

Lear

1980

Friday, June 12, 1980 8:00 PM

Monday, June 15, 1980 7:30 PM

Thursday, June 18, 1980 8:00 PM

Sunday, June 21, 1980 2:00 PM

Tuesday, June 23, 1980 8:00 PM

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AMERICAN PREMIERE

Lear

1981 SUMMER FESTIVAL

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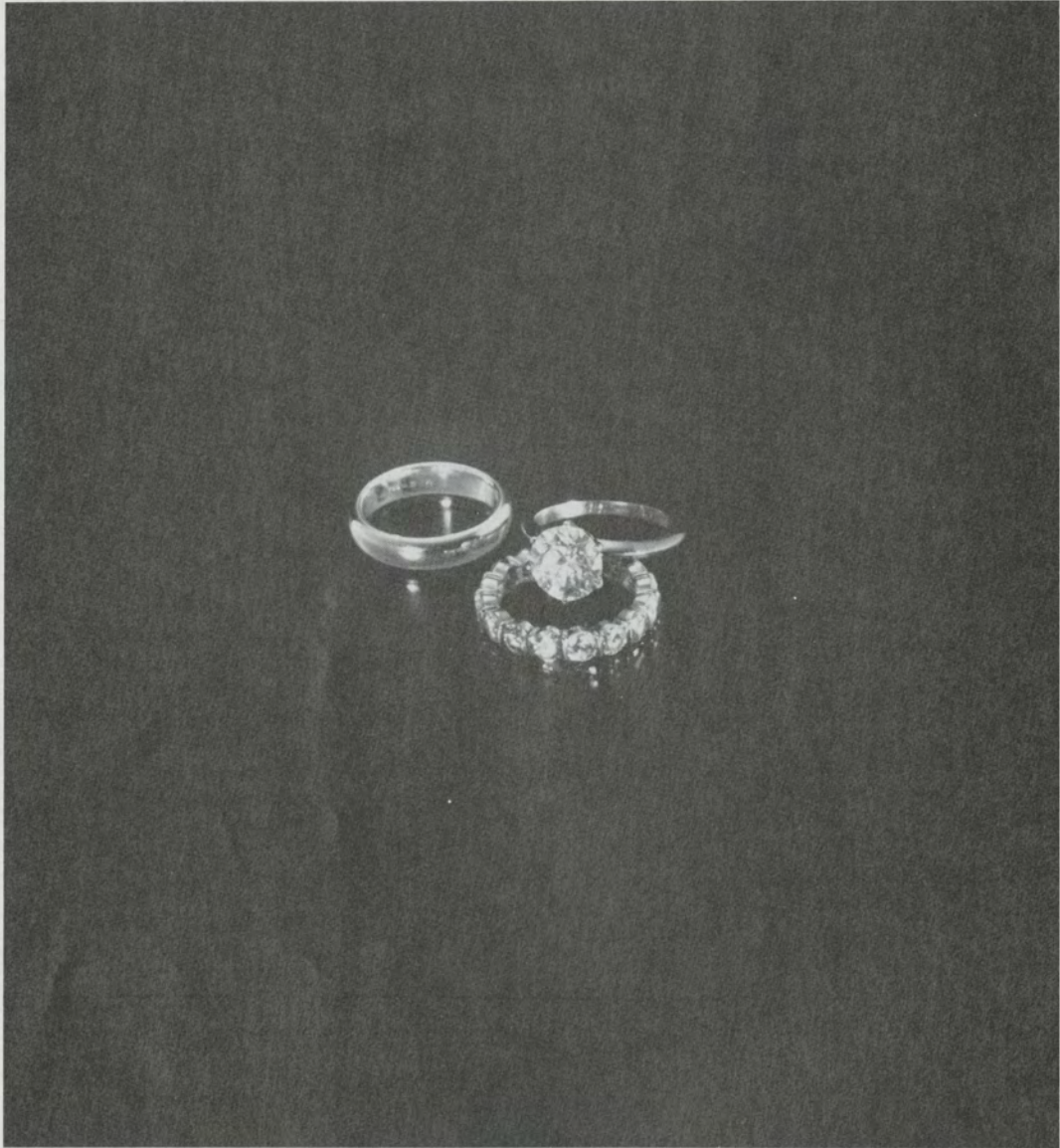


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Welcome to the San Francisco Opera's 1981 International Summer Festival. We are proud and excited to share with you this historic first for our Company and for our city. Hopefully, the Opera's new Summer Festival will become the nucleus for an annual Summer Festival embracing all of our area's wealth of performing and visual arts.

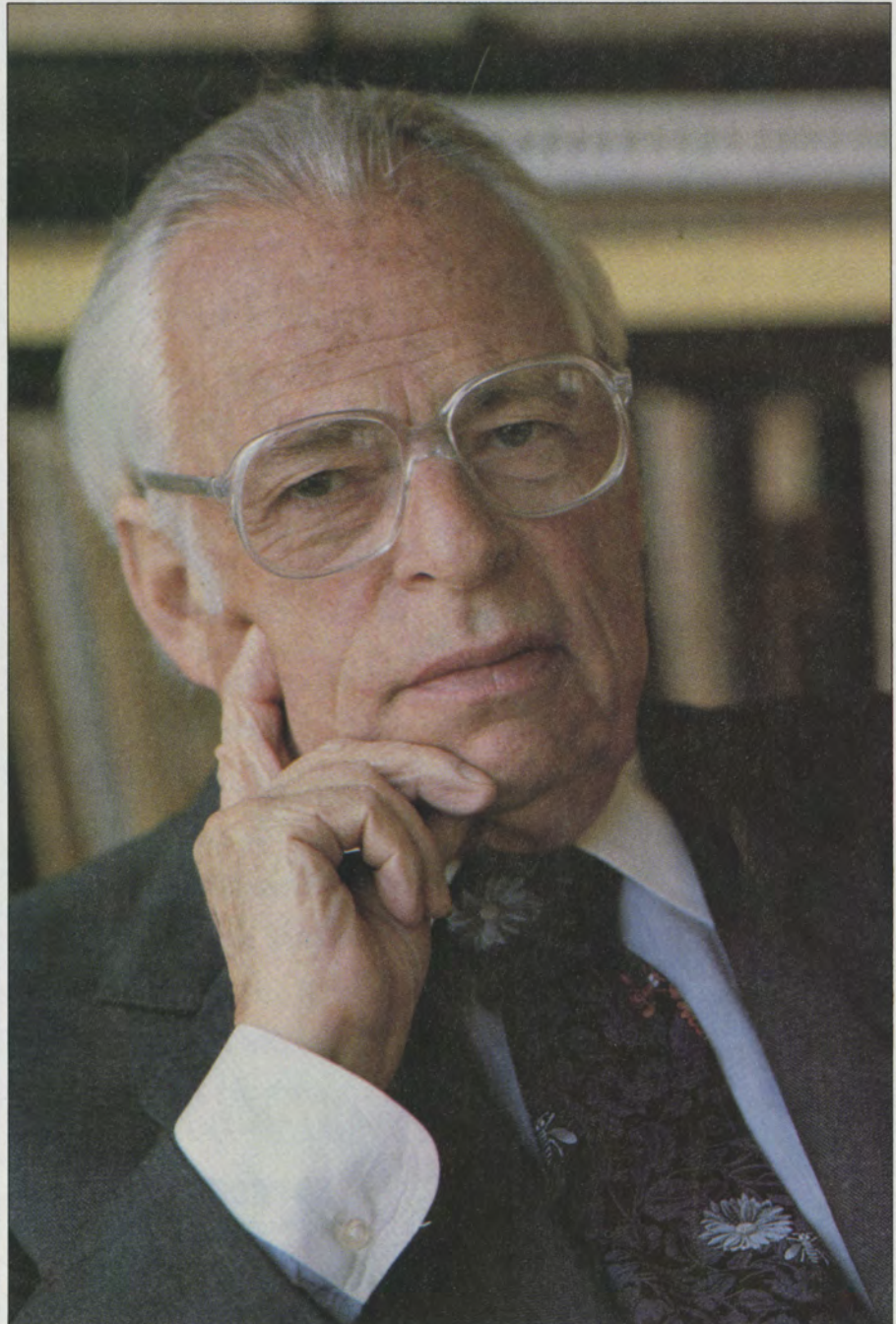
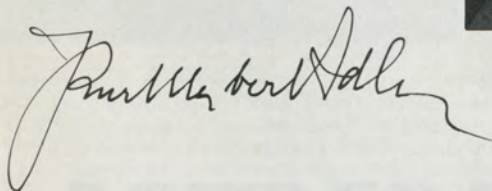
If you are a visitor to San Francisco, let me extend a special welcome to you. This city has a distinguished history of musical performance that has enabled it to become one of the great opera centers of the world. The extraordinary demand for opera by our audiences has made creation of this Summer Festival possible, and I know the people of the City are delighted to have you with us for such an important event.

The centerpiece of our Festival is its opening offering: the American premiere of Arribert Reimann's thrilling new *Lear*, in a fascinating production funded by the Carol Buck Sells Foundation and the San Francisco Opera Guild. This monumental undertaking continues the proud San Francisco tradition of musical discovery.

Our four other Festival operas present some of the outstanding productions in our repertoire, including *Don Giovanni* and *Rigoletto*, both thanks to generous gifts by James D. Robertson. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* was originally created as a memorial tribute by relatives and friends of the late Robert Watt Miller, highly esteemed president of the San Francisco Opera for a long time.

I do hope that you will enjoy our summer of beautiful music, and that you will be with the San Francisco Opera for many festivals and seasons in years to come.

Most sincerely,



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Editors: Thomas O'Connor, Arthur Kaplan • Art Director: Richard High • Editorial Assistant: Robert M. Robb

Cover: Pet Halmen's costume designs for *Lear* and the Fool in Aribert Reimann's *Lear*.

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LEAR/1981

FEATURES

Two Approaches to King Lear: Verdi and Reimann

by Gary Schmidgall 26

Verdi, who began planning a *Re Lear* in 1849, would have stressed the upward movement of the play; Reimann underscores the barrenness of evil and the alienation of the human being.

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle: *Lear* from Munich to San Francisco

by Arthur Kaplan 38

The world-renowned director-designer on staging Reimann's *Lear* at the Bavarian State Opera and in its American premiere.

Thomas Stewart: The Challenge of Lear

by Stephen Wadsworth 52

To come to grips with *Lear*, the internationally-celebrated baritone had to wrestle with the complexities of both Shakespeare's character and Reimann's score.

Shakespeare and the Lear Legend

by John C. Meagher 60

Though the tale of King Lear was widely known before Shakespeare wrote his masterpiece, his audience must have been stunned by its shattering transformation at the Bard's hands.



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FROM THE PRESIDENT

This summer marks an exciting period in the distinguished history of the San Francisco Opera. The inauguration of an International Summer Festival season has long been a dream of General Director Kurt Herbert Adler and our Company, and we are confident that this first season is the beginning of another great musical tradition in San Francisco.

Making opera virtually a year-round event here is a massive undertaking, but we are convinced that the benefits — both to visitors and to residents of the Bay Area — are well worth the difficulty and the high cost. The Summer Festival and all the manifold activities of the San Francisco Opera are made possible only because thousands of individuals join their generous support of the Company to that of businesses, foundations and local, state and federal government. Without these contributions, the San Francisco Opera would not be able to maintain ticket prices which are among the very lowest of the world's major opera companies.

If you are new to the San Francisco Opera, I hope you will consider helping the Company close the gap between ticket revenue and the soaring costs of production by making a

contribution to our fund drive. If you are already a member of the Opera family, perhaps you will bear in mind the tremendous additional financial demands placed upon the Company by the production of the Summer Festival.

The magnificent productions you will see in the Opera House this summer have been made possible through exceptionally generous sponsorships, either this year or in years past. Our new production of *Lear*, which is already acknowledged as one of the most ambitious undertakings in the history of American opera, is made possible by the Carol Buck Sells Foundation and by the San Francisco Opera Guild. Both *Don Giovanni* and *Rigoletto* were underwritten by generous gifts from James D. Robertson. And friends of the late Robert Watt Miller made possible our *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* as a memorial tribute to the man who served for many years as president of the San Francisco Opera Association.

Numerous organizations and individuals work to ensure the financial and artistic well-being of the San Francisco Opera. I would like to extend our continuing gratitude to the National Endowment for the Arts and



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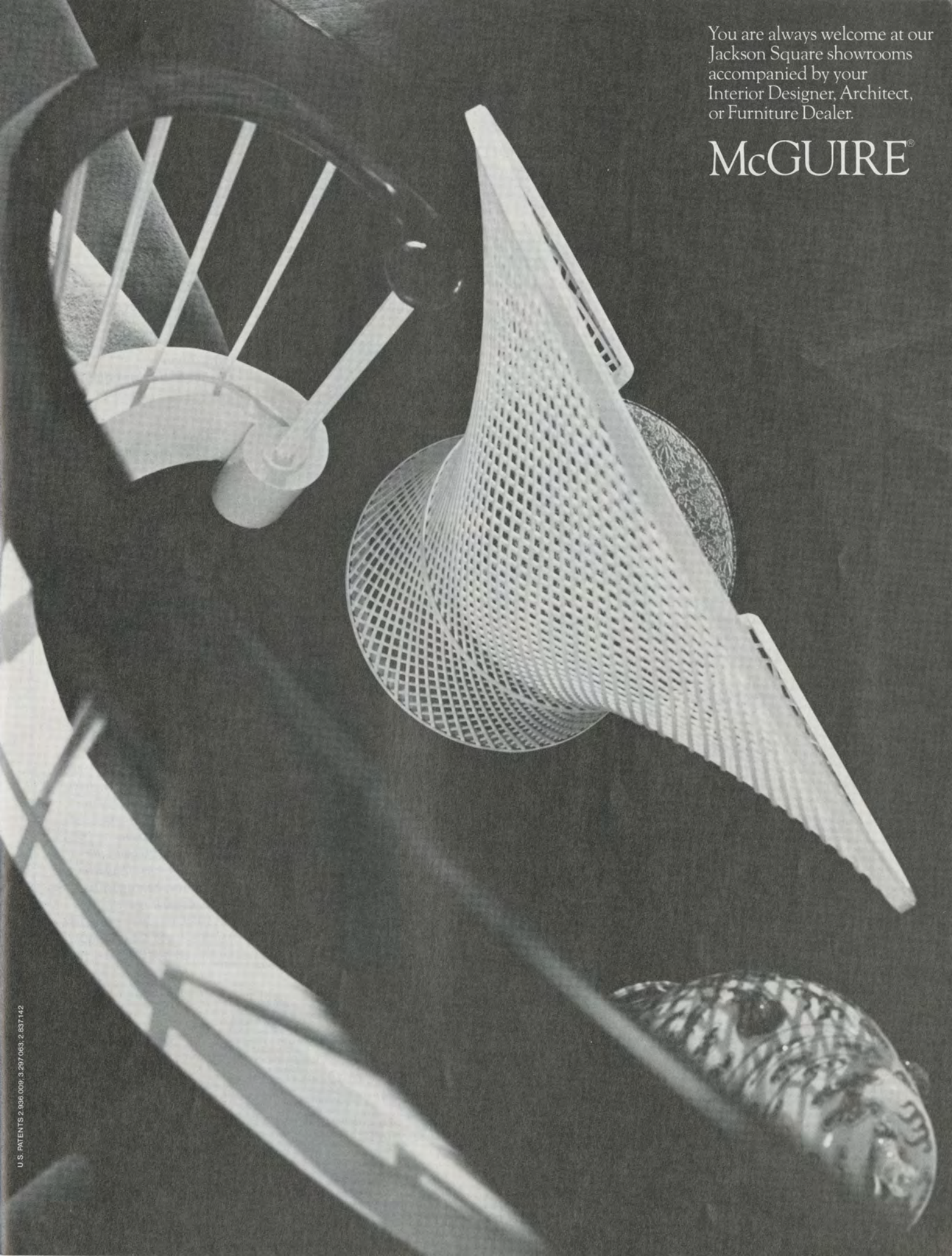
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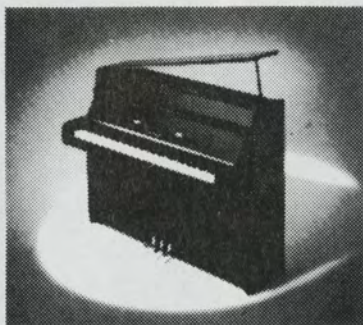
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Albrecht**/Ponnelle/Ponnelle-Halmen

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Mozart

Vaness, Cuberli*, South/Siepi, Taddei, Winbergh, Langan, Macurdy

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Wagner

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Rigoletto

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In Italian
Verdi

Wise*, Vergara*, Richards, Ganz/Boyagian (7/1, 5), Manuguerra* (7/8, 11, 14, 17), Dvorský*, Rydl, Gordon, Robbins*, Stapp, Glaum

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L'Incoronazione di Poppea

In Italian
Monteverdi

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PRELUDES

DAVID GOULD PHOTO



Kurt Herbert Adler accepts the Peabody Award from Dr. Fred Davison (far right), president of the University of Georgia, at ceremonies held at the Hotel Pierre in New York on May 6, 1981.



SFO Broadcasts Receive Peabody Award

The San Francisco's Opera's much-lauded national radio broadcasts have received a 1980 George Foster Peabody Award for excellence, the broadcasting industry's highest and most coveted honor. The award cited the "deeply appreciative and loyal audience" the broadcasts have developed nationwide over the last 10 years and "the high quality and diversity that have gone into them." General director Kurt Herbert Adler accepted the honor on behalf of the Company in May at ceremonies in New York, where only seven radio programs were selected for honor from a field of over 200 entries. The broadcasts have been produced by Marilyn Mercur and engineered by Fred Krock, and production has been made possible in part by grants from Chevron USA, and the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation of Oakland, with additional funds from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The Peabody Awards have been given annually since 1939 as the broadcasting industry's equivalent of the Pulitzer, and are administered by the Henry W. Grady School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia and by a National Advisory Board comprised of persons from across the country who

have achieved notable positions in public affairs. The Awards have always sought to foster excellence in broadcasting, and have emphasized quality and distinguished service over popularity and commercial success.

In honoring the San Francisco Opera, the Peabody Award paid particular tribute to the high technical quality of the broadcasts, and to the wide variety of intermission features heard along with the productions, including such analyses as the use of storms in opera, dramatizations of the lives of opera greats and round-table discussions with leading performers.

The Company's 1981 series of radio broadcasts, which will mark the second consecutive year of production in cooperation with station KQED-FM, will include parts of both the first International Summer Festival and the International Fall Season. The broadcasts will be carried throughout the United States on the member stations of National Public Radio, and can, for the first time, be heard in all parts of the country simultaneously. Via NPR's new Uplink Satellite, KQED-FM will transmit a taped stereo signal to stations throughout the country every Saturday at 11 A.M. Pacific time (2 P.M. Eastern, 1 P.M. Central and 12 Noon Mountain).

Lear Exhibit in Opera Museum

Devoted entirely to *Lear*, the 1981 Summer Festival exhibit in the Opera Museum features an exciting array of visual displays — from items relating to Shakespeare's play to photos of the set construction for Reimann's *Lear* in the Opera's scene shops. Special items include a rare, original 1608 Quarto edition of Shakespeare's *King Lear* (during *Lear* performances only), Pet Halmen's original costume sketches for the opera, two large models of the stage and beneath-the-stage machinery for the San Francisco Opera production of *Lear*, and a diorama showing actual elements of the "heath." Special contributors to the exhibit include the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., members of the faculty of the U.C. Berkeley School of Dramatic Arts, the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, and others.

In conjunction with the exhibit, the Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley will hold special screenings of two *King Lear* films. On June 16, the acclaimed 1971 Russian film by Grigori Kozintsev, adapted by Boris Pasternak with music by Dmitri Shostakovich, will be shown at 7:30; on June 18, the celebrated version by Peter Brook (1969) will be screened at 7:30. (The costume worn by Paul Scofield as Lear in this film will be a part of the exhibit.)

The Lear Exhibit has been organized and installed by Jeffrey Dufford, education coordinator of the San Francisco Opera. The Opera Museum, located in the south foyer, box level, is open free of charge during all performances.



M. William Shak-speare

HIS
Historie, of King Lear.

Enter Kent, Glosster, and Banard.

Kent.

Thought the King had more affected the Duke of Albany then Cornwall.

Gloster. I did allwaies seeme so to vs, but now in the division of the kingdomes, it appears not which of the Dukes he values most, for equalities are to be weighed, that curiostie in neither, can make choice of either moystie.

Kent. Is't this your sonne my Lord?

Gloster. His breeding fits him better at my charge, I haue so oft receau'd him to acknowledge him, that now I am brauz'd to it.

Kent. I cannot conceiue you.

Gloster. Sir, this young fellowes mother Couid, wherupon shee grew round wombed, and had indeed Sir a sonne for her cradle, ere she had a husband for her bed, doe you find it a fault?

Kent. I cannot with the fault vndone, the issue of it being proper.

Gloster. But I haue fit a Game by order of Law, some yeare elder then this, who vetis no deerer in my account, though this heate came something fauently into the world before hee was sent for, yet vs, at his mother faire, there was good sport at his making. So the wherefore must be acknowledged, do you knowe this noble gentleman Edmund?

B.

Edg.

THE FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

The first page of the 1608 quarto edition of *King Lear*, featured in the *Lear* museum exhibit.



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PRELUDES

Merchandising director Irma Zigas supervised the planning for the new San Francisco Opera Shop to open in June.



THOMAS O'CONNOR PHOTO

New SFO Shop Opens in June

The San Francisco Opera Shop opens on June 19 in a spacious new location, diagonally across Van Ness Avenue from the Opera House, at 199 Grove. It will be open daily except Sundays from 10 A.M. to curtain time on Opera performance days, till 6 P.M. on non-performance days.

The Opera Shop will also continue to operate in the Opera House before performances and during intermissions on the South Mezzanine level.

The new and greatly expanded shop is a haven for lovers of all the performing arts and has been designed by the architectural firm of Esherick Homsey Dodge and Davis to encourage leisurely browsing through a var-

ied collection of unique items for the performing arts enthusiast.

