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(Twilight of the Gods)

1969

Saturday, October 11, 1969 7:00 PM

Tuesday, October 14, 1969 7:00 PM

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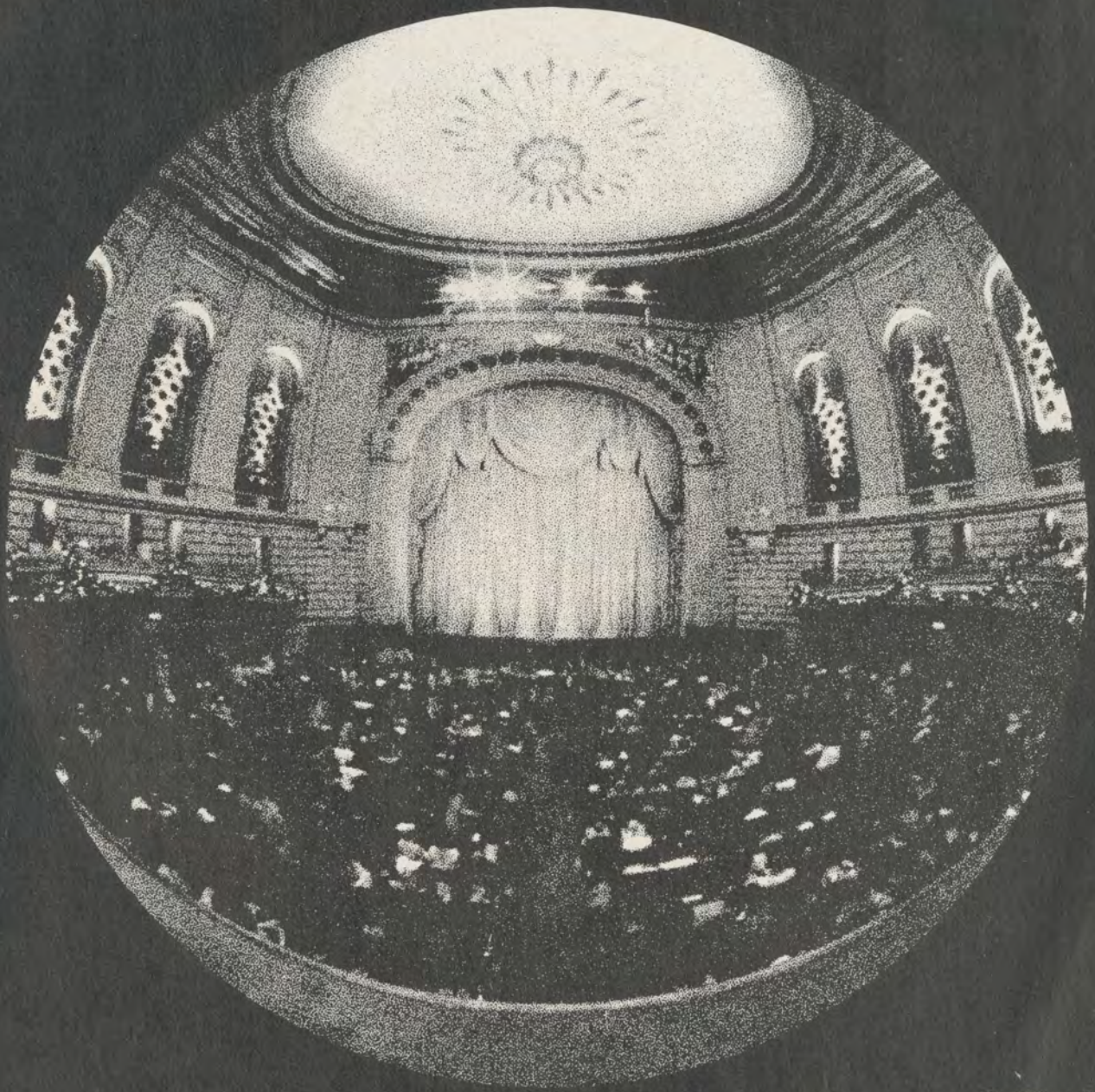
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SAN FRANCISCO'S MUSIC & THEATRE MONTHLY
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Exporting the American Musical





by LEHMAN ENGEL

Viennese and Parisian operettas were once the staples of the western world's diet of light musical theatre; today the American musical reigns—whether it be in New York, London, Tokyo, Ankara or, for that matter, Vienna and Paris.

UNTIL ABOUT 20 years ago it was unthinkable that American musicals might have any appeal abroad. Increasingly, the best ones are now being reproduced throughout the world to great acclaim.

In terms of musicals by Richard Rodgers alone, there have been Japanese productions of *South Pacific*, *Oklahoma!*, *The King and I*, *The Sound of Music* and *No Strings*; Australian productions of *The Boys from Syracuse*, *Carousel*, *The King and I* and *The Sound of Music*; and a successful Israeli run of *The King and I*. The hot-ticket items today in many countries of Europe and Asia are *My Fair Lady*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Man of La Mancha*.

When one thinks of *My Fair Lady* in Turkish, *Man of La Mancha* in French and *Fiddler* in Japanese, a number of important questions arise: How do a Cockney flower-girl and her snobbish speech-teacher friend find empathy in a poor country like Turkey? How does a musically very American version of a Spanish classic find favor with supercritical French audiences? How does a show about Polish Jews at the turn of the century relate to Japan?

The answers to these questions are to be found in two considerations: the universality of the original material, a quality of which we have only lately become aware, and the excellence of the transformation based on a profound knowledge and understanding

of local people and customs. This "transformation" process is a far more complex one than the word "translation" would indicate because the adaptor has the problem of preserving the *spirit* of the original while making no effort to achieve a word-for-word rendering. In my opinion, the successful outcome of a "transformation" can be accomplished only when the original material is indeed universal and the adaptor is sufficiently creative to see it through the eyes of his local audience.

At an earlier time, impresarios were concerned exclusively with the importation of Grand Opera. Although opera is generally sung in the language of the country to which it is taken (America is a notable exception), the libretto language is usually broad and the musical score is what matters chiefly. A translation which manages to convey the plot isn't expected to have literary distinction or special local nuances as well.

When operetta began travelling during the last quarter of the 19th Century, it was the music that furnished the principal attraction. The librettos of the Viennese and Parisian hits frequently made little sense in their original tongues, so why should the translations or "adaptations" be expected to be any better?

What we in America around the turn of the century had come to accept as the language of operetta was, 50 years later, no longer to be tolerated.

(continued on next page)



"With a Little Bit of Luck" in "My Fair Lady" at the Turkish State Opera, Ankara: "translating the play is not enough; you have to translate the audience as well"

The English version of *The Chocolate Soldier* (based on Shaw's *Arms and the Man*), for example, was not the exception but the rule. Lines such as

"If you doubt me then woe betide!"

were common.

In Harry B. Smith's adaptation of *Countess Maritza* we hear:

"He never knows whether the right ones together he's bringing, and doesn't seem to care!"

In *White Horse Inn*:

"In some Abyssinian French dominion I shall do my bit, And fall for the flag if I must!"

In *The Merry Widow*:

"Yes, you are a dutiful wife; It goes to my heart like a knife!"

These operettas were great successes, but certainly the foregoing lyrics represent a manner of speaking that never existed, either here or in Eng-

land. The French versions were no better, nor were the German versions of importations from other countries. The operettas found responsive audiences everywhere *solely* because of the opulence of the music. Since the librettos were inconsequential both in the original and in translations, there came into being a kind of never-never land verbal style which was found serviceable and was even expected.

The Viennese operettas were the best ones, and at the turn of the present century they exerted enormous influence on the barely-beginning American musical comedy. Even the synthetic translations of text and lyrics set the style in our native writing for the musical stage. Look at Glen MacDonough's lyrics for Victor Herbert's *Babes in Toyland* (1903):

"He's a lad from County Clare ('Tis the wild ones come from there) An' be sure 'tis in his coat a rogue you'll see."

Or Rudolf Friml's *The Vagabond King* (lyrics by Post and Hooker) as late as 1925:

"There's a crook with a look like a book full of naughtiness"

In the 30s and especially in the 40s and afterward, things began to change in America. We graduated into a more highly sophisticated state. We produced lyricists such as Oscar Hammerstein II, Cole Porter, Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Lorenz Hart, Howard Dietz, and later, Dorothy Fields, Harold Rome, Alan Jay Lerner, E. Y. Harburg, Stephen Sondheim and Sheldon Harnick. And there are others like them: native, talented, original, stylish and literate. They allow their characters to sing as three-dimensional human beings.

It should be noted that many of our best shows have been based squarely on plays, novels or motion pictures which had already succeeded without the help of music and lyrics. Thus Molnar's celebrated *Liliom* became *Carousel*, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* was popularized as *West Side Story*, Shaw's *Pygmalion* sang as *My Fair Lady*, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* formed the basis for *Man of La Mancha*, etc.

Writers and composers in other countries have made serious attempts to rival the creative spirits in the American Musical Theatre. There seems to be no reason why they should not succeed. However, workable, exportable shows have only occasionally come to light in London and *none* has emerged anywhere else.

While I am certain that the songs in the best American musicals have provided the bait for foreign markets, it is above all our sensible books and the identifiable characters who inhabit them which are the basic reasons for both local and international success in this field. In the books of our very best musicals, neither the situations nor the characters require explanation or footnote.

Fiddler on the Roof — one of our newest triumphs — would seem at a cursory glance to be strictly about Jews in Poland around the turn of the century. Such a subject would certainly have a very limited appeal and would — if this were the true subject matter — be best suited to production in New York, where indeed it originated. However, *Fiddler on the Roof*, still being performed throughout the United States, is a success throughout

Europe and an enormous hit in Tokyo!

