

Norma

1978

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Wednesday, September 20, 1978 7:30 PM

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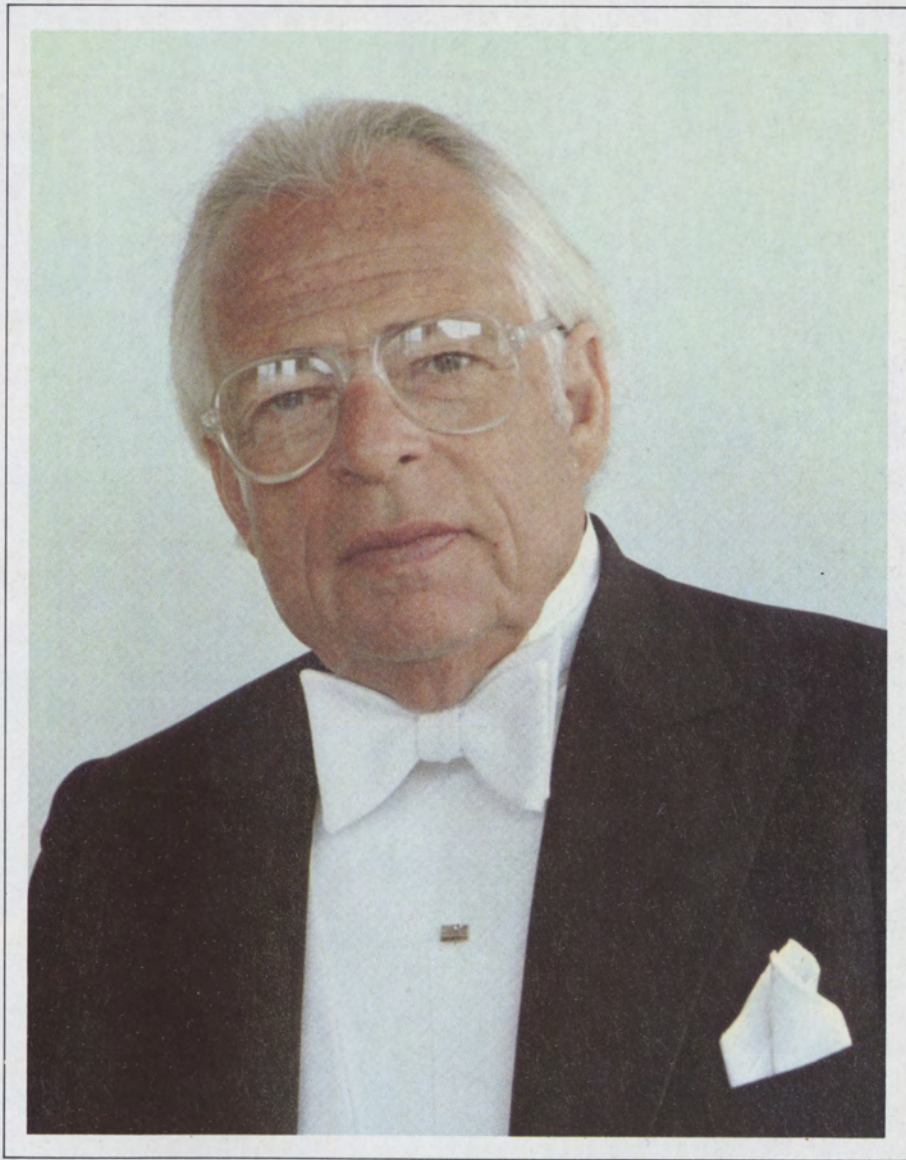
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San Francisco Opera Magazine

Herbert Scholder, Editor

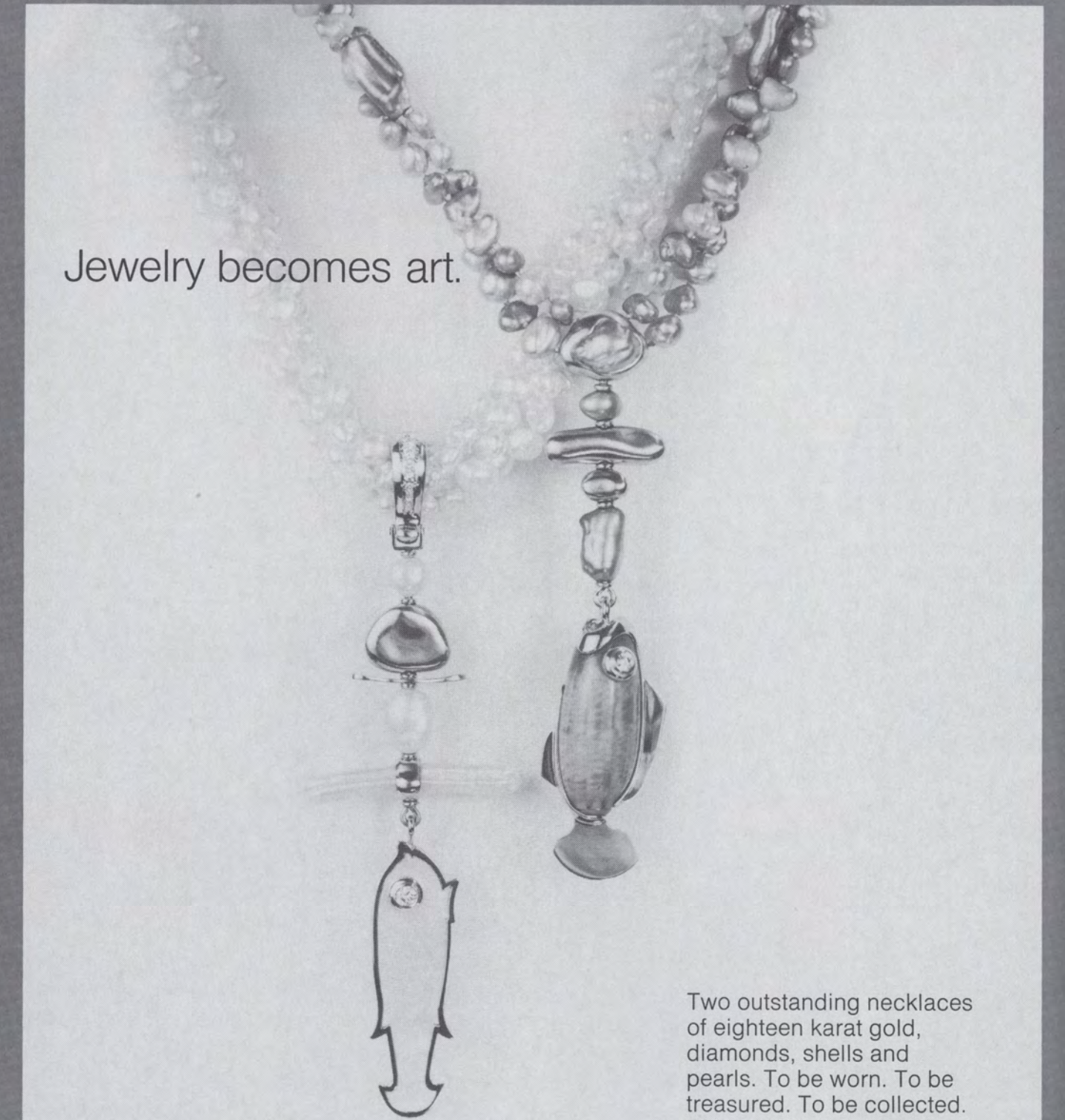
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Photographers: Caroline Crawford, Robert Messick, Ira Nowinski, David Powers, Ron Scherl

Cover: *Dru* in ancient Greek meant "the oak," and this mighty tree became the focal point of Druid belief. The Druids worshiped in oak groves and Romani subtitled his libretto for *Norma*, *La Foresta d'Irminsul*—the grove of the "giant column." The cover painting is by William Keith (1838-1911) entitled *Hearts of Oak*. It is in the collection of the Oakland Museum, a gift of the Keith Art Association. Photo by Ron Scherl.

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The Druids in Gaul

*Little Is Known Today of the Celts Who Form
the Background for Norma*

by Barry Hyams

Little is known about the Druids who, even in their day, were clothed in mystery. The enigma is all the more intriguing because of the Celtic culture they created which pervades so much of western literature, nomenclature, folkways and tales for children. Henny-Penny who ran cackling to warn the king—"The sky is falling! The sky is falling!"—was probably a Leghorn chicken from the Cisalpines bearing Druidic tidings of the world's end. Vincenzo Bellini was drawn to Felice Romani's libretto possibly by the Celtic pastoral god, Belinus, whose name so much resembled his own. It may partly account for the celerity with which *Norma*—libretto, score and fully rehearsed—was delivered. Six months after the June 1831 premiere in Paris of its progenitor, the Louis-Alexandre Soumet tragedy, the opera opened at La Scala the day after Christmas. No doubt the Druids fascinated Romani because in antiquity his city of Milan took its name from the Celt *Mediolanum*. The name of Rome's earliest poet, Virgil, could be traced to *ver* and *gil*, Celtic for "very bright." Geraint and Dylan, familiar to devotees of opera and poetry, were originally Celtic names. And Cremona, better known as the city of violin-makers, is derived from the Celt word, *creamh*, the typically Italian spice, garlic.

Almost twenty-five years before *Norma*, the same Gallic era of antiquity had attracted Etienne de Jouy who supplied a libretto to Spontini for his opera, *La Vestale*. It told of a general, fresh from campaigning against the Celts, who returned to Rome to find his beloved had become a vestal virgin. Instead



An etching of an old Druid king. The etching was made in February of 1803 by an unknown English artist.



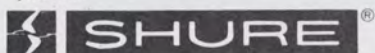
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The remains of a possible Druid place of worship at Draguignan in southern France. It is now known as La Pierre de la Fée, the Fairy's Stone.

of burying his heroine alive, Jouy managed a happy ending for his priestess. Soumet/Romani set the action of their passionate *Norma* in her homeland with the Druids, also at the period just prior to Caesar's final victory in Gaul. They added a touch of *Medea* and came up with a genuinely tragic drama. If authenticity was cast to the wind, the fault was not in their license. The Druids, after all, were a secret lot.

Dru, in ancient Greek, meant "the oak"; and *vid* was Aryan for "wisdom." The Druids had held power in the Celt order of things since their prehistoric beginnings. Their supremacy continued throughout the height of Celt dominance when they ranged from Galatia in Asia Minor to the Atlantic, and into their decline which began around 100 BC. By then, separated into at least forty-four tribes, the Celts had assimilated the racial strains of Central Europe's Goths, Teutons, Etruscans, and the West's Britons, French and the Spanish of the Pyrenees from whom the Basques are descended. Their men were of great stature and strength, fair complexioned, red hair, formidable in aspect. The women were attractive, help-meets at home and in the fields. When Caesar invaded Gaul, he found

their number greatly reduced, and did much to reduce them further. What remained of their martial glory was their love of liberty and their readiness to defend their land.

As the religious caste of the Celts, the Druids wielded total authority over the ritual and secular lives of their people. No record remains of their doctrine or lore. Learned by each generation of priests over a training term of twenty years, all of it was transmitted orally, never preserved in books nor inscribed on stone. Fragmentary information about the Druids was gathered either from contemporaries during the declining years of the Celts, or was based on legends written two thousand years after the original events, by which time the keeping of the flame had passed mainly to Ireland where fancy is often regarded as fact.

Druidic numina—spirits within nature—dwelt in lakes, rivers, the sea, all animals, particularly the boar, bull, hare, stag, cow—and the snake. When St. Patrick made Tara his headquarters and in the 5th century drove the spirit gods and goddesses into the mountains and forests, legend has it that he rid Ireland of snakes.

continued on p. 87

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Some Thoughts on Bel Canto and Bellini's Norma

Taken to Its Essence, It Is the Ability to Use the Voice to Its Fullest Potential

by Robert Jacobson



Photo by Ira Nowinski.

Bel canto. It exists as one of those terms that comes down to us in so vague a manner, encumbered with such generalizations, that it goes on and on, literally unquestioned. Translated, it means merely “beautiful singing.” But the expression itself is used to define a whole place in time—more specifically, the early 19th century in which Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti were creating a brief but magnificent epoch on the opera stage. Examined more closely, bel canto really flourished in the 18th century,

Preparing for their San Francisco Opera debut (right) as Adalgisa and American debut as Pollione are mezzo-soprano Alexandrina Milcheva and tenor Nunzio Todisco.

Shirley Verrett (below) rehearses for her first San Francisco Opera *Normas*, accompanied by maestro Paolo Peloso at the piano.

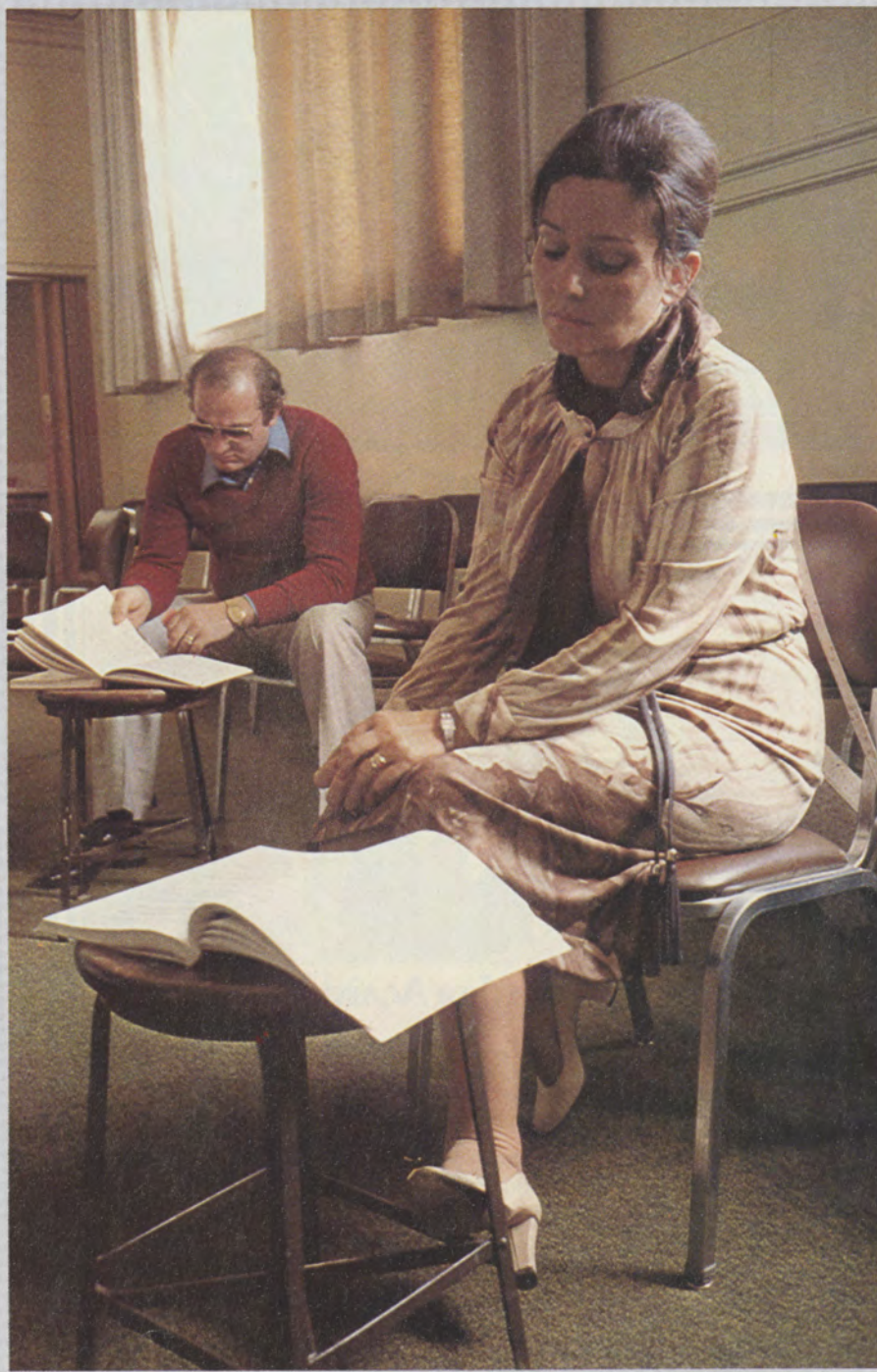


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when virtuosic singing was in the hands of the castrati (Italian ecclesiastical singers who became opera virtuos) and the few sopranos who brought the baroque era to its pinnacle, notably in the operas of Handel. The ebbing fashion for castrato singing left those relics of past glories to pass on their florid tradition to create another era, the 19th century and its celebration of the diva in the Pastas, Sontags, Grisis, Malibrans and the rest. Ask almost any singer of today or yesteryear about their training and they're bound to say it is in the bel canto tradition—generally because they have studied with some Italian teacher who claimed lineage back to the styles and practices of the last century. Invoking that term “bel canto” is enough to pass muster, and no one will ask more. Ah, “bel canto.” That seems to suffice.

But the term bel canto is something more. Taken to its essence, it really has more to do with accomplished singing or complete singing, the ability to use the voice to its fullest potential, much as a violinist or pianist learns to do everything within his capacity to become a virtuoso at his instrument. Beautiful in itself is quickly boring. Accomplished includes making beautiful sounds together with everything else. We don't know what the Pastas or Grisis sounded like and can rely only on reports of the time. Critics were astonished by some of these singers, mainly because they were making dramatic effects with their voices that had been heretofore unheard. Roles like Norma, Anna Bolena, Maria Stuarda, Beatrice di Tenda, Elvira, Semiramide, and the rest called for singers who not only could sing like true virtuos but who could give words and phrases new-found dramatic expression and truth as well.