An extensive display of records and books features both popular and hard-to-find items, plus music magazines and publications from around the world. Libretti, piano-vocal and orchestral scores are available, as are such opera-going aids as opera glasses, libretto lights and cases for preserving programs and libretti. Custom-designed gift items, ranging from hand-screened scarves to crystal, paintings, stationery and even T-shirts, put the Opera Shop high atop any selective gift buyer's list of shopping spots.

Merchandising director Irma Zigas has come up with two popular innovations for the new Shop: an espresso bar to enhance the delight of browsing, and a gallery area that will feature exhibits of graphic and photographic works relative to the arts, especially opera. Historic performance memorabilia will also be on display, some of it available for purchase in a special collectors' corner.

A staff of volunteers will assist director Zigas and her staff associate, Meigs Ingham, in the San Francisco Opera's newest and most ambitious merchandising effort, all profits from which will directly benefit the Company.

Adler Conducts L.A. Master Chorale

Maestro Kurt Herbert Adler led the Los Angeles Master Chorale in an evening of operatic excerpts at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion on Sunday, April 26. The challenging program included music from Mozart's *Idomeneo* (1781) to Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1966). Among popular favorites were the Prisoner's Chorus from Beethoven's *Fidelio*, the Monastery Scene from Verdi's *La Forza del Destino*, excerpts from Act III of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* and the Habañera and the Cigarette Chorus from Bizet's *Carmen*. Adler will conduct the last two works during San Francisco Opera's first Summer Festival and the 1981 International Fall Season, respectively. Less familiar selections included two choral excerpts from Howard Hanson's *Merry Mount*, the hymn from Mascagni's *Iris* and the final scene from Britten's *Peter Grimes*. "Va, pensiero," the lament of the Hebrews from Verdi's *Nabucco*, was sung as an encore. Soloists in the program were Marvellee Cariaga, Jonathan Mack and San Francisco Opera Affiliate Artist Gregory Stapp.



LOS ANGELES TIMES PHOTO

Maestro Kurt Herbert Adler conducting the Los Angeles Master Chorale in a concert of opera excerpts.



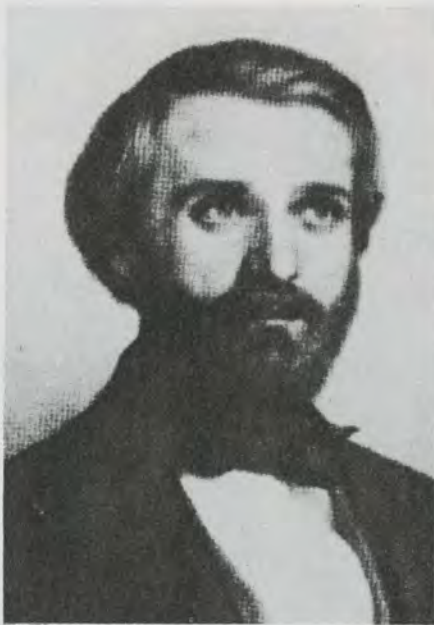
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Giuseppe Verdi

By GARY SCHMIDGALL

King Lear is a frightening play. During the Restoration it frightened Nahum Tate into writing a happy ending in which Edgar marries Cordelia while Lear, Gloucester and Kent retire peacefully to the country; this version held the English stage for 125 years! *Lear* frightened crusty Samuel Johnson so much that he could never bear to reread its last scenes until he was, as Shakespeare's first editor, forced to do so. In the 19th century it frightened Charles Lamb into saying that it was "too large" for the actual stage and could only be consummately appreciated in the imagination of the arm-chair reader. As is well known, the play frightened Verdi, who began planning a *Re Lear* in 1849 and yet left it undone at his death over 50 years later. Benjamin Britten was drawn to the work in the 1960s, but he, too, for unknown reasons, turned away from the challenge at the draft-libretto stage.

Aribert Reimann, however, was not frightened by the challenge of translating *King Lear* into music. Verdi often complained that he could not find the right singers for the venture; this was not Reimann's problem. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, the pre-eminent German baritone, is in fact acknowledged in the score as the source of the composer's "initiative and courage" to try scaling this dramatic Everest. Fischer-Dieskau's offer to assume the title role proved irresistible to Reimann, and so in 1978 (when he was 42), *Lear*, an "opera in two parts after Shakespeare," received its Munich premiere.

My approach to this work may at first seem paradoxical: I will look at

Two Approaches to Lear

VERDI AND REIMANN

Verdi, who began planning a *Re Lear* in 1849, would have stressed the upward movement of the play; Reimann underscores the barrenness of evil and the alienation of the human being.

this *Lear* opera that *was* written from the perspective of that most famous work in the might-have-been repertory, the Verdian *Re Lear* that never materialized. In addition to introducing San Francisco audiences to the style of the Claus H. Henneberg libretto and the Reimann musical ethos, the following discussion will also reflect the unique and separate splendors of the 19th-century and the 20th-century operatic idioms. The Verdian *Lear* would have differed utterly from the Reimann *Lear*, and thereby hangs a tale.

Verdi left scattered comments on *Lear* in letters and in a thoughtful and thought-provoking synopsis of the action made for his first librettist on the project, Salvatore Cammarano. A full-length libretto made by his second collaborator, Antonio Somma, was recently made available to the Verdi Institute by the Verdi family; Verdi himself made a verbatim "working copy" of this document, which deserves careful attention not pertinent here. For present purposes the earlier synopsis suffices to show the essential contours that Verdi had in mind. As one might expect, he gravitates toward passages suitable for set-pieces: Lear's swearing vengeance upon his daughters; a "magnificent quarter" for Lear, Edgar, Kent and the Fool on the heath; a "mad scene" for Lear; a duet for Cordelia and Lear at the end; and a finale "in which Lear must lead." Verdi envisioned five principals (Lear "a big baritone," a Cordelia "not necessarily with a big voice, but deep feeling," a "very good contralto" Fool, Edgar, and Edmund) and four comprimario roles (Goneril, Regan, Kent and Gloucester).

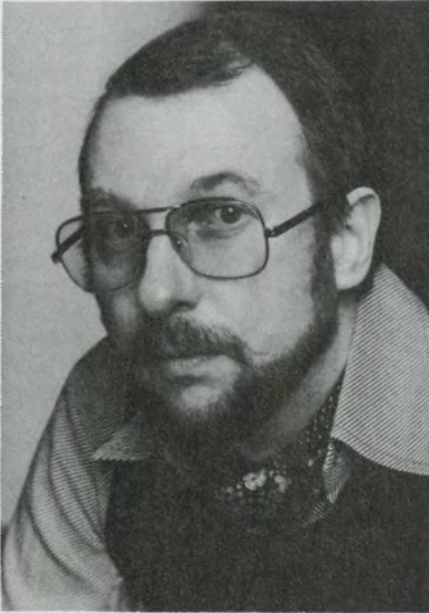
It is fascinating to speculate on *Lear's* attractions for Verdi. The most obvious needs no elaboration: Verdi

was steeped in the work of what he called "a master of the human heart." When Parisian critics suggested that his revised *Macbeth* opera showed a lack of feeling for Shakespeare, the composer bristled: "That I do not know, do not understand and feel Shakespeare, no, by heavens, no! He is one of my very special poets, and I have had him in my hands from my earliest youth, and I read and reread him continually." Verdi must have sensed (as Verdi scholars have also sensed) that his first Shakespearean opera represented the first full-fledged ascent of the "Verdi style." He must have been pleased with the artistic effects of his *Macbeth* and doubtless began to cast about for another likely subject. The relative completeness of his *Lear* scenario suggests that he gave it much thought between the date of the *Macbeth* premiere (March 14, 1847) and the date (February 28, 1850) he sent his ideas to Cammarano.

Verdi's *Lear* would have differed utterly from Reimann's.

King Lear might also have attracted Verdi for a number of conventional reasons. Next to *Macbeth*, it is the shortest of the great tragedies. Verdi, willing to excise the blinding of Gloucester and the cliff scene and willing to shrink the machinations of Edmund, Goneril and Regan, perhaps thought the violence of operatic compression could be successfully borne. He must also have sensed that the pattern of malediction — distress — explanation — reconciliation/despair that was so common in early 19th-century Italian opera was archetypically reflected in *King Lear*.

SABINE TOEPFFER PHOTO



Aribert Reimann

Other aspects of the play may have appealed to Verdi's psychological and artistic sensibilities. The kind of heroine Cordelia represents was particularly fascinating to Verdi. Gerald Mendelsohn, a professor of psychology at Berkeley, has argued that the Verdi heroines of the middle period "are . . . essentially innocents who are corrupted or destroyed by the world, a world ruled by the passions of men and the inflexible order created by men." This is certainly true of Luisa Miller, the heroine of the opera Verdi was composing when he first began planning *Re Lear*. Mendelsohn writes, "Luisa, like almost every succeeding heroine, is the victim of the machinations, irrationalities, and needs of men." Cordelia would have been precisely such a victim.

Another theme supremely evident in Shakespeare's play proved rich for Verdi in his middle period — the relationship between father and child. Macduff's heartfelt aria on his murdered children in *Macbeth* is an inkling of the powerful interactions of father and child to follow in *Luisa Miller* (1849), *Rigoletto* (1851), *La Traviata* (1853) and *Simon Boccanegra* (1857). The final scene of *Lear* as Verdi envisioned it is almost exactly paralleled by *Rigoletto's* discovery of his dying Gilda. And not a few Verdians suspect that the poignant reunion of father and daughter in *Boccanegra* grew from Verdi's thinking about *King Lear*. Perhaps Cordelia and Amelia are related by more than a similarity of sound.

Verdi was obviously moved by the filial theme in the play. In both the first and a revised synopsis he made a point of quoting *Lear's* curse upon

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CAROLYN MASON JONES PHOTO

Peter Glossop and Reri Grist in the 1966 production of *Rigoletto*.

Goneril and Regan, and among the five "highlights" that Verdi himself enumerated are Cordelia's farewell in the first scene and the reunion duet.

Finally, one might add that, with characters like Nabucco and Macbeth, Verdi created almost singlehandedly the vocal category of the heroic baritone. It was a vocal range and timbre that he gloried in, and he was perhaps excited by the idea of writing the role of Shakespeare's tragic father/king for "a big baritone."

We will never be certain why Verdi's hopes were not realized. Verdi is said by the composer Mascagni to have told him, in the vein of Charles Lamb: "The scene when King Lear finds himself on the heath terrified me." Vincent Godefroy comments wittily on this excuse: "This really savors of the secure romancing of an octogenarian lion couchant and regardant." Most likely, there was a combination of reasons: the lack of appropriate singers (in his Shakespearean operas Verdi's preoccupation with theatrical as opposed to musical effectiveness was particularly keen) and the

Verdi was obviously moved by the filial theme in the play.

manifest inexperience of his new librettist, Antonio Somma. Perhaps time and effort began to weigh on the composer. He may have relaxed into the better part of discretion, the "too cold breath" of fussing over the libretto finally cooling his musical imagination. Or perhaps, as Verdi grew from the fatherly to the grandfatherly age, and as the vicissitudes of his childless liaison and eventual marriage to Giuseppina Strepponi began



Katia Ricciarelli and Louis Quilico in the 1974 production of *Luisa Miller*.

to occupy him, the themes of *King Lear* loosened their hold on the imagination. A play centering on the painful and fatal folly of old age — not the witty folly of a Falstaff — may have become increasingly less attractive to Verdi.

Even after Verdi had gained his reputation and a measure of artistic power, he was ever and rightly fearful that the premieres of his operas would be compromised by managerial crassness and the half-efforts or worse of singers and musicians. Reimann was more fortunate. His premiere occurred under festival conditions, with a baritone of great expressiveness in the title role. The production was conceived by one of the most resourceful designer/directors now active, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. The assumption of all the other roles, the conducting and the orchestral playing were manifestly excellent, as a complete recording made toward the end of the second sequence of performances clearly shows. The reaction of the Munich public was described by one reviewer as "outspokenly, almost stormily positive." What is the work like, in its libretto and in its music? How does it reflect Shakespeare's play?

A short explanatory note by Reimann's librettist, Claus H. Henneberg, contains two interesting remarks. The first one might expect: "Transforming a Shakespearean play into an opera libretto requires reduction, tightening and lyric-dramatic intensification. I have cut from Shakespeare's text what the music can express." I will return to this point.

More intriguing is Henneberg's comment that he found the courage to make a German version of *King Lear* when he came upon a copy of the first German translation of the play by Johann Eschenburg (1777). To Hen-

neberg this translation seemed "on the whole harder, more clear, and more theatrical" than its better-known 19th-century successors. Rather unpropitious epithets of praise, one might think, for Shakespeare's rich banquet of words. *Hardness* and *clarity* do not seem to fit one's memory of the play's great moments, and today the word *theatrical* has the disconcerting connotation of streamlining and "less is more," which is un-Shakespearean. Likewise inauspicious: Eschenburg's was a *prose* translation.

One can attest that Henneberg's libretto is indeed hard and clear. It is also (I think intentionally) colorless and in some important ways empty — colorless and empty rather after the fashion in which Peter Brook rendered the visual world of his cinematic *Lear* a barren black-and-white. The first of three general aspects of the play that Henneberg chose not to translate into musical form, then, is the "poetry." There is, of course, no question of retaining all or even most of Shakespeare's memorable lines as the original 3,300 lines are compressed into about 1,200. Also, some of the most wonderful passages, lines and phrases are embedded in scenes that could not reasonably be retained in a musical version. Even then, with a kind of music quite apart from the word-music of Shakespeare's poetry ringing in his ear, Henneberg shows a systematic tendency to sharpen and shorten by de-poeticizing. Here are a few brief examples of what I mean; in each case my own literal translation of the Ger-



Margaret Price and Renato Bruson in the 1980 production of *Simon Boccanegra*.



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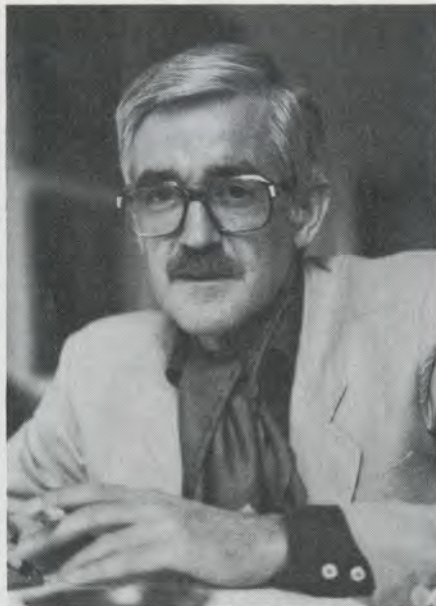


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PAUL LECLAIRE PHOTO

Lear librettist Claus H. Henneberg.

man libretto is preceded by the Shakespearean original:

A. "Peace, Kent! / Come not between the Dragon and his wrath."

"Kent, step not between her and me."

B. "Out, vile jelly! / Where is thy luster now?"

"Out with it!"

C. "I am bound / Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears / Do scald like molten lead."

"But I am bound upon a wheel of fire."

The libretto shows a careful and conscious desire to excise metaphorical phrasing, filter out abstract concepts, remove adjectival qualifiers, and shorten the full play of Shakespeare's train of imagistic thought. Lear's "great stage of fools" becomes just "this stage of fools" (which is odd, since this line is one of the opera's three Shakespearean epigraphs). In the interest of hardness and clarity Henneberg, one feels, sometimes risks an untheatrical flatness more worthy of Beckett than Shakespeare. The San Francisco audience will be hearing the opera in an English translation. It will be fascinating to observe how translator Desmond Clayton copes with the differences between his text and the Shakespearean original.

A second general aspect of the original was also not of primary concern to the librettist, the drama's play of ideas and philosophical abstractions. The play's tremendous over-meaning is not conveyed in the text: there is no higher order (however indifferent); there is little concern to evoke abstract concepts like fellowship, friendship, justice, authority, service or fault. Many of Shakespeare's resonatingly significant phrases are not part of the

Reimann opera ("I did her wrong"; "O! reason not the need"; "filial ingratitude"; "take physic, Pomp"; "Would I were assur'd / Of my condition!").

In Henneberg's defense, we must recall his expressed intention to cut away from the original what music can express. He realized that music cannot express ideas — and especially the dizzying criss-cross of ideas that Shakespeare created in his play. Thus, the "great image" of authority and many of the play's social themes are played down. This is why Kent appears in such a diminished form in the opera or why that wonderful servant who says to Cornwall in the play —

Hold your hand, my Lord.

I have serv'd you since I was a child,

But better service have I never done you

Than now to bid you hold. — is permitted in the opera to say only "Halt, Duke!" (leaving the audience utterly mystified).

The third and last general characteristic of Shakespearean drama that inevitably suffered a sea-change for operatic treatment was the interplay of themes and images. As a teacher of Shakespeare, I was, on listening to the opera, struck by the absence of a number of themes essential to an experience of Lear's tragedy: themes of blindness, kneeling, weeping, revenge, inner and outer storm, clothing, bestiality, and so forth. Henneberg and Reimann could quite rightly retort that any attempt to use all of the playwright's riches would be indigestible and that a sensitive stage director could bring many of these themes to life even if they are not actually in the text.

Henneberg's libretto is hard and clear.

If the preceding comments sound like the carpings of a pedantic Shakespearean, it is because I have been talking about words, values and concepts apart from the music. When we turn to Reimann's music the full power of this opera's achievement and something of its limitations become more apparent. The reviewer for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (July 12, 1978) was generally pleased with the world premiere of *Lear* in Munich, but he makes this important qualification: "Though Reimann possesses little vocabulary for the maturing process that Lear must undergo — ripeness is all — he still manages never to fail in the labyrinth of evil insinuations,

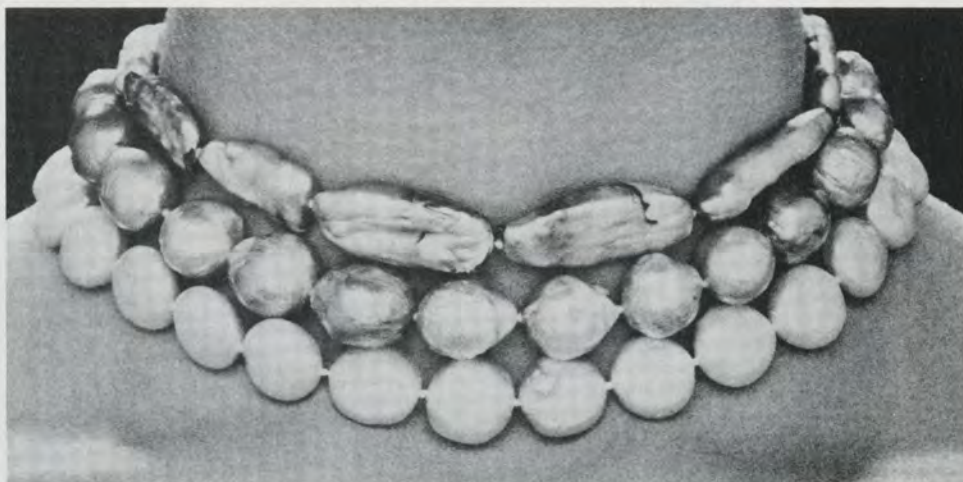


Desmond Clayton, responsible for the English translation of the *Lear* libretto.

hideous injustice and acts of brutality." Here, in brief, is Reimann's forte: the power to express the barrenness of evil and the alienation of the human being, not the power to grow and to love.

Reimann's opera is worthy of Shakespeare's play in its evocation of humanity and civilization left "darkling." Its music powerfully enlivens those phrases cast throughout the play that are suggestive of entropy and chaos: nature on the "very verge" of her confines; "this tough world"; "this dreadful pudder"; "this great decay." The composer has accomplished by aural means what Brook achieved visually in his film with those vast, blank, barren spaces. The very amorphousness of Reimann's music is suggestive of the movement from form to formlessness, order to anarchy, life to death, which is part of the play's structure. The composer brilliantly conveys the imponderable atmospherics of pessimism. The Fool's image of a "great wheel" thundering recklessly downhill is an appropriate image for Reimann's music. In fact, he tells us that a preceding composition, a "Variations for Orchestra," could stand as a prelude to his *Lear* because it expresses "the isolation of humanity in complete solitariness, the brutality and dubious quality of life."

That is one possible way to read the play, but it is not the only one. One cannot help feel that Verdi would have focused his opera more upon the "maturing process" that the Zurich reviewer found missing in Reimann. Lear's irrational renunciation of love followed by the gradual growth of his power to love again were clearly the principal elements of Verdi's plans. In his opera he was after the effect of a



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A scene from the Peter Brook film version of *King Lear* (1969), which, like Reimann's *Lear*, emphasizes the harsh, barren nature of Lear's world.

paradise regained (but too late); there is very little of paradise in Reimann's view of Lear. He passes over that one last moment of repose and joy ("Come let's away to prison") in the last scene without the slightest lyricism and a heavy dirge rhythm. One imagines that Verdi's *Re Lear* would have succeeded in the Romantic, idealistic, upward-thrusting vein. Reimann's *Lear*, on the other hand, seems to take life from the Shakespearean (and Hobbesian) notion of humanity preying upon itself "like monsters of the deep." This is a very dark view of the play; the light of Cordelia's goodness flickers in it faintly.

Reimann achieves his terrifying effects through techniques introduced by Richard Strauss, Arnold Schoenberg and Alban Berg: intricate formalistic patterning, the marshalling of tone rows and tone clusters, extreme variation in sound mass, extreme variation of vocal utterance from spoken word to coloratura, a tendency of the orchestra to sound in separate string, brass/wind, and percussion groups, and a willingness to forego all metrical organization. The two primary elements of the Verdian style, emphatic rhythm and melody, are abandoned by Reimann.

Reimann's vocal line (exemplified in Edmund's monologue "Why bastard?" for instance) is angular, often more declaimed than sung. Voice and orchestra seldom parallel each other, and in important passages the music tends to act as punctuation between phrases. It does not support and "lift" emotional gestures as with Verdi, but rather surrounds and pervades them. The Reimann style is epitomized in the storm scene, notable for the alternation of vocal and orchestral comment, the frequently present dirge pulse, and a tendency to set important phrases to a single note that is simply reiterated.


Reimann brilliantly conveys the imponderable atmosphere of pessimism.

