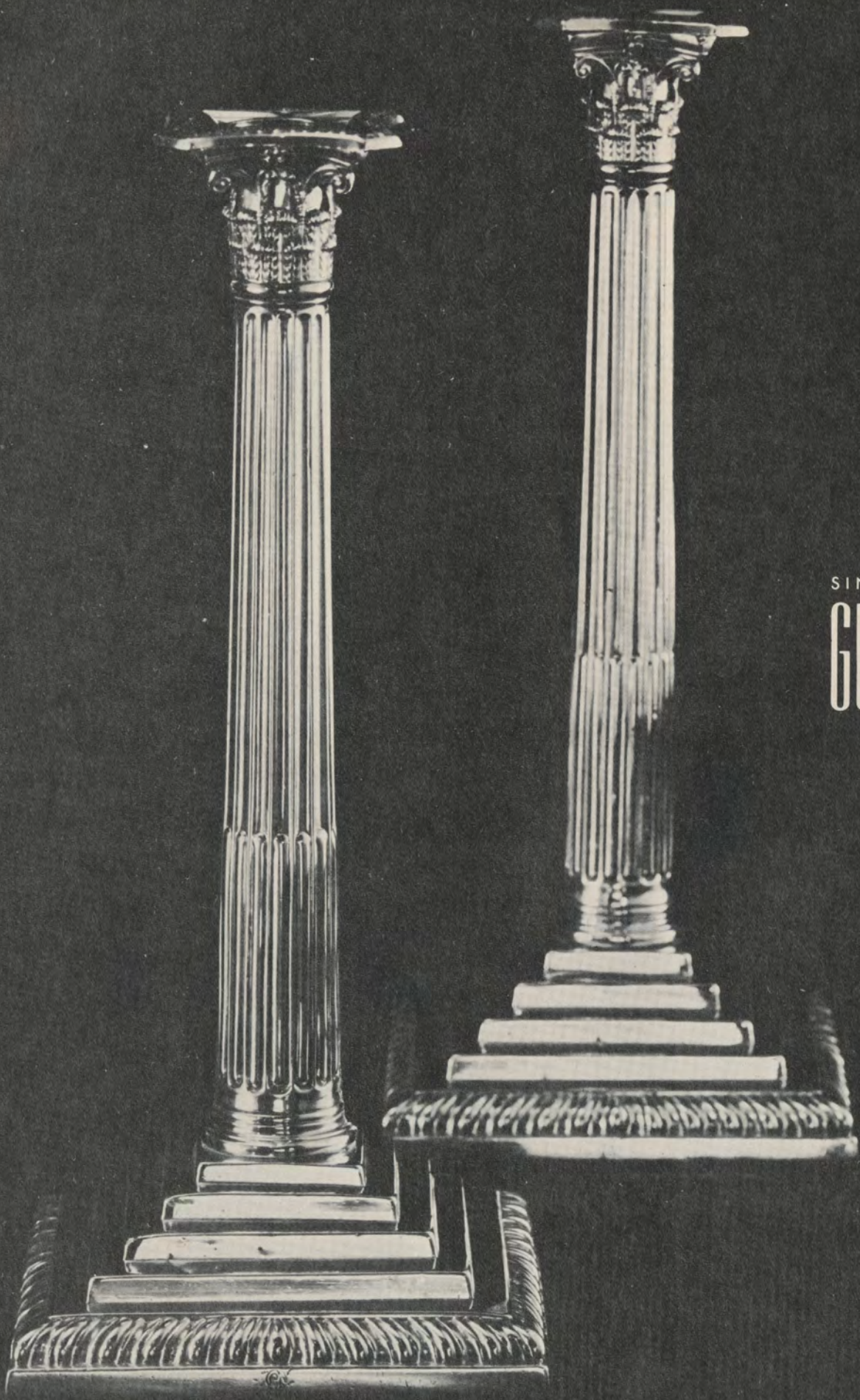
SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Kurt Herbert Adler, *General Director*
Howard K. Skinner, *Manager*

FORTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL SEASON
Sept. 16 - November 30, 1969
WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE

BEETHOVEN	Fidelio
DEBUSSY	Pelléas et Mélisande
DONIZETTI	L'Elisir d'Amore
JANÁČEK	Jenufa
MOZART	The Magic Flute
PUCCINI	La Bohème
ROSSINI	La Cenerentola
STRAUSS	Ariadne auf Naxos
VERDI	Aida
VERDI	La Forza del Destino
VERDI	La Traviata
WAGNER	Götterdämmerung





SINCE 1861
GUMP'S

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General Director



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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Company/1969

<i>Conductors</i>	Anton Coppola*, Sixten Ehrling*, Bohumil Gregor**, Charles Mackerras*, Giuseppe Patané, Jean Perisson, Gunther Schuller, Otmar Suitner**
<i>Chorus Director</i>	Aldo Danieli
<i>Associate Chorus Director</i>	Stefan Minde
<i>Musical Supervisor</i>	Otto Guth
<i>Assistant for Artists</i>	Philip Eisenberg
<i>Musical Staff</i>	Gianfranco Cauzzi**, Bruce Cohen*, Terry Lusk, Charles Perlee, Michelangelo Veltri**
<i>Boys Chorus Director</i>	Madi Bacon
<i>Librarian</i>	Judith Mosher*
<i>Stage Directors</i>	Anthony Besch*, August Everding**, Matthew Farruggio, Ghita Hager, Paul Hager, Lotfi Mansouri, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle**
<i>Company Coordinator</i>	Matthew Farruggio
<i>Assistant Stage Director</i>	Fabrizio Melano
<i>Assistant Stage Managers</i>	Virginia Irwin, Jacques Karpo
<i>Choreographer</i>	Nelle Fisher*
<i>Productions Designed by</i>	Leni Bauer-Ecsy, Toni Businger, Thomas L. Colangelo Jr., Robert Darling, George Jenkins, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, Wolfram Skalicki, Davis L. West
<i>Costumers</i>	Goldstein & Company
<i>Wardrobe Department</i>	Craig Hampton, Patricia Bibbins, Laurence Vincent
<i>Wig and Makeup Department</i>	Richard Stead, Robert Brophy, Laurence Cannon, Lilli Rogers, Rex Rogers, Don Le Page, Charles Mullen, Leslie Sherman
<i>Rehearsal Department</i>	Richard Perry*, Dina Smith*, Susannah Susman
<i>Super Department</i>	Madeline Chase
<i>Production Coordinator</i>	John Priest
<i>Scenic Construction</i>	Pierre Cayard
<i>Scenic Artist</i>	Davis L. West
<i>Master Carpenter</i>	Michael Kane
<i>Master Electrician</i>	George Pantages
<i>Master of Properties</i>	Ivan Van Perre
<i>Technical Assistant</i>	Anthony Straiges

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<i>Master Electrician</i>	Rod McLeod
<i>Master of Properties</i>	Perrie Dodson

Artists/1969

Lucine Amara
 Sylvia Anderson
 Teresa Berganza
 Colette Boky*
 Sona Cervena
 Irene Dalis
 Cristina Deutekom*
 Ludmila Dvorakova*
 Reri Grist
 Gwyneth Jones*
 Dorothy Kirsten
 Margarita Lilova
 Sheila Marks
 Janis Martin
 Shigemi Matsumoto
 Ljiljana Molnar-Talajic**
 Margot Moser*
 Sheila Nadler
 Donna Petersen
 Jeannette Pilou
 Margaret Price**
 Amy Shuard
 Susanne Stull*
 Nancy Tatum*
 Margery Tede
 Felicia Weathers
 Ara Berberian
 Carlo Bergonzi*
 Heinz Blankenburg
 Franco Bonisoli*
 Pietro Bottazzo
 Sesto Bruscantini
 Stuart Burrows
 Renato Capecchi
 Guy Chauvet
 Richard J. Clark
 Elfego Esparza
 Geraint Evans
 James Farrar*
 Howard Fried
 Alan Gilbert*
 Clifford Grant
 Henri Gui**
 Colin Harvey
 Edward Herrkind*
 James King*
 Peter Lagger**
 Raymond Manton
 Walter Matthes
 Franz Mazura
 Allan Monk
 Paolo Montarsolo*
 Raymond Nilsson
 Timothy Nolen
 Norman Paige*
 Luciano Pavarotti
 Glade Peterson
 Frantz Petri**
 Ludovic Spiess
 Evan Thomas*
 Jess Thomas
 Giorgio Tozzi
 Ragnar Ulfung
 Jon Vickers
 David Ward
 Ingvar Wixell
 roster subject to revision

*San Francisco Opera debut

**American debut

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Chorus

Arlene Adams
Kathy Anderson
Doris Baltzo
Josephine Barbano
Mary Jane Bick*
Dorothy Bogart
Walda Bradley
Norma Bruzzone
Louise Corsale
Peggy Covington
Carol Denyer
Giovanna DiTano
Beverly Finn
Elizabeth Fiorini
Ann Graber
Walda Hasselberg
Louise Hill
Ann Lagier
Jeannine Liagre
Katherine Metlenko
Pepi Nenova
Sheila Newcombe
Luana Noble
Neysa Null
Pauline Pappas
Ramona Pico
Carol Pritchett
Celia Sanders
Dolores San Miguel

Lola Simi
Sharon Talbot
Carolyn Wilson
Sally Winnington
Arlene Woodburn
Garifalia Zeissig

Winther Andersen*
William Bond
Jan Budzinski
Joseph Ciampi
Harry Clark
Melville Clarke
Angelo Colbasso
Harry DeLange
Robert Eggert
Stan Gentry
John L. Glenister
Valdis Gudrais
Colin Harvey*
Alva Henderson
Marvin Hilty
John Hudnall
Rudy Jungberg
Otto Kausch
Conrad Knipfel

Eugene Lawrence*
Edward Lovasich
Kenneth MacLaren
Sebastian Martorano
Douglas Mayock
Thomas McEachern
Henry Metlenko
Victor Metlenko
Thomas Miller
Pierce Murphy
Eugene Naham
Carl Noelke
Charles Pascoe
Edgar F. Pepka
William Petersen
David Robinson
Al Rodwell
Robert Romanovsky
Karl Saarni
Allen Schmidling
John Segale
Conrad Sorenson
James Stith
Richard Styles
Francis Szymkun
John Talbot
James Tarantino
William Tredway
Jesse Washington

Boys Chorus

Brooke Aird*
Steven A. Anderson
Bradford Brennan
Scott Brookie
Robert Calvert
Mark Englund
Linus Eukel

Gregory Formes
Clifford Hirsch
Paul Hunt*
Gary Johnson
Leonard Kalm*
Brian Knapp
Gary Levy*
Stuart Misfeldt

Christopher Nowak
Jeremy Renton
Ted Schoenfeld
Lindsay Spiller
Scott Spiller
Vahan Toolajian
Henry Wong

Ballet

Mela Fleming
Wendy Holt
Carolyn Houser
Ellen Kogan
Judanna Lynn
Gigi Nachtsheim
Leila Parello

Allyson Segeler
Susan Williams

Philip Arrona
Bruce Bain

Allen Barker
Don Douthit
Don Eryck
William Johnson
David Ramos
Edward Rumberger
Robert Sullivan

Auxiliary Ballet

Suzanne Duckworth
Phoebe Meyers
Betty Ann Rapine
Alanna Reed

Carmela Sanders
Catherine Sim

Steffon Coviello
Jonathon Hugger

John MacDonald
Charles Perrier
Paul Ricci
Robert D. Sullivan
Geoffrey Thomas

*Also appearing in solo roles

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And at Ski Incline there's fresh snow almost every winter's day, thanks to nature and our snow machine.

True, autumn isn't winter yet. It's too cold to water-ski, too warm

to snow ski. You have to content yourself with early morning walks in the woods and log fires in the evening and horseback riding through the Sierras. A little brisk tennis at the Raquet Club, golf beneath the pines, maybe an evening at The Chataux.

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Incline is invigorating activity and refreshing calm, wilderness and sophistication, four seasons a year.