What Vincenzo Bellini, for example, expected in the execution of his lyric but dramatic writing is evident in the

way he created his operas: "I carefully study the characters of the personages, their dominating passions, and their feelings. Then, invaded by the feelings of each one of them, I imagine that I myself have become whichever of them is speaking. And then, shut up in my room, I begin to declaim the lines of that personage in the drama with all the heat of passion, and while I am doing that I observe the inflections of my own voice, the haste or languor of the pronunciation in each circumstance, in short, the accent and tone of expression that nature gives man in the grip of his passions. And I find the musical motives and tempi adapted to demonstrating it." The singer then had to bring to his music the dramatic inflection and beauty of expression to etch out his melodies.

Looking at another art form, that of sculpture, might serve as a good metaphor as to what a bel canto singer needs. A great singer sculpts not marble or wood, but musical phrases. To do this, he or she must have total mastery, and the following is a check list of sorts for the battery a singer should have within his power:

Legato, or the ability to pass from note to note without breaking the line, creating one long arching line by binding together each element in it. This demands enormous breath control and concentration. Bellini, especially, remains the master of sustained legato singing, of creating smooth, endless *cantilena* filled with myriad expression.

Articulation in scales, both ascending and descending, without smearing. The comparison has been used before, but notes in a bel canto scale are like a set of matching pearls, each shining and individual but yet closely mated to its neighbor above and below. The same holds true for arpeggios, the tones in a chord spread out to be heard.

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Giulia Grisi sang Adalgisa in the premiere of *Norma*, then later assumed the title role in which she is shown here.

Fioriture, translated meaning a vocal "flowering." One can consider the straight, unadorned vocal line as the stem, but the additional fioriture as the flowering on it. This is at the essence of bel canto, and its use depends on the style of the music and the taste of the singer to suit his own voice and the music. Ornamentation is used for emotional effect as much as for vocal display itself. The singer must be able

to trill, to alternate two tones quickly—the note itself and one adjacent above and below—most often to give expression to a certain word. Trills can express many things, from great joy to elegiac sorrow. There is also the turn (a gruppetto, using the note itself, the one above and one below), the mordent (using upper and lower tones), acciaccatura (a timeless accent note) and appoggiatura, this last using

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the leaning note, again to give expression, to darken or emphasize, to affect the extremes of sighing or strength.

Dynamics, since the singer must have control over the full range from *fortissimo* to *pianissimo*. Loud, forceful singing per se has its role in the general scale of dynamics, but the scaled-down voice has equal, perhaps even reigning importance. *Messa di voce* is that firm control over the instrument to bring it down, often used to express intimate thoughts as in an aside or soliloquy; at the same time, the singer must be able to crescendo or diminuendo on a tone. Staccato attacks too are essential at every dynamic level and in tune.

Range, since the greatest of bel canto singers encompass two and a half to

three octaves, a soprano traveling to the E over high C.

Vocal color, which is not a matter of beautiful singing in itself. The artist must be able to call on the full palette of sound, from the most ethereal to the most dramatically expressive. This can even mean an ugly sound if it plays a role in forging the character. Phrasing, for as a musician the singer has to find the peak of the vocal line and then build to that point, arriving at it through analyzing and studying. This has to do with the sculptural element in molding a phrase.

Words, for which the singer must have a scrupulous care in both recitative and aria. Bellini is the supreme master of knitting these two forms to-

continued on p. 39

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(When "Norma" was first performed by the San Francisco Opera, on November 13, 1937, Gaetano Merola was in the pit, as he was for many of the operas performed for the first time by the Company. For Merola not only founded the San Francisco Opera, he regularly conducted many performances from the Italian repertoire. Now, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Merola's passing, former San Francisco Examiner music critic Alexander Fried joins general director Kurt Herbert Adler in fond reminiscence of a man they both knew well.)

Remembering Gaetano Merola

*Twenty-five Years after His Passing,
Kurt Herbert Adler and Alexander Fried
Admiringly Recall the Man Who Founded
the San Francisco Opera*

by Alexander Fried

Two anniversaries in one are garnering honors for Kurt Herbert Adler, top man of the San Francisco Opera Company. He is now in his 50th year as a professional musician, counting back to a precocious youth in Vienna, and he is in his 25th year as the Company's Artistic and General Director, to say nothing of his 35th San Francisco season as a major opera staff member.

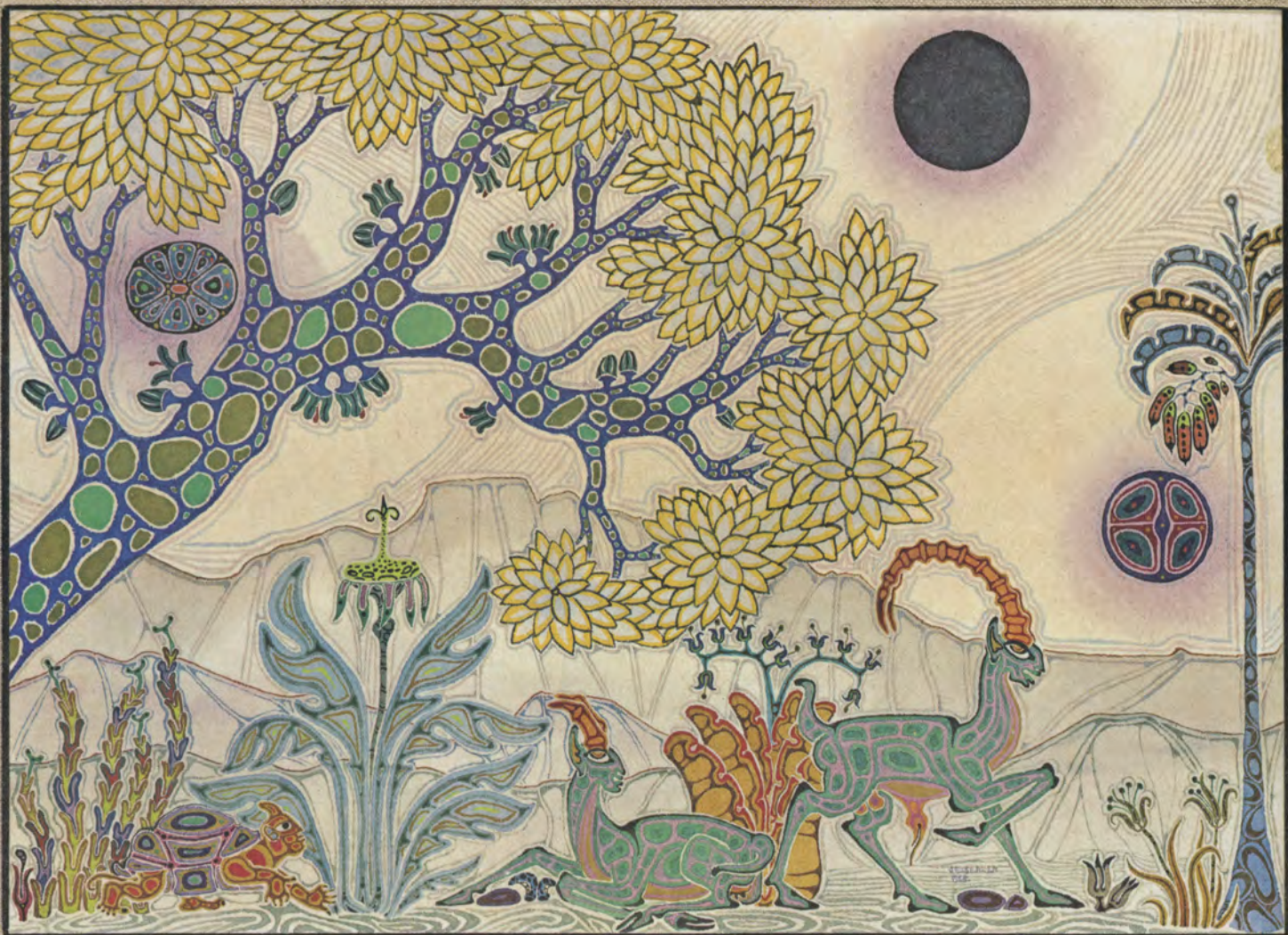


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With all this, anyone who talks opera with Adler is bound to be struck by his ever-youthful energy, force of will and resourcefulness. Opera leadership is a tough game, a complex pattern of success and pestily unpredictable frustrations, in which Adler may lose his temper but evidently never loses heart or the expertise to fight back against trouble.

Interviewing Adler the other day in his office about his current 50 and 25 year Golden and Silver Jubilees, I found him intermittently harking back to memories of his director-predecessor, the late Gaetano Merola. He does so out of sheer zest of life and personally because of his long-lasting affection and admiration of the older man.

Fate made the two directors in many ways immensely different from each other—the one Neapolitan-Italian, the other Viennese-American. But their two careers indicate numerous similarities, or even a kind of Force of Destiny, individually and in the life of the San Francisco Opera itself.

So it comes naturally that Adler wishes the Jubilees to do more than compliment him. He wants them also to be a commemoration and appreciation of Maestro Merola.

Surely there is some symbolism in the fact Merola had an uncommon, magnificent speaking voice which magnetically would make everyone within earshot prick up his ears when the Maestro was about to enter a room full of people, and Adler to this day delights in imitating that voice to tell an anecdote or emphasize an operatic point.

Adler's good-natured mimicry of the Merola sound is really marvelous in its Italianate accent, expressive flavor and its scathing semi-snarl for ironic effect. Over the years such sound during a rehearsal would call up from the conductor's stand to backstage—

"HEHya, OD-lairre!"

Or to fumbling doublebass players, "LEEsen. I am not an a-TOEnal conductor. I want da bass to be clear and correct, wit'da MAYlodee in it."

The magnetic Merola voice and the astute Adler imitation of it—Do they not create a San Francisco Opera symbol of two persons in one, from one operatic generation to the next?

As to the course of destiny in Merola's own career, he first came to San Francisco in 1906, when he was 27, to accompany a singer in a concert. He returned in 1909 and occasionally thereafter as conductor of four opera companies.

His growing preoccupation with San Francisco and environs took on a broader meaning when in 1922 social leaders, the Italian colony and other music enthusiasts rallied to him as conductor-director of a series of three favorite operas in the huge Stanford Stadium, including big-name stars like tenor Martinelli, soprano Bianca Saroya and French basso Rothier, and audiences in the range of 17,000, for "Pagliacci," "Faust" and "Carmen," under an August full moon. Prices were \$5 to \$1 per seat.

Despite a jarring deficit, San Francisco's love match with opera prevailed. A year after the Stanford venture, a brand new San Francisco Opera Company, marshalled by Merola and friends, was born in the oversized Civic Auditorium, rudimentarily refurbished even with a highly social rank of pseudo-boxes. Come depression or war, the company has never missed an annual season since that debut 56 years ago.

The first time I met Merola, in New York two years later, he was telling people a superb new, real Opera House would soon be built on Van Ness Ave. It opened its doors seven years later, which was by no means a slow-motion process compared to

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Armando Agnini and Merola meet arriving soprano Claudia Muzio at the train station for a San Francisco Opera season.



Maestro Merola conducts a chorus rehearsal backstage in 1932, with Arturo Casiglia at the harmonium.

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Photography and Make-up by Carolyn Cavallero

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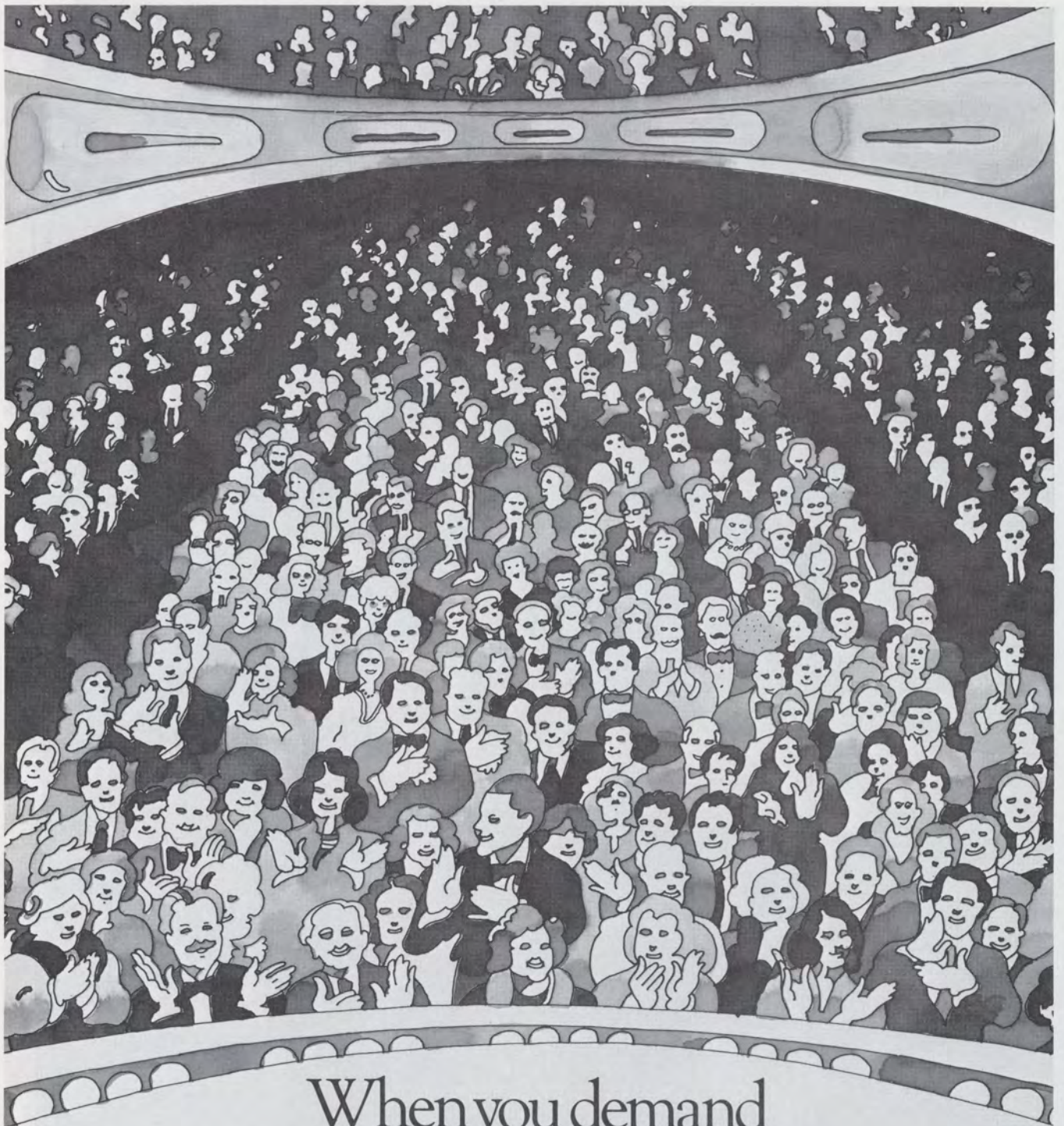
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Gaetano Merola died in August of 1953 after finishing accompanying soprano Brunetta Maz-zolini in "Un bel di" from *Madama Butterfly*. This photograph was taken that afternoon in San Francisco's Stern Grove.



With Lon Chaney on the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer set of *West of Zanzibar* when the San Francisco Opera performed in Los Angeles. From left, Valentin Mandelstam, Armando Agnini, visiting Paris Opera Comique director George Ricou, Chaney, Madame Ricou, Merola and French consul Henri Didot.

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Maestro Merola coaches a young singer in the late 1930's.



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the dragging fate of other grand structures or Yerba Buena in our city's scatter-brained later history.

Destiny, San Francisco-bound, worked for Adler, too.

Coming to this country in 1938, he coached singers and was made chorus master of the Chicago Opera—producing what Adler to this day calls “one of the best opera choruses anywhere.”

In 1942 the Chicago Opera borrowed a San Francisco Opera production of Donizetti's “Daughter of the Regiment,” starring Lily Pons. Colleagues of Merola joining into Destiny, told Merola about Adler's work, whereupon Adler received a telegram from Merola offering him a San Francisco contract.

I asked Adler very recently, what was the offer like. “Conditions and pay unacceptable,” Adler answered to me with a laugh. “I was so dumb I even forgot to ask for travel expenses.” But what quickly made him accept the offer was a definite report Chicago might never have a 1943 season. In fact it closed down for three years.

However, the San Francisco engagement immediately became rocky. “I had a first rehearsal and it was horrible,” recalls Adler. “Some of the singers were good, but too many were amateurish and even couldn't read a note or follow a beat.”

After being out of town, Merola came back and his new chorus master greeted him with, “Maestro, I'm afraid I have to leave you.” Merola's resolute response to Adler was, “Take the chorus. Do anything with it you want to do.”

Thus began a 10-year period, in the middle of which Adler was named assistant to the General Director, too, and the chorus rose to a new, higher level of professionalism.

"Merola was always fair," says Adler to this day. "He was a charmer. Also he was a great improviser," and for my part, it was apparent to me that a certain ease of temperament and too much experience with tight budgets and hurried rehearsals made him something less than a perfectionist, except now and then.

As for his charm, you could see it quietly if you watched him talking to someone, preferably a woman, with a blend of slight smile and even slighter irony on his face. He was sophisticated when he wanted to be but earthier when in Italian he switched to Neapolitan dialect. I never saw him with his fingers on someone's lapel urgently "selling himself" to anybody.

By nature it came easily to be spoiled. I remember sitting across a desk from him while a very nice woman, a warm friend of the opera, held him at his phone while she talked and talked and talked. At last she hung up and Merola in relief said to me objectively, "In the hands of an idle woman, the telephone is a ter-r-rible instrument!"