Reimann makes a few concessions to "number" opera: a brief octet at the end of the abdication scene; a trio for Kent, Edgar and Lear on the heath; and an eerily static duet for Cordelia and Lear near the end of the opera. There is also an interesting "oath" duet for Goneril and Regan (distantly related to Verdi's vengeance duet for Iago and Otello) that shows

off their vocal character. Reimann describes Goneril as "drawn into wide interval leaps" and Regan as tending toward "nervous melismas, bits of coloratura, appoggiaturas, hysterical, always extreme."

One might summarize Reimann's musical ethos as relying upon an undifferentiated mass of string sound arranged into tone clusters rather than chords. At some points every one of the composer's 48 string players has his or her own stave in the orchestral score; sometimes they simultaneously sound every note in the gamut; sometimes (at the opening, for instance) they are instructed to maintain a droning tone cluster. All this helps to evoke the primordial randomness of Lear's world. On the other hand, the exertions of the ego, id and superego that play against this sound mass are usually reflected in the woodwind, brass and percussion sections, sounding in unpredictable, nervous, skittering outbursts. The frenzied chaos of the first orchestral interlude shows this off breathtakingly.


The compositional techniques of the Second Viennese School, so abundant in the score of *Lear*, require enormous labor. The composer must spend great energy rationalizing and



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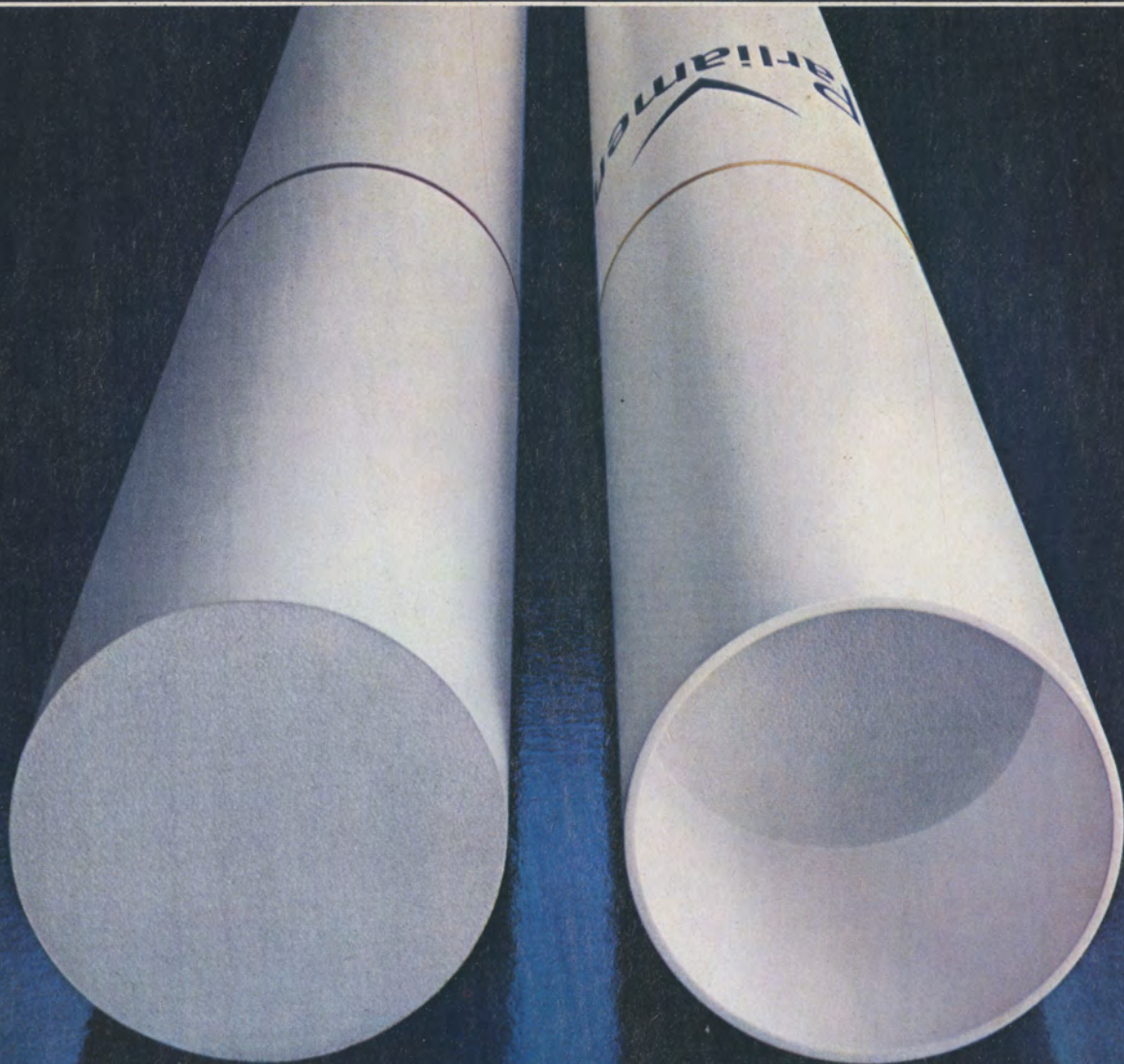


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William Blake's "Lear and Cordelia in Prison," a scene that might have been included in Verdi's *Re Lear*.

relating the various formal devices imposed by the tone-row system; he spends most of his time not on the Verdian level of scene-length structuring or vast key-relation designs, but on the level of musical micro-incidents. Those who are not friendly to tone-row-oriented music will perhaps find appropriate justice in the hellish agony Reimann suffered as he wrote the storm scene: "Three weeks I lived in this chaos. At nights I always found myself in this vortex of sound; musical figures and harmonies expanded beyond their normal dimensions, turned into abstract forms, which tormented, menaced, surrounded and crushed me."

Reimann's sense of the play as a unified and oppressive world-view perhaps forced him to avoid any striking differentiation in vocal characterization or in the musical personality of the various scenes in which the work takes place. Reimann's casting of voices shows this: three sets of characters show a lack of differentiation of sound or vocal personality: Lear and Gloucester (baritone and bass-baritone); Edmund and Edgar (tenor and counter-tenor); Goneril, Regan, Cordelia (dramatic soprano, soprano, soprano). In each case the similarity of vocal category makes it difficult to establish some very important distinctions — most obviously, the far greater charisma of Lear in comparison with Gloucester and the truly lyric sweetness one might have expected to distinguish Cordelia from her sisters. In any case, the vocal lines for the three

sisters are, on paper, indistinguishable from each other.

That Reimann cast the Fool as a speaking role raises an interesting question. Verdi, you will recall, envisioned a contralto in the role. Both composers saw the Fool as a radically independent member of the cast. This was perceptive, for the Fool, though not a creature of a different order, is certainly the best combination of wisdom and observation and tact in the play. He is as astute as Kent, but with one crucial difference — he does not participate in the moral scheme of the play. He says what is true, but does not act upon his sense of the truth. (Henneberg cleverly has his Fool aware of Edmund's subplot all along.) Lear's world is far too "mad" to be upset by the truth of a jester. The Fool might as well be a Martian, for all the good he does. Reimann ingeniously distinguishes his cerebral Fool from everyone else on stage by giving him

The music evokes the primordial randomness of Lear's world.

throughout that most cerebral of musical accompaniments, the solo string quartet.

Reimann was also not interested in achieving in his opera any sense of variety in locale. In the second part, for example, scenes 2 (Albany's palace) and 3 (a camp near Dover)

occur simultaneously on stage. The moods of these two scenes present a fine dramatic contrast, but the music underlying them does not. There is rather a terrible unity of effect in Reimann's *Lear*: Lear's *whole world* is inclement, darksome and isolating. The music, whether noisily frantic or eerily calm, seems always to be oppressively aloof and unpredictable.

Shakespeare's play exists in part for its grand poetic and philosophical gestures. These did not interest Henneberg and Reimann; their real interest and power lay in the expression of the effects of decomposition and negation that are undeniably a part of the play. As one might expect, Reimann's setting of Lear's five annihilating "never"s in the last scene is transfixing. Reimann's style — which runs along the continuum from static, unmeasured calm to a frenetic anarchy of sound — is not the kind of style that could rest on the great lines of Shakespeare that propel the upward movement in the play (Lear finding his "true need" is to love Cordelia). I find it easy to imagine Verdi doing that. Reimann's style, however, allowed him to fall into the primordial human abyss *between* Shakespeare's lines, and he has proved with *Lear* that a powerful stage work lay in that abyss. Verdi, for all his genius, could not have done that. ■

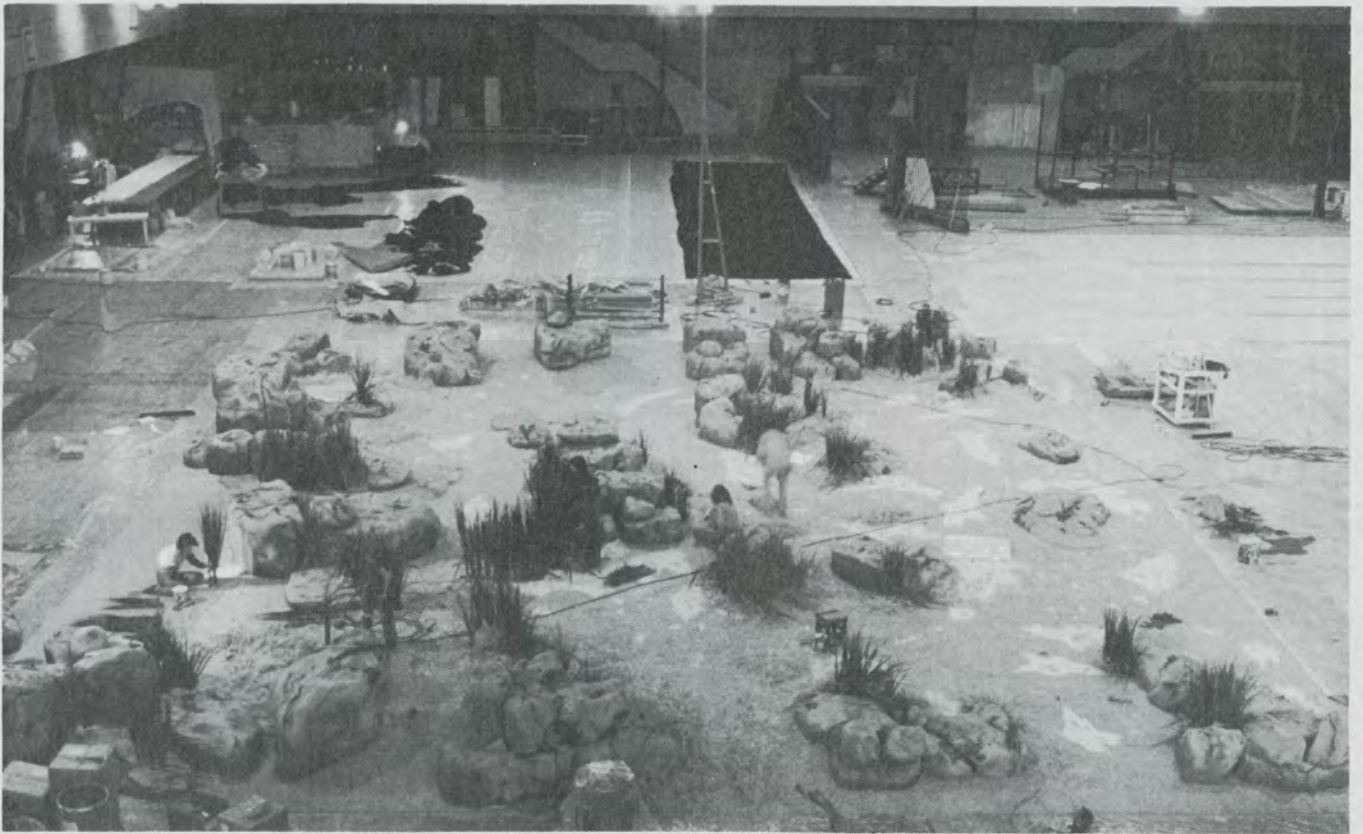
GARY SCHMIDGALL teaches at the University of Pennsylvania and is the author of *Literature as Opera* and *Shakespeare and the Courty Aesthetic*.

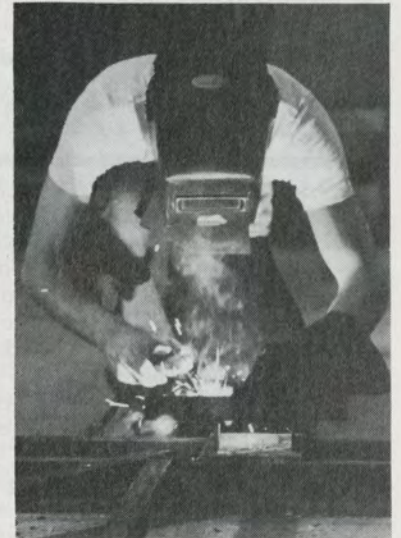
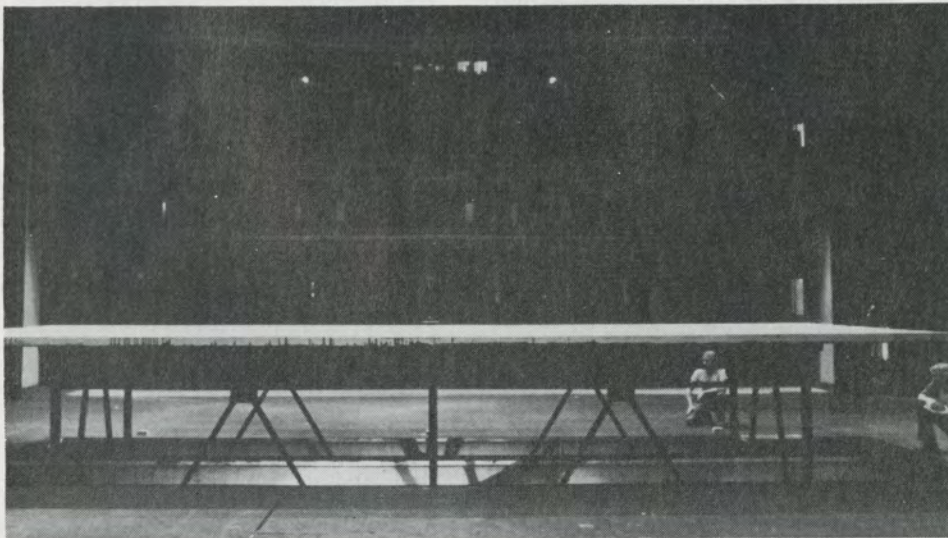
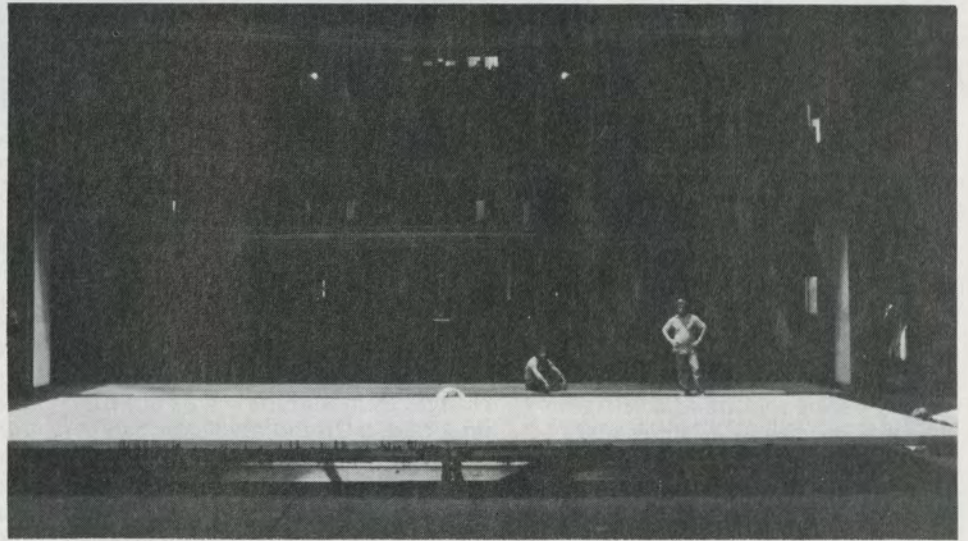
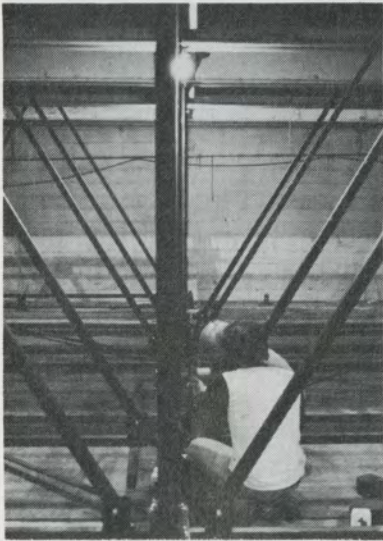
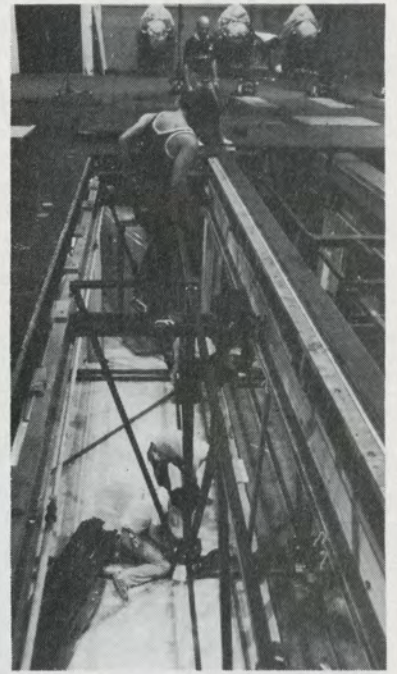
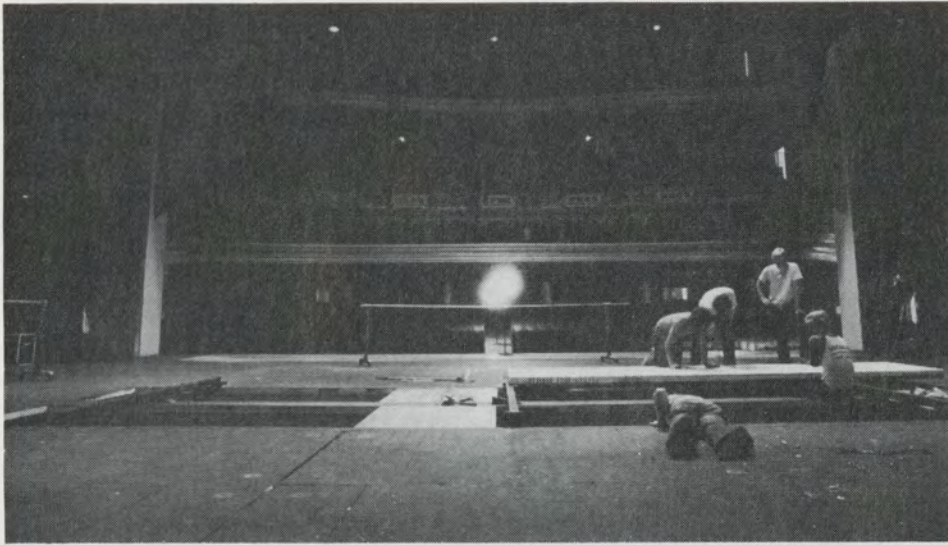
BUILDING LEAR'S "BLASTED HEATH"

PHOTOS BY RON SCHERL

"The greatest technical challenge the San Francisco Opera has ever faced," is how the Company's veteran technical director, John Priest, describes the monumental task of building *Lear* for its American premiere at the War Memorial Opera House.

Photographer Ron Scherl went onto and underneath the Opera House's stage to document one aspect of the *Lear* production audiences will not see, the exceptionally complex machinery that raises and lowers various pieces of the huge setting. In San Francisco's Mission District, Scherl also captured elements of the massive *Lear* set under construction at the Opera's Armory set shop. The construction site was not inappropriate, since a small army of expert builders and painters was enlisted to create Lear's "blasted heath."





JEAN-PIERRE PONNELLE:

Lear from Munich to San Francisco

By ARTHUR KAPLAN

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle stands on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House examining three contiguous, proscenium-wide floor sections that will serve as the principal arenas of action for the American premiere of Aribert Reimann's *Lear*. Each section is independently moveable and consists of a 12-foot by 32-foot central piece and two 16-foot hinged wings that can be tilted by a system of counter-weighted batten sets to form various angles to the flat central area. In the course of the opera's 11 scenes, the sections will be mechanically maneuvered to form playing levels at differing heights, dependent on Ponnelle's requirements for the dramatic action. It now remains only to check how swiftly, efficiently and noiselessly the platforms can be raised or lowered for the desired changes.

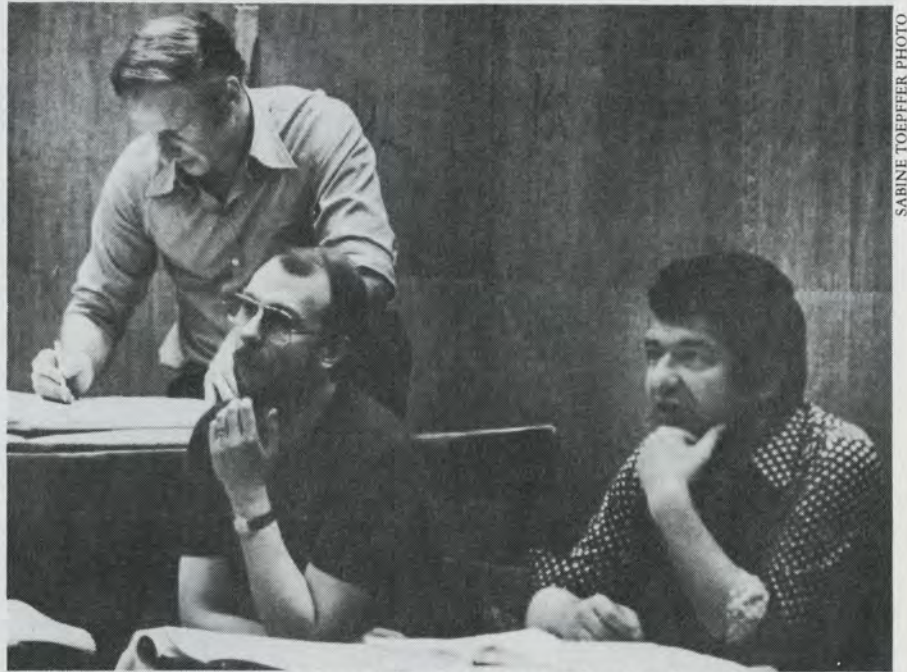
The construction of such an elaborate stage set, essential to the director-designer's scenic realization of the opera, took over a year to plan, months to build and weeks to assemble. The Nationaltheater in Munich, where *Lear* had its world premiere, was completely rebuilt after the war; its stage can be raised or lowered hydraulically as a whole or in sections. The War Memorial stage in its pre-*Lear* days had no practical stage mechanism other than the kind of traps available at the rebirth of the Western theater during the late Middle Ages. The new mechanical facilities make the Opera House stage considerably more versatile and will no doubt serve, in part at least, for other productions long after *Lear* completes its run during the first San Francisco Opera Summer Festival season.

