Il Barbiere di Siviglia
(The Barber of Seville)

1981

Friday, June 11, 1982 8:00 PM
Wednesday, June 16, 1982 8:00 PM
Saturday, June 19, 1982 8:00 PM
Wednesday, June 23, 1982 8:00 PM
Sunday, June 27, 1982 2:00 PM
Thursday, July 1, 1982 7:30 PM

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1982 Summer Festival

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I am delighted and honored to succeed two extraordinary men, Gaetano Merola and Kurt Herbert Adler, who made the San Francisco Opera into a great international company. Conscious of the responsibility of following in their footsteps, and very much aware of the high standards of our loyal public, I am determined to keep those standards up, and to keep our reputation international.

Having inherited an excellent staff whose energies are now extended over two major seasons per year rather than one, I feel certain they have the strength of purpose and staying power to give me the support I need.

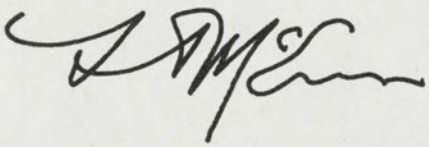
It is becoming a cliché to say that these are difficult times, but the enterprising spirit which will continue to be a part of this company can, when necessary, make ingenuity take the place of dollars we lack. An example of this ingenuity is our present Summer Festival. Of the five colorful productions being offered, four are new to our local audiences, yet the total cost to the San Francisco Opera has been nowhere near the large investment currently required to build four new productions.

Perhaps because of my business background I am very anxious for the company to have as healthy a financial future as possible and I thank, in advance, those of you who have understood the need for more active and varied fund-raising.

Planning ahead in the world of opera has changed completely in the last few years. The services of top-flight artists must now be contracted years in advance. This means that I must commit the Company to a definite artistic future. We must rebuild much of the standard repertoire and still maintain the excitement of new productions and new works. The plans I have made are both traditional and adventurous.

Somehow, the combination of traditional and adventurous seems appropriate for an artistic endeavor in our great city. I am proud to be part of a community which has such great respect for the past and is at the same time a leader and an innovator.

IRA NOWINSKI PHOTO



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1982 SUMMER FESTIVAL **IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA**

Features

20

28

40

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From the President

We are pleased to welcome you to our second summer season. This year the San Francisco Opera is participating in the San Francisco Summer Festival, a new and larger concept that coordinates the presentations of the entire arts community into a major, multi-faceted attraction for both residents and tourists.

Strong promotional efforts plus the critical acclaim that followed our 1981 Festival have resulted in greatly increased ticket sales for the 1982 summer season. We are greatly encouraged by this increased base of audience support for our new summer venture.

This summer San Francisco Opera audiences will see four operas presented in productions that are new to San Francisco and a revival of one of our own favorites, Rossini's *The Barber of Seville.* The San Francisco Foundation has generously underwritten the cost of presenting the beautiful English National Opera production of Handel's *Julius Caesar,* and a grant from the L.J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation has made possible the David Hockney production of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress,* originally created for the

RON SCHERL PHOTO

Walter M. Baird
President and Chief Executive Officer
San Francisco Opera Association

Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Teatro alla Scala, Milan. A sumptuous new production of Verdi's *Nabucco* created for San Francisco Opera and a new production of Puccini's *Turandot,* produced in cooperation with the opera companies of Dallas, Houston and Miami, round out a varied and visually stunning season.

As you no doubt know, ticket revenues cover approximately 55 per cent of our expenses; the difference must be made up with contributed income. Therefore, while we applaud the enthusiastic response from our subscribers, we must at the same time explore new sources of support. Those of you who do not currently contribute to the San Francisco Opera we ask to share the burden of presenting world-class opera; those of you who have given us your loyal support over the years we ask to continue. We have striven to keep projected expenditures for 1982 to a modest increase over those of 1981. We ask that you consider one of the many ways in which you can help the San Francisco Opera, from outright donations to the many vehicles of deferred giving. We welcome your calls and the opportunity to discuss your role in preserving this great cultural institution, the San Francisco Opera.

In addition to the above-mentioned sponsors, we would like to extend our gratitude to the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, the Hotel Tax Fund, Mayor Dianne Feinstein, Chief Administrative Officer Roger Boas, the City and County of San Francisco, the San Francisco Opera Guild, and the War Memorial Board of Trustees. But most of all we would like to thank you, our audience and donors, for making possible this grand new tradition of summer opera.

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In Memoriam
JAMES D. ROBERTSON
August 17, 1920 - February 23, 1982

The officers, Board of Directors, staff and members of the San Francisco Opera Association express their deep sadness and regret at the death of James D. Robertson. Vice president and treasurer of the Executive Committee of the San Francisco Opera Association since 1970, Mr. Robertson also served on the Boards of the San Francisco Symphony and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. His influence extended nationally: he was a member of the National Council on the Arts and the Board of the Metropolitan Opera, as well as a trustee of the National Opera Institute. His special relationship with the San Francisco Opera is exemplified by his generosity in sponsoring productions here of *Manon, Norma, Rigoletto, Don Giovanni, Gianni Schicchi, Cavalleria Rusticana* and *I Pagliacci.* The arts community has lost a loyal friend and generous patron. His leadership, enthusiasm and support have left an indelible mark upon the San Francisco Opera.

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San Francisco Opera On Radio

Bay Area radio audiences will have four opportunities to hear each of the San Francisco Opera 1982 broadcasts, including the traditional Friday night time slot. This twelfth season of opera broadcasts, produced by San Francisco Opera in cooperation with KQED-FM, will also be heard nationwide on member stations of National Public Radio and other selected stations throughout the country. Recipient of the 1980 George Foster Peabody Award, the broadcasts are made possible in part by grants from Chevron USA, Inc., and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Local broadcasts will be Friday evenings and Saturday mornings on KQED-FM, 88.5, at the times listed below. Broadcasts may also be heard Saturdays at 1:30 p.m. on KCSM, 91.1 FM, and Sundays at 1 p.m. on KALW, 91.7 FM (all times are Pacific Time).

9/3 Julius Caesar
8 p.m., 11 a.m.
9/10 Un Ballo in Maschera
7 p.m., 11 a.m.
9/17 Norma
8 p.m., 11 a.m.
9/24 The Barber of Seville
8 p.m., 11 a.m.
10/1 Turandot
8 p.m., 11 a.m.
10/8 Nabucco
8 p.m., 11 a.m.
10/15 Le Nozze di Figaro
7:30 p.m., 10:30 a.m.
10/22 La Cenerentola
8 p.m., 11 a.m.
10/29 Dialogues of the Carmelites
8 p.m., 11 a.m.
11/5 The Rake's Progress
8 p.m., 11 a.m.
11/12 The Queen of Spades
8 p.m., 11 a.m.
11/19 Lohengrin
7:30 p.m., 10:30 a.m.
11/26 Cendrillon
8 p.m., 11 a.m.

For broadcast times outside the Bay Area, contact your local NPR station or consult local listings. Executive producer for the San Francisco Opera broadcasts is Robert Walker; producer, Marilyn Mercur. Gene Parrish is host, and Fred Krock the audio engineer.

San Francisco Opera

Terence A. McEwen, general director

1982 Summer Festival Season

Handel, **Julius Caesar**
New production Performed in English

Tatiana Troyanos, Valerie Masterson, Sarah Walker, Delia Wallis*/ James Bowman, Jeffrey Gall*, Stanley Wexler, Gregory Stapp
Conductor: Charles Mackerras
Production: John Copley*
Set designer: John Pascoe**
Costume designer: Michael Stennett*

Production from the English National Opera
May 28, June 2, 5, 8 at 7:30 p.m., June 13 at 1:30 p.m.

Puccini, **Turandot**
New production Performed in Italian

Linda Kelm*, Barbara Daniels/Nicola Martinucci*, Kevin Langan, David Gordon, Jonathan Green, Thomas Woodman, Eddie Albert*
Conductor: Myung-Whun Chung
Production: Bliss Hebert
Set and costume designer: Allen Charles Klein*

Produced in cooperation with the opera companies of Dallas, Houston and Miami
June 3 at 8 p.m., June 6 at 2 p.m., June 9 at 7:30 p.m., June 12, 15 and 18 at 8 p.m.

Rossini, **The Barber of Seville**
Performed in Italian

Margarita Zimmermann* (6/11, 16, 19), Kathleen Kuhlmann* (6/23, 27; 7/1), Regina Sarfaty* (6/11, 16, 19), Evelyn de la Rosa (6/23, 27, 7/1)/Dano Raffanti*, Dale Duesing, Enrico Fissore*, Cesare Siepi
Conductor: Andrew Meltzer*
Director: Julian Hope
Set and costume designer: Alfred Siercke

June 11, 16, 19, 23 at 8 p.m., June 27 at 2 p.m., July 1 at 7:30 p.m.

Verdi, **Nabucco**
New production Performed in Italian

Angeles Gulin*, Susan Quittmeyer, Nikki Li Hartliep*/Matteo Manuguerra, Gordon Greer*, Paul Plishka, Quade Winter, Gregory Stapp
Conductor: Kurt Herbert Adler
Production: Gerald Freedman
Set designer: Thomas Munn
Costume designer: Beni Montresor

June 17 at 7:30 p.m., June 20 at 2 p.m., June 22, 25, 30, July 3 at 8 p.m.

Stravinsky, **The Rake's Progress**
New production Performed in English

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June 24 at 7:30 p.m., June 26, 29, July 2 at 8 p.m., July 4 at 2 p.m.

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1982 Summer Festival Previews

Information on opera previews and lectures is provided in order to enable patrons to make advance plans. The following is a list of previews and lectures which are open to the public.

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD

"Opera Insights" are held in the Herbst Theatre, Veterans Building, Van Ness at McAllister. Admission is free to Guild members and Summer Festival subscribers presenting membership or subscriber cards. General admission is $4.00 at the door. The panel for each event will include artists and members of the production staff. For additional information, please call (415) 565-6432. "Insights" begin at 6 p.m.

THE RAKE'S PROGRESS June 16

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWS

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

NABUCCO
Arthur Kaplan June 15

THE RAKE'S PROGRESS
Michael Steinberg June 24

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Rossini in 1820, four years after the composition of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia.*

By CHRISTOPHER HUNT

In 1860, Richard Wagner, in Paris for the first French production of *Tannhäuser,* paid a visit to the 68-year-old Rossini, in his apartment on the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. In the house that had stood earlier at the same address, Mozart had written a set of piano variations on a popular song from a stage hit by one Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais. The hit comedy was *Le Barbier de Séville,* and the song *"Je suis Lindor,"* with which the Comte Almaviva serenades Rosine in the opening scenes of the play. Beaumarchais was rumored to be at work on a sequel. When that sequel did appear, after seemingly endless complications, it was an even greater success than its predecessor. It was also notably more political. Napoleon was

Il Barbiere di Siviglia: An Introduction

to call it "the revolution in action"; Danton said it was the title character who killed off the nobility. Within a year Mozart, in Vienna, was at work on turning it into an opera, the text being adapted with remarkable fidelity by Lorenzo da Ponte. The sequel was of course *Le Mariage de Figaro.* By the time it was produced as the opera *Le Nozze di Figaro* in Vienna in 1786, the French Revolution was only three years away. Mozart was thirty, and had less than six years to live.

Thirty years later, Napoleon was in exile on St. Helena, the Battle of Waterloo a year-old memory. In the Teatro Argentina in Rome, on 20th February 1816, the 24-year-old Rossini thought he was lucky to escape with his life after the unprecedented fiasco of the opening night of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia.* But by the end of the second performance *The Barber of Seville* had been launched on its equally unprecedented career of success. It has remained one of the most popular of all comic operas, perhaps *the* most popular, ever since.

It is tempting to imagine what Mozart might have made of the first play in the Beaumarchais trilogy. (A third play, *La Mère Coupable,* in which Rosine has become the mother of Chérubin's illegitimate child, has never enjoyed the success of its predecessors.) One of the reasons why he did not choose *Le Barbier de Séville* for his first collaboration with Da Ponte could have been that Giovanni Paisiello, accepted as the outstanding Italian composer of *opera buffa* of his time, had already triumphed with that work. And a significant part of the reason for the disastrous opening night of Rossini's *Barber* a generation later was the antagonism aroused among devotees of Paisiello's work. Mozart certainly knew the Paisiello setting well. Indeed, he later began a setting of the Lesson Aria in Act II for a projected production in Vienna.

In the eighteenth century, operas were regarded much as are today's pop songs: only a few survived their first season's performances. Even fewer were still to be heard a generation later. Paisiello's *Barber,* to a somewhat prosaic but exceedingly faithful version of Beaumarchais' play, had immediately been recognized as a classic. Its charming melodies and straightforward harmonic structure did not detract from the essential strengths of the play. It had its premiere in St. Petersburg in 1782 at the court of Catherine the Great, and soon made its way around Europe. It continued to receive regular performances for the next thirty or so years. Although it was no longer a perennial feature of theater repertoires by 1816, it was still widely known and loved. When the English poet and man

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Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, 1732-1799.

of letters Leigh Hunt wrote in 1815 that *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* were among the half-dozen immortal stage works he best loved, it was Paisiello's, not Rossini's, *Barber* he referred to. And he was echoing widely held opinions. Paisiello is a largely forgotten figure now, though his works surface occasionally. In the hands of a master director, such as Walter Felsenstein who produced Paisiello's *Barber* at the Komische Oper in East Berlin in the early '60s, his work can still hold the stage.