When one considers this latest phenomenon, it becomes obvious that the show is *not* primarily about Jews in Poland. The unqualified success of *Fiddler* in places such as Amsterdam and Tokyo — if it is to be comprehended — requires a deeper examination of the subject-matter, and an attempt must be made to see in it something broader and more universal. Of course this is easily found when one is, so to speak, “on the right scent.” For *Fiddler* is about the “generation gap.” It is about the tradition-clinging older generation in conflict with a younger one far less concerned with the perpetuation of customs and mores than with today’s living. Once this is understood, the transplanting of this or any other show to a foreign land becomes not so much a matter of translation as a reconciliation of basic ideas to the new local scene with its own peculiar and particular environment.

I recall an incident which happened three years ago while I was travelling in Spain. I was being driven by an English-speaking guide who asked me to explain the *meaning* of

“The rain in Spain

Stays mainly in the plain.”

(*My Fair Lady*)

He had asked the same question of other Americans, none of whom had been able to furnish any logical answer. The driver’s confusion was due to his intimate knowledge of Spain (his native land), and he hastened to assure me that *no* rain ever fell or stayed in the plains. Luckily, it was a simple matter to explain that these lyrics had *no* meaning but that they had been created as a speech exercise for practicing the “ain” sound.

I believe that this kind of conclusion provides a perfect case in point. It should be obvious that the presentation of any work which has a local reference capable of misinterpretation must be rewritten by the adaptor. After all, any “jingle” which fits the music and reiterates any speech sound might be created in this or any other similar situation. In fact, in this particular situation the adaptor who fails to recognize the existing problem is doing a great disservice to both writer and audience if he does not clarify the lyricist’s intention by removing the confusing local reference.

Recently I went to Ankara to conduct a production of *Porgy and Bess* at the Turkish State Opera. I had occa-

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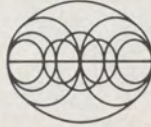
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sion to become acquainted with Sevgi Sanli, who had translated American plays into Turkish with great success. These included works by Edward Albee, Arthur Miller and Lillian Hellman. But Miss Sanli had also "adapted" *Kiss Me, Kate* and the very successful current *My Fair Lady*. I would like to quote from her account of the latter.

"I was terrified when I was asked to translate *My Fair Lady*. It would not be enough to translate the play; you would have to translate the audience as well. A Russian proverb says that 'A translation, like a woman, cannot be beautiful and faithful at the same time!' This *Lady* had to be faithful, out of my loyalty to Shaw, and fair out of my love for my people. I felt the language was extremely important, as it is a play on words. [The film version which was recently shown in Ankara in English with inadequate and dull Turkish dubbing had no effect at all on Turkish audiences and ran only for a week and a half.]

"As an equivalent of Cockney accent, I could not use one of the hundreds of Turkish peasant dialects of various regions, because Cockneys are city people — poor, ignorant, yet urban. For this purpose I thought that Istanbul 'Külhanbey' slang would come in handy. Külhanbeys are unruly young fellows with a special manner of speech and dress, and with quite a large following in the poorer districts of this large city. The dialect of the Turkish immigrants from the Balkans was also interesting for this purpose. Turks who have come from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania, etc. always drop the H's like Cockneys. The Turks, who had ruled in the Balkans for five centuries, have influenced those countries in every way of life, from music to dancing, from cuisine to vocabulary. But the rulers were also influenced by the ruled: hence this particular accent. So a mixture of the Balkan accent and the Istanbul slang served our purpose.

"Ever since I started working on adapting *My Fair Lady* I became very conscious of pronunciation mistakes. Mistakes of manicurists and dress-makers were very helpful for our Eliza, and I used some of my own mistakes too. Our version of 'The Rain In Spain' was 'İspanyada yagmur, tekne de hamur' (literally, 'In Spain, the dough in the cart')."

While I worked on *Porgy and Bess*, which of course had been rendered into Turkish — unfortunately, by people who made their version from

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Hisaya Morishige as Tevye, the role he created in the first Japanese production of "Fiddler on the Roof"

an existing German one — I realized painfully the hazards of misunderstanding and lack of comprehension that can arise out of the "word-for-word" school of translation. The complex crap-game in the first scene was rendered literally. Expressions such as "box-cars," "cover 'em," "crapped out," "little bones," "four to make," "Little Joe"—pure American jargon—in Turkish provided a mass of confusion for the performers. I was at great pains to explain all of these and more so that appropriate action could be suited to the words. Eventually the performers understood, but the audience never did. In this case I feel certain that the game itself should have been changed to a local one which everyone understood. The proper local nomenclature could then have been followed.

There were other problems. In rehearsing the "Bizzard Song," I could not elicit from the performers any sense of terror. Finally, I learned that "bizzard" had been rendered as "owl" — a bird of prey had been replaced by the most docile of sleeping birds. This, of course, was a case of carelessness, but it had threatened to sabotage the quality of the performance.

A third example of distortion from my *Porgy* experience is unbelievable though perfectly true. In Act II, Crown, the villain, has a particularly low-

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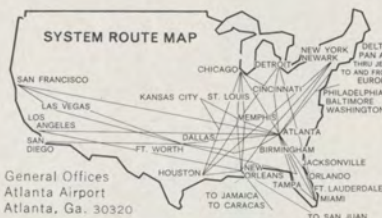
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"Porgy and Bess" at the Turkish State Opera — an example of the "misunderstanding and lack of comprehension that can arise out of the word-for-word school of translation"

down, sexy song:

"A red-headed woman
makes a choo-choo jump its
track . . ."

The scene takes place during a violent thunderstorm. Crown resents the frightened, prayerful singing of the people who are gathered together, and just before the song he proclaims (addressing the thunder):

"Ha ha!
Dat's right, drown 'em out,
don't let 'em sing.
Ha ha,
How 'bout dis one, Big
Frien'?"

At a staging rehearsal I was unable to understand what the director was working toward and finally, through my interpreter, I asked the direct question. The reply was that "A red-headed woman" was the Virgin Mary, and this concept was further substantiated by the line preceding the song which was addressed to God! While I could not deny the latter, I had to argue forcefully that the song had anything but religious implications. It seems that the director had felt, for a long time, that his explanation was the only possible and true one.

By now, *Hair* is a great success in Berlin, where it rubs shoulders with *Anatevka* (the German title of *Fiddler on the Roof*). Nor does *Fiddler's* fate end in Berlin, because even more recently it was triumphantly presented in Vienna, the birthplace of Anti-Semitism! And matters do not stop with

Europe, Australia, the Soviet Union and Japan. One of our best Off-Broadway musicals, *The Fantasticks*, appeared with great success in a Portuguese translation by Thomas E. Smith in Rio de Janeiro. Subsequently, this production inaugurated the Teatro Martins Pena in Brasilia, commemorating the sixth anniversary of Brazil's new capital; and following this, *Os Fantastikos* made a well-received tour of four other Brazilian cities.

The greatest satisfaction to be had from all this is the knowledge that the best American musicals of the last 25 years travel everywhere and travel well. And it is my considered opinion that all theoretical cant about "American Opera" can cease once and for all because "American Opera" exists and has existed for a long time. Our native opera has come out of Broadway and began quite properly by addressing itself to the American people. Now, after a quarter of a century, we have found that in reality it can speak to all people everywhere, provided the intermediaries who translate it take their cues from the heart and not the word. □

Mr. Engel is one of our most versatile men of music — conductor of countless works of The American Musical Theatre (which also happens to be the title of his highly-acclaimed book, published in 1967 by CBS in association with Macmillan) and of opera and the symphonic literature; composer; teacher; and lecturer. He has won Tony Awards for conducting the premieres of the Bernstein-Comden-Green musical Wonderful Town and Menotti's The Consul. Mr. Engel is Director of the Composers and Lyricists Workshop, sponsored by Broadcast Music Inc.

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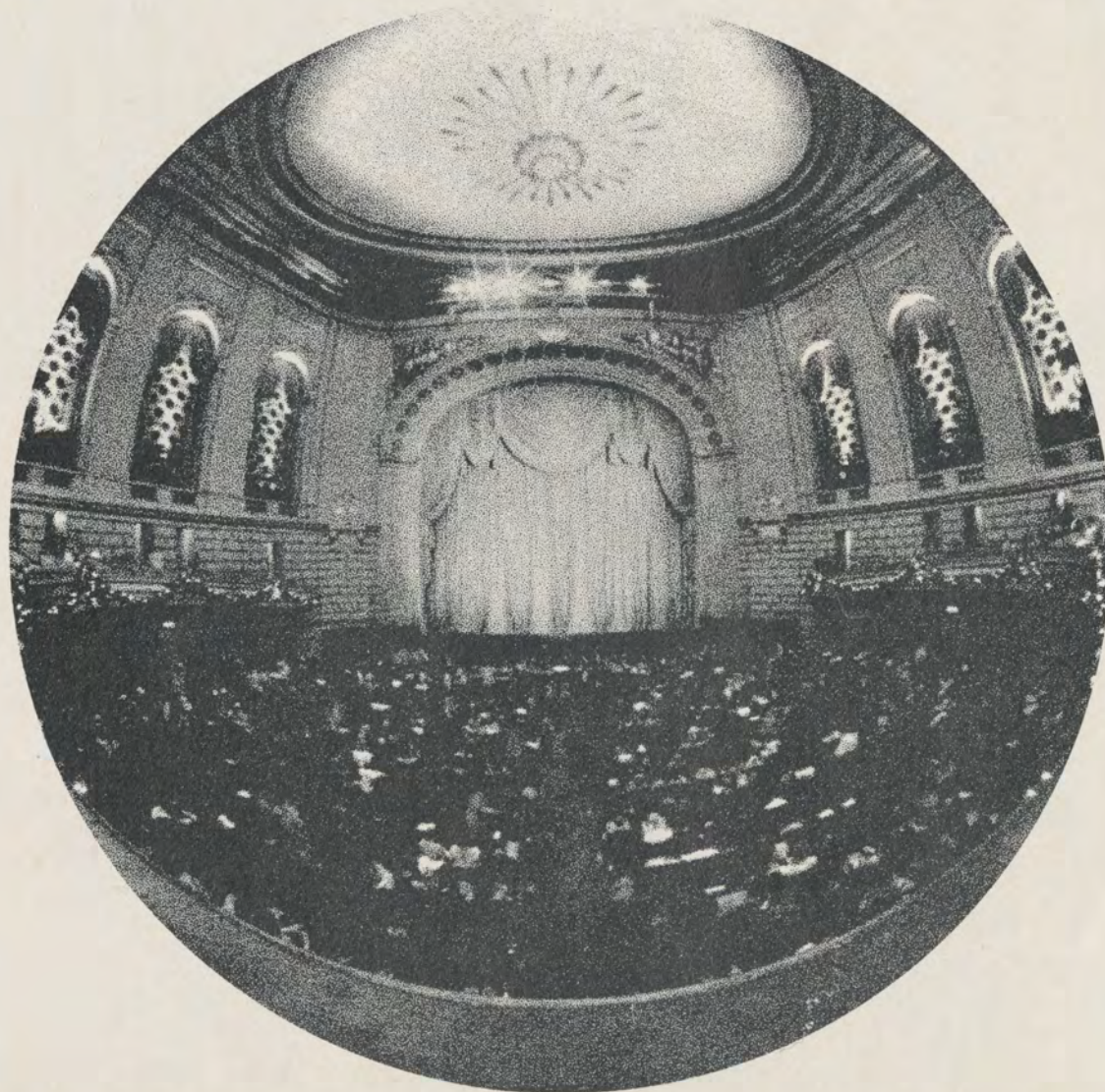


