

La Fanciulla del West
(The Girl of the Golden West)

1979

Wednesday, October 17, 1979 7:30 PM

Saturday, October 20, 1979 8:00 PM

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Saturday, October 27, 1979 1:30 PM

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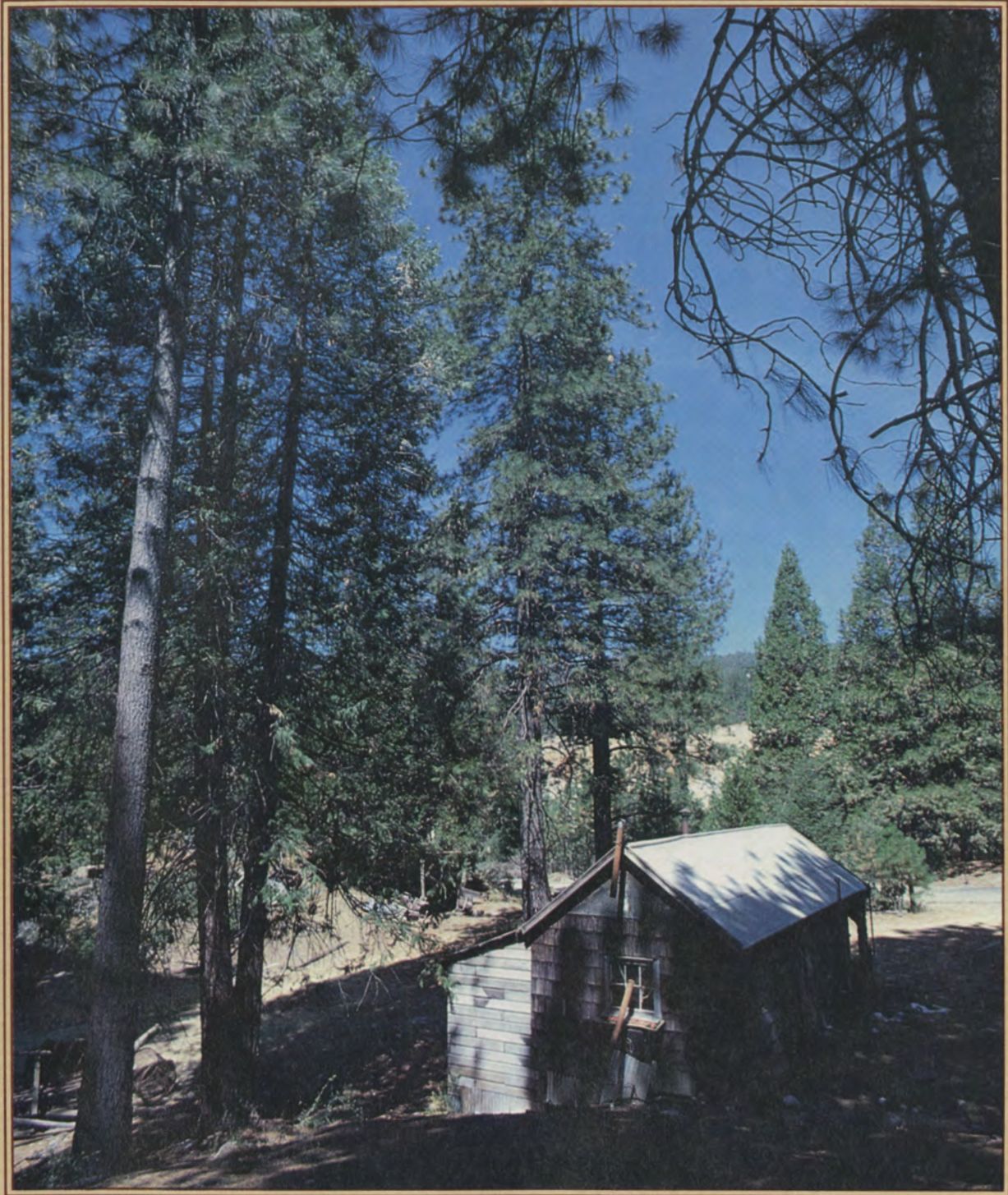
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LA FANCIULLA

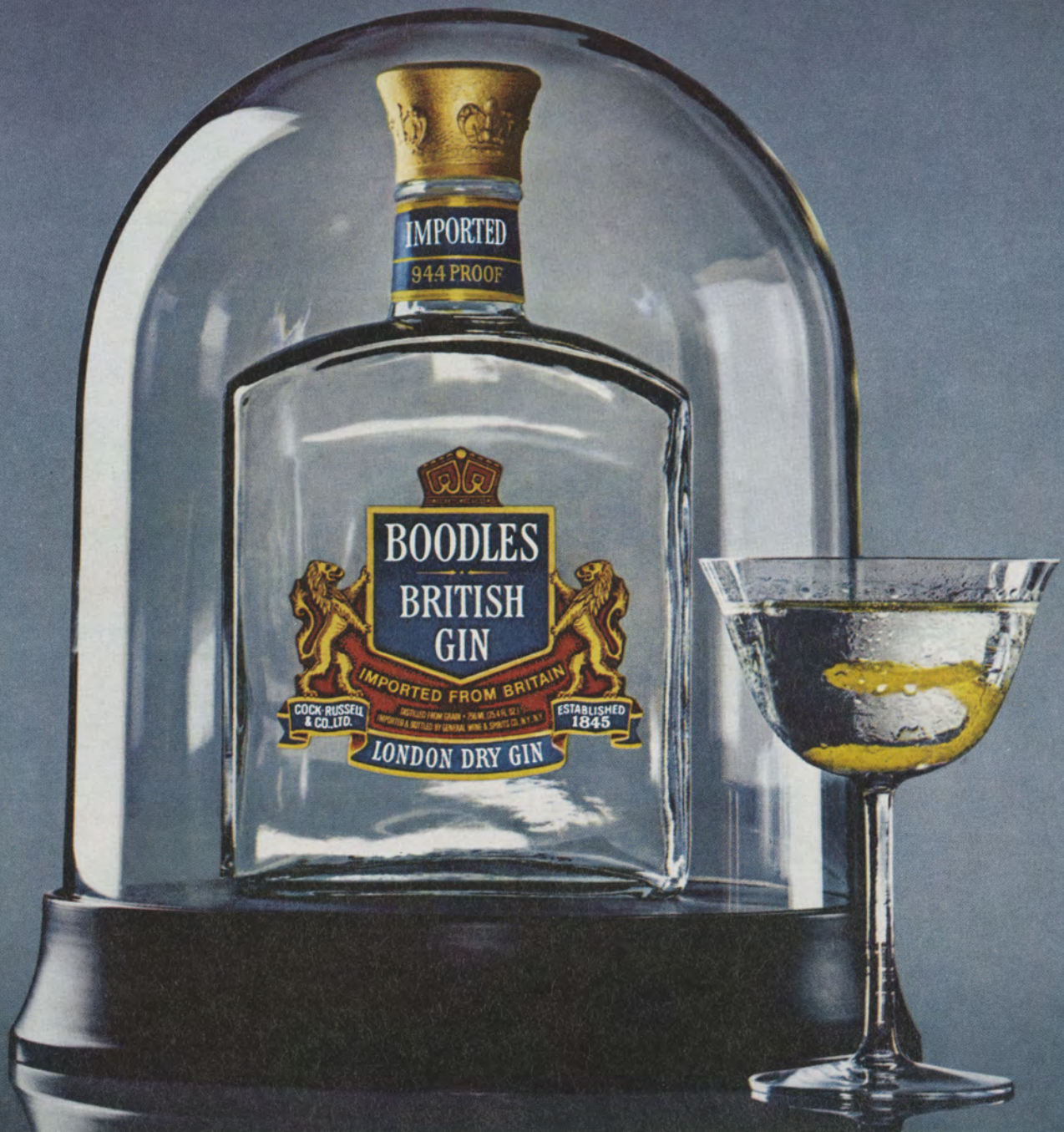


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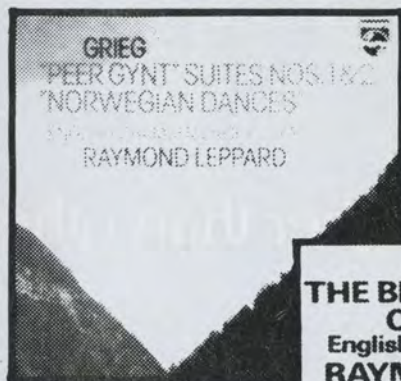
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La Fanciulla del West



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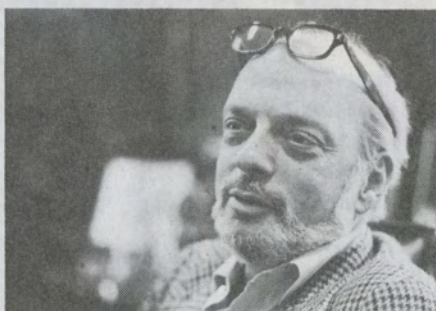
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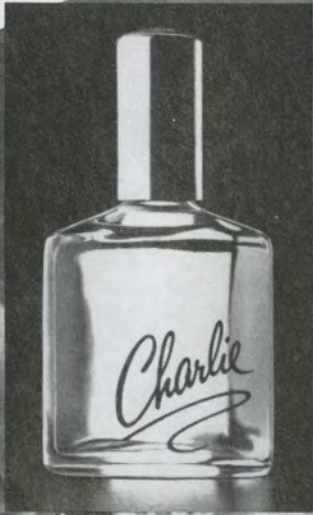
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Cover: Photographer David Powers went to the high Sierras—where else?—to
shoot the setting of California's own *La Fanciulla del West*.

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The world premiere of Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West* took place in 1910 in New York with Toscanini conducting and Enrico Caruso, Emmy Destinn and Marie Mattfeld as Dick Johnson, Minnie and Wovkle.

A Love Story with a Happy Ending, and Yet...

Puccini's Fanciulla Paints a Haunting Picture of the Sad and Lonely Lives of the Miners in the Brutal Gold Rush Days

by BARBARA FISCHER-WILLIAMS

On July 13, 1908, Giacomo Puccini complained to his publisher, the illustrious Giulio Ricordi, "It is a very difficult piece of work, this *Girl* (I shall never call it *Fanciulla*, if only because of the last two syllables, which I am afraid might refer to me." The word he had in mind was "ciullo," sometimes used in Italian slang to mean "stupid," and there were periods during the transformation of David Belasco's play *The Girl of the Golden West* into Puccini's opera *La Fanciulla del West* when the composer might understandably

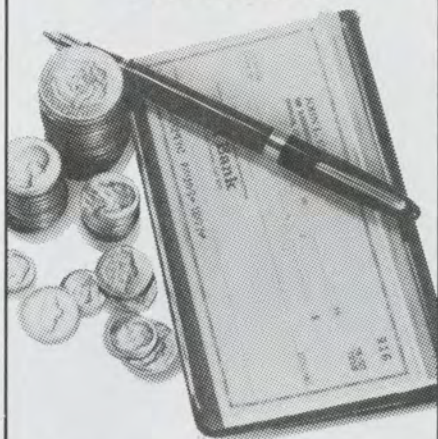
have doubted his wisdom in undertaking the task. It was a long and far from easy road he traversed from February 1907, when he first saw the play in New York, to July 28, 1910, when he wrote to Ricordi saying "L'opera è finita . . . Lode a Dio" (The opera is finished . . . Praise be to God).

The roots in effect go back much farther than 1907, to May 1900, when the composer, in London for the Covent Garden première of his *Tosca*, was taken, reportedly by some Italian friends, Alfredo and Maria Angeli, to see Belasco's play *Madam Butterfly*, then running successfully at the Duke

of York's Theatre. It was his first contact with a Belasco work, and what struck him above all was its direct dramatic appeal—the fact that he could easily follow the story, even though he did not understand English. The same quality impressed him at his first introduction to *The Girl* in New York nearly seven years later, and in the interim he had justified his instincts by giving the world *Madama Butterfly*.

Credit for inspiring Puccini to try his hand at his second Belasco adaptation has been variously ascribed. Probably the most accurate version is that it

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should be divided between the Marchese Piero degli Antinori and Sybil Seligman. The Marchese, a friend whom the composer saw when he was in Paris shortly before his departure for New York in January 1907 to attend the Metropolitan premières of two of his operas (*Butterfly* and *Manon Lescaut*), told him he should make a point of seeing the play about the American West which was then gathering laurels on Broadway. Mrs. Seligman, Puccini's close friend and mentor in London, commissioned a translation for him when he returned, and successfully pressed the claims of the Belasco work over other subjects he was considering at the time, notably an opera about Marie Antoinette, to be called *L'Austriaca* (*The Austrian Woman*), a project which eventually died stillborn.

Since these other possibilities were still in his mind, it is evident that although *Minnie*, *The Girl*, had made a favorable impression, she had not yet been installed as Puccini's new prima donna when he left New York, and even later on when the die was cast, he does not seem to have followed his usual custom of immediately falling head over heels in love, as he did with his other heroines, Mimi, Manon and, above all, Cio Cio San. His expressions of affection as the opera grew upon him appear always to be addressed to the work, rather than to the protagonist.

The definite decision to embark on a libretto was made during the summer of 1907 and, Belasco's permission having been duly secured, the question then arose of who should be the librettist. The previous great trio of Puccini, Giuseppe Giacosa and Luigi Illica was no longer in existence since Giacosa had died in January 1906, and Illica had fallen out of favor, so a search had to be instituted. On the advice of Ricordi, the choice fell on Carlo Zangarini, poet and author from Bologna, whose operatic credits include the librettos for Wolf-Ferrari's *The Jewels of the Madon-*

na and Zandonai's *Conchita*. Also, most aptly for Puccini's purposes, he had an American mother, herself a "fanciulla del west" (from Colorado), a happy coincidence which evidently stood him in good stead. The Italian biographer Mario Rinaldi, in a short work on *Fanciulla*, quotes him as saying: "The first time I saw a copy of the Belasco play, with its English full of Americanisms and of folklore (if it is legitimate to speak of folklore in connection with the United States) my interpretative faculties were put to a hard test. And in this demanding challenge my American mother proved a great help."

At first all went well and Puccini was delighted with Zangarini's work. ("*La Girl* promises to become a second *Bohème*, but more vigorous, bolder and broader," he wrote exultantly to Ricordi on August 28, 1907); but the librettist labored slowly, and furthermore had difficulty in making the changes and revisions unfailingly demanded by Puccini. The months passed, and when the composer had still not received the last act by April 1908, he insisted, over Zangarini's strenuous objections, that a collaborator be called in. Again thanks to the house of Ricordi, one was produced in the person of Guelfo Civinini, a Livornese playwright and journalist, and the work went ahead, albeit not without strains and stresses. It should be noted, moreover, that Puccini virtually always had a hand in his own librettos, and the present case was no exception.

From his correspondence with Ricordi it is clear, for example, that it was his idea that the highly dramatic last act should be staged out of doors instead of in "the dance hall of the Polka Saloon," where it takes place in the play. "An open space in the great California forest with its huge trees, but we must have eight or ten horses," he decreed, and eight were indeed provided for the New York première.

The composer was determined to cut

continued on p. 22

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A 1929 performance of *La Fanciulla del West* with (seated from left) Giulio Gatti-Casazza, general director of the Metropolitan Opera, Maria Jeritza and David Belasco and (standing from left) Lawrence Tibbett, unidentified, Armando Agnini and Frederick Jagel.

Il Fanciullo del West

Brooklyn-born Frederick Jagel Sang in the San Francisco Opera Premiere of Fanciulla in 1930 and Again in 1943, Now Is a Resident Here

by ALLAN ULRICH

Sometimes, much too frequently, in fact, a conversation with a famed singer of the past takes a wearisomely predictable turn. With a microphone and typewriter at his command, the artist under scrutiny feels compelled to rekindle old feuds with colleagues who have long ago passed on to the Great Green Room in the sky. Or, perhaps, he'll reveal some juicy and apocryphal morsel of scandal about one of his departed confrères, safe in the knowledge that there will be no reprisals. Then there's the type of respondent who looks you straight in the eye and tells you that he participated in a Golden Age of Opera, that today's youngsters just don't measure up to the standards set by his generation.

This, however, is not one of those interviews. And Frederick Jagel is not that kind of singer.

Certainly there is much about the tenor's career that might call for a bit of self-advertisement. Few surviving singers have been associated with the San Francisco Opera longer than Jagel. Few singers appeared here over such



Born in 1897, tenor Frederick Jagel now lives in retirement in San Francisco, sang many leading roles over the years with the San Francisco Opera.

Photo: Robert Messick.

CLUNY SCOTCH

*Always in
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a lengthy span of time; few offered such a wide variety of roles; and even fewer could refer to so many legendary artists as "my friends," and convince you that they meant it.

Jagel, however, remains remarkably serene about a career that flourished for nearly half a century. He shows uncommon astuteness about the shortcomings of his associates, but he refuses to spare himself; where a favorable word might conceivably be uttered, Jagel will pronounce it (one shakes one's head with welcome disbelief when he explains away a famous tenor's drinking problem, so far removed is it from the usually seething snakepit of backstage gossip).

Frederick Jagel, you might gather, is a very nice man. He is, also, at the age of 82, a noticeably robust one, with only a slight limp marking the passing of the years. Memories fade with time, yet Jagel recalls the high points of his professional life with surprising clarity. If he regrets anything, he has only to browse through his ample collection of souvenirs and photographs, some of which accompany this article. San Francisco's first Dick Johnson (in 1930!) was born a continent away from gold mine country, in the exotic territory of Brooklyn, and the amateur speech analyst will be quick to discern in Jagel's conversation a remnant of the area's characteristic inflection.

The story begins rather typically. Jagel's parents were middle-class German-Americans of sturdy stock. Possibly because his father was an organist by profession, music was always a prized activity in the household and young Frederick lost no time in becoming a boy soprano and then a soloist at a church in his native borough. The senior Jagel, however, sensing his son's passion for music, administered some wise counsel.

"My voice changed when I was 15, but my father," Jagel relates, "insisted that I stop singing until it settled, for about two years." It was so difficult. I loved

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the opera even then. As I matured, my voice assumed a deep, almost baritone quality. I remember learning the Prologue from *Pagliacci!* That, of course, was easy to explain. One of my great favorites at the time was Pasquale Amato, and I tried to pattern my phrasing after his.

"Soon my father realized that it was time for me to start studying. An audition was arranged with a gentleman named Portanova, a friend of my aunt. After I had sung the Prologue, he said, 'That's a good voice you've got, but you're not a baritone. You're a tenor, probably a lyric tenor. Later on, you'll sing more dramatic parts.' So, I started to study with him when I was 18, taking a lesson every day."

There was little extra in the Jagel household budget to encompass an additional ten dollars per session. Frederick was forced to make a career decision. He quit high school in his senior year and took a job with the Mutual Life Insurance Co. by day, in order to pay Sig. Portanova. If Jagel had even faltered in his desire for a singing career, a trip uptown to the Metropolitan steered him right back on course.

"I recall going to hear Caruso. My seat was up in the Family Circle, it only cost fifty cents, just think of that! He was doing *Canio* that night; how it struck home to me. Later I heard him in *Aida* and *Martha* and *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Tosca* with Geraldine Farrar and Antonio Scotti. Never did I think that, only a few years later, I would be singing Cavaradossi to Scotti's Scarpia, on that very stage!"

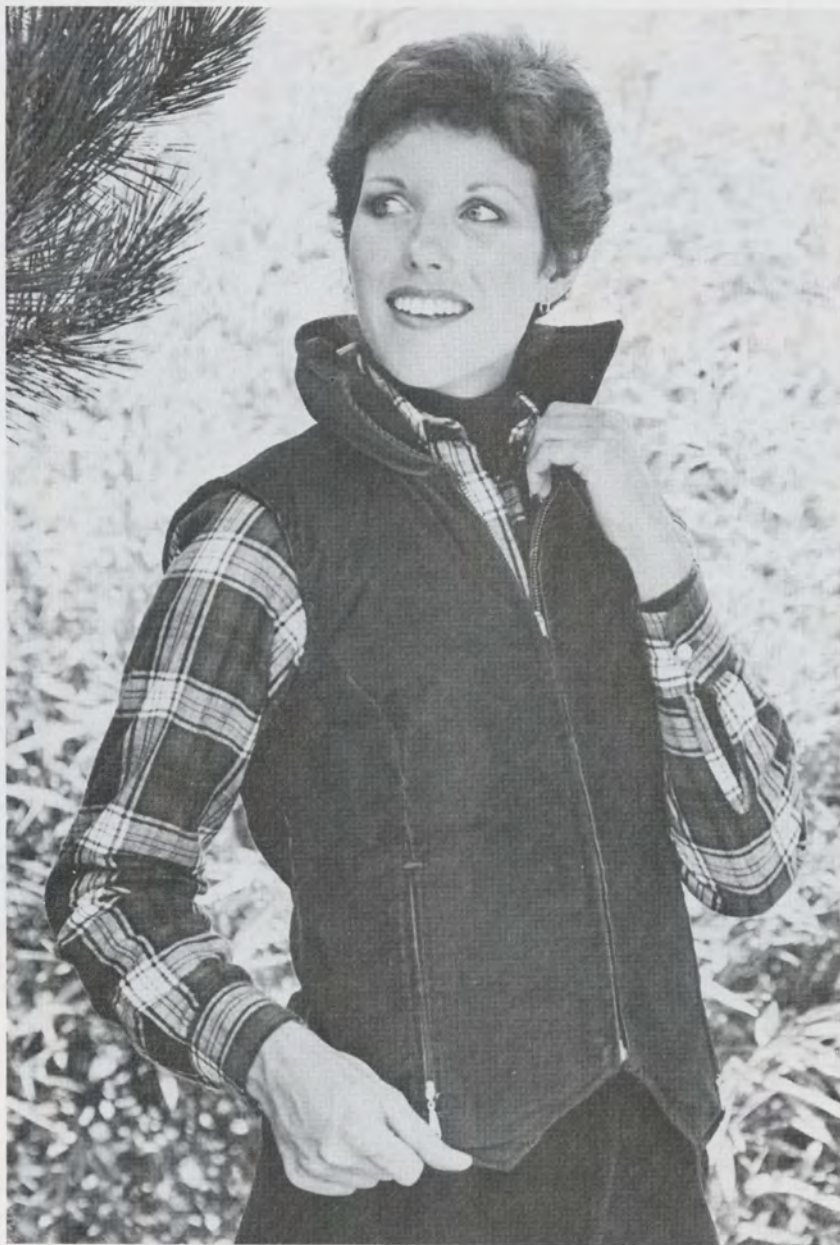
Destiny was soon to touch the stage-struck adolescent. This turn of plot reads like the last reel of a Warner's musical circa 1930; but happy endings, as well as happy beginnings, are not restricted to celluloid.

"I had been studying with Portanova for several years and had started to supplement my income by singing at a Christian Science Church in Far Rockaway. Then somebody came along, a

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dear friend, who liked my voice. I was asked to give a small concert at their house. He turned out to be a wealthy silk merchant and he informed me that he'd like to help me in my career. You know what he did?

"He sent me a check and told me, 'Put this in a savings bank. When you're through with this, I'll send you some more.' Over the years, it came to several thousand dollars. In the early 20s, I started singing on vaudeville programs at several theaters, the Rialto, the Rivoli, the Capitol, the Strand, most of them gone now.

"A couple of years later my benefactor asked me, 'How'd you like to go to Italy? You really should get into opera.' What else could I say to that but 'I'm ready.'?"

Jagel landed in (where else?) Milan in June, 1922, found a teacher named Cataldi and worked with him for four years. About a third of the way through that period, ambition bit.

"I knew that Gatti-Casazza came to Milan every year auditioning new singers for the Metropolitan. I certainly didn't expect a contract. I just wanted to let him know that I was on the map. So I went to sing for him at the Dal Verme Theater. I was the last of many applicants; after I had sung, Mr. Gatti requested another number. Then he asked me to wait around for a little while. He was waiting for Maestro Serafin.

"In walked the great conductor with Rosa Ponselle (she was learning *Norma* with him at that time). Serafin asked me to sing the third act of *Aida*. When I came down to the audience, Gatti offered me a contract for the coming season. I had to turn him down. 'I'm sorry, Commendatore'—that's what we called him—'but I have an engagement in Holland this year.' That didn't sit well with him, so I added, 'At least, it will give me an opportunity to expand my repertoire.' That seemed to pacify him, and he offered me a contract for the following season."

In truth, Jagel had, by this time, acquired some far from negligible stage experience. His professional debut (as *Almaviva*) had taken place in Newark, New Jersey, and he had sung Turiddu "in a little house down on 14th St." He had appeared on the Italian stage first as Rodolfo in *Bohème* and then as Pinkerton, both roles heard initially in Livorno. He performed throughout the provinces and debuted at the Dal Verme as Edgardo in *Lucia*. Yet the leap to Radames was a natural one.