"In reviving a work, you don't aim for exact imitation."

Surveying the sections, Ponnelle nods his approval, noting the effort and skill with which technical director John Priest and his staff have accomplished what some predicted would be impossible to achieve. Once the sections of ground cloth, with the rocks and reeds of Lear's "blasted heath," are set in place, the entire production can move from rehearsals in the Armory to the Opera House and begin the count-down to the June 12 opening.

The physical production for *Lear*, adapted by Ponnelle from his staging

The world-renowned director-designer on staging Reimann's *Lear* at the Bavarian State Opera and in its American premiere.



Ponnelle in collaboration with composer Aribert Reimann (seated) and conductor Gerd Albrecht (standing) during rehearsals for the 1978 world premiere of *Lear* in Munich.

SABINE TOEFFER PHOTO

of the work at the Bavarian State Opera, has required relatively few alterations since it first dazzled audiences at the world premiere on July 9, 1978. "If everything works as it should," Ponnelle says hopefully, "the changes from Munich will be of little importance. On the whole, the San Francisco *Lear* will be a production equal in value to the one in Munich.

"It's the second time I'm reviving the work, and as with anything you bring back, you don't aim for an exact imitation. You try to be more searching in your understanding and interpretation. So in a certain sense, the San Francisco production will be deeper, and therefore better than the one in Munich, which was already pretty good. It will go more deeply into psychological detail, into the relationships between characters. At the same time, there will be simplification, a cutting back of certain things where the essence of the action ran the risk of getting lost in an overabundance of detail."

How did the *Lear* project originate and when did Ponnelle become involved in it? As Reimann himself tells it [see "Thoughts on *Lear*", page 58], the initial spark came from the opera's first protagonist, noted Ger-

man baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. August Everding, then director of the Hamburg State Opera, asked Reimann to write an opera on *Lear*. "When he was named *Intendant* at Munich," recalls Ponnelle, "he packed the *Lear* project into his bags and offered it to Munich. It was always conceived of as a team effort, and from the moment I was asked to stage the work, that is, almost from the beginning, I was in fairly close contact with Reimann.

"If I remember correctly, Reimann and I had two or three preliminary meetings. Before he had written certain scenes we had a chance to discuss various matters, especially from the dramaturgical point of view, since the libretto wasn't completely finished. But there was no real collaboration between us while he was composing."

Ponnelle is among the few contemporary directors completely conversant in matters musical. He saw a photocopy of the *Lear* score for the first time at one of those early meetings with Reimann in Vienna and worked with the composer on it for several hours, although it was still a draft and not fully elaborated. "Reimann explained his score to me and I immediately began to form my con-

cepts for the scenic interpretation of the work. It's much easier to work on a complex contemporary piece directly from the orchestral score, where I can imagine the sonorities, rather than from a piano reduction. Piano sonorities have nothing to do with orchestral sonorities. In any case, there was no piano reduction at the time, and since *Lear* is not primarily a melodic work, it would have made no sense to listen to it on the piano. I learned the work by heart before the premiere and can still see the score before my eyes; I'm still swimming in those sonorities. The only problem with the orchestral score is that it's huge and very uncomfortable to carry around, even to turn the pages. So it's more practical to use the piano reduction. [A special stand had to be constructed to accommodate the score.]

"It's a very clear, very limpid score," Ponnelle continues, "despite the complexity of the music. It wasn't any more difficult for me to read than a Czerny étude, for example. On first viewing, the score may look complex — and it *is* — but it is not complicated."

Members of the *Lear* cast might take exception to that statement on purely vocal grounds. During rehearsal breaks they can be seen poring over their scores frequently and consulting with conductor Gerd Albrecht, prompter Susan Webb or one of the four rehearsal pianists (two play at each piano rehearsal — one the orchestral reduction, the other the voice parts — and occasionally alternate from rehearsal to rehearsal). There is a tremendous sense of cooperation and *esprit de corps* in the entire *Lear* effort. One senses an almost palpable intensity of concentration in rehearsal, befitting both the character of the drama and its staging, and the difficulty of the music. Instead

"You have to forget Shakespeare and base your entire concept on the music."

of the traditional "marking" usually employed by singers in rehearsal to save their voices, the cast sings full out despite the demanding nature of the music because, as one of them stated, "it would be impossible to achieve the necessary tension otherwise."

Albrecht insists on increasing the level of that tension, calling for more forceful delivery of the text and music. "If you don't make that stronger," he tells one singer, "I'll eat you with the trombones." He later explains that *Lear* requires an orchestra pit even larger than the one for *Die Frau ohne*

Schatten because of the huge percussion section. Albrecht often serves as a one-man orchestra during the piano rehearsals, producing an amazing variety of buzzing, banging and booming noises to simulate the more important dramatic effects in the orchestral accompaniment.

"There are two kinds of difficulties for the singers," Ponnelle says sympathetically. "First, the rhythm changes every measure and it's especially hard for the singers to recognize their vocal line independent of the orchestra without being forced to count all the time. Second, the pitch is hard to grab onto when a singer has to attack his or her next musical line because the sonorities are extremely

although he has never staged the work. And he has directed the two great Shakespeare-inspired operas by Verdi, *Otello* in San Francisco and *Falstaff* at Glydenbourne.

"You have to forget Shakespeare and base your entire dramaturgical and visual concept on the music, when you're dealing with opera. Having accepted the invitation to stage Reimann's opera, the guiding factor was Reimann's music. It's both reactionary and contemporary — reactionary in the sense that Reimann refused to falsify or to 'modernize' Shakespeare. He tried to be completely faithful to Shakespeare's dramaturgy, but in a musical vocabulary that is extremely modern and contemporary.



Ponnelle in rehearsal with Helga Dernesch (left) as Goneril and Rita Shane (right) as Regan.

dense. They have difficulty hearing the clarinet play the 'mi' or the 'fa' they have to sing because the clarinet sound is completely enmeshed in a tone cluster." Prompter Webb will use a special electronic keyboard — louder and easier to play than the usual pitchpipe — to give important key cues.

Ponnelle feels that in an English-speaking country, *Lear* should be given in English. "The only problem is to what extent does one utilize Shakespeare's original text and where does one adopt the late 18th-century prose translation that Henneberg used in writing the libretto. The translator also had to choose between Shakespearean language and modern English, not to mention the fact that he had to remain faithful to rhythms in the score written to a German text. I think Clayton did a remarkable job."

Ponnelle has directed several of Shakespeare's plays in the legitimate theater, including *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Twelfth Night*. He even designed two different productions of *King Lear*,

"That's what I've also tried to realize as a director and designer. In stripping clear the traditional theatrical space, I wanted to arrive at a kind of no-man's land. I said to myself that an empty stage would take on a completely anonymous character much more than if I'd used a black velvet masking or something similar. The bare stage represents a total emptiness, a kind of theatrical end of the world." For the first time ever in a San Francisco Opera production, audiences will see the entire back wall and wings of the Opera House with all the structural elements, including columns, girders, pipes, ladders and a gray iron fire door, in addition to the on-stage light towers built specifically for this production.

"At first I was also supposed to do the costume design, but then I realized that the creation of a modern piece required such an immense preparatory effort — to analyze the score, to think about it, to learn it — that I wouldn't have the time to do both the sets and the costumes. So I called upon

IRA NOWINSKI PHOTO

my longtime associate Pet Halmen. I had a specific vision of what the costumes should look like, which I explained to Pet, and Pet, with his customary talent and intelligence, created costumes that went far beyond what even I had imagined."

Ponnelle is quick to acknowledge that his staging of *Lear* is even more stylized than one is accustomed to see-



Pet Halmen's costume designs for *Lear's* three daughters.

ing from this master of stylization, in whose work gestural significance is often as important as the text and the music in reaching to the core of character and situation. "I think my staging for *Lear* is, in a certain sense, more conventional than the *Rigoletto* I staged here eight years ago or my *Flying Dutchman*, which was a success in San Francisco and a scandal in New York. In *Lear*," he explains, "one scene is supposed to take place in Cornwall's palace, another in Albany's palace, a third in Cordelia's palace. In fact, everyone in this production seems to inhabit the same space. Why? Both in the scenic and the philosophical sense there is often a geographical proximity of characters, although they may have no interaction in a given scene. Certain characters may not know what the others are saying, but since they are there in the background, there is a kind of dialectic linking created in the mind of the audience between characters without the characters themselves aware of what is happening. That already calls for a first level of stylization.

"Secondly, there is a gestural stylization that constitutes a style in itself. And for that I used certain elements of Far Eastern theater. I find that myth in its pure state has an equivalent in the emotional, stylized gestures of Oriental theater that no longer exists in our degenerated and purely psychological Western theater. Through the intermediary of Oriental theater, which serves as a catalyst, we can perhaps rediscover a kind of mythical sense that was evident to the Greeks but that is lost to us. For that reason I used certain Oriental elements — be they Chinese or Japanese — without making King *Lear* into a Japanese ruler, of course."

Part of this stylization, in both senses of which Ponnelle describes it, can most readily be seen in parallels between characters, which already exist in the play but are reinforced by the director through similarities of costume and gesture.

As an example, Ponnelle cites his staging at the end of Act I. "I have three fools confronting each other: the real, professional Fool; Edgar, who is a false fool since he's only play-acting; and Kent, who may or may not have lost his wits. In the opera, which reflects Shakespeare's dramaturgy, two of them — the Fool and Kent — disappear in Act II. They no longer have any function. Kent had been banished by Lear. He returned and tried to serve him again, but Lear couldn't care less about him. All of his repressed love for his daughters has been transferred to Edgar/Poor Tom. Kent disappears because he no longer has any reason to exist. The Fool, who is a jester by profession and probably not at all crazy, realizes that Edgar plays the fool much better than he does. So, professionally



Halmen's design for new soldiers' costumes built especially for the San Francisco production of *Lear*.

speaking, he says good-bye to the theater by giving Edgar his coxcomb, which is a kind of laurel wreath for actors. Then he, too, disappears. Edgar, who has played the fool for reasons of expediency, refuses to continue playing the fool and decides to play a different political role in Act II."

Ponnelle and Halmen also establish numerous parallels through costume similarities. Edmund and Edgar look alike at the beginning of the opera, although their outward behavior, evident from the opening pantomime, immediately belies this similarity.

Lear's older daughters also bear a physical resemblance to each other in attire, but they, too, are very different. Reimann has treated them like malevolent cousins of the comical step-sisters in the Cinderella tale, to which *Lear* bears some startling though ultimately superficial resemblances. Ponnelle agrees with this assessment of the sisters. "There's no great psychological subtlety there. Each uses her own technique in her cannibalistic way

with Lear. Goneril blasts away with full-barreled cannons; Regan uses more feminine arms, based on an underlying incestuous relationship between father and daughter."

The father-daughter relationship, which is what undoubtedly first attracted Verdi to Shakespeare's play, is the basis of many a soprano-baritone relationship in opera. Thomas Stewart, who portrays Lear, enumerated several such relationships in roles he had previously interpreted which bore on the *Lear-Cordelia* tie in Reimann's opera [see interview with Stewart, page 52].

"The bare stage represents a kind of theatrical end of the world."

Ponnelle is especially struck by the affinities to one of Stewart's greatest roles, Wotan in the Ring cycle. "Someone who has portrayed a Wotan like Tom's should have no problem with Lear. Lear is a condensed Wotan, in a sense. In addition to the father/favorite-daughter confrontation, there's the question of a character who once wielded great power and is forced to abdicate, with all the vicissitudes and psychic difficulties that presents.

"Do you know the essential difference between Tom and Fischer-Dieskau in the role, aside from the differences of vocal means?" he asks, parenthetically. "Tom looks like a man who is still in the prime of life. When he plays an old man, you have the feeling that 10 years ago Lear must have been a man of extraordinary strength and power, and you see and feel the collapse of that strength and power. Fischer-Dieskau is a huge man; he's as tall as a basketball player. But he's got a very small head, very spindly legs and very small feet. So you have a kind of Eiffel Tower built on a very weak foundation, which gives a different character to the role. With Fischer-Dieskau you see the full physical results of Lear's collapse, and you wonder if Lear ever really *was* the powerful man he claims to have been, or if all along he's been an extraordinarily frail king."

Thoughts of Fischer-Dieskau bring the director back to the world premiere. "When we first presented *Lear* in Munich, there were only four performances scheduled for the 1978 festival. It's been revived every year with tremendous public success. People fought to get tickets just as if Plácido were singing *Bohème*. *Lear* left the more aristocratic festival framework and is now offered in normal subscription, which means it's a *real* public success, perhaps unique in the annals of contemporary opera." ■

Lear



Helga Dernes, William Lewis, Thomas Stewart, Robert Lloyd

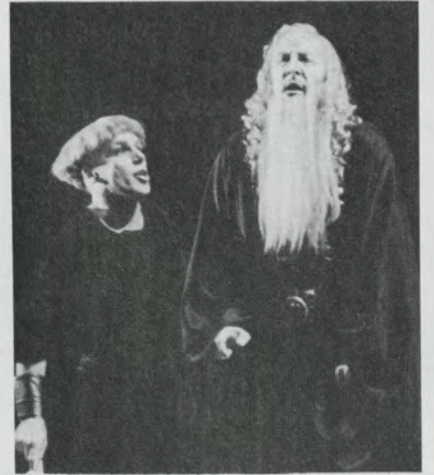


Helga Dernes, Rita Shane

Photos taken in rehearsal by IRA NOWINSKI



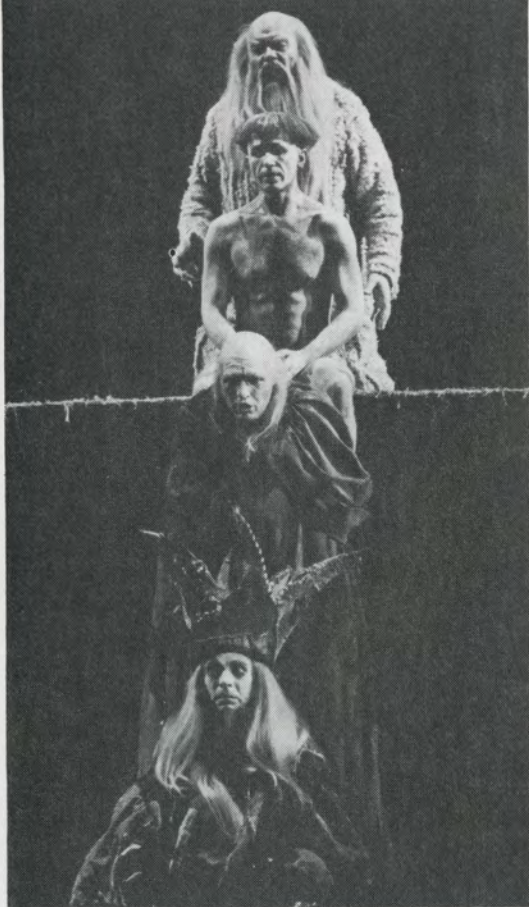
Robert Lloyd, Thomas Stewart



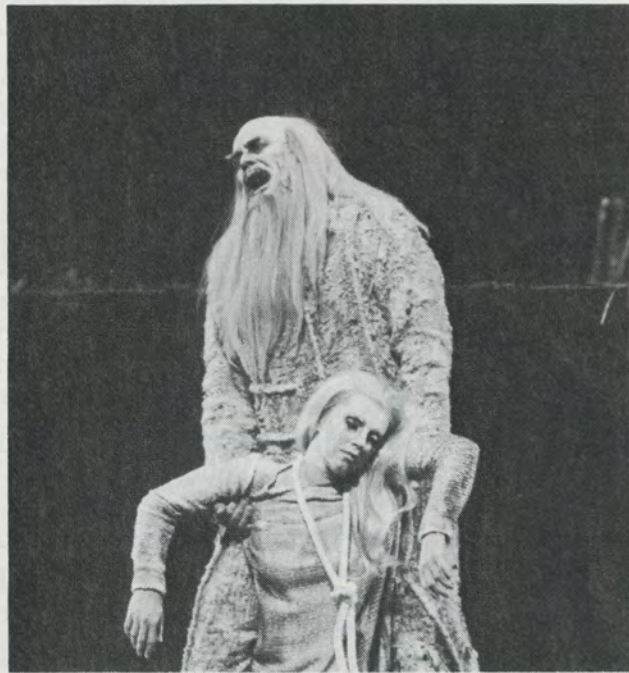
Jacque Trussel, Chester Ludgin



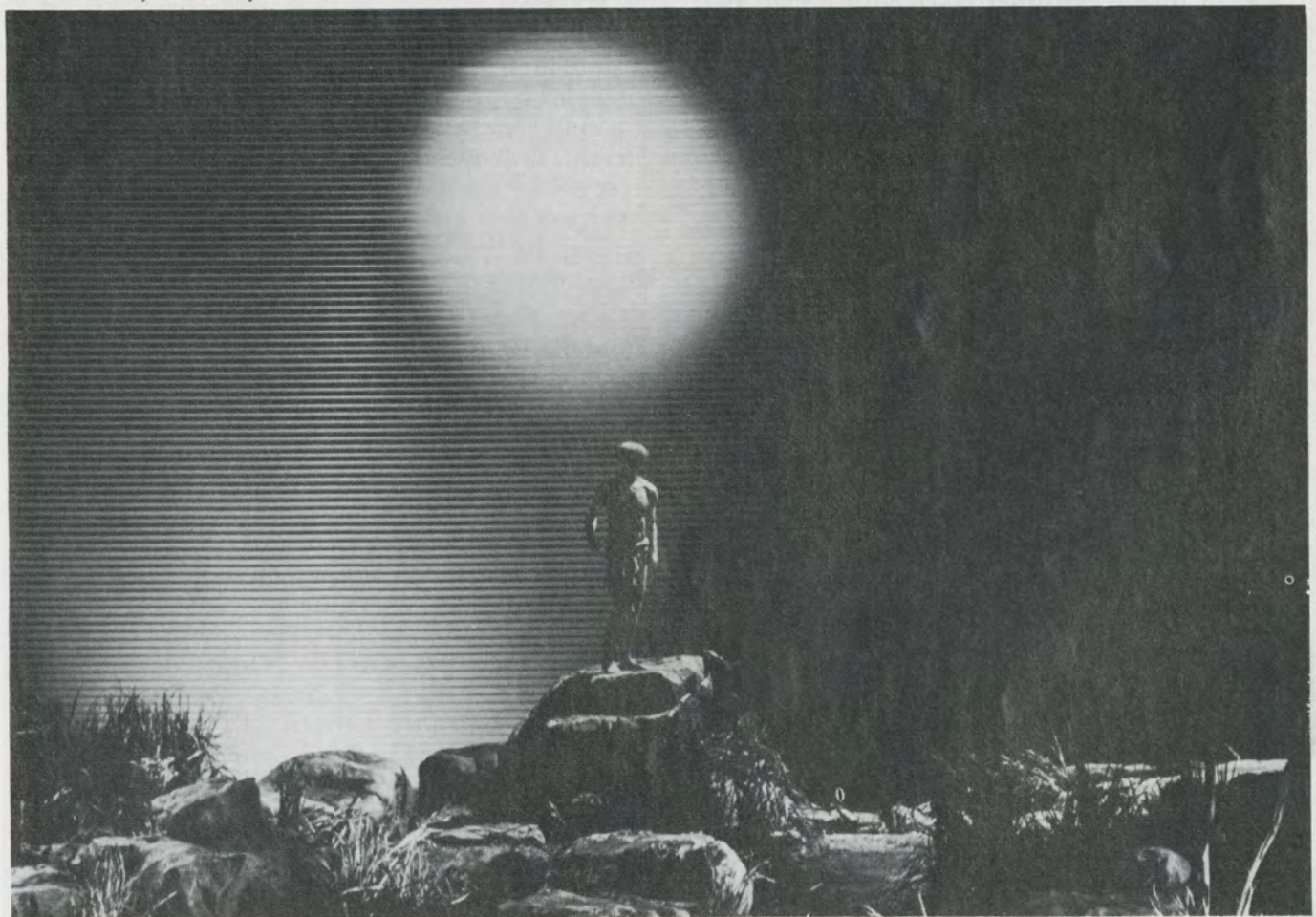
Rita Shane, Chester Ludgin



(Top to bottom) Thomas Stewart, David Knutson,
William Lewis, Robert Lloyd



Thomas Stewart, Emily Rawlins



David Knutson

SYNOPSIS

Lear

Place and Time: Ancient Britain

ACT I

SCENE 1 — Wearing by the cares of government, the aged King Lear has decided to divide his kingdom among his three daughters. The one who can make the strongest expression of her love for him is to receive the largest share. Goneril and Regan vie with each other in describing their filial devotion in extravagant terms, and each receives a third of the kingdom. Cordelia, however, conscious of her deep love for her father, remains silent. Lear is enraged by this. As he is about to reject her, his faithful follower Kent admonishes him for his folly. Kent is banished and Cordelia is hurriedly married off to the King of France, who accepts her for her honesty, not for any possible inheritance. The young couple is forced to leave the country. Goneril and her husband Albany divide the inheritance with Regan and her husband Cornwall. Both daughters are determined to rid themselves of their father, whom they consider a burden, as soon as possible. By means of a forged letter, Gloucester's bastard son Edmund has led his father to believe that his legitimate son Edgar is plotting Gloucester's death. Gloucester banishes Edgar.