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<i>Conductors</i>	Anton Coppola*, Sixten Ehrling*, Bohumil Gregor**, Charles Mackerras*, Giuseppe Patané, Jean Perisson, Gunther Schuller, Otmar Suitner**
<i>Chorus Director</i>	Aldo Danieli
<i>Associate Chorus Director</i>	Stefan Minde
<i>Musical 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

TECHNICAL STAFF FOR WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE

<i>Master Carpenter</i>	Thomas Salyer
<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
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

Chorus

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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

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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

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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, 8:00

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, 8:00

AIDA (VERDI)

Same cast as October 18

Saturday, October 25, 8:00

THE MAGIC FLUTE (MOZART)

Same cast as October 22

Sunday, October 26, 1:30

GOTTERDAMMERUNG (WAGNER)

Last performance this season
Same cast as October 11

Tuesday, October 28, 8:00

THE MAGIC FLUTE (MOZART)

Same cast as October 22

Wednesday, October 29, 8:00

AIDA (VERDI)

Same cast as October 18

Friday, October 31, 8:00

THE MAGIC FLUTE (MOZART)

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

Saturday, November 1, 8:00

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO (VERDI)

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

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

Tuesday, November 4, 8:00

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO (VERDI)

Same cast as November 1

Wednesday, November 5, 8:00

LA CENERENTOLA (ROSSINI)

Berganza, Marks, Cervena / Bottazzo, Capecci, Montarsolo, Grant

Conductor: Mackerras
Production: Ponnelle
Designer: Ponnelle, West

Friday, November 7, 8:00

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO (VERDI)

Same cast as November 1

Saturday, November 8, 8:00

LA CENERENTOLA (ROSSINI)

Same cast as November 5

Sunday, November 9, 2:00

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, 8:00

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO (VERDI)

Last performance this season
Same cast as November 1

Friday, November 14, 8:00

PELLEAS ET MELISANDE (DEBUSSY)

Pilou, Lilova, Moser / Gui, Petri, Tozzi, Clark, Monk

Conductor: Perisson
Production: P. Hager
Designer: Skalicki, West

Saturday, November 15, 8:00

LA BOHEME (PUCCINI)

Amara, Moser / Spiess, Farrar, Monk, Berberian, Esparza, Gilbert, Nilsson, Lawrence, Harvey

Conductor: Perisson
Stage Director: Farruggio
Designer: Jenkins

Sunday, November 16, 2:00

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, 8:00

JENUFA (JANÁČEK)

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, 8:00

PELLEAS ET MELISANDE (DEBUSSY)

Last performance this season
Same cast as November 14

Tuesday, November 25, 8:30

JENUFA (JANÁČEK)

Same cast as November 21

Wednesday, November 26, 8:00

AIDA (VERDI)

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

Friday, November 28, 8:00

LA BOHEME (PUCCINI)

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

Saturday, November 29, 8:00

JENUFA (JANÁČEK)

Last performance this season
Same cast as November 21

Sunday, November 30, 2:00

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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WESTERN OPERA THEATER

Western Opera Theater (affectionately known around the Opera House as WOT) was created with the assistance of the National Endowment for the Arts as a regional company to take professional operatic productions to areas where opera would otherwise never be seen. With continuing grants from the National Endowment and further help from the California Arts Commission and several private foundations, WOT has now played in nearly 100 communities, large and small, in all parts of California, Arizona, Nevada and Oregon.

Western Opera Theater gives professional young American singers, directors and designers a unique opportunity for full seasons' employment with a repertory opera company without being forced to seek positions with European opera houses. WOT stresses ensemble performance and theatrical values, and the importance of this emphasis is reflected in the number of WOT artists regularly engaged by the San Francisco Opera, Spring Opera and other major companies.

All WOT productions are sung in English, and after student performances, which comprise about half the total each season, members of the casts and backstage crew meet informally with audiences for free-wheeling discussion periods.

In addition to its regular repertoire, which in past seasons has included Puccini's "La Boheme" and "Gianni Schicchi," Mozart's "Cosi Fan Tutte," Rossini's "The Barber of Seville" and Menotti's "The Medium" and "The Old Maid and the Thief," Western Opera Theater last season inaugurated a new program of concert readings of unperformed operas and is now planning periods in residence and workshops at colleges and universities.

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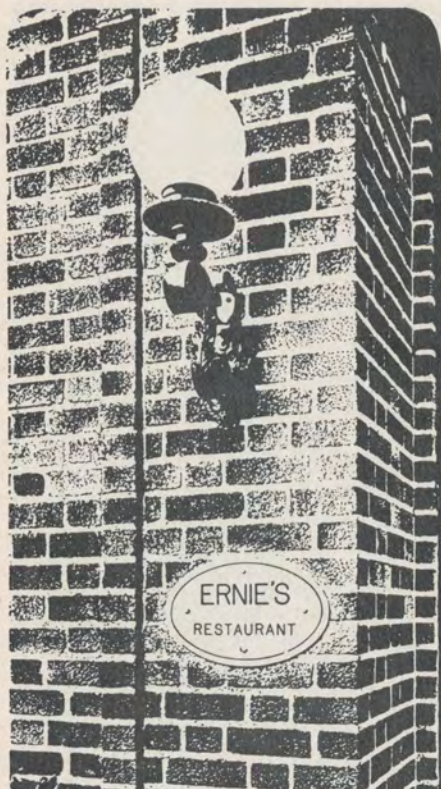
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA

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.

Prentis Cobb Hale

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President, San Francisco Opera Association

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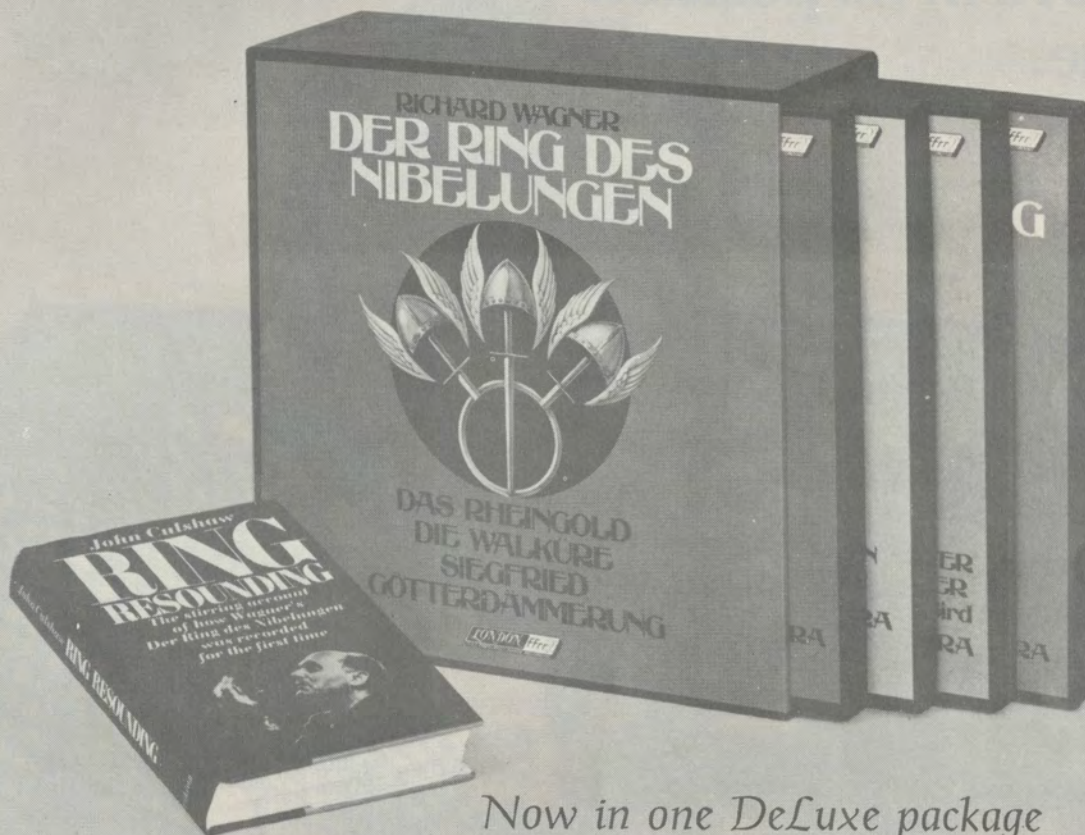
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ACT I: Scene 1: Summit of a mountain
Scene 2: The hall of the Gibichungs
Scene 3: Summit of a mountain

ACT II: Outside the hall of the Gibichungs

ACT III: Scene 1: A rocky slope on the banks of the Rhine
Scene 2: Outside the hall of the Gibichungs

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The Story of "Götterdämmerung"

BACKGROUND: Gold has lain for eons deep in the waters of the Rhine. By ancient prophecy, only he who totally renounced love could take the gold and form it into a ring which would give him complete power over the world. Alberich, spurned by the Rhinemaidens, renounced love, stole the gold and made it into a ring. Subsequently, he was tricked into yielding it to Wotan but places a curse of death on whoever possesses the ring. Wotan is forced to give it to the giants Fasolt and Fafner as ransom for the goddess of youth, Freia. In a fight over possession of the ring, Fasolt is killed by Fafner who is later slain by Siegfried. The latter took the ring and it is in his keeping when "Götterdämmerung" begins.

