

Pelléas et Mélisande (Pelleas and Melisande)

1979

Saturday, September 8, 1979 8:00 PM

Tuesday, September 11, 1979 8:00 PM

Friday, September 14, 1979 8:00 PM

Wednesday, September 19, 1979 7:30 PM

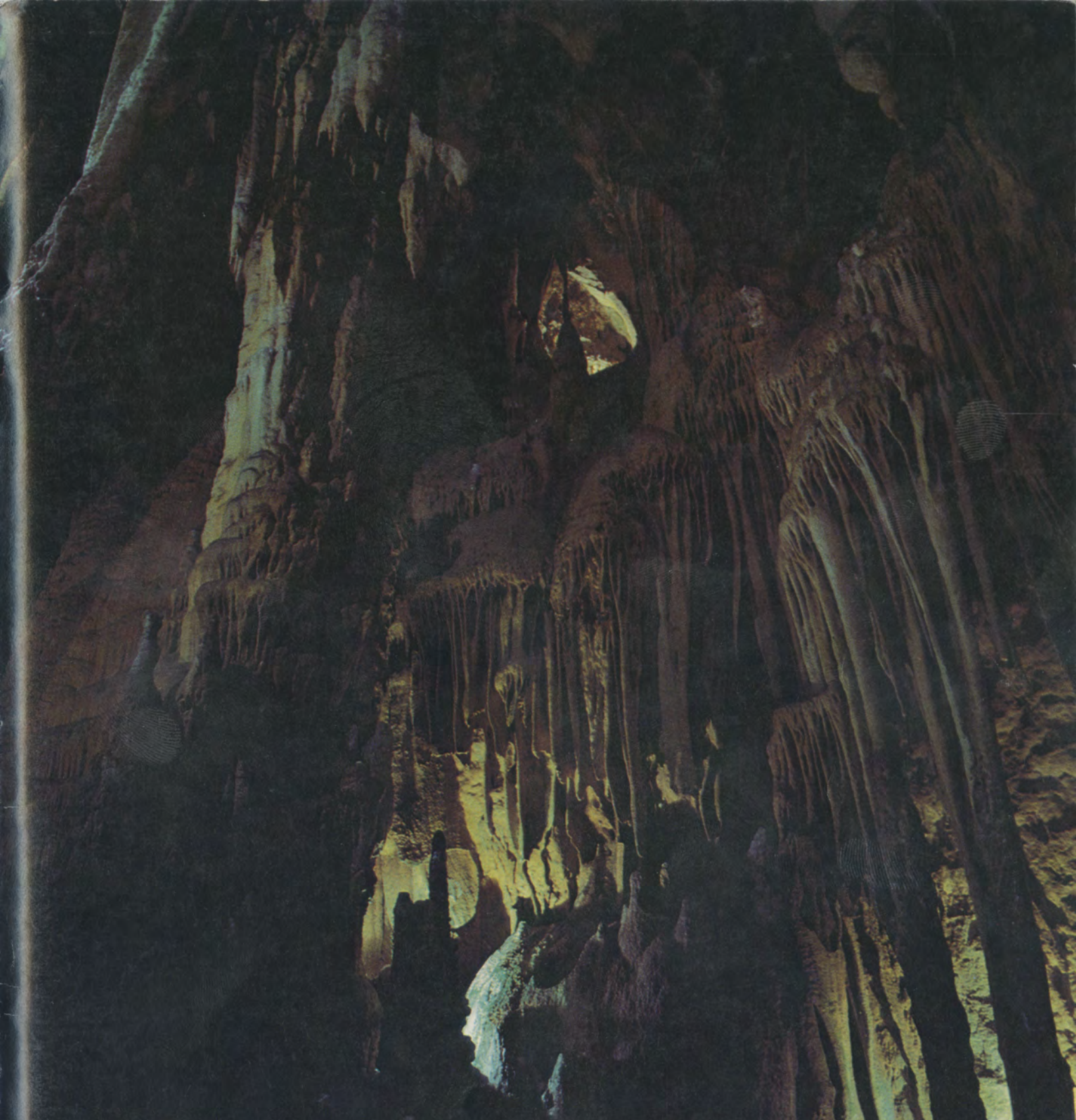
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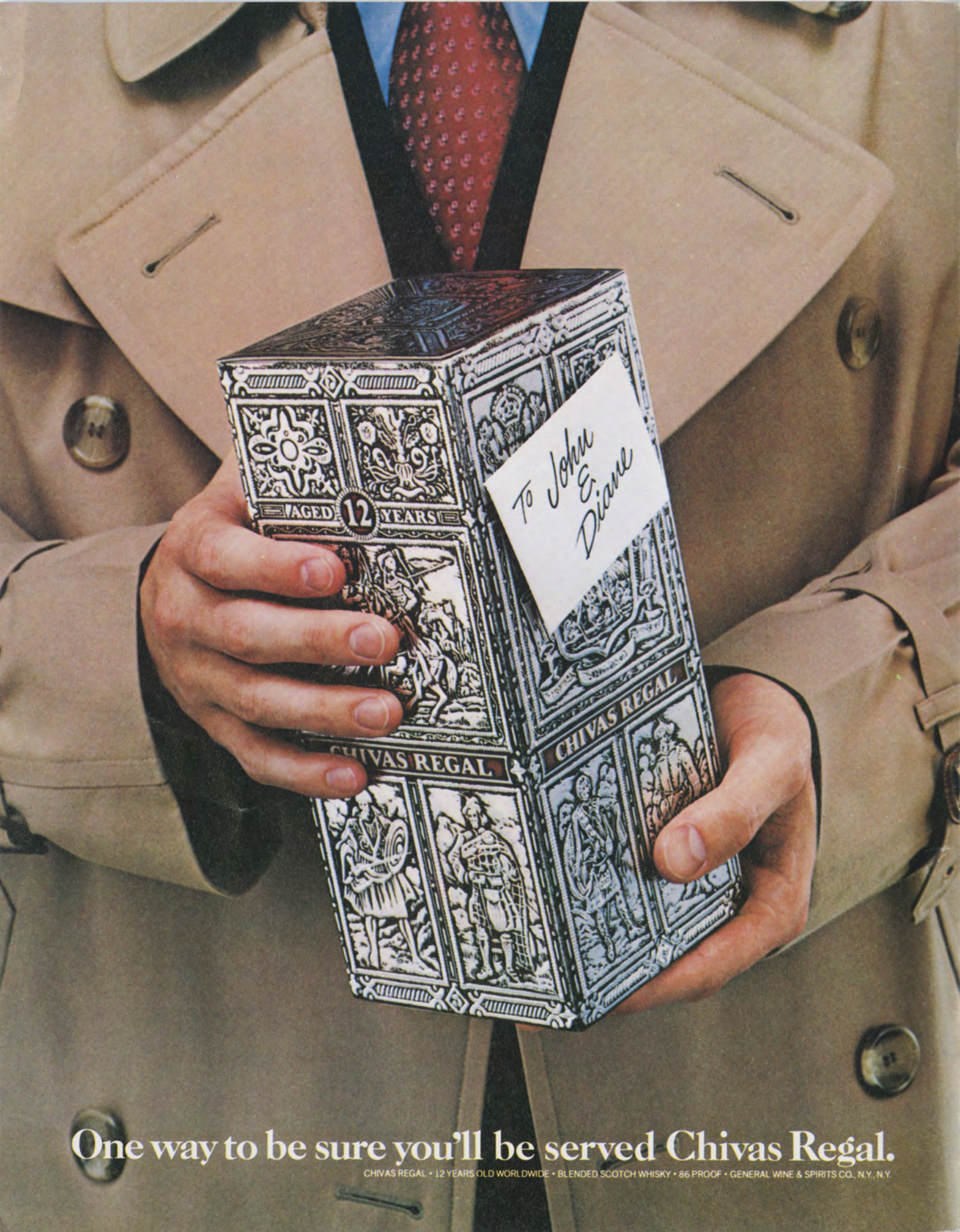
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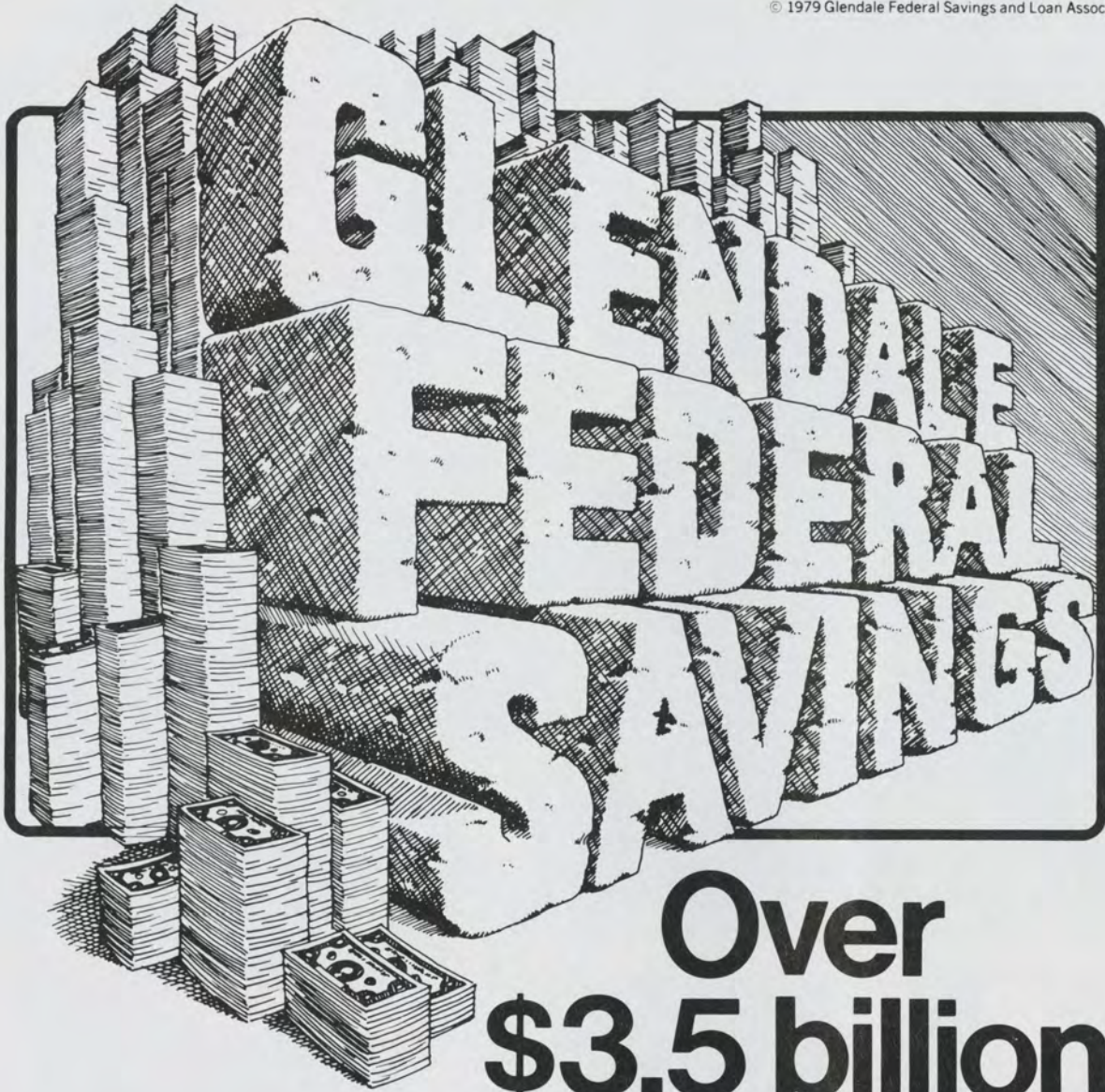
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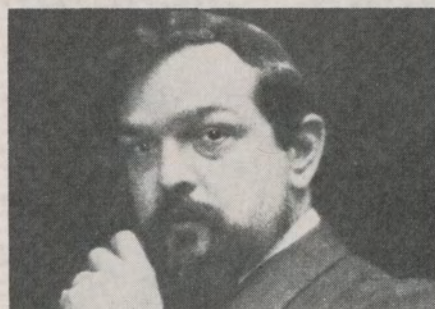
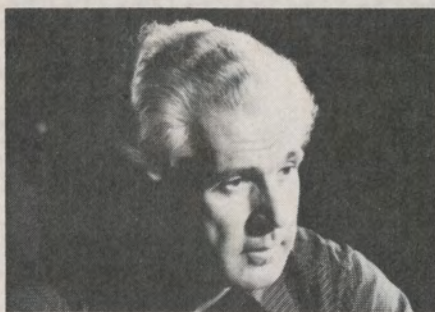


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Pelléas et Mélisande



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San Francisco Opera Magazine

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Cover: Photographer David Powers went to southern France, where thoughts of *Pelléas et Mélisande* led him to the mysterious interior chamber of the grotto d'Oxocelhays. Grateful acknowledgement for permission to enter the grotto is made to Docteur J. M. Darricau of Urrugne.

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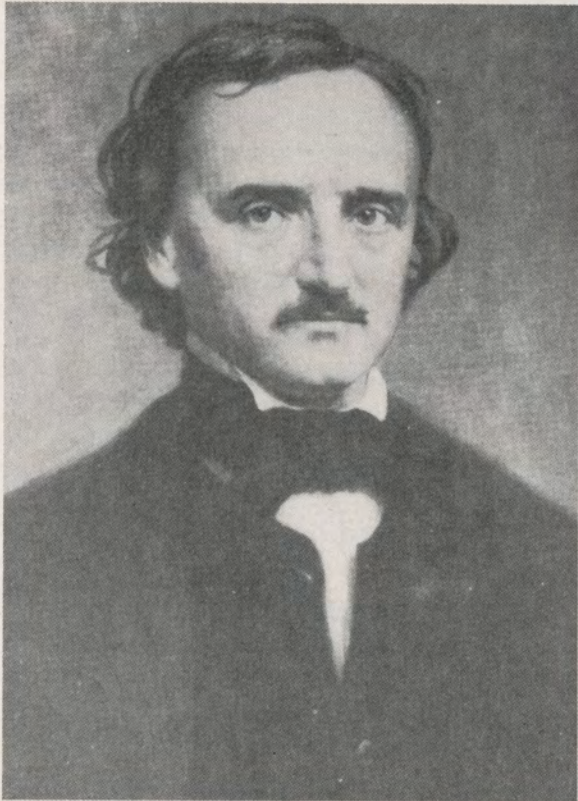
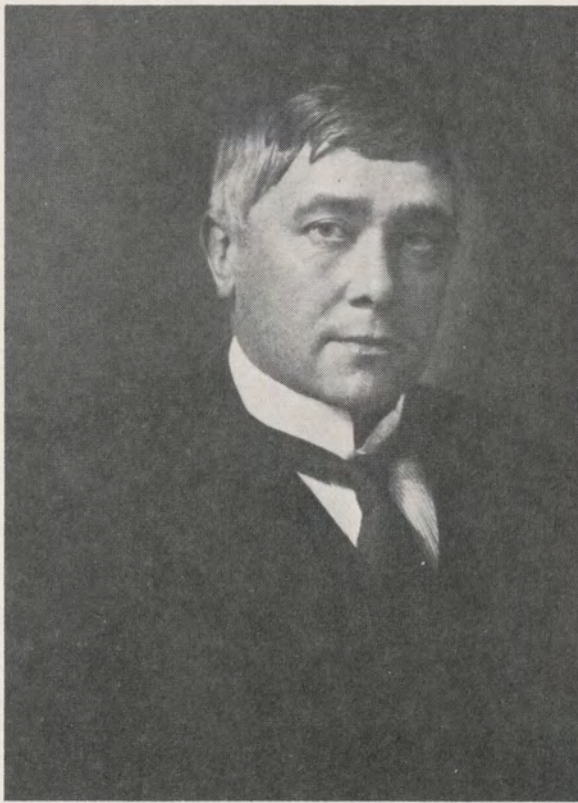


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Maurice Maeterlinck (top) whose *Pelléas et Mélisande* became Debussy's only opera, and Edgar Allan Poe who was a great influence on the composer.

Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*: Symbolist Dream or Gothic Nightmare?

by PHILIP BRETT and GEORGE HAGGERTY

In an essay written shortly after the publication of his play, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Maurice Maeterlinck said that "The word, which is the language of passion and rationality, does not translate the relations of souls or of one soul to the spiritual universe." In *Pelléas*, nonetheless, Maeterlinck attempted "the revelation of the infinite and the grandeur as well as the secret beauty of man" by means of wispy poetic prose and characters which he

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himself finally dubbed "my Marionettes." For him, the paradox was that when living figures are introduced, "the mystical density of the work of art disappears." Replacing them in importance are symbols, the outward (and on the stage sometimes none too visible) signs of the inward truths Maeterlinck sought to convey. *Pelléas and Mélisande* do not "live" like characters of Shakespeare or Chekov; they exist as part of a symbolic structure, on the same level as darkness, the castle, jealousy, innocence, and their own love. They exist, that is, as what Edmund Wilson has called "desembodied broodings and longings."

Without going further (for the moment) into Maeterlinck's pale and dated dramatic world, the question immediately arises of what Debussy could find in it for himself. Why did *Pelléas* become the only one of his many operatic ventures to reach fruition? Why indeed was it accepted by the public as such a special work from the start? On the face of it, the first question is answered by something Maurice Emmanuel reports Debussy to have told Ernest Guiraud after a visit to Bayreuth in 1889. The young French composer had fallen under Wagner's spell, but was already fully aware of the dangers of imitating him. And to Guiraud's question as to what poet could supply him with a text he replied, "One who, by saying things by halves, would allow me to graft my dream on to his; who would conceive characters whose background belonged to no time and place . . . and would leave me free, here and there, to have more art than him and complete his work . . . I dream of texts which will not condemn me to perpetrate long, heavy Acts, but will offer me instead changing scenes, varied in place and mood, where the characters in the play do not argue, but submit to life and fate." Maeterlinck's play fulfilled all these conditions admirably: without the intervention of a librettist, Debussy had merely to cut

a handful of scenes and trim a few speeches.

The other questions are more difficult to answer. But it is instructive to glance at Debussy's abortive dramatic projects. From as early as 1884 there dates a whole series of works, or ideas for works, that were taken up with enthusiasm and later abandoned, among them an opera on the *Cid* story, one on *As You Like It*, a *Tristan* and an *Orpheus*. The two most important of these ventures, which between them occupied Debussy for the remainder of his life after the production of *Pelléas*, were both settings of stories by Edgar Allan Poe: *Le Diable dans le Beffroi*, begun in 1903 and abandoned around 1911, and *La Chute de la Maison Usher*, begun in 1908 and still not discarded at the composer's death. Indeed, as Edward Lockspeiser has shown, Debussy throughout his life pondered Poe's macabre story, and identified with its central figure, Roderick Usher. Already in 1889 he is said to have been engaged on "a symphony on psychologically developed themes" based on it.

Nor was Debussy's enthusiasm for Poe a private and eccentric preoccupation, for the American author fired the imagination of almost every French literary figure from Baudelaire to Valéry. Poe's exploration of what he called "the supernal world"—the dream-like realm of inner reality—offered a mode of literary expression that became the basic vocabulary of Symbolism. His work demonstrated how emotions and ideas could gain power by being suggested rather than directly expressed, and how a wide assortment of images could be manipulated to intensify the impact on the reader. As Maeterlinck himself wrote: "Edgar Poe has exerted over my work, as over that of all others of my generation, a great, profound and lasting influence."

Pelléas et Mélisande owes a good deal to Poe and the tradition of Gothic fiction. Maeterlinck's play has many of

continued on p. 31

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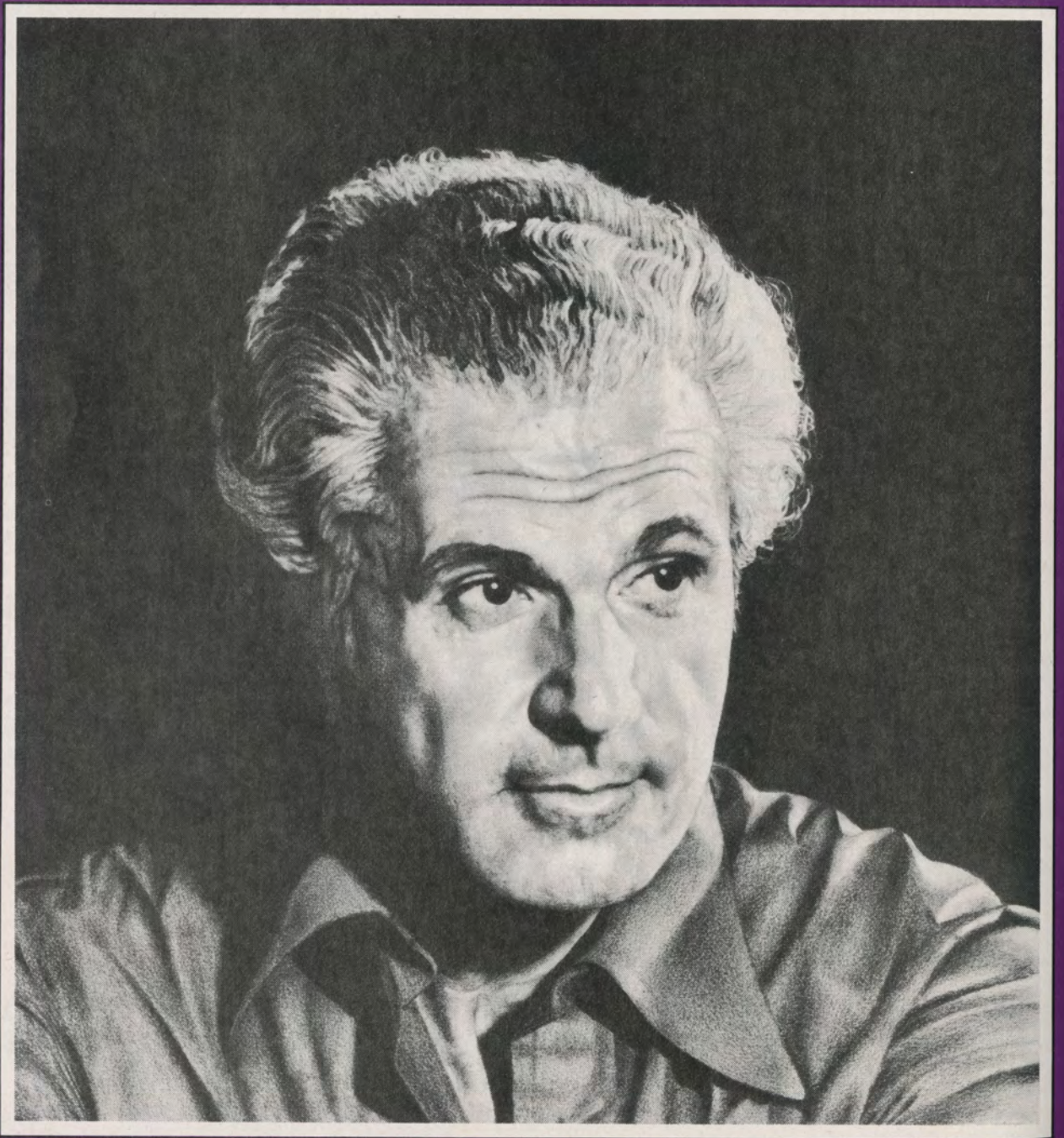
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I Go Back a Long Way

*Conductor Julius Rudel Feels That
Debussy's Work Is Particularly Apt for
Our Present 'Inarticulate Age'*

By STEPHANIE VON BUCHAU

P*elléas et Mélisande* and I go back a long way," says Julius Rudel, his light Viennese accent giving way to flawless French when he pronounces the name of Debussy's only opera. "I worked on a production in the old house [the mosque on 55th Street in New York known as City Center]. It was the great Maggie Teyte's one and only New York appearance. Jean Morel conducted and I assisted, backstage and around the clock. I remember that it was a very austere production with a unit set, and not many people liked it—the production or the opera."