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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Orchestra

1st violins

Stuart Canin
Concertmaster
Zaven Melikian
Ferdinand F. Claudio
Ervin Mautner
Silvio Claudio
Ezequiel Amador
Mafalda Guaraldi
John Wittenberg
Lennard Petersen
Ernest Michaelian
Harry Moulin
Cicely Edmunds

2nd violins

Felix Khuner
Principal
George Nagata
Zelik Kaufman
Herbert Holtman
Rose Kovats
Anne Crowden
Frederick Koegel
Gail Denny
Reina Schivo

violas

Rolf Persinger
Principal
Detlev Olshausen
Lucien Mitchell
Asbjorn Finess
Hubert Sorenson
David Smiley

cellos

Robert Sayre
Principal
Rolf Storseth
Mary Claudio
Catherine Mezirka
Tadeusz Kadzielawa
Helen Stross

basses

Philip Karp
Principal
Charles Siani
Carl Modell
Donald Prell
Michael Burr

flutes

Walter Subke
Principal
Lloyd Gowen
Gary Gray

piccolo

Lloyd Gowen

oboes

James Matheson
Principal
Raymond Duste
Eleanor Biondi

english horn

Raymond Duste

clarinets

Philip Fath
Principal
Frealon N. Bibbins
Donald Carroll

bass clarinets

Frealon N. Bibbins
Donald Carroll

bassoons

Walter Green
Principal
Marilyn Mayor
Robin Elliott

contrabassoon

Robin Elliott

horns

Herman Dorfman
William Sabatini
Principals
James Callahan
Ralph Hotz
Jeremy Merrill

trumpets

Donald Reinberg
Principal
Edward Haug
Chris Bogios

trombones

John E. Meredith
Principal
Willard Spencer
John Bischof

tuba

Wesley Jacobs

timpani

Roland Kohloff

percussion

Lloyd Davis
Peggy Cunningham Luchesi

harp

Anne Adams
Marcella DeCray

librarian

Alma Haug

personnel manager

Thomas Heimberg




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REPERTOIRE/1969 SEASON

Opening Night

Tuesday, September 16, 8:30

LA TRAVIATA (VERDI)

Pilou, Cervena, Nadler / Bonisolli, Wixell, Esparza, Paige, Gilbert, Clark, Nilsson, Andersen / corps de ballet

Conductor: Patané

Production: Everding

Designer: Businger, West

Choreographer: Fisher

Wednesday, September 17, 8:00

ARIADNE AUF NAXOS (STRAUSS)

Dvorakova, Grist, Martin, Marks, Nadler, Matsumoto / J. Thomas, Monk, Matthes, Blankenburg, Paige, Manton, Esparza, Nolen, Gilbert

Conductor: Schuller

Stage Director: G. Hager

Designer: Jenkins

Friday, September 19, 8:00

LA TRAVIATA (VERDI)

Same cast as September 16

Saturday, September 20, 8:00

LA BOHEME (PUCCINI)

Kirsten, Boky / Pavarotti, Bruscantini, Blankenburg, Berberian, Esparza, Gilbert, Nilsson, Lawrence, Harvey

Conductor: Coppola

Stage Director: Farruggio

Designer: Jenkins

Sunday, September 21, 2:00

ARIADNE AUF NAXOS (STRAUSS)

Same cast as September 17 except King instead of J. Thomas

Tuesday, September 23, 8:30

LA BOHEME (PUCCINI)

Same cast as September 20

Wednesday, September 24, 8:00

LA TRAVIATA (VERDI)

Same cast as September 16

Friday, September 26, 8:30

ARIADNE AUF NAXOS (STRAUSS)

Last performance this season

Same cast as September 17 except Boky instead of Grist

Saturday, September 27, 8:00

FIDELIO (BEETHOVEN)

Jones, Marks / King, E. Thomas, Mazura, Lagger, Berberian, Nilsson, Clark

Conductor: Ehrling

Production: P. Hager

Designer: Skalicki, West

Sunday, September 28, 2:00

LA TRAVIATA (VERDI)

Same cast as September 16

Tuesday, September 30, 8:30

FIDELIO (BEETHOVEN)

Same cast as September 27

Wednesday, October 1, 8:00

LA BOHEME (PUCCINI)

Same cast as September 20 except Moser instead of Boky and Wixell and Monk instead of Bruscantini and Blankenburg

Friday, October 3, 8:00

FIDELIO (Beethoven)

Same cast as September 27

Saturday, October 4, 8:00

LA TRAVIATA (VERDI)

Last performance this season

Same cast as September 16

Tuesday, October 7, 8:30

L'ELISIR D'AMORE (DONIZETTI)

Grist, Matsumoto / Pavarotti, Wixell, Bruscantini

Conductor: Patané

Production: Mansouri

Designer: Darling

Wednesday, October 8, 8:00

FIDELIO (BEETHOVEN)

Last performance of the season

Same cast as September 27

Friday, October 10, 8:00

L'ELISIR D'AMORE (DONIZETTI)

Same cast as October 7

Saturday, October 11, 7:00

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG (WAGNER)

Shuard, Martin, Lilova, Anderson, Nadler, Cervena, Marks / J. Thomas, Mazura, Lagger, Esparza

Conductor: Suitner

Production: P. Hager

Designer: Skalicki, West

Sunday, October 12, 2:00

LA BOHEME (PUCCINI)

Same cast as September 20 except Moser instead of Boky and Wixell and Monk instead of Bruscantini and Blankenburg

Tuesday, October 14, 7:00

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG (WAGNER)

Same cast as October 11

Wednesday, October 15, 8:00

L'ELISIR D'AMORE (DONIZETTI)

Same cast as October 7

Friday, October 17, 7:00

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG (WAGNER)

Same cast as October 11

Saturday, October 18, 8:00

AIDA (VERDI)

Jones, Lilova, Marks / Chauvet, Farrar, Berberian, Grant, Nilsson / corps de ballet

Conductor: Perisson

Production: Besch

Designer: Skalicki, West

Choreographer: Fisher

Sunday, October 19, 2:00

L'ELISIR D'AMORE (DONIZETTI)

Last performance this season

Same cast as October 7,

Tuesday, October 21, 8:00

AIDA (VERDI)

Same cast as October 18

(Continued on page 31)

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REPertoire/1969 SEASON

Wednesday, October 22, 8

THE MAGIC FLUTE (MOZART)

Price, Deutekom, Matsumoto, Marks, Anderson, Nadler / Burrows, Evans, Ward, Ulfung, Mazura, Nilsson, Monk, Herrnkind, Grant, Levy, Aird, Hunt
 Conductor: Mackerras
 Production: P. Hager
 Designer: Businger, West

Friday, October 24, 8

AIDA (VERDI)

Same cast as October 18

Saturday, October 25, 8

THE MAGIC FLUTE (MOZART)

Same cast as October 22

Sunday, October 26, 1:30

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG (WAGNER)

Last performance this season
 Same cast as October 11

Tuesday, October 28, 8

THE MAGIC FLUTE (MOZART)

Same cast as October 22

Wednesday, October 29, 8

AIDA (VERDI)

Same cast as October 18

Friday, October 31, 8

THE MAGIC FLUTE (MOZART)

Last Opera House performance this season
 Same cast as October 22 except Lager instead of Ward

Saturday, November 1, 8

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO (VERDI)

Tatum, Anderson, Nadler / Bergonzi, Wixell, Tozzi, Capecchi, Berberian, Fried, Grant, Clark

Conductor: Patané
 Production: P. Hager
 Designer: Bauer-Ecsy, Colangelo

Tuesday, November 4, 8

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO (VERDI)

Same cast as November 1

Wednesday, November 5, 8

LA CENERENTOLA (ROSSINI)

Berganza, Marks, Cervena / Bottazzo, Capecchi, Montarsolo, Grant
 Conductor: Mackerras
 Production: Ponnelle
 Designer: Ponnelle, West

Friday, November 7, 8

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO (VERDI)

Same cast as November 1

Saturday, November 8, 8

LA CENERENTOLA (ROSSINI)

Same cast as November 5

Sunday, November 9, 2

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO (VERDI)

Same cast as November 1

Tuesday, November 11, 8:30

LA CENERENTOLA (ROSSINI)

Same cast as November 5

Wednesday, November 12, 8

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO (VERDI)

Last performance this season
 Same cast as November 1

Friday, November 14, 8

PELLEAS ET MELISANDE (DEBUSSY)

Pilou, Lilova, Moser / Gui, Petri, Tozzi, Clark, Monk
 Conductor: Perisson
 Production: P. Hager
 Designer: Skalicki, West

Saturday, November 15, 8

LA BOHEME (PUCCINI)

Amara, Moser / Spiess, Farrar, Monk, Berberian, Esparza, Gilbert, Nilsson, Lawrence, Harvey
 Conductor: Perisson
 Director: Farruggio
 Designer: Jenkins

Sunday, November 16, 2

LA CENERENTOLA (ROSSINI)

Last performance this season
 Same cast as November 5

Tuesday, November 18, 8:30

PELLEAS ET MELISANDE (DEBUSSY)

Same cast as November 14

Friday, November 21, 8

JENUFA (JÁNAČEK)

Weathers, Dalis, Cervena, Marks, Petersen, Matsumoto, Stull, Tede, Bick / Peterson, Ulfung, Berberian, Grant
 Conductor: Gregor
 Production: P. Hager
 Designer: Bauer-Ecsy, West
 Choreographer: Fisher

Saturday, November 22, 8

PELLEAS ET MELISANDE (DEBUSSY)

Last performance this season
 Same cast as November 14

Tuesday, November 25, 8:30

JENUFA (JÁNAČEK)

Same cast as November 21

Wednesday, November 26, 8

AIDA (VERDI)

Same cast as October 18 except Molnar-Talajic and Vickers instead of Jones and Chauvet

Friday, November 28, 8

LA BOHEME (PUCCINI)

Last performance this season
 Same cast as November 15 except Kirsten instead of Amara

Saturday, November 29, 8

JENUFA (JÁNAČEK)

Last performance this season
 Same cast as November 21

Sunday, November 30, 2

AIDA (VERDI)

Final performance of the season
 Same cast as October 18 except Molnar-Talajic and Spiess instead of Jones and Chauvet

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For the past forty-six years a minor miracle has taken place every fall when the San Francisco Opera has presented a season of international grand opera of the highest calibre. And this year is no exception. Once again Kurt Herbert Adler and his dedicated staff have coped with the incredible complexities involved, to present an opera season which we believe will be worthy of the Company's traditions and reputation.

The repertoire this year has been chosen with great care to appeal to a wide variety of tastes. New productions of two of the most popular of operas, *La Traviata* and *Aida*, will cast fresh light upon them and reveal new beauties and subtleties in their familiar scores. Some of the most successful productions of recent seasons are returning; the less familiar works in the repertoire will bring additional pleasure to our audience.

One of the traditions we most cherish is that of introducing significant new artists to our audience. This season many prominent singers, conductors and stage directors, both American and foreign, will be making their debuts with the Company. They have become established favorites in international opera centers throughout the world; we believe they will be acclaimed by our audience, too. Another cherished tradition is being upheld through the inclusion on the roster of fine young artists whose talents were discovered by the San Francisco Opera Auditions, and whose abilities have been developed by the Merola Opera Program, Western Opera Theater and Spring Opera.

The continuance of the minor miracle to which I referred requires not only faith and good works but also a great deal of financial support. The inflationary pressures we are all too well aware of are making relentless demands on our financial resources. The proportion of expenses which we can meet through our box office income, while high in comparison with other opera companies, cannot be increased without making the price of tickets prohibitive. It is to our annual Fund Drive that we must look for the finances needed to cover our deficit.

The 1968/69 Fund Drive was the most successful ever. It was ably piloted by Co-Chairmen R. Gwin Follis and Marco F. Hellman. Particular praise should be given to Robert A. Hornby, Assistant to the President, for his success in obtaining a donation of \$100,000 by The Irvine Foundation, and for his indefatigable efforts on many other Opera problems.

We are deeply indebted to the Charles E. Merrill Trust, of which Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Magowan of San Francisco are trustees, for the generous donation of \$43,000 toward the new production of *La Traviata*. This represents a break-through for us; the first time we have received a private donation for a specific production, a practice that has become increasingly common in the East.

The future course of our Company will be determined by the degree of success achieved by our 1969/70 Fund Drive, now underway. The current drive has got off to a splendid start with a donation of \$50,000 by The Zellerbach Family Fund. We urge every individual friend of the Opera, old and new alike, to give his generous support so that grand opera of the highest quality will flourish in San Francisco for many years to come.