ACT I, Scene 1: The Norns spin the thread of fate and tell of the destiny which binds all events together. The thread snaps, ending their power of prophecy and they disappear from view. As dawn breaks Siegfried and Brünnhilde appear. Siegfried gives Brünnhilde the ring in pledge of his faith and love and departs to continue his life of adventure.

Scene 2: Hagen, half-brother of Gunther and Gutrune and son of Alberich, arouses in Gunther a desire for Brünnhilde, and in Gutrune a desire for Siegfried. A magic potion will gain their end by making Siegfried forget every woman before Gutrune. Hagen welcomes Siegfried and the magic draught is served by Gutrune. Siegfried drinks and, his love for Brünnhilde forgotten, is enraptured with Gutrune. To gain her, he agrees to help Gunther win Brünnhilde and donning the Tarnhelm, a magic garment enabling its owner to assume any desired shape, changes himself into Gunther's form.

Scene 3: Brünnhilde dreams of the absent Siegfried when Waltraute brings her a plea from Wotan to cast the fatal ring into the Rhine. She refuses and at the sound of Siegfried's horn rushes to meet him. Siegfried, in the guise of Gunther, now appears and, his love forgotten, overpowers Brünnhilde and wrests the ring from her.

ACT II: Alberich spurs Hagen to renewed effort to secure the ring. With dawn Siegfried arrives in his own form. He announces the coming of Gunther and Brünnhilde, and is wedded to Gutrune. On her arrival, Brünnhilde declares Siegfried to have wed her with the ring. But Siegfried, his mind a blank, denies. Infuriated, Brünnhilde convinces Gunther that Siegfried has betrayed him and they plot his death.

ACT III, Scene 1: Siegfried, strayed from the hunt to the banks of the river, comes upon the Rhine Maidens. They beg him to give up the ring, but he refuses. The Huntsmen arrive. Plied by Hagen with another magic potion, Siegfried, his memory returning, tells of his life and of his marriage to Brünnhilde. While Siegfried is distracted, Hagen plunges a spear into his vulnerable back.

Scene 2: Gutrune, awaiting Siegfried's return, swoons at the sight of his dead body. Hagen claims the ring and fatally stabs Gunther who tries to prevent his taking it. Brünnhilde commands that a funeral pyre be built to consume Siegfried's body. She follows her hero into death as Valhalla is destroyed and a new world begun.



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Prescription for Utopia

by Speight Jenkins, Jr.

Götterdämmerung frankly amazes the late twentieth century man. A real grand opera with larger-than-life characters, set musical pieces and circus-like spectacles, it nonetheless proposes a straightforward solution to the world's problems. The work never flirts with the grays that characterize modern life; it tells a tale of blackest treachery, unbelievable innocence and deepest woe, commands us to believe it and then suggests that the world should be reconstituted with love as its driving force.

With all its complexity, its length, its heroic requirements for singers and this messianic zeal, *Götterdämmerung* represents one of the apexes of Wagner's career as a story teller—equally in words and music. To an American, its heavy baggage of Nordic mythology and, worse, the reams of Wagner's writings explaining and analyzing his own works, have little if any necessity. The opera, unlike *Die Walküre* or *Siegfried*, is a self-contained work; no one really need know what has happened before in the *Ring*

to follow most of what goes on. Nor does the complicated use of the leitmotif to tell the fascinating story of the characters' inner thoughts explain all. *Götterdämmerung's* story and its people cannot exist either musically or dramatically alone; they live only as fused by music and drama.

To understand it even minimally one must get to its heart, its characters. Siegfried, about whom the whole *Ring* was originally planned, comes off as an oddity: placed in the hero slot, he never seems sympathetic or heroic. His opening phrase to Brünnhilde, "You gave me more, wonderful woman, than I know how to keep," cannot be faulted in its sentiments, but its melody, which represents Siegfried as a married man, and its scoring, has a hollowness not evocative of a noble aesthetic hero. Siegfried, from the beginning, brings to mind Mangiacavallo from *The Rose Tattoo* more than Rolland of the sagas. When he drinks the potion of forgetfulness at the beginning of Act I, Siegfried gets a crutch for his wrongdoing.

This potion has caused vast trouble among commentators. Robert Donington, who wrote a Jungian analysis of Wagner's *Ring*, considers the potion in non-physical terms. He sees it as a permissive aphrodisiac that allows Siegfried to woo Guttrune, who is the antithesis of Brünnhilde. To strengthen this interpretation, Donington cites Siegfried's selective amnesia. The young husband forgets Brünnhilde completely, but never loses recall of killing the dragon or of winning the ring. Others by the score have viewed the effect of the potion in different ways, but in the light of Siegfried's personality, the only question is, does it change him? A negative comes from his continually fearless, somewhat bumbling and always inconsiderate actions. After he has

won Brünnhilde for Gunther and ravished the ring from her, there is no trace, not even one musical suggestion, that he has a care for her feelings. And in the second act, his aria (as distinctively a set aria for tenor as any by Verdi or Donizetti) completely misses any conception of all that has gone before. In fact, the aria—which has a remarkable cooling-off effect on a huge crowd of people angry over the betrayal of their leader—can be compared to a speech by a statesman who pronounces the glib, happy promises that his people want to hear. Siegfried really cannot understand or even imagine that he could have done wrong, and the joy of his remarks give sudden, unwise confidence to those looking for an optimistic solution.

Wagner does give Siegfried a clear warning, via the Rhinemaidens, before his catastrophe. But the Rhinemaidens warn him in words calculated to annoy the Mangiacavallo type of character. To yield to their good advice, Siegfried would have to admit that the water-nymphs had sense, and Siegfried does not have the brains or wisdom to recognize intelligence even in standard authority symbols, much less in mermaids. And so he dies, and the great funeral march follows. But does this funeral music mourn him? Rather it mourns Wotan and the passing of all the god's plans, schemes and ideas. The march does sound like a resumé of Siegfried's life, but the mournful prominence of the sword theme and of all the other attempts by Wotan to save his world tells what the music is really tolling.

Commentators on Wagner's *Ring* have often excused the two Gibichungs, Gunther and Guttrune, as simple foils in a villain's hands. Their words and music belie this. Gunther

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worries about his prestige at the beginning of the opera, never blanches at Siegfried's capture of Brünnhilde while disguised as himself, and eventually agrees to murder Siegfried when he thinks that he can have the ring. He and Gutrune stand equally guilty in the deceit of the drink administered to Siegfried. True, neither of them knew that the hero had wed Brünnhilde, but they knew that the potent aphrodisiac wiped out the drinker's recollection of all previous women in favor of the next woman he sees. So their deceit, though not directed specifically at Brünnhilde, bears a general condemnation. And their full knowledge of what they had done makes their failure to ask Brünnhilde why she lays claim to Siegfried smack of contrived innocence.

As for their half-brother Hagen, he refreshes with his one-dimensional characterization. In this complicated drama only Hagen is always evil. His goal—the ring—never leaves his mind, and he glories in deceit, murder and cruelty. His veal-pale countenance fed by his obstinate, cold blood (to use his words) well reflects his inner malevolence, and he brings to mind immediately his first mention in the *Ring* cycle. When Wotan, in his second act monologue in *Die Walküre*, tells Brünnhilde about the frustration of his plans, he mentions that Alberich, who foreswore love to win the ring, has taken a woman by money and that she now is with child. Caught up in tempestuous wrath, Wotan gives his "blessing" to the Nibelung's son, Hagen: "What deeply revolts me, I bequeath to you, the empty glory of divinity: greedily feed your hate on it!"

Hagen, however, unlike other Wagner villains, such as Beckmesser or Melot or even Alberich, has beautiful music to sing. At the point in life when he wrote *Götterdämmerung*, Wagner could make total evil sound beautiful, as could Verdi with such a character as Iago in *Otello*. The difference lies in the expression of blatant cruelty with no *politesse* in Wagner's product. And Hagen, though a vital reason for the sustaining vocal interest of the opera, never graces us with even a trace of a smile.

The whole *Ring* makes its point through Brünnhilde. Why Wagner chose a woman as spokesman is a moot question, but she stands central to the frustrations of Wotan's world and its hopes for the future. In her opening scene with Siegfried, she rings completely true—a strong woman in love and in accord with her husband. In her next scene her refusal to surrender the ring because it was given to her by Siegfried even though her sister Waltraute begs her to do so on behalf of their father only restates Desdemona's comment to her father, "And so much duty as my mother showed to you, / Preferring you before her father, / So much I challenge that I may profess / Due to the Moor my lord."

After her conquest by the pseudo-Gunther (and Brünnhilde loses the ring to the disguised Siegfried because Siegfried, disguised or not, is the lord of the ring), she tries to grasp her calamity, making no music or dramatic lurch into anger. Only when she realizes that Siegfried himself won her for another and now wears his ring to prove it does she break out in cyclonic fury. Logical to the end, her "Misery, Misery" cry before the plotting of Siegfried's death represents the last wracking of her brain to explain what has happened. But she does live up to her oath on the spear: because she has sworn that Siegfried's perjury will cost him his life, she uses her talents to see that he dies.