How does Rudel himself feel about *Pelléas et Mélisande*? "I can tell you one thing right away. People who think it is a dull opera, where nothing happens, are talking nonsense. They see it as a distant wash of half colors and emotions. Nonsense, I tell you. *Pelléas* is as deeply felt as any opera in the repertoire. It is about the problem of young people, their inability to verbalize their feelings. What could be more contemporary? I felt this particularly during the Sixties, at the height of the flower children.

"I overheard a young couple who had seen *Pelléas*. They were the typical stereotypes of the day, flowers in the hair, beads, sandals, the boy had long hair. She said, 'It was so beautiful. If I had money I'd have it performed just for me alone.' It is true that the




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scoring of *Pelléas* is very delicate, even austere. The brass is used sparingly. But one flash of brass can be more effective than a whole bombardment. With one exception, the score never goes beyond forte. But there is such intensity in those pianos."

Rudel acknowledges the Wagnerian antecedents of *Pelléas* but doesn't emphasize them. "Sure, you can say that the first interlude in Debussy's opera is a take-off on the interlude in *Parsifal*. And yes, the orchestra, as in Wagner, is the blood and bones of the whole structure. Most people who dislike *Pelléas* don't realize what is going on in that orchestra. Wagner usually has a thicker, more opaque sound, but it needn't have. I remember attending the extraordinary Boulez *Parsifal* in Bayreuth; he got such a fluid, transparent sound from the orchestra. He proved that Wagner doesn't have to be turgid.

"I try to conduct Wagner the same way. In *Meistersinger* I tried for a light, comic, transparent quality. And naturally, those same qualities—fluidity and transparency—apply to *Pelléas*. It is, if you like, a symphonic poem with voice. With a master colorist like Debussy, who used such a large palette, the lowish dynamic level doesn't matter. The repressed passion—and sometimes it is not repressed as when Golaud breaks out in anger, or *Pelléas* and Mélisandé declare their love—makes the score so poignant, so full of things left unsaid but *felt*. Just because nobody is killed until the fourth act . . ."

Rudel's voice trails off in exasperation. It is quite clear by now that he is in love with this score, and hasn't much patience with those who denigrate its qualities. Patience isn't one of Rudel's virtues in any case. He is a dynamic conversationalist, hands moving, eyes flashing, laugh breaking out spontaneously. We are sitting in a small room in his Central Park apartment, adorned with Persian rugs and a bookcase filled



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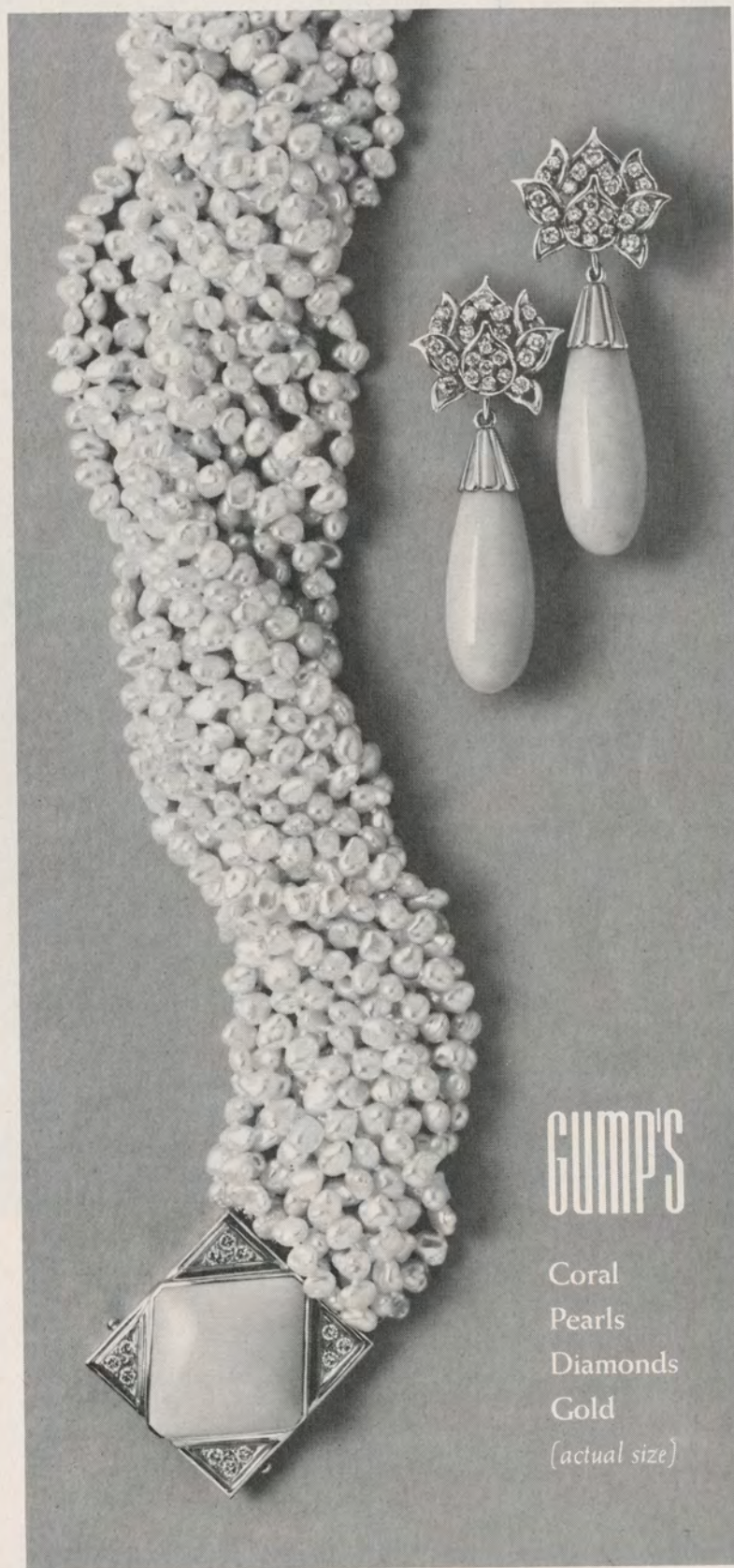
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with his wife's psychology texts. Mrs. Rudel, who has sometimes been mistaken for the ebullient Beverly Sills, is a neuro-psychologist who teaches at Columbia University and is on the staff of New York's Presbyterian Hospital.

Rudel's impatience extends to opera audiences which refuse to recognize that we are living in the 20th century. Only a few nights before our interview, the Metropolitan Opera had presented the San Francisco Opera production of Wagner's *Flying Dutchman*, designed and directed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. The performance created a scandal, with the audience loudly booing Ponnelle and the critics sharpening their knives for his hide. "I loved it!" Rudel declares. "It was so full of imagination and invention. The louder they booed, the more I shouted bravo!"

* * *

Julius Rudel was born and received his earliest musical training in Vienna. In 1938 he emigrated to the United States and supported himself with odd jobs while he studied at the Mannes School of Music. Eventually he joined the New York City Opera as a rehearsal pianist. His first conducting assignment for them was Johann Strauss' *The Gypsy Baron*. To this day, Rudel retains his Viennese love of light music. In 1956 he conducted the first American musical ever presented at the Vienna Volksoper—Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate*. The orchestra rehearsed in the hallowed halls of the State Opera, and "you'd be surprised at some of the things that distinguished body of gentlemen had to say about this lovely score. After we had presented it and it was a wild success, I told them: 'See, gentlemen, the walls are still standing.' Entrenched operetta interests at the Volksoper referred to it as an 'American barbarism' until after the premiere. Then every newspaper shouted 'Operetta is dead—long live the musical.'" Rudel also loves the work of Frank Loesser and Sigmund Romberg.



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In 1957 Rudel took command of City Opera. During his reign, which ended this summer, the company made operatic headlines with its premieres of American works, revivals of neglected operas, imaginatively staged productions and the discovery of promising young singers. Placido Domingo, José Carreras, Sherrill Milnes, Carol Neblett and, of course, Beverly Sills, are all City Opera alumni.

Rudel wasn't content to stay at home and run one opera company, even though conducting nearly half its repertoire. He also held posts as music director of the Cincinnati May festival, Caramoor festival and the New Kennedy Center, as well as being music advisor at the Wolf Trap festival. Kennedy Center, from which he resigned in 1975, is still near to his heart. "The Opera House is a wonderful theater, seating only 2300 people, with absolutely fabulous acoustics. It was one of my real moments of pride when Roger Stevens asked me to be music director.

"At first I was hesitant about taking on another responsibility, but I was asked to a luncheon at which Mrs. Kennedy was a guest. She put on her charm—and she can put on charm—and by the end of the luncheon I was committed to the post. For one thing, we were deeply involved in the designing of the theater. Hans Sondheim, City Opera's technical director, managed by his involvement to avoid 90 per cent of the traps that a new opera house can fall into. City Opera was playing at Wolf Trap, and we had everyone come over for a performance of *La Traviata* to test the house. Workers, laborers, their families, even a few congressmen were invited. I like to refer to it as a 'prehistoric' event, before the actual historic opening."

But Rudel has lately given up most of his posts to concentrate entirely on conducting, his first love. "When you do something for too long, it becomes less interesting, just more of the same. At least that is the way I feel about

administration. To plan new things was always interesting, but to keep up with the thirteenth cast change in *Traviata* gets self-defeating. Besides I was spending too much time behind a desk and not enough time with music." As he recently told a *New York Times* interviewer: "Someone sent me an article saying that conductors live 12 years longer than the average male. But on the other hand, if you are an opera director you have to take off 15 years. I think I am becoming a full-time conductor in the nick of time."

Rudel's sole music directorship today is of the Buffalo Philharmonic where he follows an interesting line of conductors: William Steinberg, Josef Krips, Lucas Foss, and Michael Tilson Thomas. Programs for his first season with the orchestra feature, as one might expect, a lot of vocal music. Sills will give a concert, and Rudel conducts *Messiah*, the Verdi *Requiem*, a work he performed on national television, and choral excerpts from the third act of *Meistersinger*. Also on the Buffalo schedule are "Five Early Songs" by Richard Strauss to be sung by Grace Bumbry, and two non-vocal works which reveal Rudel's middle European background: Weill's Second Symphony and his "Kleine Dreigroschenmusik."

Rudel's career as an international opera conductor also proceeds apace. He is a regular at the Paris Opéra where his recent performances of Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* in Günther Rennert's San Francisco Opera production were widely acclaimed. "We had an incredible cast," he says. "The Nero [Jon Vickers] is a Tristan; the Poppea [Gwyneth Jones] is a Brünnhilde; the Ottone [Richard Stilwell] a Pelléas; the Octavia [Christa Ludwig] a Fricka and Kundry; the Seneca [Nicolaï Ghiaurov] a Boris. With those high powered singers it was necessary to do the Leppard version with its fuller orchestration. Naturally the purists screamed."



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Rudel hasn't much use for purists or critics, but he has good reason for his disdain. I initially met him because I wrote him a letter complaining about the cuts in the City Opera production of *Turandot*. Rather than make generalized complaints, I wrote down the exact bar numbers of each cut. A few days later, Rudel called me long distance from Los Angeles and we spent half an hour discussing the cuts in detail. He said, rather bitterly I thought at the time, "It is a pleasure to discuss music with a critic who actually reads scores."

Reminded of this incident, he says, "Well, the problem with some critics, most critics, is that they don't think things through. When we first did *Turandot*, it opened my reign at City Opera in 1957. No one but your Kurt Adler had dared to touch it. It was a dirty word in opera, and the critics said, 'Phony exoticism, not good Puccini.' Now it is standard repertory. We took cuts then to try to minimize the critical reaction. Now they are no longer necessary. The mask scene is, after all, some of the most beautiful music Puccini ever wrote."

Rudel also finds the critical fuss about *Ur*-editions of opera to be overdone. "What is required is common sense. In the *Poppea*, I re-orchestrated a few places, and added strings. I had to with that big hall and those big singers. It would have been a disaster otherwise. And it was completely in the 17th century tradition where each *maestro di cappella* orchestrated Monteverdi according to the resources at hand. You'd expect the musical press to be aware of that. It also infuriates me when critics call for the restoration of music which the composer himself cut. Do they know better than Verdi or Bizet?" At this point he gives a conspiratorial chuckle and goes on, "I am one of those Philistines who prefer the Guiraud recitatives in *Carmen*. For the *comique* version you need two things: an all-French cast and an all-French audience. Otherwise it is nonsense.

The recitatives are very well written; Guiraud perfectly caught Bizet's style, just as he did later with Offenbach in the *Hoffmann* orchestration."

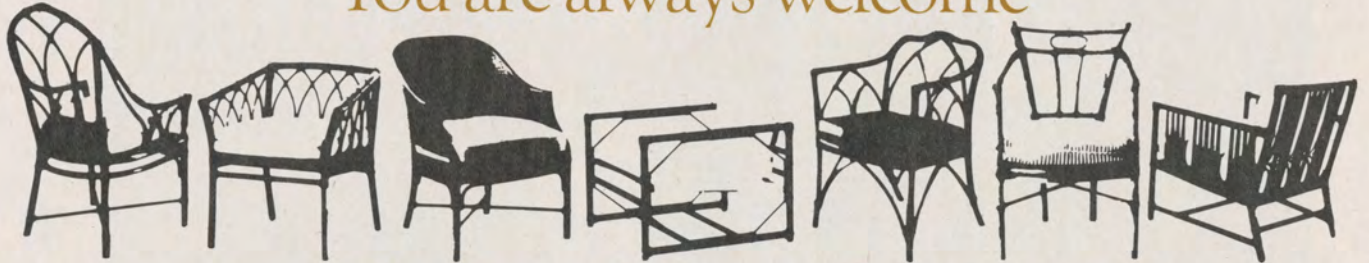
Besides regular stints in opera houses from Vienna and Paris to Hamburg, where he has done *Roberto Devereux* with Montserrat Caballé to resounding acclaim, Rudel finally made his Metropolitan Opera debut last season, stepping in for the indisposed Richard Bonyngé for *Werther*, and with this *Pelléas* makes his long-awaited San Francisco Opera debut. He had never conducted *Werther* before but "jumped at the chance. I knew its beauties already because I had helped prepare a version that City Opera did in 1948 with Eugene Conley. I was preparing *Pelléas* for my own company and for a week I did nothing but one performance after another. Dress rehearsal for *Werther*, then *Pelléas* again. I was exhausted," he adds happily.

Hard work is obviously Rudel's lifeblood. His next appearance with the Washington Opera Society will be *Tristan und Isolde* with Roberta Knie and Spas Wenkoff, both of whom have sung in San Francisco. Though he has a repertoire of 150 operas, his dream work to conduct, still in the future, is *Parsifal*. His eyes gleam when he talks about it, but he tempers his enthusiasm with common sense. "Knappertsbusch was one of my heroes . . . a god, really. I heard my first *Elektra* conducted by him when I was a kid, standing in the fourth gallery. It was unbearable, so strong that I nearly jumped out of the gallery into the orchestra pit. But I find the so-called religious atmosphere that surrounds Kna's *Parsifal* performances is a bogus one. I mean, what is really so religious about *Parsifal*? There is a smattering of Christianity, more than a smattering of paganism, and mostly just Wagner's own crazy ideas." Recording is also one of Rudel's duties. He has recorded complete versions of *Julius Caesar*, *Manon*, *Anna Bolena*, *Puritani*, *Hoffmann*, and *Louise*, all with Sills, as well as Sills-less *Thaïs*, *Mefisto*

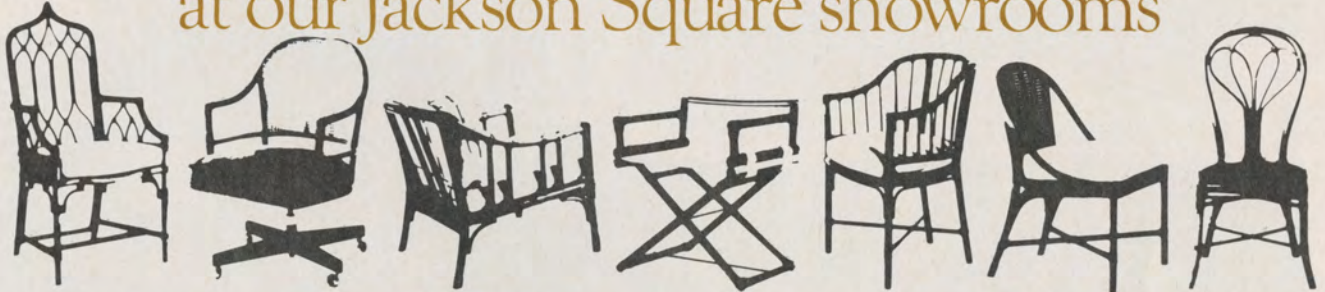
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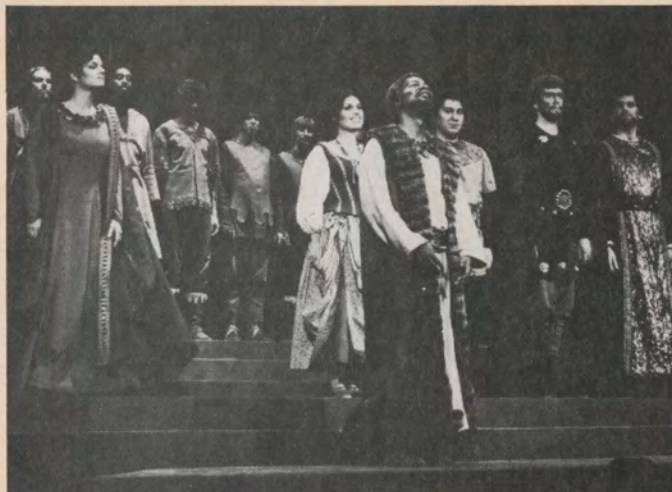
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Taking a curtain call after the world premiere of *Winter's Tale* are (from left) Susan Quittmeyer, Ellen Kerrigan, David Arnold, Tonio Di Paolo, David Koch and John Miller. Except for Arnold and Miller, they are all members of the San Francisco/Affiliate Artist-Opera Program.



Composer John Harbison sits in a box in Herbst Theatre with his wife before the curtain rises on *Winter's Tale*.



The newly-created Opera-Musical Theater panel of the National Endowment for the Arts met in San Francisco and its members attended the *Winter's Tale*. Program director Jim Ireland met with panel member Kurt Herbert Adler backstage and also moderated, along with panel member Carlisle Floyd, the symposium held on the stage after the performances.

A new affiliate of the San Francisco Opera, the American Opera Project, was launched on August 20 and 22 with two performances of John Harbison's *Winter's Tale* in the Herbst Theatre in the Veterans' Building. The Project is intended not only to give composers an opportunity to have their work staged, but to enable them to participate in the production process. The Project has been initially funded for a period of two years by the National Endowment for the Arts and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and *Winter's Tale* was written with the support of a composer-librettist grant from the National Endowment. Other operas will be produced by the Project in the future in San Francisco.

Photos by Robert Messick.



Tickets to both performances were offered free-of-charge to San Francisco Opera subscribers as a special bonus and Herbst Theatre was sold out each evening.

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fele and his latest effort, Massenet's *Cendrillon* with Frederica von Stade and Nicolai Gedda. He remains artistic advisor to the Philadelphia Opera and at Wolf Trap, and in the midst of all this activity, finds time for relaxation like skiing and swimming with his family. Rudel told me that the fact that his wife has an important career of her own makes their life hectic but fulfilling; he is not the typical macho European husband who expects the little woman to be at his beck and call. He speaks proudly of their three grown children, "the overachievers," he calls them laughingly. Both daughters are married; one is an art historian and the other has a doctorate in education from Fordham. Son Tony, "who pulled the stops on the positiv organ we used at Caramoor when we did Britten's church parables, is not a trained musician, but he knows the subject. While finishing up at Columbia, he has a classical music show on WQXR which he hosts and produces."

* * *

Eventually the talk, which has ranged far and wide through the operatic world, including a couple of funny stories that are "off the record," gets back to *Pelléas*. "You know," Rudel says, "this is the first time I will conduct this opera in a production that is not my own. So a certain amount of re-thinking is necessary for me. A physical production and a musical conception have got to work together. Conducting is not just playing the notes, it is having an understanding of the entire dramatic and musical implications of an opera.