Leigh Hunt's reactions to Rossini's *Barber* when it reached London only a year after its Rome premiere, were again reflective of general opinion:

"We were among those who thought, that the author's having taken up an opera to set to music, which had already been composed by so fine a master as Paesiello, was not a piece of ambition in the very best taste, or a very promising symptom of excellence. We expected that we should find little genius exhibited, at least on the score of sentiment; and we conceive that we were not disappointed . . . we should be loath to speak so decidedly after only one hearing; but what renders an Opera most delightful and makes one recur to it over and over again and grow fonder on

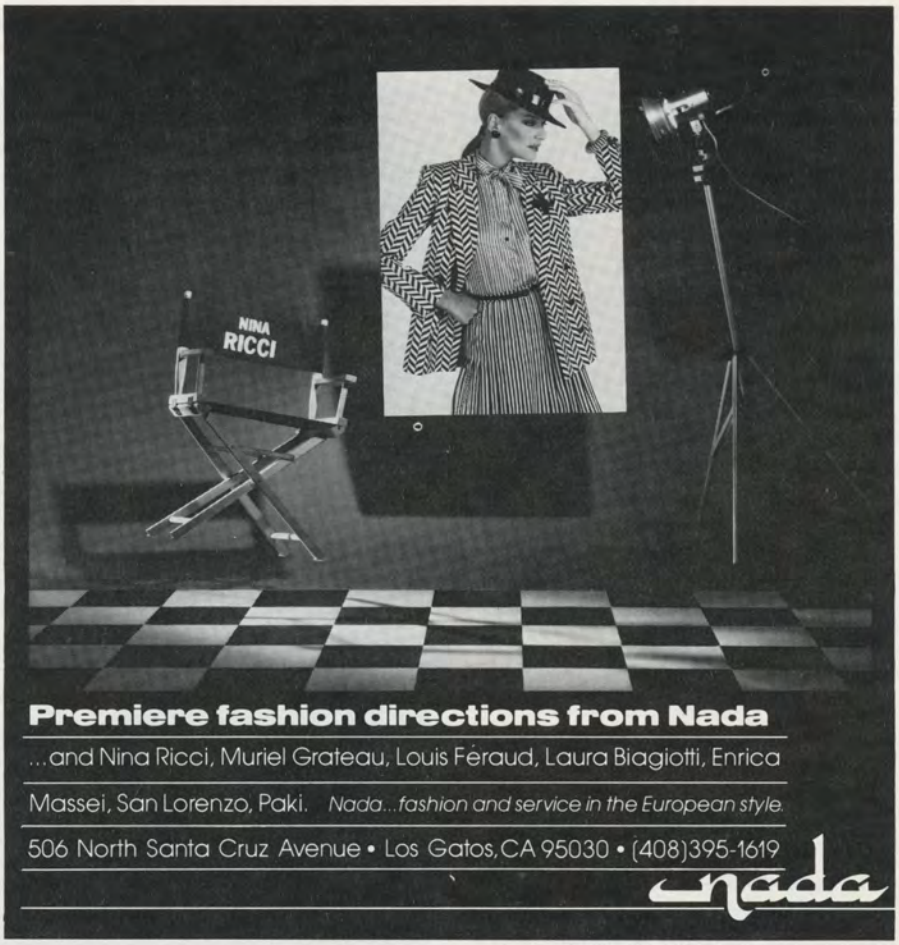
acquaintance, is a succession of beautiful airs; and of these the *Barbiere di Siviglia* appears to us to be destitute. We do not recollect one."

To give Leigh Hunt his due, he changed his mind very soon after. And his review does indicate how novel were Rossini's methods and melodic style. Nor was he simply reacting with the familiar dislike of the new. New operas were then not the rarity they are now: in the same London season that first saw Rossini's *Barber*, among sixty performances of operas reviewed by Hunt and his colleague Thomas Love Peacock for the *London Examiner* (an interesting pair Hunt and Peacock: rather as if Gore Vidal and Thomas Pynchon were *San Francisco Examiner*'s regular music critics) only a few were by a composer, Mozart, who was not alive. A comment from a couple of years later by Peacock can again stand for the feelings of all Europe by then — and America was to follow shortly (Rossini's *Barber* was the first opera ever to be given in the original Italian in New York in 1825):

> "We saw at once there was a great revolution in dramatic music. Rossini burst on the stage like a torrent, and swept everything before him except Mozart, who stood, and will stand, alone and unshaken, like the Rock of Ages, because his art is like Shakespeare's."

There is a certain sad irony in Beaumarchais having survived outside of France, where his plays are still staple fare on the legitimate stage, only through operatic settings. Like his contemporary Sheridan, Beaumarchais exhibits an enchanting, yet barbed, wit. Like Molière before him, Beaumarchais followed the principle of *castigans ridendo*, the use of comedy for political messages. Mozart's and Paisiello's operas retain much, though certainly not all, of Beaumarchais' political intentions. Rossini has practically thrown them all out of the window.

Beaumarchais was one of the more irreverent and remarkable personalities in a century full of them. Born in Paris in 1732, his career was so multifarious



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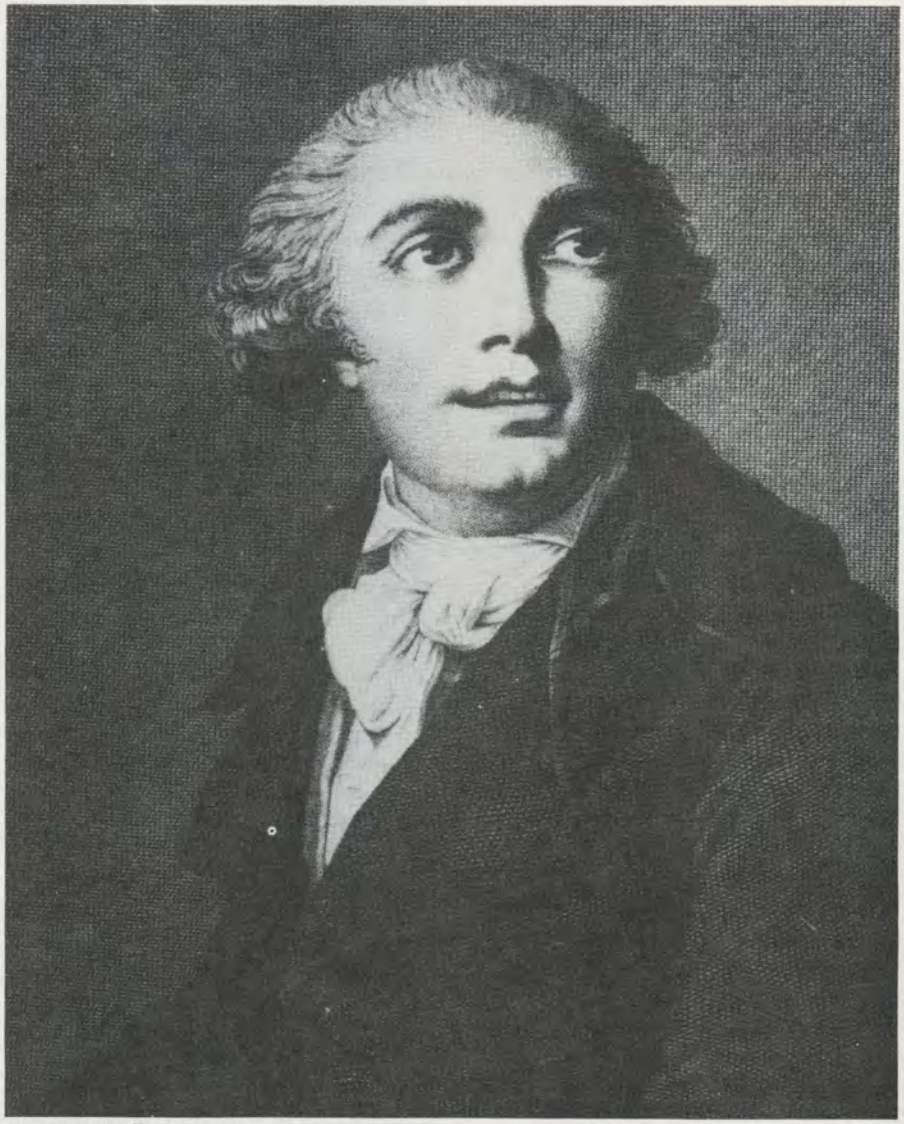
that it is clear that Figaro, his supreme creation, is largely a self-portrait. Indeed, it has been suggested that the very name is a deliberate corruption of Beaumarchais' own: born the son of a clockmaker named Caron, he added de Beaumarchais for prestige much later. 'Fils Caron', Caron's son, especially when pronounced with the Spanish accent appropriate to the Figaro plays, is indistinguishable from the word 'Figaro.' Beaumarchais himself was successively horologist to the French court, harp teacher to the king's ugly daughters, financial speculator, gun-runner (he was largely responsible for supplying the anti-colonial Americans with the arms and ammunition that led to victory at Saratoga, his help to 'my friends, the free men of America'; a fact that delayed the first production of *Le Barbier de Séville*, and was, incidentally, only acknowledged by America a generation after his death), spy at the English court, polemicist and playwright. He was imprisoned for a largely imaginary debt at the instigation of an unscrupulous member of the nobility. An active Democrat, he was nevertheless bankrupted by the Revolution, and died in 1799 in penury.

Le Barbier de Séville first appeared in 1775. It had gone through a long sequence of transformations in private readings beforehand. Rewritten after an unsuccessful first night, in its final form it was a resounding triumph. Beaumarchais had originally written it as a five-act, typically French semi-opera, a *Comédie melée d'ariettes*; although it finally lost most of its music ("Je suis Lindor," the Lesson Aria, and the storm scene were among the few sections to remain), its form lent itself immediately to operatic settings. Within a year there were operas on the subject by Benda and André in Dresden and Berlin, and by Samuel Arnold in London. At least three ballets set to its plot appeared in Italy within ten years. A second Berlin version, by Morlacchi, appeared in the same year as Rossini's; and there were several others. But it was Paisiello's version that triumphed over them all — until Rossini appeared.

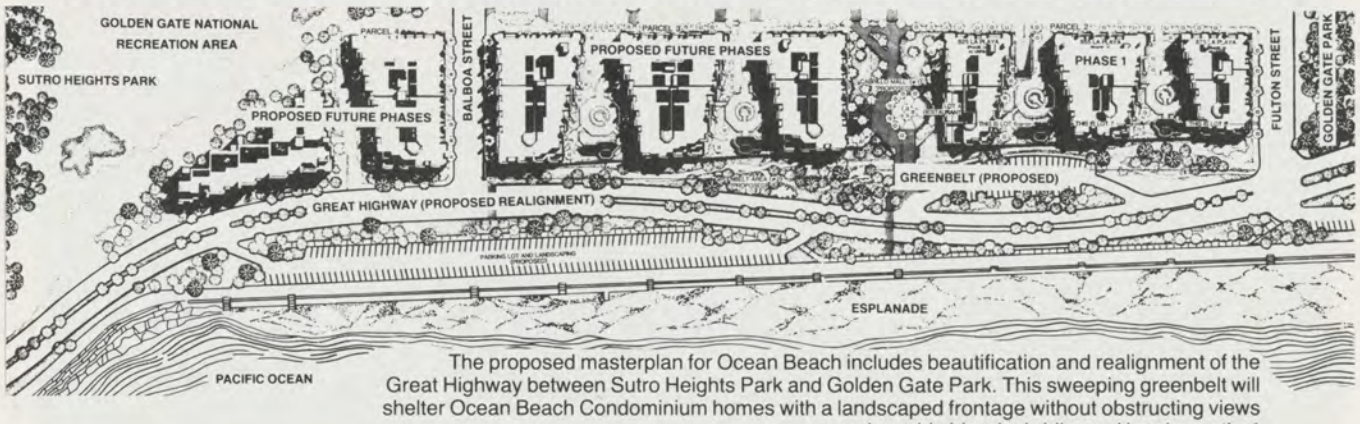
Yet, as we have mentioned, the premiere of Rossini's *Barber* was one of the greatest operatic catastrophes of all time, giving rise to the later myth that all successful operas are initially disastrous. The reasons for the initial failure are numerous: a claque of Paisiello admirers was on hand; the tenor substituted an inappropriate Spanish song for Almaviva's opening "Ecco ridente"; a string broke on his guitar before the serenade, and as he was refitting a new string, a cat wandered on stage, reducing the audience to hysterical laughter; when Figaro then appeared with his own guitar on his back the laughter increased; when Rosina's first phrase "Non è venuto ancora" ("He's still not come") was heard, there was complete uproar. That Rosina, the popular star Geltrude Giorgi-Righetti, made her first appearance with only two short phrases sung through a window, instead of the display aria that convention led everyone to expect, and it was further cause for the audience to make its displeasure noisily clear. Although her first aria, "Una voce poco fa," met with some approval, the atmosphere had been irrevocably damaged. Nor was it helped by Rossini himself, who conducted the premiere: contemptuous of the boorish behavior of the Rome audience, he sardonically applauded their jeers at the end of the first act, causing redoubled opposition in the second.

Rossini rarely conducted his own operas. Indeed, he was famous for not even attending them: "I've heard the rehearsals," he used to say, "why



Giovanni Paisiello, 1740-1816.

OCEAN BEACH CONDOMINIUMS: Seaside homes in San Francisco.



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NOT TO SCALE

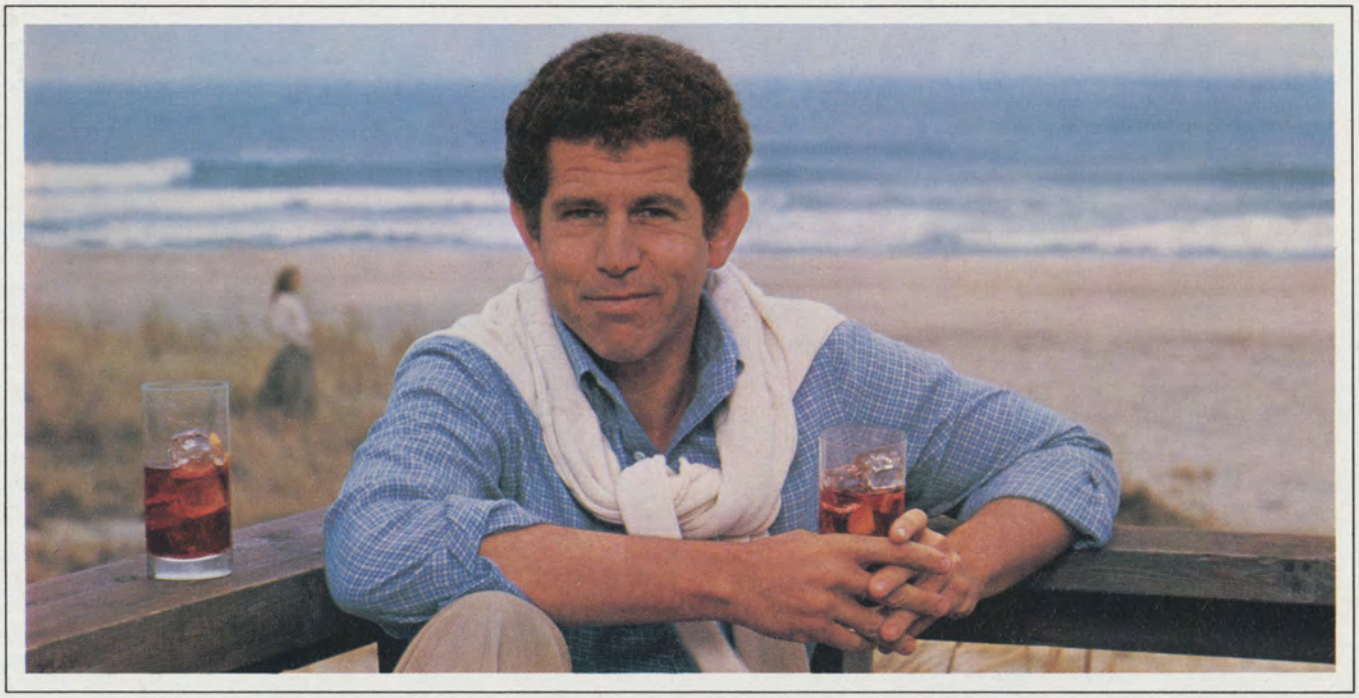
Rossini around 1860.

should I bother to go to the performances? After all, I know the music." Thus it turned out that he was asleep in his hotel in Rome when a boisterous crowd of admirers came to find him after the triumphant second night. Thinking they were further critics after his blood, he took refuge in the inn's stable, and refused to come out to meet them even after realizing that the crowd consisted of admirers. Next morning, he was presented with a bill for the damage caused by the disappointed crowd, and was obliged to move to another hotel that same day.