Her Immolation Scene that ends *Götterdämmerung* is more than just a long and beautiful operatic aria; it is an expression of catharsis. In it Brünnhilde gives rest to the weary, weakened gods, glorifies the hero of her dreams and gives the world a chance to start over. The brilliant use of music here deprives almost any listener of some perspective, but the music becomes so awe-inspiring precisely because the orchestra, the vocal line and the words themselves clearly describe the end of the greed-filled, hate-ridden, evil world. And after? Never at a loss for words, Wagner lets his orchestra sing out his prescription for Utopia—a world order built on love. □

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LA TRAVIATA

Speaker: Alexander Fried

September 23

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October 6

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Speaker: John Rockwell

November 4

LA CENERENTOLA

Speaker: James H. Schwabacher, Jr.

November 14

JENUFA

Speaker: Dr. Jan Popper

Hotel Mark Hopkins

Peacock Court at 10:30 a.m.

Public invited free of charge

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.

Presented by the Jewish Community Center
3200 California St., San Francisco

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

November 2, 2:30 p.m.

Hearst Greek Theater

Berkeley

THE MAGIC FLUTE (Mozart)

In English

Presented by the University of California

November 23, 7:30 p.m.

Memorial Auditorium

Sacramento

AIDA (Verdi)

In Italian

Presented by the Sacramento Opera Guild

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DEBUTS



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 BONISOLI 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*. Bonisoli 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 Pilou 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. Lagger 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! Lagger'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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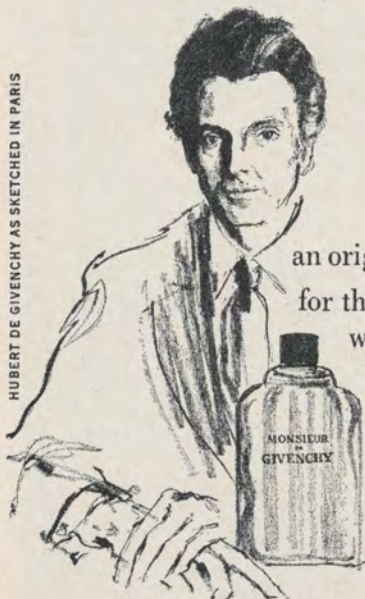
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FRANTZ PETRI began the study of medicine in Paris, where he was born, but after two years abandoned it to concentrate on vocal work. He obtained his first professional engagement at Mulhouse in 1963. He sings both standard opera such as *Carmen*, *Tosca*, *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 Players. 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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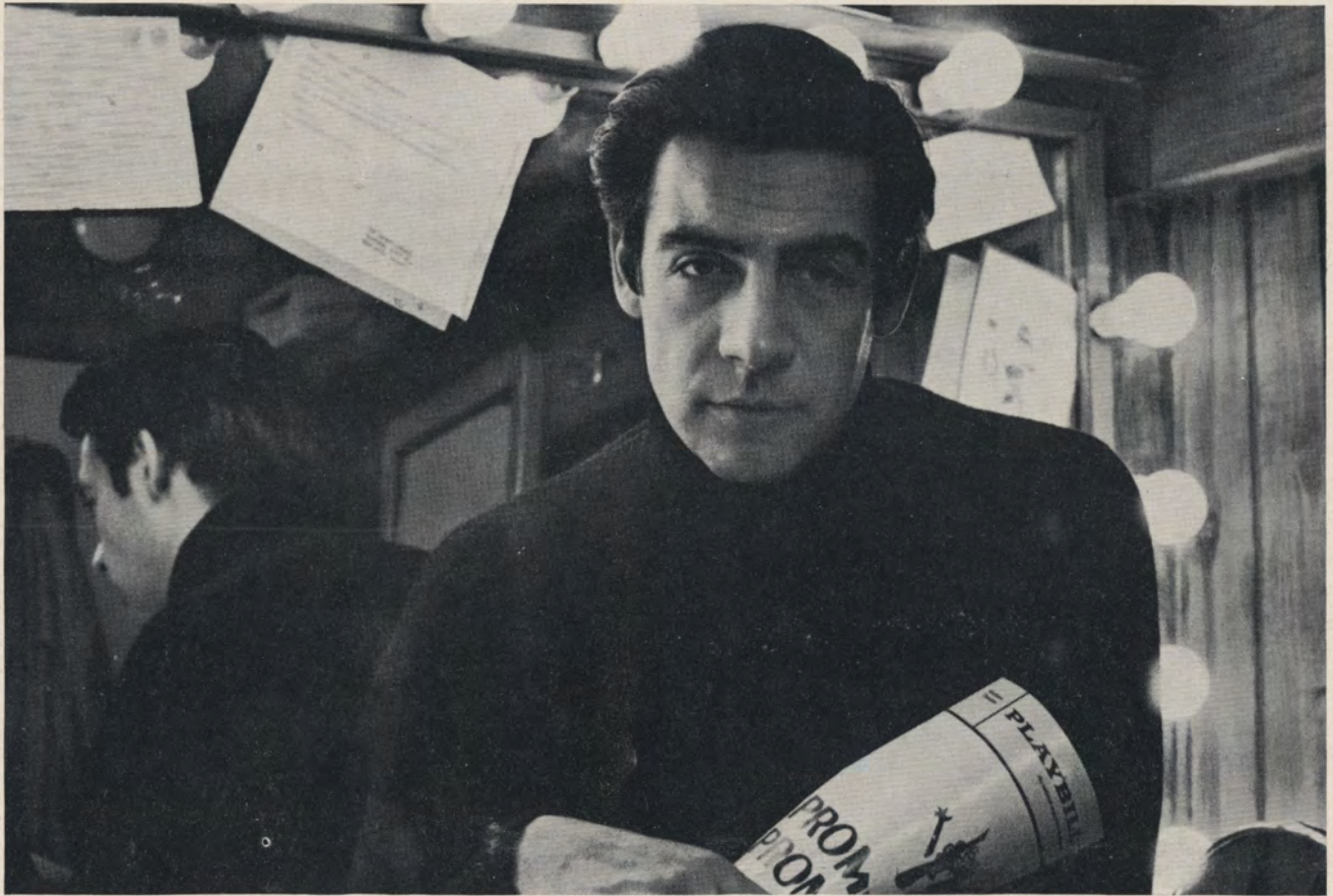
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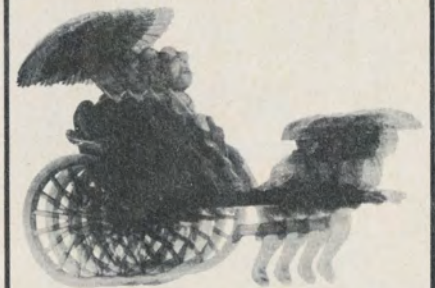
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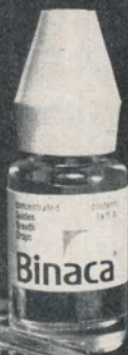


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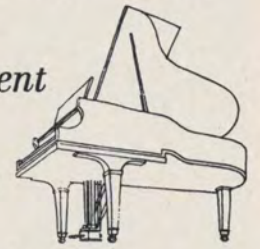
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We are but critics, or but half create.

— William Butler Yeats

The good critic is he who narrates the adventures of his soul among masterpieces.

— Henry James

I do not resent criticism, even when, for the sake of emphasis, it parts for the time with reality.

— Sir Winston Churchill

A wise skepticism is the first attribute of a good critic.

— James Russell Lowell

The sheer complexity of writing a play has always dazzled me. In an effort to understand it, I became a critic.

— Kenneth Tynan

A dramatic critic is a newspaper man whose sweetie ran away with an actor.

— Walter Winchell

One doesn't become a critic out of modesty.

— Stanley Kauffmann



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So far in this series, we have been discussing the separate audio components that you can mix and match according to your own requirements and whims. But an increasingly important category in stereo equipment is the three-piece stereo system, a complete, ready-to-play affair that requires you only to plug the two speaker systems involved into the "control center" and plug that in turn into a wall socket. If all of the *technicalia* of stereo is secondary or tertiary in your mind to the objective of filling a living room with good sound, the three-piece system may well be your logical choice.

To be a bit more descriptive, the control center of a three-piece system houses all of the electronics and controls needed for stereo (including, in most cases, an FM or AM-FM tuner), plus a record changer. The control center may be not much bigger than the 12-inch LP record it plays, but it can range to twice the "necessary" size. It can go on a bookshelf or tabletop, or you can put it on legs near your usual listening chair. The two speaker systems go across the room somewhere on the floor or on shelves, and can be placed vertically or horizontally.

The three-piece idea came of age with the transistor, which made it possible to package the record player and all electronics pretty comfortably in what had been an unthinkable small space. As you may suspect from the description, its calling-cards are convenience and simplicity; it is bought as a single "package" from one manufacturer (who often makes everything but the record changer and cartridge), and it obviates the need to match separate components on your own.

Dollar for dollar, the three-piece system competes very well with any component system of \$400 or less. Because the manufacturer doesn't have to worry about making any part of the system compatible with anyone else's components, he can omit some circuitry and matching facilities and put his manufacturing money into "basic" performance. That doesn't always happen. Some packaged systems with impressive-looking control panels are fairly skimpy on the inside, and others supply redundant features of some expense. But at its best, the three-piece arrangement can be very persuasive. Only when you get significantly above \$400 (and most three-piece manufacturers don't) does the idea begin to lose persuasiveness in comparison with components.