"Sometimes the dramatic side of opera can be overstressed. Ponnelle's *Dutchman*, regardless of what the critics say, is not such a case because he never does violence to the music. But I remember having a fabulous talk with Walter Felsenstein, who was famous for his dramatic productions, about doing *Good Soldier Schweik* in New York. Talking to him was a wonderful experience, and we agreed on everything in theory. But then I watched him rehearse *Otello*, and take hours going

over Iago's drinking song—move to the left, hold the cup higher, lower, this way, that way—I began to think something was wrong with this method of producing opera. Then I saw his *Traviata* in Hamburg and it was ludicrous, it was so overly realistic. I mean, in the second act Violetta not only wrote the letter, but sealed it and put a stamp on it! How ridiculous. Things like this do not give you a fuller understanding of the music of an opera."

He leans back in his antique chair, trim and spiffy in his dark blue leisure suit, maroon shirt and ascot, and drives home his point. "Of course, all opera directors talk alike—we all have the best intentions. But it is the end result that counts, no? We all succumb to excesses, but better that than no life at all in a production. I remember when Frank [Corsaro] and I first did *Pelléas*—he wanted Golaud to hit Yniold, and I refused to allow it; it is not justified by the music.

"Besides, *Pelléas* is about unspoken things; such violence in the action is not called for except at specific moments in the score. *Mélisande* is a problem for the singer, director and conductor because she is such a mysterious being. But she mustn't be fey; she is flesh and blood. Also," he laughs, "a pathological liar. Why does she lie about how she got lost or where she dropped her wedding ring? It is important to remember that she loves both men. It is perhaps a different kind of love; she really doesn't understand what attracts her to *Pelléas*. Still, she does truly love Golaud.

"*Mélisande* can be playful, you must emphasize that she enjoys life, she is not always dragging around in misery. The scene in the tower where her hair falls over *Pelléas* proves that. Even Golaud realizes that half of what goes on between *Pelléas* and *Mélisande* is play. But he can't enter their playful world—childishness and innocence are not for him—so he is frustrated, jealous and bitter. He thinks they have gone farther than they have. Yes, they have furtive meetings, Yniold confirms that, but all they do is sit and weep. They

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don't admit they love each other until the fourth act.

"That's the most wonderful moment when Pelléas says 'I love you' and she answers him so quietly, 'Je t'aime aussi.' He blurts it out, but she knows how serious this is. With minimum means, Debussy creates an incredibly poignant moment. We are used to noise and bombast and huge climaxes in opera, but sometimes a silence can be shattering. There is so much in life," he goes on thoughtfully, "that is inexplicable. It just gets muddy when we try to explain it. *Pelléas*, in its way, prefigures our inarticulate age."

Despite his recognition of the opera's mysterious, inarticulate qualities and orchestral silence, Rudel's final word on Debussy's score is a one-sentence review of how he conducts the work: "Whatever else it is, Debussy's music is *specific*." In fact, that stands as a monument to Rudel's entire conducting career. For he ranges with extraordinary ease from the baroque (*Julius Caesar* was conducted with such lyrical panache that any hint of *opera seria* tedium was eliminated) to the classical (Rudel's *Don Giovanni* with the late Norman Treigle remains the most vivid performance of that opera I have ever heard) to bel canto (his rhythmically lively Donizetti was as much a part of the success of the "three queens" operas as was Sills' singing) to modern scores.

The *Stuttgart Zeitung*, commenting on a Cologne performance by the conductor, wrote: "What made this an event of the very first magnitude was the musical direction of Julius Rudel . . . so electrifying, so light, so sensitive . . . the orchestra under Rudel's uncommonly fiery direction became the star protagonist of the performance." Having heard Rudel conduct a dozen different operas over the last decade, one can only agree with the Stuttgart critic. Now San Francisco has the chance to hear what the shouting is all about.

Stephanie von Buchau is the performing arts critic of San Francisco Magazine and the local correspondent for Opera News.



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the standard ingredients of a Gothic tale: a dark and brooding castle, a magical well, a dark cave inhabited by ghostly beggars, castle vaults furnished with stagnant, stinking pools, plenty of moonlight, and a threatening forest. The plot, moreover, has the requisite elements for producing Gothic horror: untainted innocence, jealousy and suspicion, subterfuge, and death. In Golaud, too, we have as fine a Gothic villain as we are likely to encounter, his inner struggles rendering his fearful cruelty all the more painfully vivid. Maeterlinck handles this material deftly, organizing the progression of his plot with great ease and skill, and achieving in the process as accomplished a sense of the unknown as that of Poe's best tales.

It is difficult at first to explain, then, why Maeterlinck's play seems so much more remote and unaffectioning than "The Fall of the House of Usher." But Poe realized that the workings of the Gothic imagination are useless without a means of engaging the reader. And the direct manner is by no means the most effective. Maeterlinck can only present his story to us at point-blank range, and hope that his language will effect some magic aided by the darkened theater and some evocative scenery. Poe, on the other hand, employs a narrator—the teller of the tale—as an intermediary who not only edits the detail, but also expresses his own seeming skepticism about the events he relates. Thus the Gothic material in "Usher" reaches the reader through a human filter who measures the strangeness of what has occurred and conveys his own impending sense of doom. He provides a wealth of detail where it matters little, and sheds confusion where detail is crucial. He also engineers the necessary distance between the reader and the characters themselves; one is (for instance) spared the exasperation arising from *Mélisande's* habit of never answering a direct question. Most importantly, Poe's narrator seems as it were to enter into collusion with the

reader's sense of the incredibility of the story itself, thus paradoxically adding authenticity to the events, and driving the reader into a particularly vulnerable position.

A dramatic version of "The Fall of the House of Usher" would begin with the enormous disadvantage of losing the intervening presence of the narrator, and would be in danger of turning into farce. (Interestingly enough, Debussy's "Usher" libretto includes the narrator as a character.) Maeterlinck certainly avoids the farcical in *Pelléas*, but he also shows himself blind to Poe's signal affective technique. In attempting to tap Poe's "supernal" regions, he leaves us without any readily identifiable human points of reference. Perhaps the bourgeois nature of the tragedy was an attempt to compensate, but it fails to breathe life into these puppets. Indeed, the most nearly human character in the play, Geneviève, disappears from the scene early on, as the atmosphere becomes too rarefied to support human life.

But it is not only human life that suffers in Maeterlinck's play; the physical world becomes less powerful as well. In "The Fall of the House of Usher," as in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, the setting is of primary importance. For Poe, the house is a series of gloomy chambers, passageways, underground vaults—all symbolic, of course, but not without a tangible physical presence. Maeterlinck so loses touch with the physical that even the castle in which most of the action transpires is but loosely linked to the dialogue. In the crucial scene where Golaud threatens *Pelléas* suggestively with a subterranean abyss, all is vague and unconvincing. Whereas Poe knows how to sketch the few necessary details of an underground vault to make its presence felt, Maeterlinck relies totally on the power of suggestion and theatrical decor. In doing so he overestimates the evocative power of symbolic action. Symbols need concrete reality in order to be

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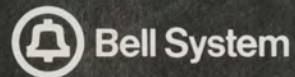
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convincing. Maeterlinck asks us to provide that reality ourselves.

In this fundamental way, Maeterlinck in *Pelléas* answered Debussy's requirement of his librettist that he would "leave me free, here and there, to have more art than him and complete his work." For the composer understood Poe's technique more thoroughly than did the dramatist:

. . . the scene in the underground caverns was done, filled with subtle terror and mysterious enough to give vertigo to the best inured souls!

There we have it. Debussy does not underestimate the audience's resistance. Instead he struggles like Poe to undermine its complacency. He is "faithful" to Maeterlinck's text, yet he underpins that text with music which for all its unassertiveness lends a palpable presence to the abyss. At the beginning of the scene, two measures of plain minor chords rumble out from the cellos and basses, reminding us in musical terms associated with the castle that we are near its foundations. They give way, however, to a sinister melody on the bassoon which, accompanied by threatening taps on the timpani, serves almost as an ostinato to the scene, holding us down there with its persistence. If the texture and sound are suggestive, the harmony—built almost entirely on the whole-tone scale—defines these depths by its essentially static quality. Golaud's flickering lantern provides the only musical relief. The sinister little appoggiatura-like figure it sets off is transformed as the ensuing interlude unfolds before our ears the desperate but exalted climb toward the light. The harmony resumes its dynamic movement, the texture becomes increasingly brilliant, and as the trumpets ring out on top with the lantern motive, now transformed, we identify with Pelléas and feel the enormous relief of his exclamation, "Ah! je respire enfin."

Moments such as this should make us wary of subscribing to the popular

notion that Debussy's only opera is a masterpiece of inspired but nebulous mood-painting. This scene, the most literally Gothic effect of the opera, is meant to move the hearer both with the intensity of entrapment and the exhilaration of escape. For while Maeterlinck summons up a world of dreams to defend his technique, anyone who has ever dreamt of entrapment knows that there is nothing flimsy about the nightmarish images of such an experience. Debussy's concept of the dream is neither sentimental nor soft-minded.

His music strives with precision to enable the listener to experience, to *feel* the drama in a manner comparable to that achieved by means of the narrator in Poe's story.

The composer's attitude to this need for precision comes out again and again when he writes about his work:

I believe that the scene before the cave will please you. It tries to be all mysteriousness of the night, where amid so much silence, a blade of grass stirred from its sleep makes a really disquieting noise; then, it is the nearby sea which sings its sorrows to the moon, and it is Pelléas and Mélisande who are a little afraid to speak amid so much mystery . . .

In other words, the music creates a context for the interrelation of these doomed souls by paying attention to detail—the way, for instance, that the lyrical flood heralding the appearance of moonlight evaporates into hollow and ghostly harmonies as the ominous figures of the sleeping beggars are revealed. These two realities are present in the music, but coinciding as they do with speeches by Pelléas (about the room) and Mélisande (the beggars), Debussy the narrator can also suggest to us the naive romantic impetuosity of the hero and the cold fear which so often grips the soul of the heroine.

In searching, like Poe, for precision and suggestiveness Debussy possessed a distinct advantage by virtue of the



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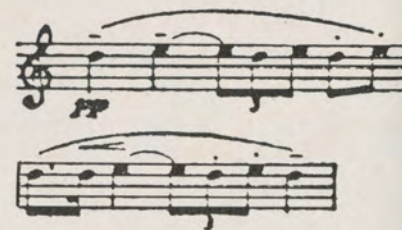


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nature of musical as opposed to literary symbols. The composer adopted a modified form of the Wagnerian system of leitmotives in *Pelléas*—his irritation with the idolatry of Wagner did not blind him to the achievement of “old Klingsor” as he liked to call him. The leitmotive is a musical symbol, but unlike a literary image, it does not have an exact connotation; the nature of music as a language liberates it from a basic concrete meaning. So while Debussy pays minute attention to the immediate mood, the concrete image, he nevertheless also employs a number of motives—rather few by comparison with Wagner—that gradually acquire definition by association and transformation, and that are always open to further reverberations in the listener’s mind. The most important of these motives attach themselves to characters—to *Pelléas*, *Mélisande* and *Golaud* to be precise—but they become suggestive of deeper states of the human soul. Thus Debussy achieved for Maeterlinck the disembodiment he so much desired by musical means at a deep structural level of the work. To follow Golaud’s curious motive, energetic yet melodically self-defeating, in its various appearances and transformations (as the ring in Act II, scene 1, for instance) is to gain a real sense of Debussy’s intellectual hold upon Maeterlinck’s vision, and his means of validating the action of the plot and the thoughts behind the dialogue.



This little idea, implanted innocuously enough in our ears in the fifth bar of the opera, comes to achieve wider and deeper connotations as Golaud degenerates before our eyes. It represents

not only him, his possessiveness and threatening villainy, but also irrational Fate which, ironically, he is doomed always to try to rationalize—right up to the last moment when the accepting Arkel dismisses him from the death-chamber and blesses the infant who will inherit the struggle.

In *Pelléas et Mélisande*, then, Debussy saves symbolic drama from itself. While seeming only to heighten what is there ("Opera as sung play" Joseph Kerman calls it in *Opera as Drama*), he recreates the symbolic nature of Maeterlinck's drama in the Gothic mold. For him, suggestion depends on the reality of a blade of grass. He knows, as Poe did before him, that other-worldly effects slip too easily beyond the grasp of audience or reader. In order for Gothic effects to be truly convincing, they must have a firm foundation in the world we know. The power of Debussy's music to substantiate that world and its feelings, especially those of fear and cruelty (as Boulez, the work's leading protagonist today, is at pains to argue) needs to be re-emphasized in order to rescue the work from the Debussyst myth which became attached to the work almost from its opening night. Anti-theatricality on the part of the composer, and a preoccupation with the natural setting of the French language, do not between them add up to musical effacement. The music dominates the action here as in any other great opera. Indeed, recent work on the sketches has shown the composer often moving from a purely musical design, reflected in the repetitive, symmetrical and hierarchical structure of the accompaniment, towards a supple asymmetrical texture as he took possession of the text and the drama. And such is the quality of Debussy's achievement that he not only validates the immediate action and feeling, as we have seen, but at the same time by means of his own musical symbolism casts the pebble of suggestion into the pool of the listener's mind to reach out in ever-widening circles to the further shores of unconscious knowledge and feeling.

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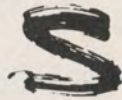
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Previews held at Del Mar School, 105 Avenida Mira Flores, Tiburon. Lectures begin at 8:00 p.m. Series registration is \$10.00 (\$8.00 for Guild members, students and seniors). Single tickets are \$2.50 (\$2.00 for Guild members, students and seniors). For information, please call (415) 388-2850.

September 6
LA GIOCONDA
Arthur Kaplan

September 13
DON CARLO
Dale Harris

September 27
TRIPLE BILL
Gordon Engler

October 18
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST
Dale Harris

October 25
ROBERTO DEVEREUX
James Schwabacher

SAN FRANCISCO
OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS

SOUTH PENINSULA

Previews held at the Palo Alto Cultural Center, 1313 Newell Rd., at 7:30 p.m. Series registration is \$12.00; single tickets are \$2.50. For further information, please call (415) 321-9875 or (415) 941-3890.

September 9
PÉLLEAS ET MÉLISANDE
Speight Jenkins

September 16
DON CARLO
Dale Harris

September 23
ELEKTRA
Arthur Kaplan

September 30
TRIPLE BILL
Gordon Engler

October 14
ROBERTO DEVEREUX
Arthur Kaplan

October 21
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST
Dale Harris

There will be a special Champagne Gala Preview of LA GIOCONDA with singers on Thursday evening, September 6, at 8:00 p.m. A second gala "Evening of Opera"—highlights from the current season with Bay Area



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artists—will take place on October 7 at 7:30 p.m. Both galas will be held at the Palo Alto Cultural Center and each will have an entrance fee of \$3.50.

**SAN JOSE
OPERA GUILD PREVIEWS**

Previews will be held on Friday mornings, from 10:00-12 noon, at the Community Center of El Paseo de Saratoga Shopping Center, corner of Campbell and Saratoga Avenue, in San Jose. Series is open to the public, at a cost of \$2.00 per lecture (free of charge to San Jose Opera Guild members). For information, please call (408) 867-0669.

September 7
PÉLLEAS ET MÉLISANDE
Speight Jenkins

September 14
DON CARLO
Dale Harris

September 28
ELEKTRA
Arthur Kaplan

October 5
TRIPLE BILL
Gordon Engler

October 12
ROBERTO DEVEREUX
David Kest

October 19
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST
Dale Harris

October 26
COSÌ FAN TUTTE
Arthur Kaplan

**UC-BERKELEY EXTENSION
LECTURE SERIES**

Previews will be given on one Tuesday and ten Monday evenings at 7:00 p.m. in Richardson auditorium, UC Extension Center, 55 Laguna St. (at Market St.), San Francisco. Series registration is \$45; single lectures are \$5, on a space available basis, payable at the door. For further information, please call (415) 642-4111.

September 4 (Tues.)
LA GIOCONDA

September 10
PÉLLEAS ET MÉLISANDE

September 17
DON CARLO

September 24
ELEKTRA

October 1
TRIPLE BILL

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October 8
DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER

October 15
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

October 22
ROBERTO DEVEREUX

October 29
LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

November 5
COSÌ FAN TUTTE

November 12
TANCREDI

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

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

September 6
PÉLLEAS ET MÉLISANDE
Michael Barclay

September 10
LA GIOCONDA
Speight Jenkins

September 27
ELEKTRA
Stephanie von Buchau

October 1
TRIPLE BILL
Gordon Engler

October 18
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST
Dale Harris

OPERA EDUCATION WEST

East Bay Friends of the Opera

Previews will be presented by Michael Barclay at St. Procopius Latin Rite Catholic Church, 926 Heart St. (corner of 8th St.) in Berkeley. Individual admission is \$3.50 with a discount series ticket of \$18 offering 6 lectures for the price of 5. All lectures are from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m. For further information, please call (415) 848-9583.

September 4
LA GIOCONDA

September 6
PÉLLEAS ET MÉLISANDE

September 20
ELEKTRA

October 1
TRIPLE BILL

October 10
DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER

October 22
ROBERTO DEVEREUX

Friends of the Kensington Library

A lecture on Rossini's *Tancredi* will be held by Michael Barclay on Thursday,

November 8 at the Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Ave., Kensington. The lecture will begin at 8 p.m. and admission is free.

CHABOT COLLEGE LECTURE SERIES

A ten-week series of introductions to the 1979 San Francisco Opera season. Given as a FREE Credit/No-Credit Course (Humanities 121-71) by Eugene Marker every Thursday evening 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. beginning Thursday, September 6. Open to all and located at the City of San Leandro Community Library Center, 300 Estudillo Avenue, San Leandro. For further information, please call (415) 786-6632.

September 6
LA GIOCONDA

September 13
PÉLLEAS ET MÉLISANDE

September 20
DON CARLO

September 27
ELEKTRA

October 4
TRIPLE BILL

October 11
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

October 18
DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER

October 25
LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

November 1
ROBERTO DEVEREUX

November 8
TANCREDI

COGSWELL COLLEGE OPERA PREVIEW SERIES

Previews will be held at Cogswell College, 600 Stockton (between California and Pine), at 8:00 p.m. Lectures will be given by opera educator Michael Barclay. Series discount tickets for all 6 lectures cost \$20; individual admission is \$4. Academic credit is available. For further information, please call (415) 433-1994.

September 5
LA GIOCONDA

September 13
DON CARLO

September 27
ELEKTRA

October 4
DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER

October 18
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

October 24
ROBERTO DEVEREUX



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Previews will be held in the auditorium of Piedmont High School, 800 Magnolia Avenue, Piedmont, at 7:00 p.m. on one Tuesday and ten Monday evenings. Lectures with slides will be given by San Francisco Opera staff writer Arthur Kaplan. Series registration is \$35; pre-registration desirable. For further information, please call (415) 653-9454 or 658-3679.

September 4
LA GIOCONDA

September 10
PÉLLEAS ET MÉLISANDE

September 17
DON CARLO

September 24
ELEKTRA

October 1
TRIPLE BILL

October 8
DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER

October 15
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

October 22
ROBERTO DEVEREUX

October 29
LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

November 5
COSÌ FAN TUTTE

November 19
TANCREDI

NAPA OPERA LECTURE SERIES

For the seventh year there will be an eleven-week course called ADVENTURES IN OPERA in Napa. The course, which accompanies the Saturday afternoon and Sunday series at the San Francisco Opera, will be held on Thursday nights from 7:30-9 p.m. at First Methodist Church, Fifth and Randolph in Napa. Ernest Fly will again teach. For further information, please call Mr. Fly at (707) 224-6162. Cost for the entire series will be \$15.00. Individual lectures will be \$2.00.

September 5
LA GIOCONDA

September 12
PÉLLEAS ET MÉLISANDE

September 19
DON CARLO

September 26
ELEKTRA

October 3
TRIPLE BILL

October 10
DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER

October 17
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

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


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October 31
COSÌ FAN TUTTE

November 7
TANCREDI

November 14
LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

WEST COAST OPERA SERVICE PREVIEW

Presented by West Coast Opera Service from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. (location in Contra Costa County to be announced). The fee for the complete series is \$22.00; individual lectures are \$2.50. All previews will be given by Ben Krywosz, and will include recordings, filmstrips and printed material. For further information, or to register, please call (415) 825-7825 evenings.

September 3
LA GIOCONDA

September 10
PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE

September 17
DON CARLO

September 24
ELEKTRA

October 1
TRIPLE BILL

October 8
DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER

October 15
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

October 22
ROBERTO DEVEREUX

October 29
LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

November 5
COSÌ FAN TUTTE

November 12
TANCREDI

MILLS COLLEGE ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION OPERA PREVIEW SERIES

Previews will be held on the Mills College Campus in Oakland on one Wednesday and nine Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. Lectures with slides will be given by San Francisco Opera staff writer Arthur Kaplan. Series registration is \$50. For brochure and registration information, please call (415) 632-2700, ext. 256.

September 5
LA GIOCONDA

September 13
PÉLLEAS ET MÉLISANDE

September 20
DON CARLO

September 27
ELEKTRA

October 4
TRIPLE BILL

October 11
DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER

October 18
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

October 25
ROBERTO DEVEREUX/TANCREDI

November 1
LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

November 8
COSÌ FAN TUTTE

SOUTH PENINSULA JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OPERA PREVIEW SERIES

Previews will be held in the auditorium of the South Peninsula Jewish Community Center, 830 E. Meadow Dr., Palo Alto, at 8:00 p.m. Lectures will be given by opera educator Michael Barclay. The admission for individual lectures is \$4.00 (\$3.00 for center members). Series discount tickets for \$22.00, 6 lectures for the price of 5, are available through the Community Center. For further information, please call (415) 494-2511.