In the long past, Adler recently recalled to me how Merola had once caught him by surprise by offering him a *Bohème* to conduct and the abashed Adler said to the Maestro, "I can't do that right after you just did such a beautiful *Bohème* yourself!"

By coincidence I remember a similar estimate of Merola from a friend of mine, Albert Elkus, a distinguished musician and UC Music Department chairman: "Musicians of the orchestra like to find fault with Merola. But have you noticed that when he is in the vein conducting a *Traviata* or such, it can turn out to be much more touching and beautiful than when other conductors do it?"



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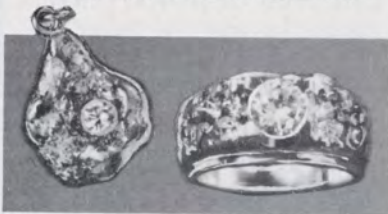


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Anniversary Gala



More than sixty singers who have made history at the San Francisco Opera will return to appear here in person at the Anniversary Gala on Sunday evening, November 19, on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House. The event is being presented to honor the gold and silver jubilees of general director Kurt Herbert Adler, with all proceeds going to the benefit of the San Francisco Opera Association and the San Francisco Opera Guild. Tickets in some sections of the theater are still available for the Gala and may be purchased now at the Opera Box Office, or by mail, with a major portion of the price tax-deductible.

Among those appearing will be two legendary artists who made their American debuts with the San Francisco Opera, mezzo-soprano Giulietta Simionato and bass Nicola Rossi-Lemeni. Both these artists have sung many roles here and, although not among the parts sung in San Francisco,

were famous for their Adalgisa and Orovoso in *Norma*.

Giulietta Simionato was born in Forlì, Italy, and raised in Sardinia. She made her first stage appearance while in her teens, in a musical comedy in Rovigo, on the 14th of May, 1927. She then returned to her studies and began singing professionally in the early thirties, making her debut at La Scala in 1936 as a flower maiden in *Parsifal*. For the next decade her talent was buried in small roles, but in 1947 she had a huge triumph at La Scala as Mignon and thus began her extraordinary international career.

Miss Simionato made her American debut in San Francisco in 1953 as Charlotte in *Werther*, and other roles she has sung here include Rosina, Azucena, Marina, Dame Quickly and Santuzza. She has also appeared frequently in this country at Chicago's Lyric Opera and made her debut at the Metropolitan in 1959. She has sung

at every leading opera house in the world, appearing at La Scala regularly until her retirement in 1966 after a performance of *La Clemenza di Tito* at the Piccola Scala. Among her especial successes at La Scala were the last performances ever conducted by Arturo Toscanini, Boito's *Nerone* during the 1947/48 season; the triumphant revival of *Anna Bolena* with Maria Callas, conducted by Gianandrea Gavazzeni, in 1956/57; the Meyerbeer *Gli Ugonotti* in 1961/62 in the soprano part of Valentina; followed by the contrasting Rossini contralto role of Arsace in *Semiramide!*

She now lives a very active retirement and, following her appearance as an honored guest here in November, will leave immediately for Barcelona where she is to serve as a judge for the XVI International Singing Contest.

Nicola Rossi-Lemeni made his American debut as Boris Godunov here in 1951 and his other San Francisco roles over the years were in *La Forza del Destino*, *La Bohème*, *Mefistofele*, *Don Giovanni*, *L'Amore dei Tre Re*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Louise*.

He was born in Istanbul of an Italian father and a Russian mother and made his stage debut in Venice in 1946 as Varlam in *Boris Godunov*. Since then Rossi-Lemeni has conquered all the important operatic stages in the world, singing the standard repertoire and such unusual operas as Pizzetti's *Assassinio nella Cattedrale* and *Fedra*, Rossellini's *A View from the Bridge* and *L'avventuriero*, Grunberg's *Emperor Jones*, Mascagni's *Il Piccolo Marat*, Gomez' *Guarany* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Ivan the Terrible*.

He is married to the famous soprano Virginia Zeani, who will accompany him to attend the Anniversary Gala in November.

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Thoughts on Bel Canto
continued from p. 20

Photo by Robert Messick.



Shirley Verrett marks her score of *Norma*.

gether so that his operas emerge as one continuous fabric. Word coloring, word stress and even subtextual considerations are at the heart of bel canto as it was originally intended.

Acting too plays a major role, and the people who created many of Bellini's or Donizetti's roles had reputations as mesmerizing actors and actresses, able to enhance their vocal gifts by shaping lines and words with effective use of their bodies, arms, hands and head.

So, bel canto, taken for what it really is, becomes the totality of singing. Since 1950 or so the opera world has been embroiled in reviving bel canto, due, no doubt, to the presence of Maria Callas and her meteoric ten years as its empress. (Still, it is to underestimate the singers of the 1930s and 40s—Pons, Pagliughi, Barrientos, Galli-

Curci, Arangi-Lombardi and others—to say that this music was completely dead until the emergence of Callas.) But why did bel canto return to the fore with such vehemence? One has to look at the whole development of opera in a way. Up to the early 19th century, the history of opera was actually the evolution of vocal ornamentation, which reached a kind of apotheosis in Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini. From then on, beginning with Verdi and Berlioz—and what was considered a more violent style of singing—there was a new concentration on dramatic expression, emotion and the orchestra. Those ways lead to Meyerbeer, Wagner, Puccini, Strauss and our own day. Voices, as a result, underwent change because there was increasing emphasis on size and power to ride the

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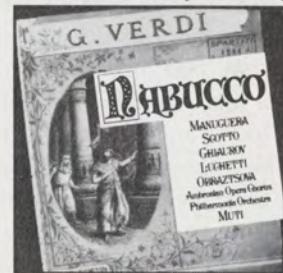
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bigger orchestras and give forceful dramatic utterance. These developments peaked in our own century, and perhaps then the time came to look back and discover a more purely vocal past.

Maria Callas' voice, plus the interest of Tullio Serafin, Vittorio Gui and other conductors, proved the spearhead. Callas particularly, because when we read about the sopranos of the last century we find that most of them built up their soprano registers from natural lower and middle voices, providing the wide-spanning range needed. Callas' dark mezzo sound which traveled up to an E in alt seemed to be the heaven-sent throwback to the romantic past.

Time was when there were no mezzo-sopranos, no sopranos, no lyrics, no

spintos, as we pigeonhole singers today. There were just female protagonists who sang and acted upon the stage. In the era of Bellini, Rossini and Donizetti certain singers who possessed natural contralto voices succeeded through iron-willed diligence in extending their range upward, in becoming sopranos as well by combining high tones and flexible ease with a fully developed lower register. This was the kind of voice which fascinated Bellini while he wrote such roles as Norma, Amina in *La Sonnambula*, Elvira in *I Puritani* and Beatrice di Tenda. Both Giuditta Pasta (the first Norma and Amina) and Maria Malibran had extensions from G below the staff to a D or even E in alt—and with this amazing vocal ability

continued on p. 79



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Its four-speed manual transmission (automatic is available) slips precisely into each gear.

And its acceleration comes up smoothly, with the turbine-like whine so characteristic of the justifiably renowned 3-liter BMW engine.

Luxurious? Yes. Yet all functions have been assiduously planned to facilitate total precise control at all times, under all conditions. Engineered to include the driver as one of the functioning parts of the car itself—the human part that completes the mechanical circuit.

SERVICE AS EFFICIENT AND RELIABLE AS THE CAR ITSELF.

An automobile as thoroughly engineered and meticulously con-

structed as the BMW 530i deserves competent, reliable servicing.

While it would certainly be inaccurate to claim perfection, it is nevertheless a fact that no more complete or innovative a technical training program exists in the automotive business than the one BMW mechanics are required to attend on a regular yearly basis.

And this human wisdom combined with the inhuman perfection of costly computerized equipment assures rapid routine servicing, accurate engine tuning and diagnosis of any impending problem.

If the thought of leasing a car you can actually enjoy driving intrigues you, we suggest you phone your BMW dealer. Not only can he arrange a thorough test drive at your convenience, he can make available a variety of convenient leasing plans as well.



THE ULTIMATE DRIVING MACHINE.
Bavarian Motor Works, Munich, Germany.

New National Smoker Study: Merit Taste Matches High Tar Competition!



High tar smokers report: low tar MERIT delivers flavor of leading high tar brands.

Can low tar MERIT with 'Enriched Flavor' tobacco measure up to the flavor delivery of high tar cigarettes?

Read the research results of a new national smoker study conducted with high tar smokers — smokers like yourself — who taste-tested MERIT against leading high tar brands.

Results Endorse MERIT Breakthrough

Confirmed: Majority of high tar smokers rate MERIT taste equal to—or better than—leading high tar cigarettes tested! *Cigarettes having up to twice the tar.*

Confirmed: Majority of high tar smokers confirm taste satisfaction of low tar MERIT.

Detailed interviews were also conducted with current MERIT smokers.

Confirmed: 85% of MERIT smokers say it was an "easy switch" from high tar brands.

Confirmed: Overwhelming majority of MERIT smokers say their former high tar brands weren't missed!

Confirmed: 9 out of 10 MERIT smokers not considering other brands.

First Major Alternative To High Tar Smoking

MERIT has proven conclusively that it not only delivers the flavor of high tar brands—but *continues* to satisfy!

This ability to satisfy over long periods of time could be the most important evidence to date that MERIT is what it claims to be: The first major alternative to high tar smoking.

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Kings: 8 mg 'tar,' 0.6 mg nicotine—
100's: 11 mg 'tar,' 0.7 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report May '78

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined
That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

MERIT

Kings & 100's



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.

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 August 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 Press Representative*

Victoria Kaufman

Jayne Kessler

Olivia Burton

The San Francisco Opera is a member of OPERA AMERICA and the
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The Company

<i>Conductors</i>	Kurt Herbert Adler, David Atherton*, Antonio de Almeida*, Hans Drewanz**, Janos Ferencsik, Giuseppe Patanè, Paolo Peloso, Calvin Simmons*, Silvio Varviso, Gunther Wich**
<i>Chorus Director</i>	Richard Bradshaw
<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*
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<i>Assistant to the Technical Director</i>	Larry Klein
<i>Costume Supervisor</i>	Janet Papanek
<i>Costume Shop</i>	Walter Mahoney
<i>Wardrobe Department</i>	Craig Hampton, Patricia Bibbins
<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
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<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>Master Electrician</i>	Jack Philpot
<i>Master of Properties</i>	David Watson

*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.

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
Siegmond Nimsgern
Luciano Pavarotti
Jerome Pruett*
Samuel Ramey*
David Rendall*
Marius Rintzler
Forbes Robinson*
David Rohrbaugh*
Guillermo Sarabia
Giuseppe Taddei
Nunzio Todisco**
Giorgio Tozzi
Spas Wenkoff*
Stephen West*†

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

Miss Dorothy A. Orrick
Mr. & Mrs. William Randolph
Oscarson
Mrs. Brooks Paige
Donald & Blandid Palatucci
Mr. & Mrs. Fred Pavlow
Thomas J. Perkins
Mr. & Mrs. W. Rollin Peschka
Mrs. Lester S. Peterson
Jefferson E. Peyser
Mr. & Mrs. David E. Pinkham
Michel Pisani
Mr. & Mrs. Harold Pischel
Paul & Helen Pocher
G. Ross Popkey
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. & 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
Mrs. Raymond Schubert
Mrs. Karl Schuster
Mrs. Mehmet A. Sherif
Mr. & Mrs. Roy L. Shurtleff
Mrs. Sidney Siegel
Dr. & Mrs. William J. Siegel
Dr. & Mrs. Charles Silver
Mr. & Mrs. John L. Simpson
Mr. & Mrs. Edgar Sinton
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Barry Stubbs
Benjamin A. Swig
Harrison Thomson
Dr. & Mrs. Charles W. Tidd
F. J. Thomas Tilton
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Z. Todd
Dr. Wilfred E. Toreson
Mr. & Mrs. Gardiner W.
Trowbridge, II
Mrs. Elna R. Tymes
Mrs. Paul H. Vincilion
Dr. & Mrs. Richard F. Wagner
Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Walker
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Walker
Dr. Anthony W. Ward, Jr.
Phillip & Gerry Warner
Ann Waterman
Dr. & Mrs. Malcolm S. M. Watts
Mr. & Mrs. Norman V. Wechsler
Mrs. Palmer Wheaton
Mr. & Mrs. Edward Wells
Neil Whiting
Leonard-John Wilkinson
Bruce E. Wilson
Dr. Peter Windhorst
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

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Chorus

Janice Aaland
Deborah Alexander
Elisabeth Anderson
Kathy Anderson
Candida Arias
Doris Baltzo
Norma Bruzzone
Louise Corsale
Constantina Economou
Beverly 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
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.

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†

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†

CELLO

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

Marianne Meredith†

BASS

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

Michelle Millard†

FLUTE

Walter Subke *Principal*
Lloyd Gowen
Gary Gray

Paul Renzit†
playing principal parts

Barbara Breedent†

PICCOLO

Lloyd Gowen
Gary Gray

OBOE

James Matheson *Principal*
Raymond Duste
Deborah Henry

ENGLISH HORN

Raymond Duste

CLARINET

Philip Fath *Principal*
Donald Carroll
David Breeden

BASS CLARINET

Donald Carroll

BASSOON

Walter Green *Principal*
Jerry Dagg

Robin Elliott

Carla Wilson†

CONTRA BASSOON

Robin Elliott

FRENCH HORN

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

Erich Achen†
Carlberg Jonest

TRUMPET

Donald Reinberg
Principal
Edward Haug
Chris Bogios

John Aymong†
Charles Daval†
William Holmes†
Robert Hurrell†
Joyce Johnson†
Carole Klein†
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

PERSONNEL MANAGER
Thomas B. Heimberg

LIBRARIAN

Lauré Campbell

Dancers

Jan Berletti
Peggy Davis
Anna Franklin

Kimberly Graves
Jacqueline Low
Terry McGlone

Monica Prendergast
Dorothy Reiff
Maria Angela Villa

J. Michael Dwyer
Dan Gardner
Randall Krivonic

Jay Lehman
Sulpicio Wagner

Boys Chorus

John Aalberg
Stephen Abramowitz
Sean Barry
Matthew Brauer
Mark Burford
Michael Burke
Jeffrey Cox
Timothy Cox
David Devine

John Dougery
Victor Fernandez
Robyn Fladen-Kamm
David Flores
Christopher Frey
Lionel Godolphin
Peter Hicks
Philip Hommes
Christopher Kula

Benjamin Lewis
Douglas Lynn
Christopher Metcalf
Daniel Potasz
Liam Riordan
David Roberts
Eric Savant
Richard Treadwell
Christopher Tucker
Eric Van Genderen

Girls Chorus

Lara Downes
Shana Downes
Kristin Genis
Angela Harrison
Susan Kim
Gayane Plavdjian
Keiko Steimetz
Dorothy Stone

Jennifer Watts
Mary Angela 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 Sagerson
Robert Schmidt
Michael Scoffield
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

A. Evans*, Martin/Chauvet, 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

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, Nimsgern, 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

Preparing for *Norma*

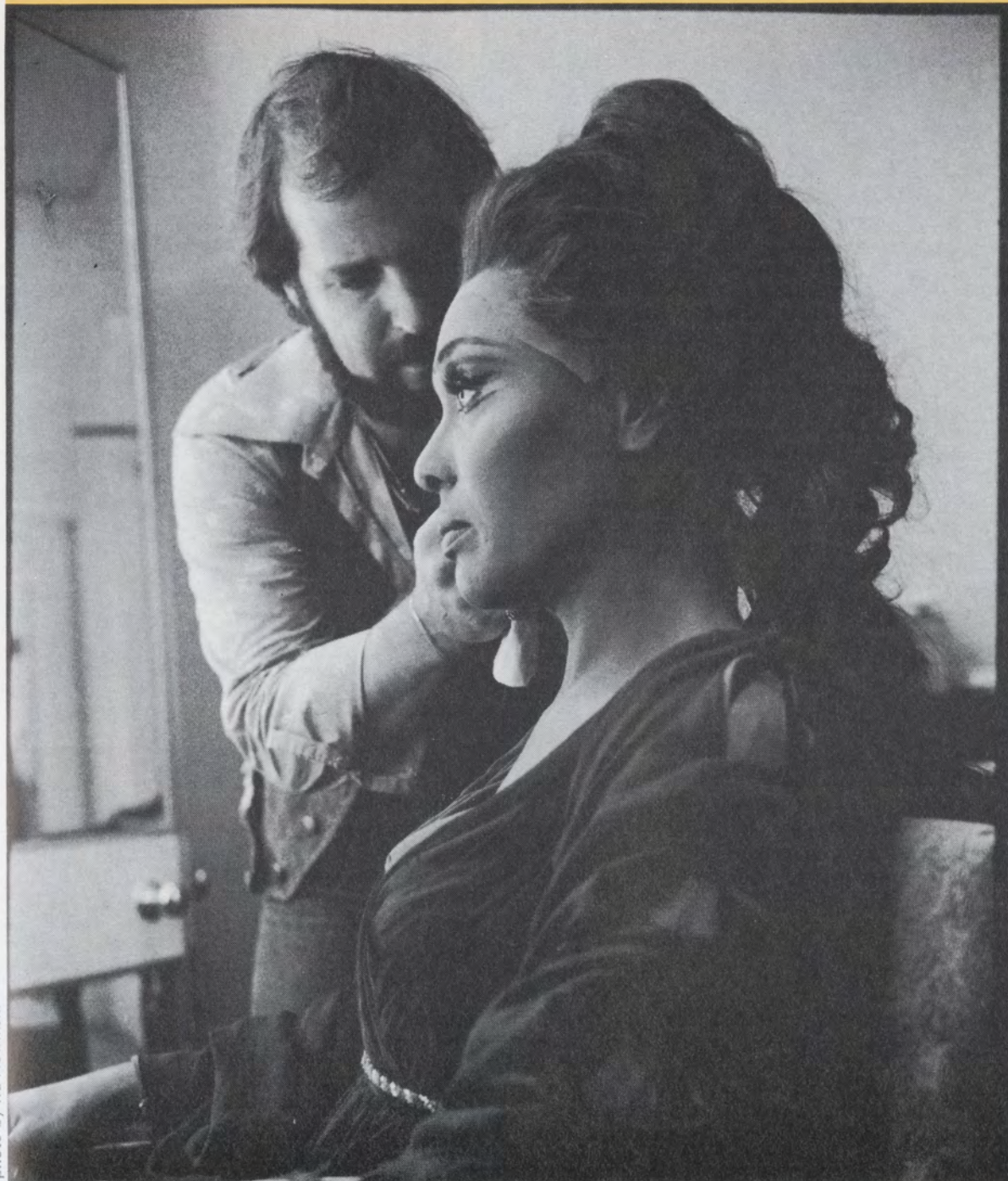


photo by Ira Nowinski

Shirley Verrett has her wig fitted by artist Richard Stead.