STEREO

by JOHN MILDER

THE THREE-PIECE STEREO SYSTEM □ Part Nine of the *Performing Arts Guide to Stereo Components — How to Buy Them, Hook Them Up and, Hopefully, Enjoy Them.*



There are decidedly different approaches to the idea by various manufacturers. KLH, which probably offers the widest range of systems, tends to emphasize simplicity and unobtrusiveness out of a conviction that the sound's the thing and that most people don't want equipment to stand out in a living room. Fisher and Scott, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the component origins of the three-piece idea, believing that their customers want the flexibility associated with components. And some, like Harman-Kardon, offer both the three-piece system and, if you prefer, just a control center to be used with anyone's speakers (provided they are compatible with the power capability of the control center); the idea here is that it's all-the-electronics-in-one place that is the big attraction to some.

It would be impossible (and not very helpful) to list all of the makes and models of three-piece outfits now available, but some best-sellers can serve as references for a shopping expedition. The list includes the Benjamin 1030 (\$439.50), the Fisher 120 (\$299.95), the Harman-Kardon SC 2020 (\$359.00), SC2350 (\$440.00), and SC7 (control center only, \$465.00), the KLH Model Twenty (\$400), Model Twenty-Four (\$300) and Model Twenty-Six (\$250, no radio), and the Scott 2502 (\$400) and 2503 (\$470).

Most manufacturers, as you have probably noted in the above list, tend to offer a \$300 model and \$400 model as their chief choices. The difference for the hundred dollars involved is pri-

marily power and speaker size. In many cases, you would be hard-pressed to hear a significant difference in sound quality between the top-of-the-line model and its cheaper cousin. When they exist, the audible differences are usually in low-bass capability and, to a lesser degree, an added subtlety or unstrained quality attributable to the higher power output.

Shopping for a three-piece system is a looking and listening experience rather than an examination of specifications. One reason, and something to make a point of listening for, is that a real difference between many systems is acoustic output, a quantity for which there is no formal specification at this time. Acoustic output is, very simply, the amount of actual *sound* a system will deliver — a highly different consideration from the rated electrical power of a system. It is a combination of both electrical power and the efficiency of the speakers involved.

To gauge differences for yourself, begin by putting a record on a system and seeing how loud you can turn things up before very audible distortion sets in; then repeat the process on the system to be compared. The differences can be startling in some cases, and a similar price tag on models of different manufacture does not indicate that they are equal in this respect.

Other things to look and listen for are the way in which different systems handle records and how many FM stations competing models will bring in clearly. As for differences in apparent sound quality, you are very much the judge and your own tastes the deciding factor.

Some three-piece systems now include tape cassette recorders, which we will cover separately in the near future. Whether this convenience is worth the varying amounts of added outlay involved is something you can decide for yourself, keeping in mind that a recorder (cassette or conventional "open reel") can be added to almost any three-piece system later on. The only thing to avoid is the system that *substitutes* a tape player for a record player. I don't know anyone who has been satisfied to do without record-playing in any stereo system.

While the three-piece system doesn't offer all of the amenities of full-fledged components, it is certainly worth considering. □

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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."



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."



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.



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.



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*.

REVIEWS

by ROBERT RILEY



BOOKS ON OPERA

Three Mozart Operas

by R. B. Moberly
Dodd, Mead & Company. \$7.50

The Operas of Puccini

by William Ashbrook
Oxford University Press. \$7.50

Richard Wagner's Visit to Rossini and An Evening at Rossini's in Beau-Sejour

by Edmond Michotte, translated
from the French and annotated with
an introduction by Herbert Weinstock
The University of Chicago Press. \$7.50

Gone are the days when opera buffs required little more than uncomplicated synopses of opera plots à la *The Victor Book of Operas*. Comparable unadorned anthologies still appear, to be sure (including a new edition of the classic *Victor Book*), and they continue to be useful. But today's sophisticated devotees of the lyric theatre learned long ago to respect the scholarship of Ernest Newman's "stories" and similar in-depth studies. Besides, contemporary opera fans have been charmed by such erudite commentators as Boris Goldovsky (via the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts) and Leonard Bernstein (remember his brilliant television appraisal of *Carmen* a few years ago?).

After all, this is the day of performance purism — at least considerable lip-service to it. Execution of instru-

mental and vocal music is expected to conform to historically correct performance practices. "Authenticity" and "credibility" are further watchwords. Operatically speaking, ours is the era of such master directors as Carl Ebert, Wieland Wagner and Gunther Rennert, all responsible for brands of musico-dramatic creativity putting to shame conventions that were once acceptable.

Psychological and social speculation also dictates the order of the day, for opera must be made "meaningful" to now-generation audiences. To Puccini authority Mosco Carner, for instance, Butterfly transcends her pitiable role as the convenient plaything of an American sailor away from home: she symbolizes the polarity and essential incompatibility between East and West. A current director of the New York City Opera sizes up poor little Mimi as a "sometimes bitch" and takes *Bohème* from there. One scholarly British music magazine recently devoted nearly seventeen pages to the "social tensions" at work in *The Marriage of Figaro*. Wagner's *Ring* is viewed by one thoughtful investigator as a vast symbolic fresco requiring illumination from the lamps of mythology, anthropology and depth-psychology. The possibilities are limitless to opera-as-theatre annotators.

The ardent, inquisitive partisanship of Moberly in *Three Mozart Operas*, and Ashbrook in *The Operas of Puccini* takes form in undeniably provocative reading. One may be tempted to wonder, though, whether or not the two critiques, like others of the kind, are sometimes more appropriate for consumption by fellow musical dramaturgists and/or professional producers than for the enlightenment of operagoers unable to detect a Freudian urge from a misplaced *fermata*, who care as little about correct vocal ornaments as they do about authentic costume ornaments.

Moberly is obviously widely acquainted with the significant literature about Mozart's stage works, for generously sprinkled citations range from pronouncements by George Bernard Shaw (one of the composer's most eloquent admirers) to the *Neue Mozart Ausgabe* (new complete edition of Mozart's music). Because so much has already been written about *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute*, Moberly's book might at first appear a vain, opinionated superfluity. At its weakest it proves fussy

and arty. At its best, however, persuasiveness outrivals extravagance. Aside from thorough literary considerations, such important musical matters as orchestral nuances are described, frequently with graphic imagination: "The first violins chuckle . . . the violins join in staccato titters . . ." Vocal aspects are similarly touched upon: "Her vocal line rocks with laughter . . ." Persons are characterized, sometimes astutely: "Zerlina . . . is a blonde dairymaid with lively eyes . . . dairymaid because the Don is made to say that her fingers are soft as junket . . ."

Moberly's guide is substantially directed at the armchair opera fan able to follow a musical score and who has the perseverance to equate the text with its (or Moberly's) musical translation. Only the author's words can properly convey his methods:

"There are cross-references . . . by number, or number and bar. For instance, *Figaro* 1 is the opening G major duet, 1.30 is Susanna's first line, and 1A14 has secco words about 'the most convenient room in the palace.' . . . There are lists of section numbers at the beginning of each act, and in the index."

Ashbrook, whose writing is considerably less pungent, precise and speculative than Moberly's, thankfully punctuates his essays on all the Puccini stage pieces with old-fashioned musical quotations instead of cumbersome location devices. He also conveys, from time to time, picturesque depictions. "Puccini's instrumentation in *La Bohème*," we are told, "is well illustrated by the opening of Act 3. With such simple means as staccato chords for flutes and harp in unison over a cello pedal point, he suggests not only snow falling but the winter of the heart." (This is a particularly effective bit, of course, for the reader who knows what a pedal point is.) The narrative contains so many facts and figures about librettos and librettists, deletions and additions to the scores, chronologies of published versions and performance dates, etc., that the results turn into something of a grab-bag of relevant bits mixed with irrelevant pieces. Ashbrook's effort in no way displaces Mosco Carner's superb *Puccini, a Critical Biography* whose broader scope and more fluent literary composition qualify it as vastly superior to Ashbrook's somewhat over-zealous volume.

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THOMAS M. DYE • ANTON VAN SON

ner and Gioacchino Rossini are decorated with grace notes of more than passing interest. Weinstock's excellent translations and critical amplifications, together with the attractive production of the little boxed volume, prove a connoisseur's delight.

Michotte was a prosperous Belgian amateur pianist and composer well known as a performer on, and an advocate of, a contraption of musical glasses known as the Mattauphone. He also acted for many years as President of the Administrative Council of the Conservatoire Royal de Musique at Brussels. To this institution he gave his distinguished collection of Rossiniana. The Belgian was one of a small circle of artistic acquaintances of Richard Wagner who gathered at the composer's Paris home where he lived quietly while collaborating with Edmond Roche on the French translation of *Tannhäuser*.

Rossini had arrived in the French capital in 1855 to spend the remainder of his life. Here he was lionized by a wide circle of the city's elite who eagerly sought admittance to the maestro's salons. Rossini had earned a reputation as a wit whose verbal barbs were frequently razor-sharp. According to Michotte, Rossini was on one occasion found "turning the pages of an enormous score . . . that of *Tannhäuser*. After further efforts, he stopped: 'At last, that isn't bad!' — and he sighed. 'For half an hour I've been searching . . . now I'm beginning to understand some of it!' — The score was upside down and backward!" Believing such an attribution, Wagner was understandably apprehensive about meeting the Italian when Michotte arranged in 1860 a meeting of the two creatively dissimilar figures. Michotte, who accompanied Wagner to the encounter in Rossini's apartment, remained to take notes during the conversation — notes whose authenticity nobody can conclusively assess, of course. In any event, the transcript formed the basis of Michotte's *Richard Wagner's Visit to Rossini (Paris 1860)* which was finally published in 1906. Its author claims it to constitute "intimate confidences that up to now I never have dreamed of divulging outside a restricted circle of friends."

According to Michotte, the meeting commenced with Rossini's cordial, mildly defensive, welcome:

"'Ah! *monsieur Wagner*,' he said, 'like a new Orpheus, you don't

fear to enter this redoubtable precinct . . .' And, without giving Wagner time to reply: 'I know that they have thoroughly blackened me in your mind . . . I do hold to being polite and refraining from insulting a musician who, like you — for this is what I have been told — is trying to extend the limits of our art. Those great devils who take pleasure in busying themselves with me should at least grant that, though I lack other merits, I do have some common sense.'"