Rossini's extraordinary career was influenced from the outset by politics, the element he so successfully excluded from the politically motivated Beaumarchais. He once declared that without the French Revolution he would probably have been a chemist or oil merchant. Born in Pesaro on the Adriatic coastline, on February 29th (sic) 1792, he was four when Napoleon invaded Italy. His solidly middle-class merchant father, an enthusiastic Republican and Bonapartist, was imprisoned three years later when Napoleon withdrew. To support the seven-year-old Gioacchino, his mother resumed her singing career, safely away from Pesaro, in Bologna. Rossini was given his earliest musical education partly in the care of Bolognese nuns, and partly backstage while his mother sang. He studied singing, one of the very few composers to have had a trained voice. By the time he was eleven he was already composing works which show the unmistakable traits of his style, albeit in embryonic form. At fourteen he was admitted to the celebrated Accademia Filarmonica, as Mozart had been before him. Among the musicians admitted at the same time was a 21-year-old singer, Isabella Colbran, whom he was later to marry. He studied the Viennese classics, especially Haydn and Mozart, with Padre Martini who years before had given lessons in counterpoint to Mozart. His first professionally produced opera, *La Cambiale di Matrimonio,* was written in 1810. It contains an aria whose theme Rossini was later to use for the first duet between Figaro and Rosina.

In the next nineteen years he wrote 39 operas, frequently borrowing from earlier works as with the *Cambriale* aria. After the magnificent *Guillaume Tell,* written for Paris in 1829, Rossini declared he needed a rest, and left for a sojourn in Italy. He never wrote another opera. For the remainder of his life, most of which he spent in Paris, he wrote little: some 150 miniatures which he called *The Sins of My Old Age,* and two large-scale religious works, the *Stabat Mater* and the sardonically named *Petite Messe Solennelle.* A noted wit and epicurean, who gave his name to at least one luxurious dish, *Tournedos Rossini,* he died in Paris in 1868, respected and beloved. He was 76. Shortly before, a band from the Paris Opéra had serenaded him outside his house with themes from *William Tell,* which had just had its 500th performance at the Opéra. It is not unreasonable to credit that work with the founding of the whole school of French Grand Opera, just as *Barber* and the other comedies had founded the school of Italian comic opera whose most notable disciple was Donizetti. ■

Christopher Hunt is Artistic Consultant to the San Francisco Opera.



Tony Roberts talks about his first time.

ROBERTS: It was exactly seven years, eleven months, two weeks and five days ago, at 7:00 PM on Fire Island.

INTERVIEWER: You remember the exact moment?!

ROBERTS: Of course. A man never forgets his first time.

INTERVIEWER: It must have been quite an experience. You must tell me about it.

ROBERTS: I was at a beach party comparing tan lines, when an exotic woman in a red sarong sauntered over in my direction. I immediately noticed that she had the best tan on the beach.

INTERVIEWER: Go on.

ROBERTS: She looked me straight in the eye and said, "Campari?"

"I'm sorry," I replied, "I don't speak Italian."

"Neither do I," she said. I was so embarrassed.

INTERVIEWER: I can see why!

ROBERTS: Anyway, she handed me a Campari and orange juice, and sipped a Campari and soda herself. Then I understood.

INTERVIEWER: How was it?

ROBERTS: At first I thought it was bitter. Then I realized it was sweet, too. I guess bittersweet is the only way to describe it.

INTERVIEWER: Was she amused?

ROBERTS: Very. She said, "You'll acquire a taste for it, Tony. Most men do."

She was right. My second time was much better. And now I like to have it as often as I can.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever see the young woman again?

ROBERTS: No, but I keep hoping I will. I've enjoyed it so many ways since my first time... now I could teach her a thing or two.

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Rossiniana

By FRANCES DE TALAVERA BERGER

"Give me a laundry list and I will set it to music."

This audacious quip, perhaps his best known one-liner, crystallizes our perspective of Gioacchino Rossini. Whether or not he could actually draw inspiration from such a banal source leaves us, one hundred and sixty six years after the premiere of *The Barber of Seville,* a tidbit to ponder and relish. Leaving the question of the facility versus the profundity of Rossini's music to critics and musicologists, we will concentrate, instead, on the wit and drollery of a musical giant who, most refreshingly, chose to describe his creative technique in such a capricious manner.

Even a cursory glance at the many sketches, portraits, and photographs of the composer executed throughout his long lifetime gives us a clear hint that Rossini's sense of humor was one of his most delightful assets. The mark of whimsy seems to leap from nearly all these representations: the eyes, half-hooded and gazing tolerantly at the world even in his youth; the mouth, curved and tucked in at the corners as if attempting to suppress an ever-present chuckle; the stance of the body, which seems to tilt in easy jauntiness, abundant and decidedly corpulent in later life. The surviving caricatures of the composer, while obviously designed to exaggerate his faults, real or imaginary, still could not escape depicting the undeniable quality of humor in the man.

Rossini himself was the best purveyor of Rossiniana. He quoted and requoted himself with gusto, leaving behind a treasure trove of *bons mots* lovingly preserved through appreciative generations. Spanning the spectrum of wit, his remarks could include the purely delicious or the casually caustic. Once, when asked by a generous and polite hostess when he could return to dine with her, Rossini, who had a legendary appetite and who had just finished gorging himself with delicacies at her table, smacked his lips and jovially insisted, "Right now, if you wish, madame!" But his barbs could also be pointed. He visited London at the apex of his career and received a tumultuous reception from an English public which had grown to adore his operas. King George IV was one of his most enthusiastic admirers, and the monarch invited Rossini to be his guest while in the city. One evening, the composer was invited to accompany his royal host at the piano. Despite the king's many errors, Rossini continued playing with great aplomb and no apparent outward indignation. Afterward, the monarch congratulated Rossini on his restraint and patience. "Sire," Rossini responded, "it is my duty to accompany you — even to hell."

His youth was spent in an unorthodox fashion. Those early years may have served to mold Rossini's appreciation, or, at least, to have instilled in him a comic tolerance for life's more bizarre moments. To begin with, he was born in a leap year on February 29th, and, as a fitting finale for one who had been resoundingly superstitious all his long life, managed to die on Friday the 13th! His youthful family life was quixotic. His father, Giuseppe Rossini, was endowed with a highly excitable nature. An ardent Republican and devout Francophile who was prone to flaunt his unpopular political views, the elder Rossini occasionally found himself imprisoned by the local authorities in Pesaro. Consquently, he was soon stripped of his official duties as town trumpeter and inspector of public slaughterhouses. Then he and his wife, Anna, began a meandering life as operatic performers. The pair left the upbringing of their small son, Gioacchino, to the absent-minded ministrations of an aged grandmother, and the boy ran wild. Even later, when the young Rossini was enrolled in serious musical studies with Padre

Gioacchino Rossini in a contemporary portrait. The ceramic frame displays titles of his works.


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Mattei at the Liceo Musicale in Bologna, his disposition still tended to lean toward the more raucous side of life. Nevertheless, he was already accomplished on the cembalo, horn, and viola, and he had composed various songs and operatic arias. And, as he was to prove for the rest of his artistic life, his zest for jesting was never allowed to interfere seriously with his work.

Rossini's humorous character was also accompanied by a better-than-average benevolence toward his fellow artists, most notably the singers whom he eventually entrusted to interpret his works. Perhaps this trait was nurtured by his affection for his mother, a soprano, of whom he wrote, "[She] had a beautiful voice, which she used out of necessity. Poor mamma! She wasn't really unintelligent, but she didn't know a note of music. She sang by ear." In another letter, he recorded, "She sang all the time, even when doing household chores. In fact, she was ignorant about music, but she had a prodigious memory . . . and for that reason easily learned the roles assigned to her. Her naturally expressive voice was beautiful and full of grace — sweet, like her appearance." It is interesting to remember that Rossini himself had a well-trained, rather beautiful voice. His final appearance as a vocalist came when, as a boy soprano in a student concert at the Liceo Musicale, he could still negotiate the stratospheric range of notes. However, soon after, his voice settled contentedly into a normal baritone mode. Many years later, however, Rossini made a rather startling confession. In a letter to a friend, he mentioned as an aside that he had written the role of Arsace, in *Aureliano in Palmira* for the *castrato,* Giambattista Velluti. He then went on to add with a flourish, "Parenthetically, would you believe that I came within a hair's breadth of belonging to that famous corporation — let us rather say de-corporation? As a child I had a very pretty voice, and my parents used it to have me earn a few *paoli* by singing in churches. One uncle of mine . . . had convinced my father of the opportunity that he had glimpsed if the breaking of my voice should not be allowed to compromise an organ which . . . could

Rossini in 1864, by H. Chevalier.

have become an assured future source of income for us all. Most of the *castrati,* in fact, . . . lived in opulence. My brave mother would not consent at any price."

At this point, Rossini added that someone had once asked him, "And you, Maestro, the chief interested party?"

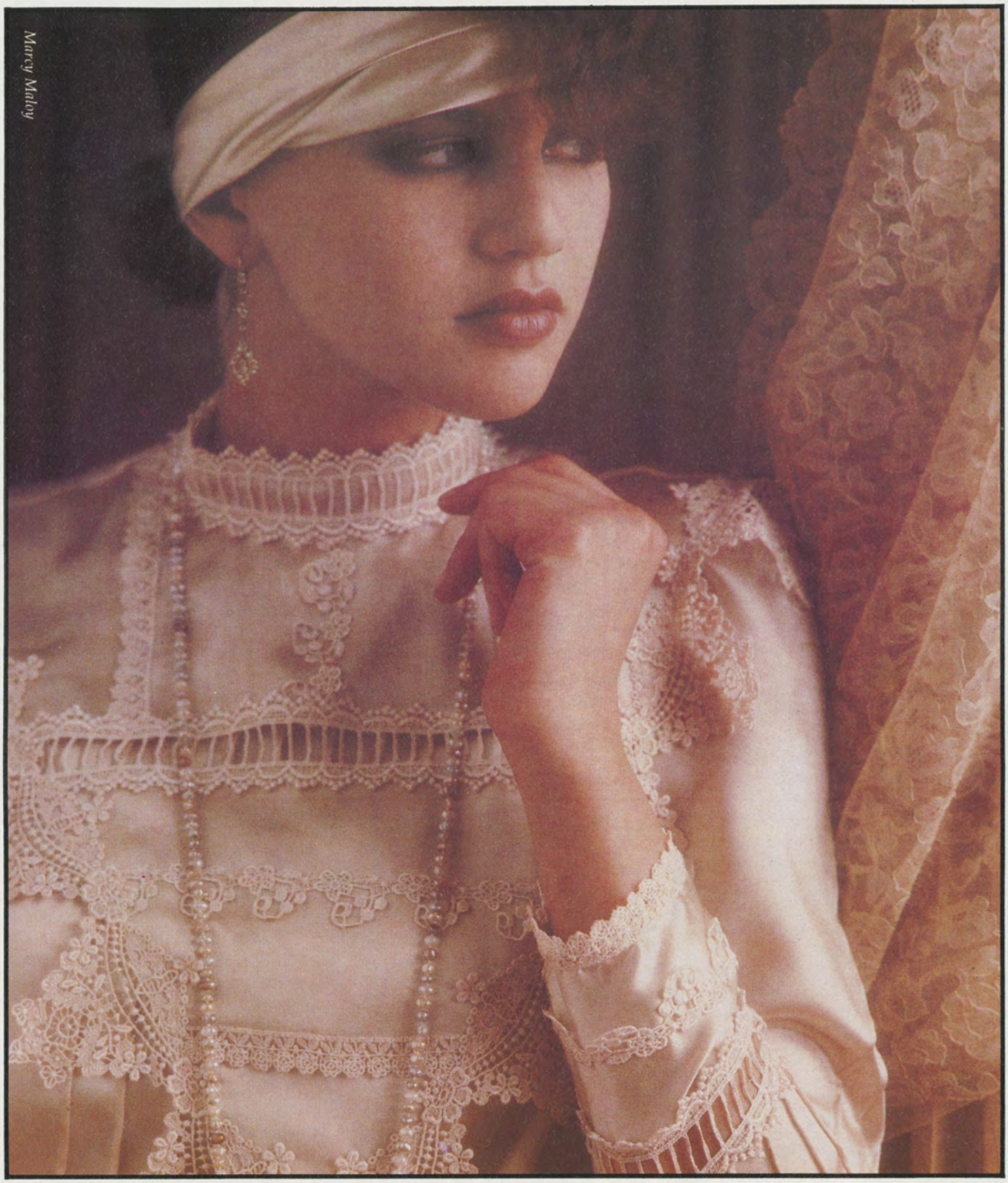
"Oh! me," Rossini answered, "all that I can tell you is that I was very proud of my voice. And as for any descendants that I might leave. . . ."

Rossini's second wife, née Olympe Pélissier — the ex-mistress of the painter, Horace Vernet — was asserted to have entered the alleged discussion, snapping, "Little you cared! Now is the moment to make one of your quips!"

"Well, then," Rossini replied, "let's have no half-truths. 'Little' is too much. I didn't care at all."

Rossini was not all brittle bravura; the misfortunes or sufferings of a fellow artist could wring compassion from him. In one of his extended sojourns in Paris, where he was worshipped as a musical god, he introduced his *Semiramide* at the Théâtre-Italien in 1825. The

Jessica McClintock



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sophisticated Parisian public eagerly awaited the premiere, not only because there was a new Rossini opera to be discovered and savored, but because the composer's first wife, the exotic Isabella Colbran, was *not* scheduled to sing the title role. She was considered the definitive interpreter of the part, and the gossip wags had a field day: Was Madame Colbran-Rossini merely indisposed, or were more dramatic (perhaps, even romantic) implications to be derived from her glaring absence from the spectacle? Whichever, amid all the titillation, Rossini chose to assign the extremely difficult role of the Queen of Babylonia to the thirty-six year old Mme. Fodor-Mainvielle, a very popular and acclaimed soprano of the day. She was cheered to the rafters when she made her first appearance onstage, and her tone gave no preliminary indication of tragedy that was soon to follow. As the opera progressed, her voice began to weaken, becoming increasingly hoarse and strained. The audience listened, first appalled, then stunned. The orchestra stopped playing, and then the curtain, mercifully, was lowered. An announcement was made to the house that Madame Fodor-Mainvielle was temporarily indisposed. The audience waited. The pause became interminable, embarrassing. But a much more serious scenario was being enacted in the soprano's dressing room. With Rossini in attendance, almost mute with anxiety and openly weeping, Fodor-Mainveille frantically paced the room, wringing her hands and beating her face. She had fallen victim to a terror that stalks every singer: In a matter of only a few hours, without any warning whatsoever, her voice had become irreparably damaged. She never fully recovered, and her career was soon over. But Rossini, who alone had shared that terrible moment with Fodor-Mainvielle — embracing her, comforting her — was to remain one of her closest friends and most constant admirers until the end of her life.