SCENE 2 — Kent, disguised as a servant, enters Lear's service. Goneril and Regan ask their father to dismiss most of his retinue. He refuses angrily, and they drive him away.

SCENE 3 — A storm rages on the heath. Lear is close to madness. Kent and the Fool (the king's jester) lead him into a hovel.

SCENE 4 — Edgar has sought refuge from his father's men in this hovel. Gloucester, arriving with his followers to serve the king, does not recognize his son, who is feigning madness. Lear is taken to Dover.

ACT II

SCENE 1 — Cornwall has captured Gloucester. Lear's supporters are to be punished. Goneril and Edmund, who refuses to help his father,

urge Albany to take up arms against the King of France, who has landed with his army at Dover. Gloucester defends his actions in saving Lear from the inhumanity of the king's daughters. Cornwall puts out one of Gloucester's eyes, and is stabbed by a servant. Regan kills the servant and puts out Gloucester's other eye. Gloucester calls to Edmund for help, but Regan reveals that it is Edmund who has betrayed him. Gloucester is cast out onto the road to Dover.

SCENE 2 — Goneril promises Edmund the crown if he will support her in defiance of Albany, who has turned against her, revolted by her cruelty.

SCENE 3 — Cordelia laments her father's insanity. She sends soldiers to search for him.

SCENE 4 — Gloucester asks his son Edgar, whom he still does not recognize, to lead him to Dover.

SCENE 5 — Gloucester wishes to end his life, and requests that Edgar lead him to the brink of a cliff by the sea. His son deceives him, making him believe he has fallen from a great height. Lear meets them. Gloucester at once recognizes his voice and envies him the madness that makes him unaware of the wrongs he has suffered. Soldiers lead the king to Cordelia's camp at Dover.

SCENE 6 — In the French camp, the loving Cordelia promises Lear a tranquil old age and the power to bring peace to the land.

SCENE 7 — Edmund has captured Lear and Cordelia. He gives the order for Cordelia to be strangled in prison. He believes he has won the crown, but Albany disputes his claim. Regan, who wants to be the queen, allies herself with Edmund. She appoints him commander of her forces, left leaderless by the death of Cornwall. Goneril has administered a slow poison to Regan, which begins to take effect. Edgar appears and challenges Edmund to single combat, in which the bastard falls. Regan dies at Edmund's side. The hopelessness of Goneril's position drives her to suicide. Lear appears with the dead Cordelia in his arms. His grief for his daughter makes his voice fail him and he dies.

This production of *Lear* was made possible by generous and deeply appreciated grants from the Carol Buck Sells Foundation and the San Francisco Opera Guild.

American Premiere

Opera in two parts by ARIBERT REIMANN

Adapted from William Shakespeare's *King Lear*
by CLAUD H. HENNEBERG

English translation by DESMOND CLAYTON

(Specially commissioned and used by arrangement with European American Music,
sole U.S. agent for Schott & Co., Ltd., publisher and copyright owner.)

New Production

Lear

(in English)

Conductor

Gerd Albrecht**

Production

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Set Designer

Jean-Pierre Ponnelle

Costume Designer

Pet Halmen

Lighting Director

Thomas Munn

Chorus Director

Richard Bradshaw

Musical Preparation

Kathryn Cathcart*

Jonathan Khuner*

Prompter

Susan Webb

Assistant to Mr. Ponnelle

Vera Lucia Calabria

Assistant Stage Director

Robin Thompson

Stage Manager

Jerry Sherk

Special Technical Supervision

John Priest

Scenery constructed in

San Francisco Opera Scenic Studios

Principals' Costumes executed by

Günter Berger, Silvia Strahammer

Bavarian State Opera, Munich

Wigs executed by

Rudolph Herbert, Richard Stead

First performance: Munich, July 9, 1978

OPENING NIGHT

FRIDAY, JUNE 12 AT 8:00

MONDAY, JUNE 15 AT 7:30

THURSDAY, JUNE 18 AT 8:00

SUNDAY, JUNE 21 AT 2:00

TUESDAY, JUNE 23 AT 8:00

Latecomers will not be seated during the performance after the lights have dimmed in order not to disturb the 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.

CAST

Lear

Thomas Stewart

King of France

Arnold Voketaitis

Duke of Albany

Timothy Noble*

Duke of Cornwall

John Duykers

Earl of Kent

William Lewis/William Neill

Earl of Gloucester

Chester Ludgin

Edgar, son of Gloucester

David Knutson*

Edmund, bastard son of Gloucester

Jacque Trussel*

Goneril

Regan } *Daughters of Lear*

Helga Dernesch*

Cordelia

Rita Shane

Fool

Emily Rawlins

Servant

Robert Lloyd*

Knight

William Wahman

Gail Chugg*

Watchmen, soldiers, servants

Followers of Lear and Gloucester

**American opera debut

*San Francisco Opera debut

PLACE AND TIME: Britain in ancient times

THERE IS A SINGLE INTERMISSION BETWEEN THE
TWO PARTS

PROFILES



HELGA DERNESCH

Viennese-born Helga Dernes makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Goneril in *Lear*, a role she created in Munich in 1978. Her only other previous opera appearances in this country were as Leonore in *Fidelio* at Dallas Civic Opera in 1971 and as the Marschallin in the 1973 Chicago Lyric Opera production of *Der Rosenkavalier*. She has also sung the Marschallin in Cologne, London, Berlin, Oslo, Zurich, Munich and Trieste, and in English at the Edinburgh Festival. In 1965 Miss Dernes made her debut at the Bayreuth Festival, where she performed the roles of Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, Freia in *Das Rheingold* and Guttrune in *Götterdämmerung*. She began singing the heavier Wagner dramatic soprano roles and in 1969 debuted at the Salzburg Festival as Brünnhilde in *Siegfried* under the baton of Herbert von Karajan. She returned there the following year for the *Götterdämmerung* Brünnhilde and Leonore in *Fidelio*. She has portrayed Isolde in Salzburg, Hamburg and Cologne; Brünnhilde in the Ring cycle in Cologne; Sieglinde in Paris and London; and, under Solti, Chrysothemis in *Elektra* and the Dyer's wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* at Covent Garden and Cassandra in *Les Troyens* with the Vienna State Opera. Since 1979 Miss Dernes has been singing mezzo-soprano roles with great success, beginning with the Nurse in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* in Cologne. She has subsequently been heard as Klytemnestra in *Elektra* in Vienna and Munich, Brangäne in *Tristan und Isolde* in Trieste, Herodias in *Salome* in Vienna and the Witch in *Rusalka* in Munich.

RITA SHANE

American coloratura Rita Shane made her San Francisco Opera debut last season as the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*, the role that also marked her Metropolitan Opera debut in 1973. She has sung the role at the Glyndebourne Festival, the Munich Festival, the Vienna State Opera and in London, Turin, Strasbourg, Santa Fe and San Antonio. Miss Shane first came to critical attention as Hilda Mack in the American premiere of Henze's *Elegy for Young Lovers* at Juilliard in 1962. With the New York City Opera she appeared early as Donna Elvira, Violetta and Madame Lidoine in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, and recently received high praise in the world premiere of Argento's *Miss Havesham's Fire* with that company in 1979. At the Met she has portrayed Violetta, Berthe in *Le Prophète*, Pamira in *L'Assedio di Corinto*, Oscar in *Un Ballo in Maschera* and Lucia. Recently she performed Lucia with Scottish Opera, and under Zubin Mehta sang Rosalinde in *Die Fledermaus*



with the Robin Hood Dell Orchestra in Israel. With Baltimore Opera she was heard in the title role of *Maria Stuarda*, as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and in the four soprano roles in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. She performed this last feat at the Aspen Festival in 1977 and returned there for the world premiere of Peter Schat's *Houdini* in 1979. Miss Shane will sing Regan in *Lear*, her current role with the San Francisco Opera, when the opera is televised live from Munich next January.



EMILY RAWLINS

Emily Rawlins, who made her American debut as Violetta in the 1979 Spring Opera production of *La Traviata* and bowed with the San Francisco Opera last fall as Nedda in *I Pagliacci*, sings Cordelia in *Lear*, a role she has performed in German with the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Dusseldorf. Born in Ohio, the soprano studied at the University of Indiana and the Curtis Institute of Music. After appearing in the finals of the Metropolitan Opera Auditions in 1972, she went to Vienna on a Fulbright Scholarship. With the Stadtheater of Basel from 1973-77, she sang such diverse roles as Poppea, Cherubino, Pamina, Desdemona, Cio-Cio-San, Liù, Rusalka, Octavian and the Composer. Miss Rawlins has been heard with the Deutsche Oper am Rhein as Nedda, Violetta, Rusalka, Marie in *The Bartered Bride*, Eurydice in *Orpheus in the*

Underworld, Antonia in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, Musetta, Manon Lescaut in Henze's *Boulevard Solitude*, Concepción in *L'Heure espagnole* and Zerlina in Auber's *Fra Diavolo*. Earlier this year she was heard as the Composer in *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Lisbon and as Serpina in *La Serva Padrona* in Vienna. This summer Miss Rawlins will create the role of Sophie in the world premiere of Cerha's *Baal* for her debut at the Salzburg Festival and will later make her Vienna State Opera debut in the same role.



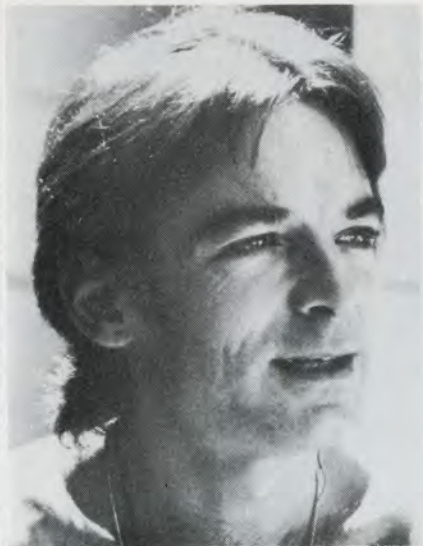
THOMAS STEWART

Acclaimed American baritone Thomas Stewart marks his 12th season with the San Francisco Opera by performing the title role of Aribert Reimann's *Lear* during the 1981 Summer Festival. He made his Company debut in 1962 with five lead roles: Rodrigo in *Don Carlo*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, Valentin in *Faust*, Ford in *Falstaff* and Count di Luna in *Il Trovatore*. Since then he has distinguished himself in such varied roles as Don Giovanni, Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Germont in *La Traviata*, the Count in *Capriccio*, Orest in *Elektra*, Prince Yeltsky in *Queen of Spades*, the title role in *Eugene Onegin*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* and, most recently, Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde*. Other Wagnerian roles in which he has been heard locally are Wotan in the 1972 Ring cycle, Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, Gunther in *Götterdämmerung* and Amfortas in *Parsifal*. Stewart is the only American to sing major roles at the Bayreuth Festival for over a decade. He made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1966 as Ford in *Falstaff* and a few seasons ago appeared there as Don Giovanni, Iago and the four villains in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. Other roles for which he is famous include Falstaff, Hans Sachs and the Flying Dutchman. A frequent recording and concert artist, he often appears in recital with his wife, soprano Evelyn Lear, and has been heard with the San Francisco Symphony in Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*.

ROBERT LLOYD

British actor Robert Lloyd (not to be confused with the British bass of the same name) portrays the Fool in *Lear* in his San Francisco Opera debut. He played the role of Edgar in the 1969 Peter Brook film version of *King Lear*. A prominent member of London's Royal Shakespeare Company and Peter Brook's Paris-based Center for International Theater Creations,

PROFILES



Lloyd has performed in many of Brook's productions, including Genet's *The Screens* and Weiss' *Marat/Sade*, in which he played the role of Marat in London, New York and on film. He also portrayed Puck in Brook's celebrated production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on its world-wide tour, which included performances in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. Other credits with the Royal Shakespeare Company include *The Comedy of Errors*, *Timon of Athens*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Tempest*. For the Royal Court Theatre he performed in Nicholas Wright's *AC/DC* and Edward Bond's *The Fool*. Lloyd has written and performed one-man shows under the title "May I have the pleasure of this dance" in London, Sydney, New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, among other places. He recently appeared in New York as the narrator in Peter Brook's dramatized version of the Persian epic poem *The Conference of the Birds*.



DAVID KNUTSON

Tenor David Knutson, who makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Edgar in *Lear*, has been a leading singer at the Deutsche Oper Berlin since 1972. In 1970 he was awarded a scholarship to study voice in Europe, where he was discovered by Egon Seefehlner, now head of the Vienna State Opera, and composer Wolfgang Fortner. He made his Deutsche Oper Berlin debut in the world premiere of Fortner's *Elizabeth Tudor*

and was then named "New Singer of the Year" by a leading German magazine in 1973. Knutson, who is able to sing in the countertenor as well as the tenor range, has sung at the Salzburg Festival, the Vienna and Bavarian State Operas and in the opera houses of Amsterdam, Cologne and Brussels. His roles include Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*, the Shepherd in Cavalli's *La Calisto*, Hippolyte in Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*, the Idiot in *Boris Godunov*, the Conferencier in Wilhelm Dieter Siebert's *The Sinking of the Titanic* and the title role in Hans Kox's *Dorian Gray*. Knutson has appeared on German television, performing dance routines and songs from musicals as well as opera selections. He will sing the leading role in Reimann's new opera based on Strindberg's *The Ghost Sonata* at the Berlin Festival in 1983.



JACQUE TRUSSEL

A native of San Francisco, tenor Jacques Trussel makes his first appearance with the San Francisco Opera as Edmund in *Lear*. In 1973 he portrayed Don José in the Spring Opera production of *Carmen*, a role he has recently sung with the New York City Opera and in a new English *opéra-comique* version with the Houston Grand Opera. Trussel has been heard with such other leading opera houses in this country as the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Opera Company of Boston, Dallas Civic Opera, Santa Fe Opera and Philadelphia Lyric Opera. He opened the inaugural season of Spoleto USA as Hermann in *Pique Dame*, a role for which he won previous acclaim at the Spoleto Festival in Italy and has subsequently sung in Ottawa. Trussel has appeared in the world premieres of Carlisle Floyd's *Bilby's Doll* and Thomas Pasatieri's *Seagull*, and sang the title role in the American premiere of Vaughan Williams' *Hugh the Drover*. In 1980 he opened the fall season of the New York City Opera in the title role of *The Student Prince*. Other highlights of the 1980-81 season include Shuisky in *Boris Godunov* in Chicago, Alfredo in *La Traviata* in Fort Worth, Sam in Floyd's *Susannah* in Baltimore and Avito in Montemezzi's *L'Amore dei Tre Re* in Washington.

WILLIAM LEWIS

Last seen here as Steva in *Jenůfa* and Matteo in *Arabella* during the 1980 season, tenor William Lewis portrays Kent in *Lear*. In 1979 he repeated his dual roles of Erik and the Steersman, which he created in the 1975 Jean-Pierre Ponnelle production of *Der Fliegende Hol-*



länder. Two years earlier he was heard as Boris in Janáček's *Katya Kabanova* and in 1976 sang Albert Gregor in the composer's *The Makropulos Case*. In the space of five months during the 1976-77 season Lewis participated in three important premieres in three internationally renowned opera houses. After creating the role of Frank Sargent in the world premiere of Andrew Imbrie's *Angle of Repose* with the San Francisco Opera in November, he sang Aron in Schönberg's *Moses und Aron* at La Scala in February and Alwa in Berg's *Lulu* at the Metropolitan Opera in March. A stalwart at the Met since his 1958 debut as Narraboth in *Salome*, Lewis has appeared there in such varied assignments as Aeneas in Berlioz' *Les Troyens*, Roméo in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*, Arrigo in Verdi's *I Vespri Siciliani*, Dimitri in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, Hermann in Tchaikovsky's *Pique Dame* and the Drum Major in Berg's *Wozzeck*, in addition to the standard Italian repertoire. His list of credits encompasses the American premieres of Stravinsky's *Threni* and Orff's *Antigona* and *Prometheus*, and the New York premiere of Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Lewis recently performed the title role in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Florence and Philadelphia, *Idomeneo* in Vienna and Strauss' first opera, *Gunterram*, conducted by John Pritchard, for the BBC in London.

WILLIAM NEILL

Texas-born tenor William Neill, who scored a personal triumph in the title role of *Lohengrin* during the 1978 San Francisco Opera season and sang Aegisth in *Elektra* the following year, returns as Kent in *Lear*. Neill's association with the Company dates back to 1967, when he won the Gropper Award as a member of the Merola Opera Program and sang his first Don José in *Carmen*. For Spring Opera Theater of San Francisco he portrayed Henry Faust in *Faust Counter Faust* and gave a memorable performance as Lennie in Floyd's *Of Mice and Men*, a role he repeated in 1977 with the Netherlands Opera and will sing with the Miami Opera next year. Neill made his San Francisco Opera debut in 1973 in *Tannhäuser* and *Peter Grimes* and the following year sang Narraboth in *Salome* and Melot in *Tristan und Isolde*. He has since become a leading interpreter of Herod in *Salome*, which he has performed in Houston, Baltimore, Washington, Caracas and with the New York City Opera. Last year with that company he portrayed Severin in Weill's *Silverlake*, which was recorded on the Nonesuch label. In the past few seasons he has sung such dramatic and heldentenor roles as Florestan in *Fidelio*

PROFILES



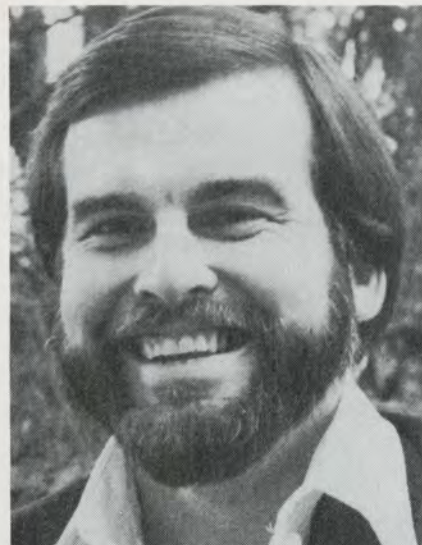
(most recently with the Marin Symphony), Siegmund in *Die Walküre* in Portland and Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Atlanta, and the title roles in *Peter Grimes* in Toronto, *Samson et Dalila* in Miami and *Lobengrin* in Tucson.

During the 1981 fall season in San Francisco he will appear as Zinovy Ismailov in Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*.



CHESTER LUDGIN

A longtime favorite of San Francisco Opera audiences, baritone Chester Ludgin portrays Gloucester in *Lear*. He numbers three other American premieres among his many appearances with the Company: Shostakovich's *Katerina Ismailova*, Janáček's *The Makropulos Case* and Gunther Schuller's *The Visitation*. In 1976 he created the role of Lyman Ward in the world premiere of Andrew Imbrie's *Angle of Repose*. Well-known for his interpretations of contemporary opera, Ludgin has participated in many world premieres, including Richard Owens' *Mary Dyer*, Abraham Ellstein's *The Golem* and Robert Ward's *The Crucible*, which he subsequently repeated for Spring Opera. Bay Area audiences will remember his performances in the title roles of *Boris Godunov*, *Rigoletto* and *Macbeth*, as Iago in *Otello*, Barnaba in *La Gioconda*, Jack Rance in *La Fanciulla del West*, and Telramund in *Lobengrin*, among the 22 roles he has performed with the Company. Ludgin has appeared with nearly every major opera company in America and with leading symphony orchestras. He has performed frequently with the New York City Opera and was heard there recently as Horace Tabor in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. During the San Francisco Opera's fall season he will recreate his portrayal of Boris Ismailov, this time in the original version of Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*.

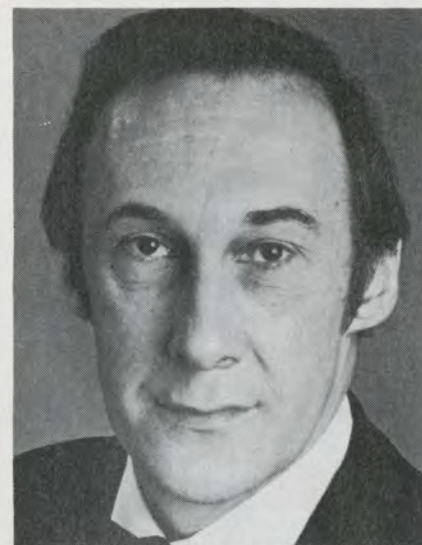


of *Rigoletto* and *Don Giovanni*. He has sung Schaunard in *La Bohème* with the Indianapolis Opera and has been heard with the symphony orchestras of Indianapolis, Atlanta and St. Louis. Following his appearance at the San Francisco Summer Festival, Noble will sing Germont in *La Traviata* with Colorado Summer Opera in Colorado Springs and will perform with the Chicago Symphony at the Ravinia Festival in August, prior to returning for several roles during the 1981 fall season in San Francisco.



JOHN DUYKERS

Tenor John Duykers is heard during the 1981 Summer Festival as Cornwall in *Lear* and Lucano in *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, a role he created in the Rennert production in 1975. Since 1972 he has sung nine roles with the Company and with Spring Opera has appeared in *Death in Venice* in 1975, *Meeting Mr. Ives* in 1976, Holst's *Savitri* in 1977 and Susa's *Transformations* in 1980. Duykers has performed with the opera companies of Seattle, Sante Fe, Vancouver, Edmonton, Frankfurt and Geneva, as well as the Metropolitan Opera Studio and at various music festivals both here and in Europe. Local audiences have heard him in concert with the Oakland Symphony, the University of California and Modesto orchestras, and the Carmel Bach Festival, among others. Duykers toured in George Coates' avant-garde theater piece, *Duykers The First*, in this country and in Bordeaux, Lille, Brussels and Amsterdam.