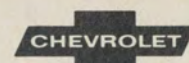
From that moment on, the two treated each other with nearly effusive deference as they exchanged ideas about their art, agreed on the idiocy of singers, compared professional experiences, and flattered each other. On the one hand, Wagner explained his revolutionary concepts of music drama with singular brevity and clarity. Rossini, a receptive listener, expressed his admiration for Bach, Mozart and Beethoven — "If Beethoven is a prodigy of humanity, Bach is a miracle of God!" He also recounted his meetings with Beethoven, Weber and Mendelssohn. The brilliant dialogue, lasting half an hour, was characterized by the utmost amiability, particularly on Rossini's part, for his jovial sallies revealed him, expectedly, as taking himself far less seriously than did Wagner. The two men parted, never to meet again. But in the meantime, each had learned to respect, and apparently to like, the other. Michotte's document does great credit to both parties.

In *An Evening at Rossini's in Beau-Séjour (Passy) 1858*, Michotte illumines Rossini's experience as a singing teacher, one facet of the maestro's career not generally emphasized. "Alas for us! — our homeland's *bel canto* is lost!", lamented Rossini to a group of friends, including Michotte, after one of his dinners at his villa. Declaring that singers and singing had fallen from their former glories, the retired opera composer discoursed on various practical principles of vocal art, footnoted by a recital of the names of famous singers active during the first half of the nineteenth century. To his recollection of these lively remarks, Michotte added the musical notation of some vocal exercises recommended by Rossini. □



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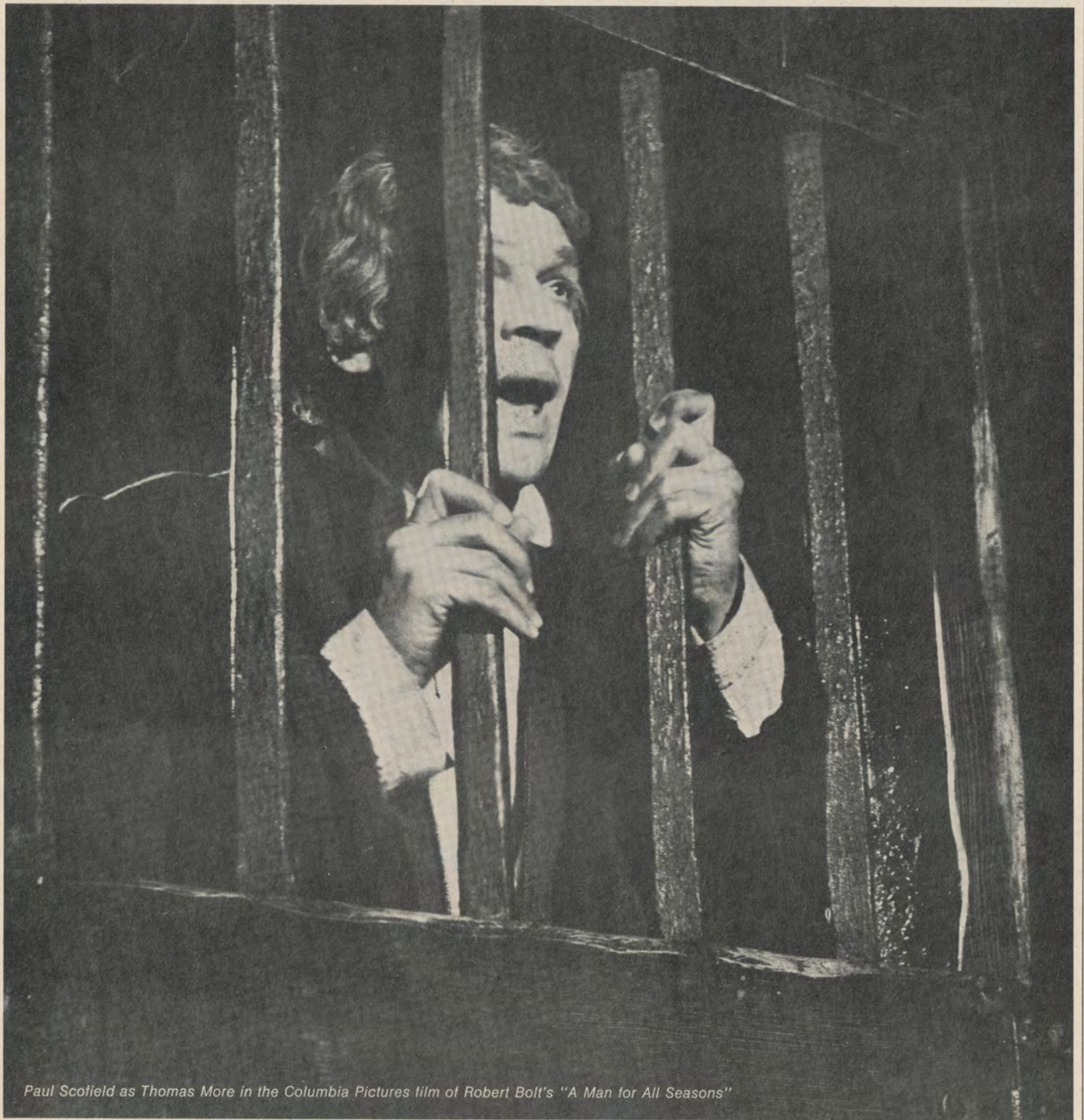
**A group picture of all the cars in
Monte Carlo's field.**

"MODERN MAN HAS BECOME SO TRIVIAL AND UNINTERESTING THAT HE HAS LOST THE POWER TO INVOLVE US." —Robert Brustein

EPIC THEATRE

BRINGING THE PAST TO LIFE

by ROSALIND LEVITT



Paul Scofield as Thomas More in the Columbia Pictures film of Robert Bolt's "A Man for All Seasons"

THE OLD ADAGE that "history repeats itself" has been discredited by Professor Lynn White, the noted historian, who insists that there's nothing you can "do" with history. "You study the past in order to live more vividly in the present," he says.

This view of the past and its uses extends to playwrights who have turned history into drama. Although the "chronicle play" or "epic theatre," as it's called, always promises plenty of visual delight and verbal excitement, mere revival of the past through costumes, scenery, and speech isn't quite enough. The good chronicle play gives us insights into the personalities of historical heroes (and into ourselves) based on modern understanding of human psychology as a force in history, often with startling results.

We aren't accustomed to heroes nowadays; critic Robert Brustein has suggested that playwrights turn to history precisely because "modern man has become so trivial and uninteresting that he has lost his power to involve us." But in the most absorbing of the modern history plays, the past comes alive in a way that reminds us unmistakably of *now*. George Bernard Shaw had a field day with history — all his historical plays have elaborate expository introductions — yet once remarked candidly, "I never study any period but the present."

Not every playwright can be a Shaw, unfortunately; some plays based on true historical events do little more than trot the events out on stage. *The Diary of Anne Frank* has a literalness that declines to wrestle with great ideas; *Anastasia* is melodrama and bad history to boot; and the Elizabethan cycle of Maxwell Anderson, so warmly received in its day, is by present standards only pageantry: a set of tableaux enlivened fitfully by pseudo-Tudor dialogue, such as Henry VIII's wooden query in *Anne of the Thousand Days*, "What will it seem to men I was like when I did this?" Compare that to the slangy, slapdash language of Anouilh's Henry II in *Becket*: "I can't think what's got into me this morning, but I suddenly feel extremely intelligent. It probably comes of making love with a French girl last night."

While chronicle plays are about people whom the audience "knows," the character on stage is usually a stranger to himself — in the beginning anyway; and what we watch is not just



Arthur Miller's "The Crucible" was designed as an indictment of McCarthyism — "the new Puritanism that allowed people to express their guilt publicly and also take vengeance under cover of patriotism." Above, Angela Paton in the ACT production.



Anthony Quayle in the title role of Bertolt Brecht's "Galileo," as staged by the Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center

the fulfillment of biographical expectations, but an identity crisis as contemporary as the analyst's couch. The humorous banter of Henry II's barons ("Who is Becket?") echoes the hero's private predicament of trying to locate his essential selfhood. Robert Bolt wrote *A Man for All Seasons* because he, too, realized that modern man has trouble with self-definition. "Thomas More, as I wrote about him, became for me a man with an adamant sense of his own self. He knew where he began and left off." Even Arthur Miller in *The Crucible* felt compelled to juxtapose with the strong political implications of his play the highly personal moral conflict of John Proctor. "He have his goodness now," is Elizabeth's exultant curtain line as she shares in her husband's long-awaited discovery of who John Proctor really is — an identity invented for him by Miller in the interests of good theatre.

What about the uses of faith? Heaven knows the 20th Century will never be called the Age of Piety, yet the heroes and heroines of much of our popular drama are people of sincere, even epic religious belief. Joan of Arc, Thomas More, Becket, Martin Luther: sedate or stormy, eccentric or down-to-earth, they were all believers and their belief is handled by their non-believing playwright-biographers with prodigious respect. It isn't simply an image of superior piety that the playwright wishes to put across; there is clearly another vital ingredient in the character's personality that always ends up making that piety creditable to modern audiences. One critic has accurately pointed out that modern

dramas which deal with religion tend to take into account the skepticism of the viewer. What fascinated Robert Bolt about Thomas More ("I am not a Catholic nor even in the meaningful sense of the word a Christian. So by what right do I appropriate a Christian saint to my purposes?") was More's willingness to commit himself to a principle. This very modern (i.e., timeless) concern he calls his "explanation and apology" for treating a Catholic saint as "a hero of selfhood." Apparently 12th Century archbishops can be skeptics too when they turn up in 20th Century plays. Thomas Becket hesitates to say if he loves God; Anouilh allows him to say only that he loves "the honor of God," which is a way of saying that he doesn't know whether God even exists but he can at least believe in himself. The historical Becket may roll in his tomb at such an inference, but Anouilh, like Bolt, has appropriated a Christian saint to his purposes, and his purposes are as vital to our age as God, Canterbury, and martyrdom were to Becket's.