Costume supervisor Janet Papanek and dresser Joe Harris help tenor Nunzio Todisco adjust his costume.

photos by Ira Nowinski



Mezzo-soprano Alexandrina Milcheva rests in her dressing room.



Maestro Paolo Peloso conducts the chorus, already in costume for a dress rehearsal, with chorus director Richard Bradshaw seated behind him.

photos by Ira Nowinski



A musical "reading" for artists and orchestra with Alexandrina Milcheva, Shirley Verrett, prompter Susan Webb, Nunzio Todisco and Gwendolyn Jones.



photo by Ira Nowinski

An adjustment to Shirley Verrett's costume by stage director Sonja Frisell while stage manager Matthew Farruggio waits to continue.



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100 things to see and



If you saw our previous ad, you'll recall we had room for only 32 items. So:

33. Join a crowd over one hundred thousand strong at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. A friendly Aussie will translate terms like silly mid-on, googly, leg glance, stumped, outswinger, gully, and sticky wicket.

34. Yield to temptation. Eat a passion fruit.

35. Change your perspective on art. See Australia through the eyes of painters like Drysdale, Nolan, Whitely and Dobell. At the National Gallery of Victoria.

36. Dine on broiled Tasmanian lobster. Better split an order. They weigh in at up to 4 pounds apiece.

37. Shoot crocodiles and wild buffalo in the Northern Territory. With a camera, please.

38. Take a train through a spectacular tropical rain forest. Board the Cairns-Kuranda narrow gauge railway for a bobbydazzler of a ride.



41. Fossick for fiery black opals at Lightning Ridge near Walgett.

42. Or buy your opals from a miner. Look up Willie the Fly, German Harry, Castro or one of their mates.

43. Marvel at Harold Hodge's Sunday best teeth. The uppers are solid opal. They're on display at the Diggers' Rest Hotel.

44. Pack a picnic for a day at the races. At the Bong Bong bush track, top hats, morning suits, couturier dresses and champagne are mandatory.

45. Order an Aussie favorite for breakfast: a juicy sirloin steak topped with a fried egg.

46. Aborigine legend has it



39. If you're a big beer man we recommend the Darwin Stubbie. The bottle holds

more than 76 ounces of amber brew.

40. Fly to summer this winter. Or vice-versa. Because the seasons are upside down Down Under.



do in Australia (contd.)

there were three sisters named Meeni, Wimlah and Gunedoo who were turned into stone for their misdeeds. You can visit the Three Sisters at Katoomba in the Blue Mountains.



a tunnel, lays eggs, suckles its young and looks like it was designed by some drunken committee.



52. This is for the birds. Emus, lorikeets, willy wagtails, galahs. More than 600 birds you'll never



47. Take a peek at a platypus. That's a duck-billed, beaver-tailed, web-footed, furry critter that builds a nest at the end of

48. Meet at the handsome Marble Bar, for more than 75 years a stand-up, two-fisted drinking establishment for men only. Then they tore down the old joint, carefully preserved the bar and built a towering hotel around it. And ladies, you're welcome.

49. Stomp a grape. Come to the Barossa Valley Wine Festival at vintage time. Step lively, the best grape-treader wins a prize.

50. Take a picture of an Aborigine taking a picture of you.

51. And in the center of our big cities you can watch ladies lawn bowling in prim and proper white. The competition is fierce.

see. until you see Australia.

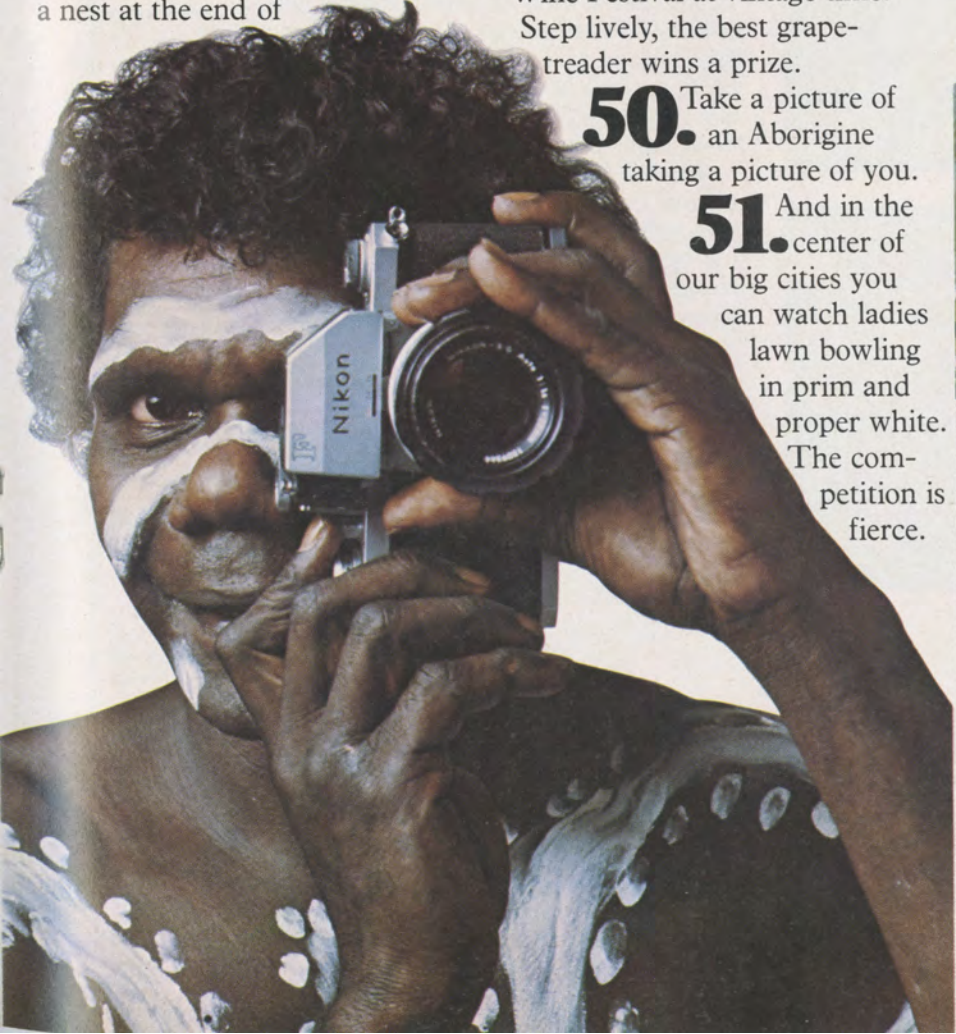


53. Try hard and there's a chance you may get the last laugh on a kookaburra, the bird that laughs just like you.

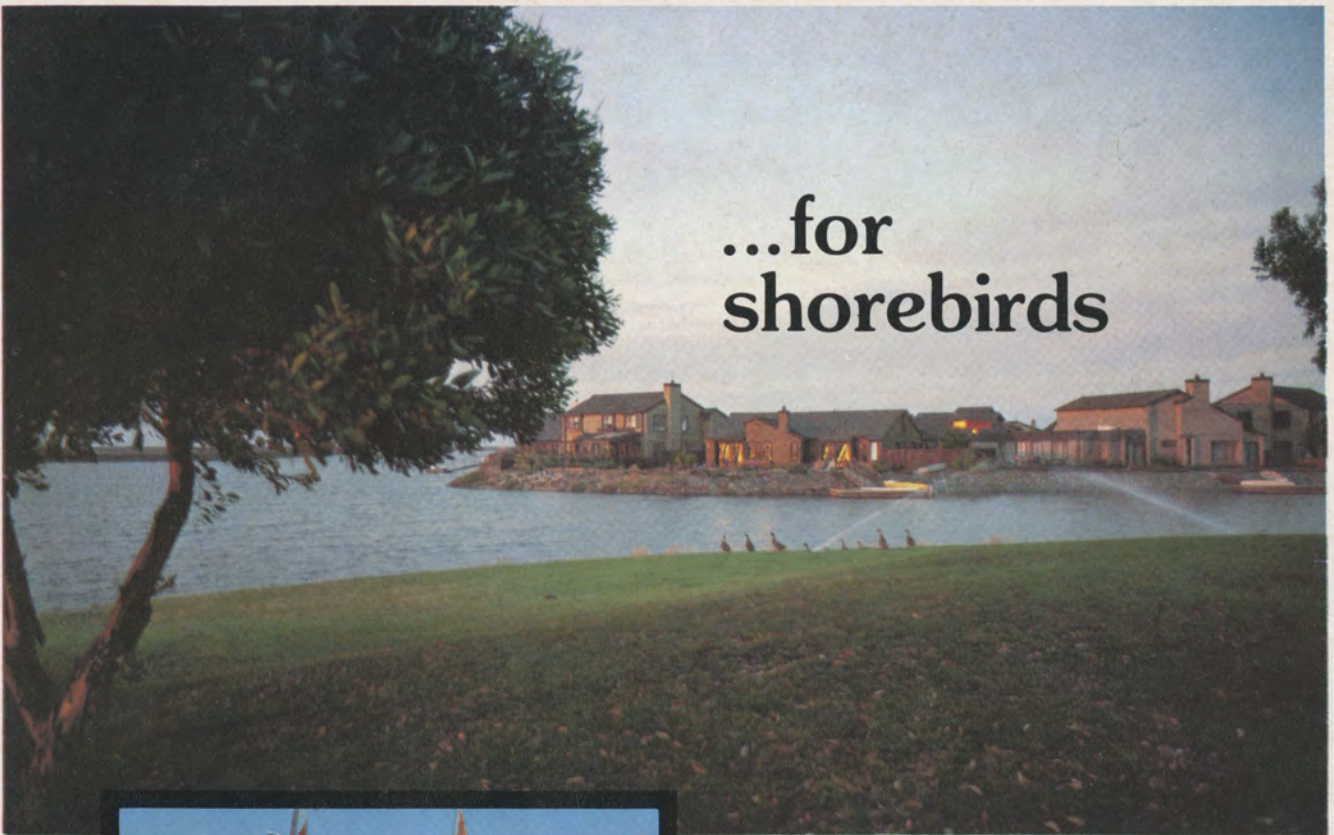
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for people too...*



REDWOOD SHORES

This production of *Norma* was made possible, in 1972, by a generous and deeply appreciated gift from James D. Robertson

Opera in three acts by VINCENZO BELLINI

Text by FELICE ROMANI

Based on a play by LOUIS ALEXANDRE SOUMET

Norma

(IN ITALIAN)

Conductor
Paolo Peloso

Stage Director
Sonja Frisell

Designer
Jose Varona

Associate Set Designer
George Scheffler

Chorus Director
Richard Bradshaw

Lighting Director
Christine Wopat

Musical Preparation
John Miner*

Prompter
Susan Webb

CAST

<i>Oroveso</i>	Clifford Grant
<i>Pollione</i>	Nunzio Todisco**
<i>Flavio</i>	Barry Busse
<i>Norma</i>	Shirley Verrett
<i>Adalgisa</i>	Alexandrina Milcheva*
<i>Clotilde</i>	Gwendolyn Jones
<i>Norma's children</i>	Tina Schneider* Thomas Garadis*
<i>Priests, priestesses, warriors</i>	

**American debut

*San Francisco Opera debut

First performance: Milan, December 26, 1831

*First San Francisco Opera performance:
November 13, 1937*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 AT 8:00

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 AT 8:00 (Live broadcast)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 AT 7:30

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 AT 2:00

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30 AT 1:30

PLACE AND TIME: Gaul, during the Roman occupation in 50 B.C.

ACT I Scene 1 Sacred forest of the Druids
Scene 2 Outside Norma's secret dwelling

INTERMISSION

ACT II Scene 1 Inside the dwelling
Scene 2 Sacred forest of the Druids

*Please do not interrupt the music with
applause*

*Latecomers will not be seated during the
performance 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
two hours and fifty minutes*

SYNOPSIS/NORMA

ACT I—Oroveso, the Druid high priest, comes into the sacred grove of Irminsul with other Druids and warriors of Gaul. They are waiting for the moon to rise, at which moment Norma, high priestess and seeress, will cut the sacred mistletoe and make her prophecies. They all hope she will predict war against the hated Roman oppressor. When the men have gone, the Roman Proconsul Pollione enters with his centurion, Flavio. Pollione has seduced Norma, who has betrayed her vows and secretly borne him two children. Now, however, he proclaims his love for Adalgisa, a young novice in the temple of the god Irminsul. As the Druids are heard returning, Pollione and Flavio leave. Before her people, Norma performs the mystical rites, at the same time trying to allay the Druids' warlike impulses. After invoking the moon goddess, she utters her secret feelings: her continued love for Pollione despite the torment caused by his neglect. When the sacred grove is again deserted, Adalgisa enters. Overcome by doubts, she awaits her lover. Pollione appears and persuades her to come away with him to Rome.

In her hidden retreat, Norma reveals to her confidante Clotilde the fear that Pollione, who is about to leave for Rome, will not take her with him. As someone is heard approaching, Clotilde leads the children away. Adalgisa comes in and confesses to Norma that she is in love. Norma, recalling her own weakness, forgives Adalgisa and releases her from her vows. When Pollione suddenly appears and Adalgisa innocently indicates that he is her lover, Norma becomes enraged. Once she reveals to the stunned Adalgisa Pollione's former love for her, the young novice, loyal to

her high priestess, spurns the Roman. The sacred bronzes of the temple ring out, summoning Norma to the rites.

ACT II—In desperation, Norma is on the point of killing her children. But her maternal love is stronger than her fury against the faithless Pollione. She sends for Adalgisa and proposes that the young girl go off with the Roman, imploring her at the same time to take the children with her and look after them. Adalgisa dissuades Norma from suicide and promises to induce Pollione to return to her. The two swear eternal friendship.

ACT III—Near the Druid's grove, the Gallic warriors, still impatient to fight the Romans, are reluctantly persuaded by the Archdruid Oroveso (Norma's father) that the time for war has not yet come.

Norma learns that Adalgisa's entreaties to Pollione have failed. In a furious rage, Norma summons her people and declares war on the Romans. The Gauls are overjoyed. Norma is about to name the sacrificial victim when a sudden tumult reveals the sacrilegious presence of a Roman in the temple sanctuary. It is Pollione who has followed Adalgisa there. His rash act must be punished by death. Norma announces that a renegade priestess will also be burned on the pyre. Pollione begs her to spare Adalgisa. When Norma utters the victim's name, it is, to everyone's surprise, her own. She confesses her guilt and prepares to ascend the pyre. Her nobility reawakens Pollione's love. Norma's final thought is of her children. She pleads with her father to give them refuge. He finally consents and forgives her, as she and Pollione prepare to die together.

Bellini's "Most Beautiful Rose"

By BARBARA FISCHER-WILLIAMS

"The most beautiful rose in Bellini's crown, the most beautiful song of the Sicilian swan." This was how Felice Romani, librettist of *Norma*, described the opera written in 1831 by his favorite among the host of nineteenth century Italian composers for whom he supplied texts, Sicilian-born Vincenzo Bellini.

Poet and musician first met in Milan in 1827 when Romani, then aged 39, was official librettist at La Scala, and 26-year-old Bellini was newly arrived in the city following his early successes in Naples. An instant friendship sprang up, and Romani, the most prolific and sought-after operatic poet of the day, made no secret of the fact that among the 117 composers for whom he wrote it was Bellini who occupied first place in his heart. "I don't know what it is about that boy, but I always end up giving way to his every wish," he once said to a friend, and again on another occasion: "That boy can twist me round his little finger, but his ways are so irresistible, and he knows so well how to get around me, that I find it impossible to refuse him."

Bellini, for his part, was lavish in his praise of his librettist, calling him "superb" and "blessed," and reiterating in letters to his lifelong friend in Naples, Francesco Florimo, "Romani is necessary to me."

The collaboration continued uninterrupted—albeit not without strains and stresses caused by Bellini's exacting demands and the perennially overworked Romani's perpetual tardiness in delivery—until it was shattered in 1833 by a notorious quarrel which became a *cause célèbre*. Although the hatchet was finally buried some two years afterwards, it was then too late, and Bellini died near Paris on September 23, 1835, three weeks after his thirty-fourth birthday, without ever again seeing the man who had meant more to him than any other in his all too brief career. Romani, who was then in Italy, wrote in his grief-stricken and widely-known obituary: "No one, perhaps no one so much as I, will be able to measure the emptiness that he leaves . . . few composers in Italy, and perhaps no composers other than ours, knew as well as Bellini the necessity for a close union of music with poetry. . . ."