ARNOLD VOKETAITIS

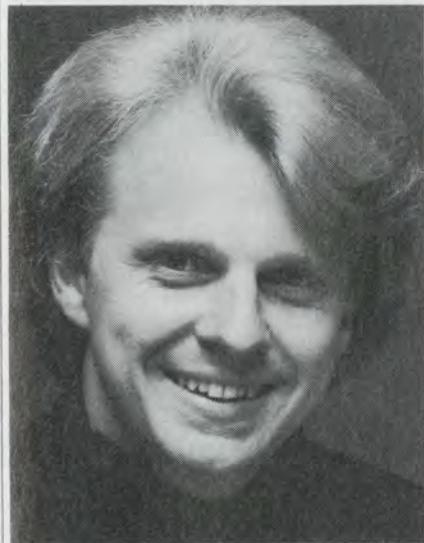
Bass-baritone Arnold Voketaitis appears as the King of France in *Lear* following his San Francisco Opera debut last fall as Abimélech in *Samson et Dalila* and the One-Armed Man in *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. He has been a member of the Lyric Opera of Chicago since 1966 and has appeared frequently with New York City Opera. Outside the United States, Voketaitis has sung at the Gran Liceo in Barcelona, and with both the National Symphony and the Opera in Mexico City, where he has been heard as Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and in the title role of Massenet's *Don Quichotte*. Other recent engagements include the title roles in Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* with the Pasadena Symphony,

TIMOTHY NOBLE

Following his debut with Spring Opera Theater as Agamemnon in Eaton's *The Cry of Clytemnestra*, a role he created at the work's world premiere at Indiana University, baritone Timothy Noble makes his first appearance with the San Francisco Opera as Albany in the American premiere of Reimann's *Lear*. As a student at Indiana University, Noble also appeared as Michele in *Il Tabarro*, the four villains in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, Robespierre in Eaton's *Danton and Robespierre*, and in the title roles

PROFILES

the Prologue of Boito's *Mefistofele* with the Pensacola Symphony, Tomaso in *Un Ballo in Maschera* in Chicago and concert appearances with the Minnesota Orchestra and the St. Louis Symphony, both in St. Louis and in Carnegie Hall, in Shostakovich selections. In 1979 Voketaitis made his debut with the San Francisco Symphony in Prokofiev's *Ivan the Terrible* and with the Indianapolis Symphony as King Marke in *Tristan und Isolde*.



WILLIAM WAHMAN

Lyric tenor William Wahman, who is heard as the Servant in *Lear*, has appeared frequently with the San Francisco Opera since his 1974 debut. With Western Opera Theater he has portrayed leading roles in operas by Mozart, Rossini, Donizetti, Britten and Krenek. He sang Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* and the Prince in a televised production of Susa's *Transformations* with the Minnesota Opera. A frequent soloist, Wahman has performed with the Chicago Symphony, the San Francisco Symphony, the Oakland Symphony and at the Carmel Bach Festival. During the 1979-80 season he was heard in recital singing Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* and Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, and performed the title role in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* at the University of California in Berkeley. Wahman sang the title role of Don Curzio in the recent Spring Opera production of *The Marriage of Figaro*.

ARIBERT REIMANN

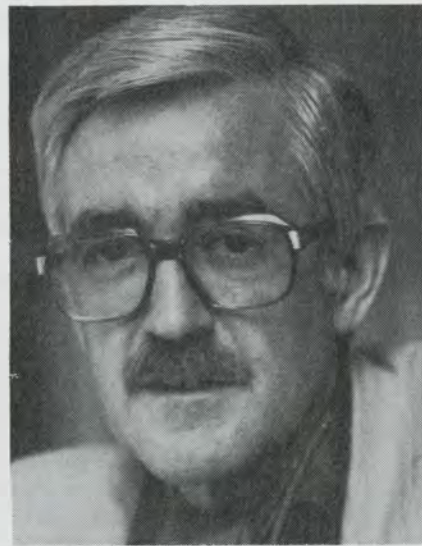
Aribert Reimann, the composer of *Lear*, was born in Berlin in 1936. His father, Wolfgang Reimann, was a university professor and was organist and director of the State Cathedral Choir, and his mother was a singer and teacher at the Berlin Academy of Music. He studied composition with Boris Blacher and Ernst Pepping as well as piano with Otto Rausch. In addition to establishing himself as a composer, Reimann is noted as a chamber musician and lieder accompanist and has been featured on recital albums with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Barry McDaniell. He has been particularly associated



with Fischer-Dieskau, for whom he has written several songs, as well as *Lear*. Reimann is currently professor of music at the Hochschule in Hamburg, where he specializes in 20th-century lieder. Reimann has demonstrated an affinity for vocal music and has often turned to the "dark" texts for inspiration, using poets Percy Bysshe Shelley, Sylvia Plath, Paul Celan, Hölderlin and Cesare Pavese as sources for his work. He has also composed numerous orchestral, choral and chamber works. Early in his studies, Reimann became interested in works for the stage. In 1958 he wrote the ballet *Stoffreste* with a scenario by Günther Grass. They collaborated again in 1970 with a three-act ballet called *Die Vogelscheuchen* (The Scarecrows). His first opera, *Ein Traumspiel* (Dream-Play), was based on Strindberg and had its premiere at Kiel in 1965. *Melusine* was first performed in 1971 at Schwetzingen with the Deutsche Oper Berlin. The American premiere of this opera was given at Santa Fe in 1972. Adapted from a story by the French playwright Yvan Goll, the libretto of *Melusine* was provided by Claus H. Henneberg. Reimann continued the association with Henneberg for *Lear*, which received its world premiere at Munich in 1978.

CLAUS H. HENNEBERG

Claus H. Henneberg, who was born in Schleswig-Holstein in 1936 and studied music, theater, literature and history at the University of Cologne and in Berlin, now combines careers as librettist and opera administrator. For the Berlin Festival in 1974, he re-translated, with Hans Keller, Britten's *Death in Venice* for its first German performance. In 1976 he was appointed general administrator at Kiel Opera. That year Henneberg provided the libretto for Toshiro Mayuzumi's *Kinkakuji*, given in West Berlin. As *Dramaturg* for the Deutsche Oper Berlin, he had previously been commissioned as librettist for Heinz Wahren's *Fettklösschen*, based on Maupassant's *Boule de suif*. Earlier, he designed the scenery for Thomas Kessler's *Nationale Feiertage*, which was performed by the Studio of the German Opera. Henneberg was appointed artistic advisor for the Cologne Opera in 1979. There he was commissioned, with Michael Hampe, to write the libretto for an opera by Udo Zimmermann, based on Ernst Barlach's *Die Sündflut*. As *Intendant* at Kiel,



Henneberg produced a work by the almost-forgotten composer Alexander von Zemlinsky, who was Arnold Schönberg's teacher and brother-in-law. Composed in 1917, it is an operatic version of Oscar Wilde's *A Florentine Tragedy*. *Lear* is Henneberg's second collaboration with composer Aribert Reimann. The first, in 1971, was *Melusine*, adapted from a work by the French playwright Yvan Goll.



DESMOND CLAYTON

Born near London in 1927, Desmond Clayton, responsible for the English version of the *Lear* libretto, studied singing at the Guildhall School of Music in London from 1948 to 1952 and in Munich. From 1952 to 1977 he performed as a concert tenor in many European countries, making numerous radio and television appearances. He was also heard at various European festivals, including the Salzburg Festival. Clayton began to diversify his activities after 1975, and is now a well-known TV personality in West Germany and an established translator specializing in the arts. His translations have included a number of musical works, such as Penderecki's *The Devils of Loudun* and Henze's *The Raft of the Medusa*, in addition to Reimann's *Lear*.

PROFILES



GERD ALBRECHT

German conductor Gerd Albrecht makes his American debut with Reimann's *Lear*, a work he conducted at the world premiere in Munich in July 1978. While studying music in Hamburg, he entered various international conducting competitions and won first prize at Besançon in 1957 and Hilversum in 1958. He began his operatic training as répétiteur for the Stuttgart Staatsoper in 1958 and in 1963 became music director for the city of Lubeck. From 1966-1972 he was music director of the Kassel State Theater and in 1972 was named principal conductor of the Deutsche Oper Berlin. Since 1975 he has been musical director of the Tonhalle Orchestra of Zurich, which he has brought to international attention with tours in the United States and South America, and appearances at the Berlin and Vienna festivals. Since 1976 Albrecht has wielded the baton for the Vienna State Opera, where he made his debut with a highly acclaimed production of Berlioz' *Les Troyens*. His television films about the Second Viennese School (Schönberg, Berg and Webern) increased public interest in 20th-century music. Albrecht wrote a humorous children's book about musical instruments, which has been translated into six languages. One of his main interests is to produce little-known works of the operatic and concert repertoire: Mercadante's *Il Giuramento* and Halévy's *La Juive* in Vienna; Schumann's *Manfred* and Wolf's *Corregidor* in Berlin; Berlioz' *Lélio* and Massenet's *Thérèse* in Zurich; and Honegger's *Joan of Arc at the Stake* and Krenek's *Karl V* at the Salzburg Festival in 1977 and 1980 have attracted international attention. The Deutsche Grammophon recording of *Lear*, which he conducted, was awarded the Grand Prix du Disque, the Edison and Koussevitzky Prizes, and the German Critics Prize for recordings.

JEAN-PIERRE PONNELLE

One of the world's most noted directors and designers, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle adapts his acclaimed production of *Lear*, which first triumphed at the Munich Festival in 1978, to the War Memorial stage. His productions of *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *La Bohème*, *Turandot*, *Idomeneo* and *Il Prigioniero*, introduced to local audiences the past few seasons, have attracted international attention. Ponnelle made his American debut as designer with the San Francisco Opera premieres of Orff's *Carmina Burana* and *The Wise Maiden* in 1958 and returned the following season to design another prestigious American premiere, Strauss' *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. In 1968 he began to assume dual



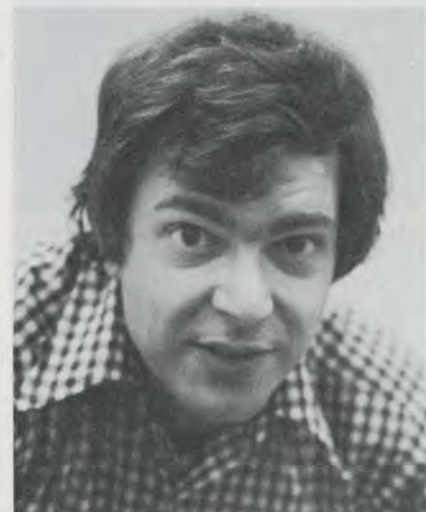
responsibility as director-designer, producing *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Così fan tutte* for the Salzburg Festival prior to his American debut in that capacity with the San Francisco Opera in the much admired 1969 production of *La Cenerentola*. Local audiences have subsequently seen his productions of *Così fan tutte*, *Otello*, *Tosca*, *Rigoletto* (to be repeated during the 1981 Summer Festival season), *Gianni Schicchi*, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *I Pagliacci*. Recent Ponnelle productions include a Mozart cycle in Cologne, a Monteverdi cycle and Mozart's *Idomeneo* and *Lucio Silla* in Zurich, the Ring cycle in Stuttgart, *Don Carlos*, *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *L'Italiana in Algeri* in Hamburg, *Pelléas et Mélisande* at La Scala and Munich, *Falstaff* at Glyndebourne, *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Die Zauberflöte* and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Salzburg Festival, *Don Pasquale* at Covent Garden, *La Traviata* in Houston and Strasbourg and *Don Giovanni* in Chicago. He recently staged Molière's play *Tartuffe* in Zurich. He will direct *Tristan und Isolde* at this summer's Bayreuth Festival. Ponnelle's production of *Carmen* will be seen during the 1981 International Fall Season in San Francisco. His film credits include *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Madama Butterfly* and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, all seen on television in this country.



PET HALMEN

Rumanian-born set and costume designer Pet Halmen created the costume designs for Reimann's *Lear* for the 1978 Munich world premiere. He was responsible for both sets and cos-

tumes for the 1979 San Francisco Opera productions of Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero* and Poulenc's *La Voix humaine*, and the costume designs for *Turandot* and *Der Fliegende Holländer*, on which he collaborated with Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. Following an apprenticeship as a theater painter in West Berlin, Halmen was for a time Ponnelle's assistant for set and costume design. Other collaborations with the celebrated designer include a television production of *Carmina Burana*, *Salome* in Cologne, *L'Elisir d'Amore* in Hamburg, a Monteverdi cycle and a Mozart cycle in Zurich, *La Traviata* in Houston and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Salzburg. He has also collaborated on a Ring cycle co-production for Strasbourg and Lyons and *La Traviata* for Göteborg with young director Nicolas Joël. Other recent design commissions include *L'Enfant et les sortilèges* for the Deutsche Oper Berlin, *Norma* and both a Mozart and a Molière cycle in Zurich, and a film version of *Elektra* to be directed by Götz Friedrich. Halmen has also worked with Gian Carlo Menotti, Oscar Fritz Schuh and August Everding, among other directors, and in ballet with choreographers John Cranko and Erich Walter. He designs record covers, posters and special magazine illustrations, many of which were seen in a major exhibition in New York.



THOMAS MUNN

In his sixth year as lighting designer/director of the San Francisco Opera, Thomas Munn is responsible for the lighting designs for *Don Giovanni* and *Die Meistersinger* during the 1981 Summer Festival. In 1980 he created the designs for the new productions of *Samson et Dalila* and *Don Pasquale* and the previous year won an Emmy award for the new production of *La Gioconda*, which was seen over international television. That year he also designed the scenery for *Roberto Devereux* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. In past seasons he has created special effects for the Company's productions and served as supervising set designer for *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Faust* and *Billy Budd*. Since 1976 he has designed the lighting for nearly all of the new productions of the San Francisco Opera, including the world premiere of Imbrie's *Angle of Repose*. Munn created the scenery and lighting for *Macbeth* and *Lulu*, and the lighting for *Don Quichotte* with the Netherlands Opera, and last year designed the lighting for the Washington Opera Society's productions of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*. He has designed numerous regional opera productions in addition to his work in television, film, ballet and legitimate theater throughout the country.



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Thomas Stewart: The Challenge of Lear

To come to grips with Lear, the internationally celebrated baritone had to wrestle with the complexities of both Shakespeare's character and Reimann's score.



Thomas Stewart as Lear.

RON SCHERL PHOTO

By STEPHEN WADSWORTH

Tom Stewart, a benign, even-tempered man, seems to hold his strengths and conflicts like trumps in his grand-slam hands. He speaks when spoken to, doesn't waste words and believes in saying, in tacit agreement with Edgar at the close of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, "what we feel, not what we ought to say." Tom indulges and enjoys people who love to talk and will hear any point of view, but his lofty, upturned Wotan eyebrows — accents both grave and accute —

uphold unshaken confidences. His sincerity and paternal kindness make Tom attractive; what he holds back and the simple conviction with which he maintains his privacy command respect. On an August day in Santa Fe he lopes sloe-eyed around the house looking for the golf balls or sits like a giant sloth in front of the television, pondering life at a pleasant remove. It's onstage that he plays his trumps. His characters, like him, have force, clarity and something that might be called masculine mystique.

"I do love to talk about myself. But I think not all of myself because there are parts of me that I don't want to talk about to anybody, really. I like to talk about myself in my profession, as a performer, an artist, an opera singer; hang it on whatever hook you want. I take pride in the fact that I am, I think, a very good professional. I do what I do and I do it well, without tantrums. I think in many ways I look at my profession with a little bit different eyes, a little bit different heart and gut and head, than a lot of my colleagues. In that I'd like to think that I'm not as emotionally involved in what I do as a lot of them; maybe I'm fooling myself. I'm sorry that I'm not on one hand, and I'm very happy that I'm not on the other. It means that I don't have the incredible highs that I see in my wife [Evelyn Lear] and others, during or after a performance or when an engagement comes through, but it also means that I don't hit bottom quite as hard as they do. It's kind of . . ." Tom indicates an even-keel stock-market fluctuation with one hand.

"I trust my reactions."

Considering King Lear from a three-month distance, Tom anticipates emotional involvement of another sort. He sighs a deep sigh. "You know a lot of people say — and I don't know whose method it is — that in order to portray a given emotion you must experience it. But I have my doubts as to whether that's necessary. Why do I feel that it's not necessary to have lived all of Lear's life to play him? Well, I say if you can fantasize enough in here, [points to head] you can live it all in here [points to heart]. You're given so much to play with, to think about. Now you put yourself into it and react as if you're living it for the first time. Lear's experiences are not things you go through once a month, or once a year. They are basic things; they come once a life.

"You draw on experience, I guess, to help you relate to and develop your character. And you get help — I've already gotten it from Evvy, and I'll get it from my director and my conductors eventually. But when you have an idea about who Lear is — and you must relate to him strongly to develop that idea — then what everyone else thinks is irrelevant, because *you* are performing. You take that character, throw him into his situations, and react."

That's easy to say, but when he is actually playing deeply conflicted men

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like Lear onstage, isn't Tom ever surprised by how much he feels it — then and there? "No, and you know why? Because I inevitably and without any qualms at all trust my reactions. I can't be thrown off, really. Whatever the feeling is, and however strong it is, I trust it *as the character*."

There is a long pause, and Tom softens. "Oh, I see what you mean — when I *personally* am moved onstage. Mmm. Do you know when I try to experience that kind of involvement? In the working process. In rehearsal I can become terribly involved. Then I'll confront Lear and really feel his feelings. But all the time I'll be saying, 'Aha, now this is real — this is Tom and this is Lear. Now I have to take this, and come time when the curtain goes up and the audience is sitting out there, I'll have to transfer this feeling, this energy that I'm feeling now, to them.' In a performance I'll feel Lear's feelings again, but only up to a point. The challenge is: How do I carry it on past that point so the people out there believe it all the way through? The continuation is sheer professionalism. I can't be too deeply involved because I'd cease to function as a performer."

Tom is intuitive, a natural master of the subtle art of letting go. He's come by the same technique as many great actors, but he hates the word technique and has learned by doing. He realizes ways of getting into a part vary from performer to performer, but he deplores that a lot of them don't even connect with their characters in the first place. Even fewer, he notes, control themselves onstage. It's a fact that fewer even than that trust themselves. It drives Tom crazy to see

"I think Lear knows what's happening."

young singers having no idea what their natural responses are or shying away from them. When he and Evelyn spend an evening with students performing scenes from opera, she chats and groans and laps it up, a real teacher. He scratches his neck violently at 60-second intervals and then vanishes to the bathroom for periods of up to an hour.

At the beginning of March, Tom was relating and developing his idea of King Lear. He was asking Aribert Reimann's score why it looked and sounded as it did, what the connection was between the character of Lear and the music that he must sing. "Why," Tom asked himself, "is the orchestration like this? The vocal line like this at this point? In the classical repertoire these connections come very fast.

But of course I know how to hear the repertoire. This music is different." The truest and most comfortable connections he makes between music and character are as Hans Sachs, Falstaff,

"Lear has it all planned: kingdom for them; honor for him."

Iago and Scarpia. In many of the German roles that Tom has been identified with — "Strauss except maybe Barak and the more long-winded Wagner" — finding that connection can be hard. Mozart is harder: "There are flashes of it, but not like in *Tosca* or *Meistersinger*, where I hear three bars and know *exactly* what's happening." Reimann's *Lear* is hardest.

"The part of Lear very often is written completely free as far as pitch and rhythm are concerned. You select it yourself; you have just the text. Reimann is obviously trying to notate only what will give him true theater with music. He would have liked to wipe out the bar lines, to get away from the metronomical aspect of music, to free it up." In March Tom found Reimann's treatment of Shakespeare, "at the risk of sounding chauvinistic — very German." He wondered if Lear's outbursts weren't too screamy, he needed more opportunities to play the tenderness he feels is so much a part of Lear, he felt the

he has must be *something*. His greatness must be there somehow in everything he does, even if he is flawed and does wrong." Tom was particularly drawn to the scenes in which Lear first realizes what Goneril and Regan are doing to him. "He has it all planned — kingdom for them, honor for him. And suddenly it comes home to him. How horrible." Yet he's also fascinated by the possibility that Lear might know all even from the beginning, "that he knows he's being had, that he knows Cordelia loves him, that he sends her away thinking, 'I've got to get her out because they'll destroy her, too.' I can never play this; I know I won't be able to. I discussed it with Aribert. But *I* think Lear knows what's happening."

There were many qualities in Shakespeare's Lear that Tom couldn't find in Reimann's, and qualities in Reimann's that he couldn't find in himself. At times Tom looked very confused. He was really wrestling with Reimann's ideas and language, trying to make it fit him, trying to find and connect with the sense of it. "This will be my problem as a professional, and it's a great thing. I'm looking forward. I'm going to have to come to grips with and make decisions about every one of these things. I know I'll solve it, oh yeah. I have no doubts about that. It challenges me. *What* a challenge!"

How to solve it? Where to start? Tom talked at length about bringing

his own experience as actor and man to bear. He talked about different actors in the part. He recognized in other characters he's played certain of Lear's qualities — Golaud, Onegin and Germont all suffer remorse after abusing a young woman; "we see Falstaff and Lear at their absolute worst, and the penance they do is so exposed"; the bond between the final scenes of *Rigoletto* and *Lear* is also revealing, helpful. Tom thought, of course, about his children (though he has none of his own, he is father to his stepchildren) and Lear's. Other thoughts surfaced which suggested unconscious, even conscious exploration of what he might share with Lear in the way of foolish vanity, guilt, avoiding truth, facing reality, humiliation, suffering

"We see Falstaff and Lear at their absolute worst . . ."

and the pain of learning and growing. Perhaps, just in facing so deep a challenge and working through it, Tom has felt some of these things in the last few months.

Six weeks later, in mid-April, Tom is home in Florida from a run of *Siegfried* in Naples. Naples was something of an existential holiday, because Tom sat cloistered in his hotel room with a little electronic keyboard and a tape of *Lear*, hammering notes into his head while April Fool's sun winked at his breakfast china. Because Reimann's orchestra rarely highlights a single instrument or section (the



IRA NOWINSKI PHOTO



RON SCHERL PHOTO



KEN HOWARD PHOTO



RON SCHERL PHOTO

spectacle of Lear — "the disintegration of a human being" — was shown perhaps as something ludicrous and rather grotesque whereas it seemed more serious and human to him.

