

Wozzeck

1981

Saturday, October 24, 1981 8:00 PM

Tuesday, October 27, 1981 8:00 PM

Sunday, November 1, 1981 2:00 PM

Friday, November 6, 1981 8:00 PM

Wednesday, November 11, 1981 7:30 PM

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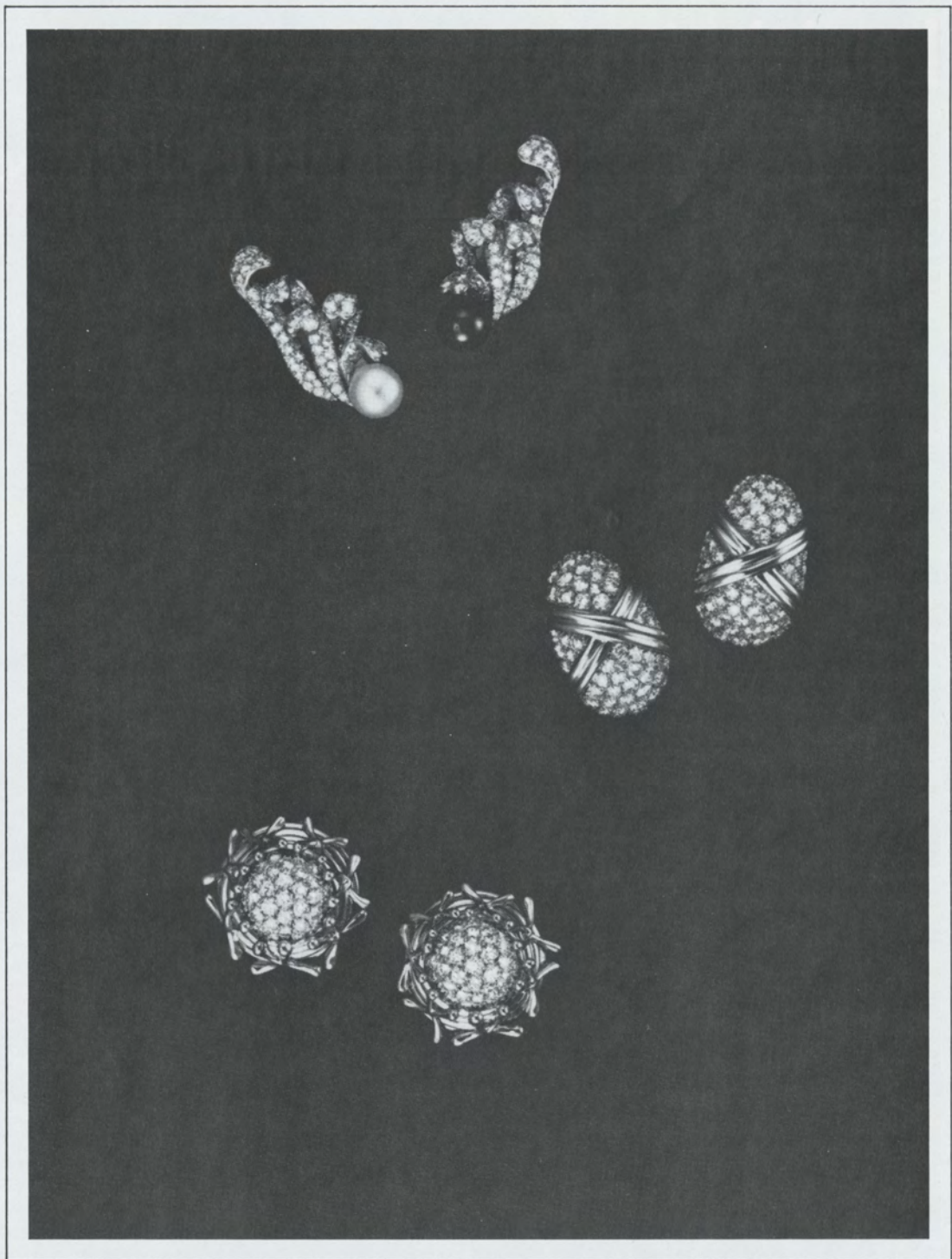
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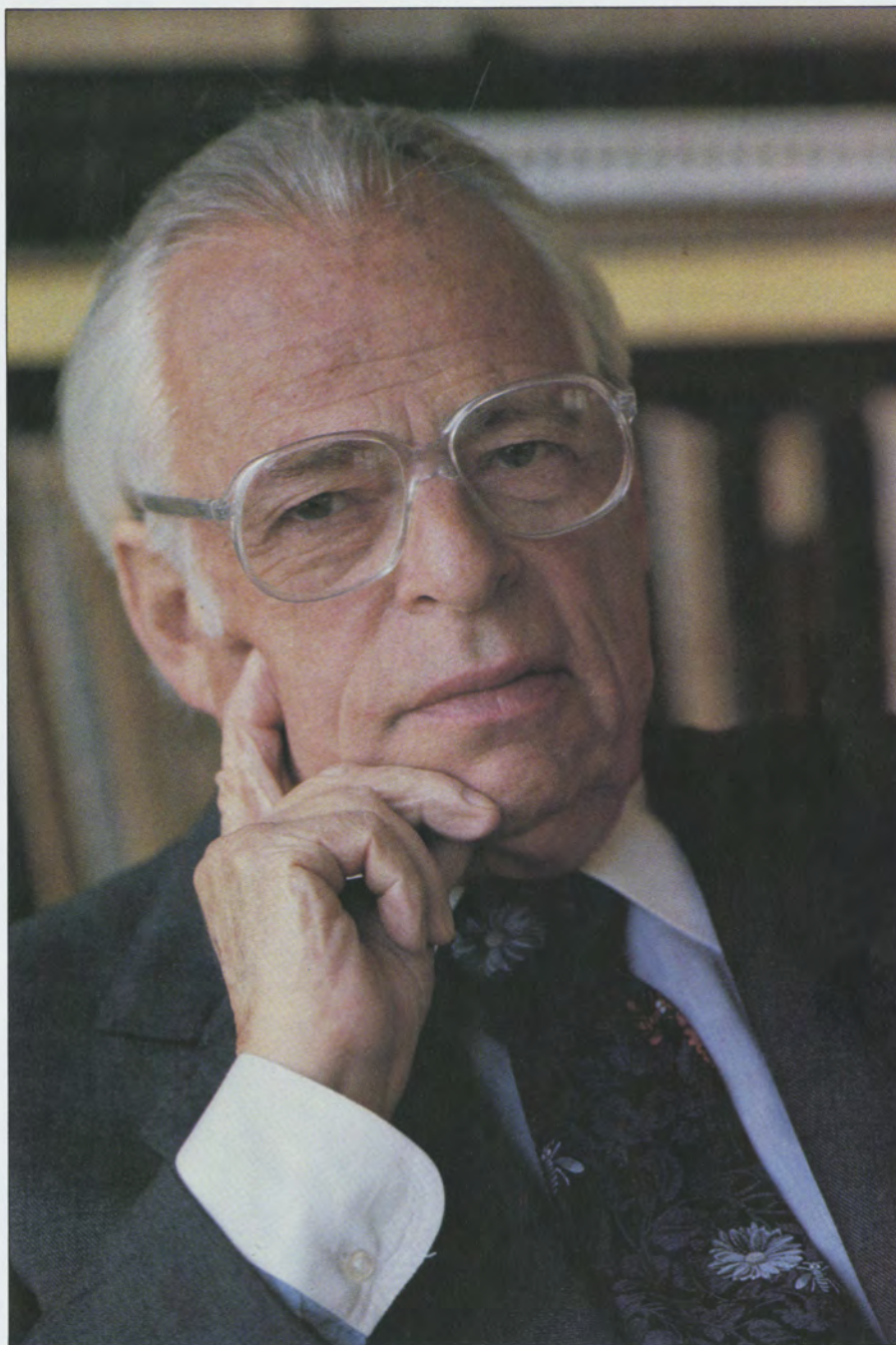
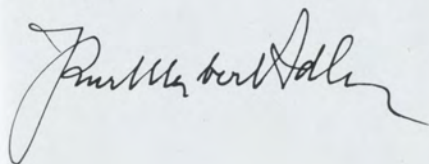
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A warm welcome to our 59th annual Fall Season, which climaxes the busiest year in the history of San Francisco Opera. We welcome back a host of dear friends of the Company and of mine, and we are also happy to introduce a number of exceptional artists new to San Francisco. Two of the most popular works in all opera — Verdi's *Aida* and Bizet's *Carmen* — receive new productions; the new *Aida* is San Francisco Opera's contribution to San Francisco's city-wide celebration of the 800th anniversary of the birth of St. Francis of Assisi, the City's patron. Three works are presented here in premiere performances: Rossini's *Semiramide*, Massenet's *Le Cid* (which has never before been heard in the American West) and Lehár's *The Merry Widow*. Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, the original version of *Katerina Ismailova*, is heard for the first time in 45 years in the United States. After this season, I will step down from the position of general director of the Company, having enjoyed 38 years of association with San Francisco Opera. Together with you, our audiences and faithful supporters, we have built an opera company of international renown. In 1954, when I assumed directorship, there were five weeks of grand opera in San Francisco; this year, we are proud to present a total of twenty in the War Memorial Opera House. With inauguration of the Summer Festival, an extended Fall Season and the activities of our affiliates, opera is now a permanent part of the vibrance that makes San Francisco such an enviable place to live. I hope this new season, and many more to come, will bring you the artistic satisfaction you desire. Thank you, and may you enjoy our sincere efforts.