The "close union" of their own twin arts produced seven operas, of which *Norma* was the sixth, having been preceded by *Il Pirata*, *La Straniera*, *Zaira*, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* and *La Sonnambula*, and followed by *Beatrice di Tenda*. It was increasingly bitter recriminations about delays in the text for *Beatrice*, in 1833, which led to the tragic rupture.

No break was in sight when work began on *Norma*. Quite to the contrary. *La Sonnambula* had been well received at Milan's Teatro Carcano in March 1831, with a cast headed by two of the greatest Italian singers of the day, soprano Giuditta Pasta and tenor Giovanni Rubini, and Bellini and Romani were fresh from that success as they

began the search for their next joint opus, which was to be presented at La Scala in the December carnival season of the same year and, most importantly, was to serve as the vehicle for Pasta's debut there.

Some uncertainty prevails as to the exact reasons which brought them to their choice of subject. The opera is based on *Norma*, a five-act tragedy by the French dramatist Alexandre Soumet, which was then winning laurels at the Odéon Theatre in Paris, and this was clearly a primary factor. In addition, Soumet had been co-librettist with Luigi Balocchi of Rossini's *L'Assedio di Corinto* (The Siege of Corinth) which scored a triumph at La Scala in 1829. But other considerations may also have influenced the decision, among them the fact that Romani was no stranger to this type of plot. He had written *Medea in Corinto* (a famous Pasta role) for Simone Mayr in 1813, and four years later had supplied Giovanni Pacini with a libretto entitled *La Sacerdotessa d'Irminsul* (The Priestess of Irminsul). And then, of course, there was the fountain-head of them all, Euripides' *Medea*. Dramatic priestess heroines obviously had popular appeal.

In any event, regardless of potential ancestresses, *Norma's* immediate progenitor was definitely her French namesake, and although it is impossible to pinpoint the moment of decision, the die had certainly been cast by July 23, 1831. On that day, Bellini wrote to Alessandro Lamperi, a Turinese friend with whom he often corresponded: "I have already chosen the subject for my new opera, and it is a tragedy named *Norma, ossia l'Infanticidio*, by Soumet, now being performed with glamorous success in Paris. . . ." By good fortune, Pasta happened to be in Paris at the time, and on September 1st Bellini sent her a letter in which he expressed the hope that the choice would be to her liking and added: "Romani believes it to be very effective, especially in view of your all-encompassing personality, which is just what *Norma's* is. He will manipulate the situations so that they will not resemble other subjects at all, and he will retouch, even change, the characters to produce more effect, if need be. By now you will have read it, [and] if any suggestion occurs to your mind, write it to me; in the meantime try to bring figurines of the characters as they are done in Paris. . . ."

Romani certainly did "manipulate" his libretto so that there were many differences between it and Soumet's drama. For example, in the play *Norma's* two children have speaking parts and are named Clodomir and Agénon, instead of being anonymous mimes as in the opera. Furthermore, in a prolonged and indeed highly operatic mad scene, *Norma* stabs Clodomir and drags Agénon with her when she commits suicide by leaping from a rocky precipice into a lake, having previously told Pollione to "marry Adalgisa upon our three graves." Pollione, horrified, cries "I die," but is told by Orovoso that his punishment will be to continue living, a victim

of his own infamy: "Her torture, Oh Roman, is over, yours is just beginning."

Compared with this melodramatic climax, the ending of the opera seems almost subdued and elegiac, even though it consigns both of the principal characters to a flaming death. Both poet and musician resisted the demand of the La Scala management that Norma deliver the conventional showpiece cabaletta after ascending the funeral pyre; and elimination of the all too familiar mad scene is credited to the shrewd instincts of Romani.

The brilliant cast, in addition to Pasta, included the renowned tenor Domenico Donzelli as Pollione, bass Vincenzo Negrini as Oroveso, and last but not least as Adalgisa 20-year-old soprano Giulia Grisi, who was later to become the leading Italian prima donna of the era after Pasta and Maria Malibran. When she herself sang Norma in London in 1837 the eminent British critic Henry Chorley wrote: "Her Norma, doubtless her grandest performance, was modeled on that of Madame Pasta—perhaps in some respects was an improvement on the model, because there was more of animal passion in it. . . ." It is worth noting in this connection that Adalgisa was first sung by a soprano, not by a mezzo as has since become the custom.

Preparation of the opera was beset by troubles and torments. Bellini wrung so many changes and re-writes from his librettist that the beleaguered Romani was said to have produced not one but three *Normas*, including eight versions of *Casta Diva*. And as if this were not bad enough, the aria did not please Pasta, who found it unsuited to her voice, even in its final form, and at first refused to sing it. A pact was eventually made between composer and star under which she agreed to try it out every day for a week, and he promised to change it if she then still maintained her objections. Bellini won. Not only did Pasta perform the aria, she also generously admitted her error.

Sad to say, however, the première on December 26 was far from a success. In fact the composer in a letter that same night to his friend Florimo said: "I am writing to you under shock of a great sorrow . . . I have come from La Scala; first performance of *Norma*. Would you believe it? . . . Fiasco!!! Fiasco!!! A real fiasco!!! To tell the truth, the audience was harsh, seemed to have come to pass sentence upon me; and in its haste wanted (I believe) my poor *Norma* to suffer the same fate as the Druidess."

Happily, the "fiasco" was short-lived, and was in fact confined to that ill-fated first performance. The reception improved progressively, and the opera was given thirty-nine times during the 1831-32 season. The first-night disaster is hard to explain satisfactorily, although a number of reasons have been advanced. Bellini himself, chronically suspicious of rivals, suggested the likelihood of a *claque* against him and Pasta instigated by Pacini, but this has never been documented. He pointed, in addition, to the exhaustion of the singers, who had been

rehearsing the second act all morning. The below-par condition of the cast is also cited by two of Bellini's best-known chroniclers, Luisa Cambi and Michele Scherillo. "The only member of the company both physically and spiritually in peak form was Giulia Grisi," says Cambi. ". . . Negrini suffered from a heart condition, and only a few months of life remained to him. Donzelli, rival of Rubini, never warmed up enough to study his role properly." And Scherillo writes: "Pasta, . . . indisposed, sang a quarter of a tone flat . . . Donzelli, too, as if by contagion, sang flat. And together with the singers the opera fell flat." Scherillo, incidentally, also asserts that artists always dreaded appearing at La Scala on the night of December 26, since it was traditionally believed that on that evening the Milanese public were bad-tempered because they were suffering from indigestion due to the consumption of Christmas fare!

As we have seen, *Norma* was the last work on which Bellini and Romani worked in harmony, and their reconciliation in 1835 was a long-distance one. Their tombs, too, lie far apart. Bellini is buried in his native Sicily, in Catania's Cathedral of Sant'Agata, while Romani rests at the northern end of the Italian boot, in Genoa's vast Staglieno cemetery. There is, however, one obscure little place where their memory is united for posterity, as anyone will discover who cares to make the pilgrimage to a tiny town named Moneglia, on the Ligurian coast between Genoa and La Spezia.

In this minute and inaccessible spot, so well-hidden that it is not easy to find even on the map, Romani had a modest villa which was the joy of his heart, and where he died on January 28, 1865. The property had been in his family for four centuries, and to this day Moneglia remembers with pride its most celebrated citizen, and his association with Bellini. No reliable proof exists that Bellini was ever there, but local legend likes to relate that he and Romani used to go boating together at the foot of an ancient tower overlooking the sea, the Torre Villafranca (also owned by the Romani family), and that they composed *Casta Diva* in the garden of the villa, sitting under either a fig tree or magnolia tree, since cut down.

What does exist indubitably is a commemorative marble plaque, placed in the wall of the villa in 1901—the centenary of Bellini's birth—which links the two for all time. The inscription glorifies "the superb poet in the centenary of the sublime maestro," and ends with a poignantly apt quotation from *Beatrice di Tenda*, the work which caused the rift. The quotation is the beginning of the lovely trio of forgiveness near the end of the opera: "Angiol di pace all'anima, la voce tua mi suona" (Angel of peace your voice echoes in my soul). A visitor reading the words while standing in the little town, still so remote from the bustling twentieth century, will find it hard to escape the potent spell of the past, and the thought that perhaps it was here that *Casta Diva* was conceived, as the moon shimmered her silver path over the Ligurian sea.

Broadcasts

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Live quadraphonic broadcasts are made possible by Chevron U.S.A., Inc.
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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*
which begins at 7:20 PM Pacific Time.

KKHI—1550 AM/95.7 FM	San Francisco
KVPR—89 FM	Fresno
KUSC—91.5 FM	Los Angeles
KFBK—92.5 FM	Sacramento
KFSD—94.1 FM	San Diego
KOAC—550 AM	Corvallis
KOAP—91.5 FM	Portland
KING 98.1 FM	Seattle
WFMT—1450 AM/98.7 FM	Chicago*

*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.

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.

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.

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) 587-8600.

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.

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.

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.

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

November 6
LA BOHÈME

November 13
FIDELIO

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

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.

Dr. John Berghout
Alton J. Bernhard
Mr. & Mrs. F. Bruce Bernhard
Dr. & Mrs. Jerome W. Bettman
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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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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 15, 1978, 1:00 p.m.
 Wednesday, November 22, 1978, 1:00 p.m.

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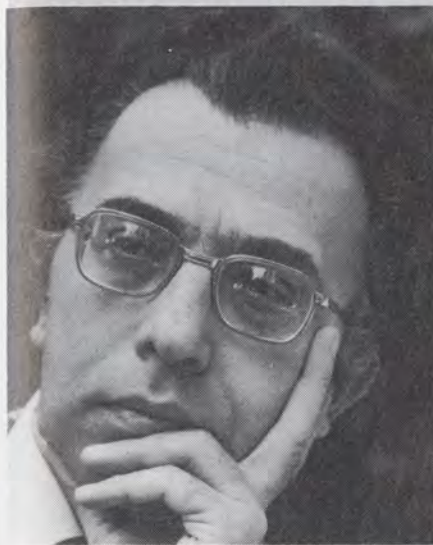
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Profiles

PAOLO PELOSO

SONJA FRISELL

JOSE VARONA



Returning for his fourth consecutive season with the San Francisco Opera, Italian conductor Paolo Peloso leads performances of *Norma* and *Tosca*. He debuted with the Company in 1975 with a stirring reading of *Simon Boccanegra* and was on the podium for *Tosca* in 1976 and *I Puritani* last year. Peloso was trained in piano, organ and composition at the Paganini Conservatory in Genoa before studying at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena. After a successful career as a pianist and a period as assistant to various European conductors, he made his conducting debut at the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa. Maestro Peloso has since conducted opera at La Scala in Milan, where he also led ballet performances for two seasons, the Teatro San Carlo in Naples, the Teatro Regio in Turin, the Teatro Comunale in Bologna, the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and many other Italian opera houses. He has been heard in the concert repertoire in Brussels and Naples, on Italian radio and television and with the Haydn Society of Bolzano. In 1977 Maestro Peloso conducted Rimsky-Korsakov's *Mozart and Salieri* with *La Villanella rapita* in Venice and *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Rigoletto* at the Hamburg Staatsoper. Most recently he led performances of *La Traviata* in Ottawa this past summer.

Following the triumphant reception of last season's *Un Ballo in Maschera*, stage director Sonja Frisell is back with the San Francisco Opera to guide the revivals of Bellini's *Norma* and Massenet's *Werther*. Widely acclaimed for her staging of *Simon Boccanegra* in 1975, Miss Frisell was also responsible for the 1977 *Aida*. Born in England of Swedish-Canadian parents, she attended the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. At the same time she joined an amateur theater group and took a course in acting based on the teachings of Stanislavsky. She became a student director for two years at the Glyndebourne festival and spent a year studying with Carl Ebert in Berlin. In 1960 Miss Frisell received a grant to further her studies in Italy, where she has worked continuously ever since. Before joining the staff of La Scala in 1964, she was an assistant director at the Verona Arena summer festival and an aide to both Franco Enriquez and Margharita Wallmann. In 1975 she was appointed head stage director of La Scala. Miss Frisell's productions in opera have included *Khovanshchina* (1969) and *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1970) in Chicago and *La Traviata* and *Lucia* in Toronto (1971). Recent successes have been stagings of Donizetti's *La Favorita* at the Bregenz festival and the same composer's *Don Pasquale* for Festival Canada in Ottawa and the Montepulciano festival in Italy. She directed *La Traviata* for Festival Canada this past summer.

Jose Varona, who made his San Francisco Opera debut with the 1972 production of *Norma*, is recognized as one of the world's foremost opera and ballet designers. His career began in his native Argentina with ballet designs executed for Cuyo University in Mendoza. Varona's first opera was *Il Trovatore*, a 1958 open-air presentation of the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires. A series of assignments with that theater followed, including *The Love for Three Oranges*, *The Rake's Progress*, *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *Castro's Proserpina* and *the Stranger*, *Così fan tutte*, *Mavra*, and many others. The designer's first North American credits were for 1964 productions of the New York Shakespeare Festival mobile unit. In 1966 he made his debut as costume designer for the New York City Opera in *Giulio Cesare*. Subsequent costume designs with that company included *Manon*, *Le Coq d'Or*, *Bomazo*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Roberto Devereux* and *Maria Stuarda*, among others. More recent opera credits include the costumes for *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in 1976 and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* in 1978, both for the Paris Opera, and *Orfeo et Eurydice* and *Gianni Schicchi/Il Tabarro* for the Holland festival in 1977. In the past two years Varona created the sets and costumes for the following ballets: the Villa-Lobos/Ashton *Forests of the Amazon* with Dame Margot Fonteyn in Rio de Janeiro in 1976; the Delibes/Balanchine *Coppelia* in Geneva in 1977; the Stravinsky/Christensen *Le Baiser de la Fée* for the San Francisco Ballet in 1977, and the Berlin Opera Ballet production of Prokofiev's *Cinderella*, which was a critical success this past summer in New York.

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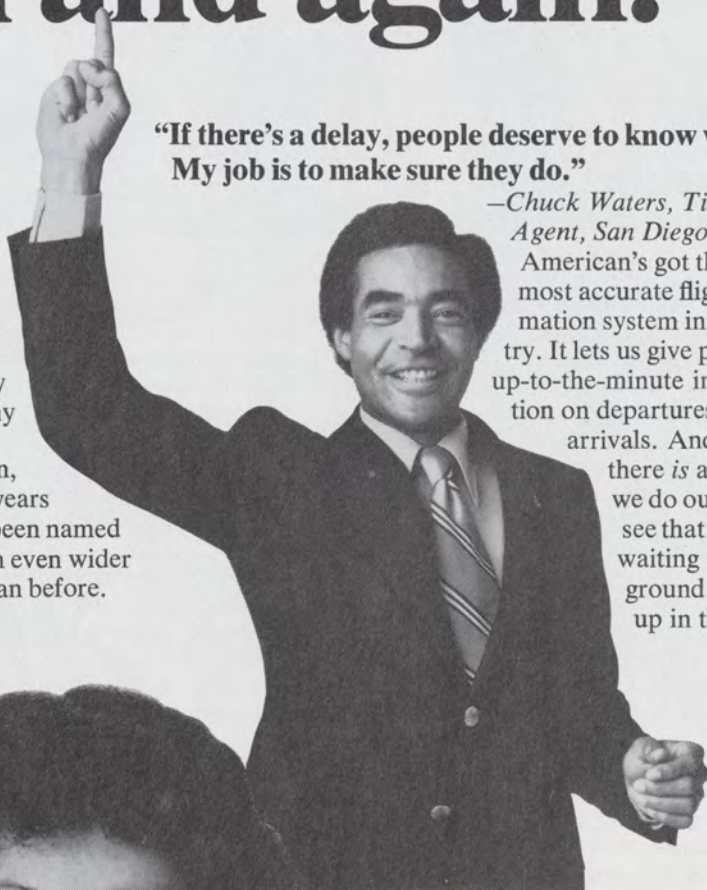
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SHIRLEY VERRETT



ALEXANDRINA MILCHEVA



Outstanding American artist Shirley Verrett is one of a handful of singers whose range successfully spans two repertoires—the contralto and mezzo soprano roles on the one hand, and the dramatic soprano roles on the other. In her debut season with the San Francisco Opera in 1972 she created a sensation as Selika in Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* and Amneris in *Aida*. In 1975 she appeared as Azucena in two performances of *Il Trovatore* and now returns to sing one of the most demanding roles in the entire soprano repertoire, the Druid priestess Norma. Miss Verrett is one of only a handful of singers in history to sing both Adalgisa and Norma in the Bellini opera. Recent triumphs include her portrayal of Lady Macbeth in the opening production of the 1975/76 La Scala season, a role she repeated during that company's historic visit to the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. in 1976 and recorded with conductor Claudio Abbado. In 1974 she electrified Metropolitan Opera audiences by performing both Cassandra and Dido in the New York premiere production of Berlioz' *Les Troyens*. She has also been heard there in such rarities as Rossini's *L'Assedio di Corinto*, Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* and Donizetti's *La Favorita*. Miss Verrett studied at the Juilliard School of Music where she was a consistent prize winner. She sang the title role in *Carmen* at the Spoleto Festival in 1962, repeated her interpretation to great acclaim at the Bolshoi Opera in Moscow in 1963, and made her Metropolitan Opera debut in that role in 1968.