September 3
LA GIOCONDA

September 10
DON CARLO

September 17
TRIPLE BILL

September 24
DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER

October 8
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

October 15
ROBERTO DEVEREUX

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September 1
LA GIOCONDA

September 8
PÉLLEAS ET MÉLISANDE

September 15
DON CARLO

September 22
ELEKTRA

September 29
TRIPLE BILL

October 6
DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER

October 13
LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST

October 20
ROBERTO DEVEREUX

October 27
LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

November 3
COSÌ FAN TUTTE

November 10
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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

Supporting San Francisco Opera

The San Francisco Opera Association extends its most sincere appreciation to all those contributors who help maintain the Company's annual needs and to those whose gifts are insuring continued growth and a secure future. Listed below are those individuals, corporations and foundations, whose gifts and pledges of \$200 or more, singly or in combination, were made to the Opera's various giving programs from the latter part of 1978 through August 15, 1979. These programs include the annual fund drive, the Endowment Fund, production sponsorships and special projects. Gifts received during the Opera season will be added to subsequent issues of the magazine. Space does not allow us to pay tribute to the hundreds of others who help make each season possible.

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General & Mrs. O. A. Leahy
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald D. Leineke

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Kathy Anderson
Candida Arias Duazo
Doris Baltzo
Roberta Bowman
Norma Bruzzone
Hilda Chavez
Louise Corsale
Beverley Finn
Lisa Louise Hill
Anne Huffington
Gail MacGowan
Cecilia McLaren
Tamaki McCracken
Iris Miller
Irene Moreci
Rose Parker
Penelope Rains
Mimi Ravetti
Laurel Rice
Anna Marie Riesgo
Shelley Seitz

Extra Chorus

Darlene Brock
Anne Buelteman
Teresa Colyer
Marcia Gronewold
Margaret Hamilton
Marena Lane
Maria Meyer
Linda Moody

Barbara Smith
Jennifer Sullivan

M.W.B. Adamson
Manfred Behrens
Michael Bloch
Gerald Chappell
Joseph Ciampi

Dale Emde
Henry Metlenko
Stephen Ostrow
Monte Pederson
Mitchell Sandler
James Tipton
Lee Velta

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 Svazlian†

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 Kadarach
Principal
Doug Ischar
Judyaba
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 Klein†

Timothy Wilson†

BASS TRUMPET

Mitchell Rosst

TROMBONE

Ned Meredith *Principal*

McDowell Kenley

John Bischof

Mitchell Rosst†

CONTRA BASS

TROMBONE

John E. Williams†

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

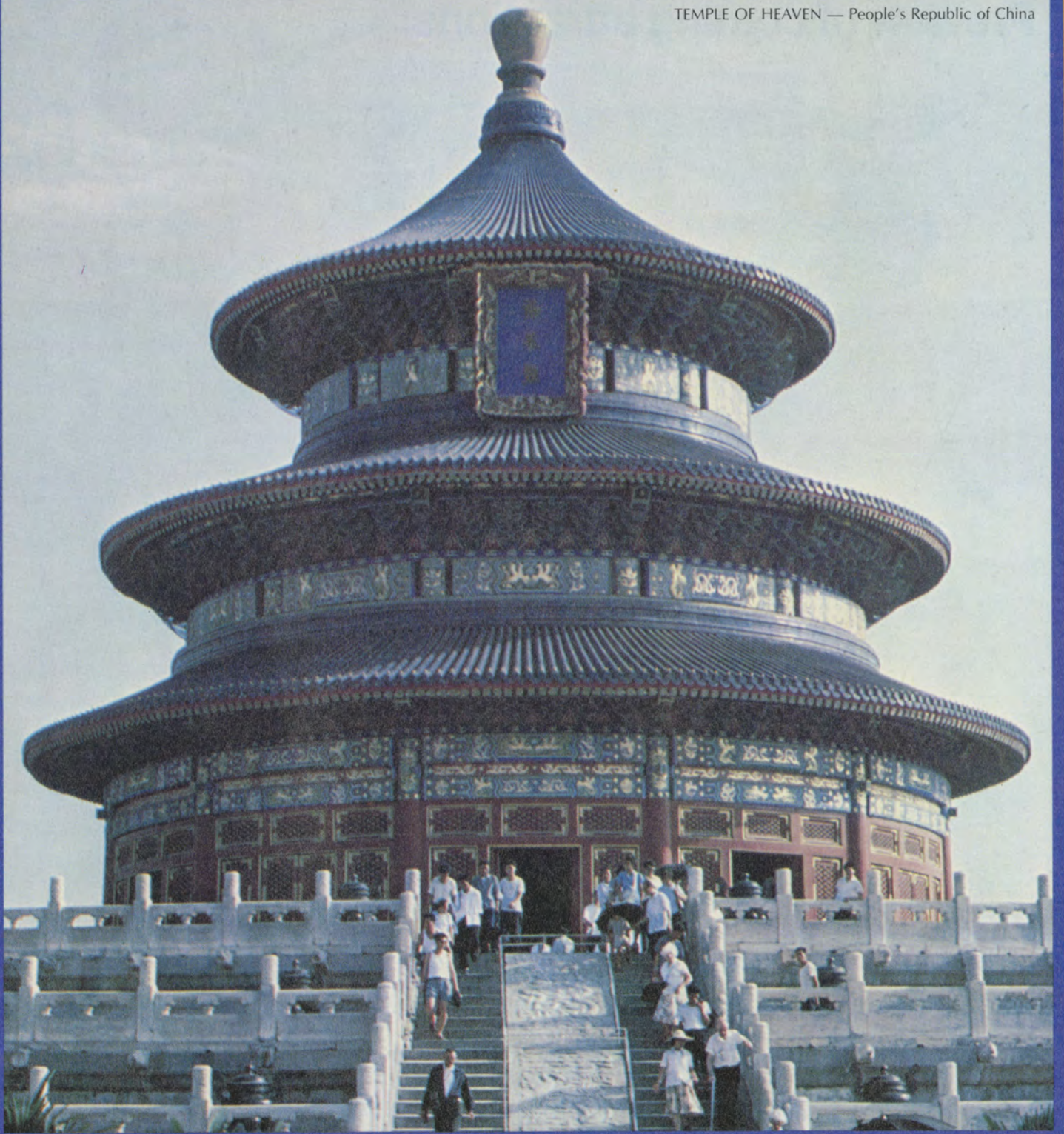
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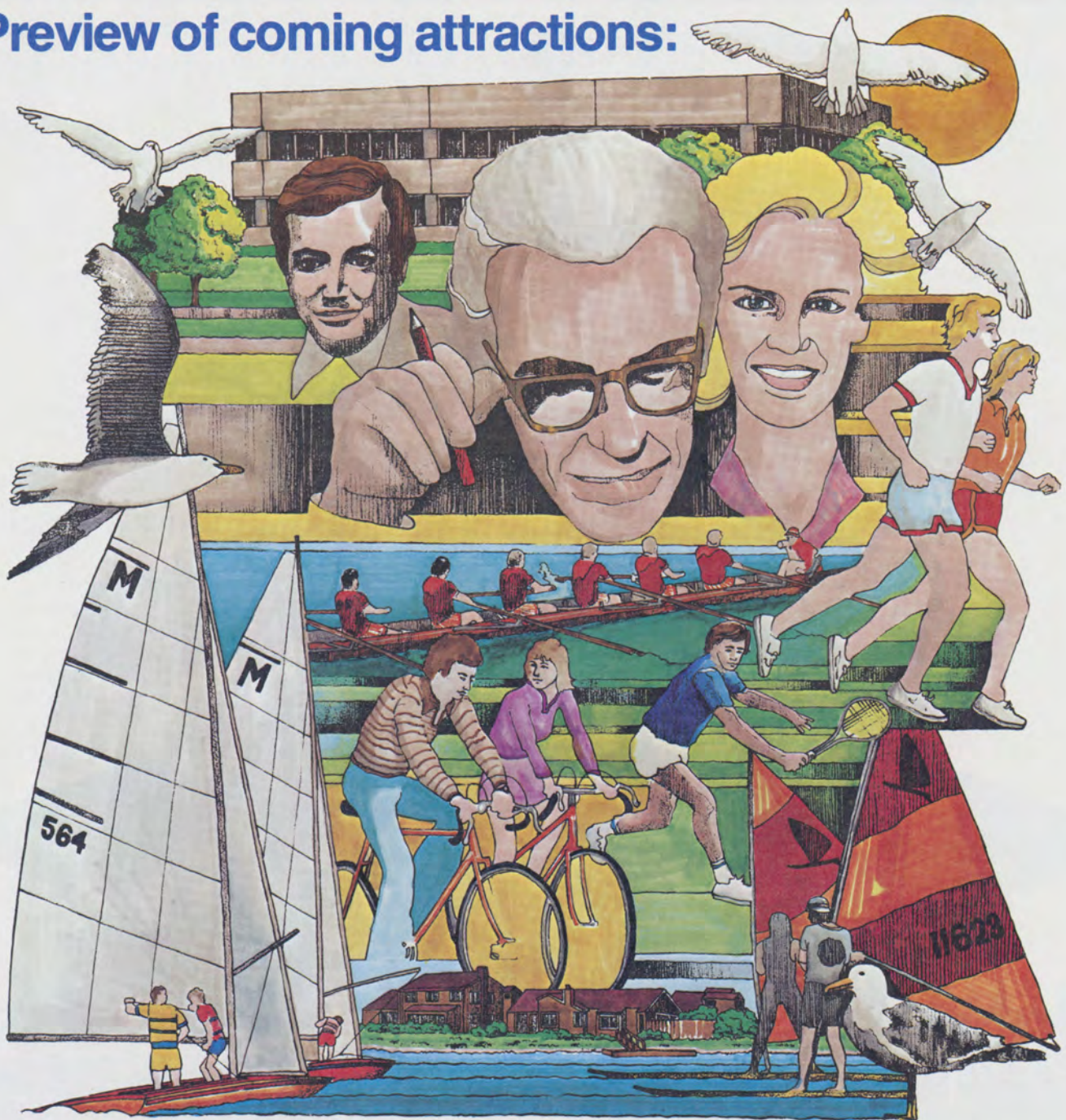
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Simply stated, Redwood Shores is a very prestigious place. Someday you may play there, live there, or work at The Shores Business Center. You'll be satisfied with much more than a key location.

Pelléas et Mélisande

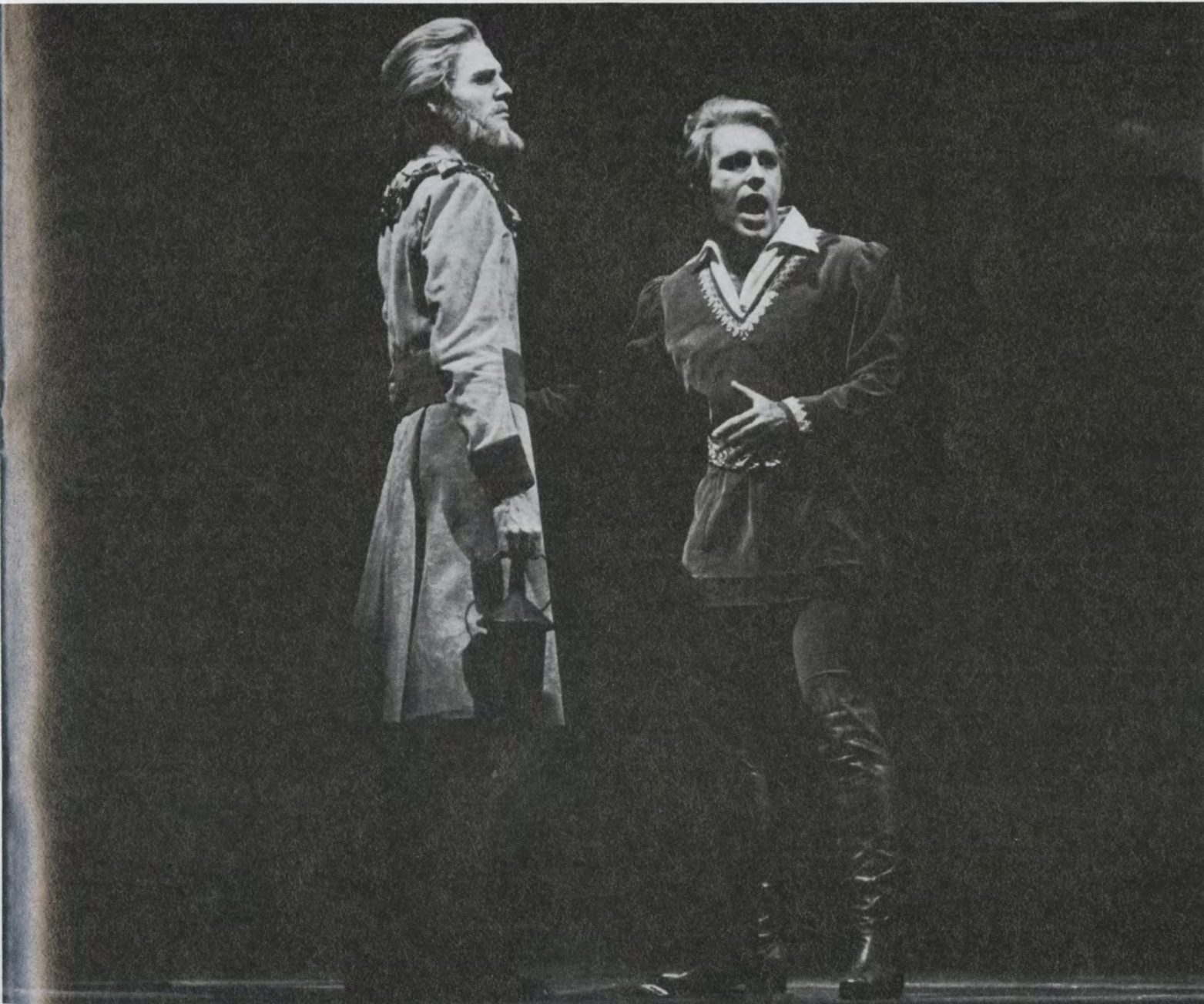


Maria Ewing as Mélisande and Dale Duesing as Pelléas

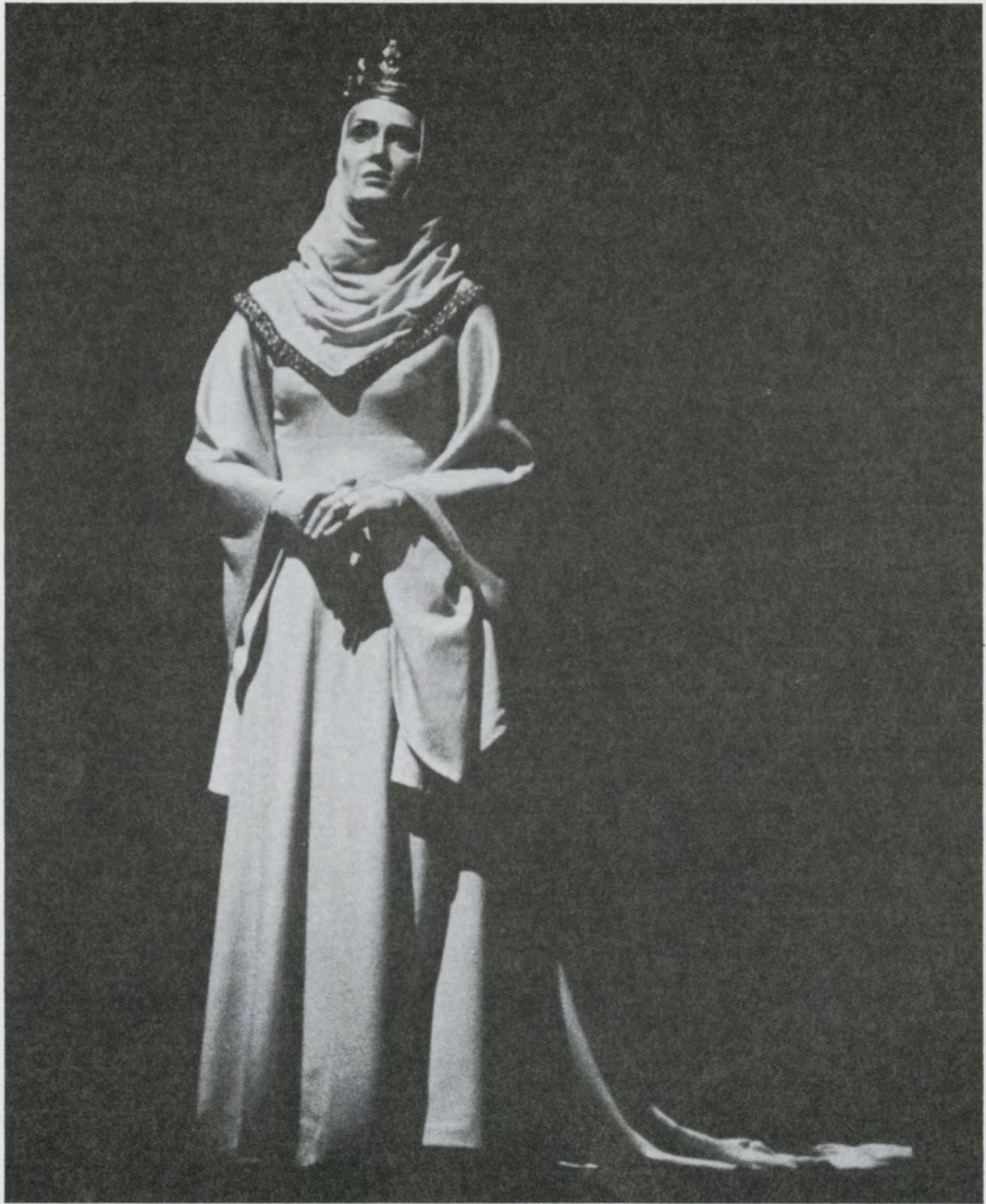
Photos by Ira Nowinski



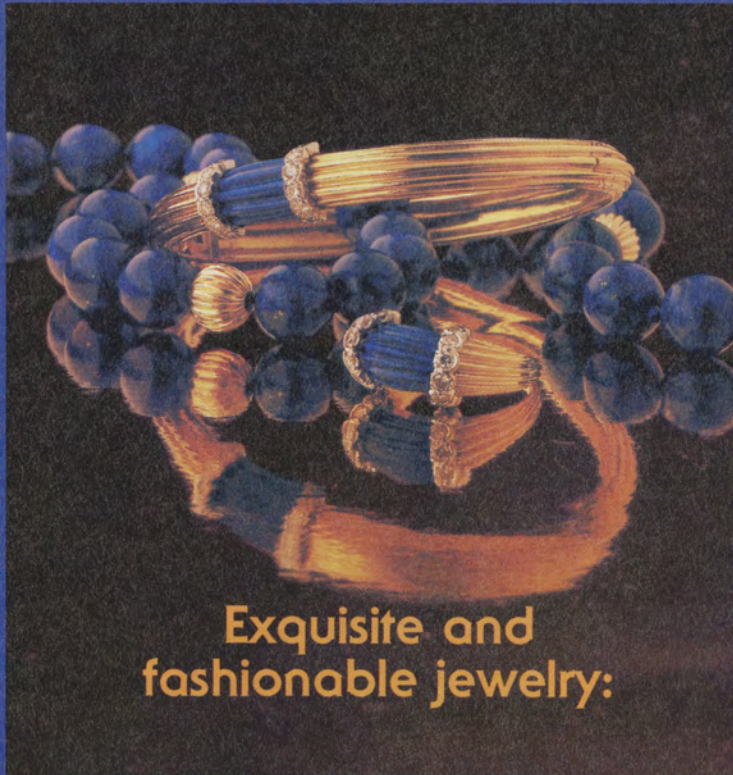
John Macurdy as Arkel



Michael Devlin (left) as Golaud, with Dale Duesing as Pelléas



Gwendolyn Jones as Genevieve



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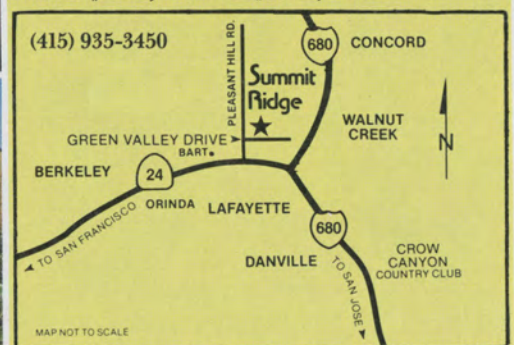
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Lyric drama in three acts by CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Text by MAURICE MAETERLINCK

Pelléas et Mélisande

(IN FRENCH)

Conductor
Julius Rudel*

Stage Director
Jacques Karpo

*Design Concept
and Lighting*
Thomas Munn

Chorus Director
Richard Bradshaw

Musical Preparation
Margaret Singer*

Prompter
Philip Eisenberg

CAST

<i>Golaud</i>	Michael Devlin*
<i>Mélisande</i>	Maria Ewing
<i>Geneviève</i>	Gwendolyn Jones
<i>Arkel</i>	John Macurdy
<i>Pelléas</i>	Dale Duesing
<i>Yniold</i>	Marena Lane*
<i>A physician</i>	David Cumberland*
<i>A shepherd</i>	Boris Martinovich

*San Francisco Opera debut

First performance: Paris, April 30, 1902

*First San Francisco Opera performance:
October 19, 1938*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 AT 8:00

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 AT 8:00

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 AT 8:00

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 AT 7:30

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 AT 2:00

Pelléas et Mélisande broadcast on September 21

*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 and thirty minutes*

The drama takes place in the legendary kingdom of Allemonde.

ACT I Scene 1 A forest
Scene 2 A room in Arkel's castle
Scene 3 In the castle gardens
Scene 4 A fountain in the park
Scene 5 Golaud's bedroom
Scene 6 A grotto

INTERMISSION

ACT II Scene 1 A castle tower
Scene 2 The castle vaults
Scene 3 A terrace at the entrance to the vaults
Scene 4 In front of the castle tower

INTERMISSION

ACT III Scene 1 A room in the castle
Scene 2 A fountain in the park
Scene 3 Mélisande's bedroom

SYNOPSIS/PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE

ACT I. Deep in a forest, Golaud, a lonely widower and grandson of King Arkel of Allemonde, has lost his way while hunting. By a spring he discovers a frightened girl, Mélisande; she too is lost and cannot explain who she is. Golaud urges her to follow him, and since night is falling she reluctantly consents.

In a somber room in Arkel's castle, Geneviève reads the aged, nearly blind monarch a letter Pelléas has received from his half brother. Golaud has wed Mélisande and fears to return home, since Arkel wishes to choose his bride; the old man, however, accepts the union. When Pelléas enters, asking to visit a dying friend, Arkel reminds him that his own father is seriously ill and persuades him to remain to greet Golaud's new wife.