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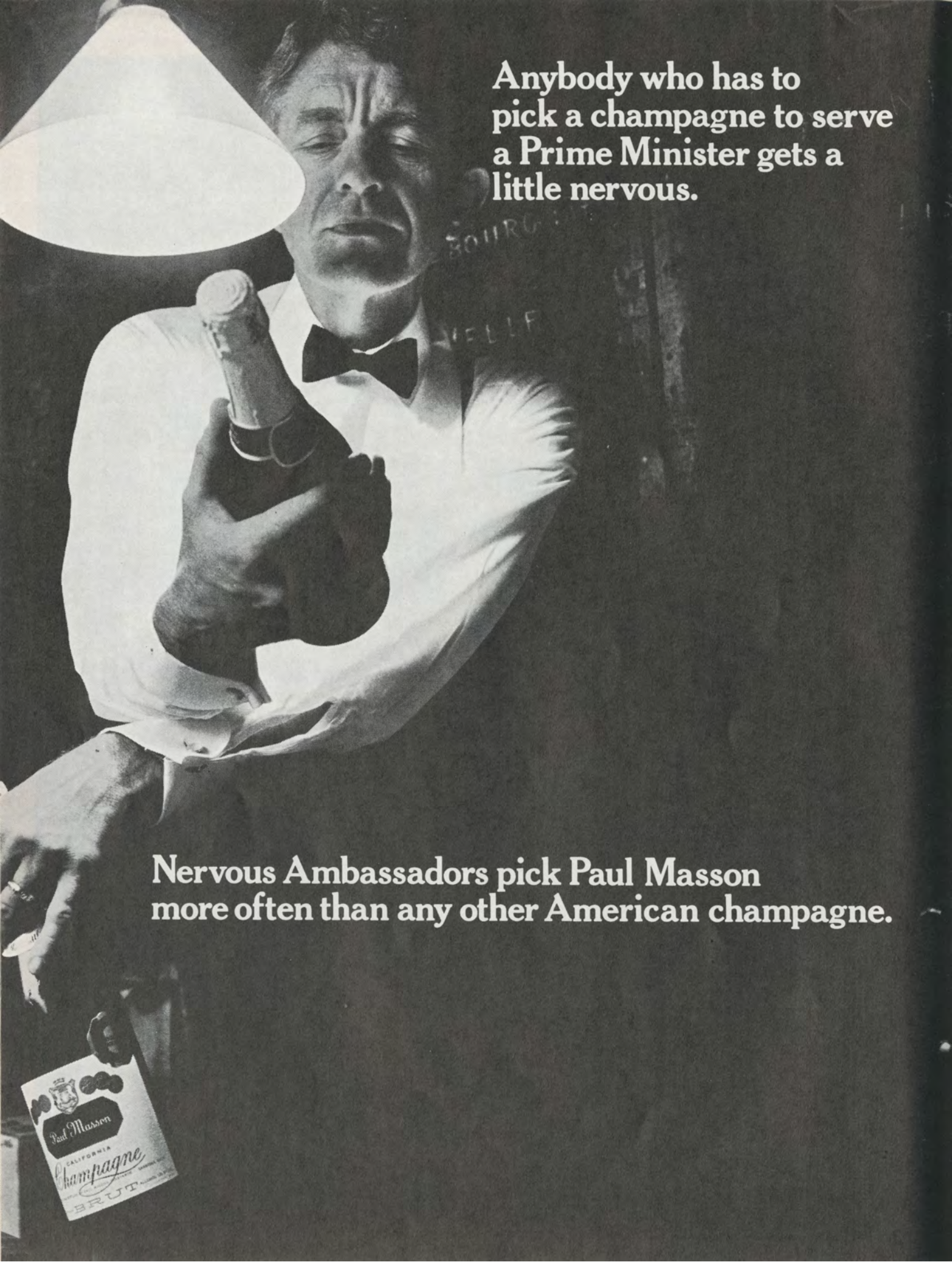


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<i>Benoit</i>	ELFEGO ESPARZA
<i>Mimi</i>	DOROTHY KIRSTEN
<i>Parpignol</i>	RAYMOND NILSSON
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The Story of "La Boheme"

Act I — On Christmas Eve in their dismal, unheated garret, Rodolfo, a poet, and Marcello, a painter, are trying to keep warm. Since they have no logs, Rodolfo sacrifices the pages of his play for a fire. They are joined by Colline, the philosopher of their group, and then by Schaunard, a musician, who brings food, wine, fuel and some money. Their celebration is interrupted by the landlord, Benoit, who demands payment of the long overdue rent. The four ply him with wine and flattery and, pretending to be shocked at his tale of conquest, push him out the door. When the others leave for the cafe, Rodolfo stays behind to finish an article but is interrupted by a knock at the door. It is the lovely seamstress Mimi, who lives on the floor below. Her candle has gone out on the drafty stairway and she asks for a light. Overcome suddenly by a fit of coughing, she drops the candle and her key. Rodolfo offers her some wine to revive her. Entranced by her beauty, he keeps the key which he finds in the dark in order to prolong her stay. Already a little in love, they tell each other of their hopes and dreams. When Rodolfo's friends call to him to join them, he replies that they should go on ahead, since he has a guest; but at Mimi's suggestion, they leave together for the cafe.

Act II — Mimi and Rodolfo join his friends at the Cafe Momus, having stopped just long enough to buy her a new hat. Marcello's former sweetheart, Musetta, comes in laughing gaily, accompanied by a rich and elderly admirer, Alcindoro. Seeing Marcello, Musetta decides to tease him and greatly enjoys his anger and jealousy. She realizes that she would like to go back to Marcello but must first rid herself of her current escort. Pretending that her shoe hurts, she sends Alcindoro off to a cobbler. Reunited, Musetta and Marcello join the others in a passing parade, leaving Alcindoro behind to pay the bills.

Act III — Two months have passed. At dawn on a wintry morning, Mimi comes to seek Marcello's advice at the tavern where he and Musetta are living. She wants to leave Rodolfo because of his constant and unfounded jealousy. Mimi hides when Rodolfo comes from the tavern where he has spent the night after quarreling with her. She overhears Rodolfo tell Marcello of their fights, of his fears for her health, and of his despair because he cannot provide the warmth and care she needs. A coughing spell reveals Mimi's presence. Aware at last that her illness is serious, she tries to say goodbye. She and Rodolfo agree to part friends but cannot bear to separate and decide to stay together until spring. Meanwhile, Marcello hears Musetta laughing in the tavern and accuses her of flirting. Furious, she insults him and leaves.

Act IV — Having separated from their mistresses, Rodolfo and Marcello are back in the garret. Despite their good intentions to give up frivolities and get on with their work, they are both distracted by sadness and loneliness. Their moods brighten when Schaunard and Colline appear with a scant supper of dried herring which the bohemians imagine into a feast. In the midst of their merrymaking Musetta rushes in with the news that Mimi is outside, very ill. Rodolfo helps her in and the others lend a hand to make her comfortable. Musetta gives Marcello her earrings, telling him to sell them and buy Mimi some medicine. Colline takes his overcoat to trade for some food and wine for her, and Musetta goes to get her muff to warm Mimi's hands—fearing it may be Mimi's last request. Left alone, Mimi and Rodolfo recall their first meeting. The others return, offering help but knowing it is too late. Mimi rests quietly as they confer and pray. Suddenly they realize that Mimi is dead, and Rodolfo is left heartbroken.

"La Bohème"—A Mirror of Life

by John Rockwell

Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème* received its first performance at the Teatro Regio in Turin on February 1, 1896, under the baton of Arturo Toscanini. The public and the critics were rather lukewarm in their reception of the new work. Many felt disappointed by the seeming coolness and blandness of the piece: it seemed, in the heat of verismo, a step backwards from his *Manon Lescaut*. And Toscanini's preceding premiere, on December 22, 1895, had been the first Italian performance of *Götterdämmerung*, after which *La Bohème* seemed a little meek.

Yet with a few alterations, and after a brief rivalry with Leoncavallo's opera (1897) on the same theme, *La Bohème* established itself as a great popular and critical success. Today it ranks as one of the most performed of all operas. Puccini has a generous number of boffo box office smashes, but *La Bohème* is undoubtedly the most boffo of the bunch.

Why? I think that the first place we can look is the libretto. Henri Murger's novel, *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*, first appeared serially from 1847 to 1849, and it retains to this day the charm of left bank bohemianism—in fact, it can be said to have helped inaugurate the whole popular fascination with the figure of the carefree, starving artist. Murger managed to capture both the gaiety and the tragedy of bohemian existence, and to do so in a way which was both realistic and, still, unthreatening to a bourgeois audience. Naturally some of the early reviews of Puccini's opera complained about the suitability of the text, but the protests were never serious ones. I suspect that the opera, and especially its livelier sections, made somewhat the same impression on audiences of the 1890's that *Hair* makes on us today.

The transformation of Murger's novel into a libretto was entrusted to Giuseppe Giacoso and Luigi Illica, who had provided Puccini his *Manon Lescaut* libretto, and who were to give him those for *Madama Butterfly* and *Tosca*, as well as Catalani's *La Wally* and Giordano's *Andrea Chenier*. Working from both the original novel and the five act play, *La Vie de Bohème*, which Murger had written in collaboration with Theodor Barriere, they presented Puccini a draft in five scenes. But the composer, over Illica's protests, insisted that the penultimate act of this version be eliminated. Reprinted in English two years ago in *Opera News* this act, which falls between the present version's third and fourth acts, takes place in the courtyard of Musetta's apartment building. It provides more color and spectacle on the order of Act II, and includes some flirting of Mimi with a Viscount, thus giving us some reasons for Rodolfo's jealousy in Acts II and IV.

Yet Puccini cut it, and it is instructive to consider why. *La Bohème* as it now stands is a model of economy and concision. Puccini's operas are quintessentially melodramas: the moments of exaggerated emotional climax come far more often than in ordinary life, and without the most "realistic" of motivations. Everything is pushed to the highest degree of supercharged hysteria. In *La Bohème*, however, we find an at least relative restraint. Richard Wagner's later operas (*Götterdämmerung* partially excepted) tend to concentrate each act around some key moment of psychological transformation the outer "action" disappears almost entirely. *La Bohème*, which suffered in comparison with *Götterdämmerung* in Turin, is ironically in this scene more "Wagnerian" than Wagner's own final

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The collection includes material in the possession of the San Francisco Opera and on loan from the California Historical Society, the Society of California Pioneers and private individuals. It has been prepared for exhibition through the cooperation of the display department of Joseph Magnin's under the supervision of David Crocker.

The Museum is sponsored by the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial, with Ralph J. A. Stern as curator. Mrs. Madeleine Haas Russell also represents the Board. Donations of interesting and valuable historical material are gratefully received. Persons wishing to contribute items should contact Herbert Scholder at 861-4008.

Ring drama. Nothing much "happens" in *La Bohème*. There is horseplay, a romantic encounter, more horseplay, and a sub-plot, a quadruple realization of love and jealousy, more horseplay, and a final working-out of a small but intense tragedy. Each scene is painted, both poetically and musically, in the most delicate and precise of colors.

Beyond the tight construction of the libretto and the music are other aspects of the score which help explain its perennial appeal. In this opera Puccini wrote music of a gaiety and vivacity which he never again managed to equal. *Gianni Schicchi* is wonderfully funny, but its comedy is insufficiently balanced by romance to be a true popular success. The other moments of Puccinian comedy seem, to me at least, to be forced (too obviously and deliberately a foil for the melodrama, as in the Sacristan business in *Tosca*) or tinged — rather interestingly — with the grotesque (as in *Turandot*). Only in *La Bohème* is the humor gay and unassuming. I have seen the opera performed in nearly every American stage, from polished ensemble teamwork to sloppy star display, and the boisterousness of the bohemians never fails to make a positive effect. The music is simply too skillful and witty for it to be otherwise.

Conversely, the romance in *La Bohème* is superbly real. Romantic pathos is of course the key of Puccini's popular success and it has often been pointed out that his own predilection in female types was for the weak, abused, passive heroine. Mimi is the perfect incarnation of that fantasy. It is not surprising, really, that Puccini insisted on the deletion of Illica's penultimate act: Mimi's flirtation with the Viscount may have been true to Murger and to psychological veracity, but it was false to Puccini's personal and dramatic instincts. As she now is, Mimi is the archtypal Puccini heroine. Beside her, Butterfly seems coy and, in the end, heroic; *Tosca* stagey, Minnie a tough guy; and Lord knows, *Turandot* distant and unreal. Only Liu approaches Mimi, but by then Puccini had become too self-conscious in his dramatic intentions,

and she appears extraneous to the plot.

Mimi is the finest and most vulnerable of Puccini's passive little love goddesses. But Rodolfo, too, fits this psychological pattern. Of all of Puccini's leading tenor lovers, Rodolfo is not only the lightest, in terms of vocal weight, but the least virile, in the locker-room sense, the least given to gratuitous displays of Italianate *macho*. He is of course not effeminate, but he is the true young lover, and thus his scenes with Mimi take on a believability and realistic intensity which Puccini's other love scenes, for all their beauties, can't match.

I keep returning to the idea of realism. Ultimately *La Bohème* is Puccini's finest and most successful opera because it more successfully than any other of his works mirrors life. Of course, the mimetic principal in art is a far more subtle one than, say, the naturalists believed. One can be "realistic" within almost any dramatic convention, from photographically accurate reproductions of outer details to highly internalized ritualizations of the most mysterious inner truths. *La Bohème* certainly functions within the hoariest conventions of Italian opera. But its ability to recall in us a fantasy life of freedom, the joys of youth, and the intensity of young love, remain unsurpassed.