Bulgarian mezzo-soprano Alexandrina Milcheva, a member of the Sofia National Opera and the Vienna State Opera, makes her San Francisco debut as Adalgisa in *Norma*. Her first operatic role was Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* with the Varna Opera in her native country. Since then she has appeared in concert and opera throughout Europe. Her repertoire includes such roles as *Carmen*, *Amneris*, *Azucena*, *Dalila* and *Orfeo*, as well as Musorgsky's *Marina* in *Boris Godunov* and *Marfa* in *Khovanshchina*. In 1970 she sang the role of *Olga* in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* at the Glyndebourne festival and the Royal Albert Hall in London. Miss Milcheva performed Bizet's *gypsy* for her Vienna debut in 1976, in Caracas and Budapest in 1977 and in January of this year in Barcelona opposite Placido Domingo. At the Salzburg Easter Festival this April she was heard as *Azucena* in *Il Trovatore*. Other recent assignments include *Dalila* in Caracas, the mezzo-soprano solo in the Verdi *Requiem* in Salzburg and her first performance as *Sesto* in Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* in Vienna. She has made several recital albums and full-length operatic recordings for Balkanton Records in Sofia and has recorded the part of *Clarice* in Prokofiev's *Love for Three Oranges* under the direction of Genady Rozhdestvensky on the Melodiya label.

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GWENDOLYN JONES



Now in her seventh season with the San Francisco Opera, mezzo-soprano Gwendolyn Jones portrays two confidantes, Emilia in *Otello* and Clotilde in *Norma*. She was heard during the 1977 season as Glasha in *Katya Kabanova*, Dryade in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Siebel in the student matinee and special popular-priced performances of *Faust*. A five-year veteran of Spring Opera Theater, she appeared as Sextus in this year's premiere production of *Julius Caesar* and previously in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (1976), Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* (1974), Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* (1972) and Mozart's *Titus* (1971). This summer Miss Jones portrayed Fidalma in Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio segreto* with the Brown Bag Opera. A frequent concert soloist, she recently performed in the Verdi *Requiem* with the Fresno Symphony and in Michael Smuin's *Mass in C Minor* and *Songs of Mahler* with the San Francisco Ballet. In 1977 she sang in De Falla's *Three-Cornered Hat* with the San Francisco Symphony under the baton of Seiji Ozawa and in 1975 in *Götterdämmerung* with the Chicago Symphony conducted by Sir Georg Solti. Also in 1977 she portrayed Tisbe in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* with the opera companies of Portland and Seattle, and the title role in the same opera two months later in Tucson. Miss Jones was a finalist in the 1970 San Francisco Opera Auditions and received the Merola Opera Program's Gropper Award that year. She is currently in her second year as Sears Roebuck Affiliate Artist in the San Francisco/Affiliate Artists-Opera Program.

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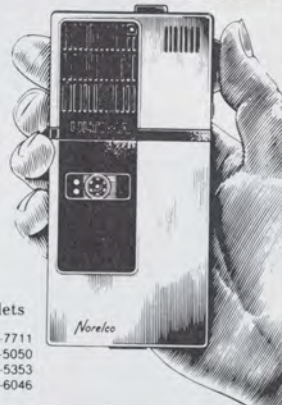
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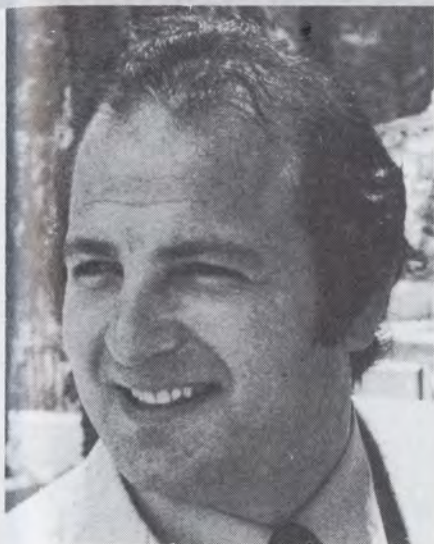
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NUNZIO TODISCO



Italian tenor Nunzio Todisco makes his American debut with the San Francisco Opera as Pollione in *Norma*. After winning several vocal competitions in 1970, he made his first appearance on the operatic stage as Canio in *I Pagliacci* at the Spoleto festival in 1971. He repeated the role at the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome the following year and also sang it at the Arena di Verona in the summer of 1977. Todisco has already appeared at most of the major operatic centers of Italy where his repertoire encompasses the principal tenor leads in the Verdi and Puccini operas, including such rarities as *I due Foscari* and *I Masnadieri*. Other roles for which he is noted are Turiddu in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Enzo Grimaldi in *La Gioconda* and Don José in *Carmen*. In the last two years Todisco has performed the title role in Verdi's *Ernani* in Marseilles, Ismaele in *Nabucco* at the Teatro Comunale in Florence and Radames in *Aida* at Covent Garden for his debut there in the summer of 1977. Among his most recent engagements are Manrico in *Il Trovatore* in Caracas, Don José in Venice and Radames at the Baths of Caracalla this past summer. After his performances here, Todisco will appear in Rome in Donizetti's *Parisina*.

CLIFFORD GRANT



Australian bass Clifford Grant this year performs two roles for which he is well known to local audiences—Lodovico in *Otello* and Oroveso in *Norma*. He sang the part of the Druid priest in his native country this past July. Grant has also been heard in San Francisco in such roles as Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Hunding in *Die Walküre*, Hagen in *Götterdämmerung*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, Phorcus in *Esclarmonde* and Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*. He made his American debut with the San Francisco Opera as Lord Walton in *I Puritani* in the opening production of the 1966 season opposite Joan Sutherland, with whom he had previously appeared in *Lucia* on tour in Australia. That same year he made his British debut with Sadler's Wells Opera (now English National Opera) as Silva in *Ernani*. With the ENO he has performed such leading bass roles as Don Basilio in *The Barber of Seville*, Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del Destino*, Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* and Philip II in *Don Carlos*. In 1976 he returned to Australia for performances of *Lakmé* and bowed at the Metropolitan Opera in *Esclarmonde*. During the 1976/77 season he appeared with the Vancouver Opera in *La Bohème* and *Les Huguenots*. This is Grant's eleventh season with the San Francisco Opera.



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BARRY BUSSE



Young American tenor Barry Busse, who has specialized in contemporary opera, makes his San Francisco debut this fall. His first appearance in opera was to create the part of the Shoe Salesman in the world premiere of Dominick Argento's *Postcard from Morocco* with the Minnesota Opera Company, a role he repeated in his Spring Opera Theater debut in 1973 and also sang in Lake George and Houston. He also created the role of Iron Hans for the world premiere of Conrad Susa's *Transformations* and has since appeared in such works as *The Good Soldier Schweik*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Four Saints in Three Acts* and *The Threepenny Opera*, as well as more unusual pieces such as *The Business of Good Government* and *Faust Counter Faust*. Busse's most recent success was in the American premiere of Thea Musgrave's *Mary Queen of Scots* with the Virginia Opera. Other 1977/78 engagements included the Houston Grand Opera production of Floyd's *Of Mice and Men* in Houston and Washington, D.C., and performances of *Arabella* with the same company. He also appeared with the Grand Rapids Symphony as Don José in *Carmen*. His roles in San Francisco this season are Roderigo in *Otello*, Flavio in *Norma*, Maintop in *Billy Budd* and the Marschallin's major-domo in *Der Rosenkavalier*.



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Thoughts on Bel Canto
continued from p. 40

they combined the art of singer and actor, translating a new taste for dramatic excitement into singing.

Both ladies shared great instincts for the theater, and both began as mezzos who were successful in the discipline and refining of rather special voices, so that they could in time dominate the great soprano roles of their time. The critic Ernest Legouvé reveled in Malibran's spontaneity, inspiration, and "fermentation." Hearing her in 1827 in Paris, he exclaimed, "Until that time, music had been for me an amiable art, compounded of graciousness and spirit. Now suddenly, it became the purest and most dramatic expression of poetry, of love and of pain. A new world was revealed to me." Ironically, the first Adalgisa was a soprano (the role is generally sung today by a mezzo), Giulia Grisi, who later was to become a great Norma herself, as well as the creator of Elvira in *I Puritani*. It was said that she united the nobleness and tragic inspiration of Pasta with the fire and energy of Malibran. *The Musical World* documented her Norma this way:

"In this character, Grisi is not to be approached, for all those attributes which have given her her best distinction are displayed therein in their fullest splendor. Her singing may be rivaled, but hardly her embodiment of ungovernable and vindictive emotion. There are certainly parts in the lyric drama of Italy this fine *artiste* has made her own: this is one of the most striking, and we have a faith in its unreachable superiority—in its completeness as a whole—that is not to be disturbed. Her delivery of 'Casta diva' is a transcendent effort of vocalization. In the scene where she discovers the treachery of Pollione, and discharges upon his guilty head a torrent of withering and indignant reproof, she exhibits a power, bordering on the sublime, which belong exclusively to her, giving to the character of the insulted priest-

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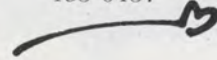
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Nunzio Todisco

ess a dramatic importance which would be remarkable even if entirely separated from the vocal pre-eminence with which it is allied. But in all its aspects the performance is as near perfection as rare and exalted genius can make it . . ."

Hearing operas of the bel canto era today makes it necessary to get the more modern orchestral sound out of our ears. Bellini's lovely, lean textures were unique in their day for the subtleties of coloration and lack of bombast. They are expressive while being subservient to showcasing the singer. The listener must surrender himself to a different art form from that of Puccini or Mascagni or whatever. In the age of bel canto there is no sense of hurry, as the music and plots slowly unfold. The emphasis is on vocal placement to carry a performance, the effects being vocal, not extraneously dramatic ones. Cantilena, the stream of flowing song, is at its foundation; and this is mated with the ability to execute it with an acute sense of drama. We must put ourselves in a frame of mind for bel canto, as one does with the romantic

novels of Sand or Dumas or Scott, luxuriating in it, savoring it without haste. Discussions of bel canto inevitably raise the question of ornamentation. The 18th century emerged as the supreme period of vocal decoration, for such castrati as Farinelli and Senesino or the sopranos Cuzzoni and Faustina possessed formidable techniques. The castrati had brilliant voices with range, agility, power and expression—at least for their time. They reveled in ornamenting the vocal line, taking technique to its pinnacle. Singers today have had to rethink their vocal training if they are to encompass operas of the bel canto period; they have had to think less about quantity of sound in order to articulate, to stress beauty, quality and limpidity of tone. What was the *da capo* aria in the 18th century—a two-section aria with the first then repeatedly embellished—became the 19th century form of *cavatina* (a slow, flowing aria) with a *cabaletta*, a fast virtuosic section, frequently extended with solo cadenzas. This last is usually first sung as written, then repeated with bravura variations, these either ex-



Alexandrina Milcheva

Rossini and Donizetti but by the classical models of Gluck and Spontini as well. So *Norma* spans two eras, while in its power of expression it looks ahead to Verdi.

Bellini achieved many things in *Norma*, but perhaps most essential was the brilliant linking of recitative with aria so that scenes flow together with remarkable cohesion and a unique care for words. Elsewhere in bel canto and earlier baroque works, conventions produced a jerky procession of action conveyed in recitative, while everything stands still in reflective arias. But Bellini kept the dramatic action and inner feelings constantly alive and progressing. He was using established formulas, but he also had a sense of moving in a new direction, since by means of traditional set pieces (arias, duets, trios, ensembles) the action is always furthered. And within these pieces there is a constant state of conflict on the personal level of the protagonists as well as the political climate of the Druids and the opposing Romans.

Because the libretto is based on a play constructed in the classical manner (by Soumet) it has perfect dramatic construction. Just examine Act I: the Druids await Norma; Pollione's conflict of his love for Adalgisa and affair with Norma is revealed; then Norma enters in her extended scene, her recitative, aria and cabaletta illuminating the state of politics in Gaul, a plea for peace and her personal wish for Pollione to return; finally, Adalgisa is introduced in her meeting with Pollione. Everything is laid out in a timeless, clear-cut form.

Looking at Norma's first scene shows why it is the quintessential bel canto role, and perhaps the most demanding of all parts. With her recitative "Sediziose voci," she takes command of her warlike Druids. The dramatic, low voice establishes her power, her authority and her essentially peaceful nature. Then the moonstruck cavatina "Casta diva" is spun out in an exquisitely sustained line, poised, even in

plidity written out by the composer or left to the singer's judgement. Today's singer goes back to the score or what has been notated from other singers, but all must judge what suits them best and then proceed, governed by taste and musical needs.

With all this, it has often been conceded that Bellini's *Norma* remains the quintessential bel canto opera, with its unity of unparalleled vocalizing and supreme drama. For the protagonist, it is the ultimate challenge, beginning with Norma's entrance, in which we experience the entire bel canto era in one long extended scene of recitative, aria and cabaletta. But beyond the music, we also experience a woman who is a supreme theatrical personage, alternating between a ruling Druid priestess and a woman very much in love, her inner and outer feeling expressed with delicacy, insight and demanding juxtaposition. Chopin called her "Casta diva" the greatest melody ever written, and it indeed reminds us of the style of his flowingly melodic piano writing. Interestingly, Bellini at the time was not only influenced by

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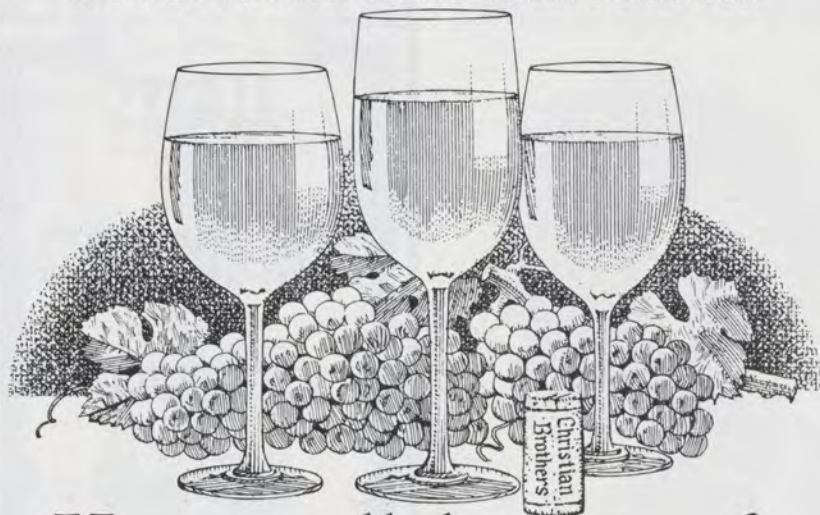


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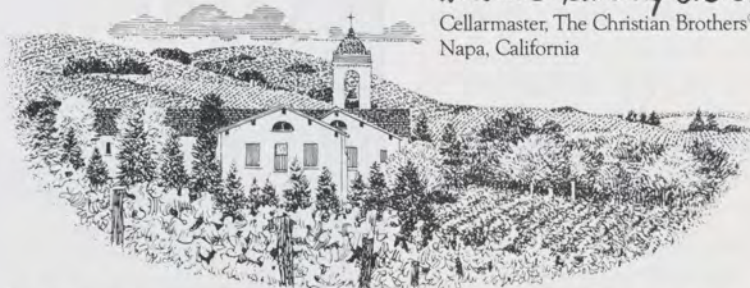
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Among the items on sale now through the end of the opera season are both paper-back and hardcover books, Christmas cards, note-paper, T-shirts, selected recordings, post-cards and posters, jewelry on a musical theme, canvas tote bags, silk scarves, and special coloring books and games for children. The store is suggested as an ideal place for gift shopping for the coming holiday season.



Stage Director Sonja Frisell coaches bass Clifford Grant for Orovoso.

scale, floating, almost disembodied and unearthly in its tone. Of bel canto technique it demands supreme legato as well as turns, ascending scales, clean attacks, a filigree of notes, four attacked high B's and high C's plus a small cadenza. This is the holy ceremony of the mistletoe, at which Norma performs her duties as high priestess. In the cabaletta, Norma utters her aside as she thinks of her lover Pollione by means of a brilliant *allegro* that is then repeated with ornaments, needing agility, poise, articulation and the full command of fioriture (trills, ascending-descending scales, chromatic runs) and great breath control. To know this aria is to know the pinnacle of bel canto in its demands and its rewards.

But Norma is much more than this. As a dramatic heroine she experiences the

full spectrum of human emotions: she is high priestess, lover and mother. She must convey nobility, sensuality, anger, pride, goodness, kindness, vengeance, hurt and more. And to make the challenge to the performer even greater, Bellini juxtaposes these emotions within seconds of one another, calling on the force of a great, insightful actress. The traditional Act II, in which she receives the contrite Adalgisa and forgives her, is a glowing example. Having been magnanimous and recognizing the same transgression in Adalgisa that she herself has committed, she then learns that Adalgisa's lover is none other than Pollione himself, and she gives vent to her rage. An overwhelming scene is that in the last act beginning "In mia man alfin tu sei," as Norma pleads with Pollione to return

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to her. This semi-aria, semi-duet develops non-stop into an ensemble of grandeur, culminating in Norma's confession of guilt to her father and Pollione's decision to follow her to the pyre ("Qual cor tradisti"). Bellini imbues this sequence of musico-dramatic events with a sense of noble theater, tragic passion and overwhelming pathos in Norma's resolve to die.