From a castle garden Geneviève shows Mélisande the lofty forests of Allemonde and the sea beyond. Pelléas joins them as a distant sailor's chant signals the departure of Mélisande's ship. Geneviève entrusts the girl to his care.

Pelléas leads Mélisande to a well, deep in the park. Fascinated by her reflection, she allows her long hair to fall into the water; then, childishly playing with her wedding ring, she drops it too into the depths. Tremulously she wonders what to tell Golaud. "The truth," counsels Pelléas as they go.

Golaud lies in bed, tended by Mélisande. In the forest his horse bolted and threw him, he tells her, and for a moment he had the sensation of a great loss. As they talk, Mélisande suddenly weeps, saying she longs to leave the gloomy castle. Golaud, taking her hands to comfort her, notices that the ring is missing. When she says she lost it in a grotto, he sends her after it, though she is afraid.

At the grotto entrance, Pelléas and Mélisande grope through the darkness so that she will be able to describe the place to Golaud. As the moon appears, Mélisande is frightened by sleeping beggars and pleads to be taken away.

ACT II. Mélisande, at her tower window, sings as she combs her hair. Pelléas approaches, and as she leans forward her

tresses fall over him. Pressing them to his face, he kisses them. Golaud breaks in upon the scene and chides them for playing like children.

In the dim vault below the castle, Golaud leads Pelléas to a yawning abyss, where the youth gasps for air.

As they emerge, Pelléas cries out in relief. Golaud warns him that Mélisande is expecting a child.

Beneath his wife's window, Golaud suspiciously questions his little son, Yniold, about Pelléas' attentions to Mélisande, but the boy can tell him nothing. When the window lights up, Golaud sends the child to spy on the couple, but Yniold sees nothing incriminating.

ACT III. Pelléas encounters Mélisande in one of the castle rooms and tells her he intends to leave the next day; agreeing to a final tryst at the fountain, they part. Mélisande returns with Arkel, who assures her that since Pelléas' father is recovering, the castle will soon be more cheerful. The old man is horrified when Golaud stalks in and, accusing Mélisande of infidelity, savagely throws her to the ground. As Golaud rushes off, she sobs that he no longer loves her; Arkel says that if he were God he would pity the hearts of men.

By the well, Yniold tries to lift a stone that covers his golden ball; distracted by sheep being led to slaughter, he leaves as night falls. Pelléas arrives, soon followed by Mélisande. Though afraid of being seen, they declare their love. Mélisande spies Golaud in the shadows; the lovers desperately kiss. The enraged husband storms in, kills Pelléas with his sword and then pursues the fleeing Mélisande.

Arkel, the remorseful Golaud and a physician wait in the bedchamber where Mélisande, who has given birth to a daughter, lies dying. She awakens with no recollection of violence; left alone with her husband, she denies any guilt in her love for Pelléas. Murmuring that she finds only sadness in her daughter's face, Mélisande quietly dies. Arkel leads the grieving Golaud from the room, observing that now it is the child's turn to live.

Pelléas et Mélisande

Masterpiece Once and Forever

By QUAINANCE EATON

"Sensibility" is defined several ways: "peculiar susceptibility to impression . . . acuteness of feeling . . . refined sensitiveness in emotion and taste"—all of these apply to Claude Debussy. His music has often been labeled "impressionistic," descriptive of the new theories of the painters of the day about the effects of light and vision on color



In 1910 a performance of *Pelléas et Mélisande* was given at Maeterlinck's abbey home, Saint-Wandrille. René Maupré was the Pelléas and Georgette Leblanc the Mélisande, and this photograph was posed to illustrate Pelléas' line "Prenez garde, vous allez tomber . . ." Mme. Leblanc was the wife of Maeterlinck.

and forms. Debussy caustically refuted the imputation: "What I am trying to do is to create a kind of reality—what these imbeciles call 'impressionism'." This sense of "reality," of workmanlike precision, underlies all the new harmonies and strange sounds that launched Debussy into the forefront of French music, established him there as unique, and left him without a successor, or even important imitators. Indeed, that seminal figure, prolific composer and writer, author of biographies of Debussy and Fauré, Charles Koechlin, remarked: "No artist in the history of French music had ever arrived more precisely at his appointed time than Claude Debussy." (He dropped his first name, Achille, at about the time of *Pelléas*).

Among the musicians of his day, several were friends, several totally unsympathetic, even antagonistic. Erik Satie, himself an original to the point of eccentricity, exerted a subtle influence on Debussy.

Still, it was the poets, the so-called "Symbolists," who meant the most to him, both in his personal and professional life. Debussy, who could boast little literary background except his own excursions into the library of his friend Mme. Marguerite Vasnier, frequented all the haunts of these (and other "celebrities")—Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, Pierre Louys, Henri de Régnier, Paul Ambroise Valéry, and Jules Laforgue, and heard their poems. He became a close friend of Gabriel Mourey, and read the poems of Charles Baudelaire, heard Whistler talk on symphonies in color and Montesquiou preach a fusion of sounds, scents, and colors—later to be developed by Scriabin. But over all brooded the dark genius of the American Edgar Allan Poe.

There seems to have been nothing in Debussy's background to account for this singular artist—middle-class parents (who, however, encouraged him in his artistic bent), little formal education, a piano teacher in boyhood who

sensed his potentialities. He first thought to be a painter, but music took over, and he was prepared to enter the Conservatoire at eleven, his parents having moved from his birthplace, St. Germain-en-Laye, to Paris several years before.

Debussy's music is so thoroughly accepted today that it is difficult to imagine the real consternation—or, worse, ridicule—it met at the turn of the century. "All genius is a case of internal



Mary Garden, the first *Mélisande*.

combustion," commented Neville Cardus, the British critic. "Debussy was his own storehouse and dynamo of sensibility . . . a reed through which all things blew to music." This originality absorbed and transmuted the influ-

ences of Wagner, of the Orient (notably East Indian music he heard at an international exposition in 1889), and the strong impression made by the Russians in his summer visits to the wealthy Nadezhda von Meck (Tchaikovsky's patroness). She employed him as duet pianist, teacher, and member of a string trio in 1881 and 1882 while he was still a student, two years before winning the Grand Prix de Rome. Tchaikovsky exerted the first appeal; only later did Mussorgsky enter Debussy's consciousness.

Bayreuth distracted him in 1888 and 1889, but he came away disillusioned with Wagner as a dramatist. He expressed to his former composition master Ernest Guiraud the desire for a poet-librettist "who will only hint at things . . . who will create characters whose history and abode belong to no place or period . . . who will not despotically impose set scenes upon me but will let me, here and there, surpass him in artistry, consummate his work." He wanted no long, ponderous acts, but only brief fluid episodes, and his characters should not "argue endlessly" but should submit to life and to destiny. The music he meant to create should be "a universal and essential psychic conception . . . for music begins where speech fails." He wanted to express the inexpressible, to create new forms "in which musical voices will be wedded to instruments tuned to those voices, discreetly mingling with their harmonious periods the echoes of dreams and the plaintive murmur of music."

The Belgian dramatist and poet Maurice Maeterlinck seemed made to order. It was no wonder Debussy was drawn to his plays, especially as he had just fought a losing battle with a libretto by Catulle Mandès.

Mendès, who was described by Jean Cocteau as "a defunct figure who trailed behind him the august ruins of Romanticism and the purple of its gods," persuaded Debussy to set his

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Beard Creates Opera Recipe



Food and the Opera are the two great loves of James Beard, famed culinary authority who will appear in person at this year's San Francisco Opera Fair on October 28.

A chance to meet celebrated chef James Beard will be one of the highlights of the 1979 San Francisco Opera Fair, the popular "day at the Opera" for the entire family, to be held this year from noon to 6 p.m. on October 28 in, around and all-over the War Memorial Opera House! Beard, who began life as an opera singer (baritone!) before he became one of the world's leading food authorities, will greet his fans personally and pass out copies of the new recipe he has created in honor of the San Francisco Opera.

The Fair, in its third year, is a benefit for the San Francisco Opera and is underwritten by a generous grant from Eureka Federal Savings and Loan Association. Tickets at only \$3.50 for adults and \$1.50 for children under twelve and for senior citizens will go on sale at the Opera Box Office on September 17. Radio personality Doug Pledger will again appear personally as host for the event.

Continuous free musical entertainment is featured at the Fair, and all the San Francisco Opera's affiliate organizations sponsor special events during the afternoon. Spring Opera this year will have a Carnival featuring Suggs the Mime, the Dancing Dills, John Timothy at his ragtime piano, puppets, animal acts, jugglers, a fire-eater and a surprise from Marineworld.

Western Opera Theater will have a Fantasy World for Children, there will be a staged demonstration of operatic special effects entitled "How Did They Do That?", Mrs. Kurt Herbert Adler coordinates a special opera fashion show, opera stars of the season are to appear in person, and the popular backstage tours will again be offered. Tickets for the latter, which were sold out last year, may also be purchased in advance at the Opera Box Office.

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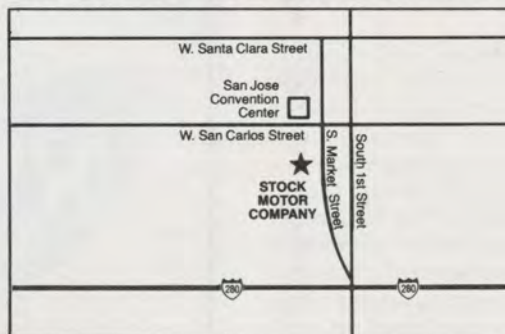
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SAN FRANCISCO OPERA BOX OFFICE

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

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

Unused Tickets

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

Opera Museum

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.

The War Memorial Opera House

Owned and operated by the City and County of San Francisco through the Board of Trustees of the War Memorial

Bus Service

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

This bus is added to Muni's 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.

Honorable DIANNE FEINSTEIN
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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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Profiles

MARIA EWING



One of the foremost young mezzo-sopranos on the operatic stage today, Maria Ewing returns to the San Francisco Opera for her third consecutive year as *Mélisande* in *Pelléas et Mélisande*. She is remembered for her impassioned portrayal of Charlotte in Massenet's *Werther* last season. Well known for her interpretations of the Mozart trouser roles, she has been acclaimed as Sesto in *La Clemenza di Tito*, Idamante in the Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of *Idomeneo* (her debut role with the San Francisco Opera in 1977) and Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, in which she made her debut with the Chicago Lyric Opera (1975) and the Metropolitan Opera (1976) and sang again at the Salzburg festival this past summer. She is a favorite of Ponnelle, who has directed her as Cherubino and Idamante for the Cologne Opera, as *Mélisande* at La Scala and in both his opera stage and film versions of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. The mezzo-soprano has appeared as Rosina in Chicago, Houston, Florence and Turin and in the title role of *La Cenerentola* in Philadelphia. Last summer in the Peter Hall production of *Così fan tutte* at the Glyndebourne festival she portrayed Dorabella, a role which she had previously sung in Boston and in Santa Fe. She returned to the Metropolitan Opera in 1979 as Blanche in Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, repeating a part for which she earned critical praise in 1977. Miss Ewing's earlier appearances with San Francisco's Spring Opera Theater include Princess Sicle in *L'Ormindo* (1974) and the title role in *La Perichole* (1976).

GWENDOLYN JONES



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.

MARENA LANE



Soprano Marena Lane, who has been singing in the San Francisco Opera chorus in both the Spring Opera Theater and international fall seasons since 1978, makes her solo bow with the Company as Yniold in *Pelléas et Mélisande*. A graduate with a master's degree in clinical psychology from Ball State University, she has performed on the West Coast with the San Francisco Lamplighters and in recital. Miss Lane has also had her poetry published in several national publications.

An extended exhibit of photographs of the San Francisco Opera in the 1930's and 1940's is on display this fall in the Opera Museum. The exhibit was prepared by San Francisco Opera public relations director Herbert Scholder in conjunction with the Archives for the Performing Arts, and installed by the latter. The photographs used come from the opera archives and the personal collection of Mrs. Robert Watt Miller, whose late husband was for many years president of the San Francisco Opera Association.



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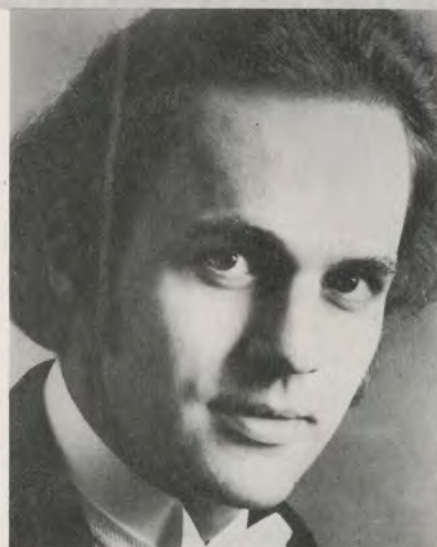
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DALE DUESING



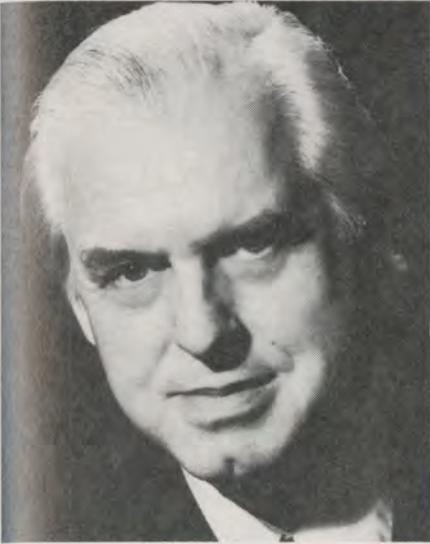
In his fourth consecutive year with the San Francisco Opera, fast-rising American baritone Dale Duesing sings Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*. He created the role of Oliver Ward in the world premiere of Andrew Imbrie's *Angle of Repose* in his American debut with the Company in 1976, and then portrayed Figaro in the student matinee performances of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. In 1977 he was heard as Arlecchino in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and as Ping in *Turandot*, and last season received unanimous praise in the title role of Benjamin Britten's *Billy Budd* and as Schaunard in *La Bohème*. Duesing began his operatic career in Germany where he has appeared with most of the major opera companies. A member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Dusseldorf for several years, he is also a regular guest at the Hamburg Staatsoper, having debuted there as Guglielmo in 1973. The summer of 1976 saw the baritone bow at the Glyndebourne festival as Olivier in Strauss' *Capriccio* opposite Elisabeth Söderström. For the past three summers he has appeared at the Salzburg festival, first as Masetto in the Ponnelle production of *Don Giovanni* under the baton of Karl Böhm, and this past summer as Arlecchino. Duesing made his Metropolitan Opera debut last season as Arlecchino and also sang Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte*. During the 1979/80 season at the Met he is scheduled to sing Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale*, a role which he recently performed in Pittsburgh, and Silvio in *I Pagliacci*. He will bow at the Paris Opera in 1981 in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*.

MICHAEL DEVLIN



American baritone Michael Devlin makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and in the title role of Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*. Since first appearing with the New Orleans Opera in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, he has sung with nearly every major opera house and symphony orchestra in this country. Devlin made his New York City Opera debut in the Company's opening night performance at Lincoln Center in Ginastera's *Don Rodrigo*. He has returned there in a variety of parts, including the title roles in *Julius Caesar* and *Mefistofele*, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Reverend Blicht in *Susannah*, the four villains in *Hoffmann*, Golaud and Escamillo in *Carmen*. This last part served for his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in 1978. That same season he made his first appearance with the Canadian Opera Company in the title role of *Don Giovanni*, which he had previously sung to great success at the Houston Grand Opera, the Frankfurt Opera and Covent Garden. The baritone made his European debut in 1974 portraying Count Almaviva at Glyndebourne and was first heard at Covent Garden the following year as Hector in Tippett's *King Priam*. At Santa Fe, where he was an apprentice while still an undergraduate, he has sung Count Almaviva and, most recently, the title role in *Eugene Onegin* in 1978. This summer he performed at the Aix-en-Provence festival in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Devlin has been heard by local audiences in Beethoven's ninth symphony and as Mephisto in Berlioz' *La Damnation de Faust* with the San Francisco Symphony.

JOHN MACURDY



DAVID CUMBERLAND



A leading bass with the Metropolitan Opera since his debut there in 1962, John Macurdy returns to the San Francisco Opera after a long absence to sing King Arkel in *Pelléas et Mélisande*. His performance of that role at the 1972 Aix-en-Provence festival led to a debut with the Paris Opera. For four consecutive years he was heard at the festival of Orange in such roles as Hunding in *Die Walküre* and the high priest in *Samson et Dalila*. Other recent engagements in France include Seneca in the Günther Rennert production of Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* (created for San Francisco) and Tiresias in Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, both at the Paris Opera, and in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* in Lyons. His portrayal of the title role in *Boris Godunov* with the Met in 1978 won critical acclaim and during the 1980/81 season with that company he will sing the four principal bass roles in a new production of Wagner's Ring cycle. At the 1977 and 1978 Salzburg festival Macurdy sang the Commendatore in the Ponnelle production of *Don Giovanni*. He recently finished making a film of the Mozart opera directed by Joseph Losey and will appear as the Commendatore at the Paris Opera this fall. It was one of the six roles he sang with the San Francisco Opera during his debut season here in 1962. In three seasons with Spring Opera in the 1960s he appeared as Friar Laurence in *Roméo et Juliette*, Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Count Des Grieux in *Manon*, Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Nourabad in *Les Pêcheurs de perles*, Sparafucile in *Rigoletto* and Reverend John Hale in *Ward's The Crucible*.

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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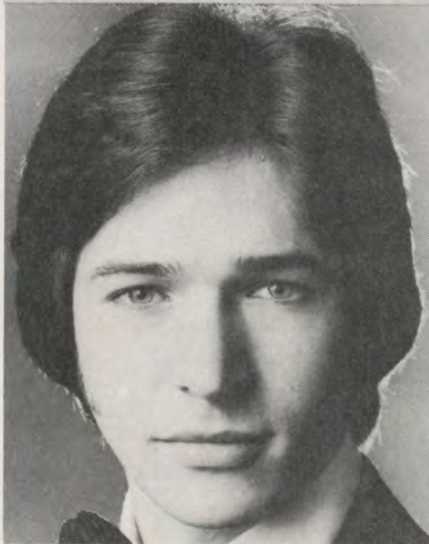
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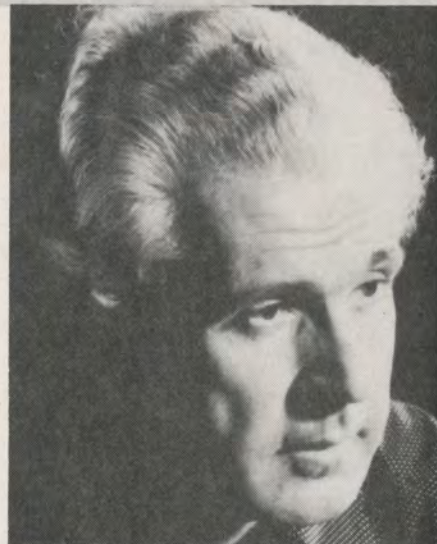


BORIS MARTINOVICH



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*, 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.

JULIUS RUDEL



Making his long-awaited debut with the San Francisco Opera, Julius Rudel conducts a work for which he has received the highest praise, Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Following his resignation as director of the New York City Opera, a post he held for 22 years, he is currently musical director of the Buffalo Symphony. In the early 1970s, he held five administrative posts simultaneously: music director of the Kennedy Center in Washington, of the Cincinnati May Music festival, of the Caramoor festival in New York, music advisor of Wolf Trap and director of the New York City Opera. With that company he has left a legacy of adventurous repertoire and conducted works there in a wide variety of styles. This spring, for example, he wielded the baton for Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia*, Boito's *Mefistofele*, Massenet's *Manon* and the world premiere of Dominick Argento's *Miss Havensham's Fire*. He returns to lead performances of Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito* there in the fall. At the Kennedy Center, Rudel was responsible for the premiere of Ginastera's *Beatrix Cenci* and the first staged performance in this country of Handel's *Ariodante*. He has led opera and orchestral performances in such European music capitals as Vienna, Munich, Hamburg, Stuttgart, Cologne, Geneva, Paris, Brussels, Venice, Bologna, Trieste, Spoleto and in Israel. After his Metropolitan Opera debut leading performances of *Werther* in 1978, he conducted *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* in Paris, *Così fan tutte* in Philadelphia, *Salome* in Madrid and *Tosca* in Budapest. Rudel has recorded several complete operas, many with his long-time colleague Beverly Sills.

JACQUES KARPO



Artistic director of the Marseilles Opera since 1975, Jacques Karpo returns to the San Francisco Opera to stage *Pelléas et Mélisande* and the premiere production of *Roberto Devereux*. He made his local debut as stage director with *Faust* in 1977. No stranger to the Company, he worked here as both stage manager and assistant director from 1968 through 1972. Among his recent successes in Marseilles were the French premiere of Verdi's *Attila*, which won a prize from the French ministry, the first uncut performance in France of Berlioz' *La Prise de Troie*, a revival of the five-act *Don Carlos* and, in 1979, new productions of Verdi's *Macbeth* and *La Forza del Destino*. Karpo also directs extensively for such other opera houses in the South of France as Avignon, Bordeaux and Monte Carlo, where he has staged his productions of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Don Carlos*, *Samson et Dalila* and *Rigoletto*. Elsewhere in Europe he has staged *Carmen* in Dortmund and in 1980 is slated to direct *Tannhäuser* in Bari and *Aida* in Naples. Assignments during the 1979/1980 season in Marseilles include *Götterdämmerung*, *Salome*, the uncut *Les Troyens à Carthage* and *Carmen*.