"Although I was singing as a lyric, my voice was gradually taking on a certain strength. My first departure from that repertoire was Enzo in *Gioconda*, which I sang in Arezzo; then I progressed through *Tosca* and *Manon Lescaut* right to *Aida* in Rome."

This latter opera was chosen by Jagel himself for his Met debut, much to the surprise of Mr. Gatti, who thought he might have been happier with Rodolfo. Serafin agreed on the tenor's choice and the impresario devised a delightful surprise for his new star's family.

"I left Italy in October, 1927, without telling either my mother or my benefactor that I had been engaged. Mr. Gatti insisted on telling my mother the news by sending her a registered letter, which he arranged to arrive on Mother's Day."

No debutant could have asked for more illustrious colleagues: Grete Stückgold, Margarete Matzenauer ("What a big woman, but, oh, what a voice! I first saw her opposite Caruso in *Le Prophète*"), the immortal Giuseppe de Luca and Adamo Didur. That same season Jagel also sang the doomed hero in Verdi's *Ernani* opposite Ponselle, Pinza and Giuseppe Danise.

As Jagel reels off his parts one by one, the legendary names of the past float by. Some he remembers with particular affection.

Like Rosa Ponselle.

"I had heard her debut with Caruso

continued on p. 27

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The San Francisco Opera Guild's annual Fol de Rol returns this year with a rousing wild west theme, inspired by Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West*. It will take place the evening of November 12 in the Civic Auditorium, as a benefit, and major stars who have already agreed to take part include Leontyne Price, Montserrat Caballé, Marilyn Horne, Veriano Luchetti, Giuseppe Taddei and Guillermo Sarabia, with others to be announced.

Charlotte "Tex" Mailliard is chairperson of the event for the Guild, and the Fol de Rol is co-sponsored by Great Western Savings and Ralph Lauren/Polo Western Wear. To get into the spirit of the event Harmony, the Cosmic Cowgirl, recently lassoed Great Western Savings president James Montgomery, Mailliard and opera general director Kurt Herbert Adler, who will produce the Fol de Rol.

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and change the Belasco text as he saw fit, but among the episodes he unhesitatingly retained was what he described as “*la classe di asen!*” (The school for donkeys), the scene in which Minnie reads to the miners, although he transferred it from the last act in the play to the first act in the opera, and changed her book from *Old Joe Miller’s Jokes* to the Bible. He also had some trouble deciding on the title. Having toyed unsuccessfully with various versions, he wrote to Sybil Seligman on August 30, 1908, asking her whether she preferred *La Figlia del West* (*The Girl of the West*) or *L’Occidente d’Oro* (*The Golden West*), and for the record it was she who came up with the wording finally chosen. But about a month later Puccini’s life

was engulfed in tragedy so profound that everything else was driven from his mind, and he was unable to resume

“Puccini in his Western opera was adopting a new idiom and was causing his music to soar over a horizon broader than any he had attempted heretofore.”

work in any meaningful fashion for another year.

The blow was the Doria Manfredi scandal, which erupted when Puccini’s jealous and difficult wife, Elvira, ac-

cused Doria, who worked as a maid in the Puccini household at Torre del Lago near Lucca, of having an affair with her husband. The unjust accusations culminated in the suicide of the innocent young girl, whose family brought a lawsuit against Elvira, resulting in sentence of a prison term and a fine. Eventually, the payment of a large sum to the family saved her from prison, but Puccini felt his life was in ruins. He separated temporarily from Elvira and for a time even contemplated making it a permanency. A letter written from Torre to an old friend in Rome, Alfredo Vandini, gives some idea of his state of mind: “I am extremely sad, and for now there is no

continued on p. 36



The first act of the Harold Prince production of *Fanciulla del West* as seen at the Lyric Opera of Chicago last year.

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"His soft, lyrical quality, measured grace and polished lustrous tone were ideal . . ." That was the assessment of *San Francisco Chronicle's* Robert Commanday, written following Murray Perahia's appearance with the San Francisco Symphony in December of 1978, at which time the pianist was heard in Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto. Reviews of his many concerts around the world reveal an embarrassment of compliments: "May well be the most eloquent lyric virtuoso since the days of Dinu Lipatti" (*TIME Magazine*), "Aristocratic musician" (*Records and Recordings*), "Endowed with sensibility, intelligence, taste and fluency" (*Boston Globe*), "Revival of the aristocracy of the piano" (*The Times, London*), ". . . a poet of the keyboard" (*The Guardian*), etcetera, etcetera.

All those who attended San Francisco Symphony's sold-out all-Beethoven concerts last December, or heard the broadcast on KKHI, will clearly remember the Perahia experience. For them and for those who are yet to be introduced to Murray Perahia—good news: he is returning for a recital that will take place on Sunday, November 4, at 3 pm in San Francisco's Masonic Auditorium. The artist has chosen a most interesting program: Beethoven's Sonata No. 11 in B flat, Op. 22; Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*, Bartok's Suite Op. 14, and three pieces by Chopin: Fantasy in F minor, Berceuse, and Barcarolle. The event is part of San Francisco's Great Performers Series.

In 1972, after Perahia's London debut, the *Christian Science Monitor* recorded the audience reaction as ". . . the kind usually reserved for Rubinstein." Bay Area audiences, please note.

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Jagel as Dick Johnson in *La Fanciulla del West*.

in *Forza del Destino*. From the standpoint of just voice, there was nothing like it. So natural. After all, she was only 21 when she first appeared at the Met. She had probably matured early. At the time of her debut, she knew only that one opera. Gatti had engaged her on the strength of an audition that Caruso had engineered.

Together we did *Cavalleria*, *Norma*, *L'Africana* and *Traviata*."

And Bidu Sayao.

"She has the sweetest character of anybody I ever met. I don't think she had a mean bone in her. She was very natural, very generous; and though her voice was not large, it was easily produced and very well schooled. Lucrezia Bori was like that too."

Tullio Serafin also merits encomiums.

"He was very particular; you could not get by with any slipshod perform-

ances, you had to be right on the button. When in the prime of his career, he was like Toscanini—the authority, although he probably didn't have Toscanini's electricity."

His contemporary, Giovanni Martinelli, was indirectly responsible for a nickname that pursued Jagel throughout his career.

"Originally, I wasn't supposed to sing that first Ernani. Martinelli was sick and I had to jump in. I also substituted for him in *Aida*, *Boccanegra* and *Pagliacci*. Later, Milton Cross called me 'The Minute Man of Opera,' because of the way I had dashed down to replace Martinelli as Radames. There was always a wonderful feeling between the two of us. I often sang *Turiddu* and he did *Canio* on the same evening."

If Jagel hadn't been wise about his repertoire, he might never have come to San Francisco.



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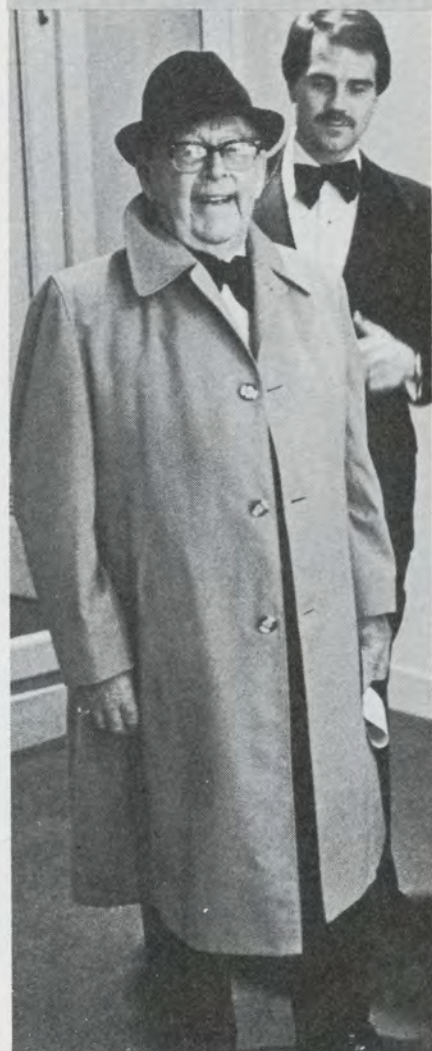


Photo: Ira Nowinski

Jagel arriving in his dressing room for last November's Anniversary Gala.

"Maestro Merola had come to Mr. Gatti, seeking my services for *Tannhäuser* and *Salome* for the 1930 season. I told Gatti that I was still too lyric for those heavy roles. 'Let me sing something Italian.' The message was relayed to Merola; he engaged Sidney Rayner for those parts; and he hired me instead for *Fanciulla del West, Faust* and *Cavalleria*."

The tempestuous Maria Jeritza's Minnie and Santuzza shared the stage of the Grove St. Auditorium with him. A few years earlier, in New York, she had left an indelible impression upon Jagel. "You always felt you were in the presence of a star." Jagel's gaze drifts



The young Frederick Jagel as Enzo in his first *La Gioconda*, in Milan in 1926.

off into the distance as he speaks. "When she made her debut in Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt*, she did something in the second act that is hard to forget. She stood by a pillar and let her hair down, a long blonde wig which fell across her broad cheekbones to her lovely figure. I wouldn't exactly have called her beautiful; striking is more like it. She had a strong voice (you know she sang Brunnhilde), was very tall and brought an electrifying quality to everything she did on stage.

"Sometimes she could be a bit original in her ideas. During the *Cavalleria* re-

continued on p. 32



Johann

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JERITZA WINS ACCLAIM IN "GOLDEN WEST"

Viviani and Jagel Charm Large Audience at Auditorium Performances

By ALEXANDER FRIED

Puccini's opera of the forty-niners, *The Girl of the Golden West*, came to the region of its setting last night in the fourth production of the San Francisco Opera Company at the Civic Auditorium. An enormous audience heard with especial delight reference to the old California locale—Sacramento, Monterey, San Francisco, and whiskey straight—in lyric Italian.

In Minnie, the angel of the Polka Bar, Maria Jeritza found a role perfectly congenial to her daring stage spirit. She put an infectious humor into the simplicity of the girl's nature at the start, and with skill and imagination developed the intensity of the pace with the melodrama of the Long-Belasco story. In the big scene of the second act she built up smashing effect where Minnie in the crucial duel of cards with Sheriff Rance stakes her love to protect her sweetheart.

VIVIANI PLAYS WELL

The new Italian baritone of the company, Gaetano Viviani, played powerfully opposite her as the sinister Rance. He needed the full strength of his arm in this scene, for Jeritza is not given to sham stage battles. His magnificent voice, as little as Puccini's score permitted it graceful vocal line, was again extraordinarily impressive.

Frederick Jagel, young American tenor, made a very successful first California opera appearance as Dick Johnson. His sturdy voice is ample of tone and range. He acted the part of the romantic hero well, if one excepts the occasional gesture too much in the manner of old-school melodrama.

Indeed, *The Girl* belongs to this category of theater entertainment. Its quaintness which, incidentally, Armando Agnini's clever staging minimized to surprising extent, lies at least as much in its badly dated American book as in any artifices of the grand opera style.

OTHERS MORE MEMORABLE

Musically the work represents Puccini in a slump. *Boheme*, *Butterfly*, *Tosca*, which he wrote before, or *Gianni*

Schicchi, *La Rondine*, or even *Turandot*, which he wrote after, have in their different ways and different degrees of pretentiousness a memorable flavor that the *Girl* does not provide.

The score makes insensitive use of harmonic cliches of the time of its composition, most of them broadly Debussyan. It has in general Puccini's theatrical touch and is benefited by his accustomed skill in orchestration. It is only a husk of theater technique.

OTHERS IN CAST

Many of the useful artists of the company's subsidiary list were cast in the production. Tudor Williams displayed a pleasing baritone voice in the part of Wallace. The ranks of the miners included Louis D'Angelo, Millo Picco, Giordano Paltrinieri, Andre Ferrier, Carlo Cozzi, Nullo Caravacci, Edward Fadem and Robet Sellon. Ludovico Oliviero tended bar. Eugenio Sandrini was once a homesick prospector, once an Indian, and once a Mexican outlaw. Elinor Marlow was Wowkle, the squaw.

Gaetano Merola conducted a performance of striking vigor and surety of movement. The orchestra, consisting of symphony players with Nathan Abas in the concert master's chair, again showed admirable adaptability and devotion in its comparatively unaccustomed task of playing opera.

The men of Antonio Dell'Orefice's chorus sang and acted forcefully a difficult ensemble role. The young ladies rejoiced in an evening off. Agnini's settings were authentically suggestive.

The audience came not unprepared to smile indulgently at the extravagance of California history in grand opera. Nevertheless it thrilled heartily to the action of the second scene. Thereafter applause reached its peak in a thorough ovation for Mme. Jeritza, Jagel, Viviani, Merola and their colleagues.



Backstage in San Francisco as Rhadames in *Aida*, with Ezio Pinza (left) as Ramfis.



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hearsals here, she came to me and said, 'Jagel, when we come to the end of that duet, give me a shove so I'll roll down the stairs.' So, I gave her a nudge and she tumbled down this flight of at least six stairs, making a terrific effect on the audience.

"She was a reasonably good actress, not quite as accomplished as some sopranos today. Once in a while, her personality could get in the way of her interpretations. I recall seeing her in *Carmen* at the Met. She wanted to make an especially good appearance before the public, so she spent much of the time posing. Corelli would do

the same thing, but he had such a magnificent voice, you could almost forget everything else."

Jagel's third role in 1930, that of Gounod's *Faust* brought him to the stage with Ezio Pinza and former socialite Hope Hampton. He chuckles to himself when her name comes up.

"A one-time movie actress, she was a beautiful red-haired girl. She had a respectable voice, but it was no world-beater, probably about the same caliber as Jeanette MacDonald. Let's say that she sang by virtue of her beauty. During one of the *Faust* performances, I had to embrace her, standing in a window during the Garden Scene. In fact, she



A rare venture into the Wagner repertoire was in New Orleans as Lohengrin.

was standing on a chair behind the set. Unfortunately, she lost her footing during our duet, and I had to hold on to her for dear life."

Jagel confirms that the 1930 audience reaction to *La Fanciulla del West* was intensely enthusiastic.

"It hadn't been a repertory opera, but Puccini was very fond of it, considering it a bridge to *Turandot*, with many of his still evolving ideas appearing here first. I liked it, personally, because I had the arias in both the second and third acts, as well as the long duet with Minnie."

When *Fanciulla* was again performed here in 1943, Jagel returned to reincarnate the outlaw bandit, joined by Florence Kirk and Robert Weede. It was considered a failure possibly because Merola had decided to give the opera in English.

"Merola was determined to have it that way. There were snickers from the audience when it heard 'Good-bye,' or 'I'll have a whiskey.' They laughed even more when we toured to Sacramento." Presumably, modern audiences can now appreciate the exoticism that Puccini found in Old California.

Jagel was absent from the San Francisco Opera roster for close to a decade, returning in 1939 to sing the Duke opposite Lawrence Tibbett's Rigoletto

and Lily Pons' Gilda. He was to stay with us for every season through 1945, offering local patrons his Radames, Pinkerton, Gabriele Adorno, Riccardo, Alvaro, Dimitri in *Boris Godunov* and Herod in *Salome*. He returned in 1950 to sing this latter role; it marked his unofficial retirement from the stage. But he continued to concertize extensively (San Francisco Symphony audiences still remember a concert version of *Parsifal* with Jagel's old pal, Dusolina Giannini, under the baton of Pierre Monteux).

In the late afternoon of his career he started to assume several new roles, many of them from the twentieth century repertoire, a gesture that most leading tenors would have considered anathema. Jagel had always had a taste for the exotic. He had appeared in the premières (in Buenos Aires) of two works by Ildebrando Pizzetti, *Fra Gherardo* and *Lo Straniero*, and did the first performance of Montemezzi's *La Notte di Zoraima* with Ponselle ("a story with an Inca background; the music was not particularly attractive.") In 1951 he appeared as the drum-major in Dimitri Mitropoulos' historic New York Philharmonic concert version of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, an opera Jagel confesses, "I would have been very wary of doing in my prime." On the

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concert platform, he gave one of the first American readings of Leos Janáček's searing song cycle, *Diary of One Who Vanished*, and only a few years back, he participated in the first production in this country of the same composer's *From the House of the Dead*. It was designed expressly for National Educational Television and may yet be rerun on your local channel.

Teaching had been a part of Jagel's regimen since 1946, an activity in which he had been encouraged by his former coach, William Brady. Thanks to the G.I. Bill, he was never short of students; and when Edward Johnson suggested that he assist William Whitney in the voice department at the New England Conservatory, Jagel packed his bags for Boston. Among his most illustrious students he numbers basso Justino Díaz. Our conversation recently in Jagel's cozy apartment in San Francisco's Sunset District was intermittently punctuated by phone calls from current students in need of advice.

Three years after the tenor's wife of four decades passed away, he remarried. He said to his second wife, "This is certainly a novel experience for me. Let's have a complete change. Let's move out to San Francisco. That was always my favorite city of the whole United States. She loved the idea and we arrived here in 1970."

Jagel's extensive career entitles him to make a few pertinent observations on singing in general. We can't resist asking if there was truly a Golden Age. "Comparisons are odious, but I certainly think that Domingo, say, has a better voice than most of the tenors of my time. In retrospect, we always think that the Age before us was Golden.

"I have noticed that we have a plethora of Spanish tenors today, all of them excellent. In my time, there were only three—Lazaro, Fleeta and Cortis."

About contemporary uses and abuses of the tenor instrument:

"Too many today like to begin with

the more heroic roles. Some are fitted for them; some are not. Some are thrown into them before their time. There's just this terrible demand in the business today. It's very difficult to say 'I'll just sing five operas, and build a career on those.' One tenor who subscribes to that is Alfredo Kraus. He's very particular and very wise. The voice is still beautiful without any strain. Gedda is another one who has been very careful, and he has the advantage of being able to sing the Russian and French repertoires without any difficulty."

No. It's not the singers Jagel misses from his prime. It's something else.

"There was more camaraderie in those days. Today, because of the demand, singers zip around from Vienna to Milan to San Francisco. We used to come out by train and stay the whole season. Merola was the spark plug of good feelings. We used to go to the wineries and have dinner together; sometimes Pinza would throw a party down at DiMaggio's . . . we'd really have a good time.

"Merola was proud of the fact that he'd started things off in the modern era. He used to engage a lot of the Met singers. Mr. Adler has to compete with Europe and on much tighter schedules and has to contend with the jet. But he's done it and he's done miracles. And, of course, Merola couldn't explore Adler's field of repertoire and do it with that kind of imaginative approach."

The qualities that Jagel seeks in a student might serve as a prescription for vocal sanity.

"I look for freedom of tone. I look for the motives behind the desire to be a singer. What kind of a person is he? The singer's personality is the most important area; he must be absolutely free from tension. Anyone with personal problems has an enormous barrier to overcome."

That was obviously one hurdle that Frederick Jagel never encountered.

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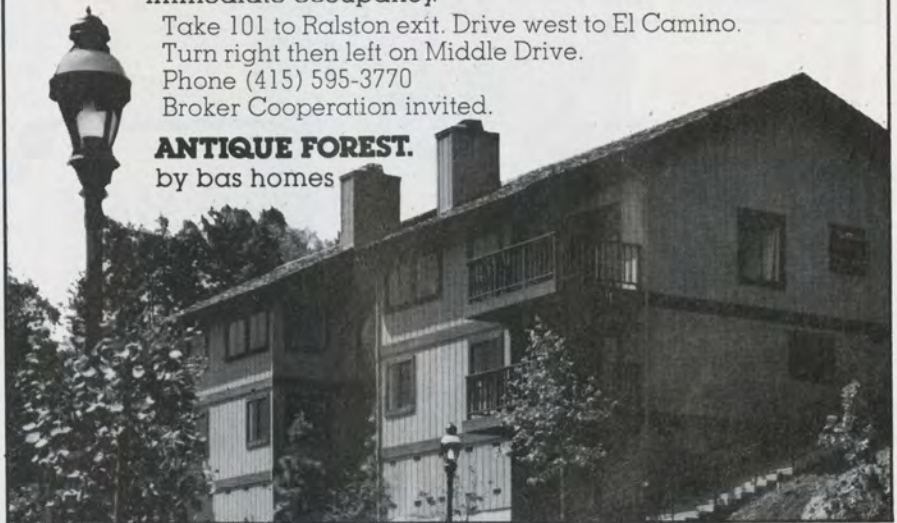
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to "Minnie and her friends," as the composer was wont to call them.)

For the 1910 gala performance a star-spangled cast was assembled, headed by soprano Emmy Destinn as The Girl, tenor Enrico Caruso as the bandit-hero Dick Johnson and baritone Pasquale Amato as Sheriff Jack Rance, with Toscanini conducting, and—an inestimable benefit—with Belasco playing a large part in the staging. Not only was the dramatist determined, as he said, "to make the artists act as well as sing", but he also rode herd on such unintentionally humorous extravaganzas as dressing the miners in cowboy attire to achieve a "genuine" Wild West ambience! Puccini arrived in New York a month ahead of time to attend the rehearsals and found himself lionized on all sides and swamped in a tidal wave of publicity. An atmosphere of almost hysterical excitement mounted to fever pitch as the first night of his "American" opera approached, and so frantic was the demand for tickets that despite elaborate precautions to prevent scalping they are said to have sold for as much as \$200 a pair. The ecstatic audience demanded a total of fifty-two curtain calls, twenty of them at the end, with the zenith being reached when Puccini was crowned with a silver laurel wreath entwined with the colors of Italy and the United States.

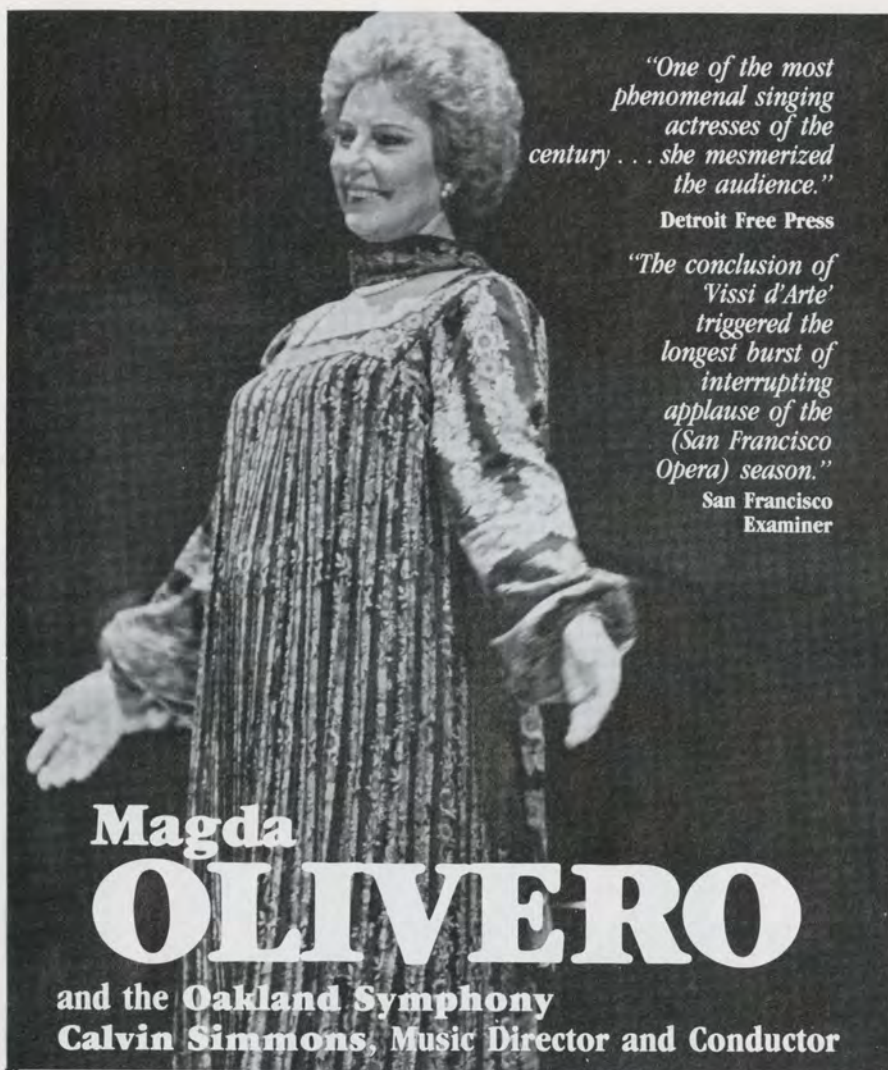
The opera received a record number of performances that winter for a new work—nine at the Metropolitan, and others in Philadelphia, Brooklyn, Chicago, Baltimore and St. Louis. Boston followed in 1911, which was also the year for European premières at Covent Garden and the Costanzi in Rome. San Franciscans first heard *The Girl* in an English version (by R. H. Elkin) given by the Savage Opera Company at the Cort Theatre on January 15, 1912. Luisa Villani, Umberto Sachetti and Carl Gantvoort were the principals, with Giorgio Polacco on the podium. And the first performance by the San Francisco Opera took place on September 15, 1930, with a cast headed by Jeritza,



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Jagel and Viviani, under the baton of Merola.

