

La Boheme

1978

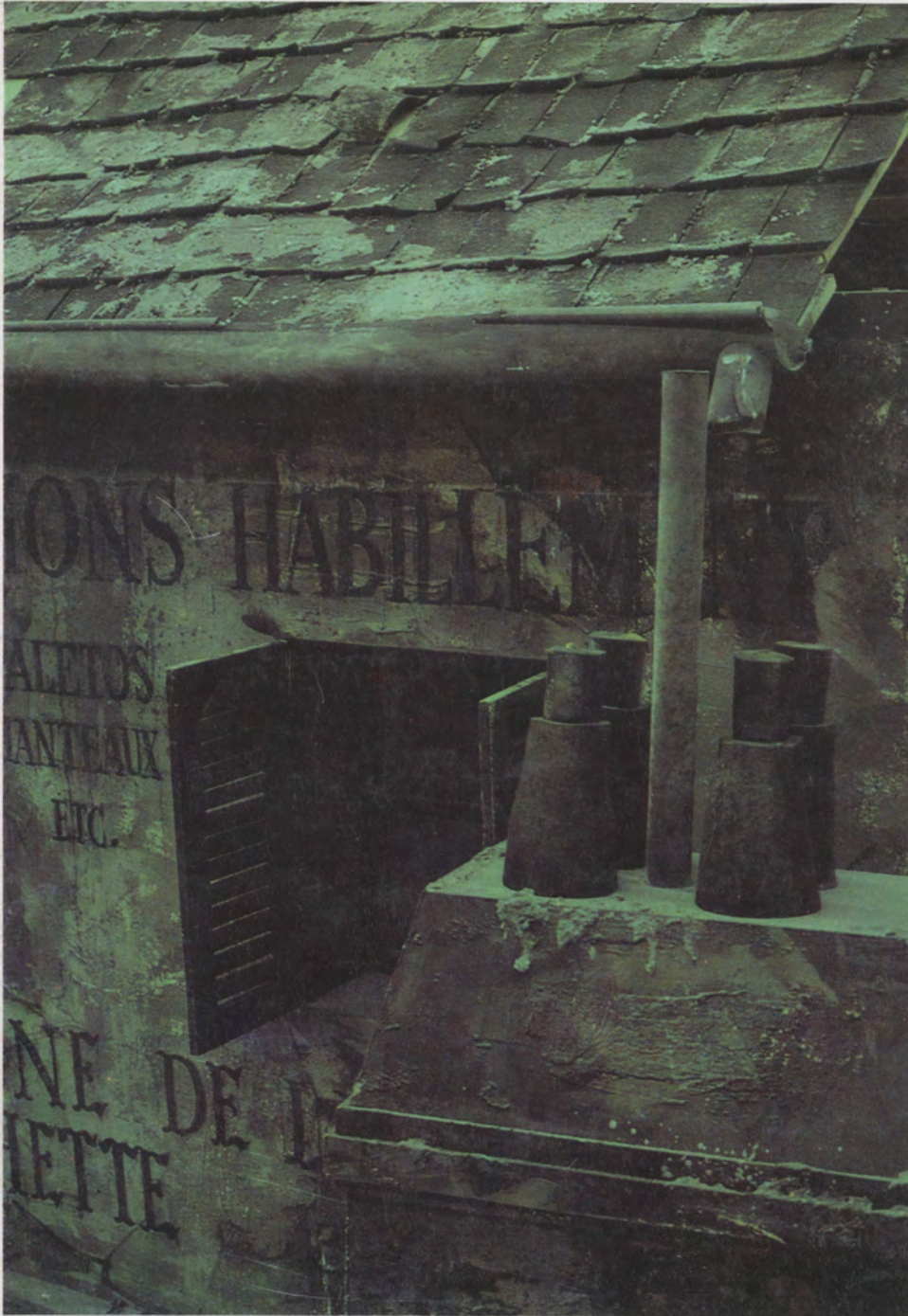
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La Bohème



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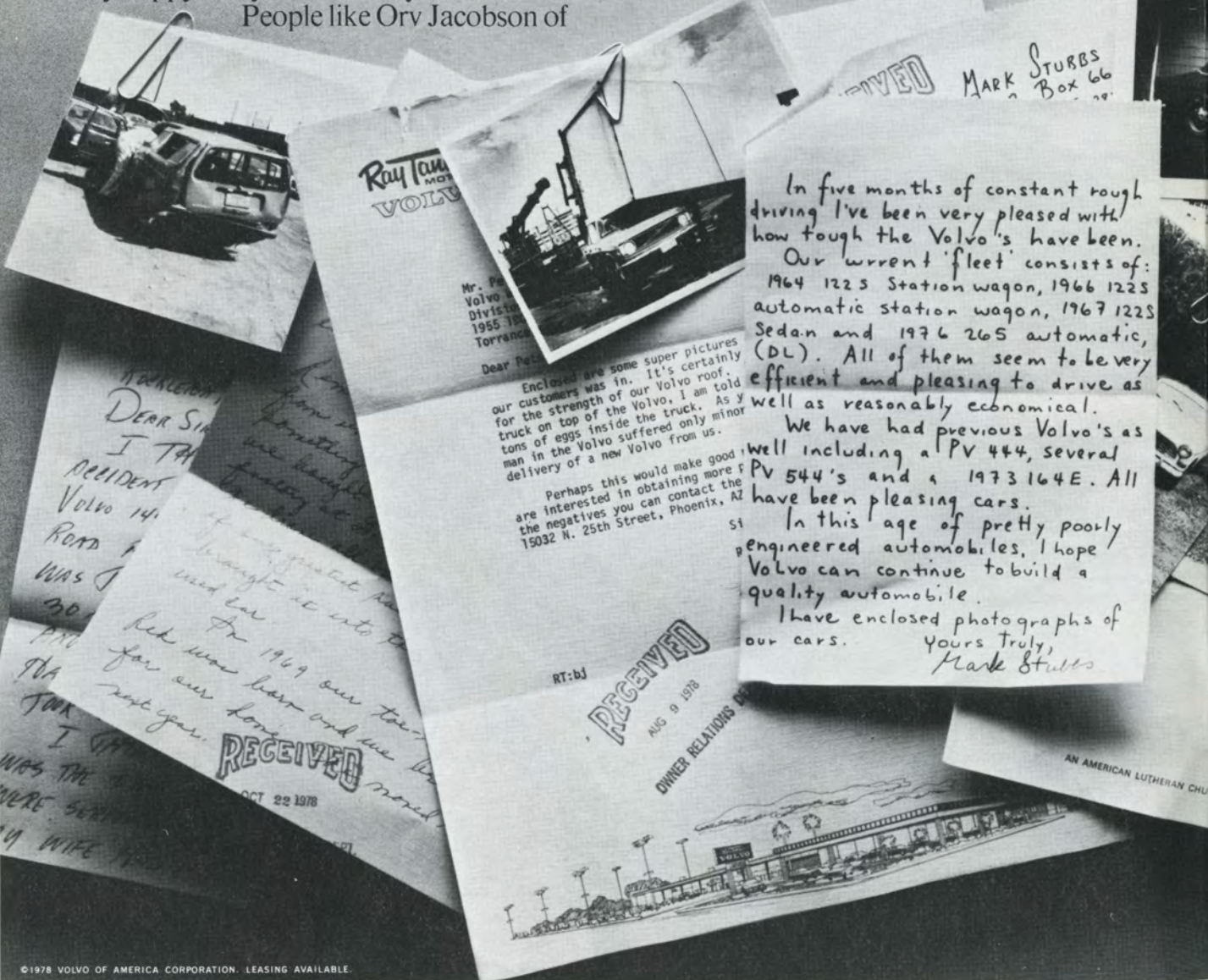
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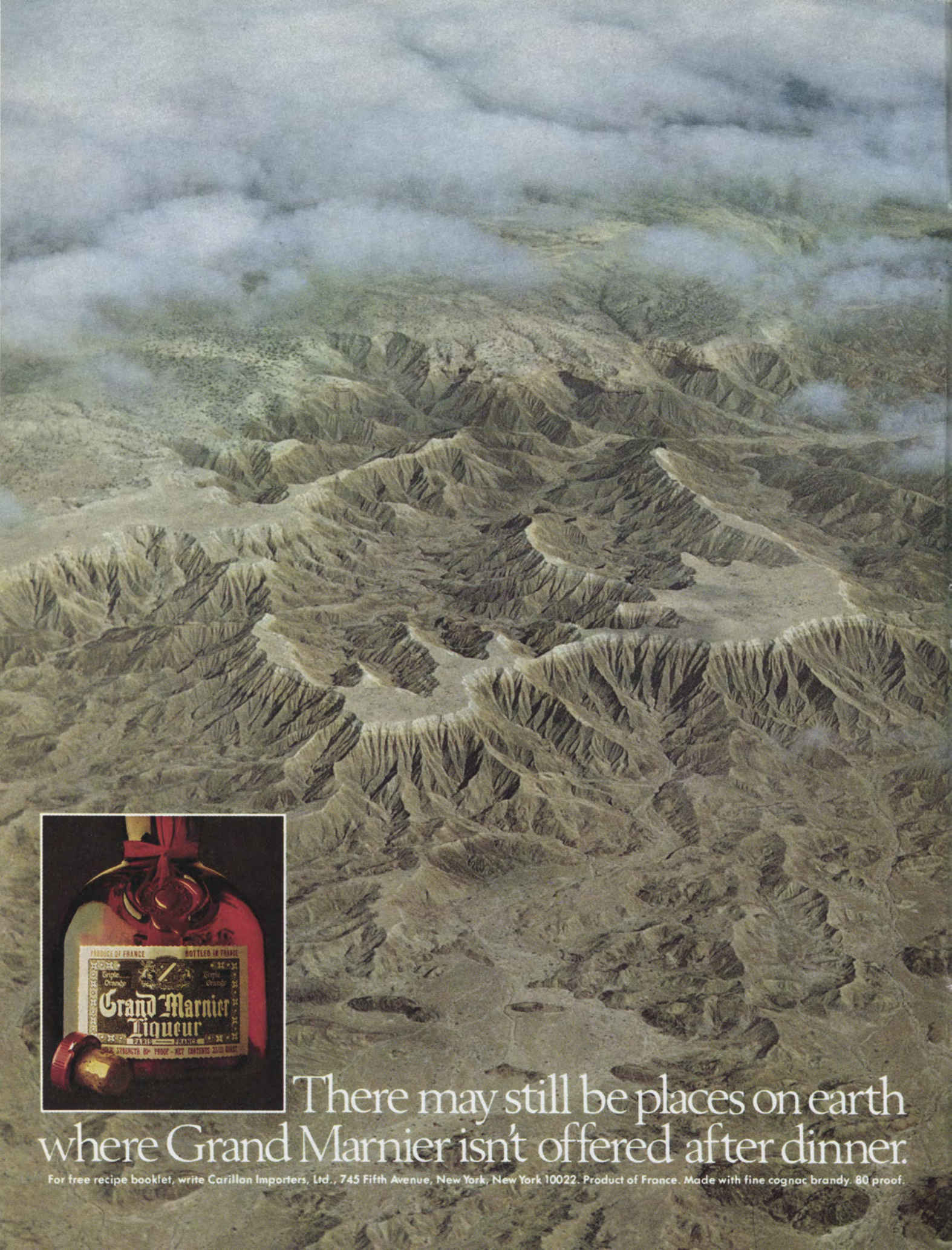
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At this point we are still to add operas to this year's repertoire and I, personally, also anticipate with pride and pleasure the benefit Gala of November 19 in recognition of my anniversaries which will bring the largest number of artists and director colleagues ever assembled at one time to our Opera House. You may rest assured that all performances yet to come (to some of which tickets are available) will be presented with utmost care until the final curtain of our 1978 season will fall on November 26th.

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La Bohème



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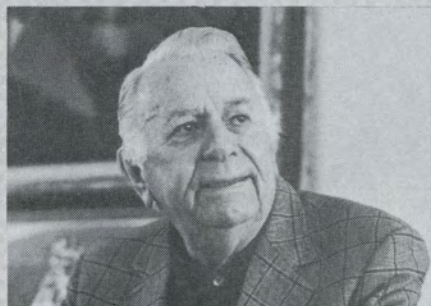


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San Francisco Opera Magazine

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Cover: The venerable chimneys and roofs of Paris, with a window such as Mimi might have looked out of as she did her embroidering. A detail of Jean Pierre Ponnelle's setting for *La Bohème*, photographed by Ira Nowinski.

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For the Fourth Time

Jean Pierre Ponnelle Stages a Puccini Opera for San Francisco—This Time the Most Popular One of Them All

by Arthur Kaplan

For the past three seasons San Francisco Opera audiences have been treated to exciting productions of three Puccini operas, all designed and staged by world-famous director Jean-Pierre Ponnelle: *Gianni Schicchi* in 1975; *Tosca* in 1976; and *Turandot* in 1977. This season operagoers will see a fourth Ponnelle/Puccini collaboration grace the San Francisco Opera stage—perhaps the most beloved opera in the entire repertoire, *La Bohème*.

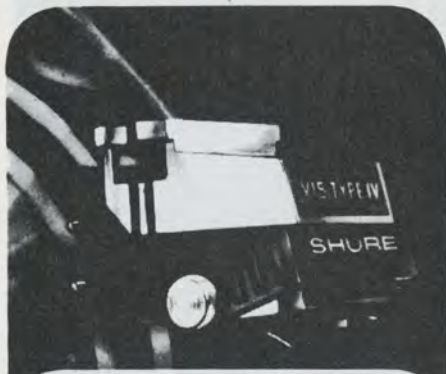
The tale of down-and-out Bohemians in mid-nineteenth century Paris has been presented more frequently than any other work in the 56-year history of the San Francisco Opera. Ponnelle is not surprised to learn this fact and offers an explanation for the opera's continued popularity and the special affection for which it is held in the hearts of the public. "First of all, there's the quality of the music; secondly, the quality of the libretto. Puc-

cini, in the melody as well as the orchestration, found a form which directly hits the visceral nerve of the public. He succeeded in finding a musical syringe which stimulates the tear ducts without putting the brain cells to sleep. And the libretto is one of the most intelligent, best constructed librettos in the entire history of opera. "In a time when *verismo* works were becoming fashionable," continues the director, "he worked in a kind of pop-

photo by Ira Nowinski.



Ponnelle works with Ileana Cotrubas and Giacomo Aragall for Act 1 of *La Bohème*.



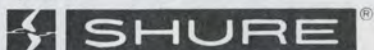
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ular form which was real, not artificial. It's realism and not *verismo*." After drawing this distinction, he elaborates on the differences between the two terms. "*Verismo* is stylized; it's an idealistic interpretation of a given reality. It's reality seen through operatic artifice, in the negative sense of the word. Realism, on the other hand, is something which corresponds to a *real* reality, to use a redundancy. All of this in an artistic mold, naturally, since opera is an art."

Whereas Ponnelle finds most *verismo* operas absurd and insipid dramatically because they artificially seek theatrical effects (in this regard he considers *Tosca* the weakest of Puccini's works), *La Bohème* is an exception because it is true. "Puccini is absolutely not sentimental, in the pejorative sense of the term. He arouses true emotions in us — his music responds to all of the sentimental yearnings that each of us feels, but without resorting to anything maudlin. It's no doubt for that reason everyone cries during *La Bohème* in opera houses throughout the world.

"In *Bohème* it's clear that Puccini was totally bound up with and understood perfectly the characters he depicted musically. He was still young when he wrote *Bohème* and by no means rich, although he wasn't dying of hunger. He was still living a kind of bohemian existence himself [When Puccini wrote *La Bohème* at age 38 he cultivated a deliberate Bohemianism with his friends in a hut on the lakeside of his home in Torre del Lago. Earlier he had kept a diary of 'Bohemian Life' where he entered items from his student days in Milan, including such entries as 'Supper for four people: one herring'].

"What is extraordinary in *La Bohème* is that the protagonists are not heroes as in almost every opera which came before it, but just plain, ordinary people. Rodolfo is a writer, but almost certainly an unsuccessful one; Marcello is surely a second-rate painter with little or no talent. In Paris, out of 40,000 or so painters, there is perhaps one with genius, 20 with real ability, and the rest with no talent. In fact,

that's the great drama in the world—the fact that not everybody is a Picasso, a Shakespeare . . . or a Puccini. *That's* the truth of the matter. *That's* what realism is."

The additional realism—the one that has touched all our lives from the Industrial Revolution to the present—is the drama of the City. This is an aspect that Ponnelle will stress in bringing the story of the Bohemian band before today's audience. "This kind of cancer which is the product of the big city and which ends up killing everyone . . . it's what Paris was in the mid-nineteenth century; what it still is. It's what Manhattan is now. That kind of stifling oppression, without even taking into account the drama of poverty. That's why I've attempted to realize the drama in the most authentic manner possible.

"I have tried to reconstitute the atmosphere of the Latin Quarter towards the middle of the nineteenth century before the aesthetically questionable surgical operations of Monsieur Haussmann [Baron Haussman modernized Paris during the Second Empire (1850-1870) by razing picturesque old sections to make way for large thoroughfares, improved sewage, etc. in one of the most striking examples of modern urbanism]."

In point of fact, rather than the stylization of the last year's *Idomeneo* and *Turandot* sets, those for *La Bohème* are among the most realistic that have ever been seen on the opera stage. The basic set, which varies only slightly from act to act, could have been duplicated from an old, sepia-colored daguerrotype of the Left Bank. The four-story grayish-ocre buildings with their typically Parisian mansard roofs, chimney pipes, exterior rain spouts and shuttered windows, and their façades covered with lettering and signs advertising the shops located within, all but exude 1830s odors.

There is the music shop, *A la clef de Sol*, with its violin signboard, on the ground floor of the *Hôtel Eldorado de l'Etudiant*; the third-floor *Dentiste du peuple*, whose proprietor does extrac-

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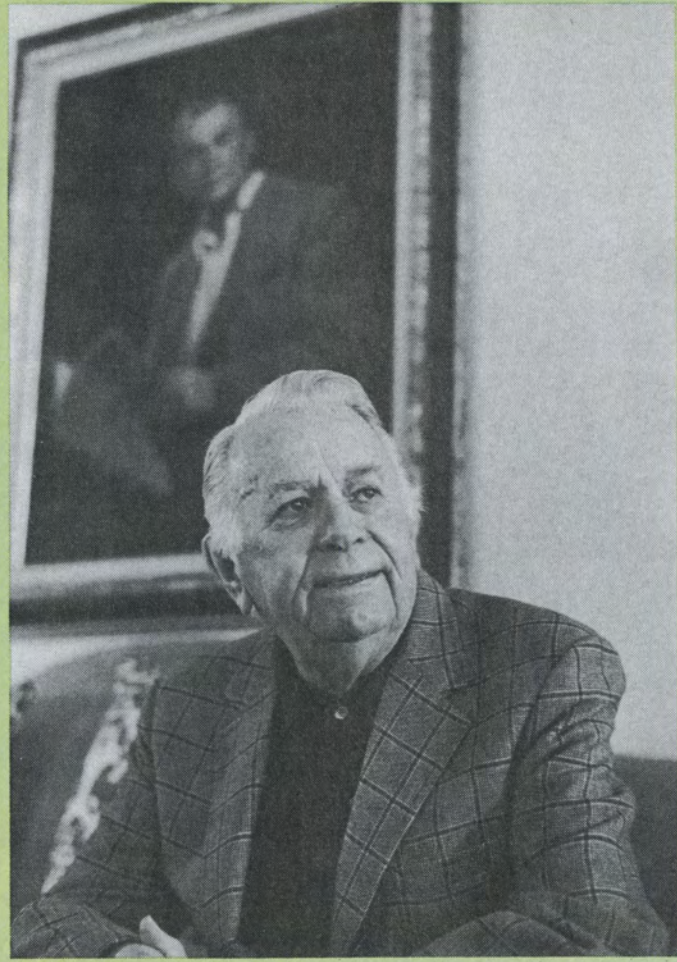
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San Francisco Opera audiences fell in love with Bidù Sayão and her portrayal of Mimi in *La Bohème* (far right) during the 1940's. Today Madame Sayão leads an active life in New York, where she posed for the San Francisco Opera Magazine photographer last February.

Tenor Charles Kullman sang Puccini's Rodolfo in *La Bohème* six different seasons with the San Francisco Opera in the years between 1937 and 1948. Now he lives in retirement in Madison, Connecticut, where this photograph was taken recently.



Bidù Sayão



Mention Puccini's Mimi to a San Francisco Opera buff, and it's likely to conjure up memories of one singer more than any other: Bidù Sayão, the Brazilian soprano who broke audiences' hearts so many times in the role during the '40s and early '50s, partnered by Bjoerling, di Stefano, Peerce and Kullman. The Sayão signature was a total immersion in a role, and her incredible fragility as Mimi made an indelible impression on audiences and critics alike.

continued on next page

San Francisco's Beloved Mimi and Popular Rodolfo of the 1940's Talk about Their Roles and Careers

by Richard Sasanow

Nobody has taken a poll, but it's probably a safe bet that few singers have hoped for disasters at their San Francisco Opera debuts—but you can count Charles Kullman among this extraordinary minority. "I was hoping for terrible reviews, so I wouldn't have to sing it again," the tenor recalls, laughing. "It" was Count Almaviva in Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, on October 31, 1936. "This kind of music was not really my forte. I was much more at home in more lyric things, but *Barbiere*, with all that coloratura, was what was chosen for me."