If Rossini learned to apply wit and compassion to instances of theatrical strife or tension, he was equally adept at dispensing artful tact. Preparing a production of *Le Nozze di Teti e di Peleo,* an elaborate cantata he composed for the marriage between the heirs to the kingdoms of the Two Sicilies and of France, Rossini was informed that the *basso buffo* who was singing the role of a river god in the cantata was suffering from a sudden fit of depression. Apparently, the *basso,* Matteo Porto, was very sensitive about his fast-approaching middle age, and he imagined that his association with a timeless character might damage his image. Rossini immediately ran to soothe the singer's ego. "You think that your role is going to make you old? Be assured, my friend! You are charged with the impersonation of a river [that is only] between thirty and thirty-five years old!" Rossini's tact apparently worked; the apprehensive *basso* performed with distinction — and the performance was an artistic success.

That Rossini could also play the buffoon is mirthfully recounted in a letter written by the political essayist, Massimo d'Azeglio who has left us this gem. "Paganini and Rossini were in Rome," he wrote. ". . . And in the evening I found myself with them and their mad companions. Carnival was approaching, and one evening we said, 'Let's arrange a masquerade.' 'What to do?' What *not* to do! Finally we decided to mask as blind people and sing requests for charity as they do. We put together four lines of verse which said:

> 'We are blind. We were born
> To earn our living from kindness.
>
> On a happy day,
> Do not refuse charity.'

"Rossini quickly set them to music. They were rehearsed and rehearsed, and finally we decided to go on stage on the very last Thursday before Lent. We decided that we should wear very elegant clothes beneath a top covering of poor, patched rags. In short, an apparent, but clean misery. Rossini and Paganini had to act as the orchestra, strumming two guitars, and they decided to dress as women. Rossini filled out his already abundant form with bundles of straw, looking absolutely nonhuman! Paganini, as thin as a door, and with a face that seemed to be the handle of his violin, appeared twice as thin and loose-limbed when dressed as a woman. I ought not to say so, but we created a furor, first at two or three homes where we went to sing, then on the Corso, then on the festal night."

Whatever the distractions, whether instigated by his own sense of humor or by life's unpredictability, Rossini almost always managed to maintain his composure in public. There were instances, however, when bouts of neurasthenia, an emotional illness which plagued him throughout his adult life and always left him weak and distressed, forced him to collapse for periods of time. But he always seemed to rebound from these seizures with his tongue-in-cheek attitude intact and his capacity for work undiminished. And his capacity for hard work was staggering. Whether or not he plagiarized his own earlier compositions or borrowed outright from the music of other composers, it is widely conceded today that he wrote *most* of the music for *The Barber of Seville* and orchestrated it, too, in a matter of three weeks. It was a highly spectacular feat, whatever the reservations — but not for Rossini. He once composed an opera in three days. His ability to concentrate was prodigious. Friends could walk into the room when he was working on a piece, talk to him at length about trivia and receive his most charming attention — after which Rossini would resume his work, exactly where he left off, the moment he was once again alone.

Perhaps Rossini's most celebrated instance of poise and self-assurance came with the opening night fiasco (at the Teatro Argentina in Rome) surrounding his latest opera, originally entitled *Almaviva, ossia l'inutile precauzione,* then named simply *Almaviva,* and thereafter known as *The Barber of Seville.* Tradition demanded that, at a premiere and for not less than two subsequent performances, the composer of a new work should station himself at the cembalo. So the evening of February 20, 1816, found Rossini in the pit — with a furious controversy whirling about his head even before the first note of the overture had been played.

The brouhaha over the *Barber* premiere is described elsewhere in this

continued on p. 52

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Enrico Fissore, Dale Duesing.

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

Photos taken in rehearsal by Ira Nowinski.

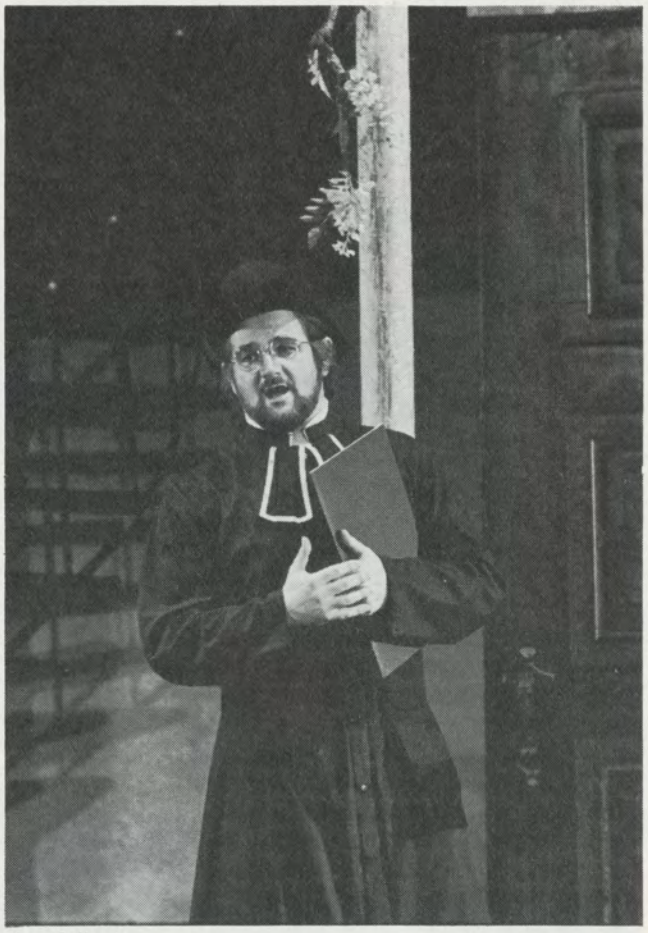
Enrico Fissore, Cesare Siepi.

Cesare Siepi.

Dale Duesing, Dano Raffanti.

Margarita Zimmermann, Dano Raffanti.

Regina Sarfaty.



Dano Raffanti.

Margarita Zimmermann, Dale Duesing.

Margarita Zimmermann.

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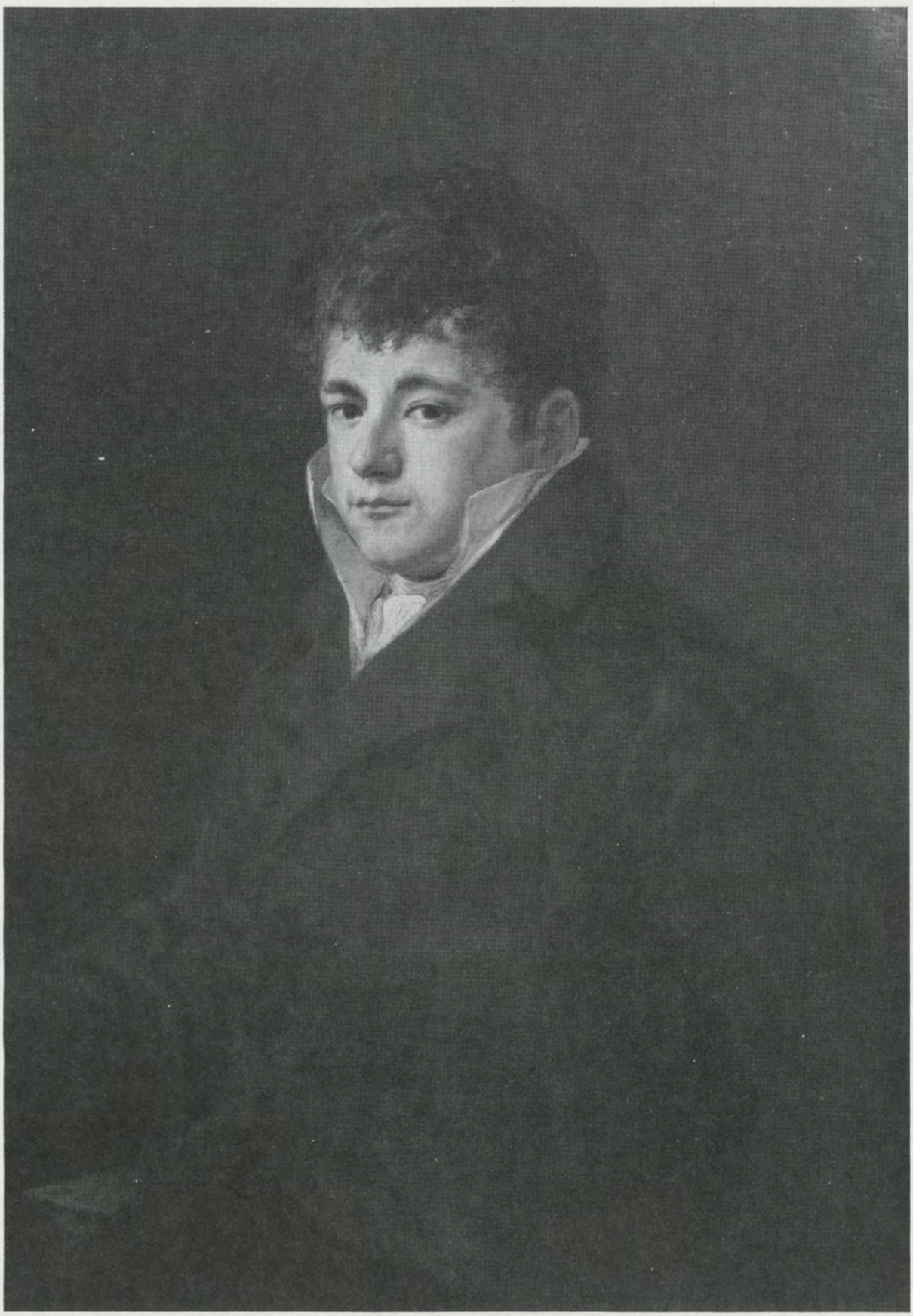

Portrait of Manuel García by Francisco Goya (1746-1828); oil on canvas. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston — Bequest of John T. Spaulding.

The García Family

By ROBERT BAXTER

The return of Edmund Kean as Richard III and the debut of Edwin Forrest as Othello brought undeniable glamor to the beginning and the end of Park Theatre's 1825-26 season. In between, however, came an event that far overshadowed those two glamorous evenings. On November 29, more than 2,000 New Yorkers, including James Fennimore Cooper and Joseph Bonaparte, the former King of Spain, occupied every seat in the theater on Park Row to hear the American premiere of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia.*

New Yorkers had already heard ballad operas performed in English and Weber's *Der Freischütz* sung in translation, but the production of Rossini's comic masterpiece marked the first time an Italian opera had been performed in New York. Indeed, the first time an Italian opera had been sung anywhere in the U.S. When the final curtain fell, the fashionable audience, now standing on its feet to cheer, had witnessed more than the American premiere of Rossini's opera. They had heard a family of singers destined to influence the course of opera for the rest of the century, a family of singers whose fame endures to this day.

Singing the role of Almaviva, a part he had created in the opera's world premiere nine years before, was Manuel García. The Spanish tenor had already introduced Rossini's opera to London and Paris. García also provided the cast for the opera. His wife, Joaquina, sang Berta. The roles of Rosina and Figaro were taken by his daughter, Maria, and his son, Manuel, Jr. As Maria Malibran, García's daughter was destined, within a decade, to shoot through the operatic heavens like a brilliant comet. Manuel, Jr. would shortly renounce his singing career, but he became, first in Paris and then in London, one of the most famous voice teachers, the first to bring scientific learning to the study of singing. Backstage was yet another García, the four-year-old Pauline, who would, as Mme Viardot, follow her sister as *prima donna* in Paris and London.

No family played a greater role in nineteenth century opera than the Garcías. They created a unique singing style, bringing a new expressive intensity to the florid virtuosity perfected by the castrati. The Garcías introduced new operas by a range of composers, from Paer, Mayr and Rossini to Carafa, Pacini, Balfe, Halévy and Meyerbeer. Inspired by their singing, Berlioz, Brahms, Gounod, Schumann, Fauré and Massenet wrote music to display their talent. Even Verdi and Wagner were influenced by the García family.

In an inimitable family of geniuses, none was more brilliant than Manuel García. "His life was a mixture of passion, wild freaks, magnificent benevolence, insane daring, childish naiveté, unbounded kindness of heart,

continued on p. 54

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Text by CESARE STERBINI
After the play by PIERRE AUGUSTIN CARON DE BEAUMARCHAIS
(Critical edition by Alberto Zedda/Fondazione Rossini, used by arrangement with Associated Music Publishers, Inc., sole U.S. agents for G. Ricordi & Co., Milan)

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

(in Italian)

Conductor
Andrew Meltzer*

Director
Julian Hope

Set and Costume Designer
Alfred Siercke

Lighting Designer
Joan Sullivan

Chorus Director
Richard Bradshaw

Musical Preparation
Mark Haffner
Martin Smith

Prompter
George Posell

Recitative Accompaniment
Mark Haffner

Assistant Stage Director
Paula Williams

Stage Manager
Jerry Sherk

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Rome, February 20, 1816

First San Francisco Opera performance:
September 24, 1925

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16 AT 8:00
SATURDAY, JUNE 19 AT 8:00
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23 AT 8:00
SUNDAY, JUNE 27 AT 2:00
THURSDAY, JULY 1 AT 7:30

Il Barbiere di Siviglia radio broadcast on
September 24 at 8 p.m. and September 25 at 11 a.m.

CAST

Fiorello	Stanley Wexler
Count Almaviva	Dano Raffanti*
Doctor Bartolo	Enrico Fissore*
Figaro	Dale Duesing
Rosina	Margarita Zimmermann* (June 11, 16, 19)
	Kathleen Kuhlmann* (June 23, 27; July 1)
Don Basilio	Cesare Siepi
Berta	Regina Sarfaty* (June 11, 16, 19)
	Evelyn de la Rosa (June 23, 27; July 1)
Officer	Jeffrey Thomas
Ambrogio	Colin Harvey
Notary	Kenneth Malucelli

Musicians, soldiers, townspeople

**San Francisco Opera debut*

TIME AND PLACE: 1840; Doctor Bartolo's house in Seville

THERE WILL BE TWO INTERMISSIONS.

Please do not interrupt the music with applause.

Latecomers will not be seated during the performance after the lights have dimmed.

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

The performance will last approximately three hours and fifteen minutes.