Giacomo Puccini's operas are melodramas. The plays from which the libretti were derived would nearly all be laughed off the stage today, and the music is not always successful in disguising from us their manipulative theatrical cynicism. Puccini himself, too, was often rather coarse in his deliberate exploitation of Pavlovian audience responses, irrespective of dramatic, musical or theatrical logic.

But *La Bohème* is different. One intuitively feels that, here at least, Puccini has invested something of himself. We do know, in fact, that his own youth was played out in circumstances rather similar to those of the characters in Murger's story. *La Bohème*, with its superbly fresh and appealing picture of youth, is real because in it Puccini discovered himself. □

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Speaker: John Rockwell

November 4

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Speaker: James H. Schwabacher, Jr.

November 14

JENUFA

Speaker: Dr. Jan Popper

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Presented by Opera ACTION
South Peninsula

September 23

FIDELIO

October 7

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

October 21

LA CENERENTOLA

November 4

PELLEAS ET MELISANDE

November 18

JENUFA

Speaker: Dale Harris
Castilleja School Chapel
Palo Alto, at 10:00 a.m.

Presented by the San Jose
Opera Guild

September 11

FIDELIO

September 18

ARIADNE AUF NAXOS

September 25

LA TRAVIATA

October 2

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

October 9

LA CENERENTOLA

October 16

PELLEAS ET MELISANDE

October 23

JENUFA

Speaker: Dale Harris

Old Town Theatre
Los Gatos, 10:00 a.m.

Presented by Opera ACTION
Marin County

September 11

ARIADNE AUF NAXOS

Speaker: Jess Thomas

September 25

FIDELIO

Speaker: Speight Jenkins, Jr.

October 9

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

Speaker: John Rockwell

October 30

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

Speaker: Dale Harris
Marin Art and Garden Center
Ross, 8:15 p.m.

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October 6, 8:15 p.m.

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

Speaker: John Rockwell

November 17, 8:15 p.m.

JENUFA

Speaker: Dale Harris

San Francisco Opera Touring Calendar

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Hearst Greek Theater

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THE MAGIC FLUTE (Mozart)

In English

Presented by the University of California

November 23, 7:30 p.m.

Memorial Auditorium

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AIDA (Verdi)

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CARLO BERGONZI appears for the first time with the San Francisco Opera as Don Alvaro in *La Forza del Destino*, an opera which he has recorded twice and with which he opened the La Scala season in 1965. The tenor was born in Busseto in the province of Parma, also noted as the birthplace of Verdi and Toscanini. Bergonzi displayed an interest in musical matters beginning in early childhood and when he was sixteen years old his teachers at the Arrigo Boito Conservatory in Parma decided he was a baritone. His studies were interrupted by the war and after three years as a prisoner he began his career as a tenor in *Andrea Chenier* at the Teatro Petruzzelli in Bari. Except for short vacations with his wife and two children, Bergonzi has been on the go continually since that time and has sung at every important Italian house, at the Metropolitan, Covent Garden, Vienna and practically every other leading theater in the world.



ANTHONY BESCH was born in London and is presently one of the leading stage directors in Great Britain. He trained under Professor Carl Ebert at the Glyndebourne Festival and Dr. Günther Rennert at the Hamburg Staatsoper. During the past fifteen years Besch has staged more than seventy operas, among which the most recent have been *Elektra*, *La Favorita* and Verdi's *Attila* at the Colon in Buenos Aires, Rossini's *Le Comte Ory* at the Monnaie in Brussels, and Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* in Washington, D.C. A year ago he became general director of the Toronto Opera School in Canada.



COLETTE BOKY graduated from the Quebec Conservatory of Music in 1962 and promptly went on to win a scholarship award from the province, a grant from the Canada Council, and a prize in the Geneva International Competition. She has sung in Vienna at the Volksoper and in Munich's Cuvillies Theater. Miss Boky made her Metropolitan Opera debut as the Queen of the Night and has been heard there also as Gilda and Rosina.



FRANCO BONISOLLI was a ski instructor and mountain guide before turning tenor. He made his debut in 1961 at the Spoleto Festival in *The Love for Three Oranges* and has since advanced through the opera houses of Rome, Naples, Palermo, Venice, Genoa and Bologna to Milan's La Scala, where he sang opposite Beverly Sills and Marilyn Horne this spring in *The Siege of Corinth*. Bonisolli is to be seen in a recent film version of *La Traviata* with Anna Moffo and is scheduled for more films in the near future.



ANTON COPPOLA'S most recent appearance on the Opera House podium was for Spring Opera's *La Rondine* in 1968. Previously he conducted here with the touring San Carlo Opera and the national company of *My Fair Lady*. Presently Coppola is on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music in New York. In addition to operatic work with the New York City Opera, where he led the world premiere of *Lizzie Borden*, he spent four years at Radio City Music Hall and with such Broadway shows as *Silk Stockings*, *The Boy Friend*, *The Most Happy Fella* and *New Faces of 1952 and 1956*.



CRISTINA DEUTEKOM in the last two years has made somewhat of a specialty of the role of the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*. She sang it first under Josef Krips in the Vienna Staatsoper in 1967, at the Metropolitan the following season, and is recording it this fall for London Records with the Vienna Philharmonic under George Solti. Earlier this year Miss Deutekom, who is Dutch, was highly acclaimed for her *Puritani* Elvira at the Fenice in Venice and immediately re-engaged to sing *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Fiordiligi* in *Così fan Tutte* there.



LUDMILA DVORAKOVA, a Czech soprano from Prague, has sprung to international prominence within the last four years. In 1965 she made her Bayreuth debut as Gu-

trune in *Götterdämmerung* and has returned there repeatedly including the summer of 1969 for Kundry in *Parsifal*. In 1966 came a first appearance at the Metropolitan as Leonore in *Fidelio* followed by Isolde, Ortrud, Senta and Chrysothemis. Also that year was a Covent Garden debut as the *Walküre* Brünnhilde, and again she has been brought back frequently for full Ring cycles. Other successes have been at La Scala, Vienna, Buenos Aires, Berlin and Munich.



SIXTEN EHRLING was named music director and conductor of the Detroit Symphony in 1963. Before then, and since 1940, he had been associated with the Royal Opera in his native Sweden, becoming its chief conductor and music director in 1953. During his tenure in Stockholm he led some 2,000 performances of 45 operas and 30 ballets, and he returned to lead the company at Expo '67 in Montreal. Maestro Ehrling guest conducts frequently and had the distinction of leading five of America's principal orchestras in one twelve-month period recently—Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and Boston.



AUGUST EVERDING is a theater director who in the last two years has staged five operas, each of which has been tremendously successful. They are *La Traviata* in Munich, *Tristan und Isolde* in Vienna, the world premiere of Humphrey Searle's *Hamlet* in Hamburg, Orff's new *Prometheus* in Munich, and *The Flying Dutchman*. The latter opera opened the 1969 Bayreuth season and was the first work staged there by anyone other than the Wagner brothers in twenty-one years. Everding is a professor of drama at the University of Munich and head of the Kammerspiele there, where he has staged such plays as *Tiny Alice*, *Sweet Bird of Youth*, *Tartuffe*, *St. Joan* and *A Delicate Balance*.



JAMES FARRAR has made his career in Europe in recent years. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, he studied in New York, Munich and Milan, made his debut in Oberhausen, Germany, and has been heard in Karlsruhe, Munich, Cologne, Stuttgart, and Berlin. In the United States he toured with the Metropolitan Opera National Company.



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NELLE FISHER studied dancing at the Cornish School in Seattle, where she was "discovered" by Martha Graham who was instrumental in bringing her to New York where Miss Fisher began her career in the Graham Contemporary Dance Company. Her work over a period of thirty years has led Miss Fisher as a dancer from three years at Radio City Music Hall to Broadway shows such as *Can Can* and *On The Town* to more than six hundred television shows. She has choreographed for the Cincinnati Opera, the Vancouver Festival and the Seattle Opera and for the last four years has led the Memphis Civic Ballet.



ALAN GILBERT sang for the first time in opera in 1963 following ten years on Broadway in *South Pacific*, *Finian's Rainbow* and *The Most Happy Fella*. He received his musical education at the Juilliard School and the UCLA opera workshop and has appeared with companies throughout the west.



BOHUMIL GREGOR for the next three years will be first conductor at the Hamburg Staatsoper and since 1965 has been permanent guest conductor of the Royal Swedish Opera in Stockholm. He was born in Prague, studied there and at the age of nineteen became a double-bass player in the orchestra of the Smetana Theater. Maestro Gregor is acclaimed for his Janacek readings, having conducted all the Czech composer's works in the theater and recorded *The Makropoulos Case* and *From the House of the Dead*. A new recording of *Jenufa* is slated for 1969.



HENRI GUI first performed the role of Pelleas in Debussy's *Pelleas et Melisande* in

France in 1959. Since then he has sung it for the new von Karajan production in Vienna, at the Glyndebourne Festival, at La Scala in Milan, for the performance at the Paris Opera-Comique celebrating the centenary of Debussy's birth, and at the Aix en Provence Festival. Most recently he was in a production opposite the Melisande of Jeannette Pidou at Naples' San Carlo last April. Monsieur Gui's repertoire also includes *Lakme*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *La Boheme*, and *Romeo et Juliette*, which he recorded last year with Franco Corelli and Mirella Freni.



EDWARD HERRNKIND, although born in New York, was a resident of San Francisco when he was a semi-finalist in the 1961 San Francisco Opera Auditions. After further study he went to Europe where he has sung in the theaters of Heidelberg, Regensburg, and Lübeck.



GWYNETH JONES is Welsh and comes from a village called Pontypool. Before her rise to fame in 1964 she had studied for four years at London's Royal College of Music, at the Chigiana Academy in Siena, and at the International Opera Centre in Zurich. She also sang at the Zurich Opera before joining Covent Garden, where her first success was in the Giulini-Visconti production of *Il Trovatore*. Roles since then have included Senta, Donna Anna, Aida, Octavian, Desdemona and Medea at La Scala, Vienna, Buenos Aires, Rome, Bayreuth and elsewhere. Miss Jones has just recorded a new *Fidelio* album, opposite James King, who sings with her in San Francisco when she makes her debut in this role, and she will repeat *Fidelio* under Leonard Bernstein in a new production at the Vienna Staatsoper marking the Beethoven year in 1970.



JAMES KING began his professional career with a performance of Don Jose in *Carmen* in the first Spring Opera of San Francisco season in 1961. Shortly thereafter he won a contest which led to a European engagement and in 1962 he was asked to join the Deutsche Oper in Berlin. Here Karl Boehm heard the young tenor and engaged him for Salzburg and a tour of Japan. King bowed at the Bayreuth Festival in 1965 and

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at the Metropolitan in 1966 and now is heard regularly at Vienna and Munich as well. Later this year King will return to the Metropolitan for Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* (of which he sings only one performance in San Francisco on September 21) and in 1971 he is scheduled for his first Manrico in *Il Trovatore* at Covent Garden.



PETER LAGGER's birthplace was Switzerland and he is currently a Swiss citizen, but one of his parents was Russian and the other Italian. Lager himself speaks eight languages fluently, which is undoubtedly a help to him because in his work to date (and he is still a young man) he has already sung in England, Japan, Germany, Monte Carlo, Italy, Brazil, Spain, Austria and Denmark! Lager's operatic repertoire ranges from Boris to Osmin and from Hagen to Kezal. He also gives lieder recitals and is frequently a soloist with orchestras.



CHARLES MACKERRAS has been heard only once before in the United States, as conductor with the Hamburg Staatsoper during its special guest engagement at Lincoln Center in New York in the summer of 1967. This was during the time he was first conductor with the Hamburg company, a position which he has now relinquished to become musical director of London's Sadler's Wells Opera. Mackerras has also conducted a number of productions at Covent Garden, the latest of which was a brilliantly acclaimed *Così fan Tutte* last winter. He has made many recordings for RCA, Angel, DGG, Vanguard and other labels, his most recent discs being Handel's *Messiah*, Gluck's *Orfeo*, Donizetti's *Roberto Devereaux* and the Janacek Sinfonietta. Mackerras is also a composer and has made recordings of two of his own ballets, *Pineapple Poll* and *The Lady and the Fool*.



LJILJANA MOLNAR-TALAJIC comes to the United States from Yugoslavia, where she is

on the roster of the National Opera in Sarajevo. She studied at the Music Academy there and in the past few years has won prizes in international competitions held in Sofia, Munich, Geneva and Tokyo. Until last summer Miss Molnar-Talajic had sung opera only in Russia, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, but in July she made a very successful debut at the Florence Maggio Musicale as *Aida* under the baton of Zubin Mehta and also sang Leonora in *Il Trovatore* there. In addition to her two "*Aida*" performances in San Francisco, she will sing the title role in the Verdi opera in Sacramento on November 23.