The critics in New York, although favorable on the whole, was varied, and much less indiscriminately rapturous than that of the house. More than one reviewer commented on a change in Puccini's style, and detected echoes of Debussy. Thus, Richard Aldrich, the perceptive and prestigious critic of *The New York Times*, noted "a marked predilection" for the Debussy idiom, and added: "There is plenty of the personal note in what [Puccini] has written, and nobody would suspect it of being Debussy's. Yet it may be doubted whether any who knew the composer only through *La Bohème* would recognize him in this, so far has he traveled in thirteen years." The *Harper's Weekly* reviewer wrote: "There is a great deal in the score that is beautiful and moving. But to be quite frank, there is altogether too much of Debussy in it for those who are aware of Puccini's gift of authentically personal utterance." Perhaps the unkindest cut came from *The Musical Courier*, whose reporter claimed that once the tumult had died down the general "whispered opinion" had been "that the first attempt of a famous European composer to operatize American people and customs had been a prodigious even if polite failure—'fiasco d'estime' would be the European way of putting it." Acknowledgement of the debt owed by the opera to the play, and to Belasco, was widespread. Typical was the *Harper's Weekly* review, which said: "The play is melodrama flagrant and unmasked; but it is uncommonly good melodrama, and there is no difficulty in understanding why it should have appealed to the composer who found in Sardou's *Tosca* a perfect vehicle for his remarkable gift of musico-theatric expression—a gift which, in its sort, is unsurpassed."

Melodrama it may be, but it is fascinating to discover that according to no less an authority than Belasco himself, one of the most melodramatic incidents in

the play—the drop of blood from the loft which betrays the hero's presence to the villain — was founded on an actual real-life incident. In a preface to the play, contained in a 1925 volume of *Representative American Dramas* assembled by Montrose J. Moses, Belasco is quoted as telling the story of an episode which occurred when his own father was a member of a gold miners' camp in British Columbia in his early days. He and some of his companions were snowed up in a hut, with their provisions almost exhausted and under guard to prevent theft, when one night an unfortunate miner from Philadelphia who "had had the blues for months" was stricken with "hunger fever" and managed to steal a little bread and beef, together with some gold dust. Then he fled the camp, but returned with the sheriff on his tracks, and although wounded by his pursuer managed to crawl upstairs into the loft. The other miners, who were playing poker when the sheriff appeared, gave no helpful answers to his questions, and he joined in the game. They let him win "so as to make him feel good," but as he held out his hand to say goodnight a drop of blood fell upon it. "The victim was caught," the dramatic Belasco account continues. "There was no staying the hand of the law; one could see this very well as the sheriff gripped his gun and drew himself up to his full height. Standing there, his gaunt shadow thrown against the wall, his white face etched with marks of hardship and of toil, he poked the muzzle of his gun between the rafters and fired. He had done his job, and so he left without another word."

Interestingly enough, the play implicitly makes it clear that in the hair-raising poker game Rance knows that Minnie has cheated, a theory to which San Francisco's "Girl," soprano Carol Neblett, gave support in a recent interview. During the final act of the play the following scene takes place:

Girl: Jack Rance, I want to thank you.

Rance: Oh, don't thank me that he got away. (*In low voice*) It was them three aces and the pair you held.

Girl: About them three aces — I want to say—

Rance: But he better keep out of my country (*The Girl and Rance look intently at one another*).

The play, by the way, shares Puccini's preference for referring to the heroine simply as "the Girl." She is listed thus in the dramatis personae, and the miners all call her so most of the time. Even Johnson, at the end when he is about to be hanged and thinks he is saying goodbye to her forever, addresses her yearningly as "Girl! Girl!" As a footnote, it is perhaps not too widely realized today that his famous farewell aria "*Ch'ella mi creda libero e lontano*" (Let her believe me free and far away), which is by far the best known number in the opera, was a favorite air of Italian troops in World War I—the Italian equivalent of America's "Over there," of Britain's "Tipperary."

Another point in the play said to have been based on fact concerns the identity of the wandering minstrel, Jake Wallace, who appears in both play and opera. This time the chronicler is not Belasco himself, but his renowned biographer Mosco Carner, according to whom Wallace "was drawn after an historic minstrel of that name who in the days of the Gold Rush had been a popular visitor to the various camps, singing the old '49 songs and accompanying himself on the banjo, just as he does in the play and the opera."

The songs themselves merit a few words of comment. In the play, the miners specifically ask Jake to give them "Old Dog Tray," and he obliges with the Stephen Foster classic. In the opera, no specific request is made, but Puccini so to speak goes Belasco one better by having Jake become the



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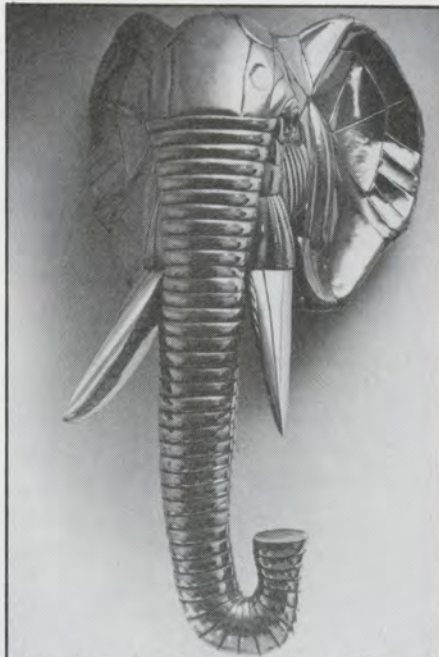


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mouthpiece for not one but two vintage Foster opuses at the same time. He makes his entrance singing—to the tune of *Old Dog Tray*—a ballad whose first words are *Che faranno i vecchi miei, là lontano, là lontano* (What will my old folks do, down there far away), and no great mental gymnastics are needed to recognize this as a thinly disguised version of *Swanee River*, the actual title and refrain of which is *Old Folks at Home*.

These nostalgic songs, and others which crop up fragmentarily, sound the keynote of the whole opera—loneliness and homesickness, a leitmotif very different from the turbulent verismo mélange of passion, tragedy and death which had been the previous Puccini hallmark. This was what his public had come to expect of him, and it has sometimes been suggested that one reason why Minnie failed to achieve the same universal popularity as her better-known sisters was that the opera was the first Puccini had written without a tragic denouement. Taken in isolation, this does not seem a very convincing theory, and it is more likely that the difficulty lay in reluctance to accept immediately, particularly in the music, a Puccini work which was not centered solely round a romance.

With regard to the nostalgic mood, which recurs achingly in the composer's final great *Turandot*, it is tempting to digress for a moment and to speculate that consciously or unconsciously this may have stemmed from the Doria Manfredi nightmare. Doria is considered almost certain to have been the model for Liù, the devoted and pathetic little slave girl in *Turandot*, and also possibly for Angelica, the gentle heroine of *Suor Angelica*, both of whom commit suicide. There is nothing suicidal about Minnie, but as we have seen, the disaster struck when Puccini was in the midst of composing her opera. When he tried to come back to it, his mind still in torment, the atmosphere at his beloved lakeside

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home in Torre del Lago must have been clouded with bittersweet memories of the peaceful and happy past which may well have found their way into the score, and have echoed as far ahead as *Turandot*. Indeed, in the second act of *Turandot* they seem inescapable. When the *commedia dell'arte* figures Ping, Pang and Pong longingly recall their distant homes, Ping opens the trio by singing *Ho una casa nell'Honan, con il suo laghetto blu . . .* (I have a house in Honan, with a little blue lake . . .)

Turandot was not to be heard until sixteen years after *Fanciulla*, but the two are linked, not only through nostalgic overtones, but also because both are drawn on a wide canvas, with crowd scenes and evocative atmosphere coloring. As the New York critics in 1910 were quick to point out with their references to Debussy, Puccini in his Western opera was adopting a new idiom and was causing his music to soar over a horizon broader than any he had attempted heretofore. *Fanciulla* is not just a love story with a happy ending for the hero and heroine, it also paints a haunting picture of the sad and lonely lives of the miners in the brutal Gold Rush days. In depicting the '49-ers, however much tricked out for theatrical purposes, Puccini was dealing with people who had actually existed. The point is underlined in a note which prefaces both the typescript of the play and the 1910 piano-vocal score: Quoting from "an early history of California" (author not given), it says: "In those strange days, people coming from God knows where, joined forces in that far Western land and, according to the rude custom of the camp, their very names were soon lost and unrecorded, and here they struggled, laughed, gambled, cursed, killed, loved, and worked out their strange destinies in a manner incredible to us today. Of one thing only we are sure—they lived." They lived on in the music of *The Girl*.

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enormous carved table. Surrounding him were Chinese pottery and smoking joss sticks and screens hung with pages of play manuscripts, an admixture of oriental temple and chapel—with chimes his big toe could set ringing. On the table stood a framed photo of Dante Alighieri inscribed: "To my warm friend, Dave, in token of his services in the cause of art—Dante A."

Sachem of hokum, his foibles were legion. He described his mother as "a wild Romany girl with occult powers." She was Portuguese, a simple woman who witnessed her son's triumphs and died, in her late 60s, at 174 Clara Street, San Francisco. Belasco traced his theatrical lineage to his father, a famous harlequin on London's Drury Lane and Haymarket stages, and once mayor of Vancouver. Actually, the senior Belasco was an obscure and untalented performer, and Vancouver was not yet a city when he removed his family to British Columbia to set up storekeeping. The elder Belasco lived until he was 81 at 1704 Sutter Street, and survived by four months the premiere of the opera, *The Girl of the Golden West*. Belasco averred he was educated in Victoria by Father Maguire, and graduated from Lincoln College in San Francisco, the record showing that cloister, priest and college were nonexistent. He did attend Lincoln Grammar School. His frippery was that of a child masquerading in an attic on a somnolent summer afternoon. His fantastications would have filled a casebook by Freud, Jung and Adler. His critics belittled him, but doing so, had to go to great lengths.

"I admire Mr. Belasco as a showman," was one summation by George Jean Nathan. "He is probably the best, and certainly the most successful in the Anglo-American dramatic theater. Indeed, if I ever write a bad play, I promise him the first refusal of it. Mr. Belasco has contributed one — and

only one—thing for judicious praise. He has brought to that theater a standard of tidiness in production and maturation of manuscript, a standard that has discouraged to no little extent that theater's not uncommon frowzy hustle and slipshod manner of presentation. I admire him for having gauged the American esthetic as probably no other showman since Barnum. And I admire him for having done several good things really well. (But) he has by his many counterfeits worked a vast and thorough ill to the American playhouse and its drama. And I believe his legend is ending to the brightening of a new and more understanding dawn in the native theater."

Alexander Woollcott, to whom David Belasco was "the Great Wizard of 1888," said, "He seems to have spent all his years in the theater in a kind of puzzled and timorous avoidance of the company of its great men."

Yet, following the landmark visit of the Moscow Art Theater to New York in 1926, Belasco received a citation. "Record No. 22 of the meeting January 12th 1927 of the High Council of the Moscow Art Theater reports that Constantin Stanislavsky proposed David Belasco for Honorary Membership in the company for his assistance in making a success of the introduction of the Moscow Art Theater to America. The resolution was passed unanimously."

Belasco died on May 14th 1931 in New York. President Herbert Hoover and Mayor James J. Walker "led the nation in a final glowing tribute" to him whom the *Times* called "the last of the completely versatile men of the theater." To Ethel Barrymore, his passing was "the loss of its leader." To Katharine Cornell, he represented "the most picturesque and authentic theater figure this country has ever known." *Barry Hyams is the author of HIRSHHORN: Medici from Brooklyn, published earlier this year by E. P. Dutton.*



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Mostly Mozart Festival

During the month of October, the San Francisco Symphony's Mostly Mozart Festival will be in full swing, with performances in U.C. Berkeley's Zellerbach Auditorium, the Marin Center in San Rafael, the Flint Center in Cupertino, the Herbst Theatre in San Francisco. By now, audiences in the Bay Area are probably well aware that Mozart and Haydn, Handel, Bach, Beethoven and a few others are alive and well in any of the above mentioned location. T-shirts, frisbees and mugs, all with the Mostly Mozart logo and the tantalizing snippets of unidentified Mozart music; posters, sweepstakes, prizes; radio spots, newspaper ads, articles, reviews — even Mozartkugeln (Mozart truffles)—all spell out that a special festival is underway.

Most people will have seen the Mostly Mozart brochure by now, which outlines the interesting programs and the impressive lineup of performers. Conductors include Barry Tuckwell, Alexander Schneider, Gerard Schwartz, Raymond Leppard and Franz Brueggen. Soloists in the various concerts are Barry Tuckwell, French horn; Lydia Artymiw, piano; Richard Stoltzman, clarinet; Charles Rosen, piano; Shlomo Mintz, violin; Anthony and Joseph Paratore, duo-piano; and Frans Brueggen, recorder.

Not listed in the brochure is a group of San Francisco Symphony players who will take part in the two Sunday chamber music concerts. On October 14, in addition to Charles Rosen, you can hear violinist Daniel Kobialka; violist Geraldine Walther; cellist Michael Grebanier; bassoonist Rufus Olivier; and cellist Peter Shelton. On October 21, in addition to Shlomo Mintz, there will be oboist Mark Lifschey; clarinetist Mark Brandenburg; French horn player Lori Westin; bassoonist Stephen Paulson; and violist Geraldine Walther.

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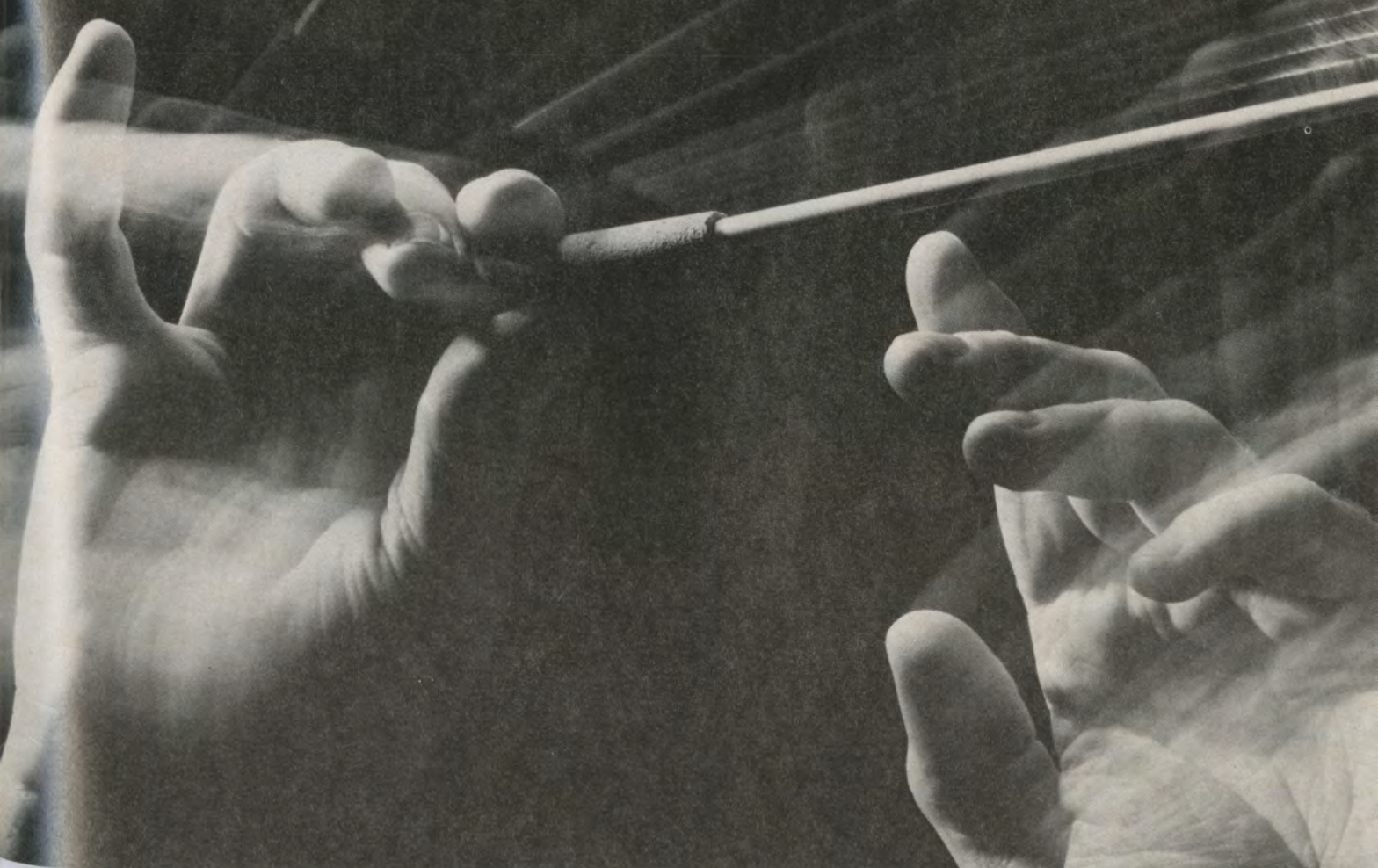
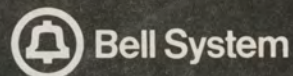
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When the curtain rang down at the end of the 1978 season, I wondered what we could do for an encore in 1979. But I believe our general director, Kurt Herbert Adler, and his excellent staff have done it again—1979, our 57th consecutive fall season, augurs to be another vintage year with some interesting innovations.

The season opens with Ponchielli's *La Gioconda* starring Renata Scotto and Luciano Pavarotti. This is the first time in twelve years that *Gioconda* has been performed by our company and we are most grateful to a friend of San Francisco Opera and to the San Francisco Opera Guild who have financed the new production. On Sunday, September 16, 1979, *La Gioconda* will be telecast live to audiences throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico and, by satellite, to Britain and Europe. This ambitious project, our first telecast, is being made possible by a most generous grant from BankAmerica Corporation. Not only will the telecast be available to millions of opera lovers now, but a mini-series made of the opera will be shown next spring and portions of the opera with appropriate educational commentary will be made available to schools throughout the State of California.

Another first for 1979 will be the performance of a stylized concert version of Rossini's *Tancredi* starring Marilyn Horne. This permits us to hear an opera not in the usual repertoire and not likely to be repeated for many years, without the huge costs of mounting a new production. A performance of three one-act operas will bring us two San Francisco Opera premieres—Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero* and Poulenc's *La Voix humaine*—followed by our

old friend *Gianni Schicchi*. The two new productions were financed by a grant from the San Francisco Foundation. We will also enjoy a new production of *La Fanciulla del West* thanks to the generosity of the Bernard Osher Foundation. This production was given last year to the Lyric Opera of Chicago by the Gramma Fisher Foundation of Marshalltown, Iowa.

Again, as has been the case for several years, we will broadcast a live performance of each opera over radio stations up and down the Pacific Coast and by delayed Public Radio throughout the nation. This important public service is made possible by grants from Chevron U.S.A., Inc., the L. J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, Oakland, California, and National Public Radio. Financially, San Francisco Opera Association is currently in reasonably good shape but it seems as if we must constantly increase our speed to stay even. Thanks to sold-out houses for most of our performances and modest ticket price increases, revenues from ticket sales continue to cover about 60 percent of our costs. We are a labor-intensive endeavor and, despite the economies effected by Maestro Adler and his staff, our costs continually increase because of the ravages of inflation; thus, raising the remaining 40 percent is a constantly increasing challenge. I am happy to report that in the last two years we have increased the number of donors to our annual operating fund by several thousand; without them, we would have incurred significant deficits. We must continually seek new and increased gifts from our supporters. If you are not presently included among our contributors, won't you please join us now?

Another noteworthy event in the past year, announced at the annual meeting of members held on June 7, 1979, was the appointment of Terry McEwen as successor to Kurt Herbert Adler as general director of San Francisco Opera upon Maestro Adler's retirement in 1982. Mr. McEwen, presently executive vice president of London Records, New York, is well known to millions for his vast knowledge of opera from his appearances for many years on the Saturday radio broadcasts from the

Met. We look forward to his arrival in the summer of 1980 and to his success in the future upon assuming the duties of general director.

Last year, I expressed the hope that the proposed new garage, replacing the parking lot across the street, would be ready for this year's season. Legal delays prevented this but I am hopeful it will be ready for the 1980 season. I am sure you are aware that construction of the new Symphony Hall on the old parking lot space is well under way and we are hopeful that construction of the rehearsal facility, on the same block and so important to San Francisco Opera, will commence soon. We look forward with anticipation to the completion of the Performing Arts Center; it will add so much to the cultural life of San Francisco. Funding for the Center is still about two and a half million dollars short. If you have not joined the thousands of contributors who have made this project possible, I urge you to do so as soon as possible.

We continue to be grateful for the financial and moral support from various sides, without which help we would find it almost impossible to continue — National Endowment for the Arts, National Opera Institute, Mayor Dianne Feinstein, 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 for its sponsorship of four student matinees, for its many other helpful activities, and for its sponsorship this year for the first time of a senior citizens matinee which has been largely financed by a gift from Bay View Federal Savings & Loan Association.

By the time the final curtain falls on November 25, I am confident the 1979 season will have proved that our reputation as one of the outstanding opera companies in the world is well deserved.

Enjoy the season.