Synopsis

IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA

ACT I

With his band of hired musicians, Count Almaviva comes at dawn to serenade Rosina outside the house of her guardian, Dr. Bartolo, who keeps her a virtual prisoner in the hope of marrying her himself. When Rosina does not appear, Almaviva dismisses the musicians but lingers near the house. The barber Figaro arrives and describes his busy life. The Count asks him to arrange a meeting with Rosina, adding that his identity must not be known, for he does not wish her to be influenced by his rank. Suddenly Rosina appears on her balcony, joined by Dr. Bartolo. The Count and Figaro hide, but Rosina manages to drop a note to the Count. After Bartolo leaves, Almaviva sings a second serenade telling Rosina that he is Lindoro, a poor student who can offer her nothing but love. The Count and Figaro continue their planning. Troops are coming to the city, and it is decided that Almaviva, disguised as a drunken officer, must arrange to be billeted with Bartolo.

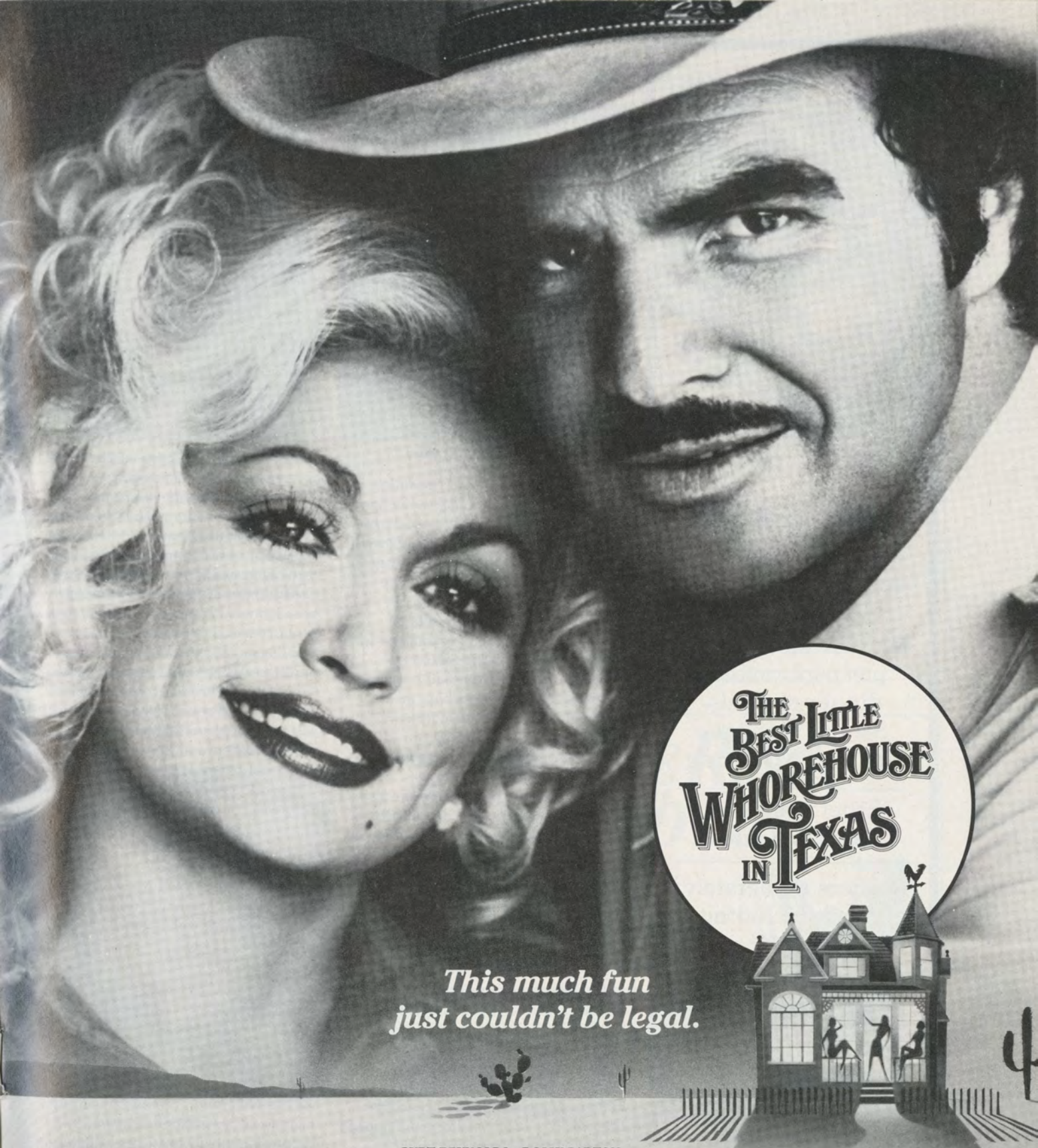
ACT II

Rosina, alone in the house, expresses her spirited nature. Bartolo returns and is soon visited by Don Basilio, the music teacher, who informs him that Count Almaviva has arrived in town and both suspect that he is the mysterious stranger who is trying to arouse Rosina's interest. Basilio suggests that they start a campaign of slander which will make Rosina reject the Count. Figaro overhears their plan and returns to warn Rosina of the doctor's intention to marry her, and leaves with a note from her to Lindoro. Dr. Bartolo suspects that Figaro may be carrying messages between his ward and her admirer, but is frustrated by Rosina in his attempts to learn the truth. Later the Count enters in disguise. The doctor suspiciously resists the order for the quartering of the soldier. During the confusion which the Count creates in the Bartolo household, he manages to slip a note to Rosina which Bartolo intercepts but which Rosina cleverly switches with the week's laundry list. Soon soldiers arrive to arrest the offender but immediately release him when the Count reveals his identity to an officer.

ACT III

The doctor, wondering if the drunken soldier may not be an emissary of Count Almaviva, is interrupted by a stranger, none other than the Count himself disguised as a music teacher named Don Alonso. He explains that Basilio is ill and he has come instead to give Rosina her music lesson. Figaro arrives, and to assure the young couple a moment together, insists on shaving the doctor. Suddenly Basilio appears — in perfect health. He is soon convinced that he is really not well and is rushed out of the house. Figaro proceeds with the shaving of the doctor while the two lovers plan their escape. Bartolo overhears and, more suspicious than ever, chases both the Count and Figaro out.

As night falls, the Count (Lindoro), accompanied by Figaro, places a ladder against Rosina's balcony. Rosina, believing the slanderous tales about her suitor that Bartolo has told her, refuses to go with them. The Count reveals his identity and, reunited, they prepare to leave. Suddenly it is discovered that the ladder is gone. At the same moment Don Basilio and the notary arrive prepared to marry Dr. Bartolo to his ward. Instead, Figaro and the Count persuade the notary to marry the Count and Rosina. Arriving too late to stop the wedding, Dr. Bartolo accepts his misfortune gracefully and all offer their congratulations to the Count and his new Countess.



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Profiles

MARGARITA ZIMMERMANN

Margarita Zimmermann, Argentine-born mezzo-soprano, makes her San Francisco debut as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia.* After her first appearance in a 1975 recital of Rossini arias at the Teatro Colón of Buenos Aires, she made her European debut in 1977 at Salzburg, singing the title role of *Carmen.* In 1978 she sang Dalila to Jon Vickers' Samson in the Salzburg production of the Saint-Saëns opera, and was heard as Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and Idamante in *Idomeneo* in Brussels. Miss Zimmermann appeared as Jocasta in a 1979 production of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* in Lyon, where she also sang in a production of Haydn's *Il Mondo della luna.* In Buenos Aires she has portrayed Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Dorabella in *Così fan tutte.* In 1980 her assignments included the Messenger in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* and Geneviève in *Pelléas et Mélisande* at Lyon, where she also participated in the Berlioz Festival, appearing as Didon in *Les Troyens.* She was heard in Mozart's Mass in C minor at the 1980 Salzburg Festival and in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Covent Garden under Colin Davis. Most recently she has sung Idamante in Venice, had her first recital in Paris, made an appearance in the title role of *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* in Lyon and took part in a radio broadcast performance of Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnole.*

KATHLEEN KUHLMANN

A native San Franciscan, mezzo-soprano Kathleen Kuhlmann makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia.* After studying at the Chicago Lyric Opera School for four years, she began singing with the Chicago Lyric Opera, where she appeared as Clarissa in *Love for Three Oranges,* Maddalena in *Rigoletto* and Bersi in *Andrea Chénier.* In 1980 Miss Kuhlmann made her debut with the Cologne Opera, and continued her association with that company in such productions as *Orfeo* and *La Cenerentola.* In that same year she first performed with the Scottish Opera in Glasgow and the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. In 1981 she received the grand prize in a Belgian radio and television singing contest and performed in a new production of *Rigoletto* in Germany, staged by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. 1982 heralds a busy year for the young American: her engagements include performances at the Teatro alla Scala as Meg Page in *Falstaff, Il Barbiere di Siviglia* at the Cologne Opera, and Ino and Juno in a new production of Handel's *Semele* at Covent Garden.

REGINA SARFATY

Regina Sarfaty, a native of New York, makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Berta in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and as Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress.* Following her opera debut in 1960 with the Glyndebourne Festival Opera in *Der Rosenkavalier,* the mezzo-soprano maintained her residence in London. Performing mostly in Europe, she has in recent years been seen in Toulouse and Bordeaux as *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein* and in *Albert Herring* in Geneva. In 1980, after a long absence from the United States, she sang with the Tulsa Opera in *Boris Godunov.* Graduating from the Juilliard School of Music with a first prize in voice, Miss Sarfaty is also the recipient of a

Rockefeller Award. She sang with the New York City Opera for four seasons and has performed with many orchestras throughout America. A favorite of Igor Stravinsky's, Miss Sarfaty has performed under his baton every work he wrote for the alto voice. Included in her repertoire are such roles as Dorabella, Dalila, Carmen and Octavian. Miss Sarfaty's current repertoire includes Clytaemnestra in Strauss' *Elektra*, Mistress Quickly in Verdi's *Falstaff*, Herodias, Ulrica, the Countess in *The Queen of Spades*, Azucena, the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel* and La Cieca in *La Gioconda*.

EVELYN DE LA ROSA

Soprano Evelyn de la Rosa, who made her San Francisco Opera debut as the Celestial Voice in *Don Carlo* in 1979, sings Berta in the 1982 Summer Festival production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Last fall, the Nevada native appeared as Aksinya in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and, with Spring Opera in 1981, she portrayed Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro*. She appeared as Diana in the

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1981 world premiere of Henry Mollicone's *Emperor Norton* with Brown Bag Opera. In May 1980 she created the role of Dorine in the American Opera Project's world premiere production of Mechem's *Tartuffe*. During the 1979 Merola Opera Program she was heard as Aennchen in *Der Freischütz* and Colombina in Wolf-Ferrari's *The Inquisitive Women*, and received both the first-place Gropper Award at the Paul Masson Mountain Winery and the Leona Gordon Lowin Award at the Grand Finals of the San Francisco Opera Auditions. Miss de la Rosa has appeared in Nevada Opera Guild productions as Marguerite in *Faust*, the First Lady in *The Magic Flute*, Clorinda in *Cinderella* and Marie in *The Daughter of the Regiment*. As a member of the 1982 Western Opera Theater, she portrayed Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* and Musetta in *La Bohème*.

DALE DUESING

Dale Duesing is returning for his sixth consecutive season with the San Francisco Opera, where he made his 1976 American debut in world premiere performances of Andrew Imbrie's *Angle of Repose*. This year, he sings Figaro in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, the role he also performed in the 1976 student matinee performances of the same opera. The following year he was heard as Arlecchino in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and as Ping in *Turandot*. In 1978 he received unanimous praise in the title role of *Billy Budd* and as Schaunard in *La Bohème*, and was equally well received for his Pelléas in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* (1980) and, in 1981, as Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, and Lescaut in *Manon*. The Milwaukee native began his career in Germany, where he has appeared with most of the major opera companies. A member of the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, Duesing is also a regular guest at the Hamburg Staatsoper, having made his debut there as Guglielmo in 1973. In 1976 he made his Glyndebourne debut as Olivier in Strauss' *Capriccio* and has appeared at the Salzburg Festival for four consecutive years as Masetto in *Don Giovanni*, which he recorded under Karl Böhm, and as Arlecchino. Duesing made his Metropolitan Opera debut in 1978, when he sang both Arlecchino and Papageno. During the 1979-80 season there he portrayed Dr. Malatesta in *Don Pasquale* and Silvio in *I Pagliacci*.

DANO RAFFANTI

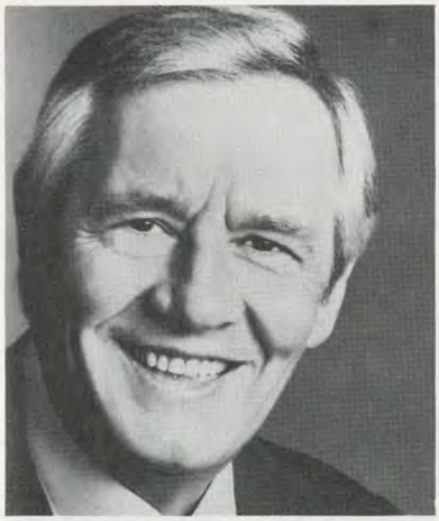
Italian tenor Dano Raffanti makes his debut with the San Francisco Opera as Count Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. He studied at the La Scala Center, where he made his first appearance in 1976 in Bussotti's *Nottetempo*. Soon thereafter, he won the Puccini Competition and made his debut in Lucca in *La Bohème*. In 1981, Raffanti sang opposite Marilyn Horne in the Houston Grand Opera production of Rossini's *La Donna del lago*. He has been seen as the Duke in *Rigoletto* throughout the theaters of northern Italy, as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and as Elvino in *La Sonnambula* at the Teatro Comunale in Bologna. In 1978 Raffanti, partnered by Miss Horne, sang in Vivaldi's *Orlando Furioso* at the Verona Arena. He has appeared at the Festival of Martina Franca as Tybalt in *I Capuleti ed i Montecchi*, and in a revival of Traetta's *Le Serve rivali*. As tenor soloist, his most recent engagements have included Liszt's Psalm 13, as well as Mozart's Vespers at the Teatro Comunale in Florence, Rossini's Stabat Mater at the Salzburg Festival and Verdi's Requiem in Zurich and Basel.

ENRICO FISSORE

Italian bass-baritone Enrico Fissore makes his San Francisco Opera debut as Dr. Bartolo in the 1982 Summer Festival production of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. After receiving his diploma with honors from the Turin Conservatory, he began specializing in works by Rossini and Mozart, as well as in 17th-century roles. Fissore has performed such roles as Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro*; Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, a role in which he made his operatic debut in Milan in 1964; Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Melitone in *La Forza del destino*, and Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'amore*. A participant in such international festivals as Salzburg, Glyndebourne, Munich, Vienna, Spoleto and Dubrovnik, he is a regular guest artist with the Vienna Staatsoper and the companies of Munich, Stuttgart and Geneva. A recording artist of note, Fissore has also been heard in radio and television broadcasts in Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland and Yugoslavia. His new recording of Telemann's *Pimpinone* is being released this fall.