That the role has fascinated singers from Pasta to the present is to be convinced that it is the ultimate test of a singer on every level. When Chopin saw Pasta in Paris, 1831, he fell under her spell: "I never saw anything more sublime. Malibran impresses you by her marvelous voice, but no one *sings* like her [Pasta]. Miraculous! Marvelous!" Stendhal remained in awe of her unique blend of vocal and dramatic gifts, exclaiming over her youth and beauty, her intelligent and sensitive acting, her gestures with their naturalness and simplicity, her pure ideals of formal beauty, her voice that thrilled with its passionate exaltation and that could weave a spell of magic about the plainest word in the plainest recitative.

The English critic Chorley wrote how Pasta could turn natural deficiencies into rare beauties, about her presence and power of genius, truth and thought. He noted that out of her "uncouth materials" she had composed her vocal instrument: "the volubility and brilliancy, when acquired, gained a character of their own from the resisting peculiarities of the organ. There were a breadth, an expressiveness in her roulades, an evenness and solidity in her shake, which imparted to every passage a significance totally beyond the reach of lighter and more spontaneous singers." Stendhal called her embellishments "a monument of classical grace and style . . . a model of unrivalled perfection. Extremely restrained in her use of fioriture, she resorts to them only when they have a direct contribution to make to the dramatic expression of the music."

Another contemporary observer talked about some harshness in her tone, but that she converted such a defect into beauty. He found her guttural tones thrilling, giving her singing additional depth of expression. "Indeed, these lower tones were peculiarly suited for the utterance of vehement passion, producing an extraordinary effect by the splendid and unexpected contrast which they enabled her to give to the sweetness of the upper tones, causing a kind of musical discordance, which animated by her pathetic expression, created in the heart of the listener an indefinable feeling of melancholy. Her accents were so plaintive, so penetrating, and so profoundly tragical, that it was impossible to resist their influence."

Pasta's genius as a tragedienne was proclaimed transcendent, for she literally threw herself completely into the character, so that she appeared the character itself. As Norma, Chorley records, "her personation printed deep on the minds of those who saw it an impression of something fierce, masterful, oriental, the like of which had hardly, till she came, been expressed in music . . . When she could be dramatic, the defects of intonation to which she was liable either disappeared, or were forgotten in the consummate union of vocal art with human emotion."

One observer claimed she "is in fact the founder of a new school, and after her the possession of vocal talent alone is insufficient to secure high favor, or to excite the same degree of interest for any length of time . . . Madame Pasta has exhibited to her countrymen the beauty of a school too long neglected, in such a manner that they will no longer admit the notion of lyric tragedy being properly spoken without dramatic as well as vocal qualifications in its representative." This then is the era of bel canto, the essence of which we in the late 20th century are held in thrall.

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As a first-hand observer, Julius Caesar had a reputation for clear and accurate reporting—in military matters—but he viewed the Druid pantheon as no more than counterparts of, if not actual, Roman deities, and referred to their gods as Zeus, Mercury, Mars and so on. Caesar may have been misled by Aesus, the divine being of the Druids, whose name sounded like Zeus. However, Aesus predated Zeus by several hundred years; and if Aesus and Jesus differed in but one letter, they nevertheless were separated by fifteen hundred years. Pliny, Lucan and the rest, like Caesar, wrote of the Celts but from an even greater distance, both in body and spirit. After the Celts were vanquished, their gods, mysteries and beliefs intermingled with Roman and Christian theology. Today, except to eliminate gross errors and some fond misconceptions, research and archeology have provided very little beyond what educated speculation can disclose about the shadowy Druids.

But if Romani knew less, and if *Norma* is as close to Druidic tradition as a television docu-drama is to truth, he was inventive, and in the best neo-classical style of the 19th century. He took liberties with the priestly institution of the Druids. It was improbable for *Norma* to be a high-priestess at the time of the Gallic Wars, and even less likely could she have outranked the Chief Druid. Priestesses did not arise among the Celts until three centuries later when the convention of vestal virgins, customary in Greek and Roman temples, was adopted. Or perhaps Romani was a premature advocate of female liberation. Not long after the priestesses attained their station, they were condemned at the Council of Tours, along with the whole Druidic system, for witchcraft.

Romani, however, was acquainted with some Druidic ritual. *Norma's* final immolation is an authentic instance of Druidic worship—and punishment—

performed with human and animal sacrifice. In Act One, Pollione, in revealing to Flavio his passion for Adalgisa, speaks of her as a priestess “of this bloody god” which he and Rome are resolved to wipe out along with its “impious altars.” *Norma*, in her Act Four exchange with Oroveso, the Chief Druid, refers to the fact that “never has the altar lacked victims.” The hymn-like introduction to *Casta Diva* hints of a ceremony in which two young white bulls were slaughtered so that their blood could renew the life of the Druidic oak tree. Romani subtitled his libretto, *La Foresta d'Irminsul*—the grove of the “giant column,” the tree which was “an object of general worship” until Charlemagne chopped it down in the year 772.

Achilpa, that sacred tree of the Arunta tribe, had been fashioned by Numbakula, the creator. He anointed it with blood and vanished in the sky. This sacred pole became the cosmic axis, supporting the world and the sky above and opening the road to the gods, and so long as harmony reigned, averting chaos. The heavenly image of these cosmic pillars was the Milky Way. Breaking the pole would cause the sky to fall and bring about the end of days—which had made a worried hen of Henny-Penny. The Druids meditated on this doomsday whose advent would make way for a new heaven, a new earth and a new race of men. It had much to do with the moulding of Celt morality.

In the court of Alexander the Great, Ptolemy was present when ambassadors from the Celts responded to the emperor's summons to sign a compact which would permit him to attack Persia and Phoenicia, having thus secured his rear borders. As they sat drinking, Alexander asked the envoys what they feared the most. “We fear no man,” they replied. “There is but one thing we fear: that the sky should fall on us.” And when they bound their

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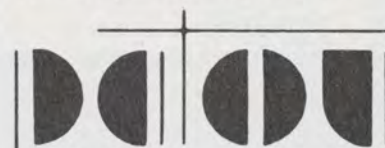
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vow with Alexander, they swore: "If we observe not this engagement, may the sky fall on us and crush us; may the earth gape and swallow us up; may the sea burst out and overwhelm us."

The cosmic pole of the Druids accompanied them wherever they went, the direction being decided by the way the pole inclined. The ground surrounding it became the place the tribe inhabited.

The central dogma of the Druid religion was the immortality of the soul and its transmigration. Caesar observed, "The soul does not perish; after death it passes from one body into another," which, he explained, "inspires valor and a contempt for death." This would account for Norma's courage in facing the pyre with Pollione in the expectation of meeting her lover in the next world. The promise of life after death would often lead a Celt to lend money on a promissory note, to be redeemed in the nether world—its god, *Dis*, being the forebear of the Celts, and the underworld being a place not of gloom but of light and liberation.

The Druids functioned as priests at sacrifices, as theologians, prophets, diviners (by astrology and horoscope), physicians and magicians. They were exempt from military duty, and paid no taxes. They served under the supreme jurisdiction of an arch-priest who, upon death, was succeeded by seniority. If more than one qualified, the office was decided by vote—or force of arms. Druids ruled on all religious questions and acted as judges in intertribal and personal conflicts. The location of the annual assizes was the *Carntes*, the sacred grove. Its site, occupied today by the Cathedral of Chartres, is considered the exact center of Gaul.

"The people," Caesar noted, "hold the Druids in great respect. They decide all criminal cases and all disputes relating to boundaries or inheritance, awarding damages and passing sentence. Any individual or tribe refusing to abide by their decision is banned

from taking part in public sacrifices—the heaviest of all punishments. The effect of this excommunication is to set the guilty party on a level with the vilest criminals; he is shunned by all; his conversation and very presence are avoided for fear of contracting ritual uncleanness; he is barred from all honors and dignities; and he has no redress in the courts."

Sickness and danger were warded off by sacrifices. A large wicker-work cage was filled with living beings and set aflame. One life might be substituted for another. In the case of criminals, Caesar reported, "The gods are supposed to prefer those caught red-handed; but if there is a shortage of these, the innocent are made to take their place." Prisoners of war and criminals were turned over to the Druids for sacrifice. This shocked the Romans. They preferred to see their victims torn to pieces by lions in the circus arenas.

Second to the Druids in the social scale were the barons who fought the wars. Each was accompanied into the field by servants and armed retainers whose number indicated the wealth and rank of their knight, "the only recognized criterion of his position and authority." The Celts dwelt in houses of timber, wicker and thatch, slept on the ground and sat on straw couches. The women worked the crops. A man brought to his marriage an amount of property equivalent to his wife's dowry which was kept in a joint account, the proceeds shared and the estate going to the survivor. This arrangement anticipated the community property of the present day, except that in the event of the wife surviving and the husband's relatives suspecting foul play, she was examined under torture and, if found guilty, burned to death. A distinctive social rule forbade a son to approach his father in public until he had reached military age; nor could he stand in his parent's presence when the latter was armed and ready to go forth to battle.

continued on p. 100

Performing Arts Center Update

The Performing Arts Center — a year ago, the issue still was in doubt. But a glance behind the Opera House and across the street in the parking lot resolves that doubt. The Performing Arts Center project is no longer an idea; it is a project under construction.

The Opera House addition now has all its structural steel in place. One can now see that it is an imposing structure in its own right with some 38,000 square feet of space. Construction is expected to be completed by March of 1979! The new extension will be extremely useful for the San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Ballet as well as other tenants of the hall. The most obvious advantage will be in the handling and storage of sets. In the present Opera House, there was virtually no set storage room. Each opera or ballet set had to be taken down every night. With the new facilities, scenery trucks can drive right onto stage level through massive side doors, unload and store several entire sets at once. In addition, the extension provides tenants rehearsal space, dressing and lounge areas for performers, and administrative office space, long-needed by resident companies. The exterior of the addition will match exactly the existing building.

Plans are now being completed for the rehearsal facility, which will duplicate the Opera House stage. The concert hall has been under construction since March and is now awaiting fabricated structural steel to be brought to the site. The 600-stall parking facility near the PAC site is progressing toward an early start of construction.

There is, obviously, much work to be done in all areas, including that of fund-raising. Sponsors will need between \$5 million and \$6 million more to complete the project as planned. In order to accomplish it, donations both large and small are needed to augment the over 4,000 donors who have contributed to this important civic project to date.

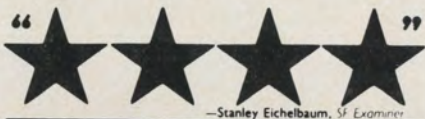
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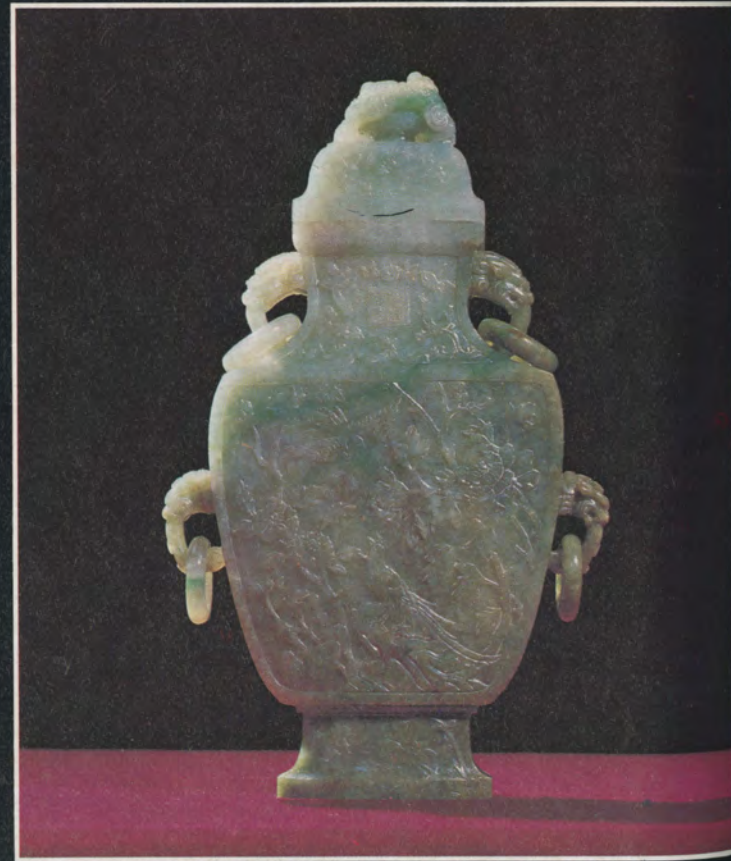
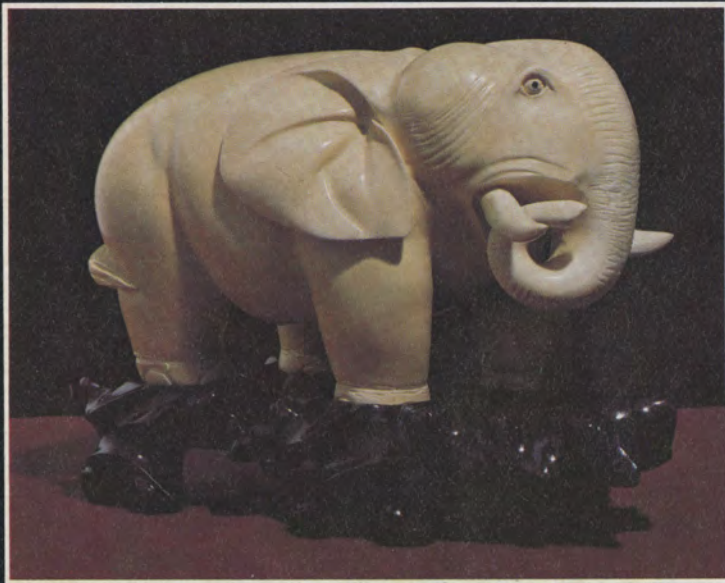
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After the success of *La Sonnambula* at the Teatro Carcano in Milan in March of 1831, composer Vincenzo Bellini and librettist Felice Romani began looking for a subject for their new opera, which would star the renowned Giuditta Pasta in her La Scala debut for the Carnival season in December, 1831. The first hint of their choice comes in a letter of Bellini on July 23 of that year, which contains the sentences:

"I have already chosen the subject for my new opera, and it is a tragedy entitled *Norma, ossia L'Infanticidio*, by [Alexandre] Soumet, now

Vincenzo Bellini (above) and his librettist for *Norma*, Felice Romani, both portraits dating from 1830.

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being performed with clamorous success in Paris. . . . My opera at La Scala must without fail go on stage by December 26."

By September 1, Bellini could write to Pasta, who was then in Paris:

"Now I must apply myself to the opera, for which Romani gave me the scenario just yesterday. I hope that you will find this subject to your liking. Romani believes it to be very effective, and precisely because of the all-inclusive character for you, which is that of Norma. He will manipulate the situations so that they will not resemble other subjects at all, and he will retouch, even change, the characters to produce more effect, if need be. By now you will have read it, [and] if any suggestion occurs to your mind, write it to me; in the meantime, try to bring figurines of the characters as they are done in Paris [those in the Soumet play]. And, if you think it necessary, you can have them improved on, if you shouldn't find them in the best taste. They are necessary for the undertaking, so you can have them made at whatever cost. I take this opportunity to congratulate you again on the new triumphs you have added to your previous numerous ones. . . ."

In July, 1831, the news reached Italy that cholera had broken out in Austria. Bellini alludes to it and speaks of his activity in composing *Norma* in an undated letter to an unidentified correspondent:

"My health is good, and I am already applying myself to the new opera that must be given at La Scala on the coming December 26. The subject is *Norma*, a tragedy by M. Soumet; I find it interesting, and if Romani extracts some beautiful poetry from it, it will become a good libretto; but I fear that my vein will

abandon me this time because my head is distracted by that doubly damned cholera which is menacing all of Europe; enough, let us see how it will end."

The threat of cholera and the work on his upcoming opera continued to be Bellini's chief preoccupations. In a letter to his best friend, Francesco Florimo, who was then in Naples, he wrote:

"I am composing the opera [*Norma*] without any zeal because I am almost certain that the *Cholera* will arrive in time to close the theaters; but as soon as it threatens to come near, I'll leave Milan. . . . Should I have to come to Naples to compose the opera [a project for the Teatro San Carlo, to be staged in 1832], I'll will understand that a good tenor like Donzelli [to be the first Pol-lione] or Rubini would be extremely necessary."

Bellini finished composing *Norma* toward the end of November, and rehearsals began on December 5. There were several difficulties with the artists, not the least of which was the fact that Pasta initially refused to sing "Casta diva." As Michele Scherillo wrote:

". . . (she found it) ill adapted to her [vocal] abilities. The Maestro used all his wiles to persuade her; but he had little success. They made a pact: she would keep it for a week, going over it again each morning; and if at the end of seven days she still found performing it repugnant, Bellini promised that he would change it."

Not only did Pasta sing the aria, but she also confessed her earlier error by sending Bellini, some hours before the premiere, a parchment lampshade decorated with flowers surrounding warriors and maidens, a bouquet of cloth flowers and a note:

"Allow me to offer you something that was some solace to me for the immense fear that persecuted me when I found myself little suited to performing your sublime harmonies; this lamp by night and these flowers by day witnessed my studies of *Norma* and the desire I cherish to be ever more worthy of your esteem. Giuditta P. your most affectionate friend."