WALTER M. BAIRD
President,
San Francisco Opera Association

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Mr. & Mrs. Simon Kleinman
Mr. & Mrs. A. E. Knowles
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas A. Koehler
Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Koppett
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel E. Koshland
Mr. & Mrs. Robert J. Koshland
Mr. & Mrs. Leo J. Kusber
Thomas W. Lacey
Lakeside Foundation
Mr. & Mrs. Scott C. Lambert
Harold A. Leader, Jr.
General & Mrs. O. A. Leahy
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald D. Leineke

continued on p. 71

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
Gerard Svazliant[†]

2ND VIOLIN

Herbert Holtman
Acting Principal
Virginia Price
Felix Khuner
Barbara Riccardi
Robert Galbraith
Gail Schwarzbart
Carol Winters
Eva Karasik
Laurence Gilbert
Linda Deutsch[†]

VIOLA

Rolf Persinger *Principal*
Detlev Olshausen
Lucien Mitchell
Asbjorn Finess
Jonna Hervig
Ellen Smith
Harry Rumpler
Thomas Elliott[†]

CELLO

David Kadarauich
Principal
Doug Ischar
Judiyaba
Lawrence Granger
Barbara Wirth
Burke Schuchman

BASS

S. Charles Siani
Acting Principal
Jon Lancelle
Carl H. Modell
Donald Prell
Philip Karp
Douglas Tramontozzi[†]

FLUTE

Paul Renzi
Acting Principal

Lloyd Gowen

Gary Gray
Rebecca Friedman[†]

PICCOLO

Lloyd Gowen

OBOE

James Matheson
Principal
Raymond Dusté
Deborah Henry

ENGLISH HORN

Raymond Dusté

CLARINET

Philip Fath *Principal*
Donald Carroll
David Breeden
Gregory Dufford[†]

BASS CLARINET

Donald Carroll

BASSETT HORN

James Russell[†]

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

Carlberg Jones[†]

Glen Swarts[†]

Gail Sprung[†]

FRENCH HORN/

WAGNER TUBA

David Sprung

James Callahan

Carlberg Jones[†]

Gail Sprung[†]

TRUMPET

Donald Reinberg

Principal

Edward Haug

Chris Bogios

Carole Kleint[†]

Timothy Wilson[†]

BASS TRUMPET

Mitchell Rosst[†]

TROMBONE

Ned Meredith *Principal*

McDowell Kenley

John Bischof

Mitchell Rosst[†]

CONTRA BASS

TROMBONE

John E. William[†]

TUBA

Robert Z. A. Spellman

TIMPANI

Elayne Jones

PERCUSSION

Lloyd Davis

Peggy Lucchesi

Richard Kvistad[†]

HARP

Anne Adams *Principal*

Marcella de Cray

PERSONNEL MANAGER

Thomas B. Heimberg

LIBRARIAN

Lauré Campbell

[†]Additional players

Dancers

Danna Cordova
Carolyn Houser
Janne Jackson

Lesla Martin
Cathy Pruzan
Kathryn Roszak

Nell Stewart
Katherine Warner

Charles Butts
James Fitzgerald
Peter Gambito
Dan Gardner

Jay Lehman
William S. Ramsdell
John Sullivan
Sulpicio Wagner

Boys Chorus

John Aalberg
Lawson Bader
Sean Barry
Mark Burford
Anthony Chu

Alex Clemens
Victor Fernandez
Robyn Fladen-Kamm
Timothy Genis
Lionel Godolphin

Daniel Howard
Andrew Johnson
David Kersnar
Christopher Kula
Stephen Martin

Gregory Naeger
Ronald Ponce
Daniel Potasz
David Roberts
Steven Rothblatt

Eric Savant
Jordan Silber
Mark Swope
Eric Van Genderen
Pierre-Guy White

Supernumeraries

Patricia Angell
Joan Bacharach
Dorothy Baune
Dottie Brown
Barbara Bruser
Barbara Clifford
Janet Dahlsten
Renee De Jarnatt
Mary Joyce
Hedi Langford
Francesca Leo
Gindy Milina
Edith Modie
Ellen Nelson

Virginia Persson
Miriam Preece
Louise Russo
Ellen Sanchez
Sally Scott
Carolyn Waugh
Steve Bauman
Jack Barnich
Douglas Beardslee
Allerton Blake
William Burns
Thomas Carlisle
Roy Castellini

Bruce Cates
Rudy Cook
Don Crawford
Tom Curran
Dick Duker
Everett Evans
Jimmy Exon
George Freiday
Albert Frettoloso
Cliff Gold
Mark Huelsmann
Stephen Jacobs
Ken Jakobs
David James

Janusz
Paul Jenkins
Andrew Jones
Bill Joyce
Julius Karoblis
John Kovacs
Terrance J. Kyle
Jay Lenahan
Rodney McCoy
Francisco Medina
Lawrence Milner
James Muth
Neil Nevesny
Paul Newman

Nick Pliam
Steven Polen
Paul Ricks
Gil Rieben
Robert Schmidt
Thomas Simrock
Kent Speirs
Jon Spieler
David Watts
Richard Weil
Frank Willis
Sam Ziegler

1979 Season Repertoire

New Production

LA GIOCONDA

Ponchielli

IN ITALIAN

Scotto, Toczyska**, Lilova/Pavarotti, Mittelmann, Furlanetto*, Del Carlo, Di Paolo*, Koch*, Haile*, Martinovich*/

Van Hamel*, Chryst*, Holder*

Conductor: Bartoletti

Production: Mansouri

Designer: Brown*

Choreographer: Sappington*

Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Friday, Sept. 7, 7 PM

Gala Opening Night

Wednesday, Sept. 12, 7:30PM

Sunday, Sept. 16, 12:30PM

Friday, Sept. 21, 8PM

Tuesday, Sept. 25, 8PM

Saturday, Sept. 29, 8PM

PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE

Debussy

IN FRENCH

Ewing, Jones, Lane*/ Duesing, Devlin*, Macurdy, Cumberland*, Martinovich

Conductor: Rudel*

Stage Director: Karpo

Designer: Munn

Saturday, Sept. 8, 8PM

Tuesday, Sept. 11, 8PM

Friday, Sept. 14, 8PM

Wednesday, Sept. 19, 7:30PM

Sunday, Sept. 23, 2 PM

New Production

DON CARLO

Verdi

IN ITALIAN

Tomowa-Sintow, Budai**, de la Rosa*, Knighton/Aragall, Brendel*, Nesterenko*, Elenkov**, Cumberland, Di Paolo, Del Carlo, Haile, Mallory*, Martinovich, Miller, Rohrbaugh

Conductor: Varviso

Stage Director: Frisell

Designer: Skalicki

Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Saturday, Sept. 15, 8 PM

Tuesday, Sept. 18, 8PM

Saturday, Sept. 22, 1:30PM

Wednesday, Sept. 26, 7:30PM

Sunday, Sept. 30, 2 PM

Friday, Oct. 5, 8PM

ELEKTRA

Strauss

IN GERMAN

Mastilovic*, Rysanek, Schlemm**, Siefer, Hinson, Jaqua, Jones, Montgomery*, Cook*, Beckstrom*, Kerrigan*/Neill, Mazura, Cumberland, Ballam*, Del Carlo

Conductor: Klobucar*

Stage Director: Weber

Designer: Siercke

Friday, Sept. 28, 8PM

Tuesday, Oct. 2, 8PM

Sunday, Oct. 7, 2PM

Thursday, Oct. 11, 7:30PM

Saturday, Oct. 13, 8PM

San Francisco Opera Premiere

New Production

IL PRIGIONIERO

Dallapiccola

IN ENGLISH

Martin/Devlin, Götz**, Egerton, Koch

Conductor: Giovaninetti

Production: Ponnelle

Designer: Halmen

Chorus Director: Bradshaw

followed by

San Francisco Opera Premiere

New Production

LA VOIX HUMAINE

Poulenc

IN FRENCH

Olivero

Conductor: Giovaninetti

Production: Joël

Designer: Halmen

followed by

GIANNI SCHICCHI

Puccini

IN ITALIAN

Greenawald, Barbieri, South, Quittmeyer*/Taddei, Ramiro**, Egerton, Davià, Massey*, Koch, Mallory, Miller, Harvey, Haile

Conductor: Giovaninetti

Production: Ponnelle

Designer: Ponnelle

Wednesday, Oct. 3, 7:30PM

Saturday, Oct. 6, 8PM

Tuesday, Oct. 9, 8PM

Sunday, Oct. 14, 2 PM

Friday, Oct. 19, 8PM

DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER

Wagner

IN GERMAN

Napier, Petersen/Estes, Lewis, Rintzler

Conductor: Perick**

Production: Ponnelle

Set Designer: Ponnelle

Costume Designer: Halmen

Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Friday, Oct. 12, 8PM

Tuesday, Oct. 16, 8PM

Sunday, Oct. 21, 2PM

Thursday, Oct. 25, 7:30PM

Saturday, Oct. 27, 8PM

Saturday, Nov. 3, 1:30PM

New Production

LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

Puccini

IN ITALIAN

Neblett, Jones/Domingo, Di Bella**, Egerton, Gardner*, Cumberland, Miller, Martinovich, Mallory, Ballam, Di Paolo, Koch, Del Carlo, Massey, Fisher*, Albin, Haile

Conductor: Patanè

Production: Prince*

Designers: Lee*, Lee*

Lighting Designer: Billington*

Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Wednesday, Oct. 17, 7:30PM

Saturday, Oct. 20, 8PM

Tuesday, Oct. 23, 8PM

Saturday, Oct. 27, 1:30PM

Wednesday, Oct. 31, 7:30PM

Friday, Nov. 2, 8PM

San Francisco Opera Premiere

New Production

ROBERTO DEVEREUX

Donizetti

IN ITALIAN

Caballé, Toczyska/Bini*, Pons*, Ballam, Del Carlo, Martinovich, Haile

Conductor: Masini*

Production: Karpo

Designer: Munn

Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Friday, Oct. 26, 8PM

Tuesday, Oct. 30, 8PM

Sunday, Nov. 4, 2PM

Wednesday, Nov. 7, 7:30PM

Saturday, Nov. 10, 8PM

Thursday, Nov. 15, 7:30PM

LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

Verdi

IN ITALIAN

Price, Forst, Jones/Luchetti*, Sarabia, Talvela, Taddei, Egerton, Cumberland, Del Carlo, Koch

Conductor: Adler

Stage Director: Hager

Designer: Samaritani

Choreographer: Sappington

Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Saturday, Nov. 3, 8PM

Tuesday, Nov. 6, 8PM

Friday, Nov. 9, 8PM

Wednesday, Nov. 14, 7:30PM

Saturday, Nov. 17, 1:30PM

†Thursday, Nov. 22, 8PM

Sunday, Nov. 25, 2PM

COSÌ FAN TUTTE

Mozart

IN ITALIAN

Lorengar, Howells*, Perriers*/Cousins*, Duesing, Stewart

Conductor: Pritchard

Stage Director: Joël

Designer: Ponnelle

Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Saturday, Nov. 10, 1:30PM

Tuesday, Nov. 13, 8PM

Friday, Nov. 16, 8PM

Sunday, Nov. 18, 2PM

Wednesday, Nov. 21, 8PM

Saturday, Nov. 24, 8PM

Special Family-Priced Matinee

Cook, Quittmeyer, South/Hoback,

Gardner, Turnage

Conductor: Agler*

Stage Director: Joël

Designer: Ponnelle

Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Saturday, Nov. 24, 1:30PM

San Francisco Opera Premiere

Stylized Concert Version

TANCREDI

Rossini

IN ITALIAN

Horne, Rinaldi, Balthrop*, Paunova*/Gonzalez*, Zaccaria*

Conductor: Lewis*

Stage Director: Hager

Chorus Director: Bradshaw

Saturday, Nov. 17, 8PM

Tuesday, Nov. 20, 8PM

Friday, Nov. 23, 8PM

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

*San Francisco Opera debut

**American opera debut

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seemingly by magic. Or a blanket to
warm you while you nap, or a patient
lesson that makes you the master
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Because we never forget how
important you are.

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the way we fly.



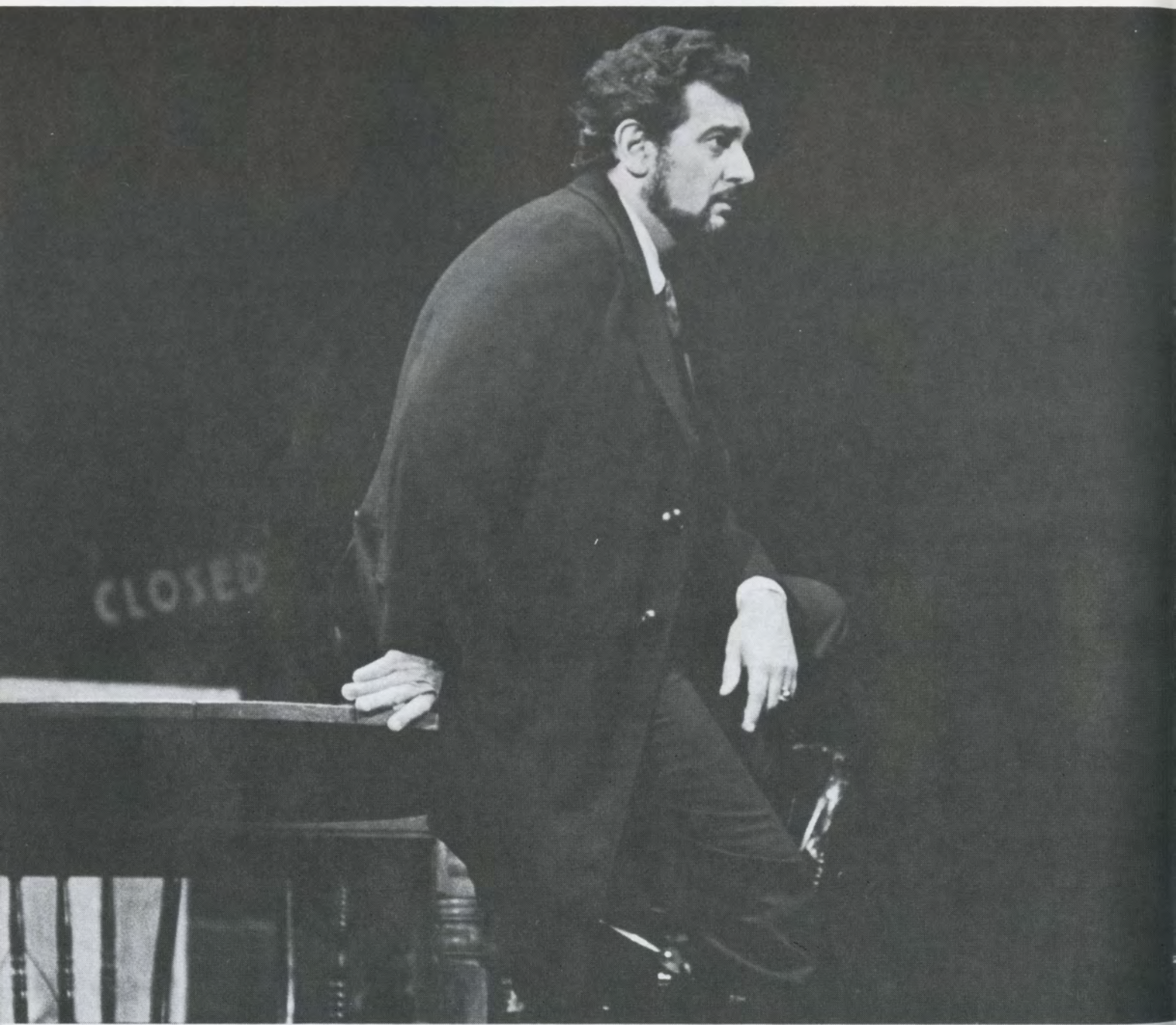
JAPAN AIR LINES

La Fanciulla del West



Carol Neblett as Minnie and Placido Domingo as Dick Johnson

Photos by Ira Nowinski

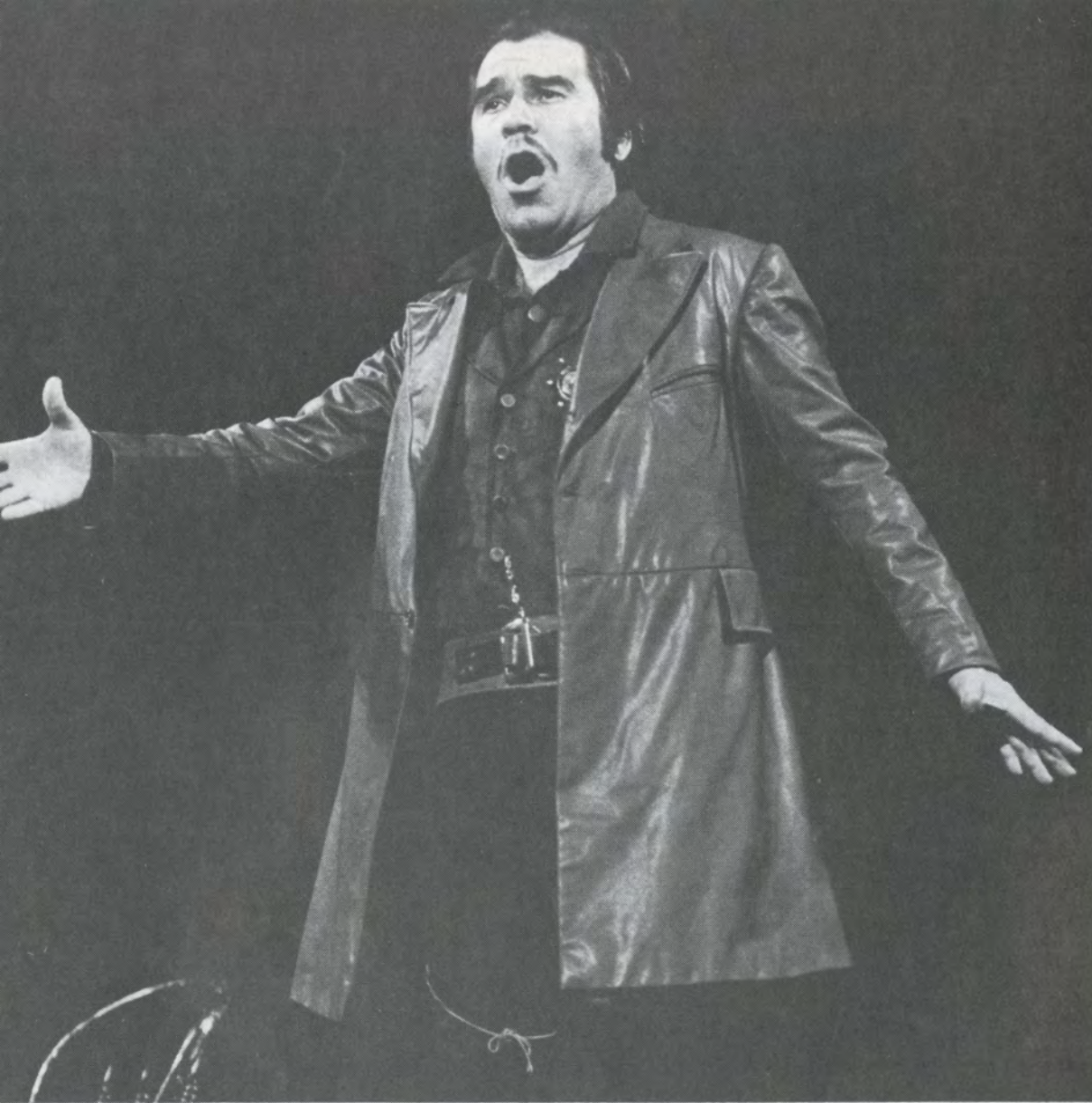


Plácido Domingo as Dick Johnson





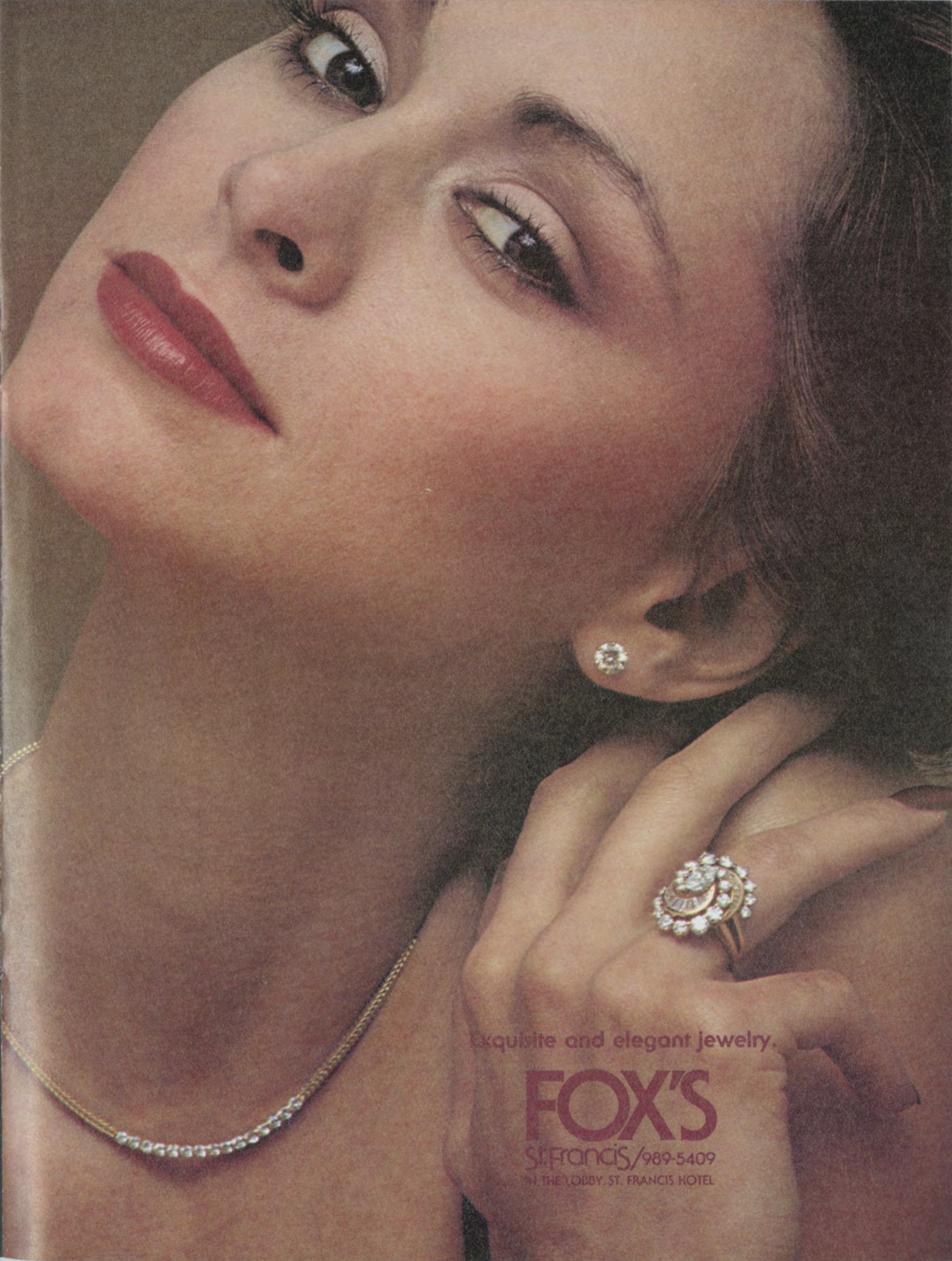
Carol Neblett as Minnie



Benito Di Bella as Sheriff Jack Rance

The miners enjoy a poker game at the Polka Saloon





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IN THE LOBBY, ST. FRANCIS HOTEL

THE BANK THAT LOOKS SHOULD ALSO LOOK



JOSEPH M. JOHNSON
WELLS FARGO PERSONAL BANKER

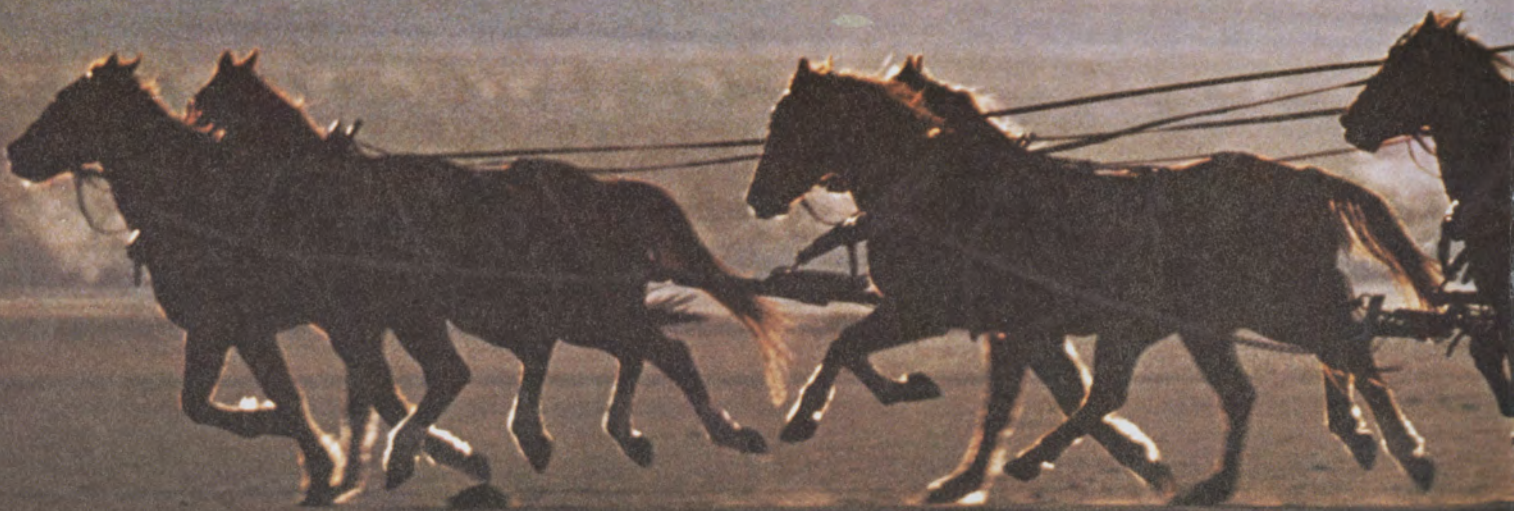
555-7273



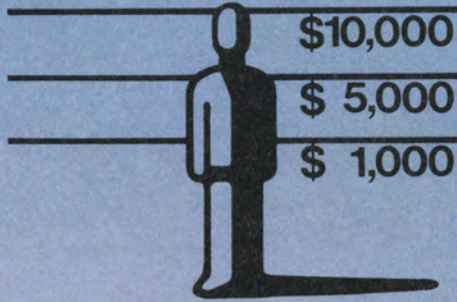
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The presentation of this production of *La Fanciulla del West* is made possible by a much appreciated grant from the Bernard Osher Foundation. The production is owned by the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and was made possible by a grant from the Gramma Fisher Foundation of Marshalltown, Iowa.

Opera in three acts by GIACOMO PUCCINI

Text by GUELFO CIVININI and CARLO ZANGARINI

Based on DAVID BELASCO'S play *The Girl of the Golden West*

(Used by arrangement with Associated Music Publishers Inc., New York, U.S., agents for G. Ricordi & Co., Milan, Italy.)