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WOZZECK/1981

FEATURES

Reflections on *Wozzeck* by Walter Ducloux 27
Alban Berg took Büchner's "Woyzeck" scenes and turned them into a music drama for all times — a study of man's inhumanity toward man.

Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck* by Barry Hyams 36
Büchner transformed a real-life murder case into a prophetic tale, called "the first wholly successful tragic representation of the common man on the stage."

***Wozzeck* — What it Sounds Like and Why** by Michael Steinberg 58

"... I have been spending these war years just as dependent upon people I hate, have been in chains, sick, captive, resigned, humiliated... were it not for this, the musical expansion might never have occurred to me."
(Alban Berg on *Wozzeck*, 7 August 1918)

Geraint Evans: An Artist for All Seasons by Arthur Kaplan 68

THE COVER

All 11 works in the 1981 Fall Season take their names from central characters. The covers for the magazines focus on non-operatic depictions of these title heroes and heroines, as seen through the filter of various other artistic media.

WOZZECK: Scene from the 1978 film version of Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*, directed by Werner Herzog. Photo courtesy of New Yorker Films.



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San Francisco Opera Magazine 1981 is a Performing Arts Network publication, Gilman Kraft, Publisher; Lizanne Leyburn, Associate-Publisher; Irwin M. Fries, National Sales Director; Jerry Friedman, General Manager; T.M. Lilienthal, Advertising Director; Florence Quartararo, Advertising Manager; Piper Parry, Managing Editor; Frank Benson, Art Direction; Pat Adami, Administrative Assistant. ©All rights reserved 1981 by Performing Arts Network, Inc. Reproduction from this magazine without written permission is prohibited.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

When Kurt Herbert Adler lays down his baton after conducting the final performance of this 59th annual Fall Season, he will retire after nearly three decades as general director of the Company. It is characteristic that his last year in charge is a spectacular one of unparalleled activity and ambition. After launching a new San Francisco Summer Festival, he has assembled a fall opera season that, in breadth of repertoire and caliber of artists, is quite simply the dream of every opera lover.

We are deeply indebted to Mr. Adler for his development of San Francisco Opera to become one of the leading opera companies of the world. I know that all patrons of San Francisco Opera wish him good health and happiness in his retirement during the years to come, a retirement he has earned and richly deserves.

As I am sure you know, Terry McEwen takes on the responsibility of leading the Company this coming winter. He is committed to maintaining the exceptional standards of quality that have characterized the Adler years, and we are fortunate to have someone of his ability, determination and vision.

As mentioned in previous letters, costs of producing operas of the quality for which we are famous are staggering, and ticket revenues cover

only 55-60 per cent of the costs, even with sold-out houses. Further, the expenses of developing our new Summer Festival are significant and, of course, the ravages of inflation wreak particular havoc with our finances since we are a labor-intensive enterprise. As a result, our need for contributions to the annual fund drive is greater than ever. It is vital that we materially increase our contributed revenues this year if we are to maintain our financial health, which we must do if we are to continue our artistic strength. If you are one of our thousands of donors, I hope you will seriously consider increasing your contribution this year; if you are not, won't you please join them? We offer a host of attractive benefits to contributors, and a number of useful deferred giving plans have been developed. Please let us know how we can help you to help the San Francisco Opera, and please act now.

A number of the beautiful productions you see this fall are special gifts: *Semiramide* through a grant from the San Francisco Foundation, and the new *Aida* through the generosity of a friend of San Francisco Opera. *Manon* was made possible in 1971 through the sponsorship of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and a gift from James D. Robertson, while our *Lucia di Lammermoor* was created in 1972 thanks



RON SCHERL PHOTO

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

to a gift from Cyril Magnin. We are also delighted this fall to present the Canadian Opera Company's production of *The Merry Widow*.

I would like to extend our continuing gratitude to the National Endowment for the Arts and its chairman, Livingston L. Biddle, Jr.; the California Arts Council and its chairman, Marl Young; the Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Mayor of San Francisco; Chief Administrative Officer Roger Boas; the City and County of San Francisco; the War Memorial Board of Trustees and the San Francisco Opera Guild for their invaluable support of the San Francisco Opera.

Enjoy the season!

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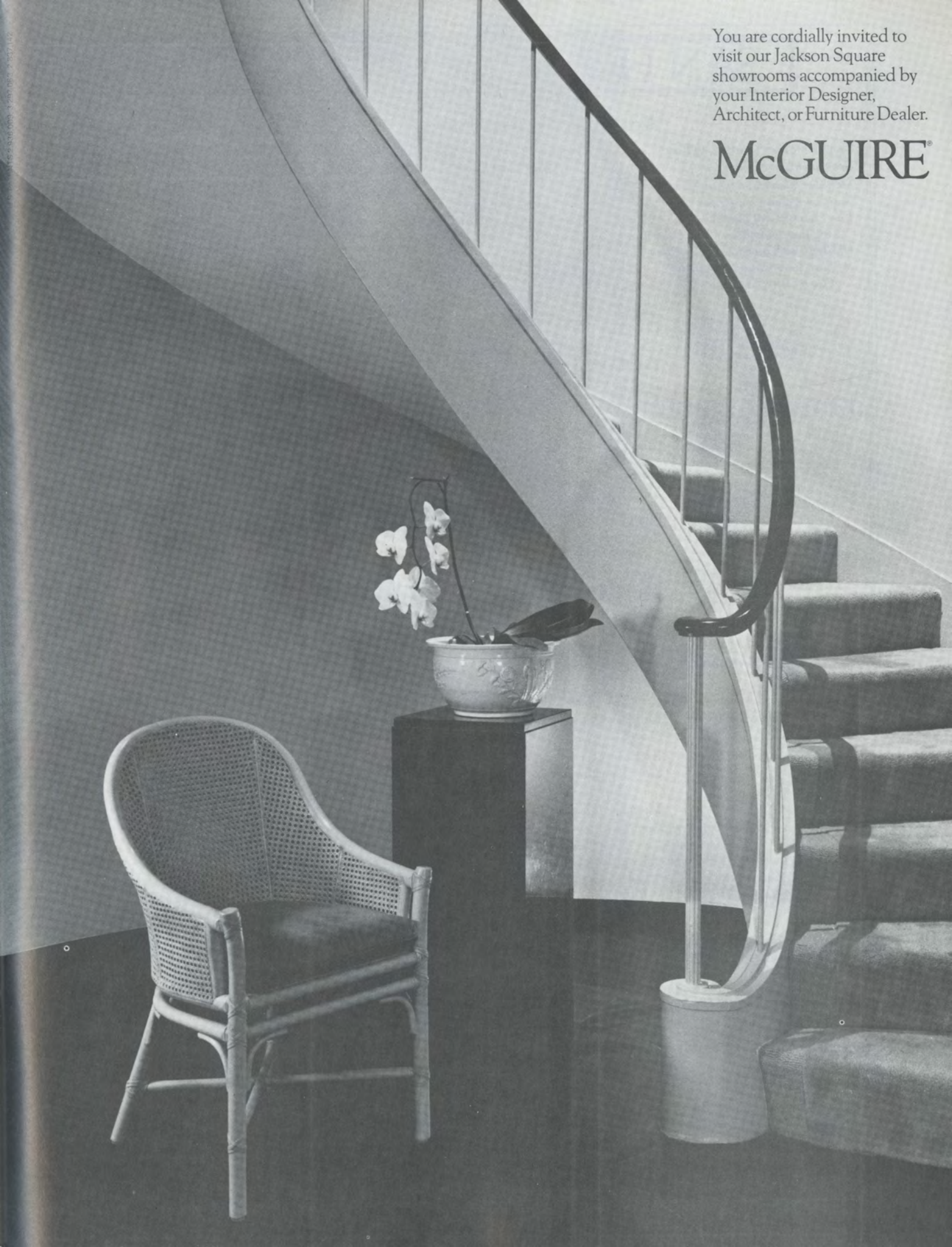
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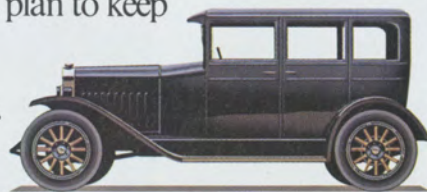
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ROCHAS
PARIS