All one has to do to find contemporary messages in an historical play is to recall what was going on in the world when the author wrote it. It holds true for Shakespeare, who wrote his histories with Queen Elizabeth looking over his shoulder, and it is just as true in our own century. *Saint Joan* was written at the time of Joan of Arc's canonization and is as much about the age that canonized her as the age that condemned her — Shaw's point being, of course, that 1920 would do for a *nouvelle* Joan what 1431 did for the original one. Besides that self-evident fact, Joan's nationalism, her practical-

ity in warfare, and her "rational dress for woman" made her an irresistible symbol of Shaw's own generation. Nor would *Saint Joan* have been a truly Shavian piece without a bit of choice comment on the Victorian complacency that in 1920 still needed to be mocked out of existence. "How can what an Englishman believe be heresy?" sputters the chaplain. "It is a contradiction in terms!" Shaw's opinion of the average Englishman's receptivity to new ideas in any century is also immortalized in a terse line from *Caesar and Cleopatra*: "Britannicus is shocked."

Albert Camus' *Caligula*, dealing in existential terms with the short, bloody career of the demented Roman emperor, was written in 1938 when Hitler and Stalin were both drunk with power. Like *Caligula*, the European dictators sought to accomplish the "impossible" by using unlimited power in an unlimited way. (Camus' symbol for the "impossible" is the emperor's desire to possess the moon. It would be interesting to see how this played in 1969.)

Galileo was written in two versions in order to jibe with what was happening first in the 1930s and then in 1945. In the first version, Bertolt Brecht was drawing on the lessons of the Third Reich: the need to keep truth alive by permitting men to think. After Hiroshima, the issue became the moral responsibility of the scientist. His Galileo, proclaiming and then, when threatened by the Inquisition, recanting his scientific truths, was successively written as a victim of Nazi intimidation and as a Marxist traitor — both times in 17th Century costumes.

Devotees of Brecht still differ about "which" Galileo was the more intellectually honest creation. Some say neither. The main point is that he's a "creation," not an exhumation.

Every red-blooded American knows Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible* because he was convinced that the emotional climate of the United States in 1953 was similar to that of Salem in 1692, the year of the witch hunt. His drama was designed as a searing indictment of McCarthyism, the new Puritanism that "allowed people to express their guilt publicly and also to take vengeance under cover of patriotism." *The Crucible*, revived from time to time on stage or TV, is also a subject of continued controversy, some claiming that it was so closely modeled upon a specific situation that it is no longer timely, others maintaining that it still holds up as a condemnation of witch-hunting anytime, anywhere. When first produced, it did not have the impact Miller hoped for. Its vivid characters did not resemble the nondescript victims of Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee; Miller's handling of the historical background was so skillful that the present became obscured by a powerfully-evoked past; moreover, audiences failed to put the dangers of witchery and Communist subversion in the same category — they felt that one constituted a more substantial threat than the other. The play succeeded artistically rather than politically, although the French liked it. They thought it was anti-American.

In the sixties, three plays about men of religion have made for some stimulating theatre, two of them — *Becket* and *A Man For All Seasons* — becoming award-winning movies and one, *Luther*, despite its scatological language, graduating to prime-time television.

The French theatre since World War II has emphasized the human predicament rather than eccentricities of character; Anouilh in particular has dealt with the individual's relation to himself, God, the universe, and history, all of which appear in *Becket* along with themes of collaboration and resistance: agonizing issues for any Frenchman who survived World War II. Anouilh's historical source (a rather quaint work, it would appear) erroneously ascribed Saxon lineage to the English archbishop, but even when informed by an historian friend that Becket ("Bequet") was actually of Norman descent, Anouilh refused to make the change, for "a large part of the subject of my play was based on the fact that Becket was of the vanquished race." In other words, Becket as a Saxon underdog to Norman rulers suggested ready comparisons to the French under Naziism:

"[My father] managed by collaborating to amass a considerable fortune. As he was also a man of rigid principles, I imagine he contrived to do it in accordance with his conscience . . . men of principle are very skillful [at that] in troubled times . . ."

If Anouilh made modern Frenchmen out of Thomas Becket and his col-

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A scene from Center Theatre Group's staging of Romulus Linney's "The Sorrows of Frederick," a play which "dissects the career of the 18th Century German emperor with an eye to the shaping and application of power by neurotic individuals." Fritz Weaver (playing Ilute) as Frederick the Great.

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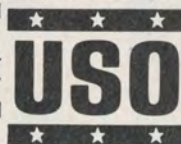
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laborator father, John Osborne made his Martin Luther a 16th Century Angry Young Man. The play *Luther* is very much in the tradition of the proletarian naturalism popularized in the 1950s by Osborne and the other "Angries." Martin's father, a German peasant, comes through as a beery British workingman, alternately proud and contemptuous of his university-educated son ("Your old dad," he calls himself) and Martin snarls back at him across the generation gap in the accents of Jimmy Porter:

"I don't have to give you! I am — that's all I need to give you. That's your big reward, and that's all you're ever going to get, and it's more than any father's got a right to."

Peter Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* uses the conquest of Peru in 1531 as the basis for an anti-imperialist drama, and Romulus Linney's *The Sorrows of Frederick*, with Hitler and Hindenburg never far out of mind, dissects the career of the 18th Century German emperor with an eye to the shaping and the application of power by neurotic individuals who become the victims of their own ascendancy. It is no coincidence that a soldier says of Frederick, "He shed the blood of his fatherland all over Europe," or when Frederick is called "the hero of the damned," "the bloody warrior who ravaged our century."

How historically accurate should a history play be? The careful reader or viewer will always be able to spot a few small errors (or even some large ones, such as Shakespeare's monstrous libel of Richard III), although in most cases the playwright will defend his innovations to the last ditch. Much, for instance, is made by Anouilh of Henry and Becket's partnership in lechery when in fact Becket was a minor cleric and therefore celibate when he became Henry's chancellor; but the playwright needed the wenching and whoring in order to heighten the hero's imminent moral transformation — and for purposes of comedy. Robert Bolt gives a fascinating account of how he "invented" Sir Thomas More's historical personality:

"I took a very highhanded line indeed in my interpretation of [More's] character. I think that the character I have drawn will fit the facts of More's life . . . quite nicely; but I don't present my picture of More as the authentic man . . . So far as I know, More no more than anybody else ever expressed neatly and finally the core of his own life. I don't



Robert Shaw in the title role of John Osborne's "Luther" (ABC-TV production): 1950s proletarian naturalism within the framework of historical drama

suppose that he knew . . . what the core of his life was."

More's pet monkey, his household fool, his belief in witchcraft, and his method of introducing his daughters to a potential suitor (he yanked off the bedclothes) would all be out of character in Bolt's supremely civilized portrait — civilized by the standards of the 1960s. It's just as well.

Knowing that this *modus operandi* is typical of writers of historical drama, Eric Bentley poses the question, "If what playwrights are after is fiction, why do they purport to offer us history plays at all?" He finds the answer in a logical paradox: only those figures who have become legendary make good subjects for plays about history. Since much of our knowledge of the past ("or what we call knowledge") is based on fiction, we can find reality even with the distortion of a few particulars. Winston Churchill claimed he learned English history from Shakespeare, and as novelist Jessamyn West put it, when you can't invent everything, you must try to get at the truth in spite of the facts.

Occasionally, too much tampering weakens a play. The dinner forks in *Becket*, the "old dad's" in *Luther*, the "Protestantism" in *Saint Joan*, all prove that a little anachronism goes a long way, whereas in Gore Vidal's adaptation of Dürrenmatt's *Romulus*, anachronism is exaggerated until the story of the last Roman emperor reads like *A Funny Thing Happened on the*

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Way to the Forum ("See you in exile. Got to flee now.") Its arch references to "un-Roman activities," "the international menace of Gothicism," etc., make the parallels too obvious and the play consequently degenerates into farce without ever saying much about then or now. Lovers of antiquity should compare *Romulus* to *Caligula*, which for all its modern nihilism still manages to convey the horrors of an earlier time, or to *Heliogabalus*, that "buffoonery in three acts" composed as a barroom bet by America's favorite infidels, H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan.

A good history play, as an admirer of *Luther* pointed out, is one in which no matter how well known the facts of the hero's life are, we see the unexpected. In *Becket*, a religious subject is given a new secular twist, with the "lover's quarrel" (not necessarily homosexual, though there has been talk) added to the familiar Church-State conflict — plus a dash of existentialism. In *Luther* and *The Sorrows of Frederick*, documented father-son relationships are given the full Freudian treatment, and there isn't a critic alive who hasn't had something to say about Brother Martin's constipation, which accounts for *Luther's* most consistent — and persistent — metaphor.

Most of all it is the wittiness of these works that lends them distinction, the healthy sparkle and bite of their talk. *The Sorrows of Frederick* doesn't mince words, including the four-letter variety, nor does author Linney scrimp on choice quotes from the subject himself (Frederick to a friend: "My hemorrhoids salute your gonorrhoea"). The religious establishment is treated by one and all with a devastating casualness, either taking it on the chin or dishing it out in fine style (Bishop to Frederick the Great: "This great understanding between your Majesty and the Holy Ghost is something new. I did not know you were even acquainted with him.")

Although everyone — historians, authors, audiences, critics — will agree that epic theatre isn't orthodox history, and isn't intended to be, there is nevertheless to be gained from the writing and viewing of such plays a strong sense of the past as a reality and as a powerful mirror for the present. □

Miss Levitt is a young Los Angeles-based writer whose byline has appeared in FM & Fine Arts magazine and the Los Angeles Times. Her article "The Wicked, Wicked Stage" was published by Performing Arts earlier this year.

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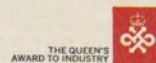
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