

Opera in the Park

9/9/1979

SFO_PUB_01_OITP_1979_01

Publications Collection

San Francisco Opera Archives

THE FRIENDS OF RECREATION AND PARKS

present

THE SAN FRANCISCO OPERA
CONCERT IN THE PARK

with

STEFANIA TOCZYSKA
Mezzo soprano

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI
Tenor

and

KURT HERBERT ADLER

Conducting the San Francisco Opera Orchestra

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1979, at 2:00 p.m.
Music Concourse, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

PROGRAM

1. LA GAZZA LADRA Overture *Rossini*
2. MANON LESCAUT *Puccini*
Aria: Donna non vidi mai
L'AFRICANA *Meyerbeer*
Aria: O paradiso
Mr. Pavarotti
3. PARSIFAL *Wagner*
Good Friday Spell
4. IL TROVATORE *Verdi*
Aria: Condotta ell'era in ceppi
Miss Toczyska
Recitative: Madre, non dormi
Duet: Ai nostri monti
Miss Toczyska, Mr. Pavarotti

PRESENTATION Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Mayor, City and County of San Francisco

5. DIE KÖNIGSKINDER *Humperdinck*
Introduction to Act II
(Hellafest and Children's Dance)
6. SAMSON ET DALILA *Saint-Saëns*
Aria: Amour, viens aider ma faiblesse
CARMEN *Bizet*
Aria: Habañera
Miss Toczyska
7. WERTHER *Massenet*
Aria: Pourquoi me réveiller?
FEDORA *Giordano*
Aria: Amor ti vieta
Mr. Pavarotti
8. SUOR ANGELICA Intermezzo *Puccini*
9. LA FAVORITA *Donizetti*
Duet: Ah! mio bene
Miss Toczyska, Mr. Pavarotti

The seventh annual free Opera Concert in the Park is made possible by a generous grant from the *San Francisco Examiner Benefit Fund* and presented with the cooperation of the *San Francisco Opera* and *Local 6, American Federation of Musicians*. The Friends of Recreation and Parks gratefully acknowledge this assistance and the participation of Maestro Adler, Miss Toczyska and Mr. Pavarotti.

Friends of Recreation and Parks was conceived to develop and cultivate broad public involvement in San Francisco's recreation and park facilities. At the same time the Friends of Recreation and Parks generates financial support for leisure-time programs of a recreational, educational and cultural character. Your participation in this worthwhile effort is invited.

Friends of Recreation and Parks
McLaren Lodge, Golden Gate Park 94117
San Francisco, California, Phone: 558-4268

'We don't hear each other,' said the conductor, thanking the crowd, 'we only hear you'

Opera in the park: Culture for the mass

By Lon Daniels

It was still four hours before the official start of the seventh annual Opera in the Park concert, but already every seat in front of the bandstand at the Golden Gate Park Concourse was filled.

"It's not a concert, it's a communion for opera lovers," said one devotee before taking a seat yesterday.

The outdoor concert is now billed as San Francisco's biggest single annual opera event, and for the fans, who come early and bring their lunches, it's a day-long affair, starting with the morning rehearsal.

It's a time to snap shots of your favorite singer, or better yet to join him in a pose. It's also a time to look for lost kids, but only after the musical selection is finished.

Most of all, it's a time for good music.

Some, like Louise Benson, had waited since 9 a.m. Benson said she had come early, hoping for a close-up glimpse of tenor Luciano Pavarotti.

"He's my favorite," she said.

Balloons and pennants flapped in the wind, women with sun visors squinted as kids sipped colas, and adults, dressed in everything from shorts to business suits, sipped stronger beverages.

A portion of the area directly in front of the stage had been roped off, but just beyond it families and friends lounged on blankets and donned straw hats and baseball caps to ward off the morning sun's glare.

It was hot and dusty in the Park. Before the musicians arrived, the instruments were protected with dust jackets and rested against chairs on the stage.

Many fans had come especially for the occasion, like Lois Elder, a former San Franciscan, who drove from Concord with her three children to "give them a little culture."