New Production

La Fanciulla del West

(IN ITALIAN)

Conductor

Giuseppe Patanè

Production

Harold Prince*

Assistant Stage Director

Vincent Liotta*

Designers

Eugene and Franne Lee*

Lighting Designer

Ken Billington*

Assistant to the

Lighting Designer

Jeffrey Schissler*

Chorus Director

Richard Bradshaw

Musical Preparation

Margaret Singer

Prompter and

Musical Preparation

Philip Eisenberg

CAST

Harry

Joe

Handsome

Sid

Happy

Billy Jackrabbit

Nick

Sonora

Trin

Larkens

Sheriff Jack Rance

Jake Wallace

Ashby

Minnie

U.S. postman

Dick Johnson, alias Ramerrez

Jose Castro

Wowlke

Michael Ballam

Tonio Di Paolo

William Mallory

John Miller

Richard Haile

John Del Carlo

Francis Egerton

Jake Gardner*

Gary Fisher*

David Koch

Benito di Bella**

Boris Martinovich

David Cumberland

Carol Neblett

Gene Albin

Placido Domingo

George Massey

Gwendolyn Jones

Men of the mining camp

**American debut

*San Francisco Opera debut

First performance: New York, December 10, 1910

*First San Francisco Opera performance:
September 15, 1930*

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 17 AT 7:30

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20 AT 8:00

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23 AT 8:00

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27 AT 1:30

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31 AT 7:30

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2 AT 8:00 (Live broadcast)

PLACE AND TIME: Mid-nineteenth century California

ACT I The barroom of The Polka saloon

INTERMISSION

ACT II Minnie's cabin

INTERMISSION

ACT III The mining camp

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

Please do not interrupt the music with applause

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

The performance will last approximately three hours.

SYNOPSIS/LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

ACT I—An evening at "The Polka," saloon and general store of the mining camp. As Nick the bartender pours the drinks, the miners gamble, listen to the camp's minstrel, Jake Wallace, and take up a collection to send home one of their homesick companions, Larkens. Handsome catches Sid cheating at faro; Sheriff Jack Rance's intervention prevents an on-the-spot lynching. Ashby, the agent of Wells-Fargo, tells Rance that he has new information which will enable him to capture the bandit Ramerrez and his band of cut-throats. Rance's boasting that Minnie, the owner of the Polka, will soon be his wife provokes sarcastic contradictions from Sonora. Insults follow and it is Minnie herself who separates the men. After reprimanding them she begins her regular Bible lesson.

A U.S. Postman arrives with mail and the news that one of the bandits has been sighted nearby. Nick announces that a stranger is outside asking for whisky and water. Minnie tells him to send the man in for a lesson on drinking. Rance tells Minnie he loves her and asks her to marry him. She reminds him that he already has a wife and explains with sincerity and simplicity the kind of love she hopes to find. Rance persists until he offends her. When the stranger, "Johnson from Sacramento," enters, Rance resents the cordial welcome Minnie extends to him. He tries to intimidate Johnson. Minnie and Johnson have recognized each other immediately; they recall a pleasant afternoon they have spent together after a chance meeting in the mountains. Rance calls in the miners, determined to get rid of his rival. The men enjoy the spectacle of Rance's jealousy as Johnson dances with Minnie. Ashby enters with José Castro, one of the outlaws, under guard. When Castro sees his boss Johnson (alias Ramerrez) dancing, he sends Ashby and the miners off on a wild goose chase. Before he is led away, he manages to tell Johnson that the bandits are nearby awaiting the signal to rob the Polka.

Minnie asks Johnson to stay after the others have left. They talk of their past lives, their aspirations and of love. Nick interrupts them to announce that another bandit has been sighted nearby. A shrill whistle, which Johnson recognizes as the signal, frightens Minnie. She confides in Johnson that she alone must now protect the gold the miners have entrusted to her safe-keeping. She vows that whoever takes it must kill her first. Johnson, who has impulsively decided to stop the robbery, rises to leave and promises the disappointed Minnie that he will see her again later, at her cabin.

ACT II—As a blizzard rages outside Minnie's cabin, Wowkle, Minnie's Indian servant, sings a lullaby to her infant. Billy enters and carries out Minnie's orders by asking the girl to marry him. Minnie comes in and makes hasty preparations to receive Johnson, after sending Billy on his way. Johnson is soon hospitably received and sharply rebuffed for an attempted embrace. He admires Minnie's room and finds her solitary existence curious. Minnie replies that she loves her life and her role as teacher to the miners. She admits to a fondness for love stories but an incomprehension of the ardent but brief passions depicted in novels. Johnson says there are women whom one wants in one's life for an hour, and then one is willing to die content. Minnie playfully asks

him how many times he has died and then offers him a cigar. When they are alone, Johnson tells Minnie he has loved her since their first meeting. They embrace. Johnson says good-bye and is about to leave but Minnie tells him it will be impossible because of the blizzard. She offers him her bed and prepares a place for herself in front of the fire. There is a loud knocking and from outside the voice of Nick announces that Ramerrez has been seen on the trail to Minnie's house. Johnson hides and Minnie opens the door. She receives a double shock when she learns that Johnson is Ramerrez the bandit and that he is the lover of a Mexican woman who has betrayed him by giving his photograph to Rance, who gloats as he shows it to her. Nick notices Johnson's cigar and realizes that he is in the house; he offers to stay, but Minnie dismisses the group and they leave. Minnie confronts Johnson. He tries to defend himself by explaining how he became a bandit and how he had decided to try for a new life with her, but Minnie orders him out. Seconds later gunfire is heard and the sound of a body falling against the door. Minnie opens it and finds Johnson wounded. Despite his protests, she helps him inside and hides him in the loft. Rance reappears in pursuit of Johnson. When Minnie tells him there is no one with her, Rance suddenly makes violent advances, which Minnie repulses. Rance goes to the door swearing that Johnson will never have her. Suddenly a drop of blood falls on his hand and he realizes the fugitive is hiding in the loft overhead. He calls up to Johnson to come down, and the order is obeyed. Johnson seats himself at the table and collapses. Desperate, Minnie proposes a game of poker. If Rance wins, he takes Johnson and her; if she wins, Johnson is hers. Rance agrees to the stakes and they play. At the final hand Rance exultantly throws down three kings. Nearly fainting, Minnie asks for a drink. While Rance is distracted she substitutes cards she has concealed earlier for the ones Rance has dealt. When he brings her the whisky, she displays the cards in her hand: three aces and a pair. Dumbfounded, Rance keeps his word and stiffly departs. Minnie bursts into sobs and throws her arms around the inert Johnson.

ACT III—Considerable time has elapsed. Rance, Nick and some of the miners are waiting while Ashby and the others track down Johnson in the hills. True to his word, Rance has not betrayed Minnie; but he is confident that his moment of triumph is at hand. Singly and in groups, the miners rush into the camp with news of the progress of the manhunt. Finally, Ashby appears with Johnson and formally turns his prisoner over to Rance. As the miners shout at Johnson a list of his offenses, they prepare a noose. Johnson admits to the robberies but denies ever having killed anyone. Rance offers him a last chance to speak before the execution is carried out. Johnson asks the men to let Minnie believe he is free and far away. Minnie rides into the camp with a drawn revolver. She pleads with them to spare her lover. Her words produce a guilty silence. One by one Minnie addresses the miners who have been her life-long friends. Urged on by Sonora, one by one they agree to grant Minnie's request. Minnie and Johnson say good-bye to the miners and disappear over the horizon.

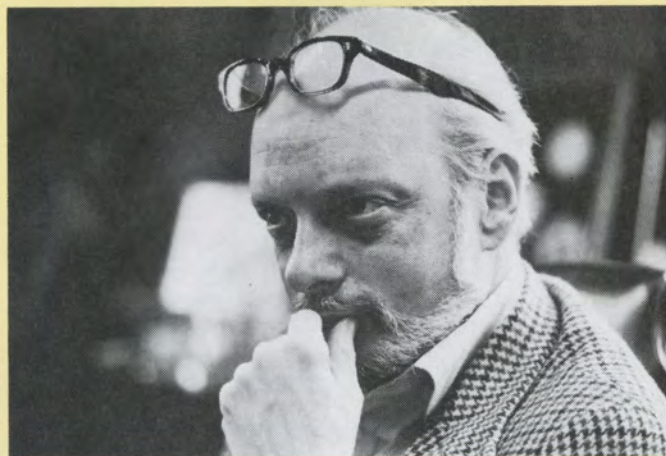
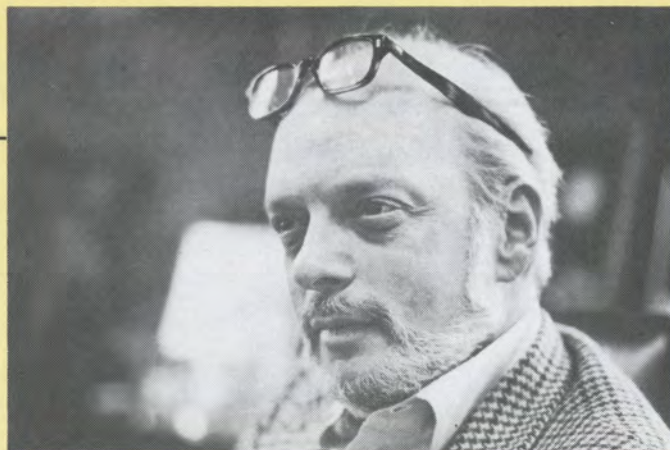
Harold Prince on *Fanciulla*

*"I think the audience was
having as good a time as at any
successful musical I've done"*

by STEPHEN WADSWORTH

People are teeming on the streets below Harold Prince's midtown office in New York. Some of them are singers who have sung for him, writers who are writing for him, actors who would die for him, opera company managers who will hire him. They all would give their eye teeth to find their way into that office, hoping that some of Prince's preternatural understanding for cause and spectacular effect in the theater might rub off on, inspire or imbue them with success. One of them managed to get a cassette of his new musical through that door, and it sits enthusiastically on Harold Prince's desk, aching to play itself out for the maestro. Flies on the wall in this office have tales to tell—talent has been checked and cajoled, hired and fired, asked to come in, and asked to leave.

One of Broadway's, and now opera's, most creative talents, stage director Harold Prince was recently represented in San Francisco by *Evita* at the Orpheum theater, makes his San Francisco Opera debut with *La Fanciulla del West*.



photos by Robert Messick

Nevertheless, this inner sanctum is peculiarly welcoming, a true locus classicus of the Broadway theater dream. It says a lot about the man who, through a long series of successes and failures—the good and the not so good are given equal time on the poster-lined walls of the outer office—has kept the musical alive and growing for twenty-five years, almost single-handedly. The desk is an elegant old table, perhaps eighteenth century. The sofas-and-chairs corner has a modular look, perhaps 1960s. Surfaces are neat. A huge poster from *Follies*, the second of five Stephen Sondheim musicals Prince has produced and directed, watches over medals, an upright piano and a spotless greige carpet that shoots across the floor, hungry for famous feet. In a square cork pencil holder there are maybe forty felt-tip pens in discreet colors. They suggest a fanatical streak. Somewhere behind them is a very genial dynamo.

It is March. Harold Prince's latest Sondheim collaboration, *Sweeney Todd*, the gory but funny, man-eats-man shocker-opera, is open a month on Broadway. His virtuoso production of *Evita*, the rock opera about Eva Peron by the authors of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, is about to mutate from London to Los Angeles. Prince is part of Broadway's past, present and future, yet he got his theatrical go as a little boy sitting next to his grandmother at the old Met. There he watched Flagstad and Melchior move their arms. There he began to learn what does and doesn't work onstage. The Saturday afternoon broadcasts caught him up. He is clearly still entranced by that magic, only now he knows how to recreate it for himself and others.

Prince went to work, as assistant, then as stage manager, for George Abbott, the great Broadway director. Then he co-produced and produced. His shows had energy, optimism, romance and style—*Pajama Game*, *Damn Yankees*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *Fiddler on the Roof*,

Zorba and others. Then he produced and directed. His work with Stephen Sondheim has brought the musical into the modern age—*Company*, *Follies*, *A Little Night Music*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Sweeney Todd*. Many of the early shows were built around big splashy numbers and lacked the continuity and seriousness of purpose of the Sondheim shows, in which the songs serve a more finely wrought plot. Add to this Prince's grand, epic-theater style of direction, one part neon instinct to one part deep thought, and you have a musically and dramatically more sophisticated repertory for Broadway that is strongly redolent of opera.

Now Harold Prince's directorial interests have moved toward opera, in matter and method, not only on Broadway but in the opera house. And he hopes to take his audience with him. "Before *Sweeney Todd*, I asked that everybody arrive on the first day of rehearsal musically if not perfect then much closer than ever before," says Prince, "like in the opera house. And having that as a guideline made it possible to do a very complicated show in five weeks. Exactly like opera. I love to work that way. It's the way I intend to work from now on. I am organized. I'm a kraut." The way Prince goes on about *Sweeney Todd* it sounds like he's describing work on an opera. "I'll tell you what interests me about it. By definition, the day we started to work on it had to be flawed. Because it's so big, it just had to be. And that didn't bother me in the least with a work of quote, if you can accept it, art."

The interviewer presses Prince to find the line between Broadway and opera. The interviewee resists. "What do I have to tell Angela Lansbury that I don't have to tell Carol Neblett? Nothing. They both approach roles in exactly the same way. Carol is a good actress. She has native talent. She's very honest about the work—she won't do anything that goes against the character, the internal machinery of the char-

acter she's playing. She has a wide range, not just vocally. You're born with these things. And they both have guts, the guts to go a little farther than is safe. I love theater that way. Carol says she wants to do a musical on Broadway. I think she should. Sure Carol could play Mrs. Lovett [the slum-worn battle-ax who bakes bodies into pies in *Sweeney Todd*]. She'd understand that part right away. Angie in *Fanciulla*? Well, Angela Lansbury could play Minnie; she couldn't sing it."

Even the music of *Sweeney Todd* is sophisticated, difficult, but Prince doesn't believe that Broadway is limited because "real" musicians aren't singing the music. "You make the demand, that's all. Isn't it amazing how Angela seems to be able to negotiate the subtleties of *Sweeney*? And Len Cariou has worked up his voice for it." Prince also demands that audiences accept a work for what it is and how it's played, not for where it's played or whether it is called an opera or a musical. "*Pacific Overtures* is an opera. *A Little Night Music* is sort of a chamber opera. All those early nineteenth-century composers turned out millions of operas like musicals—for the same audience—and like many musicals, they do not hold up except as pastiches with historical interest. It's charming to see *Whoopie!* but it has nothing to do with anything but the history of the musical.

"Offenbach wrote musicals. Until the last line of *Evita* there isn't a spoken line, and then my joke is to have the last line spoken; so that's an opera any way you slice it. There's almost as much dialogue in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* as there is music! And *Carmen* is loaded with it. The chorus work in *Sweeney Todd* and *Evita* is comparable to any chorus work in any opera company. I think *Fanciulla* is a smashing Broadway musical. That's what I think." A beat. "And I'll tell

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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

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. It is headed by Russell Hartley, with Judith Solomon as 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.

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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 north-bound 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 north-bound 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.

Management reserves the right to remove any patron creating a disturbance.

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

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Patrons needing a cab at the end of the performance should reserve one with the doorman at the Taxi Entrance before the end of the final intermission. Anyone desiring a taxi at other times of the evening may use the direct telephone line at the Taxi Entrance to summon a cab.

Emergency Telephone

The telephone number 431-4370 may be used by patrons for emergency contact during performances. Before the performance, patrons anticipating pos-

sible contact should leave their seat number at the Nurse's Station in the lower lounge where the emergency telephone is located.

Food Service

The lower lounge in the Opera House is now open one and one-half hours prior to curtain time for hot buffet service. Patrons arriving before the front doors open will be admitted at the Carriage entrance.

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

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Wednesday, November 7, 1979, 1:30 p.m.
Friday, November 9, 1979, 1:30 p.m.
Wednesday, November 14, 1979, 1:30 p.m.
Tuesday, November 20, 1979, 1:30 p.m.

Special Matinee for Senior Citizens
Friday, November 23, 1979, 1:30 p.m.
(Sponsored by Bay View Federal
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Nilsson to Return in November Concert



One of the most eagerly-awaited events of the 1979-80 music season is the return of famed soprano Birgit Nilsson in a concert at the War Memorial Opera House on Sunday evening, November 18, with Kurt Herbert Adler conducting the San Francisco Opera Orchestra.

Generally considered the greatest Wagnerian soprano of the past two decades, Nilsson last appeared in San Francisco as Isolde during the 1974 season and has not sung in the United States for the last five years, although she has appeared constantly to great acclaim throughout Europe. She will also give a concert at the Metropolitan in New York this November and appear in opera at both the Metropolitan and San Francisco Operas in 1980—*Elektra* in New York and the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* here. Miss Nilsson's American opera debut was made with the San Francisco Opera as Bruennhilde in *Die Walkure* in 1956 and she has since sung *Fidelio*, *Turandot*, *Isolde* and all the Bruennhildes here. A native of Sweden, she sang *Agathe* in *Der Freischuetz* for her debut with the Stockholm Opera in 1946. Her burgeoning career took her to Glyndebourne in 1951, Vienna in 1954 and La Scala in 1958. She has since sung in all the world's leading houses, including many seasons at the Bayreuth festival.

Tickets for her November 18 concert are available now at the Opera Box Office.

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Profiles

CAROL NEBLETT



GWENDOLYN JONES



PLACIDO DOMINGO



California-born soprano Carol Neblett returns to the San Francisco Opera following her success as Electra in the 1977 production of *Idomeneo* to sing the title role in *La Fanciulla del West*. She first performed the role in Turin in 1974 and has since appeared as Minnie at the Houston Grand Opera, the Vienna Staatsoper, Covent Garden, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Greater Miami Opera and with the Australian Opera in Melbourne and Sydney. Other Puccini heroines in her repertoire include Magda in *La Rondine*, Tosca, sung in Chicago, Washington, Houston and Edmonton, and Turandot, which she performed for the first time in Pittsburgh last November. In addition to Electra, her other Mozart roles include the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, both Donna Anna and Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, and Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito*, which she portrayed at the Salzburg festival in 1976, 1977 and 1979. A singing actress of great conviction, as a member of the New York City Opera for several years she became associated with certain parts: the title role in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, the dual roles of Margherita and Elena in Boito's *Mefistofele* and Marietta/Marie in Korngold's *Die Tote Stadt*, which she recorded for RCA with Erich Leinsdorf. Performances in other American cities include Thais in New Orleans and Baltimore, Antonia in *Tales of Hoffmann* in Dallas, Ariadne in Memphis and, most recently, Violetta in *La Traviata* in Baltimore. Miss Neblett made her Metropolitan Opera debut during the 1978/79 season as Senta in the Ponnelle production of *Der Fliegende Holländer*, borrowed from San Francisco.

Now in her eighth season with the San Francisco Opera, mezzo-soprano Gwendolyn Jones appears as Geneviève in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, a maid-servant in *Elektra*, Wowkle in *La Fanciulla del West* and Curra in *La Forza del Destino*. Last season she sang Emilia in *Otello* and Clotilde in *Norma*. A five-year veteran of Spring Opera Theater, she performed the role of Sextus in the 1978 production of *Julius Caesar*. A frequent concert soloist, Miss Jones performed in the Verdi Requiem with the Fresno Symphony in 1978 and in Bach's B Minor Mass at Hartnell College this spring. For the past three years she has been the soloist in Michael Smuin's *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 under Sir Georg Solti. The mezzo has portrayed Tisbe in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* with the opera companies of Portland and Seattle, and the title role in the same opera in Tucson. In March of this year she appeared as the secretary in Menotti's *The Consul* with Minnesota Opera and this summer was heard singing five Tchaikovsky songs with "New Sounds of San Jose," in Mozart's *Solemn Vespers* at the Midsummer Mozart festival, in "An Evening with Lerner and Loewe" with the San Francisco Pops and in the world premiere of Harbison's *Winter's Tale* at Herbst Theatre. Miss Jones recently completed a two-year term as Sears Roebuck Affiliate Artist in the San Francisco/Affiliate Artist-Opera Program.

World famous as one of the foremost singing actors on the operatic stage today, tenor Placido Domingo appears in his eighth season with the San Francisco Opera as Dick Johnson in *La Fanciulla del West*, a role he has sung with success at Covent Garden, the Vienna Staatsoper and the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. His local debut occurred in 1969 as Rodolfo in *La Bohème* and he has since been heard here as Don José in *Carmen* and Cavaradossi in *Tosca* (1970), Manrico in *Il Trovatore* (1971), Cavaradossi and Vasco da Gama in *L'Africaine* (1972), the title role in *Andrea Chenier* (1975), Turiddu and Canio in the *Cavalleria/Pagliacci* double bill (1976), and as Otello (1978). A leading artist with the Metropolitan Opera since his celebrated debut there as Maurizio in *Adriana Lecouvreur* in 1968, he has recently been seen with the company in the televised "Live from the Met" series as the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Rodolfo in *Luisa Miller* and, on opening night of the 1979/80 season, as Otello. Since wielding the baton for a performance of *La Traviata* with the New York City Opera, Domingo has conducted several other operas, including a student matinee performance of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* during the 1976 San Francisco Opera season. European engagements for 1979 have included *Werther*, *Cavalleria/Pagliacci* and *Aida* in Munich, *Le Cid* and *Manon Lescaut* in Hamburg, *La Fanciulla del West* and *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Vienna, and *Luisa Miller* in London. Among the tenor's recordings is an album of duets with Renata Scotto conducted by Kurt Herbert Adler. Domingo will repeat his portrayal of Cavaradossi with the San Francisco Opera in the Ponnelle *Tosca* production under maestro Adler's baton this December in Manila.



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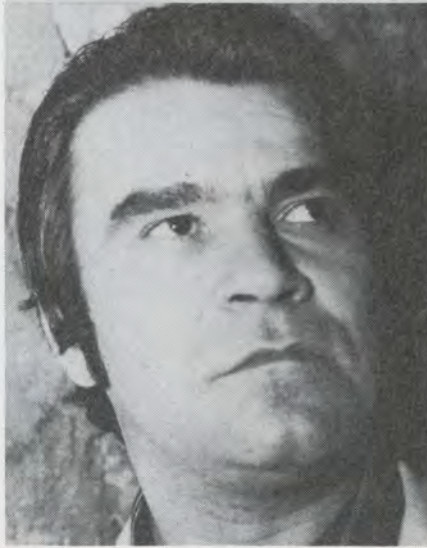
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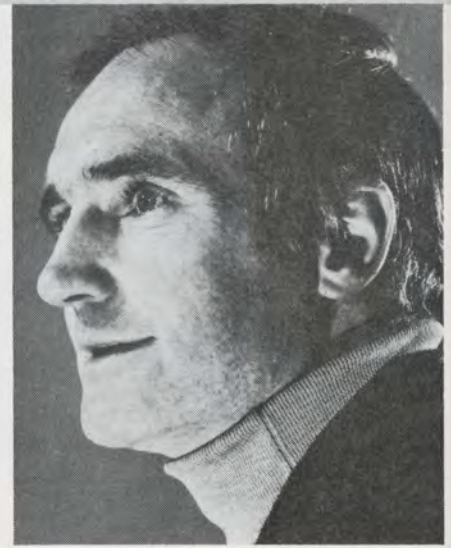
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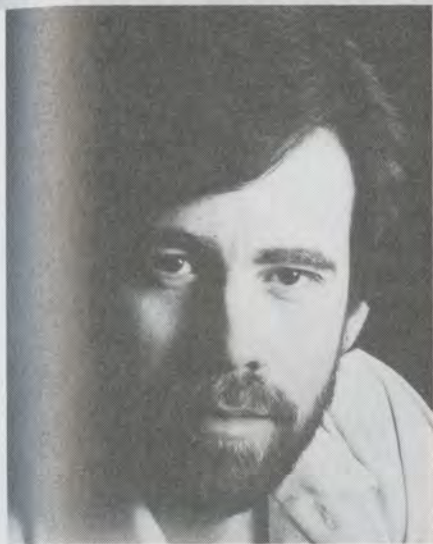
A native of Palermo, Italy, baritone Benito di Bella makes his American debut as Jack Rance in the San Francisco Opera's new production of *La Fanciulla del West*. After graduating from the Rossini Conservatory in Pesaro, he made his professional debut as Amonasro in *Aida* at Spoleto. He has performed throughout Italy in such opera houses as La Scala in Milan, the Teatro Comunale in Genoa, the Teatro Verdi in Trieste, the Teatro Comunale in Florence, the Teatro dell'Opera in Rome, the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and the San Carlo in Naples. In Europe, Di Bella is a frequent guest at the Vienna Staatsoper, the Munich Staatsoper and the opera houses of Frankfurt, Dusseldorf and West Berlin. He is best known for his interpretations in the verismo repertoire, including Scarpia in *Tosca*, Michele in *Il Tabarro* and Tonio in *I Pagliacci*, as well as the heroic Verdi roles such as Amonasro, Rigoletto, Nabucco and Carlo in *Ernani*. This year he has appeared in *Aida* in Trieste, *I Pagliacci* in Lisbon and the *Cavalleria/Pagliacci* double bill in both Munich and Vienna.