1981 SEASON

Kurt Herbert Adler, General Director

San Francisco Opera Premiere

Semiramide

In Italian
Rossini

This production of *Semiramide* was made possible through a generous and much appreciated grant from the San Francisco Foundation.

Caballé, Horne/Gonzales, Morris*, Halfvarson, Green, G. Stapp

Bonyngé/Pizzi*/Pizzi

Manon

In French
Massenet

This production of *Manon* was made possible, in 1971, through the sponsorship of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and a gift from James D. Robertson.

Grist, South, P. Hunter*, Quittmeyer, Ganz/Burrows, Duesing, Malta, Castel*, Gardner, Noble, Glaum

Rudel/R. Levine*/Mitchell-George/Sakellariou

San Francisco Opera Premiere

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk

In Russian
Shostakovich

Silja, Nelson*, de la Rosa, Olsson*/W. Lewis, Trussel, Ludgin, Langan, Halfvarson, Harger, G. Stapp, Green, Freeman*, Glaum, Noble, Woodman

Simmons/Freedman/Skalicki-Colangelo

San Francisco Opera Premiere

The Merry Widow

In English
Lehár

Production from the Canadian Opera Company

Sutherland, Forst, P. Hunter, Ganz, Olsson/Hagegård*, Austin**, Stark*, Isaac*, Green, Woodman, Harger, Wexler, Del Carlo

Bonyngé/Mansouri/Laufer*-Mess/Sappington

New Production

Carmen

In French
Bizet

Berganza, Cook, South, Quittmeyer/Bonissolli, Estes, Eisler, Gardner, Langan, Noble

October 10, 14, 18 (mat), 22, 26, 30, November 3

Adler/Ponnelle/Ponnelle-Juerke*

Schwarz, Mitchell, South, Quittmeyer/Domingo, Carlson*, Eisler, Gardner, Langan, Noble

December 4, 7, 10, 13 (mat)

Adler/Ponnelle-Hope*/Ponnelle-Juerke

San Francisco Opera and West Coast Premiere

Le Cid

In French
Massenet

(Stylized Concert Version)

Neblett, Ringo*/Domingo, Furlanetto, Noble, Halfvarson, Green, Glaum, G. Stapp, Woodman

Rudel/Frisell/Munn

Wozzeck

In English
Berg

Martin, Nelson/Evans, Cox*, R. Lewis, Kennedy*, Harger, Green, Langan, Woodman

Rennert/Evans/Bauer-Ecsy—Mason

Lucia di Lammermoor

In Italian
Donizetti

This production of *Lucia di Lammermoor* was made possible, in 1972, by a generous and deeply appreciated gift from Cyril Magnin.

Putnam*, Richards/Shicoff*, Zancanaro, Furlanetto, Eisler, Freeman

Agler/Frisell/Toms

Popular-priced performances in Italian

Ringo, Richards/Morales*, Gardner, G. Stapp, Freeman, Harger

Bradshaw/Farruggio/Toms

New Production

Aida

In Italian
Verdi

This new production of *Aida* was made possible by a friend of the San Francisco Opera.

M. Price, Toczyska, Quittmeyer/Pavarotti, Estes, Mróz*, Langan, Freeman

Navarro**/Wanamaker*/Schmidt-Casey/Sappington

Die Walküre

In German
Wagner

Nilsson (11/20, 25, 12/1), Kovács* (11/28, 12/6, 12/12), Rysanek,

Denize*, P. Hunter, Cook, Olsson, Quittmeyer, Morgan*, Richards,

Rice*, Shaulis*/King, Schenk*, Rydl

Suitner/Hager/Skalicki

Il Trovatore

In Italian
Verdi

L. Price, Cossotto, Richards/Lamberti, Brendel, Rydl, Freeman,

G. Stapp

Steinberg**/Mansouri/Skalicki-West

Richard Bradshaw, Chorus Director
Thomas Munn, Lighting Designer
Joan Sullivan, Assistant Lighting Designer

*San Francisco Opera Debut

**American opera debut

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THOMAS O'CONNOR PHOTO



Mayor Feinstein, Kurt Herbert Adler.