Kullman did not get his wish. The performance was a success—as were others he sang here later that season and through the next two decades in works such as *Carmen*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Rigoletto*, *Tosca* and, of course, *La Boheme*, which was not only a personal favorite of his, but perhaps his most popular role as well. The cheers that greeted him in San Francisco were echoes of similar scenes in opera houses on two continents. In fact, Kullman's rise to prominence as an American tenor on the world scene during the '30s, '40s and '50s was unprecedented, and seemed right out of a Hollywood musical.

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Charles Kullman

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More than twenty years after her last public performance, Madame Sayão remains a vibrant, youthful woman, who still loves going to the opera ("I adore the voices of Caballé, Price, Pavarotti, Marilyn Horne, but I worry about Shirley Verrett, and what she is doing to her voice"), and revels in discovering new voices, as she judges international singing competitions. She had a taste of teaching a master class this year, at the Mannes School in New York, by request of her old friend Risë Stevens, and would like to do more work with talented young professionals. But, speaking in her suite overlooking Fifty-Seventh street in New York, down the block from Carnegie Hall, she likes nothing better than reminiscing about her great roles, although, surprisingly, many of the characterizations that her fans found unforgettable, she recalls less-than-fondly.

"People often ask me which of my roles was my favorite, and I usually answer 'none of them,'" says Madame Sayão, her distinctive Portuguese accent as intact as her petite figure. "I did not like my repertoire at all—I was not happy to sing coloratura, because those roles are very silly. They are all soubrettes or funny ladies, you know, mad, and this did not interest me at all," she explains. The singer longed to do Verdi's *Desdemona* and Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, *Tosca* and *Manon Lescaut*, with their more dramatically challenging music, but they would have meant straining and sacrificing her voice. She was not about to do that—even though the vocal aspect of her performance was not what interested her most.

"I was born to be on the stage as an actress—that was my true vocation. But it was impossible for my family, because a Brazilian girl from a good home could not be on the stage," she says. Her determination to have an act-

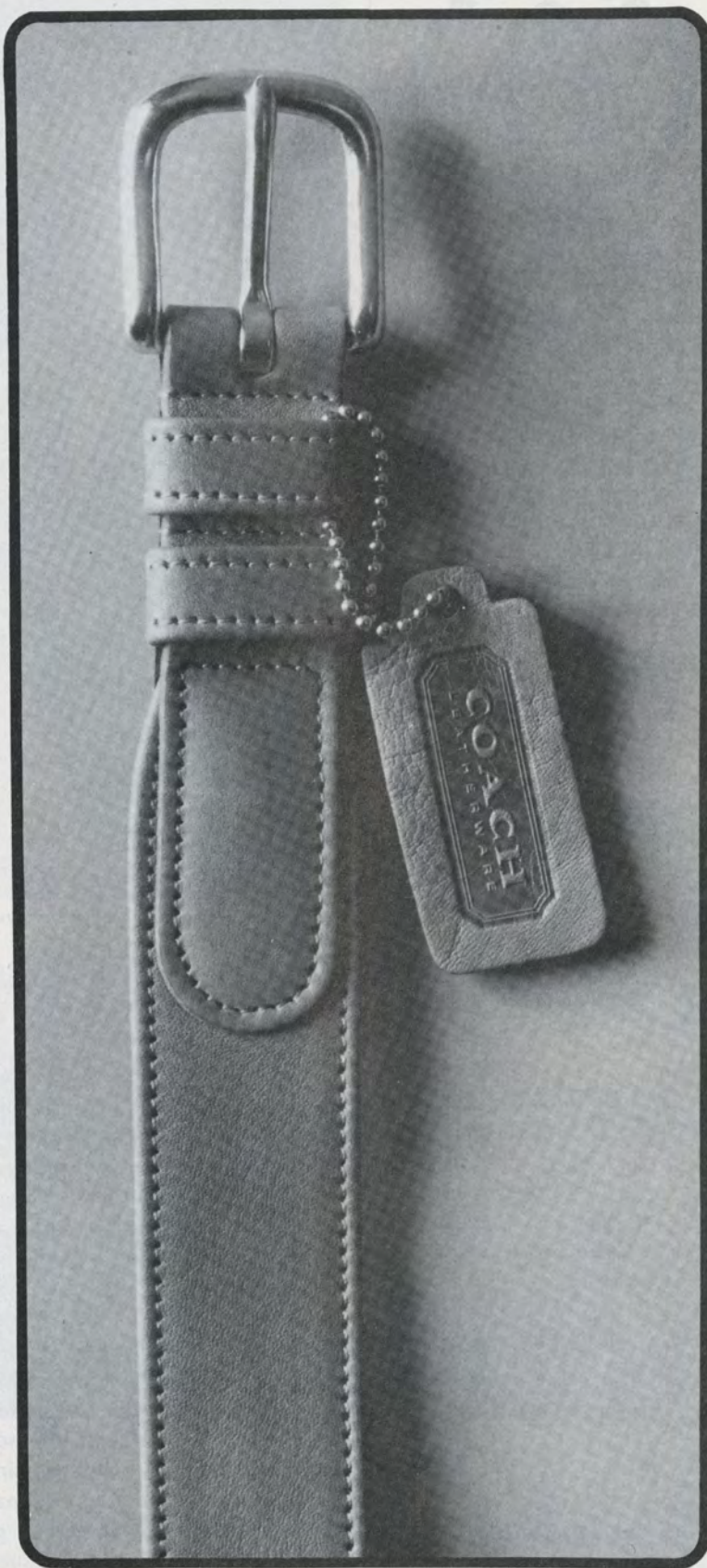
ing career was unusually strong at a very early age—but so was her parents' desire to keep her from disgracing the family. A compromise was struck: Bidù was permitted to take voice lessons at the age of 13. "I was so against music at the start that when I asked for voice lessons my mother was so happy that I might cultivate myself a little bit," Madame Sayão recalls, adding, "I suppose she also thought I could sing when people came to visit.

"My first teacher didn't want to spend too much time with me because I was hopeless. Thirteen was really too soon to start voice lessons and, frankly, I had little interest in what I was doing. People absolutely did not believe I could succeed—everybody was against me, even my friends, my mother, my brother. I had no voice whatsoever—it was very, very childish," she says, breaking into an imitation that sounds something like a sickly cat. "I developed my voice very slowly—for one whole year I did only exercises. My friends used to say to me 'Oh, you're going to be Adelina Patti,' and I'd say back, 'No, not Adelina Patti, but I am going to be somebody. Wait and see,'" she says, laughing girlishly.

After a year of nothing but vocalizing, her voice started to go "up, up," though it was never to become very large. "Oh, it was so hard, that first year," she recalls, holding her head as if remembering the pain of sixty-odd years ago, "but I never lost hope. I was so stubborn and strong-willed and had such determination to do something with my life! I didn't want just to get married and have children and live in Brazil. I was not born for that."

In three years' time, Bidù had learned every coloratura aria that her teacher knew, and the woman decided to retire to her native Romania and took her student along. "Of course, my mother went, too, because I was only sixteen.

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An informal portrait of the three second-act principals in *La Traviata*, Jan Peerce, Bidù Sayão and Richard Bonelli.

In Bucharest, I was presented by my teacher to Queen Marie, and that is where I sang in public for the first time. I made my first long dress for that concert—and what an audience I had! Oh my, such a long time ago!" she interjects wistfully. "It was in honor of the Crown Prince of Japan who is now Emperor Hirohito. The Queen was just like a dream—I can still see her, all pearls, diamonds. There were princes, kings, royalty from all over Europe. And there I was, sixteen, the soloist with the symphony orchestra, singing coloratura arias and a few Romanian folk songs that my teacher had given me to learn. I had a big, big success. The Queen was so kind to me—she gave me a big picture that she had

inscribed and a pin—not a decoration—that she had made for the ladies in waiting and for big visitors. I still have that pin—it may be the only one left in existence."

From Romania, she traveled to Paris, then to Nice, where she studied with the famed tenor Jean de Reszke, who was almost 70 by then. Without working with her voice at all, he coached her in interpretation for recital work, which her mother had decided would be a much more respectable profession than opera singing—a career not much better than acting. The soprano credits much of what she was taught in de Reszke's master classes to her great success as a concert singer throughout her career.

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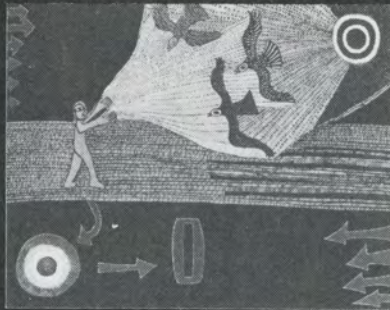
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Bidù Sayão as Rosina and Franco Perulli as Alaviva in the 1941 San Francisco Opera *Barbiere di Siviglia*.

It was, in fact, in the middle of an early concert tour that she received the emergency telegram asking her to step in on short notice and make her unscheduled debut here. Many singers have made major debuts under unusual circumstances, but who else but

Bidù can claim that she was pulled out of the jungle to come to San Francisco?! "I was touring Brazil the season after my debut with the Metropolitan, singing concerts from one end of the country to the other. My manager even rented a little plane because we had



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With Tito Schipa backstage during her debut in the title role of *Manon* on the opening night of the 1939 San Francisco Opera season.

such big distances to cover, from the Amazon to the south near Uruguay," she recalls. "My husband, Giuseppe Danise, was a singer, too, a baritone, and he had sung very often in California. He was very close friends with Maestro Merola, who was head of the San Francisco Opera, because they both came from Naples. I had met Merola

in New York, but I never sang for him, and he never mentioned the possibility of my singing in San Francisco. Of course, I had just started my career in this country and my name was not very well known," she admits, although she had been singing in Europe for more than a decade.

"There I was, way, way up in the north

of Brazil on this tour when we receive a telegram from Maestro Merola addressed to my husband: 'Please, in the name of our friendship, I am in big trouble. We are going to open the season in San Francisco with *Manon* by Massenet and our singer Mafalda Favero cannot come from Italy'—it was 1939, when many singers were trapped

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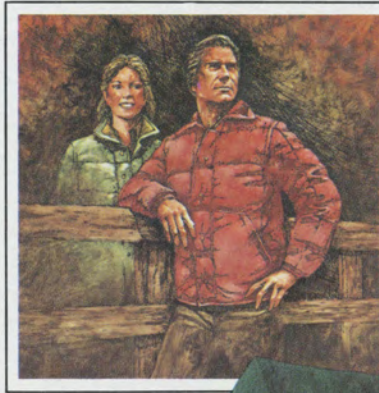
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In 1968 Madame Sayão donated her *Manon* and *Bohème* costumes to the San Francisco Opera and they were displayed in the Opera House Museum that year. The costume shown is the *Manon*.

in Europe because of the war—"Can Bidù make this big jump from the north of Brazil to San Francisco to open the season? She must." So I cancelled many concerts and left for California—and arrived about three days before opening night," she remembers. "This started my friendship with the audiences in San Francisco. You know, I adore this city. Besides the audiences, which are among the best and warmest, and the opera house and everything else, the landscape of the city—because of the water and mountains and bridges—reminds me of the country where I was born, around Rio de Janeiro. For that, I am very fond of it, and I am thrilled to be coming back this year for Maestro Adler's anniversary. It is the first time

in twenty-six years; I hope I still have friends here."

Despite her protests of disaffection for her repertoire, Madame Sayão had a very personal relationship with many of her roles, including her San Francisco debut role of *Manon*, which she sang with Tito Schipa. "For our generation, tradition and the background of the opera were the first things we considered," she avers. "I spent a great deal of time studying *Manon* in France—I even talked with Massenet's daughter, who knew all about *Manon* and her father: that he wrote the *Cour la Reine* and put in all those gavottes because he was in love with Sibyl Sanderson (the Sacramento, California-born soprano who became a star in

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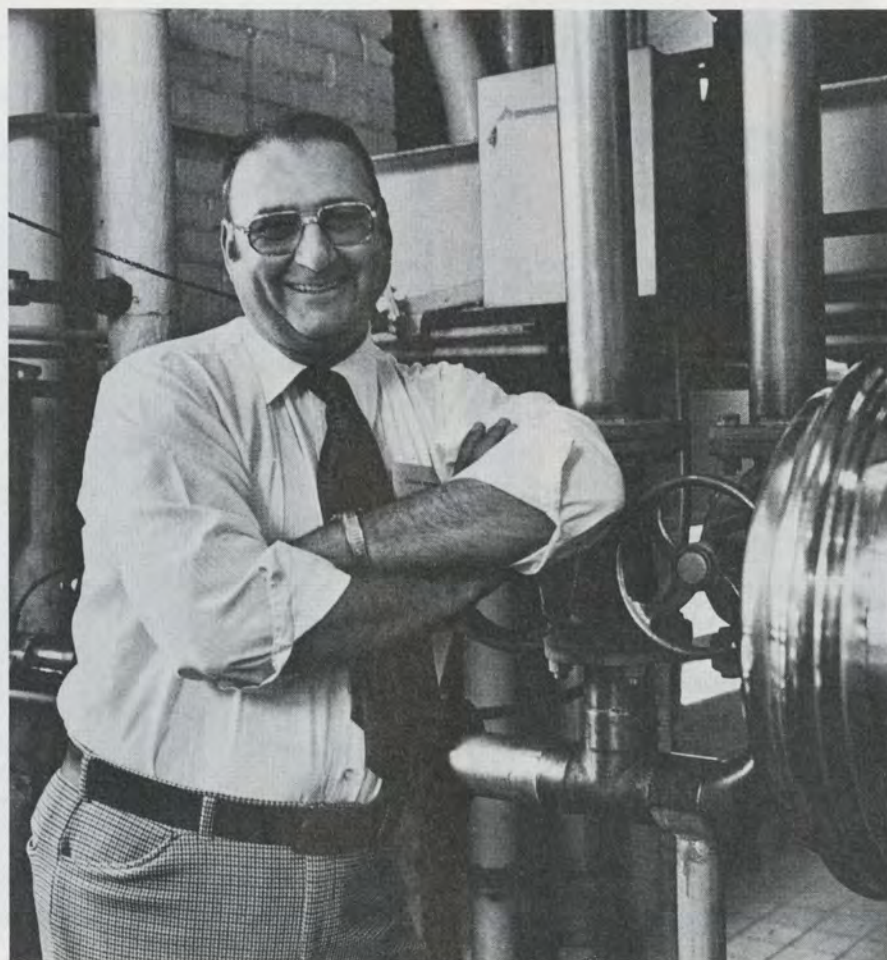
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France through Massenet's operas: the original Thaïs and Esclarmonde) and she was not satisfied with what she had to sing—and *Manon* is so long! So he wrote more and more for her! Mademoiselle Massenet took me to the most important costume house in France, so that everything would look just right. I really looked sixteen in the first scene. (Each act had a different wardrobe, and I liked that, too.) Then she sent me to the one who created Lescaut with her father, and he taught me all the little things that Massenet wanted in the role. I even danced the gavotte. I studied the role for years and years, right up to the time of my retirement."

Whenever possible, Madame Sayão asked famous interpreters of the past about roles she was preparing herself. "I had the privilege of visiting Madame Luisa Tetrazzini, who heard me and called me to her apartment. I remember so distinctly how she looked, with her grand wig, all covered with diamonds, as she sat at her piano. I was preparing to sing another Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* (which had, earlier, been the role of her 1926 Italian debut at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome), and she said to me, 'I want to give you all the embellishments, all the cadenzas for "Una voce poco fa" and the duet. I want you to sing the way I used to.' She gave me a little book with all the coloratura arias—from *Puritani*, *Lucia*—and taught me, personally, the arias from *The Barber of Seville*. Then she said, 'Now, I am going to sit in a box and see if you remember what I taught you.' Everything I performed in public until I retired was from that little book of hers."

She followed a similar pattern with many other roles. Engaged to sing Amina in *La Sonnambula*, for the ceremonies commemorating the 100th



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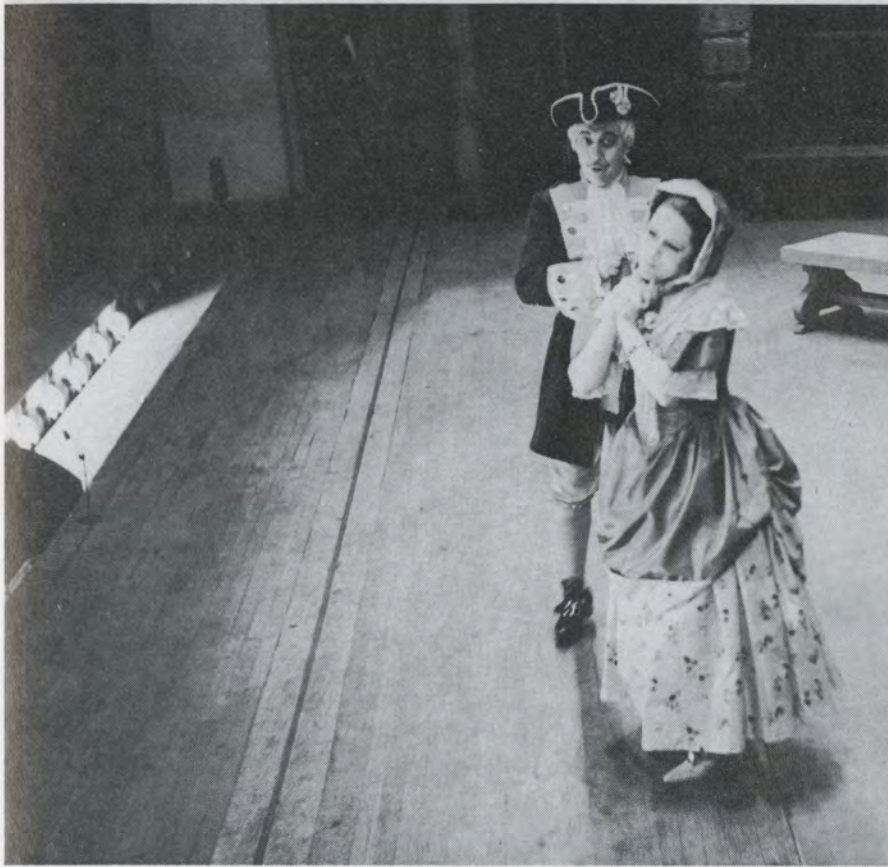
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anniversary of Bellini's death in Palermo and Catania, Sicily, where the composer was born, she admits to being "scared to death." "I knew the opera, but wanted to know the tradition." She found it in Rosina Storchio, one of the great interpreters of the role, with whom, Madame Sayão says, "Arturo Toscanini was madly in love. She was a gorgeous singer and actress who sang many, many *Sonnambulas*. So I went to her twice, carrying my score. She went through it page by page, pointing out various things for me to do, and I absorbed everything she told me. It was wonderful."

Having mastered her craft at the elbows of her great predecessors, Madame Sayão has a few complaints about singers today. "This new generation, they are very talented, but they care nothing for tradition. I would

love to work with a few talented singers, to pass on the beautiful phrases and embellishments that were taught to me by Tetrizzini, Storchio, and by Gemma Bellincioni (the original Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*), who worked with me on *La Traviata* (I had heard that everybody was in tears every time she died on stage. So after I knew that she had heard me in *Lucia*, I asked her help on *Traviata*, which was very hard for me, vocally, and she was very kind to me), but they don't come to me.

"No, tradition doesn't exist anymore—I'm sorry to admit that. Tradition means what the great singers of the past used to do with a role. The people of today don't remember them, and say that they were old-fashioned. Well, opera is an old-fashioned manifestation of art," Madame Sayão asserts.

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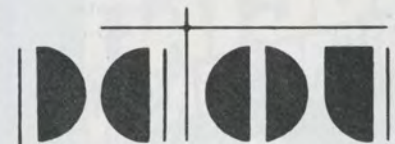
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"You can't modernize opera—it's old and must remain old. You can make it more beautiful and glamorous with the costumes, and the singers can be more pleasant to look at—I don't like to see a fat prima donna who doesn't move around. That was okay fifty, sixty years ago, but with movies and television we have different taste. I have different taste. But when the libretto says, 'This represents a castle,' I want to see a castle. I want to see it—and not steps or draperies that are supposed to be a castle, and you use your imagination. Just like I see the

actors, I want to see the scenery. These things are theatre. How can a new audience judge an opera by the modern look if they never saw it otherwise, never heard the singers of the past? This is what *is* and what *is* opera for them. It's not, I assure you, not what it should be. Opera is drama, theatre, comedy. It's more than just beautiful singing—otherwise you sing opera in concert form. I want to see all the elements—because all the elements of the opera must be alive.