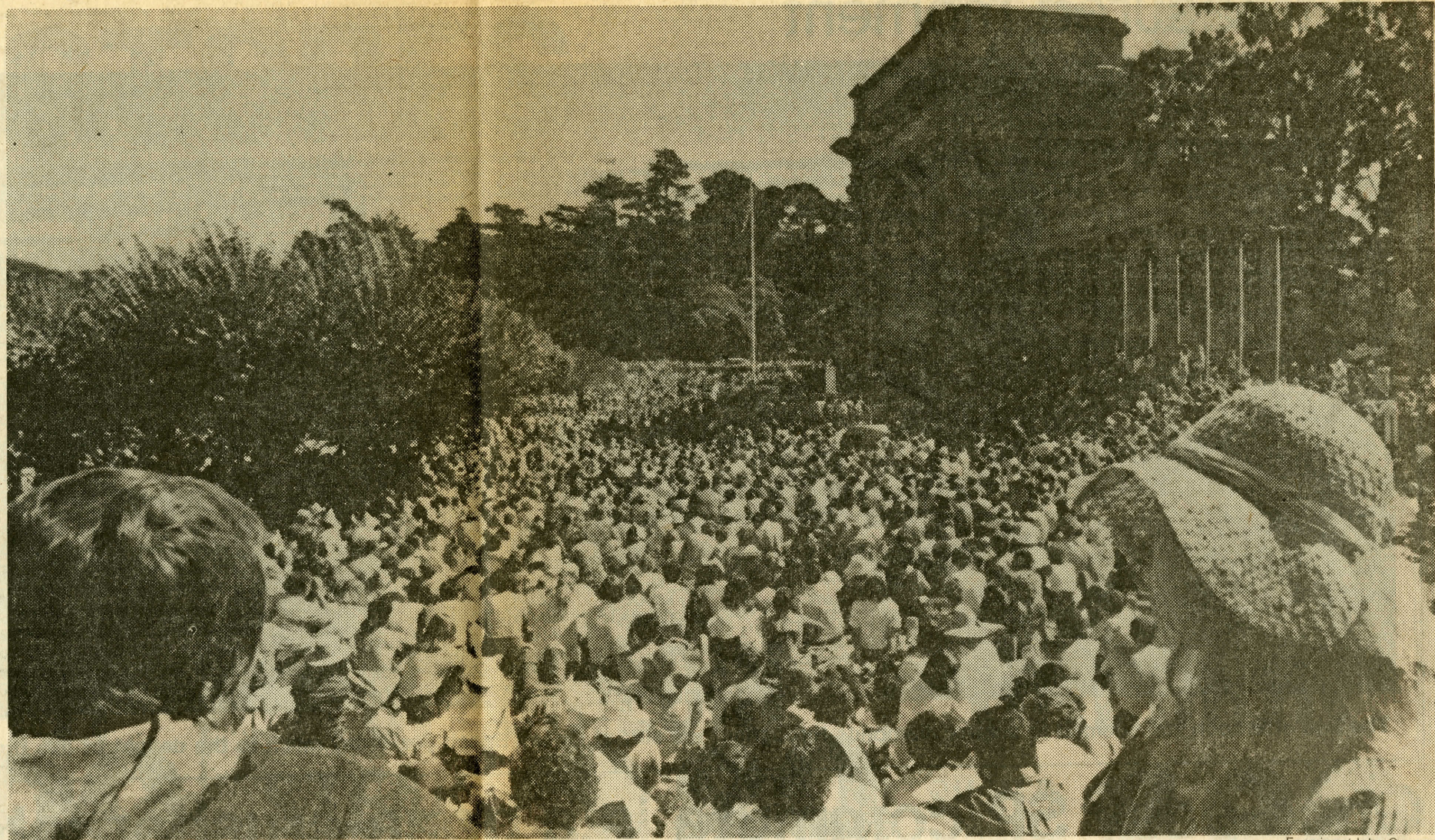
Others had wandered by while waiting for the King Tut exhibit or while strolling through the park.

Conductor Kurt Herbert Adler, a virtual rainbow of color in yellow and blue beanie and green, black and beige golf shirt, was recognized immediately and greeted with applause as he walked to the front of the orchestra section.

Members of the audience continued to munch their ham and swiss cheese sandwiches and to nurse wine in plastic cups. But it was love at first sight.

"We don't hear each other, we only hear you," Adler said later when thanking the audience for its applause.