CESARE SIEPI

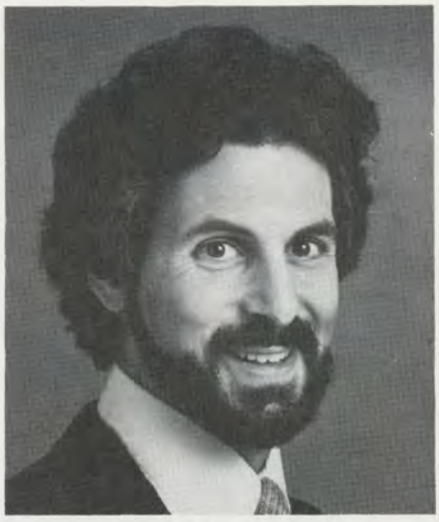
Distinguished bass Cesare Siepi returns to the San Francisco Opera for his third consecutive year, following Fiesco in *Simon Boccanegra* (1980) and *Don Giovanni* (1981 Summer Festival). A pre-eminent Don Giovanni of his generation, he has previously sung the role here in 1955 and 1958. His current assignment with the company is the buffo role of Don Basilio in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. He made his first appearance with the San Francisco Opera in 1953 as



Padre Guardiano in *La Forza del destino* and in the title role of *Le Nozze di Figaro.* The following year he was heard as Méphistophélès in *Faust.* Following successful appearances at Milan's La Scala, he made his Metropolitan Opera debut as King Philip in Verdi's *Don Carlo.* In more than 20 years as a leading bass with the Met, he has sung 17 roles, including Figaro, Don Giovanni, Méphistophélès, Boris Godunov and, his most recent new role with that company, Gurnemanz in *Parsifal.* Making a successful bow on Broadway in *Bravo Giovanni,* Siepi returned there in 1979 to star in *Carmelina,* a Lerner and Loewe musical. In December of that year, he was awarded the coveted Verdi d'Oro prize in Busseto, the composer's home town. Recent engagements include Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* in Venice, Oroveso in *Norma* at Covent Garden, Cardinal Brogny in *La Juive* in Vienna and Silva in *Ernani* in Hamburg.

STANLEY WEXLER

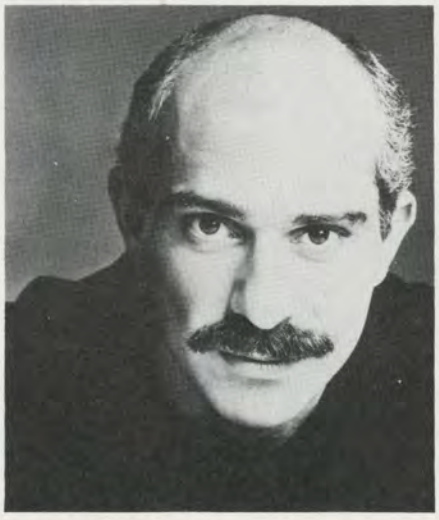
Bass-baritone Stanley Wexler appears as Curio in *Julius Caesar* and Fiorello in *The Barber of Seville.* The young American singer has performed in *Melusine* and *Salome* with Santa Fe Opera; *Arlecchino, Kleine Mahagonny* and *La Bohème* with New England Chamber Opera; and *Signor Deluso, War and Peace* and *Daughter of the Regiment* with the Wolf Trap Company. Wexler portrayed Leporello in *Don Giovanni* for Boris Goldovsky's opera company in 1975, and over the next two years appeared with Western Opera Theater as Rodrigo in *The Portuguese Inn,* Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville,* and the title roles of *Don Pasquale* and *The Marriage of Figaro.* In 1977 he began an association with



Kansas City Lyric Theater that has included appearances in *H.M.S. Pinafore, Die Kluge, Girl of the Golden West, The Marriage of Figaro, Aida, Don Giovanni* (title role) and, earlier this year, *The Merry Widow* and the American premiere of Mozart's *L'Oca del Cairo.* He appeared with the Minnesota Opera in *The Consul* in 1979, and in 1980 made his San Francisco Opera debut in five operas in the Fall Season. In 1981 he portrayed Mozart's Figaro with Spring Opera and Western Opera Theater, and during the last Fall Season was seen as Kromow in *The Merry Widow.* Last December Wexler made his Houston Grand Opera debut as Don Pedro in *La Périchole,* and in February of this year he took on all four villains in a production of *The Tales of Hoffmann* with Scholar Opera in Oakland.

JEFFREY THOMAS

Jeffrey Thomas returns to the San Francisco Opera to sing the role of the Officer in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia.* The young tenor made his debut with the Company during the 1981 Summer Festival as Vogelgesang in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger.* A Pennsylvania native, Thomas studied at the Juilliard School of Music, where he was featured as Count Belfiore in Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera,* in *The Mother of Us All,* and in the American Opera Center's productions of *Un Ballo in Maschera,* Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo,* and the world premiere of Edward Barnes' *Feathertop.* A member of the Adler Fellowship Program, he portrayed Flaminio in the 1982 San Francisco Opera Center production of Scarlatti's *The Triumph of Honor* and the Tenor in Vivian Fine's *The Women in the Garden.* Thomas has performed in Mexico's Teatro Degollado as Rameau's *Pygmalion* with Concert Royal and the New York Baroque Dance Company, in Boston with the Boston Musica Viva, and at the Kennedy Center in *Robin Hood* with New York's Ensemble for Early Music. In 1980 he was Grand Prize winner in St. David's Society Welsh Singing Contest and was subsequently awarded a choral scholarship by St. John's College, the first such scholarship given to a non-British artist.



ANDREW MELTZER

Andrew Meltzer makes his San Francisco Opera conducting debut with *Il Barbiere di Siviglia.* He served as a coach at Santa Fe Opera and Geneva Opera Centre Lyrique in 1971 and for the Minnesota Opera Company in 1972. In the summer of 1973 he was an associate conductor for the Saint Paul Opera Association and that same year conducted *The Threepenny Opera* for the Minnesota Opera Company. He made his West Coast conducting debut in 1974 with Spring Opera Theater, leading performances of Cavalli's *L'Ormindo.* In 1974 and '75 he was music director of the Merola Opera Program and in 1975 held the same position with Western Opera Theater,

for which he conducted *The Tales of Hoffmann, The Barber of Seville* and *Trouble in Tahiti.* Meltzer conducted *Lucia di Lammermoor* for Michigan Opera Theater in 1976 and in 1977 led performances of *The Mikado* for Edmonton Opera and *Porgy and Bess* for the Houston Opera on its American tour. The following year he continued the Houston *Porgy* on its European tour to Paris, Geneva, Palermo and Genoa, and returned to Edmonton for *Il Trovatore* and *Mignon,* the latter with Marilyn Horne. He conducted *The Most Happy Fella* on Broadway during the 1979-80 season (telecast on PBS), and in 1980 made his debuts with Spoleto Festival USA (Susa's *Transformations*) and New York City Opera (*La Traviata* and a new production of *The Student Prince*). In 1981 he was on the podium for *The Barber of Seville* with the Manitoba Opera Association where he returned in April of this year for *The Marriage of Figaro.* Last January he made his Paris orchestra debut leading the Orchestre Lamoureux.

JULIAN HOPE

British director Julian Hope returns to the San Francisco Opera to stage *Il Barbiere di Siviglia.* His directing debut took place here in 1981 with the second group of *Carmen* performances. Hope made his professional debut with the world premiere of Stephen Oliver's opera *Dissolute Punished* at the Edinburgh Festival in 1972. He joined the Welsh National Opera as staff director later that year and, for two years, assisted on many productions. In 1975 he directed *Manon Lescaut* there and assisted John Cox on *The Rake's Progress* at Glyndebourne. The following year he directed *Il Trovatore* for the Welsh National Opera, assisted Jean-Pierre Ponnelle on *Falstaff* at Glyndebourne and staged Handel's *Orlando* for the York Festival and *Hard Times* for the Welsh Drama Company. In 1977 he directed *I Masnadieri* for Welsh National Opera, a revival of *Falstaff* at Glyndebourne and Massenet's *Hérodiade* at the Wexford Festival. Recent credits include assisting Harry Kupfer for the Welsh National Opera production of *Elektra* and directing the same opera for the 1979 Wiesbaden Festival; also staging d'Albert's *Tiefland* and Spontini's *La Vestale* for the Wexford Festival. In addition to his work in opera, Hope is a director of ABH productions, a company that produces films and television programs on the arts. He has also directed both the British and American tours of *The Rocky Horror Show.* Future plans include the direction of *Alceste* with the Kentucky Opera in October.

ALFRED SIERCKE

Alfred Siercke designed the internationally known three-storied house for *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* that was first seen at the San Francisco Opera in 1968. In a career spanning over 40 years, he has created scenic and costume designs for more than 1,000 operatic productions in Europe and North and South America. His other familiar San Francisco Opera production is that of Richard Strauss' *Elektra.* Born in Hannover, Siercke received his early schooling in Hamburg and studied at Frankfurt, majoring in history and art history. After graduation, he was appointed assistant to the designer Gowa, and in 1930 designed his first opera, *Die Walküre.* His association with stage director Günther Rennert began in 1946 at the Hamburg State Opera and continued throughout his residency. The designer's works have been seen at La Scala, Düsseldorf, Stuttgart, Florence and Berlin, among other cities. In addition to his work on operas from the standard repertoire, Siercke has been associated with world premieres of operas by Henze, Dallapiccola and Orff.

JOAN SULLIVAN

In her third year with the San Francisco Opera, associate lighting director Joan Sullivan has designed the lighting for the Summer Festival productions of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *The Rake's Progress.* The 1981 season included her work on such productions as *The Merry Widow, Le Cid* and *Il Trovatore.* The preceding year's credits included *Simon Boccanegra* and *Arabella.* In a similar post with the Lyric Opera of Chicago from 1974 through 1979, Miss Sullivan worked on all the company's productions and also recreated the lighting for the Chicago production of Penderecki's *Paradise Lost* in the work's European premiere in 1979 at La Scala. In Chicago she also served as lighting designer for the Lyric Opera School, where her credits included Britten's *Turn of the Screw* and *The Rape of Lucretia,* Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress,* Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto* and Bizet's *Doctor Miracle.* For the Lyric Ballet she created the lighting for works by Balanchine, Jerome Robbins and Jacques d'Amboise. As lighting designer for the Kentucky Opera Association from 1978 to 1980, she designed the lighting for *The Magic Flute, I Pagliacci, The Impresario* and *Il Trovatore.* Her credits with the Virginia Opera Association include *Lucia di Lammermoor, The Barber of Seville* and *Così fan tutte.*

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Rossiniana

continued from p. 32

LA SCALA MUSEUM

Ivory fan, ca.1840. Surrounding the portrait of Rossini are six images from his operas: (l. to r.) *Tancredi, La Gazza Ladra, Otello, La Donna del lago, Il Barbiere di Siviglia,* and *Armida.*

magazine. (Please see article by Christopher Hunt, beginning on page 20. — Ed.)

Accounts vary, but the gist of what took place that evening borders on the hilarious. To begin with, Rossini attired himself in a hazel-colored Spanish-style outfit with large gold buttons. In the words of an onlooker: "The progeny of the oldtime *maestri* of the world were men too commonsensical to believe that a man wearing a coat of that color could have the slightest spark of genius or that his music deserved to be listened to for a single instant!" Catcalls and whistles greeted Rossini's appearance — and matters quickly degenerated after that.

What took place onstage after the overture could have driven even a saint to blasphemy, but Rossini, ensconced at his cembalo, remained singularly undaunted by the farce-within-a-farce that was unfolding. He remained at his post throughout the ghastly experience. At the curtain, he applauded — not his opera — but the singers. Then the maestro left the theater, seemingly unperturbed by what he had just witnessed. Geltrude Giorgi-Righetti, who had sung Rosina, searched frantically for Rossini after the ill-fated performance. Not finding him in the theater, she immediately feared he had plunged, understandably, into a terrible depression. Taking with her some food and wine, she hurried to his house to offer him some consolation, some modicum of comfort to distract him from the evening's fiasco. Indeed, she was relieved to find that the maestro *was* at home and *not* walking the streets in utter despair. What thoroughly amazed her was the fact that the maestro was placidly settled in his bed. The maestro also happened to be fast asleep.

After Rossini stopped writing for the theater, in 1829, he spent the rest of his life tremendously and energetically enjoying its every facet. Aging apparently did not diminish his robust romantic inclinations, for instance, and his famous 'at home' gatherings on Saturday nights, where the greats and near-greats of music, literature, and politics flocked, continued at his villa in Passy until just two weeks before his death. Also, he constantly traveled throughout Europe tending to the personal (never obligatory or ceremonial) supervision of either the premieres or the many revivals of his operas. His tact and wit remained his strongest resources, even in an epoch that was capable of recognizing his genius but, at the same time, treated him with the slight condescension dispensed by society upon any person earning a living through his art. Rossini's tart riposte over one of these celebrated incidents has become a classic. Whether by tradition, fiscal expediency, or just plain ignorance, the practice of presenting truncated or abridged versions of Rossini's lengthier operas was quite common, even in his day. The story is told that Charles Duponchel, the director of the Paris Opéra, met Rossini strolling along a boulevard and rather peevishly informed him, "I hope that you will have no reason to complain (again) about the Opéra directorate: This evening we are giving Act II of *Guillaume Tell!*" Then the composer grasped the opportunity to strike a marvelous blow in defense of every artist down through the ages, who has suffered the mangling of his works. We can almost hear the chuckle in the voice and see the twinkle in the eye as Rossini inquired, "What, monsieur —*all* of it?" ■

Frances de Talavera Berger, who writes in the media of television and novels, has recently completed a cookbook, Sensual Dining in Gaslight San Francisco, 1875-1915, *co-authored with John Parke Custis, for* Chronicle Press.

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The García Family

continued from p. 41

and a bold overflowing joy in existence that could not be quelled," wrote Pauline Viardot-García many years after her father's death. "He believed in neither God nor Devil — his personal religion was *life* with all its most ardent passions; it was art, it was love. He was handsome; he possessed genius; he had a passion for everything beautiful and he never gave a thought to what might come after his life so full of sunshine and lightning."

Strong-willed and hot-tempered as well as a man of many talents, Manuel García achieved fame not only as a singer and voice teacher but also as a composer, conductor and impresario. Nowhere were García's limitless talents better displayed than on the tour that brought him and his family to the United States and Mexico in 1825. García sang leading roles but also trained the chorus and orchestra. He served as composer, set designer and even painter. When the traveling troupe's scores were later lost en route to Mexico, García wrote out complete vocal and orchestral scores for *Don Giovanni* and *Il Barbiere di Siviglia.*

Manuel del Popolo Vicente García, born in Seville on January 22, 1775, is thought — although it was never proved — to have been the illegitimate offspring of gypsies. He never knew his father. After his mother's death, the six-year-old orphan became a ward of the Catholic church and was placed in the cathedral choir. Blessed with an agreeable voice and extraordinary talent for music, García received expert training in singing, solfège, harmony and composition from Antonio Ripa, and also learned to play the organ under the tutelage of Juan Almarcha, the cathedral organist.