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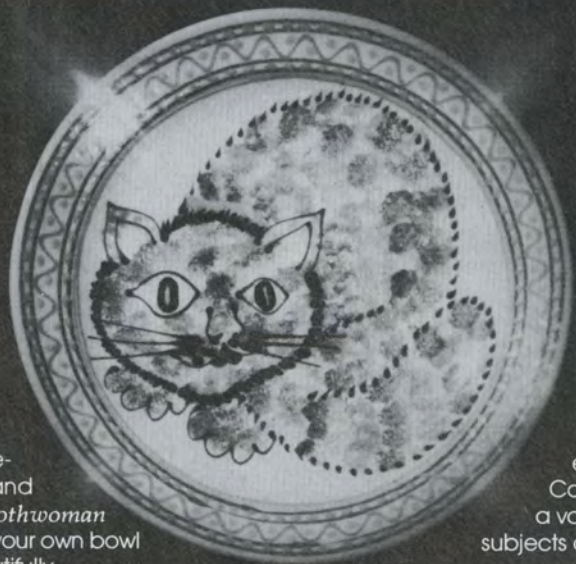
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just don't put in embellishments because you are a coloratura. Cadenzas must go with the taste of the music. 'Bel canto' means beautiful singing, but what is that? To sing with embellishment—but it must be part of the melody or else it is horrible. It should remind you of the composer's style," she insists.

"Of course, in Mozart you couldn't put in anything, because everything he wanted he wrote right in the music. I sang Mozart with Bruno Walter," says the soprano, modestly. (Her Susanna in the 1940 Met revival of *The Marriage of Figaro*, later repeated in San Francisco, is still considered quintessential by many.) "He was a god for me. When I sang in *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, I had never seen them in my life—they were not very popular at the time. When I arrived to begin working on *Figaro*, I didn't know anything but 'Deh vieni, non tardar,' but they still thought I could do Susanna. Maestro Walter taught me the role note by note—and watched carefully to see if I would put in any embellishment. But I never put in one little *appoggiatura* or *gruppetto*."

Not all her roles were learned with famous interpreters or conductors, mostly those which she never sang in Europe but only in North and South America. Mimi in *La Bohème*, one of her few roles that were more lyric than coloratura, was devised musically with the help of her husband, who was one of her most important teachers.

"After so many years of coloratura, I was tired of it, and so unhappy because all the roles I truly wanted to sing would have made me force my voice. That was my secret: my voice kept in such good shape because I never forced her. She was tiny, small but even and, I guess, agreeable to people. When you force, you lose the velvet from the voice and the beauty

is gone. What I did through study before I did Mimi was to build up a little more of the round sounds in the middle of the voice, so I could sing some lyric coloratura—not really lyric. Mimi is the only role that Puccini wrote that a small voice can sing, but it's not very dramatic. I was dying to do Butterfly, but the orchestration was too heavy, the long phases too dramatic."

Madame Sayão gave a great deal of importance to the acting because, she frankly admits, that was what mattered to her. She began by reading all the stories that Puccini used in the opera from *La Vie de Bohème*, then read the libretto, line by line of every part down to those of the chorus and comprimarios. "I never took less than two months to learn a role. I could have learned it more quickly," she adds, "because I was musical, but I didn't want to. I took weeks, so that every number was inside me. When I went on stage, I never needed a prompter—the role was part of me and I was the character."

Because she felt so strongly about getting inside a character she was portraying, Madame Sayão passed up a number of roles that would have suited her voice perfectly, such as the seductive courtesan Thaïs, because she did not feel "simpatico" with them. One that she nearly didn't do was to be among her most famous: Debussy's *Mélisande*, which she took on at the prodding of Arturo Toscanini.

"I really didn't want to do it because it's so different from any other opera: vocally, scenically, *everything* about the conception of this strange woman," she explains. "But in 1940, Toscanini and I were both going to South America on the same boat—he was fond of Rio because he made his conducting debut there. For ten days on

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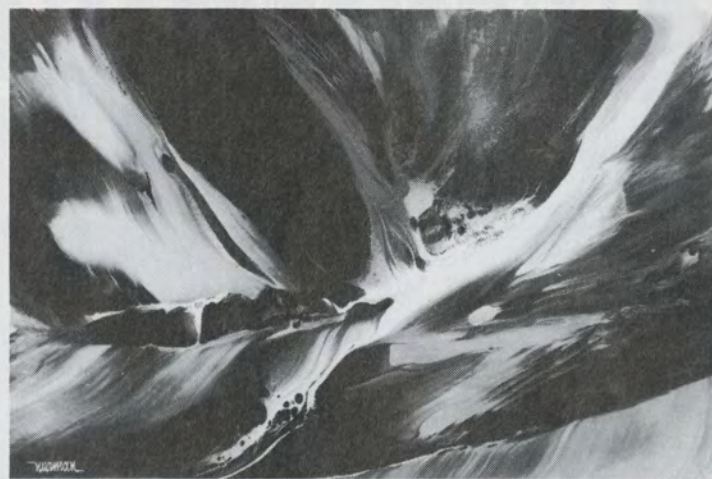
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the sea we talked, spending hours and hours speaking of tradition. One day he said, 'You know, you should study *Pelléas and Mélisande*, because Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires wants me to do it.' I said no, no, no, but he insisted. 'Your French is very good, and if you understand what you're saying and feel it, the audience will feel it too,' he told me. 'Vocally, it is not a problem. Physically, you are small and thin. Everything is right.' I said to him, can you conduct me? And he said, 'No, no—I won't conduct that!' " she says, breaking into gales of laughter. She eventually sang the role many times, without Toscanini, including her memorable performances here with Martial Singher, but worked an entire year before ever agreeing to a public performance. It was a role that she suffered for—literally. The exquisite long, blonde wig that she had made in Hollywood for the role had to be glued on very tightly—because she insisted on being thrown about, violently, by the hair in Act II as the libretto dictates, even though it was often very painful.

Unfortunately, her *Mélisande*, like her Juliette by Gounod, Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Norina in *Don Pasquale*, and most of her other acclaimed roles, went unrecorded. Recording studios made her extremely nervous and she often cancelled a session—or insisted that she would not do more than one take on any selection, fearing that her voice would tire and sound worse. Her nerves never bothered her on stage or on radio where she often sang on the *Bell Telephone Hour* and other programs, but in front of a microphone she became jittery. Not surprisingly, her most famous recording, a haunting melody by her fellow Brazilian Heitor Villa-Lobos, was quite an impromptu affair.

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violin, but Madame Sayão fell in love with it on first hearing and went about convincing the composer to adapt it for cellos and voice. "I told him that I hummed it very well when I vocalized—because humming is good for the voice—and that if you hum well you could imitate the violin. He wasn't easy to convince. He said that he didn't do it for the voice—that humming is monotonous and vocalizing is monotonous. I told him that I didn't agree and that if he didn't like what I did with it, we would not continue," she recalls.

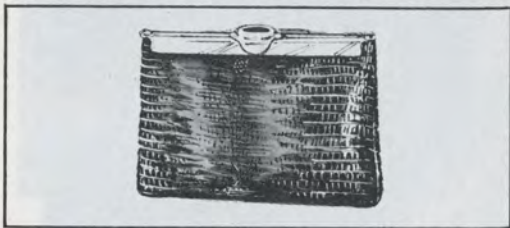
As it turned out, Villa-Lobos wouldn't let her sing the violin music, but insisted on doing a special arrangement just for her, which he taught her personally when he arrived with the music in New York from Brazil. "I went to his hotel and we worked, and he admitted that the humming was beautiful. 'Let's make a record—I want to hear the cellos and your voice,' he said, and went to the Philharmonic to pick out the eight best cellos. We went to the Columbia Records studio and he worked with the cellos for a solid hour without me. I began to worry that if he did this to me, it would be a disaster, because I would get tired—and when you're tired you cannot hum. What would I do? Anyway, we finally started to record—in this big studio with one little microphone in front of me. It was a rehearsal, he said, but there were to be no interruptions from beginning to end. When I went through it, he said to me, 'Bidù, you will never do it any better than this. That's it,' and that is the recording that became a best-seller for two years. Just six minutes' work!"

Bidù Sayão sang Debussy's "La Damselle élue" at Carnegie Hall in 1956 twenty years after her U.S. debut with Toscanini in the same music, four years after her last performance in San



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In the early 40's, Miss Sayão was photographed at her hotel room window on arriving for a San Francisco Opera season.

Francisco and at the Met. She has never appeared on a stage in this country again, despite the fact that her voice was considered very much in its prime. "I wanted to retire when I was still at my best. I think it's very sad if you're still singing when you are not in good shape anymore and leave bad memories for the audience. It's hard,

of course," she admits, "when you're still in good voice and you feel you can go on. But this was what I decided. I had seen a few people who had retired this way and I knew that I would, too. I did not want people ever to be able to say, 'Oh, I heard Bidù . . . what a pity!'"

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Born in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1903, the tenor had his first big successes in Europe. But he hadn't gone there, tail between his legs, to work his way up through the ranks of provincial opera houses, as many of his fellow Americans did (and still do). Kullman was discovered while still a student in Berlin and sang at the operas in that city, and in Vienna, Salzburg and London. He was invited back to his own country, if not as a superstar, then at least as a highly respected artist with a solid reputation.

Kullman began singing as a choir boy in New Haven, not far from Madison, Conn., where he and his wife live today in a rambling New England-style house, a hundred feet or so from the Long Island Sound. As an undergraduate at Yale, he was a soloist with the Glee Club—but studied pre-med, since his parents encouraged him to become a doctor. His hobby became his vocation when he was graduated and there wasn't enough money for medical school. Undaunted, he auditioned for the Juilliard School of Music, and studied in New York on scholarship for the next three years; when he was done, still another scholarship took him to the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, outside Paris, to study with Thomas Salignac, a tenor famed as a great acting singer at the turn of the century.


Returning to the United States, Kullman did not try to jump right into the opera world. He taught voice for a year at Smith College, in Northampton, Mass., where he had the opportunity to appear in the title roles of Handel's *Xerxes* and Monteverdi's *Orfeo* in local productions—and to attract the attention of East Coast critics. When the opportunity came to join the American Opera Company, a touring troupe based in Rochester, N.Y., that performed only in English, he grabbed it, though the salary they offered was



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La Bohème in a performance dating from the 1940's with Kullman (right) as Rodolfo, Licia Albanese as Mimi, George Cehanovsky as Schaunard and Francesco Valentino as Marcello. In the background is Ezio Pinza as Colline.

less than he was making as a teacher. His professional debut was as Don Jose in *Carmen*.

The company disbanded in 1930, and the Juilliard School offered to make Kullman its first exchange scholar—and he left for the Hochschule in Berlin. He arrived there with a terrible cold that was to keep him out of classes for six weeks. "When I returned, my voice made such an impression on the coach in the ensemble class that he said he wanted me to audition for the Berlin Kroll Opera (which later became the Nazis' meeting place when the Reichstag burned down). About half-way through my audition, this very tall man came in and said, 'Sing a few high notes for me.' So I went over to the piano and sang" (he recalls this, singing in falsetto) "A-mer-i-ca for-ev-

er and the man said, 'You're hired—if you can learn the part in two weeks.' The part was 'Linkerton' in *Madama Butterfly*—they say 'Linkerton' instead of 'Pinkerton' because the original sounds like something impolite in German—and the tall man was the famous conductor Otto Klemperer." Besides his role in *Butterfly*, he also took Mimi's "kalte hand" before ever touching her "gelida manina," and he learned others of his most famous roles (in *Rigoletto*, *Tosca*) in German before tackling them in the original language. (Coming from a German-speaking family, he did not find this terribly difficult.)

The tenor moved from success at the Kroll to even greater acclaim at the Staatsoper (now in East Berlin), where he stayed for some time. "While I

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Each year as I write this message, I look for new superlatives to describe the current season since each year seems to be better than the preceding season. This year, our 56th, is no different. Ten operas again will be performed, one of which, Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd*, will have its San Francisco premiere. Our general director, Kurt Herbert Adler, has assembled a galaxy of the world's renowned singers, conductors, directors and designers, some of them making their San Francisco or American debuts and many of them favorites of San Francisco opera patrons from previous years. In addition to *Billy Budd* we will enjoy a new production of *Lohengrin*; we are grateful to an anonymous donor for a generous gift making this new production possible. We are also indebted to the San Francisco Foundation for a grant to finance the costs of bringing to San Francisco the production of *La Bohème* owned by L'Opéra du Rhin of Strasbourg, France.

We have an added reason for excitement this year—1978 marks the 50th anniversary of Maestro Adler's professional association with the opera world, and even more important, his 25th anniversary as General Director of the San Francisco Opera. To celebrate this extraordinary milestone and to honor him, the Anniversary Gala Concert will be held at the Opera House on the

evening of November 19, 1978. Proceeds from this evening will benefit the San Francisco Opera Association and the San Francisco Opera Guild. A large number of singers intimately associated with San Francisco Opera history will be with us to participate in this event. Probably never in the history of opera has there been such an occasion. Don't miss it!

I am happy to report that the new fund-raising plan adopted this year has been well accepted by our subscribers. We have attracted several thousand new contributors which was the main purpose of the plan. Nevertheless, our financial problems continue. While ticket sales for this season exceed any previous year, revenues from ticket sales cover about 60 percent of costs, a percentage, incidentally, higher than that of probably any other major opera company. As a result of the passage of Proposition 13, we have been informed that our allocation from the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund will be only one-half that of last year, a reduction of approximately \$200,000. Inflation continues to force increases in our expenses despite our vigorous cost-control efforts. Thus, we must constantly seek new and increased gifts from our supporters. If you are not now included among our thousands of contributors, won't you please join them now? Your tax-deductible gifts should be sent to San Francisco Opera Association, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco 94102.

You are all keenly aware, I am sure, that the Performing Arts Center is well underway. Construction on the extension of the Opera House commenced in 1977, and on the new Symphony Hall across the street early in 1978. Unfortunately, this has eliminated the parking lot which will cause us some inconvenience until the proposed new garage is constructed, hopefully in time for our 1979 season. Funding for the Center is still several million dollars short. If you have not yet joined those

who have made this important project possible, I urge you to do so as soon as possible.

We continue to be grateful for the financial support from various sides, without which help we would find it almost impossible to continue—National Endowment for the Arts, National Opera Institute, Mayor George Moscone, Chief Administrative Officer Roger Boas, the City and County of San Francisco, the Board of Supervisors, and the War Memorial Board of Trustees. We are indebted to the San Francisco Opera Guild, which this year combined with Opera Action, for its sponsorship of five student matinees and for its many other activities which not only help in raising funds and reducing our costs, but in spreading the word of opera throughout our community.

One performance of each opera is broadcast by radio live up and down the Pacific Coast and in Chicago, and by delayed Public Radio throughout the rest of the nation. For making this important public service possible, we are grateful to Chevron U.S.A., Inc., and the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, Oakland, California.

For many years, we have been numbered among the six greatest opera companies in the world. This year, the National Opera Institute bestowed on Maestro Adler and the company an award for "excellence in repertoire," and OPERA America proclaimed the Maestro the Dean of American opera producers. With the help of our excellent staff and of our supporters, we will continue to earn this enviable reputation.

Enjoy the season.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Walter M. Baird".

WALTER M. BAIRD
President,
San Francisco Opera Association

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The San Francisco Opera Association extends its most sincere appreciation to all those contributors who help maintain the Company's annual needs and to those whose gifts are insuring continued growth and a secure future. Listed below are those individuals, corporations and foundations, whose gifts and pledges of \$200 or more, singly or in combination, were made to the Opera's various giving programs from the latter part of 1977 through October 15, 1978. These programs include the annual fund drive, the Endowment Fund, production sponsorships and special projects. Gifts received during the Opera season will be added to subsequent issues of the magazine. Space does not allow us to pay tribute to the hundreds of others who help make each season possible. To all, we give our warmest thanks.

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†National Opera Institute Apprentice

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| <i>Assistant to the Chorus Director</i> | Ernest Fredric Knell |
| <i>Musical Supervisor</i> | Otto Guth |
| <i>Assistant for Artists</i> | Philip Eisenberg |
| <i>Musical Staff</i> | Paul Connelly, Terry Lusk, Christofer Macatsoris, John Miner*, Susan Webb |
| <i>Boys Chorus Director</i> | William Ballard |
| <i>Stage Directors</i> | Ande Anderson*, Sonja Frisell, Ghita Hager, Nicolas Joel, Federik Mirdita**, Jean Pierre Ponnelle, Wolfgang Weber |
| <i>Productions Designed by</i> | Leni Bauer-Ecsy, Toni Businger, Beni Montresor, Jean Pierre Ponnelle, Steven Rubin, Wolfram Skalicki, Jose Varona |
| <i>Costume Designers</i> | Erni Kniepert, Martin Schlumpf |
| <i>Lighting Designer/Director and Art Consultant</i> | Thomas Munn |
| <i>Assistant Stage Directors</i> | Matthew Farruggio, Sheila Gruson, Daniel Helfgot, Robert Ripps |
| <i>Stage Managers</i> | Ralph Clifford, Matthew Farruggio, Robert Ripps |
| <i>Language Coach</i> | Barbara Hardgrave* |
| <i>Production Assistants</i> | Sylvia Klein*, Gretchen Mueller*, Preston Terry* |
| <i>Assistant Lighting Director</i> | Christine Wopat |
| <i>Assistant to the Lighting Director</i> | Larry French |
| <i>Assistant to the Technical Director</i> | Larry Klein |
| <i>Costume Supervisor</i> | Janet Papanek |
| <i>Costume Shop</i> | Walter Mahoney |
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| <i>Wig and Makeup Department</i> | Richard Stead, Karen Bradley, Candace Neal, Bruce Geller, Rex Rogers |
| <i>Rehearsal Department</i> | Susan Gillerman*, Matthew Lata*, Paula Williams* |
| <i>Super Department</i> | Preston Terry* |
| <i>Scenic Construction</i> | Pierre Cayard |
| <i>Scenic Artist</i> | Jay Kotcher* |
| <i>Sound Design</i> | Charles F. Swisher |
| <i>Master Carpenter</i> | Michael Kane |
| <i>Master Electrician</i> | George Pantages |
| <i>Master of Properties</i> | Ivan J. Van Perre |
| <i>Broadcast Producer</i> | Marilyn Mercur |
| <i>Anniversary Gala Coordinator</i> | Ann Seamster |
| <i>Official Photographers</i> | Robert Messick*, Ira Nowinski*, David Powers, Ron Scherl |
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| <i>Administrator</i> | Susan Patton |
| <i>Music Director</i> | Paul Connelly |
| | Brown Bag Opera |
| <i>Coordinator</i> | Christine Bullin* |
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| <i>Master Carpenter</i> | Robert Corso |
| <i>Master Electrician</i> | Jack Philpot |
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*San Francisco Opera debut **American debut

The Knabe is the official piano of the San Francisco Opera

The 1978 San Francisco Opera season is supported by a much-appreciated grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal Agency, and a grant from the San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund.