FRANCIS EGERTON



Irish-born tenor Francis Egerton returns for his second year with the San Francisco Opera as a priest in *Il Prigioniero*, Gherardo in *Gianni Schicchi*, Nick in *La Fanciulla del West* and Trabuco in *La Forza del Destino*. In his American debut with the Company last year he was heard as Red Whiskers in *Billy Budd*, Spoletta in *Tosca* and Valzacchi in *Der Rosenkavalier*. Egerton has been a member of the Royal Opera at Covent Garden since 1972, during which time his roles have included Iopas (*Les Troyens*), Beppe (*I Pagliacci*), Flute (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), Basilio (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Bardolph (*Falstaff*), Pong (*Turandot*), the Scribe (*Khovanshchina*) and the Captain (*Wozzeck*). During the 1978/79 season with that company he has appeared in productions of *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Billy Budd*, *Parsifal* and *I Pagliacci*. For five seasons the tenor was a member of Sadler's Wells Opera where his roles ranged from the Gangster in *Kiss Me Kate*, through the four tenor roles in *The Tales of Hoffmann* to the leading tenor roles in Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, *Count Ory* and *The Italian Girl in Algiers*. He has also performed with the English Opera Group and the English Music Theatre. At the Wexford festival he has sung Nicias in *Thaïs* and the Kadi in *Der Barbier von Bagdad* and with Scottish National Opera, Mime in the Ring cycle and the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*. Egerton has portrayed Sellem in *The Rake's Progress* at the Edinburgh festival and in Hamburg.

JAKE GARDNER



DAVID CUMBERLAND



Following his success as James Stewart, Earl of Moray, in the 1979 Spring Opera Theater production of Thea Musgrave's *Mary, Queen of Scots*, baritone Jake Gardner bows with the San Francisco Opera as Sonora in *La Fanciulla del West* and Guglielmo in the student and special family-priced matinee performances of *Così fan tutte*. Gardner created the role in the Musgrave opera at the 1977 Edinburgh festival and repeated his portrayal at the American premiere in Norfolk, Virginia, and in Stuttgart. He was heard this summer in a concert of scenes from the opera at Wolf Trap Park. The baritone toured for two years with the Goldovsky Grand Opera Theater and has more recently sung with the Houston Grand Opera, the Pittsburgh Opera, the San Antonio Opera and the Boston Opera Company. He made his New York debut in Massenet's *Le Cid* with Grace Bumbry and Plácido Domingo, and later participated in the recording of the opera. This was followed by an appearance with the Opera Orchestra of New York as Zurga in *Les Pêcheurs de perles* with Nicolai Gedda. Last year he opened the Opera Society of Washington's season as Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, sang the title roles in *Eugene Onegin* (Chautauqua Opera) and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Omaha Opera) and repeated his impersonation of Papageno in Columbus and Pittsburgh, and of Zurga in Detroit. In May of this year he was heard in Michael Tippett's *Ice Break* in Boston.

Appearing for the first time with the San Francisco Opera, American bass David Cumberland sings five roles this season: a physician in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, a friar in *Don Carlo*, Orest's guardian in *Elektra*, Ashby in *La Fanciulla del West* and the Marchese di Calatrava in *La Forza del Destino*. In 1969 he became a member of the newly-created American Opera Center of the Juilliard School of Music and performed in their premiere production, Beethoven's *Fidelio*, under the baton of Leonard Bernstein. After a season with the Metropolitan Opera Studio, he sang Don Magnifico in *La Cenerentola* with Western Opera Theater in 1972. He then went to Germany, debuting there in the title role of Cornelius' *Barber of Baghdad*. Under contract with the Kiel Opera, the bass sang Sarastro in *Die Zauberflöte*, Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra* and the Hermit in *Der Freischütz* and won the Orpheus Award for "... best performance of the season by a young male singer." Currently a member of the Gelsenkirchen Opera, he has been heard there as King Dodon in *Le Coq d'Or*, Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin*, Hunding in *Die Walküre*, Orest in *Elektra*, Pogner in *Die Meistersinger* and Seneca in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*. His roles in Gelsenkirchen this year include Sarastro, King Philip in *Don Carlo*, Ferrando in *Il Trovatore*, Pogner, Baldassare in *La Favorita* and Neptune in *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria*. He is also scheduled to sing Zaccaria in *Nabucco* in Hamburg. In March of this year Cumberland made his Philadelphia Opera Company debut as Alidoro in *La Cenerentola*.

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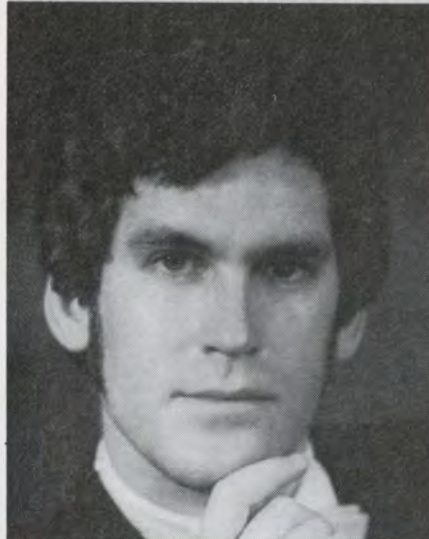
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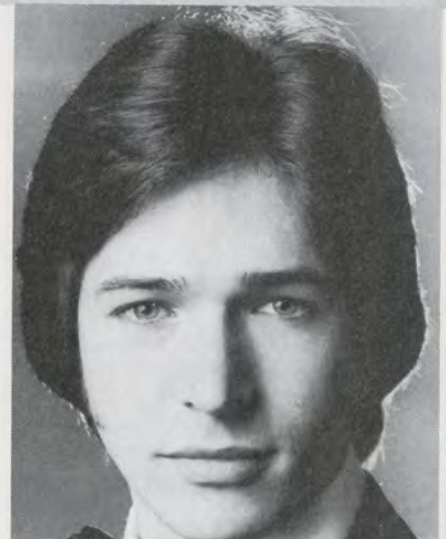
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JOHN MILLER



Bass-baritone John Miller performs three roles with the San Francisco Opera this season: a Flemish deputy in *Don Carlo*, Amantio di Nicolao in *Gianni Schicchi* and Sid in *La Fanciulla del West*. In 1971, as a finalist in the San Francisco Opera Auditions, he appeared in various productions with the Merola Opera Program. A former member of the San Francisco Opera chorus, he was heard in five solo roles during the 1973 and 1978 seasons and with Spring Opera Theater in Cavalli's *L'Ormino* and Bach's *Passion According to St. Matthew*. In recent years Miller has been featured with the San Jose Symphony in their productions of *Carmen*, *Roméo et Juliette* and *La Traviata*, and with the Bear Valley music festival in *The Elixir of Love* and *The Marriage of Figaro*. As a result of placing in the finals of the Western Regional Metropolitan Opera Auditions last year, he sang in a special broadcast performance of the Verdi Requiem. Miller's concert career has included appearances with the Oakland Symphony in Mahler's eighth symphony and with the San Francisco Symphony in the St. Matthew Passion, Prokofiev's *Ivan the Terrible* and as Brander in Berlioz' *La Damnation de Faust*. This summer he performed with the San Francisco Pops in "An Evening of Lerner and Loewe," with the Midsummer Mozart festival in Mozart's *Solemn Vespers* and as Time in the world premiere of John Harbison's *Winter's Tale* at the Herbst Theatre. Miller will repeat his portrayal of the Jailer in *Tosca* when the San Francisco Opera performs the work in Manila this December.

BORIS MARTINOVICH



Born in Yadar, Yugoslavia, bass-baritone Boris Martinovich came to the United States in 1969 to pursue a singing career and began his vocal training with Armen Boyajian and Alberta Masiello. He made his New York debut at Avery Fisher Hall in Refice's *Cecilia*, which featured Renata Scott. Invited by Gian Carlo Menotti to appear in Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades* for the opening of the Spoleto festival's first American season in 1977, he was also heard in Menotti's *The Consul*. This year marked his Carnegie Hall debut in Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* with the Opera Orchestra of New York, in addition to appearances with the New Jersey Opera, the Connecticut Opera and Rhode Island's Artists International. The bass-baritone debuts with the San Francisco Opera this season as a singer in *La Gioconda*, a shepherd in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, a Flemish deputy in *Don Carlo*, a priest in *Il Prigioniero*, Jake Wallace in *La Fanciulla del West* and Sir Walter Raleigh in *Roberto Devereux*. Martinovich was recently named the Atlantic Richfield Foundation Affiliate Artist in the San Francisco/Affiliate Artist-Opera Program.



Lyric baritone William Mallory makes his San Francisco Opera debut in three roles this season: a Flemish deputy in *Don Carlo*, Spinelloccio in *Gianni Schicchi* and Handsome in *La Fanciulla del West*. He has appeared twice with Spring Opera Theater, first in Monteverdi's *The Combat* in 1977 and this spring in the highly acclaimed production of Britten's *Death in Venice*. He has sung lead roles in *The Magic Flute*, *La Cenerentola*, *La Bohème*, *I Pagliacci*, *L'Heure espagnole*, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, *The Old Maid and the Thief* and Xador's contemporary opera *The Scarlet Mill*. Equally at home on the musical comedy stage, his credits include Billy Bigelow in *Carousel*, Sid in *Pajama Game*, Lt. Cable in *South Pacific*, Rutledge in *1776*, Lancelot in *Camelot*, Petruccio in *Kiss Me Kate* and Cliff in *Cabaret*. He has been heard with Opera à la Carte in various Gilbert and Sullivan works and was seen on the nationally televised San Diego Opera production of *The Merry Widow* with Beverly Sills. Winner of the 1975 "Singer of the Year" award from the National Association of Teachers of Singing, Mallory has sung baritone solos in Bach's B Minor Mass, Puccini's *Messa di Gloria*, the Fauré Requiem, Vaughan Williams' Mass in G Minor and Handel's *Messiah*.



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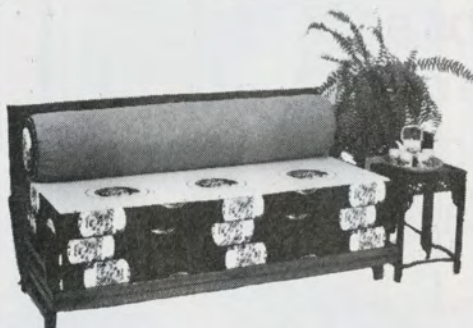
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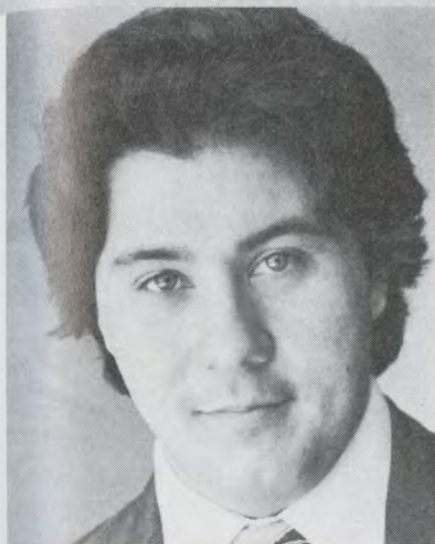
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MICHAEL BALLAM



American tenor Michael Ballam bows with the San Francisco Opera as a young servant in *Elektra*, Harry in *La Fanciulla del West* and Lord Cecil in *Roberto Devereux*. During the 1978 season of the Chicago Lyric Opera he performed the Puccini role in addition to Schmidt in *Werther* and Beelzebub in the world premiere of Penderecki's *Paradise Lost*. A graduate of Indiana university with a doctor of Music with Distinction degree, he has been heard there in such roles as Mephistopheles in *Doktor Faust*, Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Andres in *Wozzeck*, Lt. Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Anatol in *Vanessa*, the title roles in *Parsifal*, *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Danton in the world premiere of John Eaton's *Danton and Robespierre* in 1978. The young tenor has appeared as concert soloist in Carnegie Hall, Town Hall, the Kennedy Center, Notre Dame in Paris, the Royal Albert Hall and St. Martin's-in-the-Fields in London, among others. This year Ballam has sung the title roles in Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* with Pennsylvania Opera Theater, Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* with the Fresno Philharmonic Orchestra and *The Tales of Hoffmann* in Santa Barbara.

TONIO DI PAOLO



In his first season with the San Francisco Opera tenor Tonio di Paolo sings Isepo in *La Gioconda*, Count Lerma in *Don Carlo* and Joe in *La Fanciulla del West*. Until the summer of 1977 he performed as a baritone, singing Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* with the Chautauqua Opera Association, Silvio in *I Pagliacci* with the Virginia Opera Association, Doctor Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* with Opera/Omaha and appearing in the New York premieres of Conrad Susa's *Transformations* and Viktor Ullmann's *The Kaiser of Atlantis*. His tenor debut occurred at the Aspen festival as Nerone in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music, he was a member of the American Opera Center of the Juilliard School of Music for two years, making an important New York debut in the title role of Chabrier's *Le Roi malgré lui* and singing Steva in Janáček's *Jenufa* in 1978. Recently he was heard in the Verdi Requiem in Scranton and Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* with the Denver Symphony under Sixten Ehrling. This past summer he performed "Canti della Lontananza" at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and sang the role of Florizel in the world premiere of Harbison's *Winter's Tale* at the Herbst theatre in the San Francisco Opera's new American Opera Project. Di Paolo was recently named U.S. Steel Affiliate Artist in the San Francisco/Affiliate Artist-Opera Program.

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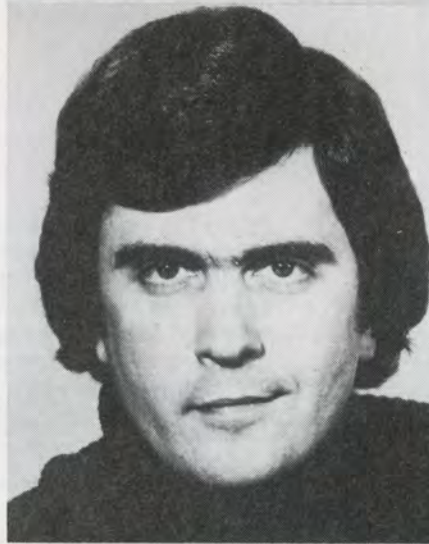
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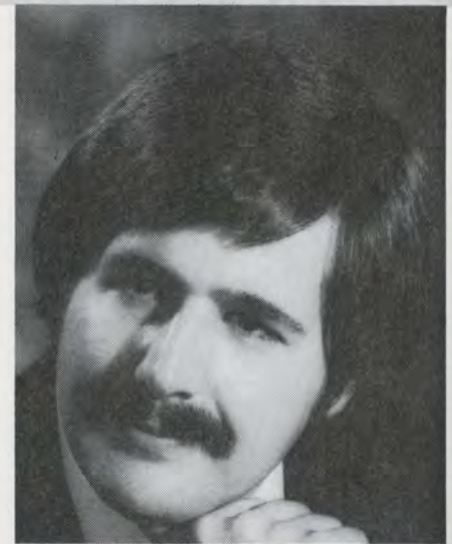


DAVID KOCH



David Koch appears in several roles during his debut season with the San Francisco Opera: a monk in *La Gioconda*, Marco in *Gianni Schicchi*, Larkens in *La Fanciulla del West* and a surgeon in *La Forza del Destino*. He was educated at Westminster Choir College, Carnegie-Mellon University in his native Pittsburgh and the University of Illinois. His repertoire includes both the standard baritone roles, such as Marcello in *La Bohème*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and Valentin in *Faust*, as well as leading roles in such twentieth century works as Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Robert Ward's *The Crucible* and Lee Hoiby's *Summer and Smoke*. The baritone has appeared with the Pittsburgh Opera, Bronx Opera, Manhasset Bay Opera and the Pennsylvania, Illinois and Lake George opera festivals. This past summer he was heard in Brown Bag Opera performances at the Geyser Peak Winery and in the world premiere of John Harbison's *Winter's Tale*. Koch was recently named the Reader's Digest Affiliate Artist in the San Francisco/Affiliate Artist Opera Program.

JOHN DEL CARLO



A member of the San Francisco Opera chorus from 1973 to 1976 and now in his second season as soloist with the Company, baritone John Del Carlo was co-winner of the first-place James H. Schwabacher Memorial Award in the 1977 San Francisco Opera Auditions Grand Finals, following performances as Marcello in *La Bohème* and Biagio in Gazzaniga's *Il Convitato di pietra* with the Merola Opera Program. In 1978 he debuted with Spring Opera Theater as Achilles in Handel's *Julius Caesar* and appeared in five different productions with the San Francisco Opera in the fall. During the 1979 SPOT season he portrayed Don Pedro, the Governor of Peru, in Offenbach's *La Perichole*. The baritone won the Giacomo Puccini Award in the San Diego Opera Center Program and was heard there as Dandini in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and Pantalone in Prokofiev's *Love for Three Oranges*. He sang Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* with the San Diego Opera in Palm Springs in 1978 and this May appeared in that company's production of *I Pagliacci* in the role of Silvio. A native of California and a graduate of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Del Carlo has performed with Brown Bag Opera, the Oakland Symphony and the California Bach Society. During the 1979 San Francisco Opera season he appears as Zuane in *La Gioconda*, a Flemish deputy in *Don Carlo*, an old servant in *Elektra*, Billy Jackrabbit in *La Fanciulla del West*, a page in *Roberto Devereux* and the Alcalde in *La Forza del Destino*.

GEORGE MASSEY



Following two seasons with Western Opera Theater during which he performed the roles of Marcello and Schaunard in *La Bohème*, Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*, Mr. McLean in *Susannah*, Roselbo in *The Portuguese Inn*, Dandini in *La Cenerentola* and Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, baritone George Massey bows with the San Francisco Opera as Betto in *Gianni Schicchi* and Jose Castro in *La Fanciulla del West*. A native of Jacksonville, Florida, he began his professional career with the Cincinnati Opera appearing in *Boris Godunov*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Carmen* and *Showboat*. A charter member of the Cincinnati Opera Ensemble, he has also been heard as a frequent soloist with the Cincinnati May festival under such conductors as Julius Rudel, James Levine and Robert Shaw. He has also appeared with the San Francisco Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony, the Chautauqua festival, the Jacksonville Opera, the Civic Opera of the Palm Beaches and Omaha Opera. Recently Massey performed in concert in Florida and in a production of *Così fan tutte* in New York.

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GARY FISHER



A native of Alberta, Canada, tenor Gary Fisher bows with the San Francisco Opera as Trin in *La Fanciulla del West*. He studied at the University of Cape Town, the Royal College of Music in London and the University of Southern California, and made his professional debut with the San Diego Opera as Rodolfo in the student performances of *La Bohème*. Recent appearances with that company were as Edmondo in *Manon Lescaut*, Borsa in *Rigoletto* and Gastone in *La Traviata*. Fisher has sung Tamino in *The Magic Flute* with both the Inverness festival and the Guild Opera of Los Angeles. He has also performed with the Ambrosian Singers, the London Philharmonic Choir, the Roger Wagner Chorale, the Pasadena Symphony and at the Carmel Bach festival.

GENE ALBIN



Bay Area tenor Gene Albin sings the role of the U.S. Postman in *La Fanciulla del West* in his second season with the San Francisco Opera. Last year he was heard in *Lohengrin* and *Der Rosenkavalier*. A graduate of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, he has studied with tenors Robert Tear in London and James Schwabacher in San Francisco. After graduation he was invited to join the Festival Singers of Canada, with whom he toured as chorister and soloist. In California, Albin has performed with the California Bach Society, the Peninsula Masterworks Chorale, at Stanford University, Hartnell College and at various locations throughout the state. At the San Luis Obispo Mozart festival he has been heard in *Bastien et Bastienne* and as Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, a role he has also sung under the direction of Donald Pippin in the Bay Area. An accomplished oratorio singer, he appeared with the Roger Wagner Chorale in Mozart's *Requiem* and Handel's *Dixit Dominus* on tour throughout the United States and was acclaimed in a performance of Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine* at UC Berkeley. In the 1979 Merola Opera Auditions Albin was awarded the Jean Donnell award and this fall joins the faculty of the University of California at Santa Cruz.

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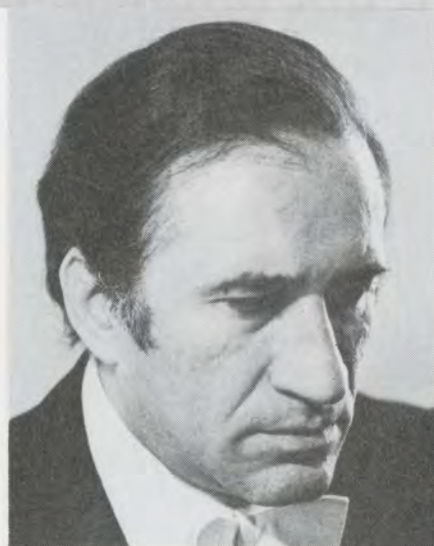
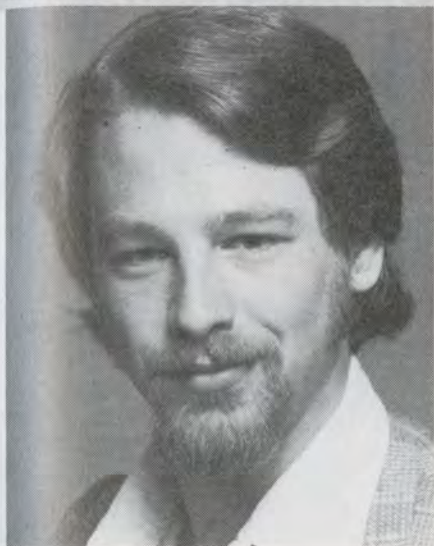
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RICHARD HAILE

GIUSEPPE PATANÈ



Baritone Richard Haile, a participant in the 1979 Merola Opera Program, bows this season with the San Francisco Opera in four roles: a singer in *La Gioconda*, a Flemish deputy in *Don Carlo*, Pinellino in *Gianni Schicchi*, and Happy in *La Fanciulla del West* and a servant in *Roberto Devereux*. This spring he was heard as a member of the ensemble in the Spring Opera Theater's production of *Death in Venice*. A graduate of Indiana University with a master's degree in music, he appeared there as Count Almaviva in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Amfortas in *Parsifal*, Monterone in *Rigoletto*, Angelotti in *Tosca*, Lamoral in *Arabella* and in the title role in the first U.S. stage production of Busoni's *Doktor Faust*. With Hidden Valley Opera in Carmel, Haile recently sang the title role in *Rigoletto*, Belcore in *L'Elisir d'Amore* and Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly*. He appeared with Central City Opera as Quince in Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Ben in Menotti's *The Telephone*, a role he repeated the following year with the Indianapolis Symphony.

Giuseppe Patanè, who conducted *Otello* last year, returns to the podium of the War Memorial for *La Fanciulla del West*. The son and grandson of conductors, Patanè made his operatic debut at the San Carlo Opera of his native Naples in 1951 with *La Traviata*. Famous for his memory of musical scores, he has since conducted a vast repertoire of opera throughout Europe and the United States. As a symphony conductor he has had major engagements with the Berlin, London and Munich Philharmonic orchestras, the Dresden Staatskapelle, l'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and the RIAS orchestra of Berlin, among others. Patanè made his American debut conducting a concert performance of *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Chicago's Grant Park in 1967. He bowed with the San Francisco Opera that fall and had the distinction of opening three successive seasons from 1967 to 1969 with *La Gioconda*, *Ernani* and *La Traviata*. With the Company he also led *Macbeth*, *Il Trovatore*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Turandot*, *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *La Forza del Destino*. Within the past year Patanè has conducted *Rigoletto*, *Carmen* and *Aida* at the Metropolitan Opera, a large number of Italian works at the Vienna Staatsoper, where he serves as principal guest conductor, *La Bohème* at the Paris Opera, *La Forza del Destino* and, most recently, Rossini's *Guglielmo Tell* at the Grand Théâtre in Geneva. During the 1979/80 season at the Met he is slated to conduct a new production of *Un Ballo in Maschera* as well as *Tosca*, *La Gioconda*, *Turandot* and *Lohengrin*, his first Wagnerian assignment in this country.

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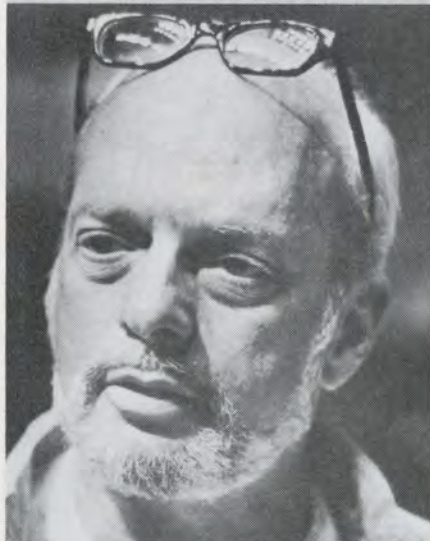
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HAROLD PRINCE



One of the most successful producer-directors in the history of the American stage, Harold Prince makes his San Francisco Opera debut with the new production of *La Fanciulla del West*, which he previously staged to great acclaim at the Lyric Opera of Chicago last season. His other opera assignment thus far has been the American premiere of Joseph Tal's *Ashmedai* for the New York City Opera. Over the past quarter century Prince has been in the forefront of the development of the American musical theater. He co-produced such hit musical comedies as *West Side Story*, *Fiorello!*, *The Pajama Game*, *Damn Yankees* and *New Girl in Town*, and served as sole producer for *Fiddler on the Roof*, *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* and *Side by Side by Sondheim*, among others. In the mid-60s and early 70s he achieved prominence as the leading producer-director on Broadway, working on such ground-breaking musicals as the revival of *Candide*, *Cabaret* and, in collaboration with composer-lyricist Stephen Sondheim, *Company*, *Follies*, *A Little Night Music* and *Pacific Overtures*. He also directed revivals of O'Neill's *The Great God Brown*, Dürrenmatt's *The Visit* and Congreve's *Love for Love* for the New Phoenix Repertory Company, as well as the films *Something for Everyone* and *A Little Night Music*. Prince is currently responsible for *Sweeney Todd*, *On the Twentieth Century* and *Evita*.