He was frustrated that Cordelia's return from France was passed over so fast. He talked about trying to keep Lear's strength, or flashes of it, intact even through degradation and madness. "Any man that can make Goneril and Regan toe the mark for as long as

Stewart has portrayed many of the Wagnerian roles for which he is famous here in San Francisco: at far left, Kurwenal in *Tristan und Isolde* (1980); at top center, Amfortas in *Parsifal* (1974); at bottom center, Wotan in *Das Rheingold* (1972); at right, Wolfram von Eschenbach in *Tannhäuser* (1973).



In rehearsal for *Lear* at the Armory with Robert Lloyd as the Fool.

pages of the score look like strategy maps or formations of trained ants), Tom couldn't find many easy cues. "Usually I associate relatively, because I don't have perfect pitch, but the bulk of this score is just a blustering mass of chords, and my ears are not finely tuned enough. So I worked to acquaint my ear with the quality of the chord mass, with the *Klang*, and I kind of learned by osmosis how my note related to the overall sound, where it belonged."

Rhythmically, too, Tom was on un-firma terra. "There are markings in the score, and I've used a metronome to get the basic rhythms of my lines. But certainly in this music you don't stay at one constant speed as you might in a classical piece, where the harmonic scheme demands it. Maybe I'm doing an injustice to Mr. Reimann to say that his harmonics, if you want to call them that, don't demand it. And of course there are those places where there are no rhythms notated for the vocal line, so I'm hoping the conductor will go along with my decisions. You know, the learning process I've used and fallen back on for so many years

— and I've learned a number of contemporary things with it — I simply find it lets me down at times. I don't think it's because of an inherent weakness in that process. It just doesn't fit this music. It was a big relief to go sing *Siegfried* at night. I think it kept me from going absolutely bananas.

"I don't have any new ideas about the part. I have got the feeling of Reimann's music-to-character connection better, though. I must confess I still don't always agree with it, but then I very often disagree with composers. I have my doubts: I find this *Lear* at times whines a little too much. Not the screaming I mentioned before, but whining. I have to talk to my director and so on, but couldn't it get boring to have an old man wandering around the stage all night moaning 'OHHH, LOOK AT MEEE, IT'S TEEERRRIBLE, OHHH!?' Not that *Lear* doesn't bemoan his fate, but there's bemoaning and there's whining. So that's one new thing I'll have to decide about. But at this point it's mostly cold-blooded note-learning. When you get to rehearsal, where you're going to have yet another chan-

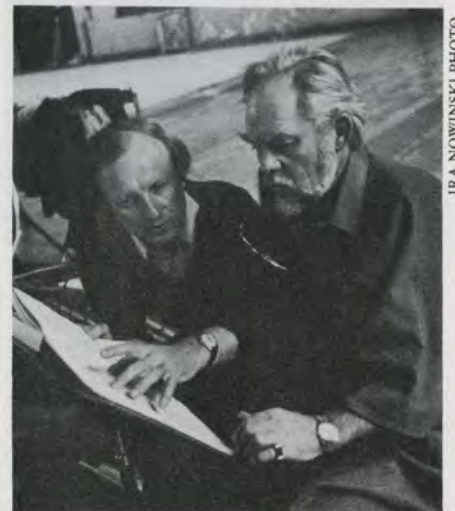
nel of thought, another line of concentration to maintain, you want to have these things as secure as possible.

"I've found from experience that it's a waste of time to delve any deeper than I have into the character — to fine tune it — *at this point*. Because there are so many variables during rehearsal, especially with this score. I mean the director has ideas, the conductor has ideas, everyone's going to put in their 10 cents' worth, and they inevitably will alter my conception. If you set yourself like a concrete foundation and suddenly it has to be changed, you have the business of tearing one out and having to rebuild."

"It's wonderful for someone to come along and shake you up."

Tom speaks with great enthusiasm of Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, his director for *Lear*. "It's wonderful for someone to come along and shake you up, as he did me in *Pelléas* at La Scala. For someone to shake me up I have to have tremendous respect for him. And really there've only been two guys for whom I've had that much respect — Jean-Pierre and Wieland Wagner. I have not found another director who really has challenged me as a performer. I would not have liked to work in Jean-Pierre's *Fliegende Holländer*. I'm sorry, I think that's one of his bad ones, because he did everything for effect. I object when things are changed so much that you lose sight of the basic intention, the essence, of the piece. All the productions I did with Wieland were not good. I mean when he blew it, he blew it. *The Aida*, for instance, in Berlin was *atrocious*. Just not to be believed."

Tom's conversation never strays far from Shakespeare's *King Lear* and



Studying the *Lear* score with conductor Gerd Albrecht.

its new operatic clothes. In March and again in April, I asked him if he thought *Lear*, opera and play, was optimistic or pessimistic. This is what he said in March, as he gathered his ideas about the character he would be living: "I think it's essentially optimistic. Shakespeare was so fantastic at suddenly bringing clear to us the humanity of life, which we forget, I think, racing around. Seeing one of these plays should be a tremendous elation because you see what a human being is capable of being or doing. In *Lear* you see what man can endure, in the Fool you see a man's dual personality, in Gloucester you see a blind man 'see.' You see men relate to women. You see other humans like you and you see what you really are. We are given clues; that's why it's optimistic."

This is what he said in April, six weeks further into *Lear*'s tempest, when, having fantasized enough in here (head), he had started living it all in here (heart): "I have to say pessimistic. It shows man in his true form, what he is capable of doing to himself and to his fellow man. Shakespeare was a genius at it. It shows that when we leave ourselves open and weaken our positions, we open the gates to the people who have pretended, and they walk all over us. It shows a very true, very dark side of man and his inner workings — within himself and in relationships with other people. I said optimistic last time? Well, I'm sorry, now that I'm in it further, I really don't think Shakespeare had that in mind. This is very interesting, because I didn't remember what I'd said before."

Lear, opera and play, presents "a very true, very dark side of man."

At the end of April Tom felt ready to sally forth into rehearsal, to discover "matter and impertinency mixed; reason in madness." To find "how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." To realize "Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise." Ultimately to show us how "machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders follow us disquietly to our graves." But always — with his manner both intimate and expansive, as Tom-Lear — to "speak what we feel, not what we ought to say." ■

STEPHEN WADSWORTH, Contributing Editor of *Saturday Review* and former Managing Editor of *Opera News*, contributes articles to musical journals here and abroad.



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THOUGHTS ON LEAR

BY ARIBERT REIMANN

1968

First thoughts on *Lear*: Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau asks me whether I would be interested in setting Shakespeare's *Lear* to music. I hesitate and reject the idea. But in the course of the year I read the piece again and again: while I am doing other work a sort of store for thoughts for *Lear* forms somewhere in my head. Conversation with Fischer-Dieskau often turns to the subject of *Lear*.

1972

I decide to devote my attention to *Lear*. Suddenly I discover that I have absorbed much of the piece and that it is in the process of transforming itself into music. When I rehear the "Celan cycle" that I wrote in 1971 immediately after *Melusine* in Amsterdam for Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, I realize that this is my starting point. The dark color, the massive groupings in the brass, the deep expanses in the strings provide the key to *Lear's* personality. From this point on, every piece I write in the course of the following years — especially the *Wolkenlose Christfest*, the *Sylvia Plath Songs* and the *Variations for Orchestra* — is a step in the direction of discovering *Lear*. Of course all these pieces have their own lives independent of the opera; but all the same, *Lear* is always in the background. The variations can be seen as a study for the opera, a sort of overture: man is isolated in total loneliness, exposed to the brutality and doubt of existence.

1975

The Bavarian State Opera in Munich informs me through August Everding of the contract to compose *Lear*. The premiere is to be in 1978.

1976

Back in Amsterdam I make thorough notes in the final version of the libretto, which Claus H. Henneberg has spent years writing for me; I go through the whole piece constructing the musical drama, mostly by means of descriptions; I notice how much *Lear* music has accumulated in me over the years. As soon as I know how the piece will end musically, I start to compose.

Lear: his line at the beginning, "Know we have divided in three our kingdom among our daughters" (sung on one note), is at the same time the declaration of his guilt. The music enters — *Lear* is in the net. His reaction to this first chord (in the strings), "once more the urge to sleep," makes clear that this first line was uttered in a half-aware state of mind. Now he

begins to follow the path taken by his psyche.

The strings are massed together in multi-levelled clusters ascending and descending in semi- and quarter-tones, or form lines that circle around one another in rhythmically displaced patterns. Time intervals and the lengths of notes must always vary — the beginning of a process of transformation that will dominate the whole work. Individual sections that are occasionally repeated must always reappear in a different form. Now try to give each character his own musical context.

Goneril: stiff chords contrasting with each other, at first in the woodwinds and some brass, into which gradually rising strings mix. The voice is guided through remote intervals, quiet, direct, only rarely flexible.

Regan: nervous, melismatic, with appoggiaturas, brief coloratura, hysterical and always exaggerated. High woodwind, diminutive figurations, chopped-off splintered sequences of notes.

Cordelia: lyrical, always rounded and balanced. Discover a 12-tone row for her from which Edgar's is derived. These rows, structured like a cross, permeate the whole work and are handled canonically. They form in effect a motif for Cordelia and Edgar, a complex epitomizing truth and purity, a systematically produced, almost nostalgic "12-toneness" that stands out from the otherwise diffuse sound structure. They also provide the basis for the 12-tone complex in the string quartet that accompanies the fool's songs.

Edmund: his monologue represents the first intrusion of the brutality first hinted at in Goneril's and Regan's duet at the beginning. Strident sound, torn-off layered notes in the brass. Percussion.

Storm scene: From below, the storm gradually grows upwards. Quarter-, semi-, three-quarter-, whole and one-and-a-quarter-notes form layers above one another. Each string instrument has its own part. Beginning of first note (double bass): *Lear's* desperation re-echoes and remains unanswered. His followers are silent. A double 24-tone row develops to span seven octaves at *Lear's* outburst: "Let me not weep before you."

The standing chord begins to vibrate slowly from below like an earthquake. Again and again new combinations of individual chords dissolve into a shuddering fortissimo and then recombine. Massive brass effects.

Later on in Lear's monologue the 48-note chord in the strings begins to wander downwards two semitones, but retains the same range until it finally decomposes from top to bottom.

As a result of these shifts, I have two new transpositions of the storm row. In the course of the scene on the heath, a series of lines are formed out of the row from below and above, crossing one another and forming vertically into part-chords and echo-groups.

Edgar as Tom: feigned madness. The voice is shifted to a high pitch and filled with coloratura, artificial, exaggerated. Here Edgar could be the brother of Melusine.

The blinding of Gloucester: the brutal climax, involving shocking torture. Gloucester's blinding is translated into acoustic terms: after a tremendous, almost unbearable crescendo in the percussion with sharp accents in the wind sections, there follows a silence broken only by a rumble from the double basses. Gloucester's last moments of sight are filled with fear. And then — "All dark and comfortless."

Cordelia's aria: the light rhythmic movements of a fourth-chord provide an ostinato. It has already been heard in the third interlude, and is transformed through the superimposition of notes at intervals of 1-1/4 tones into a further 24-tone row.

Lear's final words, epilogue: continually ascending flageolets in the strings, formed from both tone rows (thus synthesizing the storm and quartet rows) according to a specific rhythmic principle (already used horizontally in the fifth scene of part two), enter successively and stratify within a narrow chromatic space to produce the 48-note chord, which is held tremulously.

1/23/1978

End of composition.

2/12/1978

Final version of manuscript completed.

7/9/1978

Premiere at the National Theater in Munich.

Excerpts from an article for the program book, compiled and edited by Klaus Schultz, for the premiere of *Lear* at the Bavarian State Opera, Munich, and included with the recording of the opera issued on Deutsche Grammophon 2709 089. Reprinted by kind permission of Aribert Reimann ©1978 and by Polydor International GMBH (translation).

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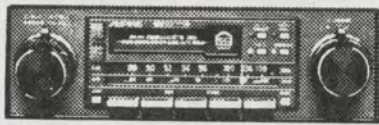
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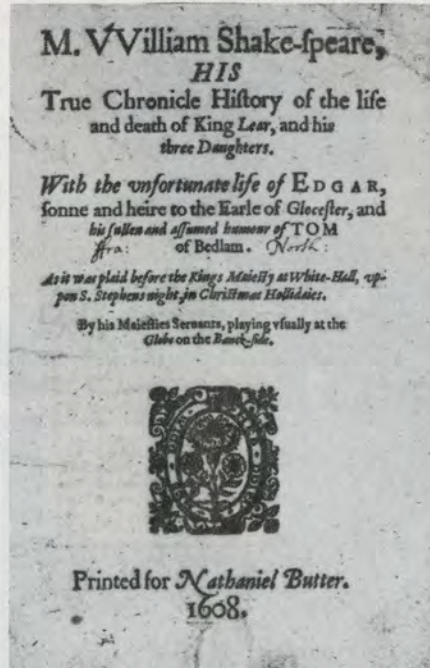
Shakespeare and the Lear Legend

Though the tale of King Lear was well and widely known before Shakespeare wrote his masterpiece, his audience must have been stunned by its shattering transformation at the Bard's hands.

By JOHN C. MEAGHER

On April 6, 1594, Philip Henslowe, the entrepreneur who presided over the financial affairs of the Rose playhouse on London's Bankside, counted his share of the day's box office and entered the sum in his diary, as was his custom. It came to 38 shillings, which was probably satisfactory by Henslowe's standards — a little more than his average take for that week. He noted that two dramatic companies had been involved in its production, the Queen's Men and Sussex's Men. He did not name the author of the

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Title page of the 1608 quarto edition of *King Lear*, featured in the Opera Museum exhibit.

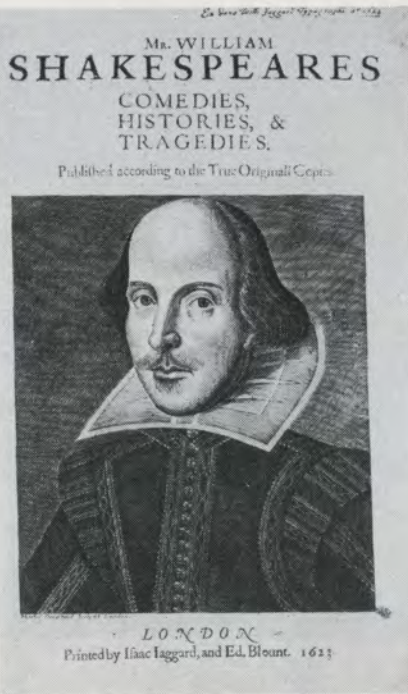
play. Its title was "kinge leare."

The author is still unknown, and his play is generally forgotten. By happy chance, it found its way into print in 1605, albeit anonymously; but by the time of its publication, *The True Chronicle Historie of King Lear and his three daughters* was already in the process of being overshadowed by William Shakespeare's new treatment of the same story. From that time on, *King Lear* has belonged to Shakespeare. *The Chronicle Historie* is no longer performed, and it is no longer quite possible to see its *King Lear* as he must have been seen on April 6, 1594, as a splendid and perhaps defini-

Geoffrey of Monmouth set the basic outline of the Lear Legend.

tive reinterpretation of one of the great heroes of British history. It is no longer quite possible to see that *King Lear* as Shakespeare must have first seen him, because our version is irrecoverably blurred by Shakespeare's drastic reevaluation of what he saw.

Historical themes had long since been firmly established on the English stage, and the chronicles of English history — especially the massive compilation by Raphael Holinshed — had been amply pillaged by popular dramatists looking for likely plots and true heroes and villains of the past. Early in his career, Shakespeare himself had tried his hand at dramatizing the reigns of Henry VI and Richard III — but that was relatively recent lore, and



Title page of the First Folio Edition of Shakespeare's works, 1623.

others had looked into the more exotic distance. The pages of Henslowe's diary are studded with titles of plays, most of them long since lost, that give witness to the historical vogue — plays reaching back not only to Richard Coeur de Lion, King Henry I, Robert II and Malcolm King of Scots, but also to Hardicanute and William the Conquerer and the great Arthur himself. Here and there one finds names now grown much more obscure: Vortigern, Brute Greenshield, Lud, Cutlack, Mulmutius Dunwallow. Their standing in history is now as thoroughly gone as the plays that celebrated them in the 1590s, but to the Elizabethan theatergoer, they were part of the real and glorious past, and part of the same dynasty that produced the one whose memory has outlived them all — King Lear.

Lear — or Leir, as he was more usually known before Shakespeare — came into existence to fill a felt need. At the end of the eighth century, the British chronicler Nennius had offered his readers a classy and classical pedigree by claiming that the British race had been founded by a descendant of Aeneas, named Brutus. But, after offering this tantalizing detail, Nennius had moved on to deal with Julius Caesar, with nothing more to say about Britain's Trojan heritage. Subsequent chroniclers puzzled over this curious gap in his account, and wondered what had transpired in the interval. One of them was Henry of Huntingdon, who wrote apologetically in 1139 that he had been unable to find either written or oral tradition to fill in the blank



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Lear's rejection of Cordelia by Henry Fuseli in an 1803 engraving by R. Earlom.

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centuries, until his recent discovery of a marvelous history of the early kings of Britain. The book in question was Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*.

Geoffrey's book was fairly new at the time. So was the history it contained. For despite Geoffrey's acknowledgment of his dependence on an old account he had recently found, his chronicle of the early British kings was cut from whole cloth of his own weaving, the product not of patient research but of wonderful romantic imagination.

Geoffrey's most distinguished and permanent contribution was in his elaboration of the reign of King Arthur, but the line of kings he invented to follow Brutus earned a semi-permanent place in the imagination of his countrymen. Subsequent

The defeat of Lear and Cordelia goes against the entire legend.

chronicles continued — in prose and in verse; in Latin, French and English; in England and on the Continent — to spread the lore of the Trojan monarchs who were the glory of the once unknown antiquity of Britain. By the reign of Elizabeth, despite doubts that had arisen among the learned about Geoffrey's reliability, they were ready to be displayed upon the stage.

Not all of Geoffrey's fabulous kings were altogether his invention. His dynasty included some demoted Celtic deities, the last remnants of a great *Götterdämmerung* of Christian revisionism by which the alien gods

were tamed to more domestic and manageable uses. One of them was King Lud, to whom Geoffrey assigned the honor of founding London. And indeed, there may have been some connection: Ludgate Hill, where St. Paul's Cathedral was built, may at an earlier time have supported a shrine of the god Llud. Another of the kings, the tenth in line from Brutus, is a dimly recognizable metamorphosis of the sea-god who was known to the Welsh as Llyr and to the Irish as Ler.

But Geoffrey's King Lear retains no shred of divinity. On the contrary, his poor mortality is the essence of his story. Despite his long reign, which could have been filled with heroics of any description, Lear interested Geoffrey only as the vehicle for the one story that has been identified with him ever since. In two brief sentences, Geoffrey breezed through Lear's first 60 years on the British throne and opened the tale of the last years of his life and the way they were shaped by his fateful decision to divide his kingdom among his three daughters on the basis of a test of love.

Those who told Lear's story repeatedly over the ensuing centuries — over 50 versions survive, side-by-side with Geoffrey's continually popular original account — made minor adjustments here and there, but remain basically faithful to the outlines set down by Geoffrey. There was no need to stray: the memorable essentials were already all there, with the bright simplicity of a proverb. They were probably there before Geoffrey attached them to King Lear, for examples of the story have been collected in folktales as remote as the antiquity of India. But wherever the

story was told of King Leir, it was ultimately Geoffrey's version that was used.

Leir is old, and must provide for the welfare of his kingdom and his three daughters. He decides to divide his realm into three dowries and marry the daughters to worthy rulers, the choicest land to go to the daughter who loves him most. Gonorilla assures him that she loves him more than her own soul; Regan claims to love him above all creatures; but his youngest and best-beloved, Cordeilla, replies that she loves her father as a dutiful daughter should, and that only flattery would offer more than this. Leir, offended and angry, casts her off with nothing and divides her share between her sisters, marrying them to the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall. Cordeilla, though dowerless, is wooed by the discerning King of the Franks and retires with him to Gaul.

Subsequent versions of the story alter little in these beginnings. Now and again some touch of characterization or elaboration creeps in. The older sisters embroider their protestations of love, sometimes with a trace of cynicism; the youngest answers sometimes in a riddle, sometimes plainly. Occasionally we are given word of a Cinderella-like rivalry between the older sisters and the more lovely youngest. Leir may offer only the promise of his kingdom in inheritance, or abdicate at once. But the variations stay within the boundaries of the basic fairy-tale structure, and the key elements of the story — the test, the responses, the angry decision — remain appropriately untouched.

No previous version had ever envisioned such devastation.

There is one major, though only partial, exception, worth noting because it lies closest to what Shakespeare did. The author of *The Chronicle Historie* had more scope to work with than the earlier tellers of Leir's story, and his dramatic format invited more attention to characterizations, motives and rationales. What the fundamental tale took as axioms, he chose to account for as well as he could. On the one hand, he develops the characters of Gonorill and Ragan as scheming, envious, bickering, small-minded shrews. And on the other hand, he undertakes to explain why Leir resorts to the oddity of the love-test: Cordella has resisted his attempts to provide her with a husband, and by this device he will trick her into pledging such a devoted submission to her father's will that she cannot then say no when he takes advantage of it to match her



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Edmund Spenser, whose version of the Lear legend had the king abdicate in favor of his older daughters.

with the King of Hibernia. The effect of these changes is to enhance the rationality of the event, but to diminish the stark strength of the original tale's abrupt givenness.

Shakespeare simply dispensed with these improvements, telescoped the first six scenes of *The Chronicle Historie* into one of his own, and removed virtually all traces of the meannesses of character and the crafty schemes. The motives are not explained, but neither are they put to question. The love-test is not a sly strategy but a gesture of imperiousness as bold and decisive as the rejection of Cordelia; the flattery is not the cynical manipulation of a gullible old man, but the token gracious overstatement of testimonial occasions, as real, and as unreal, as the situation itself. By returning Lear and his elder daughters to the places Geoffrey had given them, Shakespeare restored to them a stature from which it could again be terrible to fall.