Artists

Supporting San Francisco Opera
continued from p. 45

Kathleen Battle
Montserrat Caballé
Ileana Cotrubas*
Anne Evans*
Maria Ewing
Sheri Greenawald*
Shirley Harned
Christina Jaqua
Gwendolyn Jones†
Gwyneth Jones
Elizabeth Knighton*
Carol Malone
Janis Martin
Julia Migenes*
Alexandrina Milcheva*
Patricia Miller*
Magda Olivero*
Katia Ricciarelli
Leonie Rysanek
Patricia Schuman*
Hanna Schwarz
Ellen Shade*
Pamela South†
Olivia Stapp*
Carol Vanes†
Shirley Verrett
Ruth Welting

Gene Albin*
Giacomo Aragall
Walter Berry
Frederick Burchinal*
Barry Busse*
Samuel Byrd
José Carreras
Guy Chauvet
Lawrence Cooper
Federico Davià
John Del Carlo*
Justino Díaz*
Plácido Domingo
Dale Duesing
John Duykers
Francis Egerton**
David Eisler*
Brent Ellis
Clifford Grant
Raimund Herincx*
James Hoback
Gwynne Howell*
Paul Hudson**
Richard Lewis
Juan Lloveras
Chester Ludgin
Alexander Malta

Raymond Manton
Barry McCauley†
Joseph McKee*
John Miller
Allan Monk
William Neill
Siegmond Nimsgern
Luciano Pavarotti
Jerome Pruett*
Samuel Ramey*
David Rendall*
Marius Rintzler
Forbes Robinson*
David Rohrbaugh*
Guillermo Sarabia
Giuseppe Taddei
Nunzio Todisco**
Giorgio Tozzi
William Wahman
Spas Wenkoff*
Stephen West*†

*San Francisco Opera debut
**American opera debut
†San Francisco/Affiliate
Artist—Opera Program

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Mr. & Mrs. David E. Pinkham
Michel Pisani
Mr. & Mrs. Harold Pischel
Paul & Helen Pocher
John L. Porter, Jr.
Mrs. Thomas M. Price
Mr. & Mrs. Eugene R. Purpus
Mildred J. Quinby
Filomena M. Ranuio
Mr. & Mrs. Roger A. Ritchey
Mr. & Mrs. Justin M. Roach
Sylvia Rohde
Mr. and Mrs. Barr Rosenberg
Mr. & Mrs. Donald J. Russell
Dr. & Mrs. John J. Sampson
Dr. William Sawyer
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Schine
Mr. & Mrs. Philip S. Schlein
Mrs. Maud Hill Schroll
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Mrs. Karl Schuster
Mrs. Mehmet A. Sherif
Mr. & Mrs. Roy L. Shurtleff
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Mrs. Sidney Siegel
Dr. & Mrs. William J. Siegel
Dr. & Mrs. Charles Silver
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Harrison Thomson
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F. J. Thomas Tilton
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Z. Todd
Dr. Wilfred E. Toreson
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Mrs. Elna R. Tymes
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Mrs. Paul H. Vincilione
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Dr. & Mrs. Malcolm S. M. Watts
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Mrs. Palmer Wheaton
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Mrs. Jean C. Witter
Victor Wong
Mrs. Casimir J. Wood
Dr. Frank W. Young
Dr. & Mrs. Paul F. Youngdahl
Dr. & Mrs. John Zderic
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Zuber
David Zussman

Chorus

Janice Aaland
Deborah Alexander
Elisabeth Anderson
Kathy Anderson
Candida Arias
Doris Baltzo
Norma Bruzzone
Louise Corsale
Constantina Economou
Beverley Finn
Lisa Louise Hill
Anne Huffington
Gail MacGowan
Cecilia MacLaren
Tamaki McCracken
Anna Marie Riesgo
Iris Miller
Irene Moreci
Rose Parker
Penelope Rains
Suzanna Schomaker
Shelley Seitz

Bonnie Shapiro
Claudia Siefer
Lola Lazzari-Simi
Linda Millerd Smeage
Ramona Spiropoulos
Sally Winnington
Arlene Woodburn
Garifalia Zeissig

Winther Andersen
Daniel Becker-Nealeigh
Duane Clenton Carter
Riccardo Cascio
David Chervený
Angelo Colbasso
Joseph Correllus
James Davis
Robert Delany
Bernard J. DuMonthier
Peter Girardot

Gerald Johnson
Conrad Knipfel
Eugene Lawrence
Kenneth MacLaren
Kenneth Malucelli
Edward Marshall
Robert McCracken
Jim Meyer
Thomas Miller
Eugene Naham
Kenneth Rafanan
Thomas Reed
Robert Romanovsky
Karl Saarni
Francis Szymkun
Mitchell Taylor
Randolph Tingle
B. Tredway
John Walters
Robert Waterbury
R. Lee Woodriff

Extra Chorus

Roberta Bowman
Anne Buelteman
Hilda Chavez
Teresa Colyer
Patricia Diggs
Marcia Gronewold
Susan Jetter
Liya Kushnirskaya
Marena Lane

Heidi Parsons
Alma Simmons
Jennifer Sullivan

M. W. B. Adamson
Michael Arighi
Manfred Behrens
Kristen R. Bjoernfeldt

Michael Bloch
Gerald Chappell
Joseph Ciampi
John L. Glenister
Henry Metlenko
Steven Oakey
Robert Philip Price
Mitchell Sandler
Lorenz Schultz

Additional Chorus composed of members of the San Francisco Symphony Chorus, Louis Magor, director, and the Masterworks Chorale of the College of San Mateo, Galen Marshall, director.

continued on p. 63

Orchestra

1ST VIOLIN

Zaven Melikian
Concertmaster
Sherban Lupu
Co-Concertmaster
Ferdinand M. Claudio
William E. Pynchon
Assistant Principal
Silvio Claudio
Ezequiel Amador
Mafalda Guaraldi
Bruce Freifeld
George Nagata
Ernest Michaelian
Michael Sand
William Rusconi

David Schneider†
Gerard Svazlian†
Janice Konigsmark†

2ND VIOLIN

Felix Khuner *Principal*
Herbert Holtman
Virginia Roden
Barbara Riccardi
Robert Galbraith
Gail Schwarzbart
Carol Winters
Eva Karasik
Laurence Gilbert

Linda Deutsch†

†Additional players and stage band.

VIOLA

Rolf Persinger *Principal*
Detlev Olshausen
Asbjorn Finess
Thomas Elliott
Jonna Hervig
Ellen Smith
Mary Jo Ahlborn

John Konigsmark†
Kenneth Harrison†

CELLO

David Kadarauch
Principal
Rolf Storseth
Judyaba
Doug Ischar
Barbara Wirth
Helen Stross

Marianne Meredith†

BASS

Michael Burr *Principal*
S. Charles Siani
Carl H. Modell
Donald Prell
Philip Karp

Michelle Millard†
Jonathan Lancellet†

FLUTE

Walter Subke *Principal*
Lloyd Gowen
Gary Gray

Barbara Breedent†
Rebecca Friedman†

PICCOLO

Lloyd Gowen
Gary Gray

OBOE

James Matheson *Principal*
Raymond Duste
Deborah Henry

Eleanor Duste†

ENGLISH HORN

Raymond Duste

CLARINET

Philip Fath *Principal*
Donald Carroll
David Breeden

Diana Dormant†

BASS CLARINET

Donald Carroll

BASSOON

Walter Green *Principal*
Jerry Dagg

Robin Elliott

Carla Wilson†
John Leonest†

CONTRA BASSOON

Robin Elliott

FRENCH HORN

Arthur D. Krehbiel
Principal
David Sprung *Principal*
James Callahan
Jeremy Merrill
Paul McNutt

Erich Achen†
Carlberg Jones†

TRUMPET

Donald Reinberg
Principal
Edward Haug
Chris Bogios

John Aymong†
Charles Daval†
William Holmes†
Robert Hurrell†
Joyce Johnson†
Carole Kleint†
Laurie McGaw†
Tim Wilson†

TROMBONE

Ned Meredith *Principal*
McDowell Kenley
John Bischof

Stephen Kohlbach†
Philip Zahorsky†

TUBA

Robert Z. A. Spellman

Chong Hwa Kum†

ALTO SAXOPHONE
Gregory Dufford†

TIMPANI

Elayne Jones

PERCUSSION

Lloyd Davis
Peggy C. Lucchesi

Richard Kvistad†
David Rosenthal†
John Van Geem†

HARP

Anne Adams *Principal*
Marcella de Cray

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Dancers

Jan Berletti
Peggy Davis
Anna Franklin

Jacqueline Low
Marilyn Mather
Terry McGlone

Monica Prendergast
Dorothy Reiff
Maria Angela Villa

J. Michael Dwyer
Dan Gardner
Randall Krivonic

Jay Lehman
Sulpicio Wagner

Boys Chorus

John Aalberg
Sean Barry
Joel Benson
Howard Bentley
Bruce Boettjer
Matthew Brauer
Mark Burford
Michael Burke
Malcolm Calder
Michael Cavette
Anthony Chu
Alex Clemens
James Datri
David Devine

John Dougery
James Dreer
Victor Fernandez
David Flores
Christopher Frey
Matthew Gary
Michael Geronimo
Lionel Godolphin
Jason Gruen
Philip Hommes
Daniel Howard
Nicholas Johnson
David Kersnar
Jonathan Knowell

Benjamin Lewis
Douglas Lynn
Stephen Martin
Eric Marty
Christopher Metcalf
Paul Mohan
Alex Moreno
Gregory Naeger
Edward Nurge
Timothy O'Neill
Jason Parke
Ronald Ponce
Daniel Potasz
Douglas Price

David Roberts
Philip Robertson
Steven Rothblatt
Eric Savant
Jordan Silber
Roger Sinasohn
Val Smalley
Mark Swope
Richard Treadwell
Christopher Tucker
Eric Van Genderen
Perrin Yang

Girls Chorus

Avi Downes
Lara Downes
Shana Downes
Kristin Genis
Angela Harrison
Claudia Heynemann
Sharon Johnson
Nina Kent
Susan Kim
Marion Lee
Gayane Plavdjan
Lara Poligono
Linda Poligono
Keiko Steimetz

Anna Stelmak
Dorothy Stone
Zara Tinkleman
Lilith Von Foerster
Jennifer Watts
Rebecca Watts
Mary Angela Whooley
Patricia Whooley
Margaret Wong
Faith Yang

Supernumeraries

Joan Bacharach
Barbara Clifford
Martha Crawford
Renee de Jarnatt
Megan Fogarty
Christine Gember
Mary Joyce
Nancy Kennelly
Francesca Leo
Cynthia Milina
Edith Modie

Ellen Nelson
Louise Russo
April Sack
Celia Sack
Ellen Sanchez
Elizabeth Schultz
Mary Van Perre

Steve Bauman
Nick Bernardini
Bruce Bigel

Allerton Blake
Steve Caldwell
Thomas Carlisle
Steve Cohen
Rudolph Cook
Robert Corrick
Burton Covell
Don Crawford
Tom Curran
Danny De Jarnatt
Everett Evans Jr.

Jimmy Exon
Albert Frettoloso
Robert Fuller
Clifford Gold
Tom Grey
Mark Huelsmann
Ken Jakobs
Janusz
Bill Joyce
Julius Karoblis
Terrance Kyle

George Lenahan
Rodney McCoy
Robert Montano
Gregory Moreci
James Muth
Steve Polen
Joel Posner
Noble Edward Reynolds
Paul Ricks
Gil Rieben
James Sageron

Robert Schmidt
Michael Scofield
Thomas Simrock
Kent Speirs
Jon Spieler
George Tyree
Richard Weil

1978 Season Repertoire

OTELLO

Verdi
IN ITALIAN

Ricciarelli, Gwen. Jones/Domingo,
Sarabia, McCauley, Grant, Busse*,
West*, Del Carlo

Conductor: Patanè
Production: Ponnelle
Designer: Ponnelle
Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Friday, Sept 8, 7PM
Gala Opening Night
Wednesday, Sept 13, 7:30PM
Sunday, Sept 17, 2PM
Friday, Sept 22, 8PM
Tuesday, Sept 26, 8PM
Saturday, Sept 30, 8PM

NORMA

Bellini
IN ITALIAN

Verrett, Milcheva*, Gwen.
Jones/Todisco**, Grant, Busse

Conductor: Peloso
Stage Director: Frisell
Designer: Varona
Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Saturday, Sept 9, 8PM
Tuesday, Sept 12, 8PM
Friday, Sept 15, 8PM
Wednesday, Sept 20, 7:30PM
Sunday, Sept 24, 2PM
Saturday, Sept 30, 1:30PM

San Francisco Opera Premiere

BILLY BUDD

Britten
IN ENGLISH

Duesing, Lewis, Robinson*, Herincx*,
Monk, Hudson**, Burchinal*, Egerton**,
McKee*, Hoback, Busse, Eisler*, Byrd,
West, Miller, Del Carlo, Rohrbaugh

Conductor: Atherton*
Stage Director: Anderson*
Designers: Piper/Munn
Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Saturday, Sept 16, 8PM
Tuesday, Sept 19, 8PM
Saturday, Sept 23, 8PM
Thursday, Sept 28, 7:30PM
Sunday, Oct 1, 2PM

New Production

LOHENGRIN

Wagner
IN GERMAN

Evans*, Martin/Chauvet • Neill,
Herincx, Howell*, Monk, Albin*, Eisler,
Del Carlo, Miller

Conductor: Adler
Production: Weber
Designer: Montresor
Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Friday, Sept 29, 7:30PM
Tuesday, Oct 3, 7:30PM

Friday, Oct 6, 7:30PM
Wednesday, Oct 11, 7:30PM
Saturday, Oct 14, 1PM
Sunday, Oct 22, 1:30PM

DON GIOVANNI

Mozart
IN ITALIAN

Stapp*, Shade*, Welting/Diaz*, Berry,
Rendall*, Howell, McKee

Conductor: Drewanz**
Stage Director: Hager
Designer: Businger
Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Wednesday, Oct 4, 7:30PM
Saturday, Oct 7, 8PM
Tuesday, Oct 10, 8PM
Friday, Oct 13, 8PM
Sunday, Oct 15, 2PM
Saturday, Oct 21, 1:30PM

TOSCA

Puccini
IN ITALIAN

Caballé, Gwyneth Jones (Oct 29),
Olivero* (Nov 22, 25)/Pavarotti,
Lloveras (Nov 22, 25), Taddei, Tozzi
(Nov 22, 25), Davià, Hudson, Egerton,
West, Miller

Conductor: Peloso
Stage Director: Joël
Set Designer: Ponnelle
Costume Designer: Schlumpf
Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Saturday, Oct 14, 8PM
Tuesday, Oct 17, 8PM
Friday, Oct 20, 8PM
Monday, Oct 23, 8PM
Wednesday, Oct 25, 7:30PM
Sunday, Oct 29, 2PM
Wednesday, Nov 22, 7:30PM
Saturday, Nov 25, 8PM

WERTHER

Massenet
IN FRENCH

Ewing, Battle, Schuman*/Carreras,
Monk, Hudson, Manton, West, Byrd

Conductor: de Almeida*
Stage Director: Frisell
Designer: Rubin

Wednesday, Oct 18, 7:30 PM
Saturday, Oct 21, 8PM
Saturday, Oct 28, 8 PM
Tuesday, Oct 31, 8 PM
Friday, Nov 3, 8PM
Sunday, Nov 5, 2PM

DER ROSENKAVALIER

Strauss
IN GERMAN

Rysanek, Schwarz, Malone, Miller*,
Harned, South, Knighton*, Jaqua,
Schuman/Berry, Ludgin, Pruett*,
Egerton, Malta, Duykers, West, Eisler,
Albin, Byrd, Miller, Wahman

Conductor: Ferencsik
Stage Director: Hager
Set Designer: Bauer-Ecsy
Costume Designer: Kniepert

Friday, Oct 27, 8PM
Saturday, Nov 4, 8PM
Monday, Nov 6, 7:30PM
Sunday, Nov 12, 2PM
Tuesday, Nov 14, 8PM
Friday, Nov 17, 8PM

New Production

LA BOHÈME

Puccini
IN ITALIAN

Cotrubas*, Migenes*/Aragall, Ellis,
Duesing, Ramey*, Davià, Eisler,
Del Carlo, Rohrbaugh

Conductors: Varviso/Simmons
(Nov 23, 26)

Production: Ponnelle
Designer: Ponnelle
Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Wednesday, Nov 1, 7:30PM
Saturday, Nov 4, 1:30PM
Tuesday, Nov 7, 8PM
Friday, Nov 10, 8PM
Monday, Nov 13, 7:30PM
Saturday, Nov 18, 8PM
†Thursday, Nov 23, 8PM
Sunday, Nov 26, 2PM

Special Family-Priced Matinee

Vaness, South/McCauley, Cooper,
Byrd, Hudson, West, Eisler, Del Carlo,
Rohrbaugh

Conductor: Simmons
Production: Ponnelle
Designer: Ponnelle
Chorus Director: Bradshaw
Saturday, Nov 25, 1:30PM

FIDELIO

Beethoven
IN GERMAN

Gwyneth Jones, Greenawald*/
Wenkoff*, Pruett, Nimgern, Rintzler,
Malta, Busse, Miller

Conductor: Wich**
Stage Director: Mirdita**
Designer: Skalicki
Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Saturday, Nov 11, 8PM
Wednesday, Nov 15, 7:30PM
Saturday, Nov 18, 2PM
Tuesday, Nov 21, 8PM
Friday, Nov 24, 8PM

†Special Thanksgiving Night
non-subscription performance,
Friday evening prices

*San Francisco Opera debut
**American opera debut

REPERTOIRE, CASTS AND DATES
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

La Bohème

photo by Robert Messick



Brent Ellis (standing), Giacomo Aragall, Ileana Cotrubas, Samuel Ramey and Dale Duesing as Marcello, Rodolfo, Mimi, Colline and Schaunard.

La Bohème



Federico Davia, Brent Ellis and Julia Migenes as Alcindoro, Marcello and Musetta.

photo by Robert Messick



Giacomo Aragall as Rodolfo and Ileana Cotrubas as Mimi.

photo by Robert Messick



A jubilant ending (above) to a snowy Cafe Momus scene.





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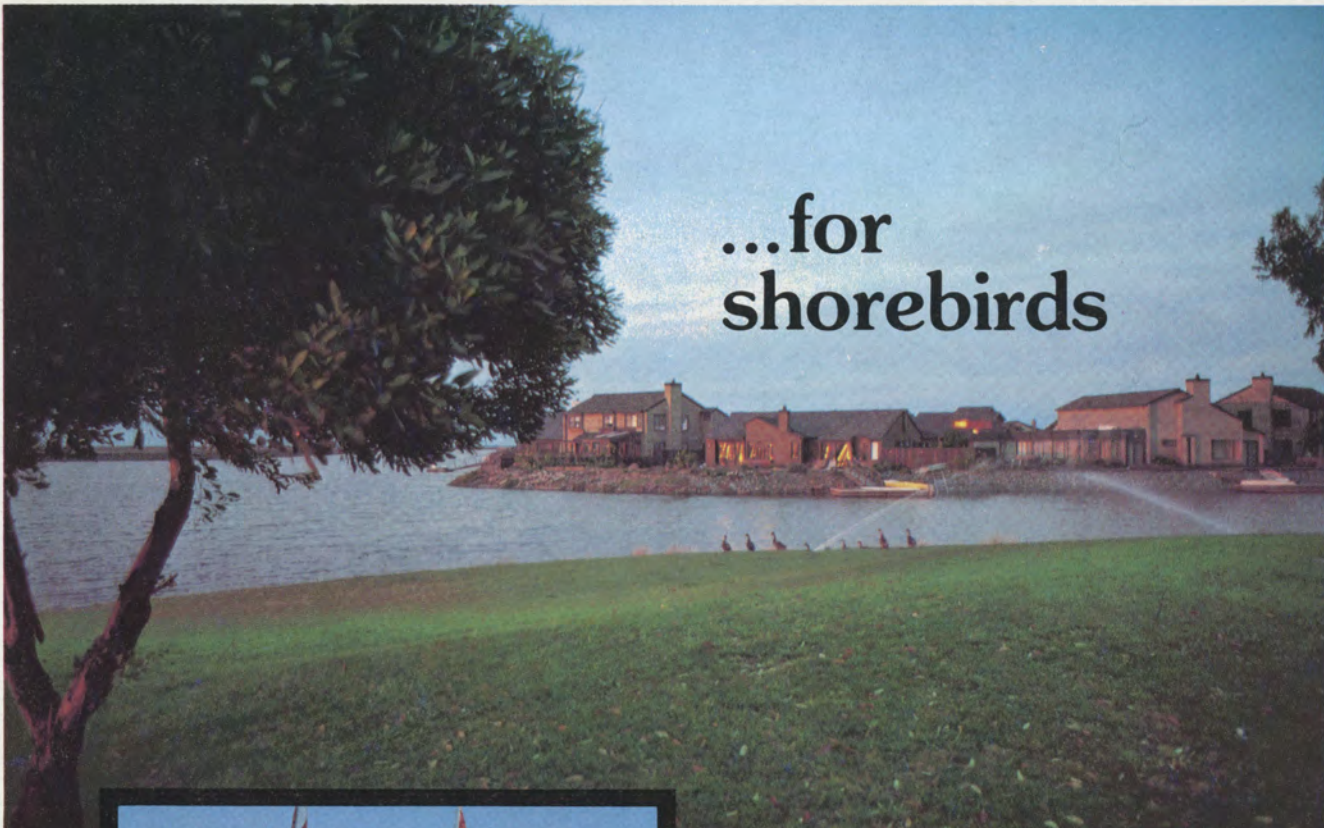
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The use of this production of *La Bohème* was made possible by a much appreciated grant from the San Francisco Foundation

Opera in four acts by GIACOMO PUCCINI

Text by LUIGI ILLICA and GIUSEPPE GIACOSA

Based on a novel by HENRI MURGER

La Bohème

(IN ITALIAN)

Conductor

Silvio Varviso

Calvin Simmons (November 23, 25, 26)

Production

Jean Pierre Ponnelle

November 25 cast rehearsed by

Nicolas Joël

Designer

Jean Pierre Ponnelle

Lighting Designer

Thomas Munn

Chorus Director

Richard Bradshaw

Musical Preparation

Calvin Simmons

Prompter

Susan Webb

San Francisco Boys Chorus

William Ballard, *Director*

Preparatory Department Girls Chorus

Elizabeth Appling, *Director*

San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Production owned by

Opera du Rhin, Strasbourg

First performance: Turin, February 1, 1896

First San Francisco Opera performance:

September 26, 1923

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1978 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1978 AT 1:30

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1978 AT 8:30

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1978 AT 8:00 (Live broadcast)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1978 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1978 AT 8:00

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1978 AT 8:00

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1978 AT 1:30

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1978 AT 2:00

Please do not interrupt the music with applause

Latecomers will not be seated during the performances after the lights have dimmed in order not to disturb patrons who have arrived on time

The use of cameras and any kind of recording equipment is strictly forbidden

The performance will last approximately three hours.