PAOLO MONTARSOLO has won special acclaim in the basso buffo roles of Rossini as witness his most recent engagements, which include *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in Venice, Salzburg, and at La Scala; *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Genoa; and *La Cenerentola* in Palermo. He is a native of Naples and left that city to go to Milan, where he attended the school run by La Scala. In the United States Montarsolo has already performed in Dallas and Chicago. He has sung for the Italian radio network, Italian television and in all the theaters of that country. The President of the Republic of Italy has decorated him for his artistic services.



MARGOT MOSER was the first American to star on Broadway as Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*. She played the role more than 1,000 times and last summer recreated it in San Francisco for the Civic Light Opera. She trained at the Juilliard School of Music and last year appeared in the Gilbert and Sullivan season of the New York City Opera. In addition to her public performances in San Francisco this season, Miss Moser will sing Adina in five student matinees of *The Elixir of Love*.



NORMAN PAIGE follows the pattern of a number of American-born singers who have gone to Europe to gain a foothold in their profession. After four years in Cologne, Germany, and Linz, Austria, Paige returned to tour with the Metropolitan Opera National Company, and has been heard with the local companies of Seattle, Boston, Houston and Shreveport.

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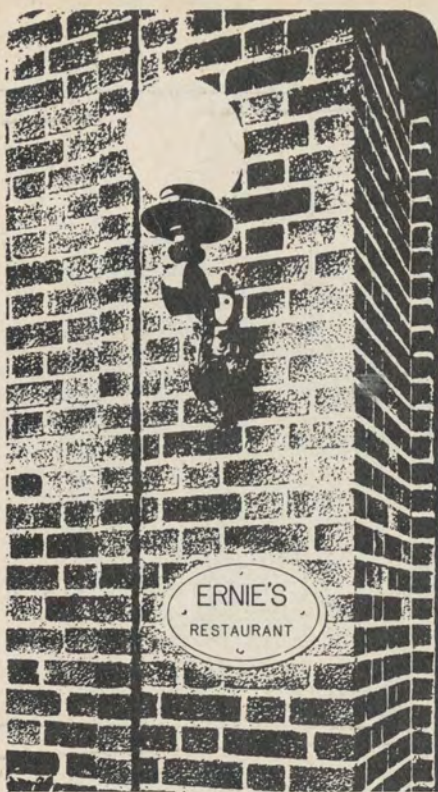
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FRANTZ PETRI began the study of medicine in Paris, where he was born, but after two years abandoned it to concentrate on vocal work. He obtained his first professional engagement at Mulhouse in 1963. He sings both standard opera such as *Carmen*, *Tosca*, *Les Contes d'Hoffman* and operettas such as *La Belle Helene* and *The Beggar's Opera*. Recently Petri has ventured into the Wagnerian area with Wolfram in *Tannhauser* and a *Rheingold* Wotan.



JEAN-PIERRE PONNELLE is a familiar name to San Francisco Opera-goers as the designer for the American premiere here of *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and the American stage premiere of *Carmina Burana*. Now he returns as a stage director as well with *La Cenerentola*. Ponnelle attended the Sorbonne in Paris and studied painting there with Fernand Leger. When he was eighteen years old he designed a ballet and an opera by Hans Werner Henze. Last year Ponnelle designed the production of *Don Carlo*, which opened the La Scala season and both staged and designed *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* for the Salzburg Festival. This year he staged and designed *Così fan Tutte* at Salzburg, *La Clemenza di Tito* in Cologne, and *Il Trovatore* in Nice.



MARGARET PRICE is only twenty-seven years old and is already established as one of the most outstanding of the younger sopranos before the European public. This year alone she appears under conductors Klemperer, Boulez, Giulini, Szell, Abbado, Barbirolli, Boehm and Davis. In opera Miss Price was the Marzelline in Covent Garden's *Fidelio* production under Klemperer last spring and she has also been heard in the Royal Opera House as Pamina. Glyndebourne heard her as Constanze in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* in 1968. Prior to coming to San Francisco for her American debut, she will sing in *Falstaff* (Geraint Evans will have the title role) with the Welsh National Opera in Cardiff in a gala production celebrating the investiture of the Prince of Wales.



SUSANNE STULL took part in the 1969 Merola Opera Program and sang in the Paul Masson Vineyard performances of Haydn's *The Man in the Moon*. She is from Reno, Nevada.



OTMAR SUITNER was the choice of the late Wieland Wagner to conduct the entire Ring cycle at Bayreuth in 1966. He led *Tannhauser* there in 1964, *Der Fliegende Holländer* in 1965, and the Ring cycle again in 1967. Maestro Suitner comes from Innsbruck, studied at the Salzburg Mozarteum, and was also a pupil of the late Clemens Krauss. He became music director of the Remscheid Opera in 1952, general music director of the Dresden Staatsoper in 1960, and general music director of the Berlin Staatsoper in 1964. Suitner has conducted also at La Scala, Venice, Buenos Aires, and last spring directed another Ring cycle in Stuttgart.



NANCY TATUM "floated a ravishing pianissimo, projected a stunning high C and bathed the Verdian line in rich warm tone," according to Los Angeles Times critic Martin Bernheimer following a performance of *Aida* in Pasadena. The young Memphis-born soprano has also sung Senta in *Der Fliegende Holländer* in Vancouver, where she was compared to Nilsson and Rysanek; Adalgisa in *Norma* with the American Opera Society in New York, and *Fidelio* in Cincinnati. The major portion of Miss Tatum's career up to now, however, has been overseas, where she has sung at La Scala, Buenos Aires, Paris, Berlin, Hamburg and Munich. Her repertoire includes Desdemona, Donna Anna, Ariadne and Abigaille in *Nabucco*.



EVAN THOMAS makes his major operatic debut in San Francisco although he has performed with the Metropolitan Opera Studio, the North Shore Friends of Opera, and the Turnau Opera Friends. New York's City Center has presented him in *My Fair Lady* and *Brigadoon* as well as a Gilbert and Sullivan season. Mr. Thomas spent a summer as an apprentice with the Santa Fe Opera.

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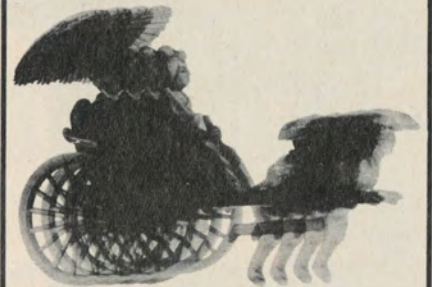


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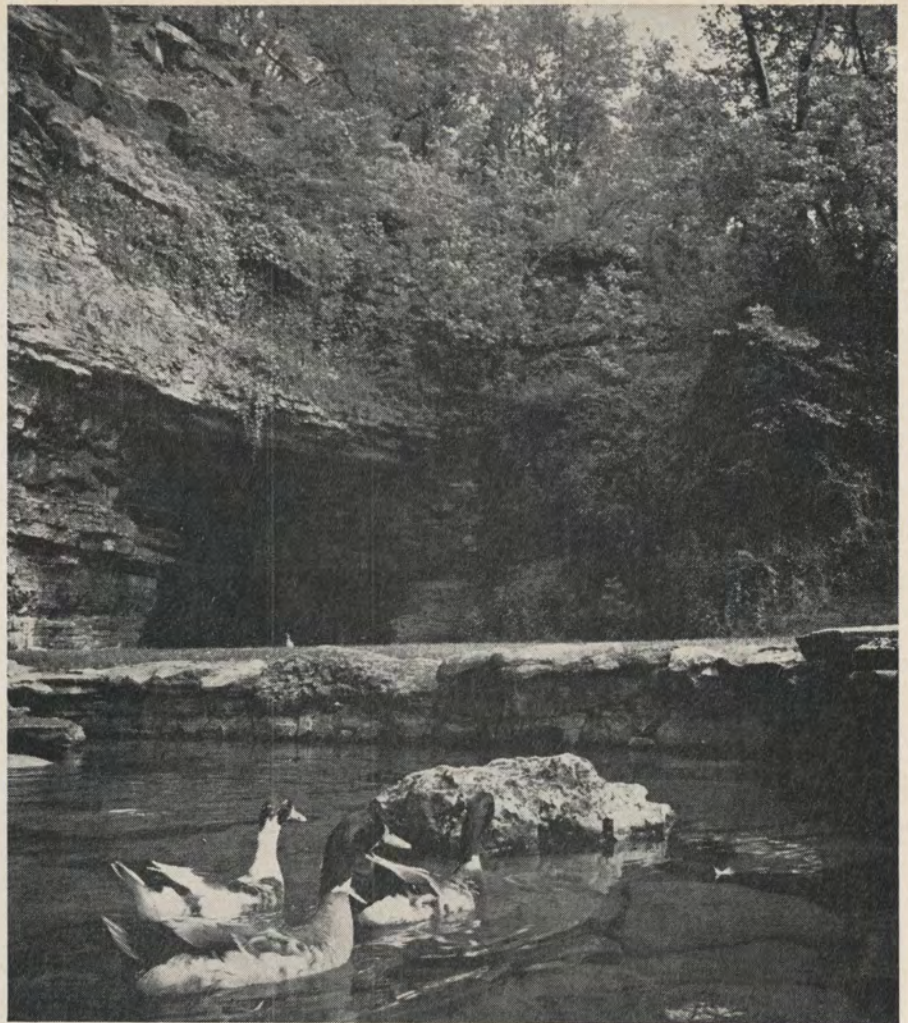


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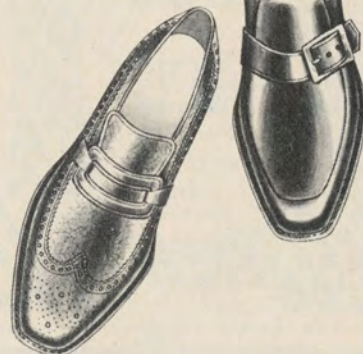
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In Part One of this short treatise on loudspeakers, I covered the various price categories at which speakers tend to be sold, and what you can expect (and *should* expect) for a given amount of money. But I reserved comment on the highest price category, which extends all the way from under \$200 to more than \$2000. That's quite a span for one category, especially when the other speaker categories go in increments of about forty or fifty dollars, and it's obviously worth some discussion.

But the reason I've saved it for separate treatment is not that I think it's the category in which most readers of this series will or should do their buying. It's just that a discussion of what people pay for, or think they are paying for, in this category probably provides the best way to talk about the things to listen for in a good speaker in *any* price range.

To recap for a moment, the things that tend to cost money for objective reasons in a speaker are bass coverage and power-handling capability. It costs more, for instance, as a speaker maker attempts to provide the same amount of bass at the same maximum distortion level at successively greater power levels. It also costs more to extend the bass range downward (toward the very lowest region occupied by things like thirty-two-foot organ pipes) at the same distortion level for roughly the same listening level. What this means is that a good \$50 speaker and a good \$150 speaker should sound very much alike on most music at reasonable volume levels in an average room. The \$150 animal will reveal some subtleties that the cheaper one won't, but their overall *character* should be very much the same up to the point when you decide you want to shake the room with bass drum or pipe organ.

You can determine where your own demands lie on the scale of such things by finding a record with portentous bass content (*real* bass, not the electric-organ variety, which is thick but puny) and listening to it on various categories of speaker. Or if money isn't enough of a concern to complicate the choice, you can simply buy your way out of the problem with a pair of the \$150 systems.

What you *shouldn't* do, however, is assume that the kind of increments you can hear between speakers in the under-\$200 class will continue in the above-\$200 range. What you pay for in *good* speakers in the luxury class

STEREO

by JOHN MILDER

LOUDSPEAKERS—II □ Part Eight of the Performing Arts Guide to Stereo Components — How to Buy Them, Hook Them Up and, Hopefully, Enjoy Them.



are super-subtleties, including the kind of high-frequency response that provides the last whisker of definition of the sound of musical instruments.

Now to the sorest point in the audio component industry. There are probably more *bad* speakers in the above-\$200 category than in all of the categories below it. This strange situation survives from the days when the best speakers were none too good, and when a generation of audiophiles — some of whom now sell audio equipment for a living — got used to paying increasing amounts of money not for successively better quality in *any* objective sense but for an increasingly larger-than-life quality that implied that reproduced music could somehow be better than the original. Many of the speakers that provided this kind of philosophy are still around, and new ones appear every so often. Lots of people, after all, would like to improve on reality.

Assuming that you don't, remember that what you will be paying for in a "best" speaker is subtlety and detail, not some sudden spectacular revealed truth. (That kind of revelation does occur once in a while, with just the right kind of recording in just the right kind of living room, and it doesn't necessarily require a "best" speaker.)