When García was 16, the manager of a theater in Cádiz invited him to join his company. The young tenor made his debut in a *tonadilla* into which he introduced several of his own compositions. From Cádiz, García made his way to Madrid, where he joined a musical troupe that included Manuela de Morales, a singer and celebrated dancer who became his first wife. García both sang in and composed *tonadillas* until 1799 when he appeared in his first opera, Paisiello's *Nina.* Three years later, he starred in the first Spanish performance of *Le Nozze di Figaro.* During his career in Spain, García wrote 13 operas and operettas, the most popular of which were *El Preso* and *El Poeta Calculista.*

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Manuel García in the title role of Rossini's *Otello.* Lithograph by G. Engelmann.

García, in his youth, must have been a magnetic man. His flashing eyes, strong features and dark hair combined with his temperamental and vigorous manner to make him irresistible. When Joaquina Sitches, a young novice in a convent, was taken to hear García sing, she fell immediately and passionately in love with the tenor. Renouncing her religious life, she resolved to go on stage with the singer who became her husband.

The Garcías, determined to make an international name for themselves, left Spain for France in the spring of 1807. Leaving behind their two-year-old son, Manuel, Jr., the singers reached Paris at the end of June, impoverished but filled with talent and ambition. At first, García failed to get an engagement, but finally Paer offered him a role in the premiere of *Griselda* at the Théâtre-Italien. On February 11, 1808, García made his Paris opera debut and at once became the leading tenor in the Italian repertory. A critic described his voice as "sweet, pleasing, of great range and extreme flexibility." A month later, Joaquina gave birth to their second child, Maria Felicita.

continued on p. 59

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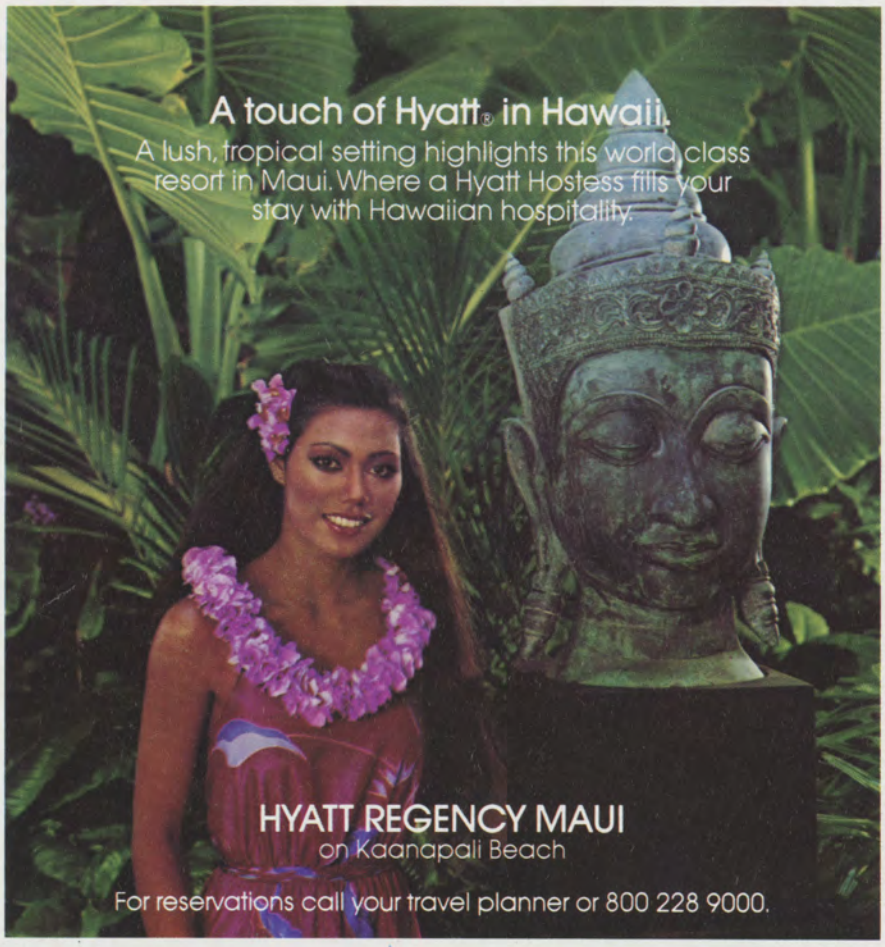

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Two legendary stars will make personal appearances at the Opera Shop during the Festival. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf will be signing copies of her book, *On and Off the Record: A Memoir of Walter Legge*, on June 15 from 3 to 5 p.m. Dorothy Kirsten will be the guest on June 26 from 1 to 3 p.m., when she will be signing copies of her autobiography, *A Time to Sing*, as well as three new recordings never before released.

* * *

The Opera Shop Logo Contest offers patrons a chance to win a signed Hockney poster. Participants may pick up entry forms at the Shop on Grove Street or at the Opera Shop Boutique on the mezzanine level of the War Memorial Opera House. No purchase is required; just identify the silhouettes in the Opera Shop logo. The winner will be announced on July 6; in case of more than one correct entry, multiple prizes will be awarded.

* * *

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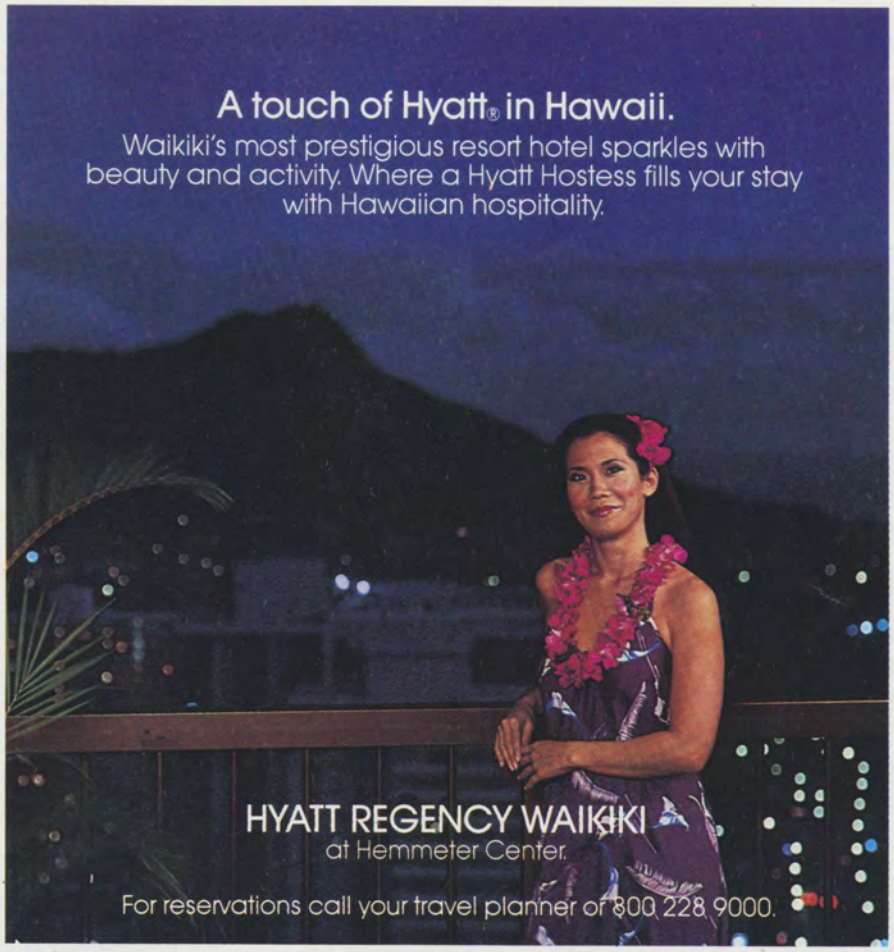

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The García Family

continued from p. 54

Maria Malibran as Rosina in a contemporary drawing.

After establishing himself as the leading tenor at the Théâtre-Italien, García began to produce his own stage works in Paris, where he lived and worked for the next three years. In 1811, García was engaged by Murat for the royal theaters in Naples. In his first rehearsal, the tenor astounded the orchestra by singing his entrance aria a semitone high. At first horrified by the musical discord, the musicians soon understood the brilliance of the feat and gave the daring singer a wild ovation at the conclusion of the aria. García's arrogance never deserted him. Forced to appear in a new opera of mediocre quality, he refused to sing a single note in rehearsals. When the performance arrived, the tenor improvised his own melodies over the composer's orchestral accompaniment.

During his five years in Naples, García undertook a variety of roles and perfected his singing under the careful tutelage of Giovanni Ansani, the last exponent of the old Neapolitan vocal school. At the same time, García established his reputation in Naples as a composer.

For García, Rossini wrote the part of Norfolk in *Elisabetta, Regina d'Inghilterra,* the opera that introduced the composer to Neapolitan audiences in 1815. A few months later, he brought García to Rome to create Almaviva in the premiere of *Il Barbiere di Siviglia,* a role forever identified with the tenor. García should have sung in the premiere of *Otello,* but he left Naples with his family to escape the plague then ravaging Southern Italy and returned to Paris. After his second debut as Paolino in *Il Matrimonio Segreto,* a critic found García's voice "much more flexible, of greater range and more powerful."

On March 10, 1818, García made his debut in London at the King's Theatre in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia.* That performance introduced not only García but also Rossini to English audiences. García's English success was no less emphatic than his triumphs in Paris and Naples. That season he appeared in Mozart's *Titus,* Rossini's *Elisabetta* as well as in *Così fan tutte* and *Il Matrimonio Segreto.* For the next seven years, he commuted between the English and French capitals as the highest paid tenor in the world.

"García's voice has an extensive compass and considerable power and is round and clear," wrote the critic in the *Harmonicon.* "Its flexibility is remarkable." That extraordinary flexibility did not please every English critic. After hearing García's embellishments in *L'Italiana in Algeri* in 1819, a critic complained that "every crotchet was literally suffocated with quavers, like the flutterings of so many mosquitos." Another critic chided García for "running about in vain with his gratuitous notes like a dog that scampers about ten miles to his master's one."

During this time, García was at the height of his vocal and artistic powers. In addition to the *Barber* and *Otello,* he appeared in *Don Giovanni, The Magic Flute, Ricciardo e Zoraïde, Matilde di Shabran, Semiramide, La Donna del Lago* and *Il Turco in Italia.* He partnered Angelica Catalani in Paris and then formed an important partnership with Giuditta Pasta in both Paris and London.

García loved challenges. For him, difficulties and obstacles served as inspiration. And so, at the age of 50, he embarked on one of his most daring undertakings when he accepted an offer from Dominick Lynch, a New York importer of French wines, to bring Italian opera to the U.S. Between his troupe's triumphant debut on November 29 and its final appearance more than nine months later, García produced 79 performances of nine operas, including two of his own works. García was praised for his

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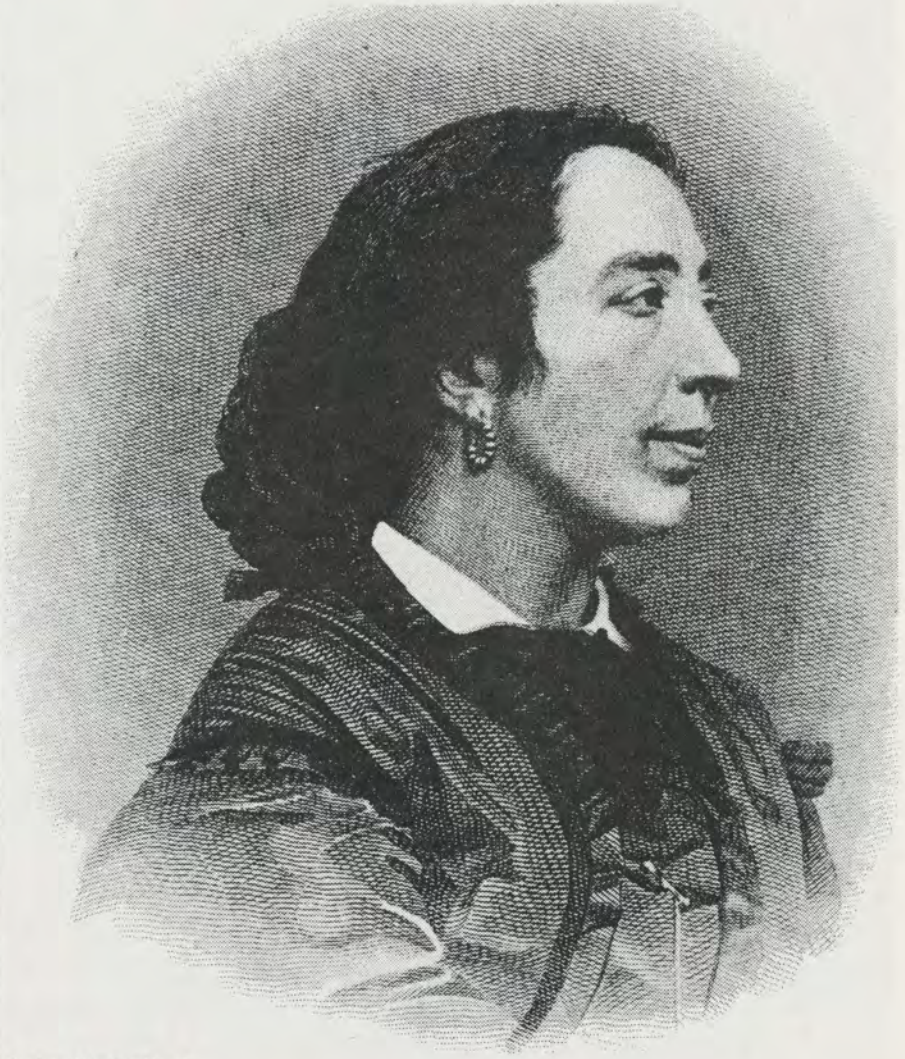

Pauline Viardot-García.

Rossini repertory but drew criticism when he played the title role in *Don Giovanni,* an opera he produced at the suggestion of Lorenzo da Ponte, then living in New York.

Manuel, Jr. undertook Leporello in that performance. He sang frequently during the New York season but gave up his singing career after an unsuccessful debut in Paris in 1829. After working for a while in French hospitals, he combined his vocal training with his medical experience to become one of the great voice teachers. In a career that lasted until his death in 1906 at the age of 101, he instructed many important singers. Early in his career, he wrote technical treatises and invented the laryngoscope, a device that allowed a singer's vocal cords to be seen for the first time.

The traveling troupe's greatest American triumph came when García was joined in *Otello* by his daughter, Maria, who had become the company's *prima donna* and most popular singer. After the second performance, Edmund Kean, then appearing in Shakespeare's *Othello,* came backstage to congratulate García and his daughter.