CAST

Marcello

Rodolfo

Colline

Schaunard

Benoit

Mimi

Parpignol

A boy

Musetta

Alcindoro

Customhouse sergeant

Customhouse guard

**San Francisco Opera debut*

Brent Ellis

Giacomo Aragall

Samuel Ramey*

Dale Duesing

Federico Davià

Ileana Cotrubas*

David Eisler

Alex Clemens* (Nov. 1, 13, 18, 25, 26)

Michael Cavette* (Nov. 4, 7, 10, 23)

Julia Migenes*

Federico Davià

John Del Carlo

David Rohrbaugh

November 25

Lawrence Cooper

Barry McCauley

Paul Hudson

Samuel Byrd

Stephen West

Carol Vaness

David Eisler

Pamela South

Stephen West

John Del Carlo

David Rohrbaugh

PLACE AND TIME: Paris, around 1830

ACT I A garrett

INTERMISSION

ACT II A square in the Latin quarter

INTERMISSION

ACT III A tollgate on the outskirts of Paris

INTERMISSION

ACT IV A garrett

SYNOPSIS/LA BOHÈME

ACT I—In their cold Paris attic, two of the Bohemians are trying to keep a fire burning in their stove; the painter Marcello is prevented from burning a chair by the poet Rodolfo, who instead sacrifices one of his own manuscripts. Their friend Schunard arrives with food and drink, having just been paid for a music lesson; they are also joined by Colline, the philosopher. After a visit by the landlord Benoit, who demands payment of the long overdue rent, all except Rodolfo leave for the Café Momus. There is a knock at the door and a neighbor, Mimì, comes in, hoping to light a candle which went out in the draft. A little later, she returns for the key to her room which she lost. As she and Rodolfo look for it, their hands touch. He tells her about himself and his dreams, followed by Mimì's charming narration about her own life and longings. They are attracted to each other and go out together to join Rodolfo's friends.

ACT II—Christmas Eve. At the Café Momus, situated in a square filled with a happy crowd, Marcello is embarrassed by the arrival of his old flame Musetta with her wealthy "protector" Alcindoro. In spite of their attempts to appear indifferent, it is obvious that Musetta and Marcello still care for each other. She

sings a provocative song deliberately directed at Marcello, after which they embrace and she joins the friends at the table. After the arrival of the guards, the Bohemians depart, leaving Alcindoro with the unpaid bill.

ACT III—The pale and distraught Mimì looks for Marcello. She tells him how difficult life has become with the jealous Rodolfo. Then, hiding, she overhears Rodolfo complaining about her. A sudden coughing fit reveals her presence. While they talk of parting Marcello and Musetta quarrel. Mimì and Rodolfo, however, decide to stay together until spring.

ACT IV—Back in their attic, Rodolfo and Marcello long for their girl-friends, Musetta and Mimì, who have left them. Schunard and Colline bring food and drink and for a while, the four friends forget their sorrow and poverty. Musetta helps Mimì in; she is very ill and had asked to be brought to the attic, where she has been so happy with Rodolfo. Colline decides to sell his only coat in order to provide for some medicine. Left alone, Rodolfo and Mimì recall their happy days together. After the friends return with medicine and a muff for Mimì's cold hands, Rodolfo is the last one to realize that Mimì has died.

La Bohème

By STEPHANIE VON BUCHAU

It was 1893—his thirty-fifth year—before the success of *Manon Lescaut* brought Giacomo Puccini a modicum of financial independence. Before that he had been a true Bohemian artist, living on a shoestring. Once he sold his overcoat to buy a meal for a voracious ballerina in Milan—an incident that surfaces in the last act of *La Bohème*. With the first fruits of the *Manon Lescaut* success, Puccini bought a home, a refuge from what the poet Rückert calls *Weltgetümmel*.

Situated on the shores of Lake Massaciucoli in the village of Torre del Lago, Puccini's villa had been purchased for three reasons: one) though the area was picturesque, it was not spectacularly so and thus prices were low, two) it was isolated from the main stream of life which adversely affected the paradoxically shy and gregarious composer, and three) the lake overflowed with waterfowl, and Puccini was an avid hunter. Several times during the composition of *Bohème*, Giulio Ricordi reminded Puccini to keep only one eye on the gunsight, and the other on Mimi.

Acknowledged the successor to Verdi, Puccini didn't waste any time after the success of *Manon Lescaut*. His first idea was an opera based on the life of Buddha (Wagner, oddly enough, had the same idea); the next was Giovanni Verga's *La Lupa*, a violent Sicilian tale of incest and murder. Verga had been made famous by Mascagni's opera based on his novella, *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

But none of these ideas took hold. It was Henri Murger's *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème*, suggested by the librettist Illica, which eventually became the successor to *Manon Lescaut*. But first there was a contretemps between two hot-headed young Italian composers. Meeting Ruggiero Leoncavallo in the Galleria of Milan one day, Puccini mentioned that he was composing Murger's *La Bohème*. Leoncavallo fired up immediately. A year before he had presented that very same idea to his colleague, offering himself as librettist; surely Puccini remembered?

It appears likely that Puccini did not. In any case, there was an acrimonious exchange of letters in the Milan papers, with Leoncavallo declaring that he was composing *La Bohème*, and Puccini replying laconically that they could both go ahead and let the public decide. The Leoncavallo work was premiered the year after Puccini's opera, and it has been eclipsed ever since. It would be titillating to think of it as a masterpiece destroyed by perfidy, but in fact it is only a pleasant, rambling opera that contains few of the musical or psychological felicities of Puccini's work.

At Torre del Lago, the prankster Puccini joined with a number of rowdy male friends in forming a "La Bohème Club." Their meetings took place in a hut which Puccini had purchased near his villa. Drinking, smoking, gambling and ladies were the

activities of the club members. Puccini often slipped into the woods for an amorous adventure with one of the local lovelies. Signs on the clubhouse wall proclaimed that: "Silence is strictly forbidden," "The treasurer is empowered to abscond with the funds" and, "It is strictly forbidden to play fair."

It is astonishing that Puccini composed much of his fourth opera in this noisy atmosphere. Its librettists were two poets who had helped him salvage the *Manon Lescaut* libretto, Luigi Illica (1857-1919) and Giuseppe Giacosa (1847-1906). Illica was the dramatist of the pair, fashioning operatic acts and scenes out of imprecise and confused material. He suffered from a bad stomach which Puccini was only able to cope with by sending hampers of delicacies along with requests for changes in the text. Giacosa was the versifier who turned Illica's dramatic dialogue into poetry, cutting and refining his work.

But the prime cutter and refiner was the composer himself, who had been badly stung on the librettos to his first two operas (*Le Villi* and *Edgar*) and nearly driven crazy by the haggling over the *Manon Lescaut* text. Puccini knew exactly what he wanted and, now a rich and famous composer, could demand it. Keeping peace in this menagerie of artistic egos was Giulio Ricordi, the head of the Ricordi publishing firm of Milan which owned the copyright to nearly every work Puccini ever published.

To detail all the changes and cuts Puccini demanded of his librettists would require a small monograph. It might suffice to examine the progress of just one cut, an absurd toast which Schaunard was to have proposed in the last act, before Musetta enters with the bad news about Mimi's collapse. In the early summer of 1895, Puccini writes to Ricordi suggesting that Illica write: "two or three lines, short or long as he prefers, with which to close the incident of Schaunard's interrupted toast." A month later he is complaining that the "solo of Schaunard, of which he sent me a rough draft, is not to my liking at all." In August he delivers the *coup-de-grâce*: "Illica sent me a copy of the solo of Schaunard, a very poor thing—a mere piece of padding it seems to me. Not wishing to insist on Schaunard's solo, although it seemed to me desirable, I have sacrificed it."

As Puccini had previously noted: "I want to have my say, and will accept nobody's dictation." This sort of ruthless, hard-headed action did not endear Puccini to his librettists, but it was necessary for the success of his opera since the source was a defuse series of vignettes about life in Bohemian Paris in the 1840's. The work had originally been serialized in *Le Corsaire* in 1848, but it didn't have a runaway success until it was dramatized by Théodore Barrière in 1849. Royalties from the

stage production allowed Murger to move from the Left Bank to a more fashionable area of Paris. *La Vie de Bohème* is based on real life—the life led by Murger who, as the son of a tailor from Germany, originally started his career as secretary to Count Alexei Tolstoy (a distant relative of the novelist) and then in 1841 migrated to journalism. For a time he was editor of a hat-maker's journal, *Le Castor* (as is Rodolfo in the opera), and he based his most famous work on the life of his Bohemian friends. The poet Rodolphe is Murger himself, although his description—heavily bearded and bald—would hardly be romantic enough for today's operatic stage. Murger knew three Mimis, all of whom died of consumption. In the novel, however, it is the incident of "Francine's Muff" which supplies the central theme of the opera. Francine and Jacques are poor but in love; she dies clutching a muff which he had given her in happier days.

The operatic Mimi is entirely Puccini's creation. He loved her above all his heroines. He completed the opera at Torre del Lago just before midnight on December 10, 1895, and later recalled that he "had to get up and, standing in the middle of the study, alone in the silence of the night, wept like a baby. It was like seeing my own child die."

Murger knew a poet named Schanne who became Schaunard through a printer's error; Colline was a composite of two theologians, and Marcel an amalgam of two painters. There was also a real Musette, morally lax but warm-hearted and earthy. She carefully hoarded her money and set out for Algiers in 1863 to live with her married sister. The boat on which she sailed from Marseilles sank in the Mediterranean, all hands lost. In Illica's original scenario, he retained one of Murger's comic scenes which takes place in the courtyard of Musetta's apartment building after she has been evicted for not paying the rent. She holds a party which ends in a riotous brawl between her Bohemian friends and the irate neighbors. Puccini jettisoned the scene, but Leoncavallo used it in his version.

Besides Puccini's and Leoncavallo's operas, an operetta was based on the *Barrière* play by Henri Hirschmann in 1877. Clyde Fitch adapted the novel into an English play which opened in New York in 1896. Called *The Bohemians*, it was still popular in the Forties. At its conclusion, Mimi and Rodolphe were decorously wed. In 1916, the first film on the subject appeared; *Bohème* was then regularly filmed, every decade or so, up to WW II. However, resemblances to either Murger or Puccini were often coincidental.

The premiere of *La Bohème*, which occupied Puccini over two years in composing, took place at the Teatro Regio in Turin on February 1, 1896. Puccini was fearful of trying to repeat a triumph (*Manon Lescaut* had had its rapturous first performance in Turin in 1893), but Ricordi wisely

thought that the venue was perfect—close enough to Milan for critics to get over by train, but not so close that the rival publishing house of Sonzogno would have their claque out to disrupt the premiere. Puccini was happy with the soprano, Cesira Ferrani, who had also created his Manon, but the rest of the cast left something to be desired. They are all forgotten today; not so the conductor, twenty-nine-year-old Arturo Toscanini. Toscanini didn't always agree with Puccini's methods, but he was a staunch supporter of the composer's music. After Puccini's tragic death, Toscanini piloted the unfinished *Turandot* to safe harbor. The audience at the *Bohème* premiere was moderately pleased, but the critics were not. It is possible that they were still under the influence of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* which Toscanini had given its Italian premiere to open the Turin season.

After some revision, *La Bohème* straggled from theater to theater, Puccini feeling that he had failed. (After the Turin premiere, he recalled: "I heard them whispering around me. 'Poor Puccini! This time he is on the wrong track. This is an opera that won't long survive!' I felt in me a sadness, a melancholy, a desire to cry . . .") Then in 1896, in Palermo, a venue removed from the intellectual centers of the north which frowned on the simple and eloquent work, a miracle happened. The performance was late, held up by a missing oboist who slipped into his seat half an hour past curtain time. The audience was restless and the conductor, Leopold Mugnone, expected the worst. But after the final curtain, the applause went on and on. Finally, the Mimi (Ada Giachetti, Caruso's common-law wife) was routed out of her dressing room where she had changed into her street clothes. Rodolfo had taken off his wig, and half the orchestra had gone home, but the cheering, stamping crowd forced them to repeat the final duet.

From that day, *Bohème* has been the most popular opera in the Italian repertory. It has been translated into a dozen languages, and is presented even without stars whenever an impresario wants to recoup losses. Yet when this work was first produced, the critics disliked it. In Turin, they said: "The palette of Maestro Puccini has not yet become either full or perfect . . . We ask ourselves what pushed Puccini on the deplorable road of *La Bohème* . . . Just as *Bohème* did not make a great impression on its auditors, it will not leave much of a mark on the history of our lyric theater . . ." English critics agreed that "Murger's *La Vie de Bohème* is hardly suitable for the book of an opera." And in America, they said "We cannot believe that there is permanent success for an opera constructed as this one is."

Additional comment is hardly necessary.

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| Friday, September 15 | NORMA |
| Friday, September 22 | OTELLO |
| Friday, September 29 | BILLY BUDD* |
| Friday, October 6 | LOHENGRIN |
| Friday, October 13 | DON GIOVANNI |
| Friday, October 20 | TOSCA |
| Friday, November 3 | WERTHER |
| Friday, November 10 | LA BOHÈME |
| Friday, November 17 | DER ROSENKAVALIER |
| Friday, November 24 | FIDELIO |

*Broadcast from an earlier performance

All broadcasts begin at 7:50 PM Pacific Time, except *Lohengrin*
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*Check local listings for day and time

San Francisco Opera broadcasts can also be heard live-on-tape throughout the
United States over National Public Radio beginning October 15. Please check
local listings for date and time.

KQED FM 88.5

Matters Musical, including commentary on the San Francisco Opera season, can
be heard bi-weekly at 8:30 AM and 12:15 PM on Tuesdays and Fridays on KQED-
FM, (88.5). Allan Ulrich is the host. The program is made possible through grants
from the L. J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation of Oakland, California, and The
Magic Pan.

Sunday Morning at the Opera. Recorded operas with John Roszak, host. 10 a.m.
every Sunday.

Special Events

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS

MARIN

Previews held at Del Mar School, 105 Avenida Mira Flores, Tiburon. Lectures begin at 8:30 p.m. Series registration is \$10.00 (\$6.50 for Opera Guild members, students and seniors). Single tickets are \$2.50 (\$1.50 for Guild members, students and seniors). For information, please call (415) 388-2850.

| | |
|--|---|
| September 7 <i>OTELLO</i> Dr. Jan Popper | October 19 <i>DER ROSENKAVALIER</i> Dr. Dale Harris |
| September 14 <i>BILLY BUDD</i> Dr. Dale Harris | November 9 <i>FIDELIO</i> To be announced |
| September 28 <i>LOHENGRIN</i> Dr. Jan Popper | |

SOUTH PENINSULA

Previews held at the Palo Alto Community Cultural Center, 1313 Newell Rd., at 7:30 p.m. Series registration is \$10; single tickets are \$2.50 (\$1.25 for students with I.D.). For information, please call (415) 325-8451 or (415) 321-9875.

| | |
|--|---|
| September 10 <i>OTELLO</i> Dr. Jan Popper | October 8 <i>DER ROSENKAVALIER</i> Dr. Jan Popper |
| September 17 <i>BILLY BUDD</i> Dr. Dale Harris | October 22 <i>FIDELIO</i> Dr. Dale Harris |
| September 24 <i>LOHENGRIN</i> Dr. Jan Popper | |

SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS

Co-sponsored by the San Jose Opera Guild and Sunnyvale Community Center. All presentations will be held in the Sunnyvale Community Center, 550 East Remington Drive, Sunnyvale. Series registration is \$10 (\$7 for senior citizens and students); single tickets are \$2 per lecture. For additional information, please call (408) 354-4068 or (408) 268-6681.

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| Sept. 7, 7:30 p.m. <i>OTELLO</i> James Schwabacher | Sept. 28, 7:30 p.m. <i>LOHENGRIN</i> Dr. David Kest |
| Sept. 15, 10 a.m. <i>BILLY BUDD</i> Dr. Dale Harris | Oct. 12, 7:30 p.m. <i>DER ROSENKAVALIER</i> Dr. Jan Popper |
| Sept. 21, 7:30 p.m. <i>DON GIOVANNI</i> Dr. Jan Popper | Oct. 20, 10 a.m. <i>FIDELIO</i> Dr. Dale Harris |

UC-BERKELEY EXTENSION LECTURE SERIES

DR. JAN POPPER LECTURES will be given on one Tuesday and nine Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. in Richardson auditorium, UC Extension Center, 55 Laguna St., San Francisco. Series registration is \$40; single lectures

are \$5, on a space available basis, payable at the door. For further information, please call (415) 642-1061.

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| September 5 (Tues.) <i>OTELLO</i> | October 9 <i>TOSCA</i> |
| September 11 <i>NORMA</i> | October 16 <i>WERTHER</i> |
| September 18 <i>BILLY BUDD</i> | October 23 <i>DER ROSENKAVALIER</i> |
| September 25 <i>LOHENGRIN</i> | October 30 <i>LA BOHÈME</i> |
| October 2 <i>DON GIOVANNI</i> | November 6 <i>FIDELIO</i> |

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

All Junior League opera previews will be held at the Herbst Theatre (formerly Veterans' Auditorium), at the corner of Van Ness Ave. and McAllister St., San Francisco. Lectures begin at 11:00 a.m. There is no admission charge. For information, please call (415) 567-8600.

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|--|---|
| September 6 <i>OTELLO</i> Dr. Jan Popper | October 12 <i>DER ROSENKAVALIER</i> James Schwabacher |
| September 14 <i>BILLY BUDD</i> Dr. Dale Harris | November 8 <i>FIDELIO</i> Stephanie von Buchau |
| September 28 <i>LOHENGRIN</i> Michael Barclay | |

OPERA EDUCATION WEST

East Bay Friends of the Opera Previews will be presented by Michael Barclay at the Marketplace in Emeryville. Individual admission is \$3.00 with a discount series ticket of \$18 offering 8 lectures for the price of 6. All lectures begin at 8:00 p.m. For further information, please call (415) 526-5244.

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| September 4 <i>OTELLO</i> | September 25 <i>DON GIOVANNI</i> |
| September 7 <i>NORMA</i> | October 16 <i>WERTHER</i> |
| September 11 <i>BILLY BUDD</i> | October 19 <i>DER ROSENKAVALIER</i> |
| September 18 <i>LOHENGRIN</i> | October 30 <i>FIDELIO</i> |

Friends of the Kensington Library

A general lecture on the operas of Puccini with a concentration on *La Bohème* and *Tosca* will be held by Michael Barclay on Thursday, October 12 at the Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., Kensington. The lecture will begin at 8 p.m. and admission is free.

CHABOT COLLEGE LECTURE SERIES

A ten-week series of introductions to the 1978 San Francisco Opera season. Given as a Free Credit/No-Credit Course (Humanities 120-71) by Eugene Marker every Thursday evening, 7:00 to

9:30 p.m. Open to all and located at the Community Center (C.C.D. Building), Room #4, All Saints School, 22870 2nd and "E" Streets, Hayward. For further information, please call 786-6632.

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|-----------------------------------|--|
| September 7 <i>OTELLO</i> | October 12 <i>DON GIOVANNI</i> |
| September 14 <i>NORMA</i> | October 19 <i>DER ROSENKAVALIER</i> |
| September 21 <i>BILLY BUDD</i> | October 26 <i>WERTHER</i> |
| September 28 <i>TOSCA</i> | November 2 <i>LA BOHÈME</i> |
| October 5 <i>LOHENGRIN</i> | November 9 <i>SEASON REVIEW</i> |

COGSWELL COLLEGE OPERA PREVIEW SERIES

Previews will be held at Cogswell College, 600 Stockton Street (between California and Pine), at 8:00 p.m. on one Tuesday and nine Thursday evenings. Lectures will be given by opera educator Michael Barclay and San Francisco Opera staff writer Arthur Kaplan. Series discount tickets for all ten lectures cost \$30; individual admission is \$3.50 a lecture. Continuing education credit offered. For further information, please call (415) 433-1994.

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|--|---|
| September 5 <i>OTELLO</i> Michael Barclay | October 5 <i>TOSCA</i> Arthur Kaplan |
| September 7 <i>NORMA</i> Arthur Kaplan | October 12 <i>WERTHER</i> Arthur Kaplan |
| September 14 <i>BILLY BUDD</i> Michael Barclay | October 26 <i>DER ROSENKAVALIER</i> Michael Barclay |
| September 21 <i>LOHENGRIN</i> Michael Barclay | November 2 <i>LA BOHÈME</i> Arthur Kaplan |
| September 28 <i>DON GIOVANNI</i> Arthur Kaplan | November 9 <i>FIDELIO</i> Michael Barclay |

PIEDMONT ADULT EDUCATION OPERA PREVIEW SERIES

Previews will be held in the auditorium of Piedmont High School, 800 Magnolia Avenue, Piedmont, at 7:00 p.m. on consecutive Mondays, starting September 11. Lectures with slides will be given by San Francisco Opera staff writer Arthur Kaplan, and are set to precede the opera presented over live radio broadcast on Friday evenings. Series registration is \$30; pre-registration desirable. For further information, please call (415) 653-9454.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| September 11 <i>NORMA</i> | October 2 <i>LOHENGRIN</i> |
| September 18 <i>OTELLO</i> | October 9 <i>DON GIOVANNI</i> |
| September 25 <i>BILLY BUDD</i> | October 16 <i>TOSCA</i> |

October 23
DER ROSENKAVALIER

October 30
WERTHER

NAPA OPERA LECTURE SERIES

For the sixth year there will be a ten-week course called ADVENTURES IN OPERA in Napa. The course, which accompanies the Saturday and Sunday Series at San Francisco Opera, will be held on Wednesday nights from 7-9 p.m. (location to be determined). Ernest Fly will again teach. For further information, please call Mr. Fly at (707) 224-6162.