Before we go further, two quick disclaimers. First, I don't believe that there is a single standard of truth to which all speakers must adhere with only minor differences. There are "effects" that, if you like them, are perfectly legitimate, including the relatively popular one these days of pro-

viding indirect, reflected sound that gives the illusion of a very large sound source. And second, my statement about "bad" expensive speakers makes it necessary to say that the speakers I will mention for your consideration are obviously subjective choices of mine, and omissions don't necessarily fall in the "bad" category.

To my mind, the leading candidates in the wide field are, in impeccably alphabetical order, the Acoustic Research AR-3A (\$250), Audio Dynamics ADC-18A (\$300), Bose 901 (\$476 the pair), Electro-Voice Patrician (\$1095), Fisher XP-15B (\$270), Janszen Z-960 (\$295), KLH Model Twelve (\$275), James B. Lansing Olympus (\$675) and Ranger-Paragon (\$2400), Rectilinear III (\$280), and Tannoy GRF (\$580).

Other than price, there are utilitarian differences between the speakers mentioned. The Bose and JBL Ranger-Paragon, for instance, are indirect radiators, and the latter is a unique horizontal cabinet design that takes up six feet of a living room wall. The AR-3A is the only "bookshelf" unit mentioned (although its weight often dictates floor placement). And the Bose and the KLH Twelve provide an unusual range of electronic adjustment to suit acoustic conditions and listening preferences.

Two highly specialized speakers, the Acoustech X and the KLH Model Nine, also deserve a special mention. Both are electrostatic speakers, and both are sold only in stereo pairs, (the KLH for \$1140, the Acoustech for \$1690 including matching built-in power amplifiers). The electrostatic (whose principle there isn't room to explain here) has peculiar virtues and limitations. Its diaphragm has more built-in accuracy of motion than a conventional speaker's, but that accuracy obtains only over a short distance of motion. So electrostatic speakers must be built up to very large size to produce the range and sound level of a conventional speaker (both the Acoustech and KLH are six feet tall), and even then there's a limit to how loud you can really play them. They are, then, for someone whose penchant for accurate reproduction doesn't extend to producing a symphonic sound level in a very big living room.

The penalty of any "best" speaker is that you hear more of the noise and distortion still present in much program material. But with the best recordings, they are indeed something to hear. □

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A NOTE IS A NOTE IS A NOTE
by Nicolas Slonimsky

The famous conductor Arthur Nikisch was criticized in the German press for not supporting the cause of modern German music. "This is not true," Nikisch observed. "I am performing a double service for modern German composers, by playing the works of some and by not playing the works of others."

PPP

Rachmaninoff played his Second Piano Concerto during one of his American tours. An enthusiastic lady admirer made her way into the green room after the concert to shake his hand. "It was wonderful, wonderful!" she gushed. "Tell me, who is your arranger?" "Madam," Rachmaninoff replied, "In Russia we composers are so poor that we have to write our own music."

PPP

In the opera *Mignon*, the tenor is supposed to save the soprano from a conflagration. The Italian tenor Giuseppe Anselmi, who was slender, found himself in a predicament when, at a performance in La Scala in Milan, he vainly tried to tackle the heroine who possessed enormous avoirdupois. "Make it in two trips!", someone shouted from the gallery.

PPP

Nineteenth-century music critics, at least some of them, were astonishingly venal. Meyerbeer hit upon an ingenious scheme of bribing the Paris critics. In advance of the production of his opera *Dinorah*, he sent copies of the published vocal score to the Paris music critics with the following identical messages: "There are six important places in my opera which merit your attention, and I have marked them with special notes." The notes were 1000-franc notes, inserted in each score. Meyerbeer got enthusiastic reviews, but *Dinorah* was a failure with the public.

PPP

Moritz Rosenthal, the famous piano virtuoso, boasted that he could identify any work by Chopin from only two bars. A witty friend put him to the test: he sat down at the piano and for three seconds played nothing. Rosenthal was nonplussed and, suspecting a joke, gave up. The answer was: two bars of rest in rapid $\frac{3}{4}$ time from Chopin's *Scherzo in B flat minor*.

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REVIEWS

by DIGBY DIEHL



BOOKS ON THEATRE

What Is Theatre?

by Eric Bentley
Atheneum. \$4.95 (paperback)

Theatre Notebook: 1947-1967

by Jan Kott
Doubleday. \$5.95

These two collections of essays and reviews, culled from almost exactly the same period (Bentley's collection ranges over the years 1944-1967) reveal much about two kinds of critical sensibility, as well as offering some significant glimpses into recent theatrical history. Bentley is consistently analytic, demanding and academically precise in his evaluations. Dealing with the Broadway scene, which he covered as critic for *The New Republic* from 1952 to 1956, these writings generate an intellectual fire which exists apart from the productions he discusses. Kott, by comparison, is generous, descriptive and broadly speculative in his critical approach. Although he has been teaching at Yale and at the University of California at Berkeley for the past two years, all of these writings deal with productions abroad, half of the book being specifically concerned with Polish drama.

As author of *Shakespeare, Our Contemporary*, Kott provoked American interest in the intriguing relationship between the comi-tragic despair of characters such as King Lear and similar emotional expressions in the Thea-

tre of the Absurd. Focusing on Samuel Beckett and at the same time illuminating a technique used by Peter Brook in his Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Lear*, Kott offered a compelling, although much-disputed viewpoint about Shakespeare's existentialism and its analogous value in the modern world. This present volume, portions of which appeared for the first time in English in the pages of *Performing Arts*, is less cosmic — fragmented by the exigencies of journalism — yet his best insights about theatre come from that same method of perceiving particular dramatic actions in contemporary philosophical contexts.

For example, Kott's first essay, "A Genealogy of Contemporary Polish Drama," is based on the premise that "Theatre, particularly in Poland, particularly since the war, has been something of a litmus paper. It has reflected politics, fashion, snobbery, literary discussion, desire for change." Pointing out that Alfred Jarry's Dadaist play *Ubu Roi* is set in Poland, Kott evokes the significance of a 1956 student production of this play in Warsaw, the year of the "Glorious Polish October" and the Hungarian Revolution. The nonsensical mockery of Jarry's dialogue became a form of political provocation — in that context, a contemporary protest. As part of the performance, a girl was to have undressed to the music of the Polish anthem. Kott notes wryly, "In Poland, even a striptease act may have ideological overtones."

More seriously, he suggests that it is the nightmare world of Kafka which has dominated the modern dramatic scene in Poland, citing contemporary playwrights such as Slawomir Mrozek and Witold Gombrowicz. He describes *The Shoemakers*, a play by S. I. Witkiewicz, a "catastrophist" who wrote under the pen name Witkacy: "In Witkacy's theatre, corpses get up and continue conversations, and suicides jumping out of windows come back through the front door. The real topic of his cruel and absurd grotesque is the agony and decay of the first quarter of the twentieth century." Kott's descriptions of the philosophical networks which connect Polish drama to a range of ideas from *Troilus and Cressida* to LSD are tantalizing in scope. They are perhaps all the more tantalizing since few readers will be familiar with the tongue-twisting names of Polish playwrights.

Disconcertingly, Kott is the soul of caution when discussing Polish productions of material more familiar to American readers such as Dürrenmatt's *The Visit*, Sophocles' *Oedipus* or Brecht's *Arturo Ui*. Typical of these blander performances is his non-review of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* which deals almost exclusively with a naive notion of the Devil as some extension of far-Right political thought. It provides a provocative, but misleading essay — and a concrete example which must raise doubts about his judgements concerning Polish drama.

One suspects that Kott is addicted to at least one critical vice: a super-subjectivity which seizes upon one aspect of a theatrical production and distorts the reader's understanding of the whole.

Kott's 140 pages devoted to the Polish theatre seem remiss in one other, more significant matter: Jerzy Grotowski's Polish Laboratory Theatre, which has been presenting, since 1959, some of the most radically experimental theatre to be seen anywhere, is not even mentioned. According to Richard Schechner's *Drama Review*, Grotowski's edicts, such as "If an actor's not in pain he's not doing anything constructive," may be cornerstones of tomorrow's theatre. Although his controversial techniques are well known in Europe, American audiences have had only the opportunity of one ETV show to witness Grotowski's conception of theatre. That Kott has failed to discuss the most important theatre group in Poland is incomprehensible.

The most readable half of Kott's book is not properly theatre criticism at all; rather, it is a personal travelogue through the intellectual landscape of Europe (and briefly, China). Like the George Plimpton of Poland, Kott takes us on visits with Alberto Moravia in Italy, a romp with Brendan Behan's brother in Edinburgh, and chats with Eugène Ionesco in Paris. Kott's "1962 Italian Journal" is a delightfully evocative series of sketches and observations.

Finally, in his last essay, "Theatre and Literature," Kott returns to his supposed critical function with a consideration of "theatricalism" in contemporary drama. He offers us the choice between an abstract theatre of artificial conventions and a theatre of literal action:

One might ask which theatre is the most truthful. To my mind the answer could be the circus: a circus in which genuine lions

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devour genuine Christians. We can now start measuring the gradations of theatrical illusion. Genuine lions and genuine Christians, but now the lions only pretend to devour the Christians; false lions and genuine Christians; and finally false lions and false Christians, that is to say, *Androcles and the Lion* by George Bernard Shaw.

Kott suggests the scene in *Lear* where Gloucester wants to throw himself over the cliffs of Dover and ends up pantomiming this act. Kott points out that this could only have relevance in a theatrical setting: "This kind of parable can be realized only on the stage; in narrative fiction it has no meaning. Gloucester's jump is both imaginary and concrete, meaningful and meaningless." Here, we return to a kind of speculative critical insight that is Kott at his best.

By comparison, Bentley bristles with specific arguments and viewpoints in *What Is Theatre?*, generally ignoring the theoretical questions which he has raised in such previous volumes as *The Theatre of Commitment* and *The Life of the Drama*. Unlike Kott, he is not a plot-teller, but rather one who chooses to seize some point of debate, expresses it in the context of the production being reviewed, and proceeds to defend it as the crux of the play. The unsparing results of this critical methodology give the reader a cumulative concept of Bentley's critical standards and a composite answer to his title question, "What is theatre?"

The manner in which Bentley frames his obligations as a critic in the first essay, "Professional Playgoing," differentiates him from his gentler colleague, Kott:

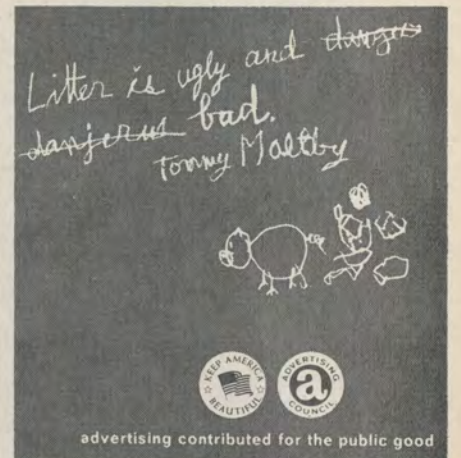
The critic is uncompromising, not because he regards himself as infallible, nor even because he feels very sure of himself, but because it is his job to be so. It is true, he enjoys this job; he enjoys a fight; his writing embodies his zest for living. Yet he doesn't enjoy all of the job. The constant infliction of pain is a burden to him, the price he has to pay for the right to practice his profession. For the journalist-critic, the only alternative to a sharp tongue is a mealy mouth.

Examine, for instance, the review of *The Crucible* which Bentley entitles, "The Innocence of Arthur Miller." Bentley first points out that the theatre needs more plays that are critical, engagé commentaries on the state of the nation. "The appearance of one such play by an author, like Mr. Miller, who is neither an infant, a fool, or a swin-

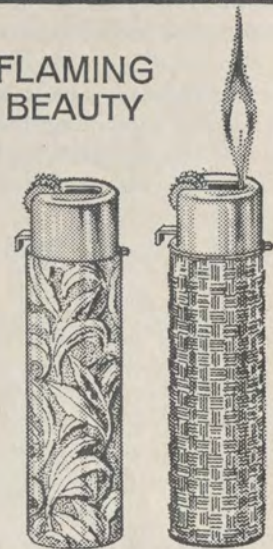


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dlar, is enough to bring tears to the eyes," Bentley writes. And then he moves directly to the conceptual weakness of the play and its origins in the mentality of the unreconstructed liberal. It is the essential unreality of the assumptions in the play that Bentley attacks: "In Hebrew mythology, innocence was lost at the very beginning of things; in liberal, especially American liberal, folklore, it has not been lost yet; Arthur Miller is the playwright of American liberal folklore."