Five months before her American debut, Maria García had already made her first appearance on the opera stage, as Rosina, at the King's Theatre in London. But that debut served only as a prelude to her American appearances, appearances that established the young soprano as a

prima donna. In America, Malibran laid the foundation for the brilliant career that took her to the great European stages. She established her repertory and acquired the stagecraft that became such an important element in her career. Her debut drew raves from the critics. "Compass, sweetness, taste, truth, tenderness, flexibility, rapidity and force do not make up even half of the sum of her vocal powers," noted one New York critic.

Maria acquired that vocal polish through her father's meticulous, if sometimes harsh, training. By her fifth birthday, she had already begun piano and solfège in Naples with Louis Joseph Hérold and Auguste Penseron, recent winners of the Prix de Rome. Manuel García, however, became his daughter's voice teacher and her most exacting critic. Maria often rebelled against her father's tyrannical guidance. Paer and a friend, passing by the García apartment in Paris one day, heard screams issuing through the open window. "Someone is being murdered," exclaimed Paer's friend. "No, no," replied the composer, "it's only García teaching his daughter to sing."

García forced his daughter to sing only exercises, exercises that extended her range, equalized her registers and developed the flexibility of her voice. García instructed his daughter in the art of embellishment, teaching her to improvise florid variations to any melody she sang. He also trained her to extend her chest register up and her head register down to provide a choice of tone colors that added expressivity to her singing. Maria first fought but then accepted her father's commands, developing an iron-willed discipline that turned her unruly voice into an instrument of rare technical accomplishment, an instrument capable of sublime expression.

During the voyage to New York, García rehearsed his children relentlessly. After he struck his son during a rehearsal, García was warned by the captain that, should such assaults continue, he would be thrown in irons below the deck. During rehearsals for the premiere of *Otello,* García treated his daughter with shameful abuse, threatening, at one point, to strike her with Otello's dagger

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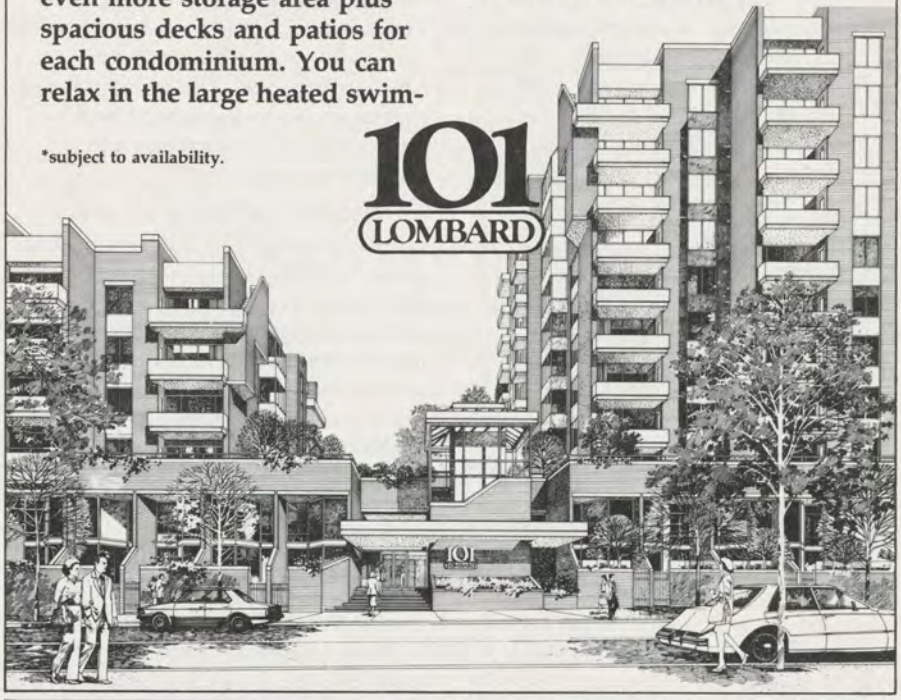

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if she didn't follow his orders. When at the first performance he appeared on stage with a real dagger, Maria cried out in terror, "Father, for God's sake, don't kill me!" She put real-life terror into her Desdemona, actually biting her father's hand so hard that he screamed.

To escape from her father's iron discipline, Maria married Eugène Malibran, a middle-aged but elegant Frenchman living in New York. After a brief period of retirement, she returned to the stage when her husband suffered financial setbacks. She escaped to Europe where she soon established herself as the *prima donna assoluta* in Paris and London. Prodded by her father's faith and by her own determination to prevail against all obstacles, Malibran transformed herself into the greatest singer in the world. "All spontaneity, inspiration, fermentation," wrote the French writer Alfred de Musset to describe Malibran's impact. The soprano fused that spontaneity, inspiration and fermentation into a unique and compelling artistry.

Ignoring the limitations of her voice, she sang roles that ranged from deep contralto to high soprano, from florid *leggiero* roles to dramatic soprano parts, from tragic priestesses and comic servants to conquering heroes and trembling maidens. In her ceaseless struggle to be unique, Malibran fought against her limitations to surpass the achievements of all her predecessors and eclipse each of her contemporaries.

After her triumphant appearances in Paris and London, Malibran made an assault on the operatic centers of Italy. In Rome, Naples and Bologna, she created unparalleled scenes of hysteria. In Venice, a theater was named after her. In Milan, she eclipsed Pasta as Norma. Fearlessly original in song and in gesture, Malibran enthralled not merely audiences and criticis but artists, musicians and composers. Her death from a riding accident in 1836 stunned and saddened all Europe.

García's relationship with his younger daughter, Pauline, was far less problematic. In Pauline, he found not only an eager but willing pupil, a pupil whose industry earned from her family the nickname "the ant." She became her father's favorite. "Pauline," he said, "can be guided by a thread of silk, but Maria needs a hand of iron." Pauline, from an early age, played the accompaniments for her father's voice lessons. Although he died before she could begin formal training, Pauline relied on vocal exercises he had written out and on the memory of his lessons with other singers.

Under her father's guidance, Pauline received an exceptional musical training. Before her tenth birthday, she was studying piano with Meysenberg (later with Liszt) and composition with Reicha at the Paris Conservatory. García, himself a singer and composer, turned his children into composers, too. Both Malibran and Viardot wrote songs. Indeed, Viardot, like her father, even wrote operettas.

Maria was perhaps too close to her father in temperament and talent to accept his guidance without rebellion. But Pauline grew up worshipping her father. "He could *do* anything," she said, "from cooking to writing an opera. If he had possessed greater mental repose, he would have done admirable things in the grand style, but he had too great facility, and life had too great charm for him." Rossini agreed. "If your father had had as much *savoir faire* as he had *savoir musical,*" he said to Pauline, "he would have been the foremost musician of his time."

García passed on to his children not only his brilliant musicianship but his unswerving ideals and his devotion to hard work. "Unhappily, I possess not one of my father's brilliant and fascinating qualities," wrote Pauline, "but I resemble him in this that I do not do things by halves, and that I have a horror of hypocrisy. When I think I ought to do something, I will do it despite water, fire, society, the whole world. My will-power exercises strong control over me."

That will-power turned Viardot-García into one of the most renowned and famous *prima donnas*. A plain, some said ugly, woman, she transformed herself into the greatest tragedienne on the opera stage. Unlike her sister who shot through a brilliant career in less than a decade, Pauline took almost ten years to establish herself as a *prima donna*. Despite early

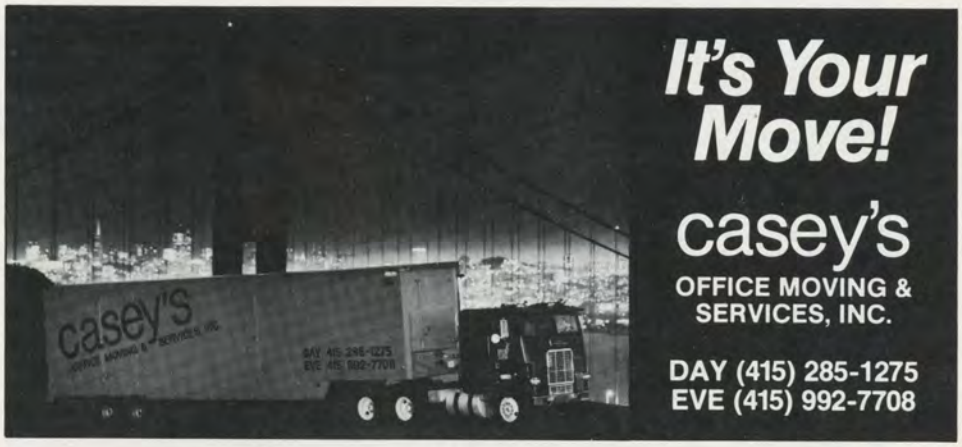
success in Paris and London, she found her career checked by Giulia Grisi, a powerful and conniving opponent who allowed no rival to gain a toehold on the stage of the Théâtre-Italien or Her Majesty's Theatre.

After maturing her art in Germany and Russia, Pauline returned at the height of her artistic powers to conquer London in 1848 and Paris a year later. Her appearances as Valentine in *Les Huguenots,* Alice in *Robert le Diable* and Rachel in *La Juive* made her world-famous. Meyerbeer wrote Fidès in *Le Prophète* to express her phenomenal agility and to exploit her powers as an actress. Berlioz revived for her Gluck's *Orphée,* a role she sang more than 150 times in Paris alone. She mastered an astonishing repertory, from Rosina to Leonore in *Fidelio,* from Donna Anna and Zerlina to Lady Macbeth and Norma. García provided the training and the extraordinary will-power required to accomplish these unparalleled vocal feats.

After her retirement in 1863, Mme. Viardot became a teacher, first in Baden-Baden, then in London and finally, for the last three decades of her long life, in Paris at the Conservatory. Her pupils included Aglaja Orgeni, Désirée Artôt and Mathilde Marchesi.

The fashionable audience that filled the Park Theatre on a November evening in 1825 could hardly envision the extraordinary career that would take off from the theater's stage. Nor could that audience perceive the extraordinary popularity that Italian opera would subsequently win across the country. Manuel García won deathless fame for creating the brilliant *prima donnas* his daughters became as well as for mastering the training that his son passed on to countless pupils. To his credit, too, García introduced Italian opera to this country, where more than 150 years later it continues to thrill and excite ever-increasing audiences. ■

Robert Baxter has a Ph.D. in classics from Stanford University and serves as the music critic for the Camden Courier-Post. *He regularly writes reviews for* Opera *and contributes feature articles to* Opera News.



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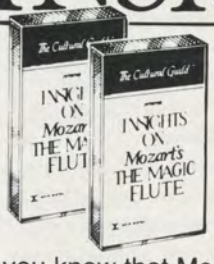

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David Hockney needn't worry about the Devil; there are too many others ready to find him a work to do, such as the San Francisco Opera, which commissioned the world-renowned artist to create a special poster in celebration of the second annual San Francisco Opera Summer Festival. Hockney, born in England but currently a resident of Southern California, is the designer of the production of *The Rake's Progress* that will be presented during the 1982 Festival. Inspired by Hogarth's famous series of engravings, Hockney's vision of *The Rake's Progress* was his first opera production, originally created for the Glyndebourne Festival in England. Hockney later adapted the production for the larger stage of La Scala in Milan, and his lavishly praised designs for this piece are now being seen in this country for the first time.

Hockney's sets and costumes were the focus of critical comment when the production first appeared. "This production is plainly going to be known as David Hockney's," said one, while others called his designs "vividly evocative," "full of arresting, unexpected ideas" and "the most vivid new art about." Particularly singled out for mention was the Bedlam scene. Hailing Hockney's bold conception of the madhouse as "memorable," "most striking" and "hallucinatory," critics went on to say, "In presenting the

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inmates of Bedlam as a box-pewed congregation enclosed by walls upon which the engraving techniques have now degenerated into schizoid graffiti, Hockney achieves a visual *frisson* to match the dramatic situation." "In Bedlam," wrote another, "where Tom's fellow-inmates arise like spectres from their symbolic cells, we have a *coup de théâtre* both disturbing and poignant."

It is this memorable scene that Hockney has chosen as the basis for the 1982 Festival poster. Measuring 34 by 39 inches, the poster is available exclusively at the San Francisco Opera Shop, 199 Grove at Van Ness, for $25. A limited edition of the poster, signed by the artist, is also available, for $100.

An exhibit of posters by Hockney is currently on view at the Opera Shop Gallery for the duration of the Festival. The display includes his most recent designs for the New World Festival in Miami, the Young Playwrights Festival in New York and the Barbican Center in London, plus 18 other posters. All items, including the Summer Festival poster, are available for purchase.

continued from p. 14

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John Datri
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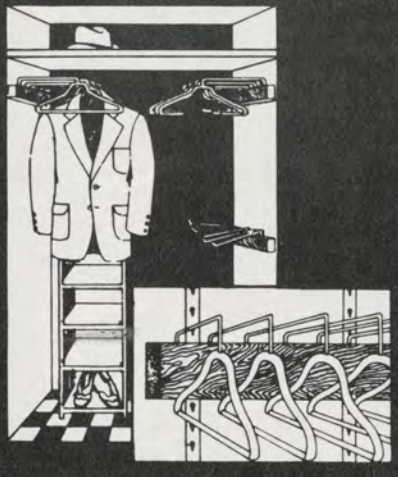

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IMPORTANT NOTICE: The box office in the outer lobby of the Opera House will remain open through the first intermission of every performance. Tickets for remaining performances in the season may be purchased at this time.

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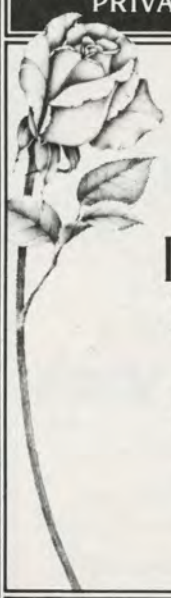

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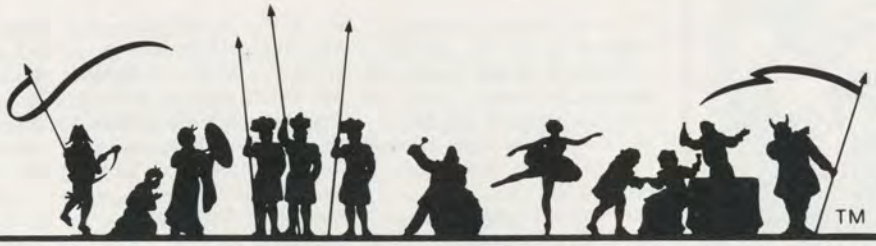

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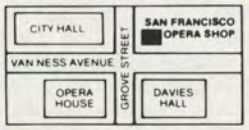

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Winston Lights 100's	12	0.9
Benson & Hedges 100's	16	1.1
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