At 11:15, the rehearsal began with a wave of Adler's arm.



A wall-to-wall blanket of people turned out for the concert at Golden Gate Park concourse yesterday

Examiner/John Gorman

The audience was still growing. People carried picnic baskets and ice chests. They parked their bicycles along the sidelines as they began looking for seats.

Members of the overflow began seating themselves on the steps of the concourse, behind the bandstand.

"You may not see them from here, but you'll hear," said one woman as she ushered her husband to a seat on the steps.

Another woman got off a tour bus and remarked, "What an unexpected treat." Other fans carried lawn chairs and wore T-shirts that said "Opera is a good high."

Mezzo soprano Stefania Toczyska's arrival on stage to sing a Verdi aria was greeted by a shower of applause, which grew to a storm after the selection was completed.

Pavarotti won a standing ovation when he joined Adler and Toczyska.

One aficionado explained that the performers only sang in "half-voices" during the rehearsal and saved their strength for the real performance. But it was hard to imagine a more rousing reception than that given Pavarotti after each of his numbers.

He charmed his fans with every gesture. They even applauded when he donned a checkered cap and hurled a long multi-colored scarf around his neck.

The "Habanera" from "Carmen" won for Toczyska the morning's longest round of applause. The Polish-born singer had made her American debut Friday opposite Pavarotti and Renata Scotto in "La Gioconda."

The concert is made possible through a grant from the San Francisco Examiner Benefit Fund, and is presented by the Friends of Recreation and Parks with the cooperation of the San Francisco Opera and the American Federation of Musicians, local 6.

Previous shows have included performances by stars such as Scotto, Beverly Sills and Giacomo Argall.

By one 1 p.m., the rehearsal was over, but the crowd, which had doubled in size to an estimated 10,000 wasn't moving. The real show was to begin an hour later.

An hour after the 2 p.m. official start of the program, Richmond District police had to issue a warning. "Don't attempt to go near there. It's wall-to-wall. There's a blanket of people," said a policewoman.

Tues
9/11/79

Magical Mix At Opera In the Park

By Marilyn Tucker

Now that Luciano Pavarotti has promised to come back for the annual opening weekend opera concert "until we are at least old like Mr. Adler," Golden Gate Park may have to be enlarged.

As it was, Sunday afternoon's concert at the bandshell — with approximately 25,000 in attendance, depending on which party of interested officialdom one consulted — managed to finally reduce concurrent King Tut to the upstart he probably is.

The mix was magical, beginning with a good hot afternoon without a hint of fog (Kurt Herbert Adler doesn't conduct in fog), thousands of picnics all heavy on the garlic, plus everybody's favorite Italian and a Polish mezzo-soprano, Stefania Toczyska, with the lung power of hurricane force.

Even the politics, which have been used as a springboard for unbelievable ego trips in the past, like the time when the chairman of something or another even brought his children on stage, were kept to a minimum. Mayor Dianne Feinstein, in the face of loud but limited heckling (shame!), was all class and graciousness, making her presentation of city gifts and then going on to listen to the music.

The music is, after all, what people come for, and eliminating the speeches entirely has always been my best idea for improving these affairs, but then, no one listens to me!

Pavarotti probably never could do any wrong in San Francisco, and he was in splendid voice, except for an occasional hint of scratchiness. He sang five arias, including a radiant "O paradiso" from "L'Africana" and "Pourquoi me reveiller" from "Werther."