No chauvinist, Bentley applies the harshest critical standards to American playwrights such as O'Neill, Williams, Inge, and Miller — standards that are sometimes too harsh. It is his contention that the first-rate American playwrights are usually second-rate Europeans, and that they share a "cult of immaturity." Bentley remains consistent in this thesis right up to his 1964 essay, "Touch of the Adolescent," occasioned by Arthur Miller's *After The Fall*.

The Teen-Ager (an American invention) is the current culture hero, and the archetypal dramatic situation of the culture is the adolescent misfit who is cutting loose a bit and is sorry for himself a whole lot. . . . What else can be said of Arthur Miller's actual stage presentation of himself and Miss Monroe? What *After The Fall* really shows is the adolescent male discovering sex: at first it is absolutely yummy, but a little later on girls turn out to be awful bitches, and one needs to let the world know it — loudly.

In reading through the broad spectrum of dramatic events featured in Bentley's 104 articles, one receives some of the immediacy, the journalistic bounce, that these productions had years ago, as distinguished from the retrospective chronology granted us in other, duller histories of American theatre.

Ultimately, books such as *What Is Theatre?* (and to a lesser extent, Kott's *Theatre Notebook*) give us a sense of perspective and critical balance which we must bring to contemporary theatre experiences. They are full of historical lessons worth reviving and remembering. Most significantly, a collection such as Bentley's book serves to remind us that "theatrical excellence" is not merely a term invented for the wanton misuse of ebullient critics and advertising agencies; rather, it is an idea of drama distilled from our theatrical tradition, an idea which could stand redefining by the critics of today. □

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"...the theatre has little to fear from the mass media — and even less from technology."

The Mechanics of Illusion

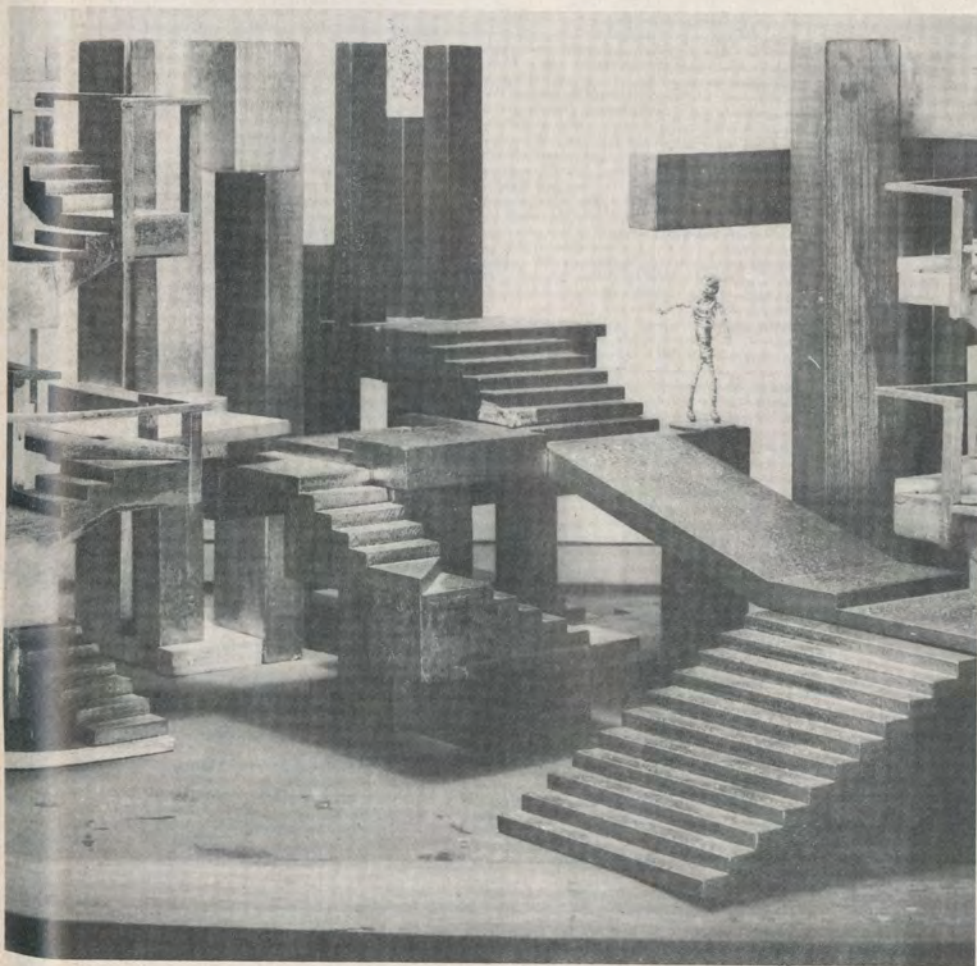
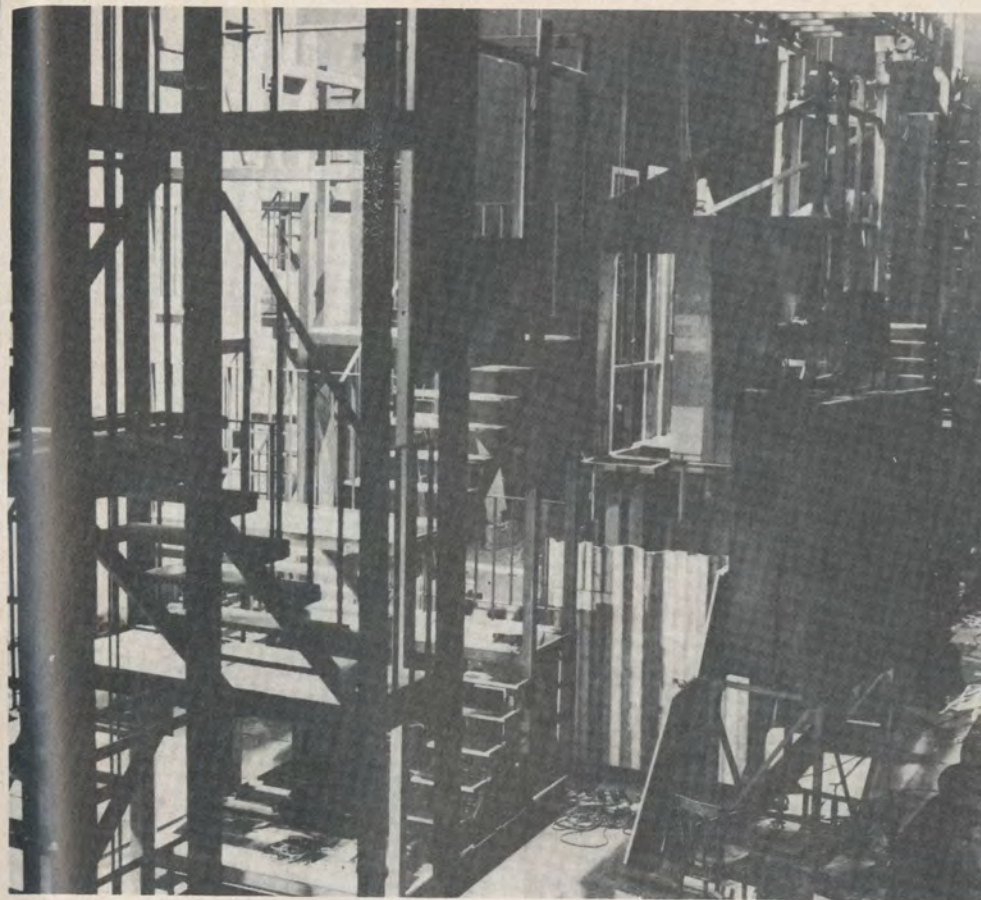
by LEWIS SEGAL



Mary Martin riding her horse down a treadmill in the Civic Light Opera's 1957 "Annie Get Your Gun" — "kinetic excitement more intense than a thousand celluloid buffalo stampedes"



Center Theatre Group's recent production of the George Bernard Shaw-Christopher Isherwood "The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God" made striking use of projections



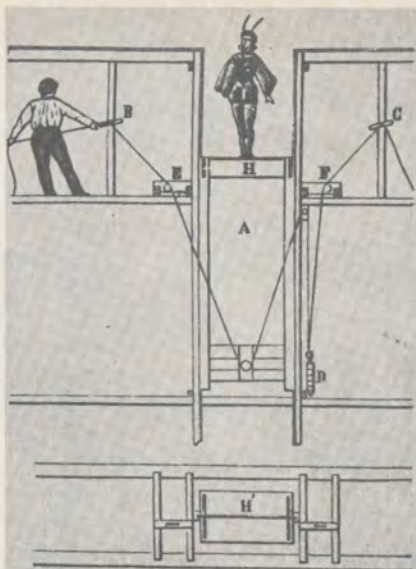
Mechanical settings by Sean Kenny for "The Four Musketeers" (top) and "Bull" which, according to critic Kenneth Tynan, converge "menacingly on any performer who threatens to hog the lime-light; and whenever the human element looks like its gaining control, they collapse on it in a mass of flaming timber"

"AESTHETICS and technology," as the saying goes, "don't mix." And in the theatre they are considered an exceptionally volatile combination. After all, by continually raiding the drama library, don't the mass media rob the legitimate stage of its legitimacy? And don't the fluidity of the cinema and the immediacy of television contribute to making the fabulous invalid a terminal patient? The stage's salvation will not come from any fancy technical gimmicks but through "two planks and a passion." Right?

Not quite. For it has become increasingly evident that, by appropriating the audience for manufactured realism, the mass media have forced the theatre to become theatrical again. Moreover, if new inventions and techniques give the theatre a quasi-cinematic fluidity, they also restore to it its function as a source of amazement, poetry and even magic. And it is here that, despite the competition, the stage is supreme.

Whenever Hollywood gets hold of a Broadway hit, it paradoxically invests considerable resources purely for *de-theatricalization*. In the recent *Finian's Rainbow*, for example, half the musical numbers were shot in a multitude of locales. But despite the exertions of cast and crew, the result seemed less alive than any perfunctory performance in front of a painted backdrop. Yet a literal photographic transcription would have seemed hopelessly stogy and even more tepid. Unfortunately, without the crucial aliveness or corporeality of the stage, film adaptations rarely have a satisfying effect. With this quality of presence, however, the most obvious devices and techniques generate delight and wonder.

A treadmill is hardly a miraculous invention. Yet when Mary Martin galloped a horse down one during the Los Angeles and San Francisco Civic Light Opera's 1957 *Annie Get Your Gun*, the kinetic excitement proved more intense than a thousand celluloid buffalo stampedes. Similarly, when in the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Dr. Faustus*, Mephistopheles spit and the floor suddenly discharged a few sparks, the shock seemed greater than could be generated by the most fiery film volcano. Finally, a single gunshot in a play will cause people to jump when documentary telecasts of mass violence leave them unmoved. So, propaganda aside, the theatre has little to fear from the mass media — and



Top to bottom; an early-19th C. illustration of a trapdoor mechanism, an illusion-creating device in constant theatrical use for over 2000 years; a more recent development, moving pattern projections, is favored in today's operatic presentations, in this case a Bayreuth Festival "Parsifal"; another ancient device for creating illusions, the mirror, is here employed to make the six cast members of the New York production of "Dames at Sea" look like the hordes who populated Busby Berkeley dance sequences in 1930s films.

even less from technology.

After belatedly renouncing realism, the legitimate stage had to tighten its belt a bit — particularly in the area of spectacle. However, vestiges of its old opulence remain in ballet, opera and, to a lesser extent, musical comedy. But even here, the closer a staging gets to capturing a real or even imaginary environment with the finality of a photograph, the more incompatible it becomes with any conceptual lyricism. As anyone can testify who ever endured a Gothic *Lohengrin* or Stonehenge *King Lear*, the theatre cannot successfully render in literal terms conceptual elements which should remain only suggested or symbolized. And technology must not go beyond providing a springboard for the audience's imagination, for theatre is most powerful when most metaphoric. In other words, Cleopatra's death gains nothing from the presence of a wriggling rubber asp. Indeed, besides the inevitable attention-smashing squeals of audience disgust, such a staging irrevocably changes Shakespeare's concept from high tragedy (with the unseen asp personified as a baby "that sucks the nurse asleep") to a historical illustration of the lethal consequences of snakebite.

From the beginning, drama has been a ritualized re-enactment for which special effects were created with special equipment. In fact, the oldest surviving critical term, *deus ex machina*, originated with the "god out of the machine" who frequently dropped in on Greek tragedies to alter their outcomes. (Today it describes an unexpected and often coincidental event or character through which a plot is neatly resolved.) The Greeks also invented the trapdoor mechanism and the *periaktoi*, three-sided scenery which could be rotated for a swift change of view — much like modern billboard advertisements.

Not only didn't the Romans improve upon previous technical developments but, like alchemists in reverse, they took the poetry of Greek drama and transformed it into the most debased sort of spectacle. And the most characteristic Roman theatrical form wasn't drama at all but those violent pre-Christian era "happenings" in the Colosseum. (No wonder the Church banned the theatre as soon as it gained sufficient power!)