EUGENE & FRANNE LEE



The gifted husband-and-wife team Eugene and Franne Lee provided the set and costume designs for the new production of *La Fanciulla del West*, first seen in Chicago last season, in their San Francisco Opera debut. The Lees began their artistic collaboration for the Theater of Living Arts in Philadelphia several years ago. They have designed two productions for Peter Brook's International Center for Theatre Research: *Orghast* in Iran and Peter Handke's *Kaspar* in Paris. They also created designs for the Trinity Square Repertory Company. The Lees have received Drama Desk awards for their work on Andre Gregory's *Alice in Wonderland*, and both Drama Desk and Tony awards for the Leonard Bernstein musical *Candide*, directed by Harold Prince. Also with Mr. Prince, they designed the sets and costumes for the New York City Opera's production of Joseph Tal's *Ashmedai* and the current Broadway hit, Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, for which they received another Tony. Their designs for Gilda Radner's recent *Live from New York* were seen at the Winter Garden Theater in New York and will appear in the film version of the show to be directed by Mike Nichols. They are presently at work on a movie in collaboration with Paul Simon. The Lees are production designers for the popular *Saturday Night Live* television show and have designed several productions for PBS.

KEN BILLINGTON



Lighting designer Ken Billington has collaborated with director Harold Prince on numerous occasions in the legitimate theater and in opera. In addition to *La Fanciulla del West*, which was first produced at the Lyric Opera of Chicago last year, they worked together on Joseph Tal's *Ashmedai* in its American premiere at the New York City Opera and on such outstanding Broadway musicals as *Side by Side by Sondheim*, *On the Twentieth Century* and *Sweeney Todd*. A three-time Tony award nominee, Billington has designed extensively for the nation's leading opera and ballet companies. For the Dallas Civic Opera his credits include *Le Coq d'Or*, *Anna Bolena* and *I Puritani*, and for the New York City Opera he was responsible for the lighting designs for the American premiere of Thea Musgrave's *The Voice of Ariadne*. In the theater his credits include recent revivals of *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Sweet Bird of Youth* and *The Visit* in New York and productions of the American Shakespeare festival, the Milwaukee Repertory and the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. Billington also designs nightclub shows and concerts for headliners Ann-Margret, Liza Minelli and Shirley MacLaine.

Harold Prince
continued from p. 68

you something else. All you have to do is settle down and read that mammoth Puccini biography by Mosco Carner—which obviously I did before doing *Fanciulla*—and you see a man going through precisely the same things that Stephen Sondheim goes through, not only searching for material but with benefactors, casting, it's endless. No! There's nothing different between opera and musicals. The only thing is we created a difference at one point. We gave them names.

"I think what does happen on Broadway is that you make certain compromises in the vocal size of some of the star parts and subordinate leads, but you don't have to make any compromise whatsoever in the ensemble. We were recording *Sweeney* yesterday and it was thrilling. Tom Shepard, who produces a lot of operas for RCA, said, 'I wonder why we are having such a success?' Well, it's because that chorus is all out-of-work opera singers! It used to be only dancers could act. It's no longer true. I, personally, happen to be sick to death of dancing musicals—maybe because I can't choreograph, but I don't think so. Because by and large when you dance, in character, you have a hell of a lot of trouble convincing me of whatever the tension is you're dancing about. Acting and breaking into dance is just not as persuasive to me as acting and breaking into singing.

Prince directed his first opera production, Josef Tal's *Ashmedai*, at the New York City Opera in 1976. Julius Rudel asked him to direct *Le Nozze di Figaro* there but he eventually backed out. "I can't do *Figaro*. I gave up. I can't find anything new in it that hasn't been done better by other people. I'm damned if I make it political and damned if I don't. And I don't understand the hiding scenes and all that. I did decide it wasn't political. I think I'm right—it isn't there in the opera

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libretto, and you don't want to impose anything on anything. They get you for that, watch out." Sills asked him if he would ever want to do *Traviata*, but that's an opera that confuses him. "I saw Felsenstein's in Berlin. He dealt with it by being unreal, stylized. He had sixty waiters running around like lunatics, because of course they have to serve a meal in two seconds. Then they go dance for a few minutes and come back and it's dawn. I stole the bit with the waiters in *Company* because I knew Felsenstein was coming." London's Covent Garden asked Prince to stage Sir Michael Tippett's *The Ice Break* but he was busy. Vienna courted him, but balked when he said he'd like to do Janáček. Then Vienna asked again, but other commitments created problems. "I trust they'll ask me again." A beat. "I don't think I'm ducking opera—I'm not, let's face it. I love opera, I love to do it. I want to do what so many directors in Europe do and what almost no American directors do, which is direct any damn thing I'm right for."

For now, Harold Prince wants to build a reputation as an opera director. That is why he is working at the San Francisco Opera. Prince directed *La Fanciulla del West* for the Lyric Opera of Chicago at the beginning of last season, and it is this staging, with designs by Eugene and Franne Lee, that he will be recreating here. He is proud of his production, and talks about it with a mixture of shrewdness and glee. His eyes bug out, then narrow like slits. "In Chicago, I think the audience was having as good a time as at any successful musical I've done. I wish to hell the Met would pick it up. I haven't a clue why they haven't jumped for it. Well they can do another one at their own risk. I really think this one is swell. "You shouldn't necessarily play *Fanciulla* for reality. It's a style piece. Talk about pastiche! *Fanciulla* is a valentine, it's the most romantic piece—the audi-

ence cheers when she saves him. In our production, Minnie comes on at the end in one of these handcars, pumping down the track. No horse. And no horses when they leave at the end. The image here is two sort of hippies with backpacks climbing free all over the Sierras. That's nice. It's funny about realism or reality. Once you've established the size and the style of the piece, then everybody works within a kind of reality, within the confines of that style. That's *Sweeney Todd*, that's *Fanciulla*. When I first talked to Carol Fox about doing this opera in Chicago, she wanted me to do it in English. I read it in English and I panicked, because short of doing an adaptation—which I would have been happy to do but there wasn't time—it has to be done in Italian, to preserve the romantic aura.

"I will tell you where I differed from other directors. I concentrate on the miners, on all the subordinate roles. I have a feeling they're more individually delineated than usual. Puccini certainly delineated them. If you look at them carefully, they all have very specific characteristics, and character names that tell you a lot about them—Sonora, Handsome, Happy—sometimes even ironically. Now one of the reasons I spent a lot of time on them is because I'm crazy about their music and the way they function in the story. Another reason is that there is so much choral music and I didn't want crowds just coming in and going off. I wanted them to be motivated the entire evening. And then I also thought I'm going to put a lot of time into them because I'm not going to get a lot of time with the tenor and the baritone, who were arriving rather late in our schedule. The principals worked hard and fast, but the physical demeanor of the Rance and Johnson was big—barrel-chested, tubby Toby jugs. Now this is fine, and it's a thing that opera audiences have come to accept with no difficulty at all. And so have I while

we're at it. But I was able with the miners to get just as close to home as I could on Broadway. And the same is true of Minnie, because Carol Neblett is Minnie." A beat. "You know, I didn't realize until I was about to go into rehearsal that *Fanciulla* is *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*!

"But the most important thing I did was to take this opera outside. And the Lees did a lot of that. At the end of the first act, when the bandits come, we play inside and outside simultaneously. There's a bit of clumsy libretto when Johnson and Minnie go offstage to dance and everybody sings that lovely melody. Clumsy because their dancing is out of view. I put it on-stage and I love it there. The set opens so that Johnson and Minnie dance in and out of sight. They just keep dancing and meanwhile the scene's happening outside. I think it's endemic to the production, that moment, and I wouldn't sacrifice it. But all through, it's a big mountain onstage and people live on it all night long. There's a sense of loneliness and desperation.

"There were ideas I thought about and then discarded. Mud. I was going to put mud on the stage. Big pots of it, indentations in the set. And I was going to have boards across it and then have people challenge each other and then suddenly fall into the mud and do pratfalls and so on. A note of realism I abandoned instantly. Because it was going to be more trouble than it was worth and maybe a little distracting. The other thing I was going to do was open the second act in the snow there with a jack rabbit leaping across the horizon. And that was a lot of trouble so instead I substituted two bears. The rabbit's right. The music covers it. There's a very nice passage that made me think of it but the bears worked. The mother bear and the baby bear are drinking at a water hole—which was going to be the mud thing—and then they walk over the mountain. The audience delights in them. There's a dog in it too. He's been criticized. He's there with the wander-

ing minstrel and he's lovely. He was an Australian sheepdog in Chicago, and he sat, rose and moved very skillfully." Prince has changed both the staging and the structure of *Evita* and *Sweeney Todd*, but in both cases the composers and librettist were on hand. "We changed the last quatrain of *Sweeney* yesterday, because we never quite liked it. I wouldn't change it before the opening because it would have shaken Angie. But now I can. And in *Evita* I changed the ending, took a number out, put in something else. And a couple of very good things occurred to us for America, so I'm going back to London to alter. But Puccini isn't on tap. I remember the moment where I turned and said to Carol, 'Damn, I wish he were here.' The very end of the opera is truncated. Emotionally, it needs more music to get them all off. And what I've done makes it worse, because there are no horses, so they're walking over a mountain and I have even less time. I really think it could take another sixteen bars, of them singing 'Addio, California' or of the orchestra playing or whatever. It would be wonderful." Describing this rewrite that never could be, Prince is transported. I can see the curtain, the romance, the timing of it all, in his eye. He looks about eleven. When the vision dissolves, he continues gravely. "There's a lot of snobbery in the way people perceive *Fanciulla*. They sort of knock it as an opera. I wish they'd stop. They don't give it credit for being as brave as it is, and as honest."

Prince ponders the operatic repertory with an eagle eye. "To tell the truth, the operas that attract me are generally more about plot than character. *Peter Grimes* as far as I'm concerned is a miracle. I only wish I hadn't seen two marvelous productions, because I'd love to direct it so I could listen to it

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all the time. It's overwhelming—like *Carmelites*, really one of the memorable experiences I ever had in the theater. I had an offer to do *Magic Flute* and I couldn't figure that out." A beat. "It's intimidating. I thought well all these great directors gravitate toward *Figaro* and *Magic Flute* and yet I . . . I thought boy, they really know something.

"Oh I'd love to do Wagner. But you see, one of the things I don't want, and this comes out of my Broadway background, is to do anything I've seen anybody else do terrifically, which eliminates some of my favorites. I love *Bohème*, but I saw it, and not the one you imagine. I saw *Bohème* in the tiny theater in Salzburg and that to me was it. You see *Bohème* should be done on a stage the size of this desk. When I went to see that incredible *Bohème* at the Met, which came from Chicago, that great big cavernous room turned me off. We tried very hard with *Fanciulla* to make tiny playing areas. And all the artists were in shock. They said, 'What are you talking about?!' And I said, 'We'll put thirty people in there because that's where thirty people actually went.' And we let the rest—the mountain, the horizon—be the panorama. So I'd love to do a *Bohème* where they all didn't sit shivering outside in the second act. I've never understood that exactly. The whole first act they're freezing and in the second act they go out and sit outside to have supper." A beat. "It strikes me as unnecessarily perverse of them.

"I have very catholic tastes, I mean from *Boris* to *Tristan*. What doesn't attract me, because I'm not that much of a musician—you see I can't read music—are some of the musicians' favorite operas, like *Pelléas*. I wouldn't know how to do it. *Carmen* is a staggering opera, and yet very hard to do, isn't it? I've never seen a *Carmen* I liked." Getting back to plot and Prince's directorial need for it, one wonders

what plays or screenplays he would like to see become operas. "*The Visit*, which Von Einem made into an opera, that's a terrific plot for an opera. I think that some of the O'Neill stuff would make good opera material, because he wrote very operatic-style characters." Eventually Prince plays his trump. "I'm working on an opera, or I'm gonna work on one, and that's *Sunset Boulevard*. Years ago Billy Wilder told me it was an opera when I wanted to make a musical of it. It'll make a wonderful opera," Prince announces with that blanket certainty of show biz, "and I'm starting on it.

"The point about all this is that *Sweeney Todd* has made it, so we now have an opera in a Broadway musical house and audiences are happy. There's the acceptance, the acceptance of something like *Evita* in London—that's all we wanted. I think that's where the musical theater has to go." Prince falters. "You know I hate people who make those predictions. It doesn't have to go anywhere, but I'll tell you where it can't go. Back. It can't go back. You can't have mindless plots and unmotivated songs. They did it for years and it's no fun any more except in pastiches. The same thing is happening to musical theater that's happened in opera, just a little later."

I wondered which of Prince's many eyes he levels on a script that is new to him, if he has a producer's reflex for the one that will work on Broadway. "No, I never think about that, never thought about whether something will be a hit. Hence, look at all my non-hits. What turns me on?" A beat. "Well I'm a very political animal, so a point. Then, again, a plot. What kind of plot? It doesn't matter. Interesting characters. I wanted to do *On the Twentieth Century* to prove that I enjoy doing things like *On the Twentieth Century*. Totally different things, from show to show. I like style." Curtain.

Sweeney Todd and Books in Gift Shop

Books and *Sweeney Todd* aprons are among the fastest-selling items in the San Francisco Opera's Gift Shop, located on the south mezzanine level of the Opera House and open before every performance and at each intermission during the current opera season.

Choices of books are fairly eclectic, ranging from the new and rare hard-bound second volume of Julian Budden's *The Operas of Verdi* to paperback biographies of Fats Waller, George Gershwin and Cole Porter. For those interested in starting a basic library, the shop stocks both *Milton Cross Complete Stories of the Opera* and its sequel *More Stories of the Complete Operas*. There are also paperback art book editions of *French Opera Posters* and *Old Opera Stars in Historic Photographs*.

The *Sweeney Todd* aprons are based on the new Broadway show of the same name which tells the rather grisly tale of a London barber who butchers his customers and turns them over to his lady-friend Mrs. Lovett who, in turn, makes meat pies out of them in her kitchen!

All profits from the Opera's Gift Shop, which is staffed by volunteers, benefit the San Francisco Opera. The store is suggested by opera officials as a good place for patrons to use for their Christmas and Holiday gift shopping.

In addition to more expensive gifts there are such "stocking stuffer" items as post-cards and note-cards, costume jewelry, T-shirts, opera buttons, mugs, key rings and gift copies of the elaborate souvenir program for last fall's Anniversary Gala.

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Civic Light Opera's "run" at Ghirardelli Square was one example of the organization's long community involvement. Another one occurred in September when "42 Hours of Dancin'" was presented on an open air stage outside of the Hyatt on Union Square to note the arrival of Bob Fosse's production of "Dancin'" at the Orpheum Theatre.

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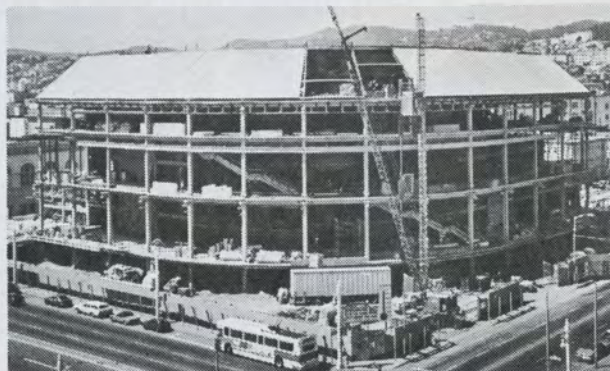
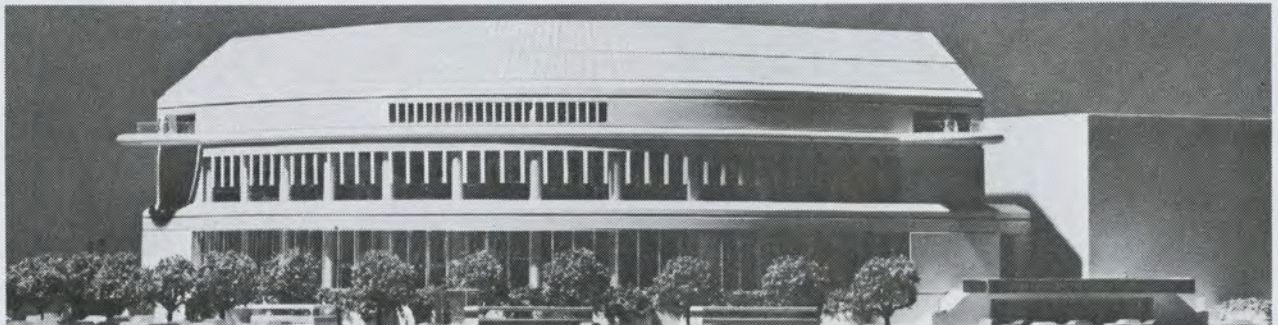
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David Belasco- Sachem of Hokum or Genius?

*San Francisco's Contribution to the
American Theater Wrote The Girl of the Golden West
as a Hit Play, Then Directed the Opera's World Premiere*

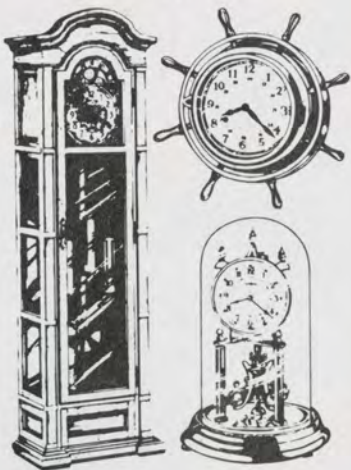
by BARRY HYAMS

It is typical of the vagaries of America that *The Girl of the Golden West*, the first opera with a story indigenous to this land, set in California and written by her homegrown son, should be the child of an Italian composer produced by his fellow Italian, and be sung and conducted initially by their three stellar compatriots and a Czech. *The Girl of the Golden West*, after *Madame Butterfly*, was the second play by David Belasco to stir the juices of Giacomo Puccini's inspiration. Another almost linked playwright and composer a third time. *Butterfly*, a dismal failure at its La Scala premiere, went on to become a perennial favorite, even in Japan. *The Girl of the Golden West* enjoyed a riotous reception at its world premiere at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York in 1910, and shortly thereafter slipped into oblivion for sixteen years. Some attributed its neglect to Puccini's music, an opinion stoutly disputed by its admirers. Others ascribed its loss of favor to the absence of Belasco, fabled equally as director



David Belasco (with white hair and clerical collar) during rehearsals for the world premiere of *La Fanciulla del West* with (from left) Giulio Gatti-Casazza, Arturo Toscanini and Giacomo Puccini.

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and dramatist, who had staged the original production at the Met but no longer was available, or desirable. To cap the irony, however, today both *Girl* and *Butterfly* are recognized as creatures of Puccini, and their parentage by David Belasco is virtually forgotten.

During his lifetime, Belasco was anything but obscure. The many accounts of his career vary when told by fan or skeptic, the least reliable being his autobiography. Mystification suited Belasco's personal style. But no doubt exists that for most of fifty years he stood, a megalith in the middle of the American theater, a presence felt all the way from his native San Francisco to New York and on to London. Genius, charlatan, lauded and detracted, the counterpart of P. T. Barnum, and the hierarch of the stage, within a decade of his death in 1931 he had become an artifact of an age as golden as California and as fictive. Mr. Dave, or The Governor, to his aides and associates, Belasco turned everything around according to his taste, whether it was stage department, the date of his birth or his collar which he affected clerical fashion and which prompted George Jean Nathan to dub him Monsignor Belasco. Others of the press referred to him as St. David, Reverend or Bishop Belasco. Robert Benchley preferred The Great White Father, partially because of Belasco's prematurely white hair which tumbled with carefully arranged negligence over his forehead above large romantic eyes in a sensitive face. In 1928 he celebrated his 69th birthday. A year later he marked his 75th, still one year short of the truth, and discarded his minister's neckwear.

Beginning in mid-19th century, Belasco had been "carried on" as Cora's child in the arms of Julia Dean in *Pizarro*, later playing Little William to her Hayne in *East Lynne*. The west was throbbing in those pioneer days and, as Belasco related, "the purse

of San Francisco was heavy with weighted gold." It lured such luminaries as Charles Kean, Edwin Forrest, Edwin Booth and E. A. Sothorn to the coast, all of whom drew Belasco permanently into the purview of the theater. In turn, he was to do the same for Maude Adams, Mrs. Leslie Carter, Nora Bayes and Gladys Smith whom he introduced to Broadway in *The Warrens of Virginia* written by William C. de Mille, father of choreographer Agnes De Mille. In the cast, too, was the author's brother, Cecil B. De Mille. Before presenting Miss Smith together with Lillian Gish in *A Good Little Devil*, Belasco changed her name to Mary Pickford. *The Girl of the Golden West* was one of 106 plays credited to Belasco as dramatist and director. Speculation ran to 200. Belasco claimed he directed 355 plays and performed 177 roles, in addition to his youthful readings of *The Maniac*, *Curfew Must Not Ring Tonight*, *The Maiden's Prayer* and *Tell Me Not In Mournful Numbers*. Stunning as it may be, either of the larger sums could be made to seem reasonable. Henry C. De Mille, father of William C. and Cecil B., as playreader for the Madison Square Theater on 24th Street in Manhattan, would read 200 manuscripts in three months and submit his selections to Belasco through whose hands every piece had to pass for "final shaping." Before he was 24, Belasco was known to have fashioned at least sixteen "works" on his own, including a clutch of penny-dreadfuls titled *Pawnticket 210*, *The Butcher's Revenge*, *The 7 Buckets of Blood*, as well as *The Bohemian Girl*—"with music"—and similarly *Il Trovatore*, and *Valentine*, adapted from *Faust*.

In that era, "adaptation," a euphemism for plagiarism, was more piratical than the practice which survives today in the theater, movies and television. What Belasco already knew and employed was magnified by a

short, instructive association with a master, Dion Boucicault. In 49 years, that Irish playwright wrote, adapted and translated 400 plays. How he accomplished the feat is illustrated by the manner in which he came up with one of his notable pieces.

In 1860, his *Vanity Fair* flopped and he had speedily to provide a substitute to its distressed manager/actress, Laura Keene. Passing a bookshop one evening, he picked up a novel, *The Collegians* by Gerald Griffin, and by morning had sent a note to Miss Keene.

"My dear Laura: I have it. I send you seven steel engravings of scenes around Killarney. Get your scene-painter to work on them at once. I also send a book of Irish melodies with those marked I desire Baker to score for the orchestra. I shall read act one of my new Irish play on Friday; we rehearse that while I am writing the second which will be ready on Monday; and we rehearse the second while I am doing the third. We can get the play out within a fortnight. Yours, D. B."

He did, and *The Colleen Bawn* became a Boucicault milestone. "When I wrote it," he said later, "I invented the Irish drama." William Butler Yeats and Lady Gregory with the Abbey Players labored for years "to undo some of the harm done to Irish character by the Boucicault type."

At age 20, Belasco experienced the Boucicault method first-hand in Virginia City during the preparation of *Led Astray*. His hands knotted with gout, the playwright dictated the dialog to Belasco. Whenever he came to a part which required Irish brogue, Belasco noticed the ease with which the dictation flowed. Otherwise, the playwright kept glancing furtively at something held behind a newspaper. Belasco's curiosity was whetted, and with Boucicault summoned from the room, he seized the moment to peek under the journal to discover a copy of *La Tentation* by Feuillet from

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which Boucicault was filching the entire plot.

"He was more than an adapter," according to Belasco. "He was a brilliant and indefatigable slave, resting neither day nor night. Even though he adapted—in accordance with the custom of the time—he added to the original source, making everything better than he found it."

One doubts that Boucicault improved *Nicholas Nickleby* or *Cricket On The Hearth* by Charles Dickens. He had adapted *Cricket* from a French dramatization called *Le Marchand d'Enfants*, unaware of the story's origin or previous existence. He helped himself liberally to Walter Scott, Dumas *pere et fils*, and Sardou without giving credit where it was due. Belasco, already an adept, was by this buttressed in his own endeavors.

In Virginia City he was able to watch Boucicault rehearse Charles Thorne in *Led Astray*, and he listened as the playwright directed the actor, an overwrought scenery chewer, in a passage which called for moments of suppressed emotion.