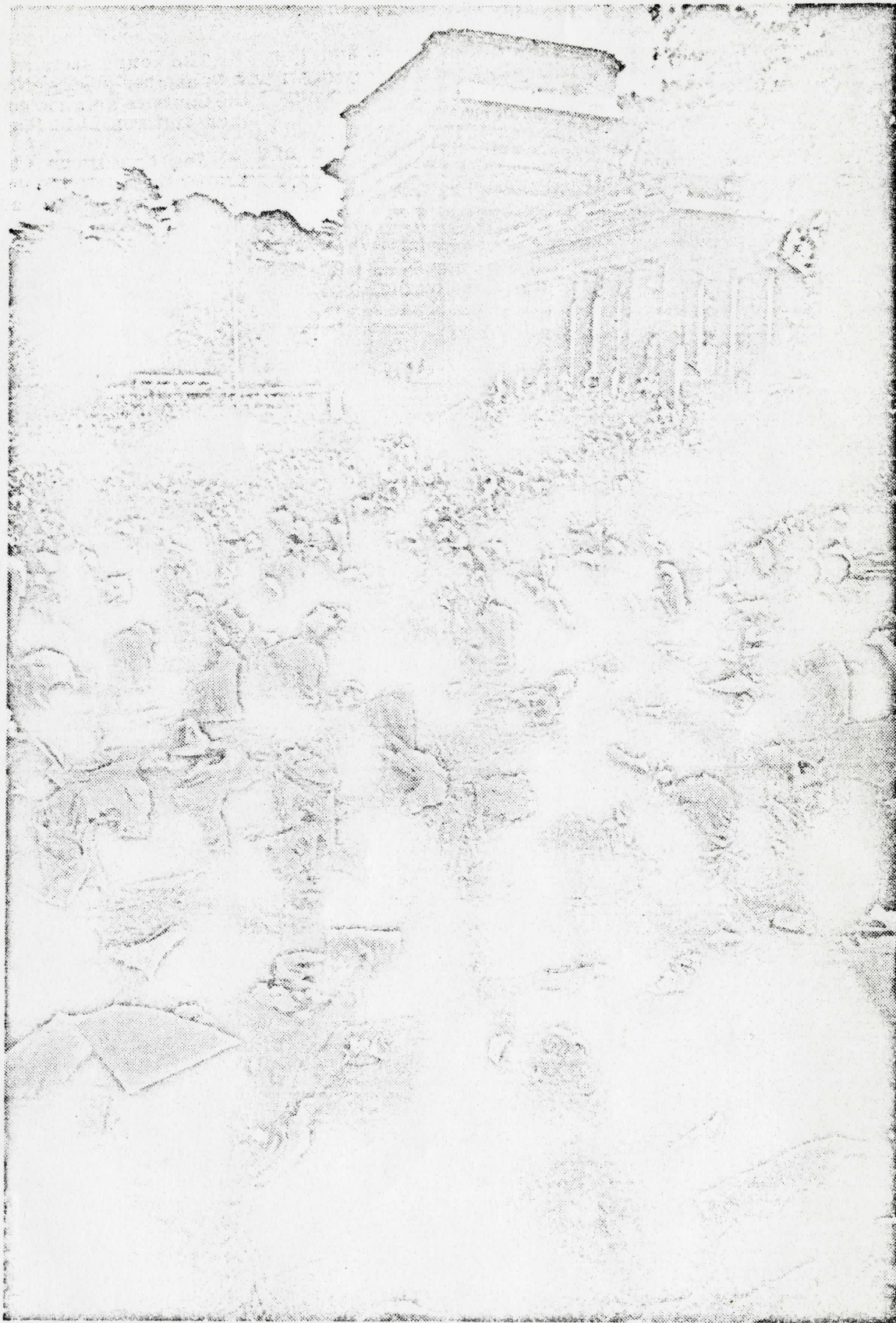
Toczyska knocked everyone dead with her colossal voice, that went from ravishing chest tones to a top that was all blast and beauty, and virtually seamless as well. She looks the gamine, and her physical presentation is so mannered that it's funny. But the voice could break a truckload of crystal without half trying.

Toczyska sang the Habnara from "Carmen," as well as arias from "Il Trovatore," "Samson et Dalila" and "La Favorita."

Pavarotti and Toczyska were forceful in Manrico and Azucena's duet, "Ai nostri monti" from "Il Trovatore."

The orchestral music was well suited to the occasion. Adler conducted Rossini's "La Gazza Ladra" Overture for a sparkling opener as well as the Good Friday Spell from Wagner's "Parsifal," which worked better than one might expect.

All in all, it was an afternoon of opera that was really grand.



Opera Goes Outdoors

An estimated 25,000 persons — the biggest-ever crowd for San Francisco's annual opera concert — jammed the Music Concourse of Golden Gate Park yesterday. Singing were

Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti and Polish mezzo-soprano Stefania Toczyska. They are in 'La Gioconda' at the Opera House. Kurt Herbert Adler led the opera orchestra.