Anticipation of the premiere ran high, but with previous Bellini successes at La Scala and the presence of the noted Mme. Pasta in the title role in her first appearance at the prestigious theater, a triumph seemed certain. *Norma* opened the season on December 26, 1831, as scheduled. To everyone's astonishment, it was greeted by the opening-night audience with a chilly reception. Writing that very night to Florimo (who later somewhat doctored his friend's letter before publishing it), Bellini poured out his acute disappointment:

"I am writing to you under the shock of sorrow; of a sorrow that I cannot put into words for you, but that only you can understand. I have come from La Scala; first performance of *Norma*. Would you believe it? . . . Fiasco! !! fiasco! !!! solemn fiasco! !! To tell the truth, the audience was harsh, seemed to have come to pass sentence upon me; and in its haste wanted (I believe) my poor *Norma* to suffer the same fate as the Druidess. I no longer recognized those dear Milanese, who greeted *Il Pirata*, *La Straniera*, and *La Sonnambula* with happy faces and exulting hearts; and yet, I thought that in *Norma* I was presenting them with a worthy sister [of the other three operas]. But unhappily that was not so; I was wrong; my protagonists failed and my hopes were deluded. Despite all that, with my heart on my lips I tell

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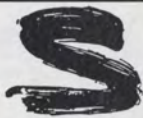
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you (if passion doesn't deceive me) that the Introduction, Norma's entrance and cavatina, the duet between the two donnas, with the trio that follows, the finale of the first act, then the other duet of the two donnas and the whole finale of the second act, which begins with the be content with [Giuseppina] Ronzi [de Begnis] and Tamburini, but you Hymn of War and proceeds, are pieces of music of a kind — and please me so much (modesty)—that I confess I should be happy to create their likes for the rest of my artistic life. Enough! ! ! I hope to appeal against the sentence it [the audience] pronounced against me, and if I succeed in changing its mind, I shall have won my case, and then I'll proclaim *Norma* the best of my operas. If I don't, however, I shall resign myself to my most unhappy fate, and in consoling myself will say: didn't the Romans, perhaps, whistle at the divine Pergolesi's *L'Olimpiade*? . . . I leave with the courier, and hope to arrive ahead of this letter. But either I or the letter will inform you of the sad news that *Norma* was whistled at. Do not grieve because of that, my good Florimo. I am young, and I sense in my spirit the strength to effect a vindication of this tremendous downfall."

Two days later, in a letter to his uncle Vincenzo Ferlito, the composer explained some of the reasons for the opening-night "fiasco" and gave his own evaluation of the performance:

"Despite a formidable faction antagonistic to me because it is supported by a powerful personage and by a very rich woman, my *Norma* has dumbfounded [its audiences], more yesterday evening, the second performance, than at the first. The official Milanese journal yesterday reported a decided fiasco because on the first evening the adverse fac-

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tion whistled while the unprejudiced applauded; and because the powerful personage is an owner and can order the journal to write whatever he pleases.

"The powerful personage does this because of enmity toward Pasta, and the rich woman because she is Pacini's mistress, and therefore my enemy; in the meantime, yesterday evening the opera was enjoyed even more, and the theater was crammed full, a true sign of an opera's success. . . .

"On the first evening, an eruption was produced by the introduction, Pollione's entrance, that of Pasta. What did not please was the Pollione-Adalgisa duet, and that will never please because it doesn't please me either; the duet that begins the final trio pleased greatly, but the trio as performed did not; the singers were weary, having rehearsed the entire second act that morning, and therefore it was not enjoyed; thus the first act finished without anyone's being applauded and called out; in the second act, except for a chorus that pleased but little, the rest was so extraordinarily effective that the whole [adverse] faction was too cast down to recover at all, and I was obliged to show myself on the stage at least four times, both alone and with the singers. Yesterday evening [the second performance], because the singers projected the trio better, I was also called out in the first act [and] the second act was more effective than on the first evening, so much so that my triumph was even decisive enough to raise hopes that the opera to close the Carnival will be the persecuted *Norma*.

"Pasta is an angel, and that expression will suffice to tell you how she performs her role in both singing and acting. Donzelli does very well and sings well, but still doesn't know his role thoroughly; Giulietta Grisi in the role of Adalgisa is a little

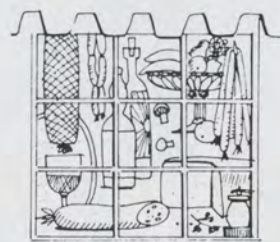
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cold by nature, but still is good; the chorus is excellent. The public showers the journalist with imprecations; my friends jump for joy; I am very well satisfied, doubly content because I have discomfited so many of my vile and powerful enemies."

In fact, Bellini, for whom *Norma* was the favorite among his works, was vindicated. The second and third night audiences, although still not totally enthusiastic, were much better disposed to the new opera. By the end of the season, *Norma* had been performed 39 times at La Scala and was launched on its way to becoming the quintessential Romantic work in the Italian repertoire.

As proof of its quick propagation and success in Italy, one can cite a letter from the composer to the librettist on the occasion of the first performance of *Norma* in Donizetti's home town of Bergamo, in August, 1832:

"My dear Romani:

"I wanted to write to you yesterday, but it was not possible; I am besieged by visits and introductions. Everyone wants to meet me and congratulate me; and here I am in Donizetti country! . . . How many people must be boiling with rage over it! . . . Our *Norma* created a decided furor. If you were to hear it as it is performed here, you would almost think it changed; it seems a different piece to me; and has a wonderful effect on me. It has stunned the natives of Bergamo, and all the others who were at the theater: from Brescia, Verona and even Milan; it's a true triumph. Everything is more alive, the singers have grown into their parts and put a lot of soul into them. La Giuditta [Pasta] is in good spirits and in good voice and sings and acts to bring tears to one's eyes! . . . She even makes me cry! . . . And in fact I did cry for all the emotion I felt in my breast. . . . I wished you were there with me to share it with me, my

good advisor and collaborator, because you alone understand me, and my glory can't be separated from yours. . . . Now, even I am happy. The applause and the shouts for the Maestro and the singers were both spontaneous and universal. If you had been there, they would have called you to the stage, so much did your poetry find favor; they thought it tragic and sublime. . . . It's a shame you didn't listen to me and are not here, because you would be greatly feted and would have much satisfaction and honor, and you would be happy with our *Norma* and your Bellini, who owes you so much gratitude and who repays your kindness with equal affection."

Review from *L'Eco* of Milan, 28 December 1831, of the world premiere of *Norma*.

". . . Romani in this work again demonstrated that gift of inspiration which he has so richly shown in the past, and his verses are by far superior to those of the best of librettists. From a composer like Bellini, from artists like Madame Pasta and Donzelli, one could with reason expect something extraordinary; and yet . . . we are forced to inform our readers, to their slight surprise, that at the end of Act I, there was not the least sign of applause, though during the act there was acknowledgment of the overture, the introduction (which was perhaps a bit too long), and the singing of Madame Pasta and Donzelli. The public, who certainly were expecting to hear the first act close with a grandiose finale, were disappointed and were unhappy to see the curtain fall after a trio ["Oh! di qual sei tu vittima"] of little effect. The second act contains several lovely pieces of music, such as the duet between Norma and Adalgisa ["Mira, o Norma"], another between Norma and Pollione ["In mia man alfin tu sei"], and the finale, which, however, both in the action [the

continued on p. 100



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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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Best of My Operas
continued from p. 97

placing of a black veil over the priestess who is condemned to death] and the music are reminiscent of the first act of Spontini's *La Vestale*.

"Madame Pasta, Donzelli and Miss Grisi, as well as the Maestro, in this act had the clearest proof of public satisfaction and at the end were called out repeatedly onto the stage; and we are firmly convinced that, generally speaking, the entire opera heard several times, and once some visible defects are gradually removed, will end up finding favor. We are sorry that Donzelli, whose strong voice, excellent intonation and superb dramatic skill arouse so much admiration, is so little employed in this opera. Likewise, that Legrini [Oroveso] has scarcely the opportunity to deploy his harmonious bass voice and his lovely singing method.

"Madame Pasta showed herself, as usual, that eminent tragic actress and singer that she is. Almost the entire opera is centered on her alone, and although she knows how to bear such a burden, it is certain that in the long run she will become fatigued by it. . . . "All of the decors are by the expert hand of Sanquirico, and several are superb. The direction has not spared anything on the costumes either. Let us nevertheless be permitted to say that Druids and Druidesses were certainly never dressed like priests and vestal virgins of Rome."

The Druids in Gaul
continued from p. 88

Norma occurs in the year 50 BC when the Celts had passed the zenith of their might and—as Caesar was to inform every student in College Latin I—*omnia Gallia in tres partes divisa est*—divided into Cisalpine, Transalpine and Celtica Gaul. Caesar's uncle, Marius, had thrust the Celts out of southern Europe and by 63 BC, Cisalpine Gaul (northern Italy) was a Roman province. Caesar, beginning five years later, made short work of the northern and southern regions of what today is France, and embarked on his main campaign to subdue the major and central territory, Celtica. The only hope of the Druids was that Rome would "die of its own vices." This is the prophecy of Oroveso, the Chief Druid, and the sentiment *Norma* voices as she argues against challenging Caesar's legions.

But such hopes were shattered by the siege of Bourges where the Romans slew 40,000 men, women and children. Following the events depicted in *Norma*, the Celts made their last stand at Alesia under their rebel leader, Vercingetorix. Caesar wrested victory from an overwhelming force of 290,000, killing thousands and dispersing the rest to their homes. Defeated, Vercingetorix volunteered to have his head sent to Caesar, but his lieutenants voted for surrender. In great dignity, Vercingetorix delivered himself up to his conqueror and was imprisoned in Rome for six years. Caesar's triumph was celebrated for twenty days, and early in 44 BC, upon the occasion of Caesar being crowned, Vercingetorix was executed. Shortly after, on March 15th, the new emperor was assassinated. Three centuries elapsed, how-

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ever, before the prophecy of the Druids was fulfilled in the dismemberment of the empire. In Caesar's view, "The Gallic tribes as a whole were slaves to superstition," a curious judgment from one who just before his death had consulted an oracle for the reading of a pigeon's entrails to forecast the Ides of March.

The Druidic influence did not diminish with Caesar's conquest of the Celts. Some of their beliefs and practices, albeit transformed, continued, even to this day, particularly with the recrudescence of the occult and metaphysics. Most of their rituals were directed toward fertility in womankind and livestock. In their magic rites for the May Day Festival there were dances round the Maypole—a relic of the cosmic pole. Herdsmen set rows of bonfires on the hills and drove their cattle between them. Fire was brought from the hearth and, as burning brands were carried through the fields, dancers round the flames petitioned the sun to favor the crops. The climax came with a human or animal sacrifice in the bonfire. From this offering, the sun was to recover its strength after the long winter sleep. The King and Queen of the May came to incarnate the spirits of vegetation. Joined in marriage, they sought the pleasure of the gods in the children they bore which, in turn, stimulated the fertility of soil and flock. Until 1743, when the practice was outlawed, in Paris a human effigy was burnt and the people fought for fragments of the debris which were supposed to have magical properties. In modern France, near Grenoble, a goat was slaughtered at harvest time. Its

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flesh was eaten except for one piece which was treasured until the following spring. The skin was made into a coat which was believed to have the power to heal. Today, when the last sheaf is garnered or threshed, the farmers can still be heard to say, "We are killing the old woman"—or the hare, the dog or the ox.

In the British Isles, a vestige of the sacred oak tree reverberates in the jingle: "Turn your cloaks/For fair folks/Are in old oaks." And "knock on wood" is almost the universal rubric for warding off evil and bringing good luck. The mistletoe which twines around oak trees was, according to Pliny, most sanctified by the Druids. With a ceremonial golden sickle they cut sections away from the oak, made a magic balm from the berries and applied it to barren women to gain them fertility. Kissing under the Christmas mistletoe, today a gambit for lovers, was intended then as a specific and more pregnant charm for fecundity.

Graves were believed to be sanctuaries, entrances to the underworld, dwellings of the departed and the retreats of dispossessed gods. The stones and boulders which marked them were hallowed and contained magic. They were held in such reverence that in the year 452 the Synod of Arles denounced those who "venerate trees and wells and stones."

Not surprising, then, was the long-held belief that Stonehenge was the remains of a Druid temple. The garbling resulted partly from a 4th century writer referring to them as "a magnificent circular temple dedicated to Apollo," and the fact that the sun—Apollo to the Greeks—was a Druid god. The confusion heightened with the discovery of more megalithic monuments at Carnac, on a peninsula of northwest France, where *menhirs* (single standing

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stones) were found aligned in eleven parallel rows for almost three-quarters of a mile near the shore of Biscay Bay. Also, in Avebury village, Wiltshire, not far from Stonehenge in southern England, were found larger and more ancient stone pillars. But archeology's carbon test proved them all a thousand years too old to be the sacred stones of the Druids who did not arrive in that part of the world until the 3rd century BC.

The spirit of the Druids persists to this day in these metamorphosed folkways, and in legends, especially among the Welsh, the Scotch and Irish, many bearing startling kinship with the myths of other peoples. *The Coming of Lugh*, for instance, is the story of the Sun God of all Celtica. His name is heard like faint music in those of cities in France and Holland — Lyons and Leyden. The legend of Lugh tells of a one-eyed king and his attempts to dodge his destiny which is to die by the hand of a Druidess, the villainous monarch is brought low, after much treachery and trial—ordeals with a magic sword and spear, a golden spit purloined from the hearth of the sea nymphs, and transmogrifications of man into pig. In battle, Lugh flings a stone through the single eye of the king, penetrating his brain. Lugh's victory represented the triumph of light over darkness.

Not too faint are the echoes in Greek mythology and in the Teuton Ring of the Niebelungen. Such was the religion of the ancient Druids; and such was the stuff of which opera was made in more recent times.

Barry Hyams has written the biography of art collector Joseph H. Hirshhorn which is scheduled for publication in the spring of 1979 by E. P. Dutton.

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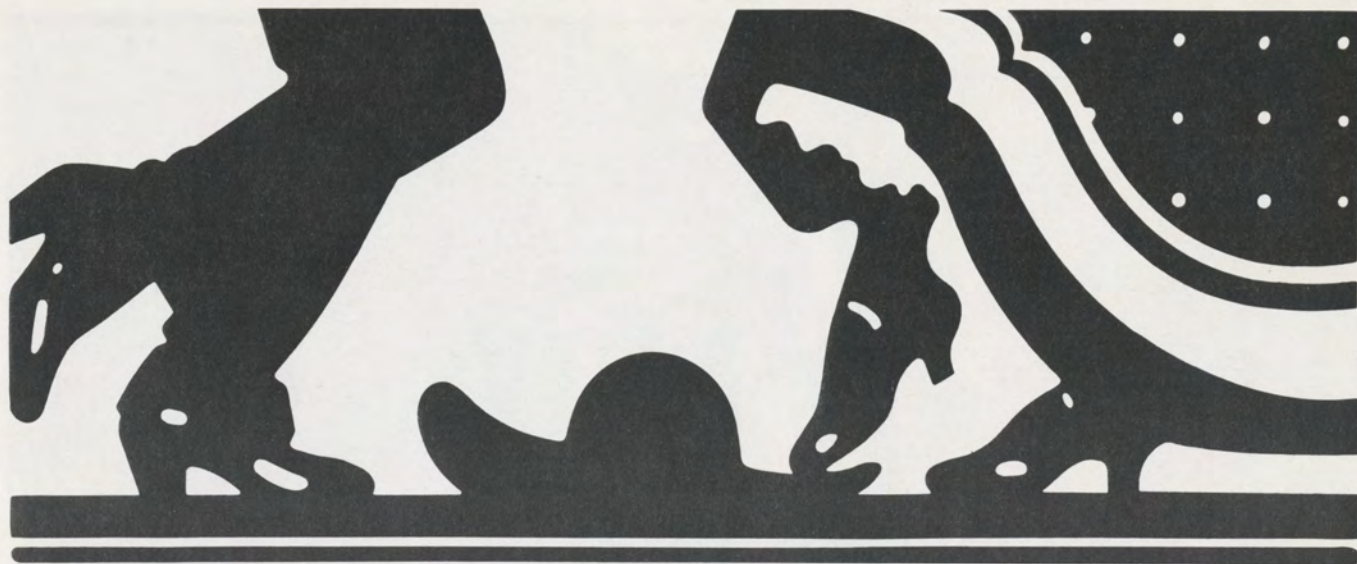
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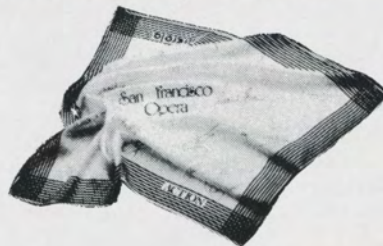
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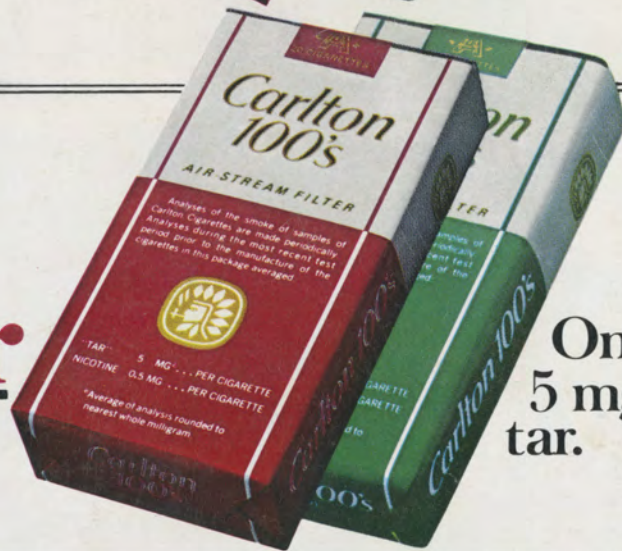


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Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Box: Less than 0.5 mg. "tar," 0.05 mg. nicotine; Soft Pack and Menthol: 1 mg. "tar," 0.1 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report May '78. 100 mm: 5 mg. "tar," 0.5 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.