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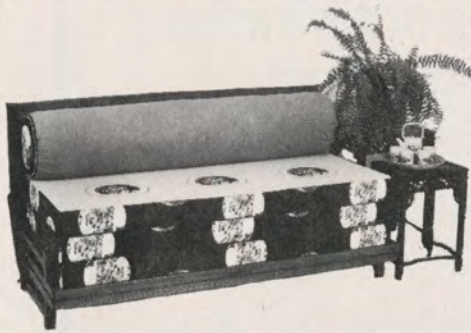
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THOMAS MUNN



Thomas Munn returns for his fourth season as lighting designer/director of the San Francisco Opera. In addition to his responsibility for the new productions: *La Gioconda*, *Il Prigioniero* and *La Voix humaine*, he is credited with the scenic design for *Roberto Devereux* and the design concept for *Pelléas et Mélisande*. In the past two seasons he acted as the supervising set designer for *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Faust* and *Billy Budd* as well as designer of the lighting scheme for the new productions of *Katya Kabanova*, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Billy Budd* and *La Bohème*. Munn created the scenery and lighting for the Netherlands Opera production of Verdi's *Macbeth* in 1977 and Berg's *Lulu* in 1978, both of which he will supervise in their revivals during the 1979/80 season. He was responsible for the lighting design at the Lake George Opera festival for two years and has created designs for the Kansas City Lyric Theater, the Michigan Opera Theater and the Minnesota Opera Company, among others. A versatile artist whose work has been seen on Broadway, off-Broadway, in films and on television, he is currently at work on the sets and lighting for *The Nutcracker* with the Hartford Ballet. For six years he was resident designer for the Mary Anthony Dance Theater in New York. In early 1980 he will be responsible for lighting *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Tristan und Isolde* with the Washington Opera Society. Local audiences will remember his imaginative lighting for the new productions of the 1976 season: *Thaïs*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Cavalleria/Pagliacci* and the world premiere of *Angle of Repose*.

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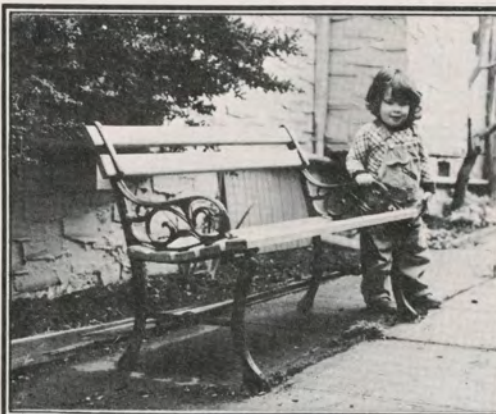
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continued from p. 68

libretto, *Rodrigue et Chimène*, based on Corneille's *Le Cid*. The play had already been set by at least five composers, including Pacini and Massenet. Mendès had previously fashioned *Gwendoline* for Chabrier and *Ariane* and *Bacchus* for Massenet, among others. Debussy completed two acts of *Rodrigue* between 1890 and 1892, and friends who heard the music thought it "vital and brilliant." But as Edward Lockspeiser remarked in his comprehensive biography, "Debussy was temperamentally incapable of meeting the demands of an exteriorized theatrical subject. He made it clear to his friends that he abhorred [the whole thing]." The music was noticeably Wagnerian, for his attitude toward the master of Bayreuth was still compounded of love and fear, still contradictory.

In the summer of 1892, a classic coincidence in the history of the lyric stage confronted Debussy with his "ideal" librettist. The gods had brought it about, said Ernest Newman, "that living within a few miles of each other were two artists, speaking the same tongue, nourished by the same culture." Each was thirty, having been born in the same week (astrologists would have had a field day). "Each consciously provided the other with the one possible solution to his peculiar problem," wrote Kathleen O'Donnell Hoover in *Makers of Opera*.

The play was published in Brussels in May, and Debussy came across a copy of it in Flammarion's book stall on the Boulevard des Italiens soon after. Maeterlinck was no stranger to him, for he had already seen *L'Intruse*, and had even requested permission (refused by the poet) to set *La Princesse Maleine*—had indeed, some of his friends said, composed part of the latter.

Pelléas immediately fired Debussy. Léon Vallas said that the composer read it through in one sitting and jotted down themes, one or two still recognizable in the finished work. A performance of the play at the Bouffes

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Parisiens in May 1893 added inspira-
tion.

(Maeterlinck admitted to a biographer,
Patrick Mahony, quoted in the Journal
of the National Opera Association, that
the idea for *Pelléas* came from a col-
lection of tales by Biondello published
in 1562, called *The Palace of Pleasure*.
Two lovers are caught up in a hostile
atmosphere; they unite, relying on the
protection of an invisible power, and
are forever joined in the grave.)

Debussy and Louys made a famous
pilgrimage to Ghent to secure Maeter-
linck's formal consent. Debussy wrote
to Ernest Chausson: "At first, he [Mae-
terlinck] behaved like a schoolgirl meet-
ing an eligible young man. Afterwards
he thawed and became charming." Louy's
account differs somewhat, in
that he found both men so tongue-tied
that he himself had to conduct the
conversation.

The playwright agreed to Debussy's
suggestion for cuts, and even sug-
gested a few himself. The main cuts in-
clude four scenes: Act I Scene i (a
chorus of servants); Act II Scene iv (in
which the old Arkel for the second
time dissuades Pelléas from visiting his
dying friend Marcellus—wisdom thus
the slave of fate); Act III Scene i (in
which the child Yniold interrupts a
tense conversation between Pelléas and
Mélisande and distracts them with her
nervous chatter); and Act V Scene i
(in which the serving women discuss
finding Mélisande, wounded, and
Golaud the apparent victim of suicide.
They know they will soon be called
mysteriously to enter Mélisande's bed-
chamber to signal her death).

These omissions have undoubtedly
added to the mystery of the play. So
much of the meaning remains hidden
behind symbolism, so much is left to
the imagination, inferences are so el-
liptical, that one searches quite deeply
for understanding of what Neville Car-
dus called this "world of whispering
implications, of terrible truths."

Another scene, where Yniold seeks his
lost ball and sees a flock of sheep
being led to slaughter, also heavily
symbolic, was omitted by the exigen-
cies of performance, and also, it is
said, by Debussy's own wish. Too often
it is restored today, a mistake, this
writer believes, as it lessens the impact
of the tremendous orchestral interlude
that should lead directly to the love
scene by the fountain.

These interludes, seeming so integral
a part of the opera, and requiring an
unwonted silence and attention from
the audience, were in actuality an af-
terthought, necessitated by the time re-
quired for changing scenery. Debussy
added to them in rehearsal. Also in the
dress rehearsal, a commotion rose so
loudly over a few lines in the scene
where Golaud uses Yniold as a spy,
that they had to be cut. The father asks
the boy if Pelléas and Mélisande are
near the bed; Yniold replies that he
cannot see the bed.

Still, even with these excisions, *Pelléas*
is one of the rare operas set directly
to a play. (Two others are Richard
Strauss's *Salome* on Oscar Wilde's play,
and Italo Montemezzi's *L'Amore dei
Tre Re*, to Sem Benelli's play.)

In spite of Debussy's initial enthusiasm,
the opera score grew very slowly, even
suffering demolition and reconstruction
now and then. Debussy kept his friends
informed at intervals—having torn up
his first version of the Fountain scene,
he wrote Chausson: "The ghost of old
Klingsor, alias Richard Wagner, ap-
peared at the opening of one of the
bars, so I tore the whole thing up and
struck off on a new line." Painfully,
over the better part of a decade, the
work was wrought. Debussy resisted
several attempts at premature or frag-
mentized performances, once telling
Eugène Ysaye that a concert version
would lose the value of the "silences,"
which are so significant. (The most
famous of these, of course, is the mo-
ment when Pelléas and Mélisande
avow their love without benefit of or-

chestra. And there are other subtle magic moments served by the suspension of sound.)

Albert Carré accepted the work for the Opéra-Comique in 1902. Debussy's euphoric association with Maeterlinck lasted only until casting had to be set. It had been understood by Maeterlinck—and the lady herself—that Mélisande would be created by Georgette Leblanc (supposed to be the poet's wife but in reality never married to him). She was an actress of some pretensions, and had played Maeterlinck's heroines, including Mélisande, in *al fresco* performances at their abbey home, St. Wandrille, as well as singing in *L'Attaque due Moulin* at the Opéra-Comique, where her "irregular intensity" frightened everyone. She also sang *Carmen*, *Thaïs*, and *La Navarraise* at the Brussels La Monnaie. When Carré and André Messager, the conductor who was to exhibit such profound understanding of the opera, came to the composer and suggested the young Scottish girl Mary Garden (who had taken the town by storm by stepping into the role of Charpentier's Louise two years previously), Debussy acceded, after coaching Garden.

One shudders to think what the opera might have had to endure with the central role in the eccentric hands of Leblanc. (She finally got to sing as well as act it when Henry Russell put on the play and the opera in tandem in Boston in 1913).

Maeterlinck, of course, was furious. He stormed out to Debussy's apartment, brandishing his cane, challenged the composer to a duel, and vowed to ruin the performance. He published reams of invective, and it is possible that he at least acquiesced in the scandalous so-called "select program" which circulated at dress rehearsal, ridiculing the plot and lampooning the characters.

It is always amusing, if not instructive, to read the adverse criticism of a work subsequently hailed as a masterpiece.

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There were hostile reactions to the new way Debussy followed the pattern of speech, using relatively few musical climaxes, yet allowing the orchestra to reveal emotions not expressed in words. (The word setting fulfilled Rousseau's dream of a recitative that should completely capture the melody of French speech.)

Several critics, among them Romain Rolland and Pierre Lalo, recognized the genius of the work immediately. But the detractors were legion. One of the fiercest was the same Catulle Mendès whose *Rodrigue* Debussy had so summarily tossed back to its author. After a great deal of flattery came the "buts." At the end, Mendès expressed the desire to hear the music and play separately, of course denying the *raison d'être* of the opera. Another critic wrote: "structureless art, the abolishment of rhythm goes hand in hand with the abolishment of melody . . . contains germs, not of life and progress, but of decadence and death." The director of the Paris Conservatoire, Théodore Dubois, forbade students to hear the opera, so fearful was he of its nefarious influence. After its New York premiere, Henry E. Krehbiel wrote that the tone combinations "sting and blister and pain and outrage the ear"; another critic likened the score to jellyfish.

Certain famous composers were not shy in their comments. Puccini, hearing *Pelléas* in 1906, praised its harmonies and delicate instrumental effects, and concluded that it was "very interesting in spite of its coloring, which is somber and unrelieved like a Franciscan habit." Also expectable was Richard Strauss's reaction, related by Romain Rolland in 1907: "He didn't let a single Wagnerian imitation pass without remarking on it, and not in praise. 'But that's the whole of Parsifal,' he said of one passage."

What did Debussy himself think of it all? The "musicien français," as he modestly insisted on being called,

wrote copiously in several journals, and his witty, racy, often cynical comments (shot through with biting irony), enlivened the music world between 1901 and 1915. Rather ruefully, he changed the mocking tone he employed as Monsieur Croche (his alter ego in *La Revue Blanche*) to one of appreciation for the favorable criticisms, and rather defensively explained himself in an interview in *Le Figaro*: "On hearing opera, the spectator is accustomed to experiencing two distinct sorts of emotion: on the one hand the musical emotion and on the other the emotion of the characters—generally he experiences them in succession. I tried to ensure that the two were perfectly merged and simultaneous . . . I have never allowed my music to precipitate or to retard the changing feelings or passions of my characters for technical convenience."

In spite of all the trials of the unprecedented four months of rehearsal, and of Debussy's doubts that his inner creation could be realized outwardly, he found a perfect incarnation of his *Mélisande* in Mary Garden. In a 1908 piece in *Musica*, he recalled: "I hardly had to speak a word to her as the character of *Mélisande* gradually took shape . . . and [as for her death], a breathtaking event whose emotions cannot be rendered in words, I heard the voice I had secretly imagined—full of a sinking tenderness, and sung with such artistry as I would never have believed possible."

(On the subject of this death scene, he had written in 1895 to Henri Lerolle: "In France, every time a woman dies in the theater, it must be like *La Dame aux Camélias*. People cannot concede that one leaves discreetly, like one who has had enough of this earth.")

Garden has described her own sensations at first hearing the opera at a runthrough with the composer at the piano. "I seemed to become someone else, someone inside of me whose language and soul were akin to me." She claimed never to have taken a

curtain call after Mélisande's death, because "I really died."

The soprano who made Mélisande her own for many years, claims that Maeterlinck violated his vow never to see his play in its operatic dress, and purports to have a photo of him and a rather gushing letter to prove his presence in 1908 at the American premiere with Hammerstein's Manhattan Opera. Debussy had said that Maeterlinck had no use for music—like a blind man in a museum. Maeterlinck later admitted to Henry Russell that Debussy was right. And he wrote *Garden* that she had the genius to add or vivify the things he had omitted or "left in a state of sleep."

Mélisande's fragility and distant charm were important to Debussy. But what comes through in the character is also her fecklessness, her determination to get what she wants, even if she has to lie and betray her husband, and her willingness to accept fate and withdraw into unreality.

Just who was Mélisande anyway? Speculation has placed her as Bluebeard's eighth wife—Maeterlinck had a Mélisande among those wives in his *Ariane et Barbe Bleue*, which Paul Dukas set to music, but she was one who declined freedom when Ariane escapes. She must have been a Princess or Queen, for her crown has fallen into the well, but she repudiates it as a reminder of an undoubtedly traumatic experience.

Bidu Sayao, San Francisco's Mélisande in 1947, and whom Alexander Kipnis rated only second to Garden in ethereal beauty (he had sung Arkel with both), advances a theory that is new to this writer, although it may have been touted before: that Mélisande was pregnant when she met Golaud, and her child had for father the unknown Prince or King. Certainly it is not Pelléas's—for it seems impossible that the two should have become lovers. And here the character of "Le petit Yniold" comes into question. He

is almost always viewed as the innocent. But he is a lonely child, with no one to play with, and possibly prone to mischief out of sheer restlessness. When Golaud forces him to spy on Mélisande in her tower room, he reports that Mélisande and Pelléas have actually kissed on the lips. It is impossible to believe this in light of the eventual avowal of love—surely the first open admission, although when Mélisande's hair falls on Pelléas from the tower room, he shows it the ardor hitherto repressed. Can we not believe that the mischievous child, weary of his father's goading and resenting his brutality, simply says what he thinks Golaud wants to hear?

The hair of Mélisande has alluring meaning. Debussy had once written to Henri Lerolle that when he had turned away to other ideas, Mélisande had bent over him and murmured: "Drop these little follies . . . and keep your dreams for my hair."

There is palpable magic in that hair. Every Mélisande has felt it. Garden treasured her two wigs, made of the hair from "the golden daughters of Brittany" at a cost of 6,000 francs. Sayao adored her wigs, one so firmly glued to her hair and forehead that it was not displaced even when Lawrence Tibbett fell too deeply into his role as Golaud and flung her from side to side by its golden length. (Some Mélisandes, untrusting, have been seen to hold their heads in this stormy scene.)

What a shock it was for Debussy and Garden, on a visit to London expressly to see Sarah Bernhardt as Pelléas and Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Mélisande in the play (with the incidental music by Fauré), when Mrs. Pat let loose an avalanche of jet black hair! Debussy almost fainted, and they rushed out of the theater and back to Paris. One other Mélisande this writer remembers—this time at the New York City Opera—played one performance with a coal-black wig. It seemed sacrilege.



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Debussy could probably have withstood the barrage of adverse criticism of *Pelléas* better than the cultish response it almost immediately invoked. The "swooners and snobs and poseurs" who made the Opéra-Comique hideous with their delirious cries, were scornfully dubbed "Pelléastres" by Jean Lorrain (real name Paul Duval) in 1904. Debussy wanted to challenge the writer to a duel, but was dissuaded by Louys. The hysterical adulation nearly drove the composer mad. The controversy over "L'affaire Debussy" mounted almost to the height of that other upheaval, "L'affaire Dreyfus."

It is quite possible that this wordly reaction contributed to the malaise which afflicted Debussy after his great work was done. He was never quite sure where to go next. Like Bizet, he tried one stage work after another, but succeeded completely in only one. The wreckage of many uncompleted operas was strewn around *Pelléas*.

It was Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* that obsessed Debussy longest. He found in the melancholy Roderick "a progressive expression of anguish." The music he completed showed new orchestral effects and "a type of harrowing declamation." A recent reconstruction of the material left by Debussy, long considered to be undecipherable, was made by devoted musicologists, Carolyn Abate with her professor Robert Bailey. It reveals real genius in all too brief a span. Performances at Yale University and in New York in 1978 found the idiom to be unmistakably Debussy's, yet there are evidences of a new sternness, tight construction, and dissonance.

For another Poe story, *The Devil in the Belfry*, Debussy intended that Satan would whistle instead of sing, while his adversary, the crowd, would sing and move about as individuals. Debussy wanted these two Poe settings to be a single bill, and so stipulated in a contract signed with Giulio

Gatti-Casazza in 1909. (He hoped also to include a *Legende de Tristan*, not the same story Wagner set, but the medieval legend adapted by Joseph Bedier in 1900.) Gatti was quite patient with the long delays after Debussy had accepted the contract—reluctantly, for he felt in his heart that he would never finish the operas.

Although Debussy's masterpiece is unquestionably *Pelléas et Mélisande*, he has left a body of piano works that changed and revitalized the keyboard world as Chopin did before him. He was also revolutionary in the orchestral realm. His most famous works, *Prélude a l'après-midi d'un faune*, *La Mer*, the *Images* (which include *Iberia*) and the *Nocturnes*, opened new kingdoms of sound and sensibility. The larger choral works have their individual charm. The String Quartet is unique; the songs gleam like prismatic jewels.

Debussy played strange tricks with tonalities, abandoning them altogether when he felt the need; using the pentatonic scale, employing consecutive 9ths and 11ths as if they were consonances, and reverting to modes—cutting his own individual path through a welter of late Romanticism. His music could not be pigeonholed, he belonged to no school and founded none. In 1907 he wrote to his publisher Durand: "I am more and more convinced that music, by its very nature . . . cannot be poured into a tight, conventional mold. It is all colors, rhythms." Still, with this calculated "vagueness" that so disturbed the conservatives, Debussy was one of the most exact of composers, in reality a classicist. This is the paradox: that music of such "sensibility" should stand aside so objectively from its subject. It was these subjects that provided the mysticism, the veiled obscurity, the unreachable mystery. The music with which he enveloped them so magically was absolute—indeed, pure.



Georgette Leblanc, who claimed to be the wife of Maurice Maeterlinck, also sang *Mélysande* (but not in this costume!)

Debussy's own life lacked the precision of his music. An aesthete, even a voluptuary, at the mercy of all sensations, often so introspective that his powers seemed to be paralyzed, subject to fluctuating love affairs and partner in two marriages—neither of which yielded serenity—he depended

greatly on his friends, with whom, however, he could too easily become estranged. His health deteriorated from 1909, and after an operation for cancer in 1913, he spent the last years in periodic misery, accomplishing very little. Debussy died during a German bombardment of his beloved

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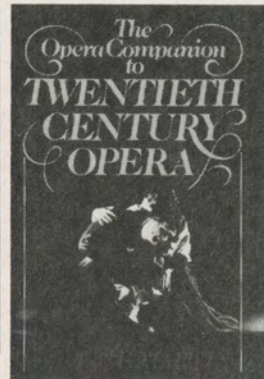
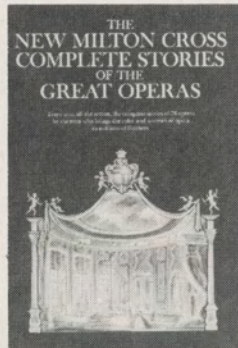
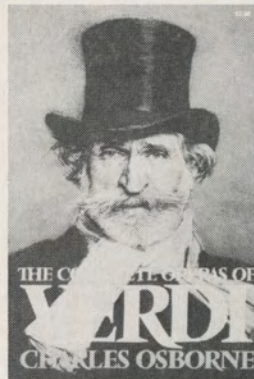
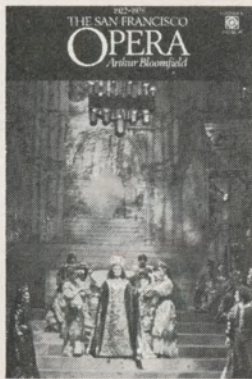
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Lucrezia Bori as Mélisande

Paris, and was buried while the shells fell on the church of Saint-Gervais.

Although other composers — notably Schönberg, Sibelius, and Fauré—made their own orchestral versions of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, it is Debussy's masterpiece that crowns the play. As one critic wrote: "What it has to say has been said once and for all."

Pelléas et Mélisande—some notes on performance.

Maggie Teyte, who succeeded Mary Garden in Paris esteem as Mélisande, never sang it in America until 1948, in a horrendous production by the New York City Opera that did nothing to disguise the encroachment of her age, although it marked the burgeoning career of the young Pelléas, Theodor Uppman. High baritones have been successful in the part, notably

the exquisite Martial Singher, and recently Richard Stilwell. From 1924 through 1935, the Metropolitan Opera faithfully produced the Opera with Lucrezia Bori and Edward Johnson as the lovers, Clarence Whitehill eventually succeeded by Ezio Pinza as Golaud. After a few intervening stands, Bidu Sayao and Singher claimed the leading roles, with Lawrence Tibbett as Golaud and Alexander Kipnis as Arkel, from 1943-45. There have been a half dozen or so pairs of star-crossed lovers since. And the opera has of course been mounted all over the world.

San Francisco's first *Pelléas*, in 1938, had Janine Michaud and Georges Cathélet. Sayao and Singher reigned in 1947, succeeded by Pilar Lorengar and André Jobin in 1965, Jeannette Pilou and Henri Gui in 1969.

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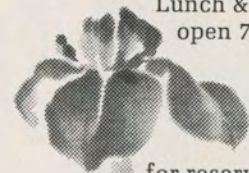
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His first San Francisco recital will be given by the striking young Catalan tenor José Carreras on Sunday evening, October 7, at 8. The recital is sponsored by the San Francisco Opera Association and marks Carreras' only appearance here this season.

The program opens with Scarlatti and Handel and includes operatic arias from *I Capuleti ed I Montecchi* by Bellini and *La Pietra del Paragone* by Rossini. Carreras will also sing Fauré and Tosti songs and he ends the evening with Spanish songs by Fernand Obradors. Martin Katz is the accompanist.