September 13
OTELLO

September 20
NORMA

September 27
BILLY BUDD

October 4
DON GIOVANNI

October 11
LOHENGRIN

November 6
LA BOHÈME

November 13
FIDELIO

October 18
WERTHER

October 25
TOSCA

November 1
DER ROSENKAVALIER

November 8
FIDELIO

November 15
LA BOHÈME

WEST COAST OPERA SERVICE

WEST COAST
OPERA SERVICE PREVIEWS

San Francisco Opera Fall 1978 season: Presented by West Coast Opera Service at the Parkside Playhouse, 2750 Parkside Circle, in Concord. The fee for the complete series is \$20.00; individual lectures are \$2.50. All lectures will be given by Ben Krywosz, and will include recordings, filmstrips, and printed material. They will be held from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm on the following dates:

September 5
OTELLO

September 11
NORMA

September 18
BILLY BUDD

September 25
LOHENGRIN

October 2
DON GIOVANNI

October 9
TOSCA

October 16
WERTHER

October 24
DER ROSENKAVALIER

October 30
LA BOHÈME

November 8
FIDELIO

For further information, or to register, please call Ben Krywosz at 825-7825 evenings.

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continued on p. 68

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Ticket Information

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA BOX OFFICE

LOBBY, WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE: Van Ness at Grove, (415) 431-1210. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. 10 a.m. through first intermission on all performance days.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The box office in the outer lobby of the Opera House will remain open through the first intermission of every performance. Tickets for remaining performances in the season may be purchased at this time.

Unused Tickets

Patrons who are unable to attend a performance may make a worthwhile contribution to the San Francisco Opera Association by returning their tickets to the Box Office or telephoning (415) 431-1210. Their value will be tax deductible for the donor. If tickets are re-sold, the proceeds will be used to benefit the San Francisco Opera.

Opera Museum

The 1978 exhibit in the opera museum, prepared by the Archives for the Performing Arts, pays tribute to Kurt Herbert Adler on the occasion of his twenty-fifth anniversary as General Director of the San Francisco Opera. The history of the Company from 1923-1978 is illustrated by photographs and programs from each season.

Archives for the Performing Arts, which serves as a repository for invaluable collections pertaining to opera, dance, music and theater, is a non-profit, tax exempt corporation, with headquarters in the San Francisco Public Library, Presidio Branch. The museum display represents countless hours of research and preparation of visuals by Archives' director, Russell Hartley, and Judith Solomon, his assistant.

The specific purpose for which Archives for the Performing Arts was formed was to collect, preserve, classify and exhibit all types of memorabilia pertaining to all the performing arts and to make the educational and historical material accessible to the general public on a continuing basis.

The opera museum, in the south foyer, box level, is open free of charge during all performances.

Bus Service

Many Opera goers who live in the northern section of San Francisco are regular patrons of the Municipal Railway's special "Opera Bus".

This bus is added to Muni's northbound 47 Line following all evening performances of the Opera, Symphony, Ballet and other major events. The service is also provided for all Saturday and Sunday matinees.

Look for this bus, marked "47 Special", after each performance in the northbound bus zone at Van Ness Avenue and Grove Street — across Van Ness from the Opera House.

Its route is as follows:

North on Van Ness to Chestnut, then left to Divisadero where it turns left to Union. It continues on Union over Russian Hill to Columbus, then left to Powell—then right to the end of the line at North Point.

FIRE NOTICE: There are sufficient exits in this building to accommodate the entire audience. The exit indicated by the lighted "Exit" sign nearest your seat is the shortest route to the street. In case of fire please do not run—walk through that exit.

For lost and found information inquire at check room No. 3 or call (415) 621-6600, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Opera Glasses

Opera glasses are available for rent in the lobby.

Please note that no cameras or tape recorders are permitted in the Opera House.

Children of any age attending a performance must have a ticket.

Opera management reserves the right to remove any patron creating a disturbance.

Taxi Service

Taxis will usually be available at the taxi entrance on the south side of the Opera House at the end of a performance. Anyone desiring a taxi at other times of the evening may use the direct telephone line at the taxi entrance to summon a cab.

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For the safety and comfort of our audience all parcels, backpacks, luggage, etc., must be checked at the Opera House cloakrooms.

Hot buffet service in lower level one hour prior to curtain time.

Refreshments in the box tier on mezzanine floor, grand tier and dress circle during all performances.

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Wednesday, November 8, 1978, 1:00 p.m.
Monday, November 13, 1978, 1:00 p.m.
Wednesday, November 15, 1978, 1:00 p.m.
Wednesday, November 22, 1978, 1:00 p.m.

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Profiles

SILVIO VARVISO



Eminent Swiss conductor Silvio Varviso, who made his American debut with the San Francisco Opera in 1959 with Gluck's *Orfeo*, appears in his eighth season with the Company, leading performances of *La Bohème*. Other works he has conducted locally include *Carmina Burana* (1959), *Tosca*, *Der Rosenkavalier* and *La Traviata* (1960), *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Rigoletto* (1961), *Don Carlo* (1973), *Tristan und Isolde* (1974) and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (1976). Maestro Varviso is currently music director of both the Württemberg State Opera and the State Orchestra of Stuttgart, posts he has held since 1972. During 1978 he is guest conducting in Stockholm, Paris, Munich, Vienna and Tokyo, and is also a frequent guest conductor at the Berlin Opera, the Metropolitan Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic. In the spring of this year he wielded the baton for *Der Rosenkavalier* in Paris and *Boris Godunov* in Munich. Varviso began his career as an assistant conductor and coach with the St. Gallen Stadttheater. He then joined the Basel Opera and advanced from first conductor to music director and, finally, to artistic director. He has also served as music director of the Swedish Royal Opera, where his numerous successes included a Ring cycle, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *The Rake's Progress* and *Tristan und Isolde*. Maestro Varviso led the 1969 Bayreuth festival stagings of *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Lohengrin* and *Die Meistersinger* and he has had several return engagements there.

CALVIN SIMMONS



Former assistant conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, 28-year-old San Francisco-born Calvin Simmons makes his public debut with the San Francisco Opera leading performances of *La Bohème*. No stranger to the Company, he joined the music staff as rehearsal pianist in 1967 at age 17. In 1970 he became assistant conductor of the Merola Opera Program and in 1972 was named an assistant conductor of the San Francisco Opera and Associate Music Director of Western Opera Theater, posts he held for three years. Also in 1972, he was the recipient of the Kurt Herbert Adler Award. Simmons started his musical life with the San Francisco Boys Chorus under Madi Bacon, which also offered him his first conducting opportunities. Subsequently, he studied piano with Rudolf Serkin and conducting with Max Rudolph at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. He made his podium debut with the WOT production of *Hansel and Gretel* in 1972. That same work will serve as his debut vehicle with the Metropolitan Opera during the 1978/79 season. In 1974 Simmons joined the conducting staff of the Glyndebourne festival and in the next three years led performances of Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*, Verdi's *Falstaff* and Poulenc's *La Voix humaine*. He has also conducted the Hallé Orchestra in England and, in America, the American Symphony Orchestra and the National Symphony in Washington, D.C. and the New York Philharmonic. This year he made guest appearances with the Oakland Symphony and was director of the Ojai festival.

JEAN PIERRE PONNELLE



One of the world's most noted stage directors and designers, Jean Pierre Ponnelle returns for his tenth season with the San Francisco Opera to stage his productions of *Otello* and *La Bohème*, and as the designer of *Tosca*. Last year his *Idomeneo* and *Turandot* drew international attention. Ponnelle made his designing debut in this country in the Company's 1958 premiere of Orff's *Carmina Burana* and *The Wise Maiden*, returning the following season to design the production for another prestigious American premiere, Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. In 1968 he began to take on dual responsibility as director-designer, producing *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Così fan tutte* for the Salzburg festival prior to his American debut in that capacity with the San Francisco Opera in the much admired production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* in 1969. Local audiences have subsequently seen his productions of *Così fan tutte* (1970, 1973), *Otello* (1970, 1974), *Tosca* (1972, 1976), *Rigoletto* (1973), *Der Fliegende Holländer* (1975), *Gianni Schicchi* (1975), and *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *I Pagliacci* (1976). All of these but *Così* were created for the San Francisco Opera. Recent Ponnelle productions include a Mozart cycle in Cologne, *Don Carlos* in Hamburg, *Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung* in Stuttgart, *Pelléas et Mélisande* at La Scala, *Falstaff* at the Glyndebourne festival and *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Die Zauberflöte* at the Salzburg festival. The Metropolitan Opera will offer his production of *Der Fliegende Holländer*, created by the San Francisco Opera, during the 1978/79 season.

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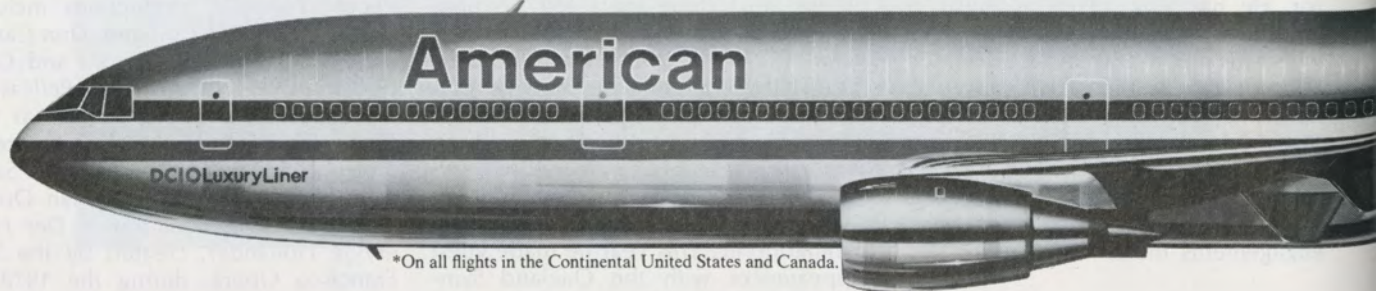
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THOMAS MUNN



ILEANA COTRUBAS



Thomas Munn returns for his third year as lighting designer/director of the San Francisco Opera. This season he is also responsible for supervising the scenery and projections for *Billy Budd* and the special effects for *Lohengrin*. Last season he acted as the supervising scenic designer for *Adriana Lecouvreur* and *Faust* as well as designer of the lighting scheme for the new San Francisco Opera productions of *Katya Kabanova* and *Un Ballo in Maschera*. A versatile artist whose productions have been seen on Broadway, off-Broadway, in films and on television, Munn created the scenery and lighting for the Netherlands Opera productions of Verdi's *Macbeth* in 1977 and Berg's *Lulu* in 1978. In the spring of this year he devised the lighting for Copland's *The Tender Land* with the Michigan Opera Theater, to be televised in the near future. Munn was responsible for the lighting design at the Lake George Opera festival for two seasons, which included productions of *The Crucible*, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto*, *Die Fledermaus*, *La Traviata* and *The Magic Flute*. He has also created designs for the Kansas City Lyric Theater and the Minnesota Opera Company, among others. In addition to his work in opera, Munn has designed over one hundred industrial shows and was resident designer for the Mary Anthony Dance Theater of New York for six years. Local audiences will also remember his imaginative lighting for the new productions of the 1976 season, *Thais*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *I Pagliacci* and the world premiere of *Angle of Repose*.

In demand throughout the world as one of the finest lyric sopranos of her generation, Rumanian-born Ileana Cotrubas makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Mimi in *La Bohème*. It was as Puccini's beloved seamstress that she made a sensational last-minute debut at La Scala in 1975 and was first heard at the Chicago Lyric Opera in 1973 and the Metropolitan Opera in 1977. Following a three-year contract with the Frankfurt Opera, Miss Cotrubas has appeared at all the major European opera houses and festivals. In 1971 she made her Covent Garden debut as Tatyana in a new production of *Eugene Onegin* conducted by Sir Georg Solti and later that year sang her first *Violetta* at the Vienna Staatsoper, conducted by Josef Krips. In 1974 she appeared in the title role of Massenet's *Manon* at the Paris Opera and toured Japan with the Munich Opera. In the United States Miss Cotrubas has performed with the Chicago Lyric Opera as *Norina*, *Violetta* and *Euridice*, as well as *Mimi*. During the 1977/78 season she starred as *Gilda* in the new production of *Rigoletto* at the Metropolitan, which was seen nationally in a live telecast. Her most recent engagements include *Susanna* at the Vienna Staatsoper, *Gilda* at Covent Garden, *Pamina* in the new Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of *Die Zauberflöte* at the Salzburg festival and *Micaëla* in *Carmen* at the Edinburgh festival. Miss Cotrubas' artistry is equally appreciated on the recital stage and in recordings, which include *Louise*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Rinaldo*, *La Traviata*, *Carmen*, *Les Pêcheurs de perles*, and the soon-to-be-released *Le Nozzi di Figaro* and *Hänsel und Gretel*.



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CAROL VANESS



California soprano Carol Vaness, who received rave reviews as Cleopatra in Handel's *Julius Caesar* and Vitellia in Mozart's *Titus* with Spring Opera Theater during the past two seasons, sings Mimi in the student matinee and special family-priced performances of *La Bohème*. Last year, in her debut season with the San Francisco Opera, she was heard as the Priestess in *Aida*, Queen Enrichetta in *I Puritani* and a lady-in-waiting in *Turandot*. Miss Vaness won the first-place Schwabacher Award in the 1976 San Francisco Opera Auditions and was among the national finalists in the 1977 Metropolitan Opera Auditions. As a member of the 1976 Merola Opera Program she performed Giulietta in *The Tales of Hoffmann* and was soloist with the Stern Grove Symphony Orchestra under Kurt Herbert Adler. This summer she sang Elisetta in Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio segreto* with Brown Bag Opera and returned to the Carmel Bach festival for the second consecutive year, appearing as Vitellia and as soloist in Bach's B Minor Mass. Miss Vaness is currently in her second year as the Atlantic Richfield Foundation Artist in the San Francisco/Affiliate Artist-Opera Program and is a recipient of a 1978 Martha Baird Rockefeller Award.

JULIA MIGENES



Young American soprano Julia Migenes, of Puerto Rican and Greek parentage, makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Musetta in *La Bohème*. While still studying at the High School of Music and Art in New York, she attracted attention in a television performance of Copland's *The Second Hurricane* when she sang the soprano lead with the New York Philharmonic under the direction of Leonard Bernstein. She was then engaged as Maria in the revival of the conductor/composer's *West Side Story* at City Center in New York. At that same theater she sang Annina in *The Saint of Bleeker Street* and the Italian lady in *The Consul* both under composer Gian Carlo Menotti's direction. Other credits in musical comedy include Hodel in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Magnolia in *Showboat* and Tuptim in *The King and I*. Miss Migenes has portrayed Kate in the operatic version of *The Taming of the Shrew* by Vittorio Giannini. Standard repertoire roles for the soprano include Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Blondchen in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, Olympia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and Cio-cio-san in *Madama Butterfly*. Having made her operatic career principally in Germany, she has appeared in such rarities as Schmidt's *Notre Dame*, Lortzing's *Der Wildschütz* and Wolpert's *Der eingebildete Kranke*, in addition to various roles in German operetta. She has made several appearances on the Johnny Carson Show and, starting this year, had her own series on German television.

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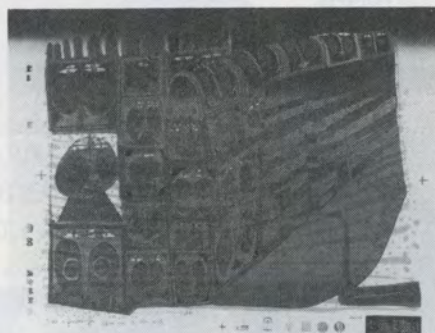
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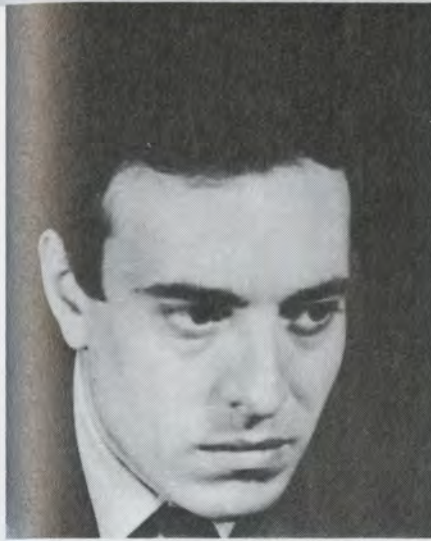
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PAMELA SOUTH



Now in her fourth consecutive season with the San Francisco Opera, soprano Pamela South appears this year as a noble orphan in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Musetta in the student matinees and special family-priced performance of *La Bohème*. A member of the Merola Opera Program in 1974, she toured with Western Opera Theater in 1975 and 1976, performing such roles as Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Gabriella in Cherubini's *The Portuguese Inn*. During the 1976 Spring Opera Theater season, the young soprano won critical acclaim for her comic talents as the Prima Donna in Donizetti's *Viva la Mamma* and for her portrayal of Servilia in Mozart's *Titus*. Roles with San Francisco Opera include Giannetta in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Papagena in *The Magic Flute*, Nella in *Gianni Schicchi* and Mascha in *Pique Dame*. Currently the Combustion Engineering Affiliate Artist in the San Francisco/Affiliate Artists-Opera Program, Miss South has recently appeared with the San Francisco Symphony Pops Concerts conducted by Arthur Fiedler and with the Anchorage Symphony.

GIACOMO ARAGALL



Celebrated for the beautiful lyric quality of his voice and for his exciting stage presence, Catalan tenor Giacomo Aragall appears in his sixth consecutive season with the San Francisco Opera as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*. He made his local debut in 1973 as the Duke in Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's provocative production of *Rigoletto*, returning for *Esclarmonde* and *Madama Butterfly* in 1974, *Werther* in 1975, *Tosca* in 1976, and *Adriana Lecouvreur* and *Faust* last season. Aragall emigrated to Italy in 1962, where he won first place in the International Vocal Competition at Busseto, the birthplace of Giuseppe Verdi. The following year he made his operatic debut at Venice's La Fenice in that composer's *Gerusalemme*. Soon thereafter he was engaged by La Scala, first singing the title role in Mascagni's *L'Amico Fritz*. An accomplished athlete, Aragall would have participated with the Spanish gymnastics team in the 1964 Olympics had his musical career not progressed so rapidly. Debuts outside Italy followed in Vienna (1966) and at Covent Garden and the Metropolitan Opera (1968). Since 1973 Aragall has added several French roles to his repertoire. In addition to Werther and Roland in *Esclarmonde*, he has sung the title role in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* and *Faust* and performed Des Grieux in Massenet's *Manon*, staged by Jean Pierre Ponnelle for the Vienna Staatsoper. During the 1977/78 season he has sung the leading tenor roles in Verdi's *La Traviata*, *Un Ballo in Maschera* and *Don Carlos* in New York, Barcelona, Hamburg, Vienna and Munich.

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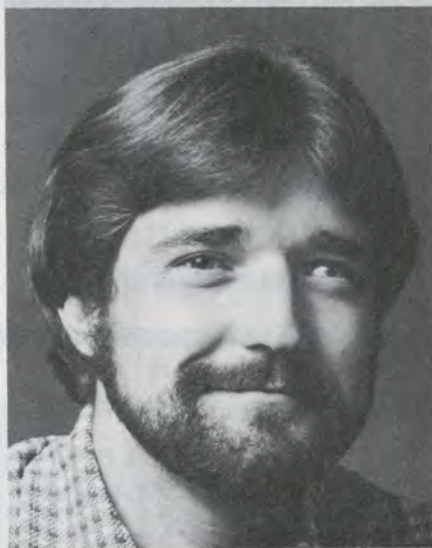
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BARRY McCaULEY



Tenor Barry McCauley returns for his second season with the San Francisco Opera as Cassio in *Otello* and Rodolfo in the student matinee and special family-priced performances of *La Bohème*. Last year he sang the title role in *Faust* in the same series as well as Vanya Kudryas in *Katya Kabanova* and Froh in *Das Rheingold*. Earlier in 1978 he appeared as Ruggero in *La Rondine* with Spring Opera Theater, after making a highly successful debut with the Company as Don Jose in *Carmen* in 1977. It was in this role that he appeared before 15,000 people in Sigmund Stern Grove as a member of the Merola Opera Program in 1975. He won the Program's Gropper Award that year and portrayed the title role in *The Tales of Hoffmann* as a Merola participant the following year. In 1976 he was a finalist in the San Francisco Opera Auditions, winning the Florence Bruce Award. With the Tucson Opera McCauley has performed both Faust and Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, and he has appeared as the Duke in *Rigoletto* with Nevada Opera in Reno. During the 1978 San Francisco Ballet season he was soloist in Michael Smuin's *Mass in C Minor*. This past summer McCauley sang Paolino in Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio segreto* with Brown Bag Opera. Engagements next year include Alfredo in *La Traviata* with Michigan Opera Theater and Stravinsky's "In Memoriam: Dylan Thomas" in the opening concert of the 1978/79 San Francisco Symphony season. McCauley is the Reader's Digest Affiliate Artist in his second year in the San Francisco/Affiliate Artist-Opera Program.