'Adler Years' on View

San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein was among the first visitors to the current season's Opera Museum display, "The Adler Years," a photographic exhibit honoring Kurt Herbert Adler's tenure as general director of San Francisco Opera. Feinstein presented Adler with a proclamation announcing a citywide "Kurt Herbert Adler Appreciation Day." The

exhibit was prepared for the San Francisco Opera by Ann Seamster and can be viewed throughout the Fall Season in the museum. The Opera Museum is located on the south mezzanine level, adjacent to the Opera Shop, and is supervised by the Friends of the War Memorial Performing Arts Center.

Samson Telecast Nov. 23

The San Francisco Opera's 1980 production of *Samson et Dalila* will be seen nationwide on PBS television stations Monday, November 23, at 8 P.M. on WNET-TV's *Great Performances* series. The much-acclaimed new production of Saint-Saëns' opera, which opened the 1980 Fall Season in the War Memorial Opera House, starred Plácido Domingo and Shirley Verrett in the title roles, with Wolfgang Brendel as the High Priest. Julius Rudel conducted. The visually spectacular production was created by stage director Nicolas Joël and by designers Douglas Schmidt, Carrie Robbins and Thomas Munn. Taping of the production was partially funded through the generosity of a friend of San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Opera Guild, and was supervised by television director Kirk Browning. The opera production itself was made possible by and produced through the cooperation of the Gramma Fisher

DAVID POWERS PHOTO



Samson et Dalila, 1980: Shirley Verrett, Plácido Domingo.

Foundation of Marshalltown, Iowa, the Lyric Opera of Chicago and San Francisco Opera.

Film Masterpiece *Napoleon* at Opera House

As a special event the San Francisco Opera, in conjunction with Francis Ford Coppola, will present Abel Gance's 1927 film masterpiece *Napoleon* at 7 P.M. on October 23 and October 25 at the War Memorial Opera House. Carmine Coppola will conduct members of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra in his score, which accompanies the epic silent film.

Napoleon, which broke house records for attendance in New York and Los Angeles earlier this year, was hailed by Vincent Canby of the *New York Times* as "the best film event of the year." Charles Champlin in the *Los Angeles Times* recently called *Napoleon* "the measure of all other films, forever." With the advent of sound movies, *Napoleon* became one of the great lost masterworks of film history. Reconstructed through detective work by the English film-maker and historian Kevin Brownlow and others who used fragments and archival versions, *Napoleon* has now been restored to an almost complete version of the original.

Repeat showings are scheduled for next January 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Tickets are available now through the Opera Box Office.

New 'ArtExpo' Preview To Benefit SFO

The October 21 preview of the first-ever ArtExpo California, a four-day international exhibition of fine art scheduled for the new Trade Show Building at the Showplace, will be a benefit for the San Francisco Opera. Over 200 international exhibitors, including both artists and dealers, will display paintings, drawings, sculpture, tapestry and graphics at ArtExpo, which will also include a lecture series on art and a special exhibit of Bay Area printmakers. The benefit preview will take place from 7 to 9 P.M. on October 21, and, in addition to the exhibition, will include hors d'oeuvres and wine, the latter courtesy of United Vintners. Benefit tickets are \$25 each, and an invitation can be obtained by phoning the San Francisco Opera Development Department at (415) 861-4008.



The fine art of the silversmith is expressed in this centuries old vintager figurine from The Christian Brothers Collection, The Wine Museum of San Francisco. Crafted of wood with silver mounts, Nuremburg, Germany, circa 1650.

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SFO Broadcasts Now on Saturday Mornings

Listen for the weekly, Peabody Award-winning broadcasts of the San Francisco Opera on Saturday mornings at 11 A.M. (Pacific Time) this fall on KQED-FM (88.5) in the Bay Area and on many other stations along the West Coast.

In an important shift from the Company's previous live, Friday night broadcasts, San Francisco Opera productions are now being heard simultaneously nationwide on most of the member stations of National Public Radio and other select stations on Saturdays at 11 A.M. Pacific, 12 Noon Mountain, 1 P.M. Central and 2 P.M. Eastern Times. (Certain stations may choose to delay the broadcasts in their area; check local listings or consult your NPR station if in doubt.)

The 1981 broadcasts include three operas from the Company's first International Summer Festival and nine of the 11 operas in the current International Fall Season. The broadcasts are produced by the San Francisco Opera in cooperation with KQED-FM. Executive producer is Robert Walker; associate producer Marilyn Mercur; announcer Gene Parish and engineer Fred Krock.



Milton Glaser Visits new Opera Shop

Noted graphic artist Milton Glaser (left) chats with the distinguished director/designer Pier Luigi Pizzi at the opening of the San Francisco Opera Shop's display of Glaser posters in September. With them is the Opera's merchandising director, Irma Zigas. At the opening, Glaser unveiled his design for a San Francisco Opera 1981 Fall Season poster, honoring the final year of Kurt Herbert Adler with the Company. The new Opera Shop, located at Van Ness and Grove Streets, features a gallery area (at rear), with new opera-related displays slated for every month. The new shop is open daily 10 AM till curtain time, while the Opera Shop on the mezzanine level of the Opera House continues to be open before performances and during intermissions.

Second Summer Festival Set

The San Francisco Opera's second Summer Festival will open on Friday, May 28, and continue through Sunday, July 4, 1982. Five operas will be given during the six-week season.

Handel's *Julius Caesar*, in English, is the opening production on Friday, May 28, and will be repeated on June 2, 5, 8 and 13 (M). The second work of the season will be Puccini's *Turandot*, which opens on Thursday, June 3, with additional performances on June 6 (M), 9, 12, 15 and 18. Rossini's *The Barber of Seville* will open on Friday, June 11, and also be performed on June 16, 19, 23, 27 (M) and July 1. Verdi's *Nabucco* will be the fourth production, opening on Thursday, June 17, with five more performances on June 20 (M), 22, 25, 30 and July 3. The three works by Italian composers will all be sung in Italian.