Although his career to date has been mainly in opera, Carreras has recently given a number of recitals to overwhelming acclaim. After a Milan concert last year the headline of the review in a leading Italian paper was "La Scala in delirio per Carreras", which hardly needs translating.

Following a Los Angeles concert last October (given between his *Werther* performances here!) the Los Angeles Times senior critic Albert Goldberg said "There is nothing like a tenor. And there are very few tenors like José Carreras.

"His recital . . . observed the time-honored ritual of every golden-throat-

ed tenor: cheers and shouting almost from the beginning, a rush of adulators singly and in bunches tossed at his feet, hands thrust out for a fleeting touch of his magical person.

"The important thing is that Carreras eminently deserved the adulation . . . earlier hearings here did not suggest the range of artistry Carreras disclosed in this recital. He has an abundance of temperament, not all of it sheerly operatic. He can sing with fire and passion, and he can sing poetically and with restraint."

Since his debut with the San Francisco Opera in 1973, as Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, Carreras has appeared here as Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Riccardo in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and last year's *Werther*.

The tenor was born in Barcelona, where he received his musical education and eventually made his operatic debut at the Teatro del Liceo in *Lucrezia Borgia*. He now sings regularly with many of the world's leading companies including La Scala and the Metropolitan, as well as San Francisco.

Tickets for his October 7 recital are now on sale at the Opera Box Office.

San Francisco Ballet Has Five Month Season



Diana Weber in *La Fille Mal Gardée*

The San Francisco Ballet, the oldest professional classical ballet company in the United States, returns to the War Memorial Opera House this December with the 1979/80 Repertory Season.

Opening in December, the San Francisco Ballet presents *Nutcracker*. Lew Christensen's spectacular production of this timeless fairy tale has become a Bay Area favorite, enchanting the young and young-at-heart. Opening in January, the San Francisco Ballet presents five months of exciting dance—from classic to contemporary—performed in the dazzling style that has made the San Francisco Ballet a company of International renown.

Highlighting the Season will be a rich variety of new ballets by Company choreographers, beautiful works by George Balanchine, Sir Frederick Ashton's celebrated "La Fille Mal Gardée," and a selection of repertory favorites. The San Francisco Ballet will also perform at Zellerbach Auditorium on the UC Berkeley Campus and in the South Bay. Check your local newspapers for announcements of the complete San Francisco Ballet performance schedule, or call the San Francisco Ballet at (415) 751-2141 to receive the 1979/80 Season Brochure.

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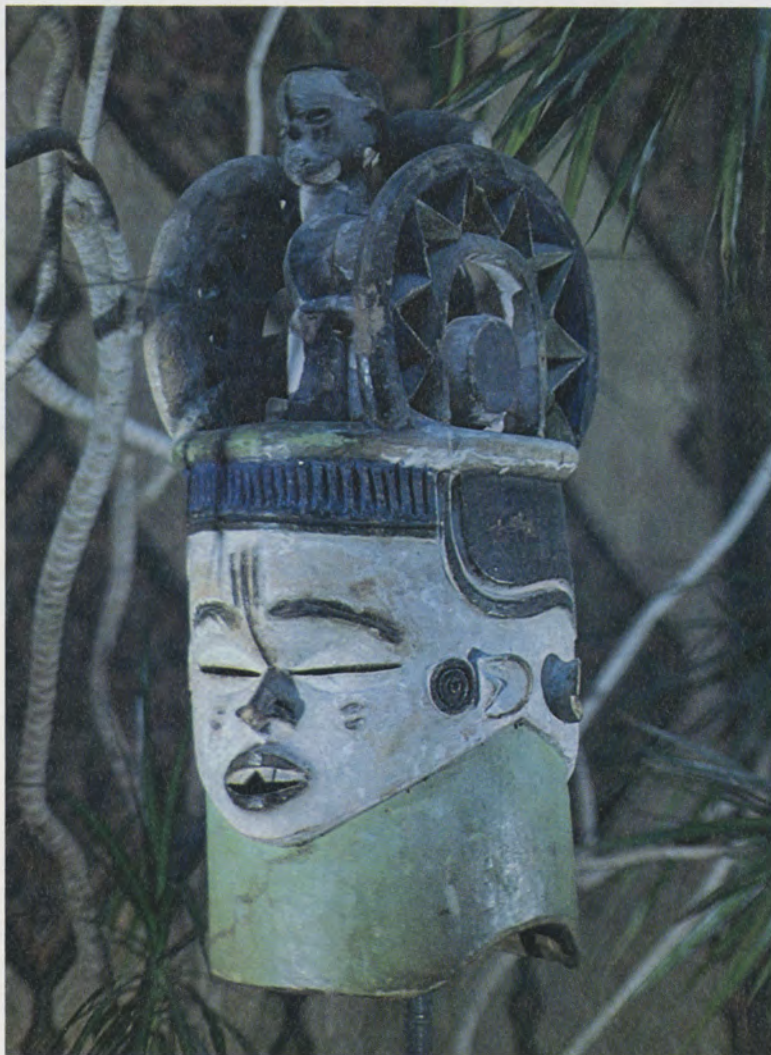
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Mostly Mozart Festival Comes to Bay Area

The *Mostly Mozart* Festival, a six-week series of concerts devoted to the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and his near-contemporaries, will have its first Bay Area season between September 26 and November 3, 1979. Presented by the San Francisco Symphony and featuring the Symphony and its Chamber Musicians, this event will take place in four locations: Zellerbach Auditorium on the U.C. Berkeley campus; Herbst Theatre in San Francisco; Marin Center, San Rafael; and Flint Center, De Anza College, Cupertino.

The concept of the *Mostly Mozart* Festival was developed by New York's Lincoln Center, where it has enjoyed thirteen popular seasons. Most of the programming and promotional ideas conceived there will be featured in the Bay Area. The emphasis will be on popular programs, performed by internationally known artists alternating with some outstanding younger musicians. Orchestral programs will each include two concertos; several choice chamber music evenings will also be offered. Informality, low ticket prices and a flexible ticket-purchase plan, combined with additional attractive items (Mozart T-shirts, mugs, frisbees, sweepstakes, characteristic foods) will contribute to a special festival atmosphere.

The impressive list of performers includes: Barry Tuckwell, in the dual role of conductor and horn virtuoso; talented young pianist Lydia Artymiw; beloved conductor Alexander Schneider; clarinet super-virtuoso Richard Stoltzman; renowned conductor Gerard Schwarz; the remarkable pianist Charles Rosen; young Israeli violinist Shlomo Mintz; prominent British conductor Raymond Leppard; duo-piano team of Anthony and Joseph Paratore; recorder virtuoso and conductor Frans Brueggen; and, last but far from least, San Francisco Symphony's first violist and recent Primrose Award winner Geraldine Walther. Among the chamber music soloists will be Charles Rosen and Shlomo Mintz, along with a group of prominent San Francisco Symphony players.

Brochures are available. For more information, please call 431-5400.



Claude Debussy

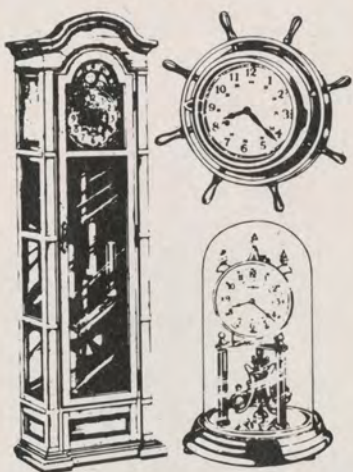
musicien français

By ARTHUR KAPLAN

Claude de France, as Gabriele d'Annunzio called the greatest French musician of his and perhaps of any other era, was born Achille Claudé Debussy on August 22, 1862, into a non-musical family. His father, the proprietor of a china shop in Saint-Germain-en-Laye near Paris, wanted his eldest son to be a sailor. It was not until age nine, when he was heard playing the piano by Madame Mauté de Fleurville, a former pupil of Chopin and mother-in-law of Paul Verlaine, whose verses Debussy later so successfully set to

A photo of Claude Debussy taken about 1900, after the completion of *Pelléas et Mélisande*, but before its world premiere.

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music, that the boy's musical talents were first recognized. She offered to give the gifted youngster free piano lessons and urged his parents to send him to the Paris Conservatory.

At age 11, after passing the obligatory entrance examination, Achille Debussy (he began using the name Claude only in his mid-20s) entered that prestigious institution, where he was to spend the next eleven years in intensive musical training. His inherent hostility to regimentation and his distaste for following the rules led him to difficulties with many of his professors. An unconventional student with an already hyperdeveloped sense of harmonic invention and a vivid imagination, he often had to check his instinctive musical impulses and to conform to the accepted academic styles.

Young Achille won a respectable number of the medals and prizes which the Conservatory still distributes annually, but did not establish himself as the outstanding student one might expect. The faculty at the Conservatory found him to be an apt but recalcitrant student with flashes of brilliance, but decidedly unorthodox. He was, however, an excellent sight-reader on the piano and won the only first prize of his early conservatory years for *accompaniment*—a term which encompasses transposing, reading orchestral scores on the piano and improvising accompaniments to given songs, as well as sightreading. The first prize earned him the honor of enrolling in the advanced composition class. Debussy chose Ernest Guiraud, who supplied the sung recitatives for *Carmen* and finished the orchestration for *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, over the more exacting Massenet, as his professor of composition.

His sightreading skill also earned him a recommendation to Madame Nadezhda von Meck, Tchaikovsky's eccentric and mysterious patroness. She engaged the 18-year-old musician as her resident pianist, and in this capacity Debussy travelled with the von Meck entourage during summer vacations from 1880 to 1882. He gave piano

lessons to her children, accompanied their violin playing and singing, played four-hand duets with Mme. von Meck and completed the piano-cello-violin trio which entertained the wealthy patroness and her friends. Debussy went with the von Mecks to Italy and Switzerland in 1880 and in 1881 and 1882 to Vienna and Moscow. At their summer estates near the Russian capital he enjoyed the comfortable luxury of their aristocratic life style and was treated as a guest rather than an employee. When he had the audacity to ask for her 16-year-old daughter Sonia's hand, however, Mme. von Meck sent her "little Frenchman" packing.

An important influence in this same Conservatory period came from yet another cultivated household to which Debussy initially gained entrée as an accompanist. He had met Mme. Vasnier, an accomplished singer, at the school where he earned some extra money for accompanying voice students. Soon thereafter, Debussy began making daily visits to the Vasnier residence. A growing attachment to his new patroness (the first set of songs in the *Fêtes galantes* were dedicated to Mme. Vasnier), which demonstrated more than simple gratitude, was accepted with admirable restraint and understanding by the older Monsieur Vasnier, an architect who continued to encourage his young protégé in his musical career. He also introduced him to the works of the leading poets of the day and conversed with him on literature and art, greatly enriching his general culture.

It was most likely through Vasnier's tutelage and urging that Debussy reluctantly submitted his candidacy for the coveted Prix de Rome. He earned the second prize in 1883 and the following year won the top award for his cantata, *L'Enfant prodigue*. The committee, including such notables as Gounod, Reyer and Saint-Saëns, voted 22-6 in his favor. The composer of *Faust* supposedly whispered to the

young laureat, "Toi, mon petit, tu as du génie."

Debussy's stay at the Villa Medici in Rome, which he described as "a cosmopolitan hotel, a private college and a compulsory civilian barracks," was largely unhappy and unproductive. He did not enjoy communal life and his aloof manner estranged him from his fellow students. Furthermore, he had little taste for Italian music, especially Italian opera, and little interest in the history and splendor of the Eternal City. In frequent letters to the Vasniers he spoke of Rome as "une grande prison" and it was only at their insistence that he remained there for the second year of the traditional three-year term of the Prix de Rome. Even their influence could not induce him to stay for the third year. *Zuléma*, a composition for chorus and orchestra and his first official "envoi" as laureat, was the only work he completed in Rome. It was disapproved of by the French Academy and later destroyed by the composer. Of the other three "envois," completed in Paris, only *La Damoiselle élue*, written to a poem by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, is still occasionally heard. It gives early proof of Debussy's extraordinary gift for wedding text and music into an indissoluble whole.

The young composer officially broke with the Academy over the announced "Festival Debussy," the traditional performance dedicated to the Prix de Rome laureats after their return from the Villa Medici during which their "envois" were played in public. He was irate over the fact that *Printemps*, inspired by Botticelli's famous painting "Primavera," had been excluded from the program because it had received the Academy's disapproval. In addition, he willfully refused to compose the required overture to accompany the ceremonial distribution of prizes, thereby forfeiting a potentially important first public audition.

Throughout his career, the composer could never be accused of being an opportunist. In April 1890, when his

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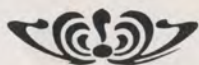
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Fantaisie for piano and orchestra was to be played by the Société Nationale under Vincent d'Indy, Debussy, deciding that the work was not really representative of his art, unbeknownst to anyone took the orchestral parts home with him after the last rehearsal, effectively cancelling his participation in the concert. Thus it was not until 1893 when *La Damoiselle élue* was given its first performance by the same Société Nationale that Debussy's name first reached general attention. He did, however, consent to be a member of the Prix de Rome jury beginning in 1903, and in 1904 accepted the rosette of the Légion d'Honneur, probably to please his aging parents.

When Debussy returned to Paris in 1887, he found that his relations with the Vasniers had changed considerably. Although he was occasionally welcomed in their new residence and for a while gave piano lessons to their daughter, the former warm bond of affection, coupled with much-needed material and moral support, was no longer freely proffered. Reluctantly, he took up residence at his parents' apartment and began his Bohemian years by dabbling in various intellectual currents then in vogue. He became an ardent supporter of Wagner and the pre-Raphaelites, while taking an active interest in the burgeoning Symbolist movement in French literature. It was the last of these that had the most profound influence on his career. By occasionally frequenting Stéphane Mallarmé's salon, the celebrated "mardis de la rue de Rome," and becoming an habitué of Edmond Bailly's bookshop, la Librairie de l'Art indépendant on the Chaussée d'Antin, the young composer completed his largely self-taught cultural formation. He met symbolist authors such as Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, Jules Laforgue and Mallarmé as well as such young writers as Andre Gidé, Paul Claudel and Henri de Régnier. He formed a particularly close friendship with Pierre Louys, whose *Chansons de Bilitis* he set to music in 1898.

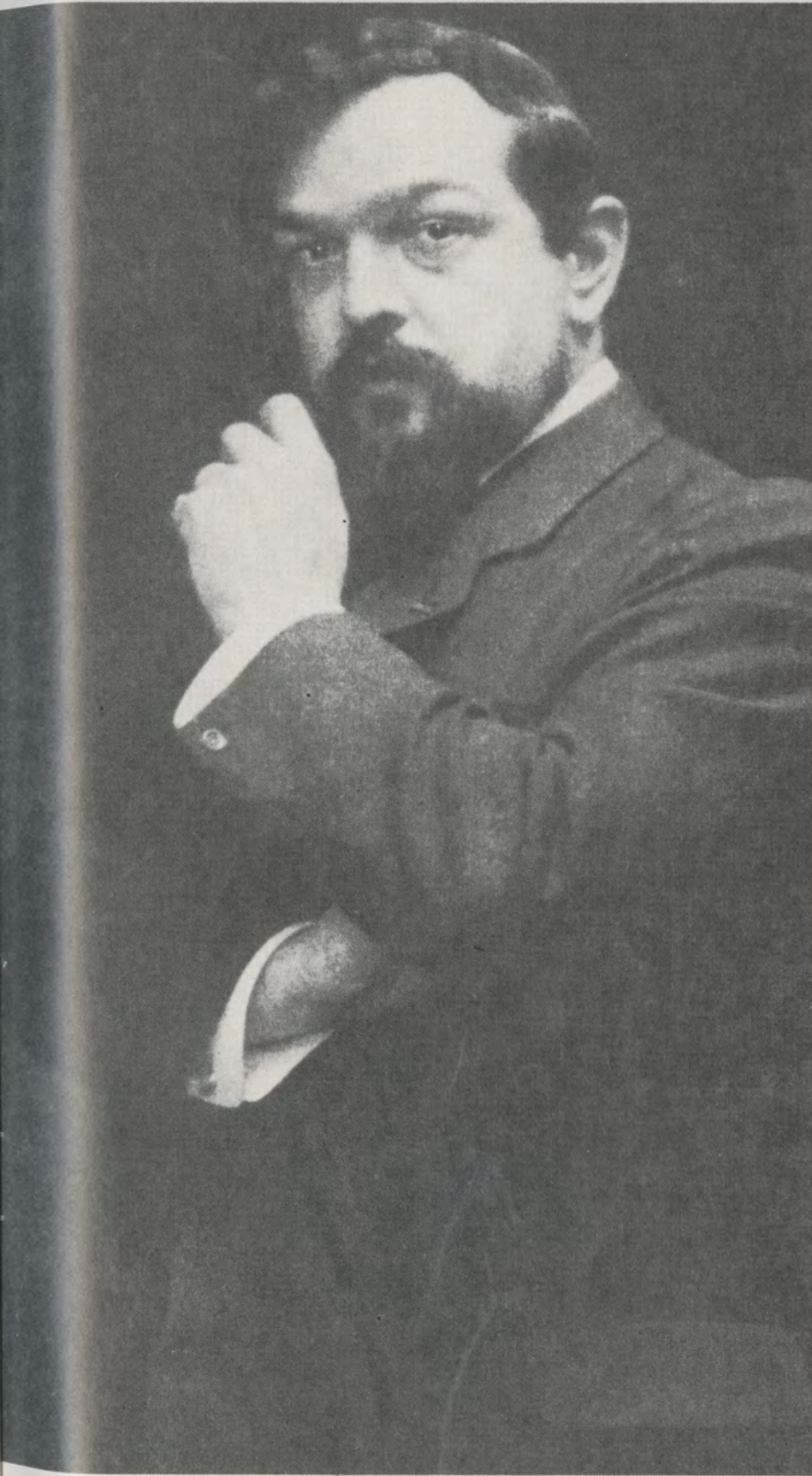
It is not surprising that such poets as Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé and Poe should attract his attention with their musical approach to verse (Verlaine, in the first line of his famous theoretical poem, "L'Art poétique," wrote: "De la musique avant toute chose . . ."). Wishing to evoke secret "correspondances"—the word serves as the title of one of Baudelaire's most famous poems—between art and nature and among the various senses, they sought out special cadences, rhythms and harmonious juxtapositions of sounds in suggestive combinations. Like the Symbolists, Debussy rejected the backward-looking classical approach of the Academy and was repelled by the bombast and rhetoric of the Romantics. He had no desire to revive the great traditions, but to explore new territories through his own intuitions.

The composer's most successful early works are all settings of Symbolist texts: *Ariettes oubliées* (1888), *Trois mélodies* (1891) and *Fêtes galantes* (1892) to Verlaine poems; *Cinq poèmes de Baudelaire* (1890); *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (1892-94) to Mallarmé's enigmatic eclogue; and his only opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1893-1902) to Maurice Maeterlinck's play of that name.

The revolutionary *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* is a landmark in musical history and the work in which Debussy can be said to have found his own language. The symphonic poem, with its new orchestral texture, its masterful scoring, its non-traditional form and its supple sensuousness, hit Paris by storm. It was an immediate success when first performed at a concert of the Société Nationale in 1894.

If the *Faune* took two years to complete, *Pelléas et Mélisande* occupied the composer for a full ten years. Although Debussy had projects for numerous other operas, including *As You Like It*, *La Princesse Maleine*, to an-

continued on p. 110



Claude Debussy

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Pelléas et
 Mélisande
 8 pm, A,B

11

17

Don Carlo
 8 pm, A,C

18

24

La Gioconda
 8 pm, B

25

October

Recital
 JOSE CARRERAS
 Sunday, October 7,
 8 PM
 Opera House

1

Elektra
 8 pm, A,B

2

8

Triple Bill
 8 pm, A,C

9

San Francisco Opera
 FAIR
 Sunday, October 28,
 Noon to 6 PM
 Opera House

15

Fliegende
 Holländer
 8 pm, A,C

16

22

La Fanciulla
 del West
 8 pm, A,C

23

29

Roberto
 Devereux
 8 pm, A,C

30

November

San Francisco Opera Guild
 FOL DE ROL
 Monday, November 12, 8 PM
 Civic Auditorium

5

La Forza
 del Destino
 8 pm, A,B

6

Concert
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 Kurt Herbert Adler,
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 Orchestra
 Sunday, November 18, 8 PM
 Opera House

Fol de Rol
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 8 pm

12

Così fan tutte
 8 pm A,B

13

19

Tancredi
 8 pm, A

20

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Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		Opening Night La Gioconda 7 pm, A	Pelléas et Mélisande 8 pm, J,K	Park Concert 2 pm
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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Claude Debussy
continued from p. 106

other Maeterlinck play, *Rodrigue et Chimène* to a Catulle Mendès text, *Axel*, based on Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's story, *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Devil in the Belfry* to works by Edgar Allen Poe, and Joseph Bédier's treatment of the Tristan legend, *Pelléas* is the only work in this genre to reach completion. The two Poe operas and the *Tristan* were earmarked for the Metropolitan Opera, its director, Gatti-Casazza, having paid Debussy a nominal retaining fee for the works.

Debussy's first contact with *Pelléas et Mélisande* came during the Paris performance of the play at Lugné-Poë's Théâtre de l'Oeuvre in 1893. It immediately fired his imagination. Through the intermediary of Henri de Régnier, he secured the playwright's permission to use the story as a basis for an opera. Three months later, the composer travelled to Ghent with Pierre Louys to meet Maeterlinck, who accepted the composer's cuts and suggested several others.

During its ten-year gestation, *Pelléas* underwent several revisions. The first draft was jettisoned as being too Wagnerian by the composer himself. (The height of Debussy's admiration for Wagner dates from the late 1880s when he made back-to-back pilgrimages to Bayreuth and returned with vivid impressions of *Die Meistersinger*, *Parsifal* and *Tristan*.) The second version was revised in accordance with suggestions of the renowned Belgian violinist Ysaye, a close friend whom Debussy had enlisted to try to get the work premiered at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels. Last-minute alterations, including the expansion of the interludes made necessary by the lengthy scene changes, went on right up until curtain time.