"Now, Charlie, old man," Boucicault cautioned him, "play it down, play it down."

"And Charlie did play it down," Belasco recalled. "The consequence was when he read the line, 'God, oh, my God!,' his method soon became the talk of the town. Thus did a school of acting begin while Boucicault and I were working together."

"Working together" meant that Belasco, as emanuensis and "gofer," took some of Boucicault's many plays at dictation, in dressing-rooms and on the train from Virginia City to San Francisco. He would have proceeded with the Irish playwright to New York, but Mrs. Belasco wouldn't hear of her son's departure—not until 1882.

For years Belasco served San Francisco's Metropolitan Theater, Grand Opera House and Baldwin Theater as a "grip," a bit-player in anything from

Sambo in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to the Second Actor in *Hamlet*, stage manager, prompter, hack playwright, and secretary-runner to impresario Tom Maguire. When at last he made for New York, he took with him the formidable experience of having supervised scores of plays, including his own dramatizations, adaptations, and "original" works. With his first assignment at the Madison Square Theater, the staging of Bronson Howard's *Young Mrs. Winthrop*, he put his innovations into effect.

This was the age when "ham" behavior passed for normative acting, when character was portrayed with stentorian declamation, semaphore gestures and measured intervals, with the action halted for applause. Belasco eliminated the soliloquy, the aside; he modulated voices and movements, and prohibited a comedian from waiting for a laugh which thenceforth rewarded the reading of a line or not at all. Ensemble performance became his trademark. Astonished by the novelty, actors growled their derision which turned into congratulations upon the glad reception from audiences and critics. Belasco's reputation as a director soared.

He then went to work on the *mise-en-scene*. In the words of Sheldon Cheney, he "swept out the artificial and muddy operatic settings; meticulously real scenes, photographed from life, took their places. Belasco, arguing for 'the importance of the little thing,' assembled thousands of little things out of life in settings that touched the high spot in naturalness and left the spectator agape at telephones, real doorframes, bars with real liquors, living flowers, complete restaurant interiors, thousand-cushioned lovenests."

At a time when a carpet and mirror used by Mrs. John Drew in *London Assurance* was looked upon as a natural miracle, Belasco was dousing real water on two quarreling women

in a scene from his version of Zola's *L'Assommoir*. For realistic effect in *The Wanderer*, Belasco herded 120 sheep down a scenic hillside. On tour in Canada in 1917, the flock was confiscated by the government to feed the army. Belasco, outraged, demanded their return, describing the animals as "highly trained, personally rehearsed under David Belasco. Some of these trained sheep," he fumed, "are far more intelligent and artistic than some of the two-footed actors I have rehearsed in the past." That didn't endear him to Actors Equity, and the government ignored him.

Belasco lavished money and special attention on lighting. Early he dispensed with footlights, and then was first to utilize triple-banked foots. In *Darling of the Gods* he stopped a rehearsal to instruct the electrician: "I don't want a mere moon; what I want is a Japanese moon!" He doted on dims and fades. His production of *Mima* loaded the stage manager with 1,500 technical cues, eight to the minute.

A spectacular stunt of that nature permitted *Madame Butterfly* an uninterrupted course between scenes, going from twilight to sunrise without bringing down the curtain. In the interval which Puccini later filled with an orchestral nocturne, *Butterfly*, Suzuki and the child were seen standing at the window awaiting the arrival of Pinkerton, until night fell and stars appeared. *Butterfly* lit the lanterns in expectation of a celebration. One by one they flickered out into total darkness. Gradually, gray dawn broke, to reveal the child and Suzuki asleep on the floor and *Butterfly* still at the window. The glow of sunrise filled the room with light and birds sang. No other sound was heard during the transition of fourteen minutes with "an audience, awe-struck, scarcely daring to move or breathe." Belasco approached it as a challenge, but with customary sententiousness, he called

it "my most successful effort in appealing to the imagination of those who have sat before my stage."

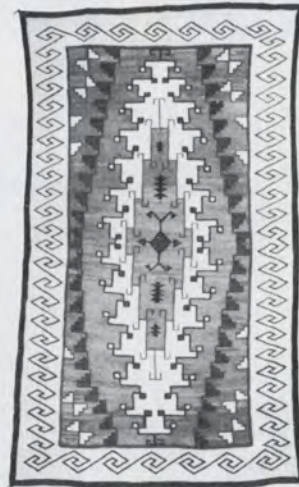
The Girl of the Golden West proved another tour-de-force by Belasco. When it opened in Pittsburgh in July 1905, the curtain rose on a panorama of the cabin atop Cloudy Mountain. Gradually, the audience's eyes were directed, as in a vertical cinematic "pan," down a dizzying path to the exterior of the Polka Saloon. After a dimout, from the darkness emerged the interior of the barroom. The blizzard on Cloudy Mountain formed ice on the window panes of the cabin; snow drifted through the chinks in the walls; and the gale shrieked and moaned, orchestrated by 32 stagehands on wind and snow machines. His lesson from Boucicault well-learned, Belasco supplied atmospheric music played on a concertina, banjo and "bones" which rendered *Coal Oil Tommy*, *Rosalie The Prairie Flower*, *Pop Goes The Weasel*, and *Echoes From Home*—or *Old Dog Tray*. This last, when heard by Puccini, who was otherwise unaffected by the play, made him exclaim, "Ah, there's my theme at last!" Minstrel and song were retained in the opera.

Belasco based his play on a Bret Harte story. Minnie, however, was a composite of Harte heroines, mainly "Miggles" who actually ran the Polka Saloon in Marysville in 1853, the year Belasco was born. After it opened on West 42nd Street in November 1905, Blanche Bates, as Minnie, had already spent four months in the cabin on Cloudy Mountain when the earthquake which destroyed most of San Francisco left her frantic for word from relatives and friends. None came, and she went on, performing as an automaton. But at the lines, "Oh, my mountain! Oh, my California! My Sierras!" the words stuck in her throat. She broke down, weeping, and the audience cried with her. A heart-

continued on p. 110

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	10	11
	17	Don Carlo 8 pm, A,C
October		18
	24	La Gioconda 8 pm, B
		25
	1	Elektra 8 pm, A,B
October		2
	8	Triple Bill 8 pm, A,C
		9
	15	Fliegende Holländer 8 pm, A,C
November		16
	22	La Fanciulla del West 8 pm, A,C
		23
	29	Roberto Devereux 8 pm, A,C
November		30
	5	La Forza del Destino 8 pm, A,B
	12	Così fan tutte 8 pm, A,B
	19	Tancredi 8 pm, A
		20

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La Gioconda 7:30 pm, D,E		Pelléas et Mélisande 8 pm, G,H	Don Carlo 8 pm, J,L	La Gioconda 12:30 pm, M,N
Pelléas et Mélisande 7:30 pm, D,F		La Gioconda 8 pm, G,H	Don Carlo 1:30 pm, X	Pelléas et Mélisande 2 pm, M,N
Don Carlo 7:30 pm, D,F		Elektra 8 pm, G,I	La Gioconda 8 pm, J,L	Don Carlo 2 pm, M,O
Triple Bill 7:30 pm, D,E		Don Carlo 8 pm, G,I	Triple Bill 8 pm, J,L	Elektra 2 pm, M,N Carreras Recital, 8 pm
	Elektra 7:30 pm, D,F	Fliegende Holländer 8 pm, G,H	Elektra 8 pm, J,K	Triple Bill 2 pm, M,O
La Fanciulla del West 7:30 pm, D,F		Triple Bill 8 pm, G,I	La Fanciulla del West 8 pm, J,K	Fliegende Holländer 2 pm, M,N
	Fliegende Holländer 7:30 pm, D,E	Roberto Devereux 8 pm, G,I	La Fanciulla del West 1:30 pm, M,O Fliegende Holländer 8 pm, J,L	Opera Fair 12 pm, to 6 pm
La Fanciulla del West 7:30 pm, E		La Fanciulla del West 8 pm, G,I	Fliegende Holländer 1:30 pm, X La Forza del Destino 8 pm, J,K	Roberto Devereux 2 pm, M,O
Roberto Devereux 7:30 pm, D,F		La Forza del Destino 8 pm, G,H	Così fan tutte 1:30 pm, X Roberto Devereux 8 pm, J,L	
La Forza del Destino 7:30 pm, D,F	Roberto Devereux 7:30 pm, E	Così fan tutte 8 pm, G, H	La Forza del Destino 1:30 pm, X Tancredi 8 pm, J	Così fan tutte 2 pm, M,O Nilsson/Adler Concert, 8 pm
Così fan tutte 7:30 pm, D,E	La Forza del Destino 8 pm Thanksgiving	Tancredi 8 pm, G	Così fan tutte 1:30 pm** Così fan tutte 8 pm, J,K	La Forza del Destino 2 pm, M,N

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David Belasco
continued from p. 107

less critic commented, "One of Belasco's marsh-melodramas."

"It was," one historian wrote, "a dramaturgic sleight-of-hand, and no amount of critical cavil over its patent improbabilities could prevent the public from lavishing affection and approval on it for three years after its premiere."

In 1907, the second year of *Girl's* New York run, Puccini, at the invitation of Heinrich Conreid, general manager of the Met, arrived to oversee the staging of his operas. He attended three Belasco plays: *The Music Master*, *The Rose of Rancho*, and *The Girl of the Golden West*. By then he had "had enough of *Boheme*, *Butterfly* and *Company*," and was "sick of them." He told reporters, "I found a heroine very naive and refreshing. I find truth and sincerity in the American drama. I would like *The Girl Of The Golden West*—or some western theme. If Mr. Belasco will write the libretto, I shall write the music and we shall have the American opera." The two met but the composer left New York without concluding an arrangement with the playwright. From Paris he wrote to ask that copy of the play be sent for translation and study. Belasco dispatched it posthaste.

A year later, Giulio Gatti-Casazza took command of the Met, and among the first things he did was visit Puccini to obtain the rights to the world premiere of *Girl*. He offered a star cast, consisting of Enrico Caruso, Emmy Destinn and Pasquale Amato with Arturo Toscanini conducting, the composer to supervise the production—and today's equivalent of \$50,000, an offer Puccini couldn't refuse. Gatti supplied "the first American opera" with one native singer in an ensemble of ten Italians, two Germans, and one each from Bohemia, Poland, Spain and France. He also took Belasco at his word to be of service, and brought him into the fold "to make the artists act as well as sing."

Everyone was in a fever of preparation. Toscanini, as was his practice upon waking each morning, studied the score in bed and conducted without looking at it. Emmy Destinn learned the role of Minnie in twenty days, working ten hours a day—four alone, six with Toscanini. Caruso, as usual, was note-perfect at the first rehearsal. Nevertheless, this time he held his score in hand and marked every one of Belasco's directions. Aided by an interpreter, Belasco tried to follow his original prompt book. However, the chorus behaved "in an alarming manner."

"Men and women by the scores," he wrote, "would troop out on stage, range themselves in rows and become merely a background for the principals. Then, for no clear purpose, they would all begin to shrug their shoulders, grimace, and gesticulate with their hands. I resolved to undo all this at once. I located the ones who shrugged too much and either backed them up against trees and rocks, or invented bits of 'business' by which they were held by others. When a chorus singer became incorrigible in the use of his arms, I made him go through entire scenes with his hands in his pockets. Little by little, I tamed this wriggling crowd until they themselves began to understand the value of repose." Destinn tended bar as she sang; Caruso was made to deliver his opening measures with his back to the audience, and later, wounded, sang as he mounted an almost vertical ladder to the loft of Minnie's cabin.

Some changes, more in detail than dimension, had taken place in the transfer from American play to Italian opera. Belasco had spoken of *Girl* as "a drama of love against a dark and vast background of primitive characters and untrammelled nature . . . Minnie's utter frankness takes away all suggestions of vice—showing her unsmirched, happy, untouched by the life about her. Yet she has a thorough

knowledge of what the men around her generally want." It allowed, in other words, a gunslinging angel who countenanced no impropriety to dispense whiskey and cheat at cards. Pure love redeemed all.

Puccini probably regarded her as another Tosca. A sheriff substituted for a police chief, and a rehabilitated desperado took the place of a revolutionary painter. The stakes were the same: the heroine's virtue for her lover's life. The sole difference was that after a gallows scene, the end was a happy one.

In the play, reduced from four acts to three in the opera, Minnie's love "is a tickling sensation at the heart you can't scratch." She has no more than "thirty dollars worth of education" and gets her "learning" from reading *Old Joe Miller's Jokes*. Puccini has her reading the 51st Psalm with which she moves granite hearts to mercy, appealing for Johnson's life as "the best and highest teaching of love."

To Belasco, Sheriff Rance, "a cool waxen deliberate gambler," is a man of honor truly in love with Minnie. He would never do her violence, and is a good loser and a man of his word. When Ashby of Wells Fargo hunts Johnson down and hands him over, only then does the sheriff feel duty bound to hang the former bandit. Puccini's Rance, not unlike Scarpia, is sinister and inclined to force his attentions on Minnie.

At first, Puccini guardedly asserted that "the music cannot be called American, for music has no nationality—it is either music or nothing." By the time Belasco had kneaded the production into shape, Puccini's reserve dissolved in euphoria. "For this drama," he held forth, "I have composed music that I feel sure reflects the spirit of the American people and particularly the strong vigorous nature of the West. I have never been west," he went on expansively, "but I have

continued on p. 114

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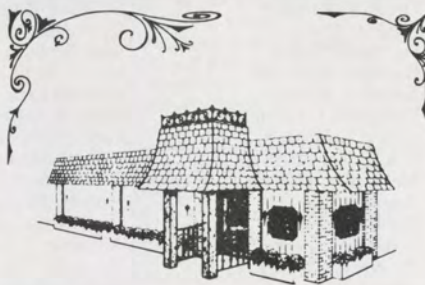
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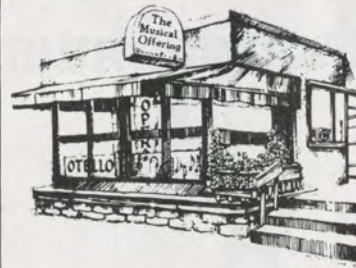
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David Belasco
continued from p. 111

read so much about it that I know it thoroughly."

Not enough, however, to avoid gaffes which Belasco rectified during rehearsal, pointing out that gold miners neither dressed nor behaved like cowboys, and that Billy Jack Rabbit, the Indian, could not be the one to lynch Dick Johnson; that, according to stage convention, could be performed only by a white man. Ever the realist, Toscanini evaluated the production for a *Times* reporter three days before the dress rehearsal. "The music is Italian," he said flatly; "that we understand. But the play is American, and not only American but Mr. Belasco's. We want every detail to be correct because other theaters in the future must copy this production. And Mr. Belasco is the man to initiate us into these details." All of which may account for the note of petulance in the composer's letter to his wife. "The opera emerges splendidly, but how tremendously difficult it is, this music and the staging."

The opening of *Girl* on December 10th 1910 was unprecedented. That year the Met had paid Oscar Hammerstein \$1 million never to produce opera in New York again, and had opened the way to its own expansion to the "golden west" through the capitalization of the Chicago Opera Company. Competition eliminated, and exploitation of the *Girl* intense, the value of tickets to the premiere rocketed to the value of ounces of gold. To buy a seat, the purchaser had to sign each pasteboard, and upon entering the theater had to countersign it. Scalpers counterattacked by forging signatures and selling tickets at thirty times the box office price. On the evening of the premiere, automobiles and carriages began to arrive at the Met at 7 p.m. The ticket entrance was jammed, traffic backed up for blocks around the opera house and police had to handle the mob panting to get in. Otto H. Kahn, most prominent member of the Met's board, arrived

without his ticket and was refused entry until finally someone identified him. The curtain rose an hour late.

The production was spectacular, the singers outdid themselves, and in the final act, true to form, Belasco had eight horses gallop on stage. The reception was ecstatic. Applause mounted with each act, and altogether *Girl* was given 53 curtain calls, a tumultuous one for Puccini, Toscanini, Gatti and Belasco.

Eight performances followed the opening; the next three seasons toted only thirteen. *Girl* was heard in Covent Garden, Vienna, Berlin, and later in Chicago and Boston. In Liverpool, in 1911, it received its first presentation in English. In 1929, revived with Jeritza, Martinelli and Tibbett, it stayed on two more seasons and, except for fitful reappearances, vanished from the American scene. Its survival power was best exhibited in Rome.

In late 1919, Belasco, co-author with George Scarborough of *The Son-Daughter*, produced that melodrama of revolution in Chinatown starring Lenore Ulric. While it ran for 223 performances, Gatti-Casazza sent a copy off to Puccini, and the New York agent for Ricordi, the composer's publisher, optioned the rights. Intrigued at first, Puccini cooled. He may have associated Belasco with two disasters in his life—his near fatal auto accident before *Butterfly*, and the ordeal of his housemaid's suicide prior to *Girl*. Also, he had been contemplating the operatic possibilities of Nancy and Bill Sykes of *Oliver Twist*. In any case, Puccini dumped it all to continue his search for an epic legend and found it in *Turandot*. A third collaboration with Belasco never materialized.

The passing of *Girl* at the Met dated the gradual discovery of clay in the Belasco boots. By the mid-20s, the critical fraternity emerged from its Belasco hypnosis and were in "full-throated chorus of disenchantment." Though their cries at times tended to

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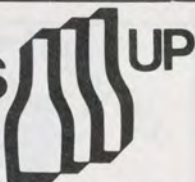


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discount his achievements, much of their demythologizing was due to Belasco's own pretensions and posturings.

Describing his stage naturalism, he would declare, "As long as there is a God, we cannot improve on scenery. My motto is: Get as near to God as possible." Decrying the "commercial play" and the star system, he produced the former and presented the latter.

He opened the Empire Theater for Charles Frohman with *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, written by Belasco and Franklyn Fyles, of which *Tribune* critic William Winter wrote: "It is incredible that anybody can be so foolish with a pen in his hand." Nevertheless, it ran for 288 performances. *The Heart of Maryland*, a Belasco thriller, starred Mrs. Leslie Carter as a Southern belle. The climax had her bayonet the villain to free her Northern lover, and prevent an alarm by climbing a forty-foot rope to grab the bell-clapper and keep it from ringing. When Frohman exported it to the Adelphi in London, GB Shaw greeted it solemnly. "This is the moral mission of Mr. Charles Frohman. He is snatching the fool's cap from the London playgoer and showing it to him on the head of an American. Meanwhile, our foolish plays are going to America to return the compliment."

Still, when Belasco produced and directed Molnar's *The Phantom Rival*, a sensation with its lightning changes of scene and costumes, it made third place on George Jean Nathan's "Ten Best" list, ahead of *Doctor's Dilemma* and *Pygmalion* by Shaw—which must say something about critics.

Belasco could no more change his ways than a leopard his spots. Presenting *Mary Mary* with Minnie Mardern Fiske, he had his press agent proclaim that the production would display "a new system of lighting based on David Belasco's study of the rainbow." The announcement elicited from Robert Benchley, "The thought



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of Mr. Belasco studying the rainbow is touching and impressive, and only goes to show what great strides Nature is making."

Relentlessly, George Jean Nathan pursued him in the press. "The Belasco legend," he wrote, "shows signs of soon going to join its comrades, the stork, Santa Claus, black hose, Swiss vermouth, eugenics, neutrality and Rabindranath Tagore. . . . He discarded the ordinary habiliments of commerce and by the simple device of turning his collar hind end foremost made of himself a sort of Broadway Rasputin, a creature for awe and pointings and whisperings."

In a manner of speaking, Belasco was a Rasputin. In 1925, after eight years under his direction, Ina Claire fled the master's influence. She was quoted saying, "I began to be terrified that perhaps after a while I could not do anything without him. I knew I ought to be able to rely on my own merit without so much support, excellent and understanding as it is. . . . I began to suspect I wasn't actually as good an actress as his theatrical effects made me seem."

Many, such as Jane Cowl, Judith Anderson, David Warfield and Lenore Ulric, publicly acknowledged that no benefit from their early careers compared in value to their tutelage under Belasco. Others appeared but once under his direction, like Katharine Cornell in *Tiger Cats* in 1924. "They simply didn't understand each other."

Belasco persisted in his flamboyancies and pomposities. He circulated a story that Oscar Wilde, freed from jail and living in Paris, was writing a play commissioned by Belasco. His studio-apartment on top of the theater bearing his name was a sanctum. Upon several strokes of a gong, admission was gained by passing down a long corridor between rows of flunkies to where Belasco, in black with white clerical collar, sat ensconced at an

continued on p. 42

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S.F. Ballet Returns to Opera House in December

The San Francisco Ballet will return to the San Francisco War Memorial Opera House this December upon completion of their current tour of four Pacific Rim cities—Pasadena, Seattle, Portland and Honolulu.

Opening the 1979-80 Opera House season on December 13 will be Lew Christensen's spectacular production of *Nutcracker*. There will be 29 performances of *Nutcracker* running through December 30.

On January 15, 1980, the San Francisco Ballet will begin its 1980 Repertory Season, presenting five months of exciting dance—from classic to contemporary—in the dazzling style which is unique to the San Francisco Ballet.

Highlighting the 1980 Repertory Season will be four World Premieres of ballets choreographed by the Company's resident choreographers: Michael Smuin's full-length ballet *The Tempest*, and new works by Robert Gladstein, John McFall and Tomm Ruud.

The Tempest is San Francisco Ballet Co-Director Michael Smuin's third full-length ballet after *Cinderella*, choreographed in 1974 with Co-Director Lew Christensen, and *Romeo and Juliet*, choreographer in 1976. This new ballet follows William Shakespeare's serene fantasy of romance and intrigue from the spectacular opening shipwreck to its magical conclusion. The island paradise of Shakespeare's imagination provides the setting and a cast of dukes and lords, spirits and mythological deities adrift in a world of romantic allusion and remarkable natural beauty.

The three additional World Premieres will consist of Robert Gladstein's new work set to the music of Leonard Bernstein's "Chichester Psalms"; John McFall's new contemporary ballet set to Henri Lazarof's "Canti," an a cappella choral work in five languages; and

Tomm Ruud's new neoclassical ballet for 14 dancers set to Sir Edward Elgar's Introduction and Allegro, Opus 47, for quartet and string orchestra.

The 1980 Repertory Season will also feature revivals of Lew Christensen's *Don Juan* and Willam Christensen's *Nothin' Doin' Bar. Nothin' Doin' Bar*, choreographed in 1950 to a score by Darius Milhaud, will be presented as part of a Bay Area celebration in honor of Milhaud, sponsored by Mills College.

Three works by George Balanchine will also be in the repertory schedule. *Divertimento No. 15* will be given its San Francisco premiere; and that choreographer's *Allegro Brillante*, given its San Francisco Ballet premiere during the 1979 Summer Season, and *Symphony in C* are included.

Other scheduled works from repertory include: Sir Frederick Ashton's full-length *La Fille Mal Gardée*; Lew Christensen's *Scarlatti Portfolio* and *Sinfonia*; Michael Smuin's *A Song for Dead Warriors, Q.aV.*, *Scherzo*, *Mozart's C Minor Mass*, *Harp Concerto Pas de Deux* and *Duettino*, a 1979 Summer Season premiere; Robert Gladstein's *The Mistletoe Bride*; and John McFall's *Le Rêve de Cyrano*.

In addition to the 1980 Repertory Season at the Opera House, the San Francisco Ballet will present four different programs at Zellerbach Auditorium on the U.C. Berkeley campus and at the San Jose Center for the Performing Arts in San Jose.

People interested in *Nutcracker*, the 1980 Repertory Season at the Opera House, or in the Zellerbach or San Jose performances are urged to check local newspapers for upcoming announcements of performance schedules, or to call the San Francisco Ballet at (415) 751-2141 for information.

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Prizes in the giant raffle include two hundred shares of Marathon Oil common stock; round-trip San Francisco-Paris Apex airfare for two people plus accommodations for two weeks (not to exceed \$2,600) from Siemer & Hand Travel; a \$2,500 gift certificate from Statements; a one-week coastal cruise for two to Canada from Delta Cruise Lines; and a \$2,000 gift from Narsai Catering.

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Raffle tickets at \$5 each or six for \$25 are available now in the basement bar area of the Opera House during intermissions at every performance and may also be purchased at the Opera Box Office and through the mail. By purchasing raffle tickets you are making a contribution to benefit the San Francisco Opera. Drawing for all prizes will be held at 5 p.m. at the Fair, although winners need not be present at the drawing.

The 1979 Fair will also feature free musical entertainment throughout the Opera House by artists of the San Francisco Opera, Brown Bag Opera and the Affiliate Artists. New this year are "How Did They Do That!?", an exciting staged demonstration of special effects, combat techniques and pyrotechnic magic from the Opera tech shop, and "Spotlight on *Forza*", a rare opportunity to observe from the dress circle a technical preparatory rehearsal for *La Forza del Destino*.

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