The final production to be presented in the 28-performance season will be Igor Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, with its first appearance on Friday, June 24. *The Rake's Progress*, sung in English, will be repeated on June 26 and 29, July 2 and 4 (M), 1982.

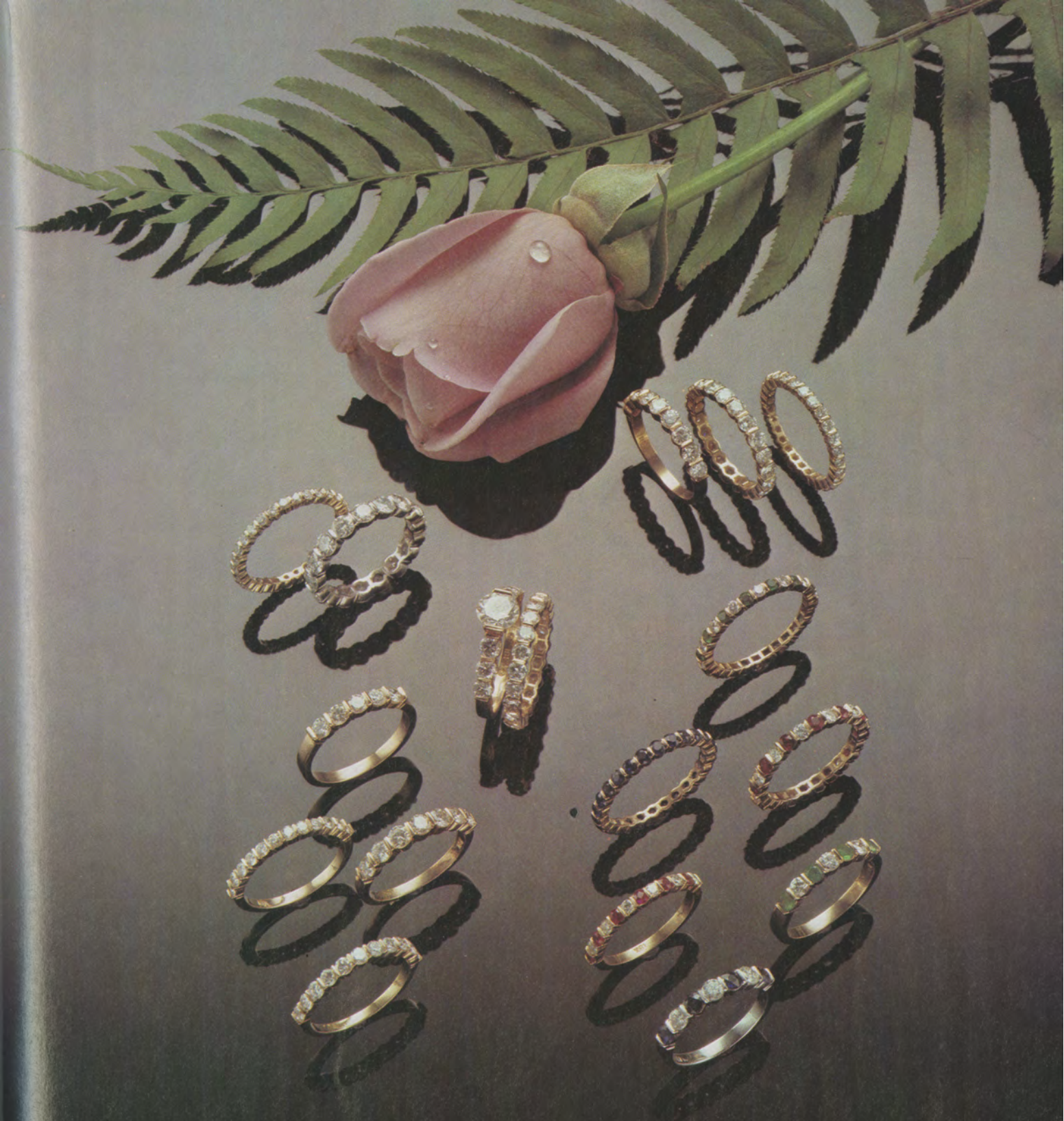


DAVID POWERS PHOTO

Record Turnout for Park Concert

A record crowd, estimated by officials at over 25,000, jammed Golden Gate Park for the annual free Opera in the Park concert jointly sponsored by the Friends of Recreation and Parks, the *San Francisco Examiner* and San Francisco Opera on September 13. Montserrat Caballé and Marilyn Horne performed a wide range of excerpts under Kurt Herbert Adler's baton, accompanied by members of

the San Francisco Opera Orchestra. The superstar duo brought the afternoon to a stunning climax, and the overflow throng to its feet, with a mesmerizing rendition of the duet "Mira, o Norma" from Bellini's *Norma*. The concert was televised live over KQED San Francisco and KXRA Sacramento, complete with stereo simulcast on radio, and was rebroadcast the following evening.



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Reflections on Woyzeck

Alban Berg took Büchner's *Woyzeck* sketches and turned them into a music drama for all times — a study of man's inhumanity toward man.



Albert Steinrück, who created the title role in Büchner's *Woyzeck* in Munich in 1913.

By WALTER DUCLOUX

"On June 21, 1821, at half-past nine in the evening, the 41-year-old barber Johann Christian Woyzeck stabbed the 41-year-old widow of the surgeon J.C. Woost, née Otto, seven times with a broken sword blade, to which a hilt had been affixed that same afternoon. She died within a few minutes. The killer was apprehended shortly thereafter. He put up no resistance."