In 1898 the score was essentially complete, although the opera was not performed until 1902. André Messager, composer and conductor for the Opéra-Comique, interceded with its newly-appointed director, Albert Carré, who gave his tentative approval

to mount the opera. Although Debussy remained distrustful of official French musical circles and thought the Opéra-Comique too large a theater for the intimacy of his work, he was anxious to see it performed and agreed.

It was tacitly assumed that Maeterlinck's wife, singer Georgette Leblanc, would portray the role of Mélisande. The composer even went over the score with her a few times. But when Messager's protégée and paramour Mary Garden created a sensation by substituting for an ailing colleague in the title role of Charpentier's *Louise*, Carré proposed that the Scotswoman portray Golaud's unhappy young bride. Both Messager and Debussy quickly and enthusiastically concurred. There ensued what was known as "la Bataille des Dames." Maeterlinck, incensed at the affront to his wife, attempted to retract his play in rehearsal and, failing that, wrote a public letter to *Le Figaro* disassociating himself from the opera and wishing that "its failure be immediate and resounding."

Despite numerous difficulties during rehearsal and a certain campaign to discredit the opera before it opened, Miss Garden and *Pelléas* gradually won popular favor after a tumultuous premiere on April 30, 1902. The opera had 14 performances in its first year and was revived frequently thereafter. The critics, with rare exception, were often inept and missed the true significance of the work, however.

Pelléas stands at the beginning of Debussy's lasting popular recognition. His initial public acclaim had come with the performance of the first two *Nocturnes*—"Nuages" and "Fêtes"—at the prestigious Concerts Lamoureux in December 1900. Following this success, Debussy, on Pierre Louys' recommendation, received an invitation to write a musical column for the avant-garde monthly, *La Revue Blanche*. (He later contributed to *Gil Blas* and other reviews.) With considerable wit, irony and sarcasm, he attacked such cherished institutions as the Institut des Beaux-Arts and the Prix de Rome, the Paris Opera and Wagnerism.

In 1899, after the breakup of a ten-year liaison with a midinette named Gaby and several other extra-curricular romances, Debussy married Rosalie ("Lily") Texier, a beautiful dressmaker. Faced with increasing responsibilities, he could no longer live "la vie de Bohème" of his student years. Their childless marriage lasted officially until 1908, but in reality was dissolved four years earlier. In 1904 the composer told Lily that he was in love with Emma Bardac, a society woman of culture, charm and considerable musical ability. Lily tried to commit suicide by shooting herself, but her attempt was no more successful than Gaby's had been seven years earlier. The seeming calousness of the composer, who had previously abandoned his faithful lover and now appeared to be abandoning his wife for the promise of a much more comfortable life with a rich society lady, estranged many of his friends, as both the Chausson and Ysaye families had been estranged over the "affaire Gaby" in 1897. Several even took up a collection to pay Lily's hospital expenses. To Debussy, this constituted a clear sign of disloyalty. He systematically broke with all those who contributed to Lily's medical care, including Pierre Louys, Mary Garden, Messager and Carré, thereby losing nearly every one of his former friends. Debussy finally married Emma Bardac in 1908 following lengthy divorce proceedings and three years after the birth of their only child, Claude-Emma (called "Chouchou") on whom he doted and for whom he wrote the charming piano pieces, *Children's Corner* (1906-1908). The noted playwright Henri Bataille wrote a thinly veiled account of the Debussy-Lily-Emma affair, *La Femme nue*, an extremely popular drama which opened in 1908 and was revived in 1911, 1916, 1923 and 1928. (There is even an opera based on the story by Henri Février, the composer of *Monna Vanna*.)

Depressed by the deterioration in his relations with his friends, which was no doubt exacerbated by the success of Bataille's play, engrossed in his new

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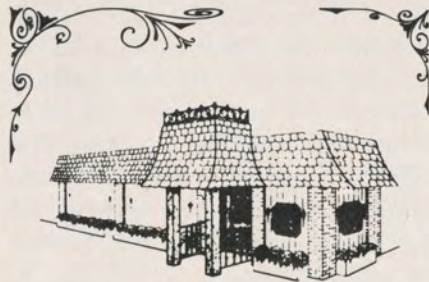
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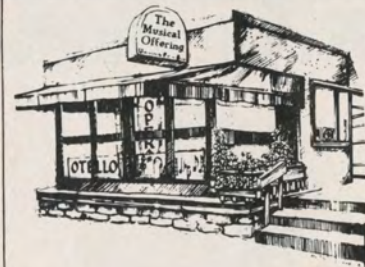
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family life and seeing his name dragged unwillingly into an artificial rivalry waged between the Debussyites and the Ravelites, the composer withdrew into a relative social and artistic silence. In addition to some conducting, his main musical preoccupation at this time was his projected settings of the two Poe works. Despite much thought and planning, the musical problems posed were of such a difficult nature that Debussy never resolved them to his satisfaction and he finally abandoned the project.

In the years following the completion of *Pelléas*, the composer turned increasingly to compositions for the piano. After his symphonic masterpiece, *La Mer* (1905), an unprogrammed tone poem with a stronger, more coloristic evocation of nature than the earlier impressionistic *Nocturnes*, he wrote *Estampes* (1903) and the two series of *Images* (1905 and 1907), showing increasingly rarified harmonies and interesting effects of timbre. For Debussy, the piano was primarily a harmonic instrument. In his own personal pianistic technique he used both unusual pedaling and a special touch to achieve strange and coloristic sonorities. The *Préludes* (1910 and 1913), 24 in all, constitute an impressive collection of short piano compositions in a concise and pictorial style.

The last years of his life brought increasing international fame and, with it, various commissions and engagements to conduct his works. Although conducting was the musical activity he least enjoyed—he was very conscious of his own deficiencies on the podium—he could not afford to refuse such engagements since they were an important source of revenue. Emma's fortune was not as large as supposed and they had furnished a very comfortable residence near the Bois de Boulogne which was extremely costly in upkeep. Furthermore, Debussy had an uncontrollable penchant for expensive and rare objets d'art.

Gabriele d'Annunzio invited him to compose incidental music to his mystery play, *Le Martyre de Saint Sébastien*, which was performed with actress-

dancer Ida Rubinstein portraying the title role to mixed notices in 1911. In the succeeding two years he wrote *Khamma*, a ballet commissioned by the English dancer Maud Allen and, more importantly, *Jeux* (1913) which Serge Diaghilev commissioned as a vehicle for Nijinsky, who had both choreographed and danced the lead role to *L'Après-midi d'un faune* the previous year. A third ballet, for children this time, was written that same year to a scenario by André Hellé, *La Boîte à joujoux*, which was later orchestrated by André Caplet and premiered in 1919.

Despite an increasingly painful bout with cancer, which had first declared itself as early as 1907, Debussy continued composing and conducting with unabated energy until the outbreak of the war. The "terrible cataclysm," as he called it, left him very depressed. His patriotic sentiment had been exacerbated by the events in Europe and, unable to fight for the country and the freedom which he loved, he felt himself a useless member of society. He found it difficult to concentrate on composing. All of his life he had lived in a kind of spiritual and physical isolation. He did not compose for either public or critical acclaim and his innate aristocratic tastes made him seem aloof and reserved. But the tragedies of the war made him feel closer than ever to his fellow countrymen. He signed his wartime compositions, Claude Debussy, *musicien français*.

The early war years produced several piano compositions, including the austere and purified *Études*, and the final works of his career—three in a series of six projected sonatas for various instrumental combinations, which also gave evidence of a more abstract character. They are, in fact, among the very few of Debussy's works with little or no extra-musical content.

After two operations and much suffering, the musician, of whom it has been said that "no other artist has ever lived quite so exclusively in and for his art," died of cancer on March 23, 1918, and was quietly buried to the noise of Big Bertha's bombs exploding on Paris.

Emphasis On Books In Opera Gift Shop

Photo: Ira Nowinski.



The San Francisco Opera Gift Shop, successfully launched last year, will be open again in 1979 at every performance, on the south mezzanine level of the Opera House.

The San Francisco Opera Gift Shop, inaugurated so successfully last year, will be in operation again this season at all performances. It will be open for one full hour before the performance and at every intermission. All proceeds from sales directly benefit the San Francisco Opera and the shop is run, under the supervision of the opera's public relations department, by volunteers.

There will be an expansion of merchandise this year including, in response to many requests, an increased emphasis on books about opera and music, both paperback and hardcover. Among titles in stock as the season opens are *Kobbe's Book of the Opera*, both *Milton Cross' Stories of the Operas* and *More Stories of the Operas*, George Martin's *Operas of the Twentieth Century*, the new *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Opera*, the new biography of Alban Berg and both volumes of Julian Budden's *The Operas of Verdi*, as well as last year's new, revised and up-dated history of the San Francisco Opera by Arthur Bloomfield.

An expanded selection of note-cards, post-cards and greeting-cards is available this year including a new series of San Francisco Opera note-cards with envelopes featuring photographs of such singers as Luciano Pavarotti, José Carreras, Magda Olivero, Montserrat Caballé and historic photos of Kirsten Flagstad, Lauritz Melchior, Claudia Muzio and others.

Gift Shops and merchandising have proven valuable fund-raising assets to many opera companies not only in the United States but in Europe in recent years. The Metropolitan Opera only last season installed a completely new shop in its north lobby in Lincoln Center.

The San Francisco Opera Gift Shop is located in the Opera Museum on the south mezzanine level of the Opera House. Among the items available, all opera-related, are canvas tote bags, a number of different styles of T-shirts, ash-trays and mugs, jewelry, posters, silk scarves and neckties, musical scores and recordings.

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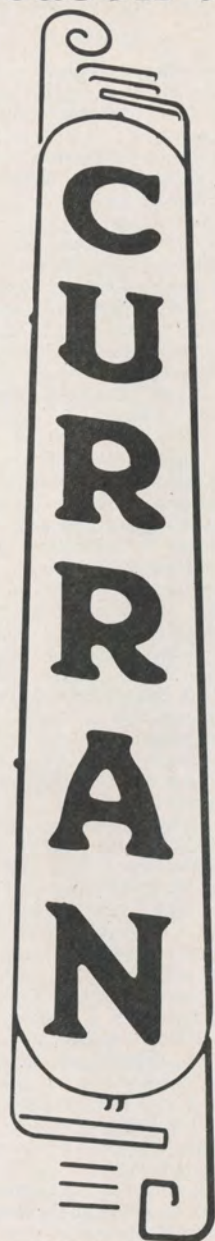
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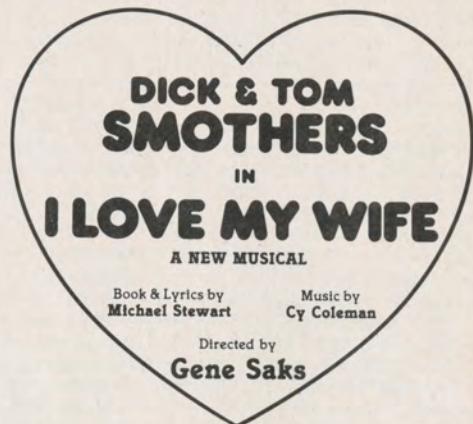


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Rare Photo Exhibit In Opera Museum



Tenor Lauritz Melchior and his wife, Kleinchen, at the singer's dressing room table backstage at the San Francisco Opera in a photograph taken about forty years ago and now a part of the large exhibit in the Opera House museum.

A striking exhibit of rare photographs of the San Francisco Opera at work in the 1930's and 1940's is now on display in the Opera House Museum on the south mezzanine level of the Opera House. The display is open before every performance and during each intermission. Admission is free of charge.

Photographs, in large blow-ups, include actual production shots and many scenes of favorite artists backstage. They include shots of such singers as Bidu Sayao, Kirsten Flagstad, Ebe Stignani, Beniamino Gigli, Lauritz Melchior, Ezio Pinza, Lily Pons, Salvatore Baccaloni, Elisabeth Rethberg, Tito Schipa, Gladys Swarthout and many others.

The photos have been assembled from the archives of the opera company and from the private collection of Mrs. Robert Watt Willer, whose late husband was for many years president of the opera association. They are shown

in new enlargements made expressly for this exhibit by Clark Photos and General Graphics. The entire exhibit was prepared under the supervision of Herbert Scholder, director of public relations for the San Francisco Opera.

The Opera House museum is maintained by the Friends of the War Memorial, Mrs. Joseph D. Cuneo, president. The installation of the exhibit was carried out, as have been those of previous years, by Russell Hartley, the director of the Archives for the Performing Arts, and his assistant Judith Solomon.

The Archives maintains the largest collection of theatrical memorabilia and documentary materials in the country, except for New York and Washington. It is housed in the Presidio branch of the San Francisco Public Library System and anyone interested in further historical material on opera in San Francisco may contact Hartley at 922-6750.

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Nilsson to Return In Special Concert

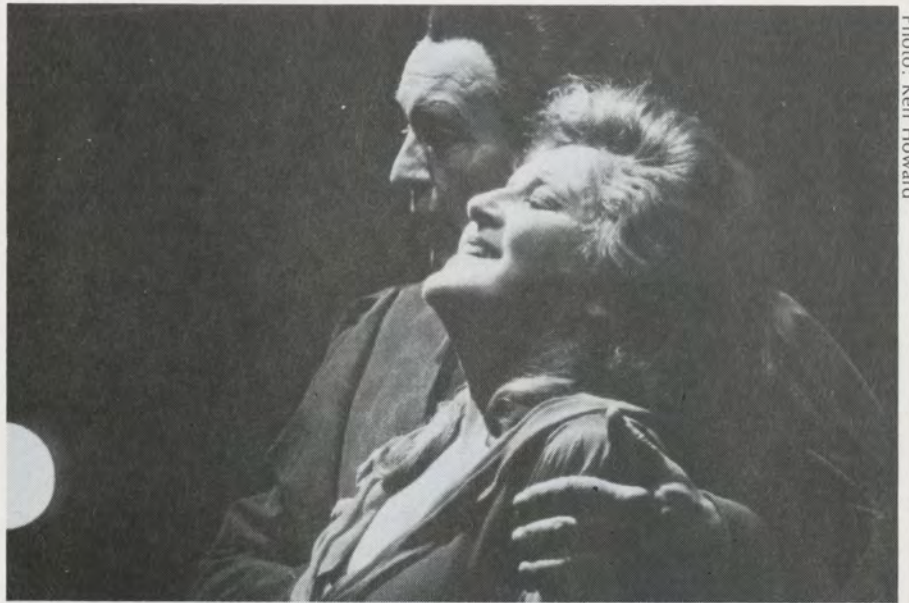


Photo: Ken Howard

Birgit Nilsson as Isolde in the historic San Francisco Opera performances of 1970, with Wolfgang Windgassen as Tristan, which marked the only time the two ever sang this opera together in the United States. Now the legendary Nilsson returns in a major concert at the Opera House on November 18.

One of the musical highlights of the coming season is expected to be the gala concert celebrating the return to this country for the first time in five years of the great Swedish soprano Birgit Nilsson. It will take place in the War Memorial Opera House at 8 p.m. on Sunday, November 18, with opera general director Kurt Herbert Adler conducting the San Francisco Opera orchestra.

Miss Nilsson has a special connection with San Francisco, having made her American opera debut here in 1956 as Bruennhilde in *Die Walkure*. In subsequent years she appeared here as Fidelio, Turandot, Isolde and Bruennhilde in all three operas of the Ring cycle, her last performances having been as Isolde in 1974.

Adler has already announced that Miss Nilsson will again sing with the San Francisco Opera in 1980 as the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*.

This November she will mark her return to the United States also with concerts at the Metropolitan, conducted by James Levine, and in Los Angeles, and next winter she will sing a number of performances of *Elektra* at the Metropolitan.

Miss Nilsson was born in West Karup, Sweden, and studied at the Royal Acad-

emy of Music in Stockholm. She made an unexpected operatic debut, on three days notice, in 1946 as Agathe in *Der Freischuetz*, following it up with a formal debut at the Stockholm Opera in 1947 as Verdi's Lady Macbeth.

Her first major engagements outside Sweden were in the early fifties at Glyndebourne as Elettra in Mozart's *Idomeneo* and at the Vienna Staatsoper. Her La Scala debut was as Turandot in 1958 and the Metropolitan first heard her in 1959 as Isolde.

Although appearing frequently in the Italian repertoire, Miss Nilsson has sung more than one thousand performances of the Wagnerian operas and was the first soprano to record the full Ring cycle. She was a favorite performer of the late Wieland Wagner at the famed Bayreuth festival for many years. Details of her San Francisco concert have not been announced yet, but it will definitely include Wagner excerpts and possibly some Strauss.

Remaining tickets for the concert are on sale now at the Opera Box Office which is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 10 a.m. through the first intermission on all performance days including Sundays.

Tour to the Orient Offered by SFO

An exciting pre-Christmas tour to the Orient, culminating with a gala performance of Puccini's *Tosca*, has been arranged by the San Francisco Opera for this fall. It includes seventeen days, leaving San Francisco on December 6 and returning on December 22, at the low all-inclusive cost of \$1950 and is open to the general public.

The tour begins in Hong Kong and then goes on to Bangkok, Singapore and Manila, with a performance there on December 21 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines of the touring San Francisco Opera's production of *Tosca* with Placido Domingo, Eva Marton and Justino Diaz and conducted by Kurt Herbert Adler.

Various activities are planned for tour participants, including an evening of exotic Thai classical dances and traditional music in Bangkok, a tour of the Grand Palace in Singapore and a five-hour sunset cruise aboard a Chinese junk in Hong Kong.

For a brochure with full information, please write to Orient Tour, San Francisco Opera, Opera House, San Francisco, CA 94102.

Western Theme Set For Guild's Fol de Rol

After a year out, due to last season's special Anniversary Gala, the San Francisco Opera Guild will again present its annual operatic extravaganza, the Great Western Fol de Rol 1979, at 8:30 p.m. Monday, November 12, at the Civic Auditorium.

The western theme is keyed to the opera's new production this season of Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West*, and Fol de Rol-goers are requested to come in either black-tie or western wear! The 1979 event, which is a benefit for the Opera Guild's student matinees, is underwritten this year by Great Western Savings and Loan and Ralph Lauren Western Wear and Polo Western Wear by Ralph Lauren, a division of the Gap Stores, Inc.

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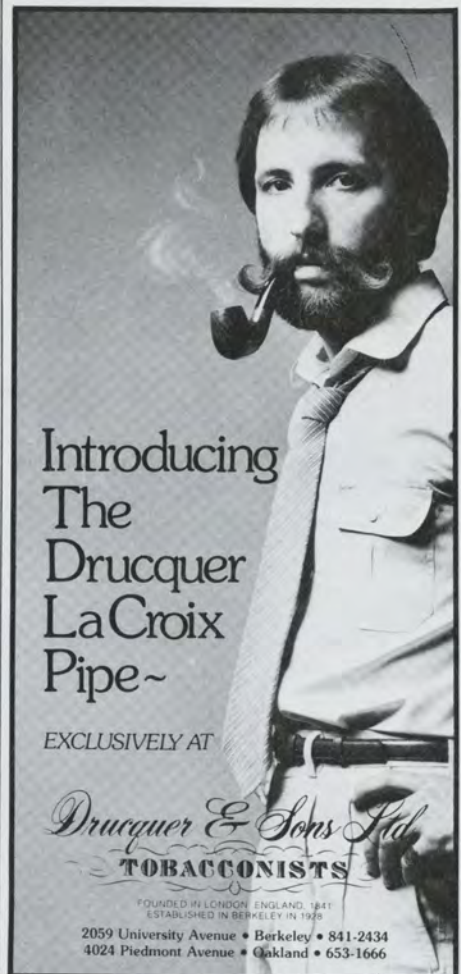
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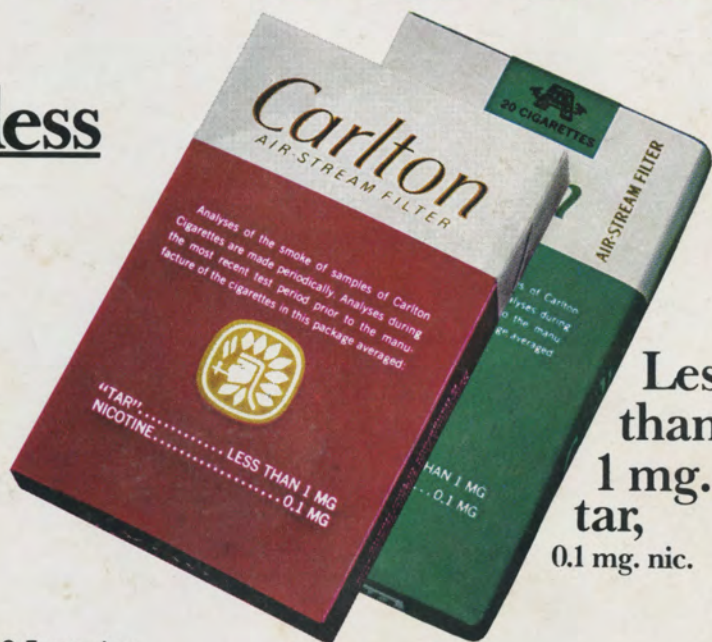
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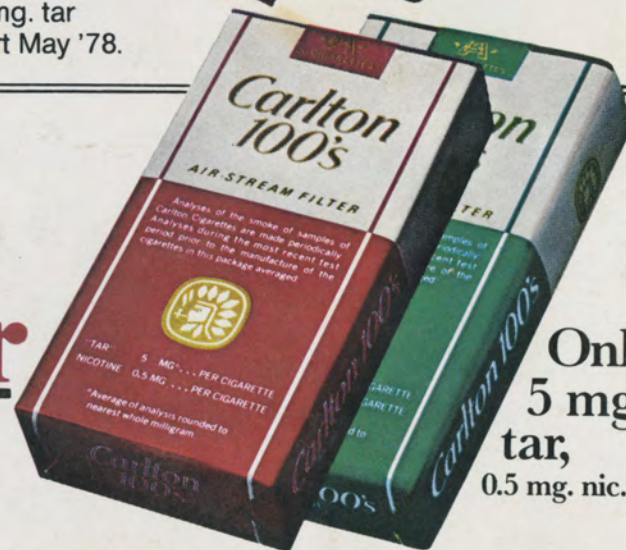
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