BRENT ELLIS



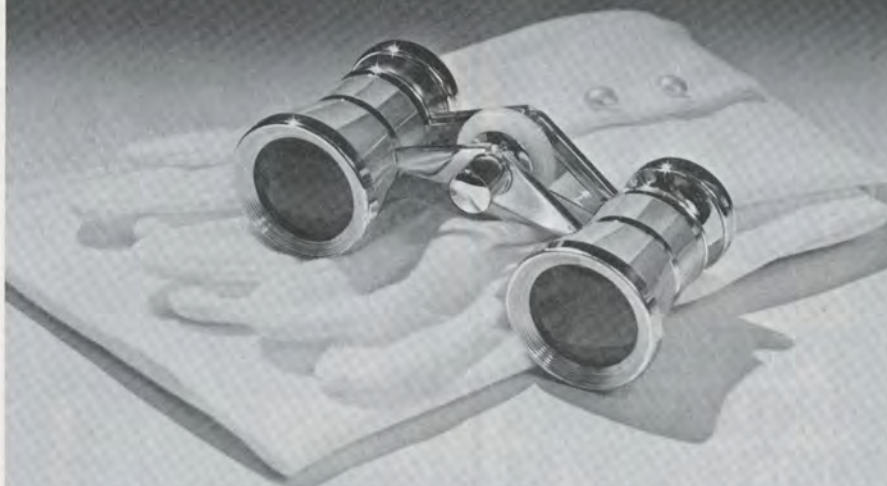
Young American baritone Brent Ellis, who made his operatic debut in Ginastera's *Bomazo* with the Opera Society of Washington during the 1966/67 season, has carved out a highly successful career in Europe and North America. After a triumph as Ford in the Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of *Falstaff* at Glyndebourne last summer, he was invited back for the title role of *Don Giovanni* and Marcello in *La Bohème*, the role he sings with the San Francisco Opera this year. He previously appeared with the Company in 1976 as Silvio in *I Pagliacci* and Figaro in the student matinee performances of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. His 1977/78 debuts included Zurga in *The Pearl Fishers* with the Welsh National Opera, concert performances of *Die Grossmutige Temis* at the Hamburg Staatsoper and performances as Count Almaviva (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Germont (*La Traviata*) and Figaro (*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*) with the Canadian Opera Company. The baritone opened the current season in Toronto as Lionel in Tchaikovsky's *Joan of Arc* and later will appear in a new Ponnelle production of *La Traviata* with the Houston Grand Opera and will make his Scottish Opera debut in the title role of *Rigoletto*. Recent highlights in Ellis' career include his creation of two roles in world premieres by American composers: Morris Townsend in Thomas Pasatieri's *Washington Square* with the Michigan Opera Theater and Cortez in Roger Sessions' *Montezuma* in his debut with the Opera Company of Boston.

LAWRENCE COOPER



Canadian baritone Lawrence Cooper, who sang five roles in San Francisco last fall, including Valentin in the student matinee and special popular-priced performances of *Faust*, portrays Marcello in *La Bohème* in the same series this year. A winner in the grand finals of the 1971 San Francisco Opera Auditions, he appeared with the Merola Opera Program and toured for three years with Western Opera Theater in such roles as Germont in *La Traviata*, Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*, Dandini in *Cinderella* and Belcore in *The Elixir of Love*. In 1972 he debuted with Spring Opera Theater in *The Rise and Fall of Mahagonny* and later that year appeared in the fall season productions of *Tosca* and *The Visit of the Old Lady*. Last year he was heard as the Loudspeaker in the American premiere of Viktor Ullmann's *The Emperor of Atlantis* with SPOT. In the summer of 1976 Cooper portrayed Lionel in the American premiere of Tchaikovsky's *Joan of Arc* with the Reno Opera. Immediately following, he sang Magua in the world premiere of Henderson's *The Last of the Mohicans* in Wilmington, Delaware. He then toured with the Canadian Opera Company as Marcello and Germont. Last summer he performed the Count in *The Marriage of Figaro* in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* under Eve Queler with the Harford Opera in Baltimore. Cooper's 1978/79 schedule includes performances of *Così* in Chattanooga and Detroit, and Renato in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Jackson, Mississippi. He returns to Toronto, after singing Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* there earlier this year, for the title role in Weinberger's *Schwanda the Bagpiper*.

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DALE DUESING



In his third consecutive season with the San Francisco Opera, fast-rising American baritone Dale Duesing sings the title role in Britten's *Billy Budd* and Schunard in *La Bohème*. He created the role of Oliver Ward in the world premiere of Andrew Imbrie's *Angle of Repose* in his American debut with the Company in 1976, and then portrayed Figaro in the student matinee performances of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Last year he was heard as Arlecchino in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and as Ping in *Turandot*. Duesing began his operatic career in Germany where he has appeared with most of the major opera companies. A member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf for several years, he is also a regular guest at the Hamburg Staatsoper, having debuted there as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* in 1973. The summer of 1976 saw the baritone bow at the Glyndebourne festival as Oliver in *Capriccio* opposite Elisabeth Söderström. For the past two summers he has appeared at the Salzburg festival as Masetto in the Ponnelle production of *Don Giovanni* under the baton of Karl Böhm. Duesing makes his Metropolitan Opera debut in the 1978/79 season as Arlecchino in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*. He is scheduled to bow at the Paris Opera in 1981 in *Roméo et Juliette*.

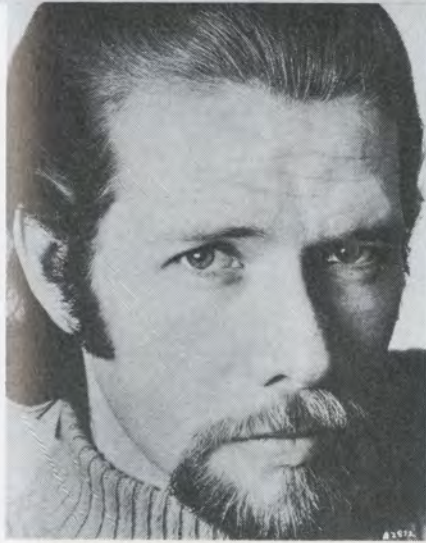
SAMUEL BYRD



Alabama-born baritone Samuel Byrd, who made his San Francisco Opera debut during the 1976 season singing in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and the world premiere of Imbrie's *Angle of Repose*, returns as the Novice's friend in *Billy Budd*, Brühlmann in *Werther* and Schunard in the student matinee and special family-priced performances of *La Bohème*. A finalist in the 1975 San Francisco Opera Regional Auditions, he was a participant in that year's Merola Opera Program and won the Program's Bernhardt N. Poetz Award. The following two seasons he toured with Western Opera Theater, performing such lead roles as Figaro in *The Barber of Seville*, Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*. Byrd was an apprentice artist with Santa Fe Opera in 1973 and 1974 and has been a soloist with the Birmingham Symphony as well as the opera companies of Birmingham and Tucson. He has received grants from the National Opera Institute and the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund, and was a recent prize winner in the Baltimore Opera National Vocal Competition.

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SAMUEL RAMEY



Leading bass with the New York City Opera, Samuel Ramey makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Colline in *La Bohème*. He first appeared on the opera stage with the New York company in 1973, and has since been heard in such roles as Don Giovanni, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Creon in *Medea*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Giorgio in *I Puritani* and Henry VIII in *Anna Bolena*. Recently he scored successes there as Don Basilio in Sarah Caldwell's staging of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and as Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. In 1977 he was heard for the first time in the title role of Boito's *Mefistofele* to great acclaim. The *basso cantante* made his European debut as Figaro at the Glyndebourne festival in 1976 and has returned there for the past two summers as Nick Shadow in *The Rake's Progress*. In 1977 he sang Don Giovanni in Bordeaux and this year added debuts with the Netherlands Opera as the four villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* and Don Basilio with the Hamburg Staatsoper. In North America Ramey has appeared with the Florentine Opera of Milwaukee (*Lucia* and *Faust*), the Santa Fe Opera (*Carmen*), the Houston Grand Opera (Handel's *Rinaldo*) and the Vancouver Opera (*Queen of Spades*), among others. He was also heard as Colline in Fort Worth and will make his Paris Opera debut in that role in 1979.

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PAUL HUDSON



English bass Paul Hudson makes his American debut with the San Francisco Opera, performing Dansker in *Billy Budd*, Angelotti in *Tosca*, the Bailiff in *Werther* and Colline in the student matinee and family-priced performances of *La Bohème*. A regular artist with the Royal Opera at Covent Garden, he has made over 300 appearances with that company. With the English National Opera he has sung such roles as King Philip in the five-act version of *Don Carlos*. Hudson's roles with the Welsh National Opera include Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Colline in *La Bohème* and Nourabad in *Les Pêcheurs de perles*. He soon makes his debut in Johannesburg, South Africa as Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra*.

FEDERICO DAVIÀ



Bass Federico Davià, who appeared with the San Francisco Opera in 1966 and 1967 and returned to the Company to perform Mathieu in *Andrea Chenier*, Talpa in *Il Tabarro* and Simone in *Gianni Schicchi* in 1975, sings three Puccini character roles: the Sacristan in *Tosca* and both Benoit and Alcindoro in *La Bohème*. He was featured in the latter opera this past summer at the Glyndebourne festival. Born in Genoa, Davià made his operatic debut in Milan in 1959 as Colline in *La Bohème*. Two years later he made his first appearance on the stage of La Scala. His career has subsequently taken him to the major opera houses of Europe and to such festivals as Wexford and Glyndebourne. Davià's repertoire encompasses such classics as *Così fan tutte*, *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *Don Pasquale*, *Faust*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Rigoletto*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Aida* and *Turandot* as well as modern operas—*Wozzeck*, *Murder in the Cathedral* and Musco's *Il Gattopardo*. He sang in the world premieres of Chailly's *Wassiliev*, Turchi's *Il Buon Soldato Swaig* and Negri's *Giovanni Sebastiano*.

STEPHEN WEST



In his debut season with the San Francisco Opera bass-baritone Stephen West sings Montano in *Otello*, the First Mate in *Billy Budd*, Sciarrone in *Tosca*, Johann in *Werther*, a notary in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Alcindoro/Benoit in the student matinee and special family-priced performances of *La Bohème*. A semi-finalist in the 1973 Metropolitan Opera National Auditions, he went on to study for three years at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. While there he appeared with the Philadelphia Lyric Opera in *Macbeth*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Tosca*, *La Traviata* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. In 1977 he was called on two hours notice to sing the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni* with the Philadelphia Opera Company. Among the other companies with which he has performed are the Seattle Opera, Central City Opera, Kentucky Opera Association, where he sang Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*, and AVA Opera Theatre, where he portrayed the title role in *Falstaff*. West recently made his debut with Spring Opera Theater as Taddeo in *The Italian Girl in Algiers* and sang Count Robinson in Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio segreto* with Brown Bag Opera in June. He has been heard as guest soloist in Bach's *B Minor Mass* with the Denver Symphony and in Handel's *Messiah* in the Mormon Tabernacle. West was recently named U.S. Steel Affiliate Artist in the San Francisco/Affiliate Artist-Opera Program.



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DAVID EISLER



After a well received debut as the poet Prunier in Spring Opera Theater's production of *La Rondine*, 22-year-old tenor David Eisler makes his first appearances with the San Francisco Opera as Squeak in *Billy Budd*, a noble of Brabant in *Lohengrin*, Von Faninal's majordomo in *Der Rosenkavalier* and Parpignol in *La Bohème*. A participant in the 1977 Merola Opera Program, he sang the role of Don Giovanni in Gazzaniga's *Il Convitato di pietra* at the Paul Masson Vineyards and shared the first-place Schwabacher Award at the San Francisco Opera Auditions Grand Finals: A former voice student at Indiana university, Eisler has appeared in several roles with the Los Angeles and San Francisco Civic Light Opera Association, most recently as the Caliph in *Kismet* in 1977. During the 1976/77 season he performed the role of Johann Strauss, Jr., in the Transvaal Opera Company's production of *The Great Waltz* in Johannesburg.



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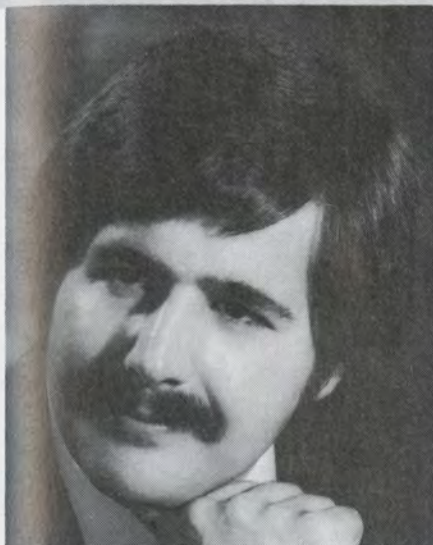
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JOHN DEL CARLO



DAVID ROHRBAUGH



Baritone John Del Carlo, previously a member of the San Francisco Opera chorus, was co-winner of the first-place James H. Schwabacher Memorial Award in the 1977 San Francisco Opera Auditions. He appears with the Company as soloist this year for several roles: A herald in *Otello*, Bosun in *Billy Budd*, a noble of Brabant in *Lohengrin*, Leopold in *Der Rosenkavalier* and a customhouse sergeant in all performances of *La Bohème*. He sang Marcello in the Puccini work and Biagio in Gazzaniga's *Il Convitato di pietra* during the 1977 Merola Opera Program. Following that, the baritone participated in the San Diego Opera Center program, where he received the first-place Giacomo Puccini Award. He was heard there as Dandini in *La Cenerentola* and Pantalone in Prokofiev's *Love for Three Oranges* and sang Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with the San Diego Opera in Palm Springs. A native San Franciscan and graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Del Carlo performed in 1977 with Brown Bag Opera, the Oakland Symphony and the California Bach Society. In 1978 he made his first appearance with Spring Opera Theater as Achilles in *Julius Caesar* and in June sang in a Brown Bag Opera series at the Geyser Peak Winery as Marcello and Geronimo in Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio segreto*.

After his recent debut with Spring Opera Theater as Curio in *Julius Caesar*, baritone David Rohrbaugh makes his first appearance with the San Francisco Opera as Second Mate in *Billy Budd* and a customhouse guard in *La Bohème*. Now on the voice faculty at San Jose State university, for several years he was chairman of the voice department and director of opera at the University of Akron, and was one of the youngest musicians to serve on the faculty of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. Rohrbaugh has been heard with several symphony orchestras in Ohio: the Cleveland Symphony and the symphonies of Columbus, Akron and Canton. He was a leading baritone with the New Cleveland Opera Company and has performed with the Ohio Opera Theatre and the Santa Fe Opera. Recent engagements include Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with the New Cleveland Opera Company and a well received rendition of Schubert's *Die Winterreise* at the San Francisco Goethe Institute on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the composer's death.

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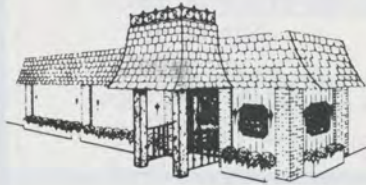
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tions at 20 *sous* a tooth, located over the essential *chapellerie* (hat shop) where Rodolfo buys Mimi her *cuffietta rosa* in Act II; the widow Dupin's wholesale cheese store, selling Camembert, Brie, Munster, Port Salut and Chèvre; the optometrist Dr. Masson's shop, with its enormous eyeglasses, advertising "will give you new eyes"; the bookstore, *A la Plume de Rabelais*, with an inkpot and quill pen signboard, buying and selling used books, offering the latest publications, scholarly articles and Greek and Latin dictionaries, and proudly announcing itself as the purveyor for the University; the Maison Louis and Sons, tradesmen in mattress stuffing and chair mending; various cafés and restaurants; and even a sign for Mme. Irma, *cartomancienne* (fortune teller) who *lit tout, sait tout, voit tout* (reads everything, knows everything, sees everything), and a sign for a *bagotier* (cab runner), a man who carried baggage from public transport to domicile, a trade which has died out in twentieth-century Paris. There are one or two minor errors in the French, due, Ponnelle says, to the last-minute frenetic activity of the set painters in Strasbourg, but which only make the scene all the more authentic looking.

Amidst these naturalistic surroundings, the central action is played out on a platform which, with appropriate props and accessories, serves as the garret flat of the Bohemians in Acts I and IV, the Café Momus in Act II and the customhouse cabin in Act III. "The way in which I combine the houses," says Ponnelle, "is not purely naturalistic. In the first act, the houses are quite far off, and it's as if they are in a desert surrounded by a void. It's only in Act II that they are set as they might really have been."

On the central platform in each act will be situated the only outsized prop in the entire production—a huge, cylindrical stove. "It is the central element of the production," states Ponnelle, "and I made it unnaturally big on purpose. The stove is the focal point of the entire staging. It's a sym-

bol; it's there because of the cold."

This concern for essential operatic truthfulness, getting to the core of the piece through the scenic design—whether it be in a buddha-like statue of a goddess, symbolizing the taboo princess of legendary China, or an enormous wood-burning stove symbolizing the physical and spiritual need for warmth among the poor Parisian workers and artists—is a major preoccupation in Ponnelle's stagings. "You know," adds the director, "tuberculosis was the disease of the poor—the nineteenth-century cancer, in that it was widespread and incurable. Of course it was made the fashionable malady for every fragile heroine. But it was born of poverty and especially squalor [in fact, the three women named Mimi in the life of Henry Mürger, upon whose semi-autobiographical novel, *Scènes de la vie de Bohème*, the opera is based, all died of consumption]."

Ponnelle originally had thought of making an ironic comment in Act IV by showing Mimi elegantly attired as the mistress of the *viscontino* mentioned by Marcello, coming back to her nest and dying in poverty. "I started out rehearsing it that way in Strasbourg," he admits. "You always see Mimi as a poor, sweet thing. What is she actually? She's a simple, naive girl to whom all her friends keep saying, 'You're a fool; if you want to earn some money, well, go out on the streets . . .' And, after Act II, she does follow Musetta's footsteps and takes up with a viscount.

"There was a version of Act III, written by Puccini, which he later decided not to use, where Mimi is a kept woman and appears in elegant gowns [an entire Act III ball scene played in a glassed-in courtyard with *grisettes*, barons, etc., similar to Act II of *La Rondine*]. It would be interesting to play the complete version some time, to have Mimi come in as a sumptuously dressed kept woman who dies in squalor. It would be rather extraordinary. But the problem is, only the specialists would understand it. It



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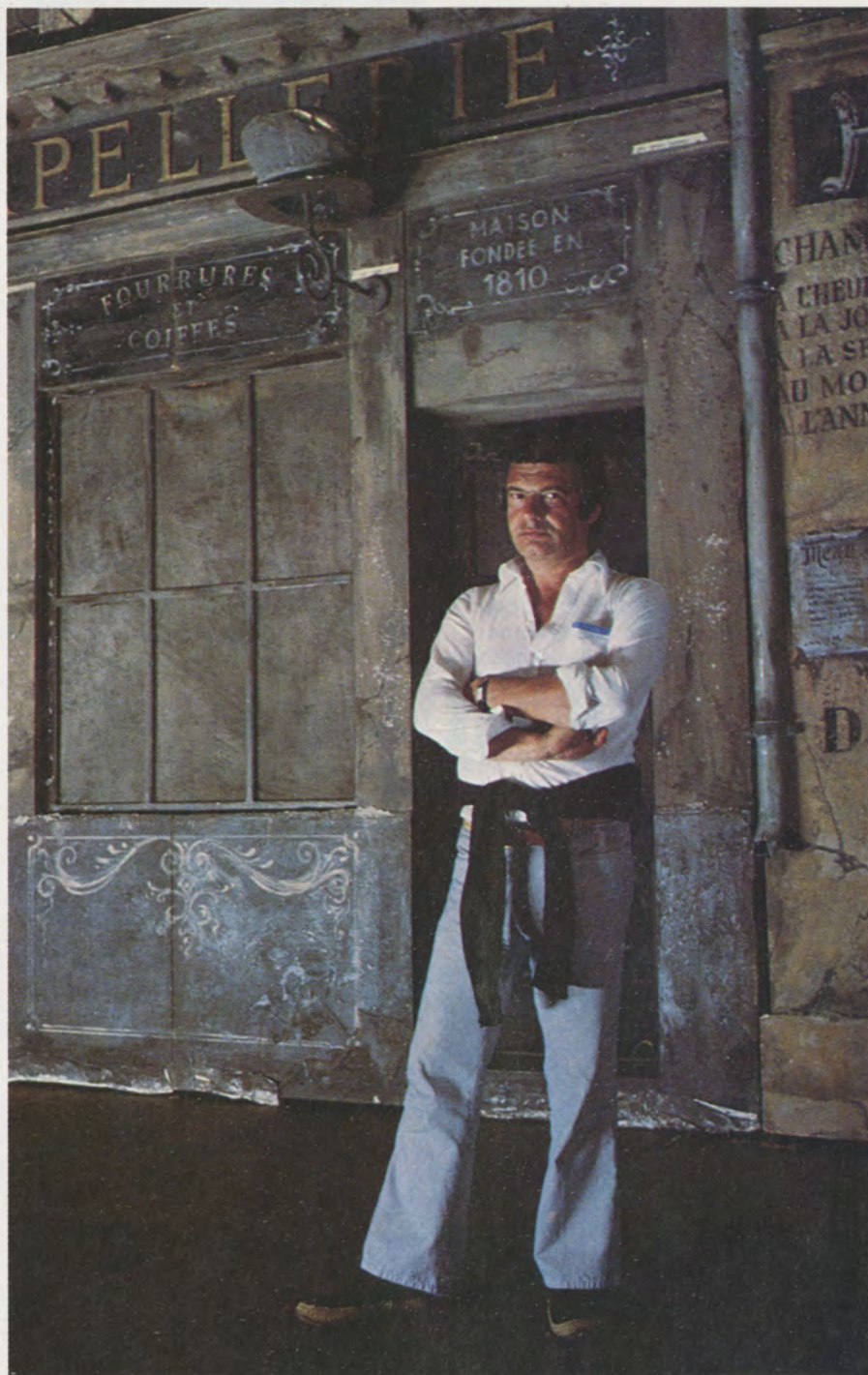
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doesn't work; it doesn't go with the music."