This sober extract from a Leipzig police record was the beginning of a *cause célèbre* in the history of German jurisprudence. In dealing with the case, all the legal amenities were observed. The court-appointed psychiatrist, *Holfrath* Professor Johann Christian Clarus, submitted his findings in a well-documented summary. After five extensive interviews with the culprit, he had found Woyzeck confused and weird, but altogether responsible for his action, which was punishable by death. The defense requested and obtained a reprieve and review by the court. Again, the murderer was found sane enough to suffer the extreme

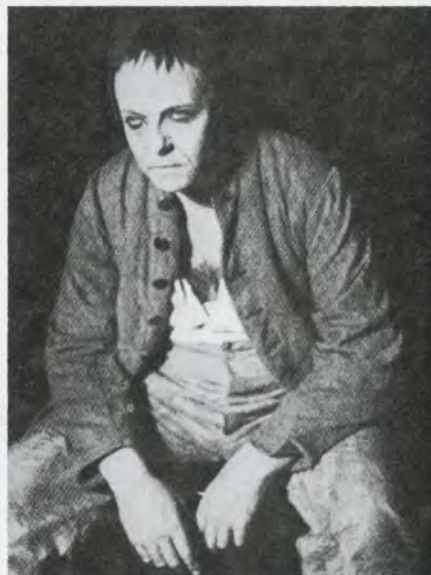
punishment, death by the sword in public execution.

Meanwhile, however, Woyzeck had confided to a priest that he had for years been hearing voices and seeing ghosts. Another psychiatrist was called in. His findings contradicted Dr. Clarus' verdict. The newspapers had long since taken hold of the story, and every turn in the trial fanned the flames of controversy. The legal wrangle lasted for over three years. The second psychiatrist made a nice profit from printing and selling his diagnosis. It did not help poor Woyzeck. He was executed at the crack of dawn on August 27, 1824. Few people would have expected his name to survive for long.

The son of a wigmaker, Woyzeck had been born in Leipzig in 1780. After leaving home at 18, he had drifted from job to job and finally enlisted with the Dutch army. Taken prisoner by the Swedes, he joined the ranks of his captors, only to desert again and return to Germany. After the Napoleonic juggernaut came to an end, Woyzeck and thousands of other ex-soldiers had nowhere to go. He lived from hand to mouth, winding up as a beggar. As a man without proper papers, he could neither hold a steady job nor get married. His last liaison came to its bitter end. He was never sure whether their child was his or not.

The issue of capital punishment was a hot topic of public debate throughout Germany in the early 19th century, particularly among the young. In the wake of years of war, the country teemed with refugees, wretches of every kind, illiterate and therefore defenseless, people without homes or families, whose names appeared on no legitimate ledgers, who were tossed about as flotsam on the tide of history. It was, as it is today, easy to blame a "callous and insensitive bureaucracy" for their suffering, for turning a deaf ear to cries of anguish and despair.

One of the youths who was to carry a flaming torch for the down-



Leo Schützendorf, the first *Woyzeck* in Berg's opera.

trodden was only 10 years old when Woyzeck was executed. His name was Georg Büchner. Unlike the hapless wretch he was later to immortalize, Büchner had everything going for him as a young man. After a sheltered boyhood, equipped with a classical education, he entered medical school at the age of 18. Soon enough, he was swept up in crusades on behalf of the underprivileged and in campaigns against German officialdom, whose reactions were slow but sure in coming. Before he turned 21, he had to flee Darmstadt. In 1836 he became a professor of medicine at the University of Zurich, where he died of typhus, not yet 24 years old. Among his literary output, the most successful document was his doctoral dissertation on the nervous system of fish.

Young people animated by notions of the Romantic age refused to accept concepts of guilt and responsibility. They saw traditional evil-doers as victims rather than villains, as creatures to be pitied rather than punished. Some literary monsters that struck terror in the hearts of ordinary

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Johann Christian Woyzeck (1780-1824).

people were "beings that suffered curses they tried in vain to break" — vampires, wolfmen, zombies and the like. Before reading about Woyzeck, young Büchner was fascinated with at least two other cases of murder, both uncannily similar to Woyzeck's. All three men killed their common-law wives with a blade; all of them were soldiers, born to direst poverty and uneducated; all three cases involved an illegitimate child. Of the three murderers, one committed suicide, another died in a mental institution. Only Woyzeck suffered the death penalty, which may be the reason why his case won by far the greatest notoriety.

From his early youth, Büchner had been fascinated by the theater. He saw it as a forum for propaganda as well as a means of entertainment, and early in life his skill with words would become one of his favorite tools of expression. A born dramatist, he saw the exciting new possibilities in bringing the plight of the lower classes onto the stage, mindful of Kant's dictum that to *act* a beggar was one thing and to *be* a beggar another. Earlier playwrights had hardly ever tried to reproduce on the stage the inarticulate moans of pain, the howls of impotent rage in a totally realistic way. The great sufferers of dramatic history, the Oedipuses and King Lears, had been cast in a heroic mold, their agonies entrusted to the power of poetry. By contrast, Büchner's "heroes" would be nobodies, spokesmen for uncounted millions. Could such creatures be valid subjects of dramatic treatment?