Despite such effective economies, Shakespeare's audience soon realized that it was not his intention to simplify the story of Lear. There was a hint of this when Lear's rejection of Cordelia overflowed into his gratuitous banishment of her defender, Kent; but the following scene made it clear that this was not going to be Lear's play alone. Shakespeare had found in Sidney's *Arcadia* an analogous adventure which he adapted as the story of Gloucester and his two sons. It held enough material for a separate play, and its inclusion could have diminished this one, stealing attention from the plight of Lear. But the risk was well calculated and well controlled. The stuff of Gloucester's tale echoes the stuff of Lear's in another key and tempo, surrounding it with deeper sounds of doom; and in the meantime, Shake-

speare interwove the characters so that those of the Gloucester plot both occasion and intensify the gradual stages by which Lear and his three daughters come to ruin.

Shakespeare's addition of a second plot was a radical departure for the unfolding of Lear's story, and it was enlisted in support of a departure still more radical. He meant to redefine the breaking of Lear, and his redefinition ran most starkly against what his audience had learned from *The Chronicle Historie*.

Geoffrey's Leir had gone unwillingly from power. He had reserved half his kingdom until his death, but that, too, was wrested from him in a rebellion by his impatient sons-in-law, leaving the old king with Gonorilla's hospitality and a modest company of soldier-retainers. Geoffrey does not report Leir's reaction until Gonorilla's hospitality fades, and the king goes indignantly to seek relief from Regan. It is only after Regan, too, tires of him, and Gonorilla's position hardens further, that Geoffrey allows Leir to give vent to his grief in the manner of the medieval "complaint," protesting his losses and blaming the fates with embittered kingly dignity and half-swallowed pride. His lament became a set-piece fixture of the story in subsequent retellings, sometimes shifting its position but varying little in its tone. When the traditional Leir finally turns uncertainly to his rejected youngest daughter as a last and desperate resource, he does so with the humiliated grandeur of a man who had never quite got used to being unkinged.

But there was another potentiality in the story, another way of capitalizing on its pathos. The rebellion had traditionally been reported in a perfunctory way; Edmund Spenser's version of the story dispensed with it altogether, and had Leir abdicate in favor of his older daughters. Picking

Shakespeare found the stuff of Gloucester's tale in Sidney's *Arcadia*.

up on this clue, the author of *The Chronicle Historie* offered a Leir who from the beginning was bound for pious retirement, giving away his kingdom to "take me to my prayers and beads." The ostensibly pagan setting is only a veneer, readily overcome: the play's opening lines show Leir gently lamenting his recently deceased Queen, "Whose soule I hope, possess of heavenly joyes, / Doth ride in triumph 'mongst the Cherubins," and thereafter there is almost nothing that might compromise the self-



Sir Philip Sidney, in whose *Arcadia*, seen in the lower right of this engraving, Shakespeare found the stuff of Gloucester's tale.

assessment he later offers: "There lives not any under heavens bright eye / That can convict me of impiety." Except, of course, Cordella, whom he wrongs "Through dotting frenzy, and o're-jealous love" — but his remorseful repentance for this misstep is total, and he soon acknowledges that it has made him unfit to live. Through every step of his humiliation at the hands of his daughters, he responds with patient acceptance, inventing extenuating excuses for irrationally shrewish and slanderous abuse and greeting his hired would-be assassin with mild forgiveness. At the last moment before his rescue by Cordella, he offers to sustain his faithful companion Perillus with his own life's blood. Throughout, Lear's woeful progress is a study in penance and sanctity.

Schooled by this theatrical redefinition and refinement of Lear, Shakespeare's audience would have been totally unprepared for what happens as the King's state dwindles. Even Geoffrey's lamenting Lear is only a shadow beside the burst of fury and cursing of Shakespeare's Lear, denying and battling his tears as he prays for the gift of rage to a heaven that answers only with a punishing storm, his mind finally shattering into fragments of demented self-pity and snarling cynicism. The broken Lear of *The Chronicle Historie* is consoled in his holy grief by loyal Perillus, but Lear's faithful Kent must look on helplessly and unrecognized as his master's desolation is dragged through a saturnalia of madness by the goading Fool and the crazed Tom O'Bedlam. No previous version of this mythical king had ever envisioned such devastation.

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Detail from "King Lear Weeping over the Dead Body of Cordelia" (1787) by English painter James Barry.

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mation is at the end. The stunning shock he delivers to those who knew the story — any version of the story, without exception — is not only un-cushioned but sharpened by his dalliances with tradition. All his predecessors had followed the logic of the fairy tale: once Lear had suffered the hard lessons of his false trust, he is redeemed by the truth of his youngest daughter's initial pledge. Through her faithful intervention, Lear is restored to his lost throne, and all is well. The wheel has come full circle, and the half-hidden truth of the story's beginning stands vindicated and clear.

Shakespeare teases us in this direction. Cordelia's intercession for her father rumbles in the background from the middle of the play, surfaces movingly when she returns and rescues him, and seems headed for a

The injustice of *King Lear* is brutal and strident.

glorious conclusion as she marches with the restored Lear to do battle with the divided forces of their enemy. The defeat of Lear and Cordelia is an absurdity that Shakespeare forces upon us, against the grain not only of the entire Lear tradition but even of his own building of expectations. After allowing us a moment to recover from the shock, he then braces us for their final peril and rescue — and suddenly lets the unexpected disaster crash upon us with Cordelia's brutal murder and the dying howls of a demented

Lear. The happy ending that was always implicit in the sad beginning, and had been faithfully recounted in every known version of the story through all the centuries of its wide circulation, was savaged and shattered in the cruel ending of Shakespeare's Lear.

The injustice of *King Lear* is brutal and strident, and deliberately inflicted upon a story that had always protested that it should not be so. In the late 18th century, Samuel Johnson wrote that "I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as editor." The shock had been generally felt, and the aversion generally observed, for Shakespeare's version was banished from the stage for over a century. It was replaced by Nahum Tate's revision in 1681, which overruled Shakespeare in favor of the spirit of *The Chronicle Historie*. Tate's new Lear survives to go gracefully and contentedly into humble retirement, bestowing his restored throne upon Cordelia. This version supplanted Shakespeare's until well into the 19th century. It might have made a good opera in 19th-century style; but it is appropriate that Shakespeare's own handling of the story should wait for the less shock-resistant musical idioms of our own time. ■ JOHN C. MEAGHER is a professor at the University of Toronto, Canada, where he teaches both English and Religious Knowledge at St. Michael's College.

MEROLA PROGRAM SCHEDULE 1981

Every summer, approximately 20 singers are selected from a nationwide series of San Francisco Opera Auditions to participate in the prestigious Merola Opera Program at the San Francisco Opera. The 1981 program begins June 15 under the supervision of H. Wesley Balk and will culminate with the Grand Finals of the Auditions on the stage of the War Memorial Opera House on August 23 at 8 P.M.

General director Kurt Herbert Adler created the Merola Opera Program to offer young American singers rigorous professional training in the operatic craft, and continues to personally oversee the annual 10-week session. Renowned soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf will again offer master classes (open to Merola Fund members only), as will Adler and the president of the Merola Fund, James H. Schwabacher. Master coaches for the program are Margaret Singer, who will also supervise the apprentice coaches, Martha Gerhart, George Lawner and Willie Anthony Waters. Barbara Hardgrave will again be the diction coach.

In addition to receiving intensive instruction in such aspects of opera performance as diction, movement, acting, stage deportment and make-up, 1981 Merola participants will perform Otto Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in a free concert at Stern Grove on July 26 at 2 P.M. under Balk's direction, with George Lawner conducting the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. Merola will also celebrate its 20th consecutive year of performances at the Paul Masson Mountain Winery with Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* on August 15 and 16, with Matthew Farruggio directing and Willie Anthony Waters conducting. David Agler will conduct the orchestra for the August 23 Grand Finals. For free tickets send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Grand Finals, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco, CA 94102.

On August 9 at Stern Grove, Kurt Herbert Adler will conduct a free concert at 2 P.M. featuring three notable alumni of the Merola Program, soprano Carol Vaness, tenor Barry McCauley and bass Kevin Langan.



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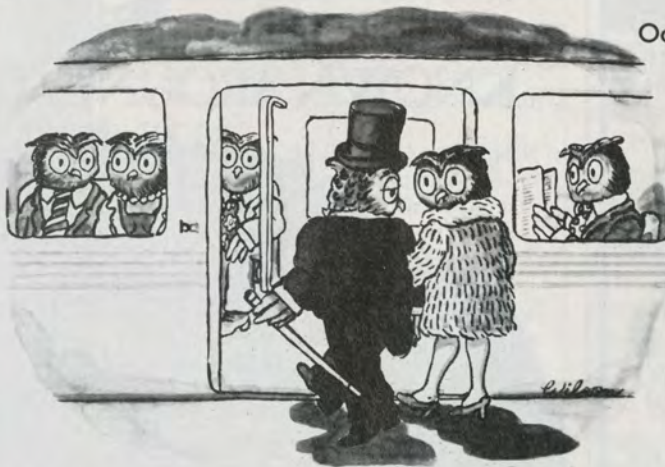
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1981 PREVIEWWS

1981 OPERA PREVIEWWS

Information on opera previews and lectures is always carried in the San Francisco Opera program magazines. To enable patrons to make advance plans, we are printing a list of all previews and lectures which are open to the public.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWWS

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD AUXILIARY

Opera "Insights" held in the Green Room of the Herbst Theatre, Veterans' Memorial Building, Van Ness & McAllister, in San Francisco. Lectures are free to the public and feature some of the season's outstanding artists in discussion. Schedule to be announced. For additional information, please call (415) 565-6432.

MARIN

Previews held at Park School Auditorium, 360 East Blithedale, Mill Valley; refreshments served at 7:30 p.m., previews at 8:00 p.m. Series registration is \$17.50 for 6 previews (\$15.00 for students and seniors). Single tickets are \$3.50 (\$3.00 for students and seniors). For further information, please call (415) 565-6432.

SEMIRAMIDE

Arthur Kaplan 9/3

LADY MACBETH

Speight Jenkins 9/17

CARMEN

Robert Jacobson 9/24

LE CID

James Keolker 10/8

WOZZECK

Dale Harris 10/22

DIE WALKÜRE

Henry Holt 11/19

NORTH PENINSULA

Previews held at William Crocker School, 2600 Ralston Ave., Hillsborough. Lectures begin at 7:30 p.m. Series registration is \$15.00; single tickets are \$4.50. For further information, please call (415) 342-8674 or (415) 343-7620.

SEMIRAMIDE AND SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

Ramona Rockway and singers 9/8

CARMEN

Robert Jacobson 9/28

WOZZECK and LE CID

Arthur Kaplan 10/12

DIE WALKÜRE

Henry Holt 11/16

SAN JOSE OPERA GUILD

All lectures begin at 10 a.m. Series is open to the public at a cost of \$3.00 per lecture (free of charge to San Jose Opera Guild members). Location to be announced. For further information, please call (408) 741-1331.

SEMIRAMIDE

Arthur Kaplan 9/11

LADY MACBETH

Speight Jenkins 9/17

CARMEN

Robert Jacobson 9/25

LE CID

Dale Harris 10/2

WOZZECK

Dale Harris 10/23

LUCIA

Donald Pippin 10/30

AIDA

James Keolker 11/6

DIE WALKÜRE

Henry Holt 11/13

SOUTH PENINSULA

Previews held at the Palo Alto Cultural Center, 1313 Newell Road, at 8:00 p.m. Series registration is \$15.00; single tickets are available. For further information, please call (415) 941-3890.

LADY MACBETH

Speight Jenkins 9/15

LE CID

Arthur Kaplan 9/22

CARMEN

Robert Jacobson 9/29

WOZZECK

Dale Harris 10/20

LUCIA

Donald Pippin 10/27

DIE WALKÜRE

Henry Holt 11/10

There will be a special Champagne Gala Preview of SEMIRAMIDE with singers on September 15 at 8:00 p.m., also at the Cultural Center. Admission is \$5.00.

NAPA OPERA LECTURE SERIES

For the ninth year there will be a ten-week course called ADVENTURES IN OPERA in Napa. The course, which accompanies the Saturday and Sunday series at the San Francisco Opera, will be held on Thursday nights from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at a location to be determined. Ernest Fly will again teach the course. For further information, please call Mr. Fly at (707) 224-6162. Cost for the entire series will be \$18.00. Individual lectures will be \$2.00.

SEMIRAMIDE 9/10

MANON 9/17

LADY MACBETH 9/24

MERRY WIDOW 10/1

CARMEN 10/8

WOZZECK/LE CID 10/15

LUCIA 10/29

AIDA 11/5

DIE WALKÜRE 11/12

IL TROVATORE 11/19

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1981 PREVIEW

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

All Junior League opera previews will be held at the Herbst Theater in the Veterans' Auditorium, Van Ness and McAllister. Lectures begin at 11:00 a.m. There is no admission charge. For information, please call Darralyn Saladino at (415) 931-0266.

SEMIRAMIDE
Arthur Kaplan 10/10
MANON
Speight Jenkins 10/15
LE CID
Dale Harris 10/22
WOZZECK
Michael Barclay 11/14

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

Previews of all the operas of the 1981 season will be given by Arthur Kaplan, editor of the San Francisco Opera Magazine, and Michael Barclay, director of Opera Education International. All lectures are given in the auditorium of the Dr. William Cobb School, 2725 California Street, between Scott and Divisadero, at 7:30 p.m. Free parking is available in the schoolyard outside the auditorium. Discount series tickets for all 11 lectures, including Barclay's discography "The 1981 Season on Records," is \$45. Individual admission is \$5. For further information call (415) 526-5244.

SEMIRAMIDE
Michael Barclay 9/2
MANON
Arthur Kaplan 9/9
LADY MACBETH
Michael Barclay 9/17
CARMEN
Michael Barclay 9/22
MERRY WIDOW
Michael Barclay 9/28
LE CID
Arthur Kaplan 10/7
WOZZECK
Michael Barclay 10/20
LUCIA
Michael Barclay 10/29
AIDA
Arthur Kaplan 11/5
DIE WALKÜRE
Michael Barclay 11/10
IL TROVATORE
Arthur Kaplan 11/16

FRIENDS OF THE KENSINGTON LIBRARY PRESENTS GENERAL LECTURE ON VERDI

A general lecture on the operas of Giuseppe Verdi, with an emphasis on *Il Trovatore* and *Aida*, will be given by Michael Barclay on Thursday, November 5 at the Kensington Library, 61 Arlington Avenue, Kensington. The lecture will begin at 7:30 p.m. and admission is free. For further information, please call (415) 526-3043.

PIEDMONT ADULT EDUCATION OPERA PREVIEW SERIES

Previews will be held at the auditorium of Piedmont High School, 800 Magnolia Avenue, Piedmont, at 7:30 p.m. on two Tuesday and ten Monday evenings. Lectures will be given by San Francisco Opera Magazine editor Arthur Kaplan and Opera Education International director Michael Barclay. Series registration is \$45; \$40 for Piedmont residents. Pre-registration desirable. For further information call (415) 653-9454 or 658-3679.

SEMIRAMIDE
Arthur Kaplan 9/1
MANON
Arthur Kaplan 9/8
LADY MACBETH
Michael Barclay 9/14
CARMEN
Arthur Kaplan 9/21
LE CID
Arthur Kaplan 9/28
WOZZECK
Michael Barclay 10/5
LUCIA
Michael Barclay 10/12
AIDA
Arthur Kaplan 11/2
DIE WALKÜRE
Michael Barclay 11/16
IL TROVATORE
Arthur Kaplan 11/23

CHABOT COLLEGE LECTURE SERIES/OPERA FOR EVERYONE

A ten-week series of introductions to the 1981 San Francisco Opera season. Offered by Chabot College and conducted by Eugene Marker, these 10 lectures are open to all, free of charge, and will be given on ten consecutive Thursday evenings. All lectures are from 7:00 to 9:15 p.m. beginning on Thursday, September 10, and are located at the City of San Leandro Community Library Auditorium, 300 Estudillo Avenue, San Leandro. For further information, please call (415) 786-6632.

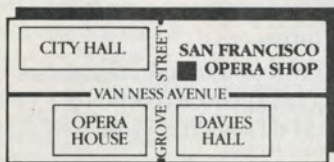
SEMIRAMIDE 9/10
MANON 9/17
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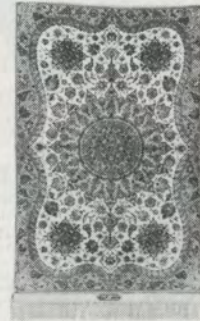
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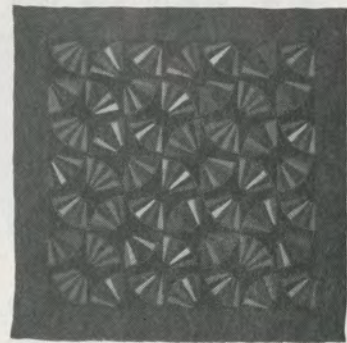
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Look for this bus, marked "47 Special," after each performance in the north-bound bus zone at Van Ness Avenue and Grove Street — across Van Ness from the Opera House.

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Taxi Service

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.

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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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The telephone number 431-4370 may be used by patrons for emergency contact only during performances. Before the performance, patrons anticipating possible contact should leave their seat number at the Nurse's Station in the lower lounge, where the emergency telephone is located.

Ticket Information

San Francisco Opera box office. Lobby, War Memorial Opera House: Van Ness at Grove, (415) 431-1210. 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday through Saturday. 10 A.M. through first intermission on all performance days.

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

Unused Tickets

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

Opera glasses are available for rent in the lobby.

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

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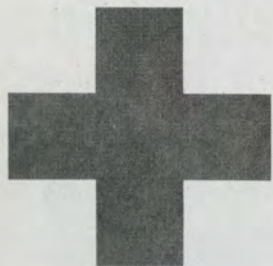
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This production of *Lear* was made possible by generous and deeply appreciated grants from the Carol Buck Sells Foundation and the San Francisco Opera Guild.

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(in English)

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Pet Halmen

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Richard Bradshaw

Musical Preparation

Kathryn Cathcart*

Jonathan Khuner*

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The performance will last approximately three hours.

CAST

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| <i>Lear</i> | Thomas Stewart |
| <i>King of France</i> | Arnold Voketaitis |
| <i>Duke of Albany</i> | Timothy Noble* |
| <i>Duke of Cornwall</i> | John Duykers |
| <i>Earl of Kent</i> | William Lewis |
| <i>Earl of Gloucester</i> | Chester Ludgin |
| <i>Edgar, son of Gloucester</i> | David Knutson* |
| <i>Edmund, bastard son of Gloucester</i> | Jacque Trussel* |
| <i>Goneril</i> | Helga Dernesch* |
| <i>Regan</i> | Rita Shane |
| <i>Cordelia</i> | Emily Rawlins |
| <i>Fool</i> | Robert Lloyd* |
| <i>Servant</i> | William Wahman |
| <i>Knight</i> | Gail Chugg* |

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** American opera debut

* San Francisco Opera debut

PLACE AND TIME: Britain in ancient times

THERE IS A SINGLE INTERMISSION BETWEEN THE TWO PARTS

SYNOPSIS

Lear

Place and Time: Ancient Britain

ACT I

SCENE 1 — Wearing by the cares of government, the aged King Lear has decided to divide his kingdom among his three daughters. The one who can make the strongest expression of her love for him is to receive the largest share. Goneril and Regan vie with each other in describing their filial devotion in extravagant terms, and each receives a third of the kingdom. Cordelia, however, conscious of her deep love for her father, remains silent. Lear is enraged by this. As he is about to reject her, his faithful follower Kent admonishes him for his folly. Kent is banished and Cordelia is hurriedly married off to the King of France, who accepts her for her honesty, not for any possible inheritance. The young couple is forced to leave the country. Goneril and her husband Albany divide the inheritance with Regan and her husband Cornwall. Both daughters are determined to rid themselves of their father, whom they consider a burden, as soon as possible. By means of a forged letter, Gloucester's bastard son Edmund has led his father to believe that his legitimate son Edgar is plotting Gloucester's death. Gloucester banishes Edgar.

SCENE 2 — Kent, disguised as a servant, enters Lear's service. Goneril and Regan ask their father to dismiss most of his retinue. He refuses angrily, and they drive him away.

SCENE 3 — A storm rages on the heath. Lear is close to madness. Kent and the Fool (the king's jester) lead him into a hovel.

SCENE 4 — Edgar has sought refuge from his father's men in this hovel. Gloucester, arriving with his followers to serve the king, does not recognize his son, who is feigning madness. Lear is taken to Dover.

ACT II

SCENE 1 — Cornwall has captured Gloucester. Lear's supporters are to be punished. Goneril and Edmund, who refuses to help his father,

urge Albany to take up arms against the King of France, who has landed with his army at Dover. Gloucester defends his actions in saving Lear from the inhumanity of the king's daughters. Cornwall puts out one of Gloucester's eyes, and is stabbed by a servant. Regan kills the servant and puts out Gloucester's other eye. Gloucester calls to Edmund for help, but Regan reveals that it is Edmund who has betrayed him. Gloucester is cast out onto the road to Dover.

SCENE 2 — Goneril promises Edmund the crown if he will support her in defiance of Albany, who has turned against her, revolted by her cruelty.

SCENE 3 — Cordelia laments her father's insanity. She sends soldiers to search for him.

SCENE 4 — Gloucester asks his son Edgar, whom he still does not recognize, to lead him to Dover.

SCENE 5 — Gloucester wishes to end his life, and requests that Edgar lead him to the brink of a cliff by the sea. His son deceives him, making him believe he has fallen from a great height. Lear meets them. Gloucester at once recognizes his voice and envies him the madness that makes him unaware of the wrongs he has suffered. Soldiers lead the king to Cordelia's camp at Dover.

SCENE 6 — In the French camp, the loving Cordelia promises Lear a tranquil old age and the power to bring peace to the land.

SCENE 7 — Edmund has captured Lear and Cordelia. He gives the order for Cordelia to be strangled in prison. He believes he has won the crown, but Albany disputes his claim. Regan, who wants to be the queen, allies herself with Edmund. She appoints him commander of her forces, left leaderless by the death of Cornwall. Goneril has administered a slow poison to Regan, which begins to take effect. Edgar appears and challenges Edmund to single combat, in which the bastard falls. Regan dies at Edmund's side. The hopelessness of Goneril's position drives her to suicide. Lear appears with the dead Cordelia in his arms. His grief for his daughter makes his voice fail him and he dies.

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