In this regard Ponnelle talked about another *verismo* opera to which he gave a "specialist's" interpretation—the 1976 San Francisco Opera production of Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Although its twin, *I Pagliacci*, was very well received by both audience and critics, there was considerable negative reaction to the staging of *Cavalleria*. "The public didn't understand what I was after," declares the controversial director, "simply because they don't know what the Catholic church represents in a Mediterranean village—the stifling force of religion and the practice of that religion in a village of the Abruzzi or Sicily—it's unbelievable! And that collective hysteria still exists in Sicily. I transposed things a bit, but I didn't invent a thing. In *Cavalleria*, when I had people flagellating themselves [during the religious procession] and had one guy grab a bottle, break it, and start slashing his body with it, everyone was shocked. But I've seen that with my own eyes. In Corsica, for example, there are men who crawl around the village ten times on their knees carrying immense crosses. You have to have seen it.

"I'm convinced the Italians would have understood the staging, but here people have no familiarity with that sort of thing. In the United States the Catholic church is Americanized and not the way it is in Sicily. There everything is bound up together—the protocol of honor, faith in the Virgin Mary, vendetta and death. In *Cavalleria* the procession and the assassination, the two principal events, get all mixed up together . . . The whole thing is amalgamated in a kind of Freudian complex, which is that kind of religious fanaticism one sees in the Latin populations of Spain, France and Italy, especially among the peasant women. "My error was in thinking that people here would understand it. It's clear that people can't be expected to understand it if they're unaware of its existence, if they don't have the cultural context. If I were to do it again in San Francisco, I would do it in



Jean Pierre Ponnelle in front of his setting for Puccini's *La Bohème*.

exactly the same manner. Perhaps they would understand it better this time. In Salzburg, for example, many people were shocked by my *Don Giovanni* last year. This year, on the contrary, people said to me, 'You've eliminated lots of things,' and I answered, 'Not at all. You've just digested it.'"

In all of Ponnelle's work, it is clear that the director has little or no concern for what is commonly called "operatic tradition." But it is equally

clear that his sometimes off-beat productions do not stem from personal whim, directorial arrogance, or a desire to shock the public. "I do what I believe to be authentic and modern. When I say 'modern,' it's not because I'm trying to be fashionably modish. By modern I mean that it corresponds to what people alive today experience and feel. The so-called theatrical tradition doesn't interest me at all. First of all, it was founded by people who



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"I work with the artists according to the way I feel a role should be played, and according to the way they feel it too. It depends on their personalities too. For instance, I'm sure with Ileana [Cotrubas, who plays Mimi and with whom Ponnelle has worked previously on *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Vienna last year and on the ecstatically received production of *Die Zauberflöte* at the Salzburg festival this summer] I will do things differently than I did with [Hélène] Döse [in Strasbourg]."

Whoever the artists, Ponnelle believes in total credibility of stage action. For this reason he would refuse to direct *La Bohème* with performers who are not physically believable in their roles. "There are plenty of overweight prima donnas who play Mimi, but I don't believe in it. In *La Bohème* it's evident that Mimi ought to be a girl who looks 18 or 20 years old and tubercular. To have a 50-or-60-year-old singer who weighs ten tons is absurd. In the case of *Tosca*, it's not necessary that the artist be 20 years old.

It's quite plausible that an older *diva* of that period could become involved with a minor revolutionary painter—remember *Sunset Boulevard*—and that she could still be very sexy for an aging prefect of police. In that regard there's a difference between *Tosca* and *Bohème*.

"And *Tosca* is a melodrama," he continues. "It's very exciting, marvelously executed and extraordinarily effective, but it's nevertheless superficial because it is not founded on reality. In *Bohème* and *Butterfly* there's a sincerity, a ring of truth that you don't find in *Tosca*. For me Puccini is a very great musician—as great as Verdi. *Bohème*, *Schicchi*, *Butterfly* are masterpieces."

Ponnelle didn't always feel this strongly about Puccini, and especially not about *Butterfly*. "Ten years ago," he confesses, "I said that I would never

stage it because I'd always found it unbearable in the theater. It was only in preparing it [for the film version shown in the United States over television in 1976] that I realized the quality of this masterpiece. My interpretation is not traditional, but I think it's correct. *Pinkerton* is a bastard and that little *Butterfly* is one of the greatest feminine characters in all of literature. For me she's like Joan of Arc. She becomes a heroine and is crushed just like you would crush an ant."

Speaking of *Butterfly* brings the director to a discussion of the filming of opera in general as opposed to its staging in the theater. Ponnelle, more than perhaps any other opera director working in the two media, has realized that they are very different and, consequently, must be approached very differently. "Not only does filming opera interest me very much," says Ponnelle, "but I find it essential. First of all, it permits millions of people who would never go to the opera house to see and hear opera, either in the movie theater or on television. Secondly, the technique of the movie camera meshes with and complements musical technique. I see and think of cinematographic technique, be it the camera's traveling, or film editing, or whatever, in musical terminology. There are dynamics, harmonies and rhythms characteristic of film which are complementary to the musical score.

"Also, there are thousands of possibilities available on film which we don't have in the theater. My staging of *The Marriage of Figaro* is completely different from the one I did in the theater. I'm doing a cycle of Monteverdi operas on film which are also quite different from the stage productions. If I were to do *Bohème* on film, for example, I'd have to do things differently, or find equivalents which would be plausible in front of the motion picture camera. Any stylization in as realistic a work as *Bohème* wouldn't work. The basic concept, however, would remain the same."

The idea of reaching as large an audience as possible for opera leads to the subject of opera in translation. Although a work like *Bohème* is immediately accessible dramatically and musically to non-Italian-speaking audiences, there is a great deal of sparkling verbal comedy in the scenes with the Bohemian quartet which is lost on an audience which cannot understand Italian or which is not intimately acquainted with the libretto. Does Ponnelle think that opera, especially comic opera, should be presented in translation?

"The problem is extremely complex. On the one hand, I am in favor of works in the original language because they have been conceived as a linguistico-musical entity which is inevitably lost in large part as soon as you begin translating. On the other hand, there is perhaps a certain intellectual pretension involved in asking people who have not learned Italian in school or during their travels to be acquainted with Italian works in Italian.

"I would present in translation works which were conceived by the author to be popular, that is, accessible to everyone—for example, *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and *The Magic Flute*, where Mozart used the *deutsche Singspiel* in contrast to the prevailing theatrical tradition of the period which was for opera in Italian, because he wanted the corner Viennese butcher to understand. But the works conceived in Italian, such as *Le Nozze di Figaro*, I feel should be done in Italian. I'm not familiar with a single good translation of a Mozart/Da Ponte opera. The French translations are ludicrous and the German ones are badly done. Perhaps there's one in English, but I doubt it because of all the underlying humor in Da Ponte's text, which is full of allusions and knowing winks. It's all so Latin and there's a continual eroticism in the text which is untranslatable. The famous case is *Barbarina's 'L'ho perduta,*" to which Figaro and Marcellina ask, "Cosa? cosa?" Every Latin understands, 'I've lost my virginity,' although they don't say so.

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If you say it in German, "Ich habe es verloren. Was? was? . . .

"And there are other works," he adds, "such as *Boris* and *Carmen*, for which, in my opinion, there is no translation solution. To give *Carmen* in Japanese is idiotic. There's a relation between text and music which is very intellectual on Bizet's part. It's not as naturalistic a piece as you think. I've analyzed the text very carefully and there's a dialectic between the text and the music which is absolutely unbelievable. If you don't understand a word of the French, you're losing at least 50% of the work. And *Pelléas*. It's an untranslatable piece and would probably be unbearable in any translation. It's better to leave it in a hazy fog for those who can't understand the French.

"That probably holds true for the *Ring* as well. I have a great admiration for Wagner the writer. Unless you can find a genius equal to Wagner—and most translators are mediocre, by that I mean they are craftsmen who do translations, even if they're very gifted—the results are quite laughable.

"Then there's another consideration. Thanks to the airplane, radio, television and recordings, there has been an increasing diffusion of opera resulting in an enormous increase in its popularity. Thanks also to the jet plane, there is a professional corps of so-called "international" singers who will never sing an opera in translation. It's unthinkable to ask Domingo to sing *Tosca* in English in London, or to ask Mirella Freni to sing *Mimi* in Swedish in Stockholm. The result is that first-class international opera houses, were they to perform operas in translation, wouldn't have casts of the quality they would wish. You know, that's one of the reasons I'm not doing *Don Carlos* at the Metropolitan. Originally, Jimmy [Levine] and I wanted to do it in French. But it's inevitable that a repertory theater has no recourse should Carreras or Domingo, I forgot who was going to sing the role, fall sick.

Then you'd get a performance given in the original with one role in another language. Once in Munich I saw a *Tosca* where in the second act, in answer to Scarpia's question, 'Che dice il cavaliere?' the Sciarone answered, 'Gar nichts.' "

During the last ten years, from the time when he began assuming dual responsibility as both designer and director, Ponnelle has had to abandon work in the legitimate theater, where he began his professional career. "I did over 100 theatrical productions, but not recently. It's due to the fact that legitimate theaters plan their schedules too late, whereas in opera they're set two, three, four years in advance. So I'm never free when they ask me. But I'm going to get back to it—in Zurich in 1980 and maybe in Vienna."

Are there any operas he hasn't yet staged that he's anxious to have a crack at? *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, which is a great masterpiece. I haven't done *Fidelio*, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Elektra*, *Wozzeck*, *Lulu*. . . ."

As he works his way from the standard repertoire to the more contemporary works, mention is made of his recent staging of Aribert Riemann's *Lear* in its world premiere this spring in Munich. According to Ponnelle, there is no essential difference in approaching a new work as opposed to a repertoire piece. "The only real difference is that it demands more preparatory work for the simple reason that there are no recordings, documents, etc. Therefore, it requires a much more thorough examination of the score. In addition, with modern music it's no use working on the piano; you have to work on the orchestral score. Working on *Lear* was fascinating, and to everyone's great surprise—except mine—it was an enormous critical and public success. There wasn't even a single boo. It was sold out in Munich and people were fighting for seats. That proves that, in spite of everything, there are contemporary composers who have something to say."



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Charles Kullman
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Kullman as Tamino, with the feathered John Brownlee as Papageno in *The Magic Flute*.

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was there, the Staatsoper, the City Opera, also asked me to sing, but the Staatsoper management wouldn't permit me," he recalls. "The man I dealt with at the City was Rudolph Bing. When he came to the Metropolitan Opera in 1950 and saw me, he said, 'I remember you—you wouldn't sing for us in Berlin.' I don't know whether he held it against me—but I'm not sure he didn't."

The attention he garnered in Germany brought an invitation to Vienna, to be "first lyric tenor" at the Staatsoper, where Bruno Walter asked Kullman to learn a new role for a special concert, singing with the Vienna Philharmonic and mezzo Kerstin Thorborg. The event was to be a landmark: the first recording, a "live" one of *Das Lied von der Erde*, Mahler's symphony for tenor and contralto written in 1908. Also in Vienna, Kullman had sung the Verdi *Requiem* under Toscanini, at a special memorial performance for the slain Austrian Chancellor Doll-

fuss. (Kullman repeats one of those apocryphal Toscanini stories: in the course of rehearsals for the *Requiem*, the conductor told one of the singers who did not speak Italian well, "If your voice was as large as your behind, you'd be great," and it was taken as a compliment.)

The concert eventually led to an invitation to sing Walther von Stolzing in *Die Meistersinger* with Toscanini in Salzburg during the summer of 1936—for which Kullman was given 16 days to learn the uncut part in the five-hour opera! According to George Marek's biography of Toscanini, when the Maestro was asked why he chose Kullman to sing Walther, Toscanini replied, "Because he hasn't got a paunch." But there was more to it than that—the conductor had obviously been impressed by the tenor's professionalism.

"Many people were scared to death of Toscanini, but I always knew my music—and if you did, it was easy to get



Tosca at the San Francisco Opera in 1941, with Charles Kullman discussing Cavaradossi's last act letter with stage director Armando Agnini.



The "unwanted" role of Kullman's San Francisco debut was Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*.

along with him," Kullman avers. "In Salzburg, I had the nerve to show up without my score—and suddenly Erich Leinsdorf told me the 'Meister' wanted to hear me sing the part. So I sang it by heart. I made only one mistake—but luckily Leinsdorf was playing too loud at the time and Toscanini didn't hear it. Everybody was standing around waiting to hear what he would say when I was finished—how could anybody learn that opera in just sixteen days?—when I was through, Toscanini

came over to me, patted my shoulder and said, 'Bravo.' That was all. Many people didn't think I should have been singing that role, because I had a lyric voice—but that didn't have any effect on the Maestro. I sang with Lotte Lehmann as Eva and we had a great success."

Kullman was not only a quick study—he also had stamina that other singers envied. A doctor once told him that

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| | Monday | Tuesday | |
|-----------|---------|--|-------------------------------------|
| September | | | |
| | | 11 Norma 8 pm A,B | 12 |
| | | 18 Billy Budd 8 pm A,B | 19 |
| | | 25 Otello 8 pm C | 26 |
| | October | | 2 Lohengrin 7:30 pm A,C |
| | | 9 San Francisco Opera FAIR Sunday, October 8, 1978 Noon to 8 pm War Memorial Opera House | 10 Don Giovanni 8 pm A,B |
| | | 16 Tosca 8 pm A,C | 17 |
| | | 23 Tosca 8 pm B | 24 |
| November | | | 30 Werther 8 pm A,C |
| | | 6 Der Rosenkavalier 7:30 pm D,E | 7 La Bohème 8 pm A,C |
| | | 13 La Bohème 7:30 pm E | 14 Der Rosenkavalier 8 pm A,B |
| | | 20 Fidelio 8 pm A,C | 21 |
| | | | |

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Opera Calendar

| Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| | | Opening Night Otello, 7 pm A | Norma 8 pm J,K | Park Concert 2 pm |
| | | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Otello 7:30 pm D,E | | Norma 8 pm G,H | Billy Budd 8 pm J,L | Otello 2 pm M,N |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| Norma 7:30 pm D,F | | Otello 8 pm J,L | Billy Budd 8 pm G,I | Norma 2 pm M,O |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| | Billy Budd 7:30 pm D,F | Lohengrin 7:30 pm J,K | Norma 1:30 pm X Otello 8 pm G,H | Billy Budd 2 pm M,O |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 1 |
| Don Giovanni 7:30 pm D,E | | Lohengrin 7:30 pm G,I | Don Giovanni 8 pm J,L | Opera Fair Noon to 8 pm |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Lohengrin 7:30 pm D,F | | Don Giovanni 8 pm G,I | Lohengrin 1 pm X Tosca 8 pm J,L | Don Giovanni 2 pm M,N |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| Werther 7:30 pm D,E | | Tosca 8 pm G,I | Don Giovanni 1:30 pm X Werther 8 pm J,K | Lohengrin 1:30 pm M,N |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| Tosca 7:30 pm D,F | | Der Rosenkavalier 8 pm G,H | Werther 8 pm L | Tosca 2 pm M,O |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| La Bohème 7:30 pm D,F | | Werther 8 pm G,I | La Bohème 1:30 pm X Der Rosenkavalier 8 pm J,K | Werther 2 pm M,N |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | La Bohème 8 pm G,H | Fidelio 8 pm J,L | Der Rosenkavalier 2 pm M,O |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Fidelio 7:30 pm D,F | | Der Rosenkavalier 8 pm I | Fidelio 2 pm M,O La Bohème 8 pm J,K | The Anniversary Gala, 7 pm |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| Tosca 7:30 pm E | La Bohème** 8 pm | Fidelio 8 pm G,H | La Bohème*** 1:30 pm Tosca, 8 pm K | La Bohème 2 pm M,N |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |

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Charles Kullman
continued from p. 97

he had very strong vocal cords—and he often put them to the test, adding emergency performances to his busy schedule on a moment's notice. Once, he was having dinner in Rio de Janeiro with baritone Leonard Warren, having sung *La Bohème* the night before and having spent the day on the golf course. A messenger was sent from the opera to look for him: would he fill in as Cavaradossi in *Tosca*—they were holding the curtain and if he didn't come, the performance would have to be cancelled. He went. Kullman didn't even complain when, by error, the Metropolitan scheduled him for four performances—*Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Traviata* and *Shuisky* in *Boris Godunov*—in five days!

During the spring of his Vienna debut, Kullman went to London with the Austrian conductor Clemens Krauss to sing the English premiere of a Czech opera, *Schwanda the Bagpiper* by Jaromir Weinberger. He appeared at Covent Garden again the following season, when Edward Johnson, newly appointed General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera, asked him for a meeting at his hotel on the morning after a performance. "Would you like to come to the Metropolitan?" he asked. "We can only pay you \$300 a week." I told him that I didn't care if they paid me \$10 a week. That was in June, 1935, and I made my debut in the fall with Ezio Pinza, in *Faust*."

His engagement at the Met was the beginning of his successful career in the United States (and the curtailment of his years in Europe), and led to that infamous—for Kullman, at least—debut here in *Barbieri*, arranged through his agent. He had sung the opera before—"Johnson at the Met told me to 'sing it like Cavaradossi,' which is impossible. In order to do the role, I had to work on lightening up my voice, though I always did have a good *mezza voce*," he says, tossing off a bit of

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Kullman's many trips to San Francisco were made particularly pleasant—besides the appreciative audiences and good reviews—by the presence of Kurt Herbert Adler. They had first met in Salzburg, when Maestro Adler was working with Toscanini. "I always enjoyed coming to San Francisco to sit and talk with him," says Kullman. "He was a great favorite of mine."

With the start of World War II, Kullman transferred all his opera activity to this country's major houses and to a considerable concert schedule. Much of his singing was with Bidù Sayão, not only in works from *La Bohème* (Rodolfo, Mimi) to *Don Giovanni* (Don Ottavio, Zerlina) to *La Traviata* (Alfredo, Violetta), but also as concert partners, since they shared the same management. "We wouldn't just stand there during duets—we'd indicate lines to each other, and I must say that we interacted very well." He singles out Madame Sayão from among his many co-stars as just about the best singing actress he worked with on a regular basis but, being a gentleman, he refuses to pick favorites from among the many divas he worked with, including Madames Albanese, Lehmann, Milanov, Pons and Ponselle.

Though he's loath to offend any of his one-time partners, there's no hesitation when it comes to naming his favorite composer: Puccini. "He wrote so naturally for the voice that you didn't have to be a great actor," says the singer, whose superior acting was one of his trademarks. "He was a master at that—you just have to follow the line of the music and it comes across. Actually, I always thought I was a lousy actor—but everyone else seemed to think differently. (I always read my reviews to see what they had to say about me—people who say that they

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don't look at notices lie like hell!) In fact, back in the '50s when I was doing *Joan of Arc* in San Francisco, one of the actors in the non-singing roles, a guy from Hollywood, said to me, 'For a singer, you're not a bad actor.' That was Lee Marvin." As a matter of fact, Kullman's acting, combined with his voice and looks, did take him to Hollywood, where he appeared in *Scheherazade* with Yvonne de Carlo and Brian Donlevy. But his film career ended there.

In the mid-1950s, Kullman began tapering off his opera appearances, although he continued singing until 1962. He started to teach voice and acting at Indiana University—not, he admits, one of his happiest experiences. "Every teacher was always trying to steal the best students away from the others. I also had a problem because I had such a naturally high voice." The tenor explains, "When you have such a natural asset—something that you didn't have to work at to achieve—it takes away from your ability to explain to others what they have to do to make their voices higher. That's important," he adds, with a smile, "because, as you know, if you're a tenor, high notes help!"

There may have been one or two roles that eluded Kullman during his many years on the opera circuit (Lohengrin was one of a few he regretted not singing), but on the whole, his was a career that was particularly full and varied, in roles that spanned the considerable distance from Mozart to Richard Strauss (as Herod in *Salome*, he was called "hair-raising"). Certainly, he had no regrets about passing up the scalpel for rehearsal clothes. "I don't think I was built to be a doctor—although maybe I would have been a good one," he says. "But I was built to be a singer. Getting out in front of an audience and delivering a message—that was something wonderful to me."

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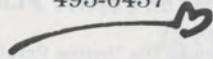
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