Dormant until the Renaissance, stage mechanics suddenly burst into prominence with the allegorical tri-

umphs or masques. For these court entertainments, elaborate perspectives were devised that had to vanish in the twinkling of an eye or, at least, provide for the appearance of airborne and aquatic displays. Transformation scenes were particularly popular and no less a personage than Leonardo da Vinci was employed to develop a revolving stage unit that changed from a rocky hillside to a classical interior for *Il Paradiso* in 1490. Even the comparatively austere outdoor theatres (Shakespeare's Globe, for example) were equipped with trapdoor machinery and some sort of crane by which characters could be lowered from the roof. (See *Cymbeline*, V, 4, where "Jupiter descends in thunder and lightning sitting upon an eagle. He throws a thunderbolt. The ghosts fall on their knees.")

Although the solidity and detail of Renaissance settings are undeniably impressive, the manner in which they attempt to cram all the world into a single space — through infinite vistas, raked floors, etc. — takes them beyond any representational considerations. In fact, the demands for frequent scenery changes soon forced designers to adopt a linear stylization which, more than ever, affirmed the theatre as the temple of artifice. The popularity of sliding flats mounted on rails (developed by Buontalenti in 1585) increasingly limited stage settings to a series of two-dimensional painted surfaces arranged symmetrically to frame the action.

Counterweight systems were devised at this time to raise flats to the ceiling or lower them through slits in the floor; pulleys and windlasses were invented to move scenery across the stage and into the wings; fireworks and colored smoke further enhanced the illusion created by all these devices. Yet, except for the special mechanical units (clouds being a frequent choice), scenery became standardized in a wing-and-backdrop system which persisted in some form down to the Victorian era.

Technical improvements through the end of the eighteenth century were, for the most part, restricted to modifications of earlier ideas. New, quieter equipment was developed, lighting greatly improved both in brightness and safety, and — early in the nineteenth century — the moving diorama (an unrolling panoramic landscape used for a travelling sequence) was invented. Some time later, the



ACT's mounting of Aleksei Arbuzov's "The Promise" is another of many current productions making extensive use of rear projections

scrim (a solid-appearing painted gauze drop which "disappears" when illuminated from behind) came into prominence. Opera design takes its dominant graphic style from this period, although machines developed for its special effects (Ansaldo's famous rotating water cylinders, for example) are usually discarded in favor of simpler solutions.

Parallel with the development of photography, stage design became more lifelike and three-dimensional — if no less elaborate. The change from gas to electric light, the development of the box set and the proliferation of playwrights intent on exposing the ills of society all served to create a demand for increasingly realistic stagecraft. As early as 1900, producer David Belasco was famous for his authentic settings — some near-facsimiles of actual places — and unusually atmospheric lighting. (Puccini's opera of the Belasco-John Luther Long *Madam Butterfly* sets aside considerable time for the sunset-sunrise light show from the original play.) The proximity of the European theatre to new movements in art and literature made the situation there less constricting than in the United States; nevertheless, the boxed-off, picture-frame stage with its realistic contents virtually monopolized the spoken drama until the mass media reached technological maturity.

Summing up the situation, designer Nicola Benois (associated with Milan's La Scala Opera since the 1930s) recently concluded that, except for new sources of energy (such as electric motors), and a wider range of materials (plastics, synthetic fabrics, etc.), technology in the theatre still leans heavily on classical prototypes:

"It is now possible to mould scenery, instead of constructing it out of wood and cardboard, with the advantage of obtaining large masses which weigh next to nothing. Mention ought also to be made of the ever-growing use of projections, which make it possible to reproduce original sketches on very large areas and which replace, with their fade-out possibilities, the clumsy transformation scenes associated with painted flats.

"Still today, however, the basic tools of the modern stage designer are the 'periacts' (revolving stages), the flies, the trapdoors, the cylinders for waves, the sliding flats, and the other 'machines' of more or less recent date which will probably continue to be a source of that delight and amazement which for centuries has been purveyed to humanity by the theatre."

Although Benois' homage to the past is valid enough, the application of technology to theatre practice is now making possible scenic effects which even a decade ago would have required a prohibitive expenditure of manpower. For example, at the *Lido de Paris* in Las Vegas, a city with a concentration of superbly equipped stages, both an ice rink and a swimming pool are stored under the audience area. Push the appropriate button and they travel on tracks to an elevator unit which raises them to stage level. This system may represent a fusion of the old sliding flat and trapdoor concepts, but it functions without their inherent limitations of scope and efficiency. Other variations on Buontalenti's 1585 invention include mechanized wagon stages — common in German opera houses — and the scenic treadmill, used at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles for Center

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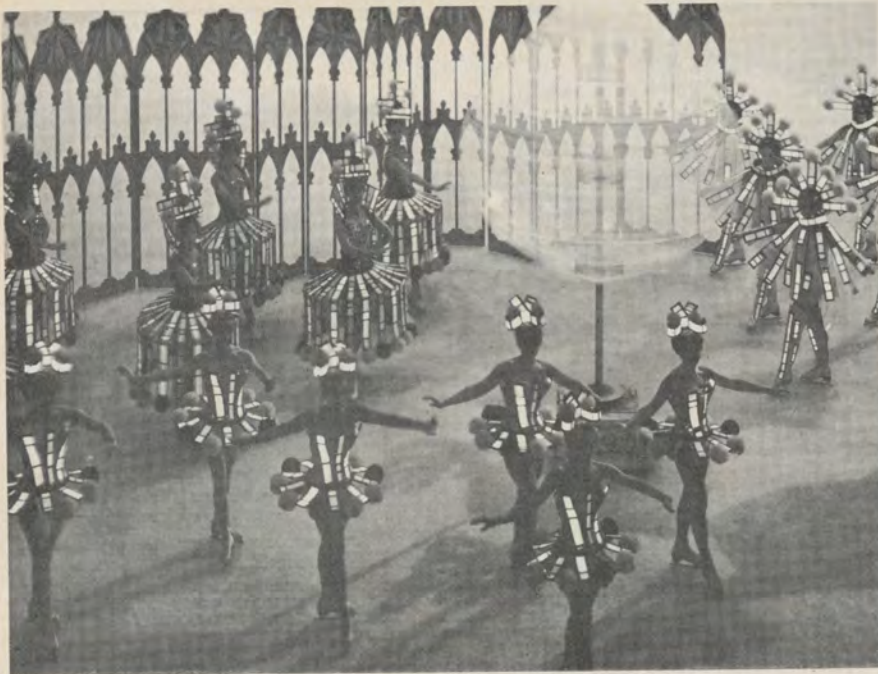
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Theatre Group's recent production of Feydeau's *Chemin de Fer*.

Benois mentions the use of projections as a substitute for painted flats, but lately they have been employed for far more unusual purposes. Instead of only scenery slides, *The Sorrows of Frederick* (another Los Angeles CTG production) incorporated wide-screen motion pictures. Czechoslovakia's Magic Lantern Company combined actors and action both live and on film in a mixed media, multi-screen staging of astonishing inventiveness. And as anyone who attends rock concerts can verify, projectors now enlarge not only photographs, but objects and moving colored liquids as well. The potential effects and combinations are endless.

Besides improving in control and efficiency, stage lighting has gained from technological advances in other fields. From photography came the strobe, a high intensity light that can be set for flashes of a predetermined length and frequency. Director Gower Champion used them recently to create a flickering "old time movie" effect in another Feydeau farce, *A Flea In Her Ear*, for San Francisco's ACT company. And Jerome Robbins deployed them brilliantly for a simulated time-lapse sequence in *Gypsy*. Phosphorescent paint and ultraviolet light have also been employed for special effects — although with less conspicuous success than other techniques. Nor has closed circuit television yet been given much creative consideration. The Royal Shakespeare Company's *US* attempted something in this direction, but had to abandon the idea due to technical difficulties. And while many theatres and opera houses now coordinate separated personnel via TV monitors, the only direct benefit for the spectator is that, in some places, he can see the whole show without ever leaving the bar.

If no aspect of theatre practice has remained untouched by technology, none has gained so spectacularly as sound. Not only has the development of high fidelity recording, particularly on tape, made thunder sheets and other acoustic devices unnecessary, but it is now common for even the smallest regional theatres to maintain permanent libraries of sound effects. Moreover, stage microphones can both increase the audibility of a performance and contribute to it creatively as well. An actor's voice can now be recorded in performance and automatically played back, with added rever-



The Shipstads & Johnson "Ice Follies" employ a technique called "tape light" whereby the performers themselves, with lighting strips attached to their bodies, create illuminated stage patterns

beration, a fraction of a second later — thus for the first time making an actual, controllable echo effect possible in the theatre. And the continuing development of electrified musical instruments and even music synthesizers promises an almost limitless potential for sonic invention.

The most exciting technological discovery of the last decade — not yet applied to stagecraft — is called holography, and it may eventually revolutionize set design. A hologram is an image recorded by a laser beam on a special plate. When played back (for which a laser is also necessary) the image not only appears in three dimensions — without any viewing glasses — but remains natural and undistorted across a wide angle of vision. In other words, as a spectator walks from left to right in front of it, the visual relationship between the hologram and himself changes no differently than if he were looking at the original object.

Besides the anticipated applications to film and television, holography may soon make it possible to store elaborate three-dimensional scenic effects the way theatres now collect sound and music tapes. By that time, a potential stage designer will need an electronics degree besides the engineering background almost mandatory today. Yet the best results will still be produced by men like Sean Kenny (known in America primarily for *Oliver*) who place their entire technological exper-

tise at the service of an imaginative concept. Kenny's work sometimes seems more impressive than the mediocre productions making use of it; so if his scenery steals the show, the crime is hardly more than petty theft.

In 1962, Kenny designed the set for Lionel Bart's *Blitz!* (a musical version of the bombing of London!). Critic Kenneth Tynan's review of the production (reprinted in *Right and Left*) crystallizes both the impact and danger of current theatre technology:

"In *Blitz!* there are distinct signs that the sets are taking over. They swoop down on the actors and snatch them aloft; four motor-driven towers prowl the stage, converging menacingly on any performer who threatens to hog the limelight; and whenever the human element looks like it's gaining control, they collapse on it in a mass of flaming timber. In short, they let the cast know who's boss. They are magnificent, and they are war: who (they tacitly enquire) needs Lionel Bart? I have a fearful premonition of the next show Mr. Kenny designs. As soon as the curtain rises, the sets will advance in a phalanx on the audience and summarily expel it from the theatre. After that, the next step is clear: Mr. Kenny will invent sets that applaud." □

Mr. Segal is a California-based writer on the arts whose articles frequently appear in the Los Angeles Times and Free Press and in FM & Fine Arts. His "Artaud, O'Horgan and Total Theatre" was published earlier this year in *Performing Arts*.



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IDENTITIES OF MR. & MISS X REVEALED!!!

Responses to our first annual Help the Editor Quiz, which appeared in the July *Performing Arts*, were gratifyingly numerous, often funny and occasionally correct. Among the *incorrect* guesses as to the identities of Mr. and Miss X in the Busby Berkeley dance sequence from *Varsity Show* were the following names: Ethel Merman, Johnny Davis, Anna May Wong, Mabel Lake, Florence Lake, Veronica Lake, Greta Garble (!), Dick Haymes, Bob Hope (there *is* a resemblance), Buddy Ebsen, Bobby Epstein (Buddy Ebsen?), Sunny O'Dea, Janet Blair, Emma Dunn, Walter Catlett, and Anne Miller.

Mr. X is, in fact, dancer Lee Dixon; Miss X is singing comedienne Mabel Todd. Both, I am informed by Donald O. Yerger of West Covina, were Warner Brothers contract players of the 1930s.

Many who responded to my query were able to identify one or the other performer, but only the following sharp-eyed film buffs were able to identify *both*: Edward Mecca Graham, Vernon Harbin, Mrs. David Kohler, and Anita Weber, all of Los Angeles; Mrs. Jay Fletcher and Peter Horn, both of San Francisco; Mrs. James C. White of Gardena; Harry K. Chalfant of Pasadena; Walton E. Kabler of Northridge; Robert Willard of Altadena; Jack Warren of Fresno; A. Simonini of New York City; Diana Rose of Council Bluffs, Iowa; and the aforementioned Mr. Yerger.

To all who responded, my deepest thanks. And to those whose responses were 100% correct goes the first prize: the satisfaction of knowing you were 100% correct. —H.G.

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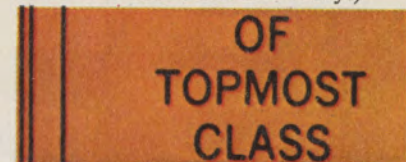
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