When Büchner wrote down some short scenes projecting his new-found subjects, it is altogether likely that he meant them to be capsule dry runs of an as-yet-untried style, comparable to the design exercises of Leonardo or

the composition sketches of Beethoven. The scenes were penned on individual and unnumbered sheets of paper. Their first version did not contain the names of either Woyzeck or Marie, which only appear in the second rewrite of the fragments. While there is an obvious connection between them, it is unlikely that the author regarded them as anything approaching a complete play. Yet the compelling power of every installment is inescapable and projects a new image of life, a worm's eye-view of humanity as seen by someone whose emotions are normal, but whose failings of intellect and understanding lend him a kind of monstrous astigmatism foreshadowed by some of the great medieval painters of Germany.

After Büchner's death his literary legacy was, at first, not carefully sifted. No one paid any attention to the disjointed sketches loosely entitled "Woyzeck." In 1850, aiming to organize his brother's literary output, Ludwig Büchner failed even to list the scenes. By that time, the ink on the manuscripts had almost faded and Ludwig could not decipher them anymore.

Almost 30 years later, a literary sleuth, Karl Emil Franzos made the

Büchner's text was far ahead of its time.

rediscovery of Büchner's genius his personal crusade. Going over his papers with a fine-tooth comb, he succeeded in restoring the legibility of the scenes, even though he misread the protagonist's name as Wozzeck. Although the author's works were finally published in 1879, leading to occasional performances of his dramas, the "Wozzeck" scenes found no interest until 1913. In that remarkable year, one of the most distinguished playhouses of Germany, the Residenztheater in Munich, undertook a production of the "Wozzeck" scenes. In the light of what was to follow, the comments of Munich's leading theatrical journal, *Das Jahr der Bühne*, seem noteworthy:

If, in this year of 1913, there are theaters which see fit to pay centennial tribute to someone other than Richard Wagner, this is due to the lucky happenstance that they have no orchestras. Thus, better late than never, the Residenztheater honored Georg Büchner. While earlier productions of his plays were not too successful, one item on the program made us regret the absence of Max Reinhardt: A series of scenes never before performed, *Wozzeck* bears comparison with



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The program from the first performance of Büchner's play in Vienna in 1914, which Berg attended.

the greatest fragments of German dramatic literature. Hastily scribbled by a 23-year-old with the devil on his tail and already marked by death, *Wozzeck* reflects biblical simplicity and monumentality, the depth of Dostoyevsky, and the magic of some ancient ballads. As it was, the production's aim was noble, but the result wanting. Why must we always have either the wine or the jug?

Despite the absence of Max Reinhardt (who put his master's touch to a *Wozzeck* revival in 1921), the scenes made an enormous impression,

Alban Berg was a true man of the theater.

especially as enacted by Albert Steinrück, one of the luminaries of the German stage who, after assuming the title role in Munich, repeated it in Vienna in the spring of 1914. His performance was seen by the 29-year-old Alban Berg, who at once resolved to turn *Wozzeck* into an opera, against the advice of his friends. The almost-lost flyleaves in Zurich, in one of the strangest concatenations of accidents, thus were granted international fame and a degree of longevity never dreamed of by their author, supported by a large symphony orchestra!

Vienna in 1914 was the capital of *Weltschmerz* and a seething cauldron of artistic activity, much of it influenced by Sigmund Freud and his theories. Its operatic life was dominated by Gustav Mahler, the most demonic and controversial director the opera ever had, whose symphonies were monumentally mounted pursuits of simple ideals, nature and a peace he never found. Arnold Schönberg had

just finished his own gigantic contribution to monumentalism, the *Gurrelieder*, only to make a break and become the prophet of strict new disciplines that cut all the "fat" out of music and made austerity an ideal. The most outstanding among his disciples were the ascetic Anton von Webern and the elegant and urbane Alban Berg. Actually, in the latter, the worlds of Schönberg and Mahler melded in a unique way.

What drew the young composer to the hapless antihero Franz Wozzeck? In one of history's mystifying time sequences best dealt with under the theory of relativity, Büchner's text was far ahead of its time. What music from the author's time could express the subliminal agonies, hellish traumas and inarticulate tantrums, the stifled sobs of lonely despair, the gruesome grammar of guilt-ridden *Angst* pervading the disjointed plot? It took a century to develop musical vocabulary to that point, especially in exploiting the expressive means of wordless instruments. Meanwhile the subject matter, instead of becoming dated, had assumed greater poignancy. Across all changes of society and politics, wars and other catastrophes, one curse remained constant: man's inhumanity to man. The hopes that *liberté, égalité, and fraternité* would gradually cure the wrongs created by "the old order" may well have been greater in Büchner's day than they were in 1914. If not, why was it necessary to fight a "war to end all wars"? On the eve of that war, even the most civilized societies harbored millions of people still living in misery, tortured by abuse and cruelty not due to systems, but to fellow human beings.

The extraordinary coincidence that brought Berg and the *Wozzeck* scenes together might still have produced no creative result had not history sucked the composer into a situation that deepened his — and his future audiences' — sympathy with the subject. Several years of military service exposed the refined intellectual to the coarseness of a world he was not meant to know. It heightened his almost obsessive compulsion to finish a project faced with what must have been almost insuperable difficulties, especially for one who had never before written an opera and had never worked in the humdrum world of operatic routine most other successful opera composers had gone through.

For all his musical sophistication, Alban Berg was a true man of the theater. Thoroughly aware of the great operatic heritage of the past, he was also alive to the need for a regeneration of opera. Yet he resolutely refused to be regarded as a revolutionary. His primary aim was, in his own words,

"to enhance the content of Büchner's timeless play by an appropriate score and to translate his powerful dramatic utterances into the language of music." Theatrical effectiveness would dictate the musical continuity, which at all times would have to act as a kind of ideal stage director, guiding what happens on stage and intensifying the emotional climate as well as controlling the shifting moods.

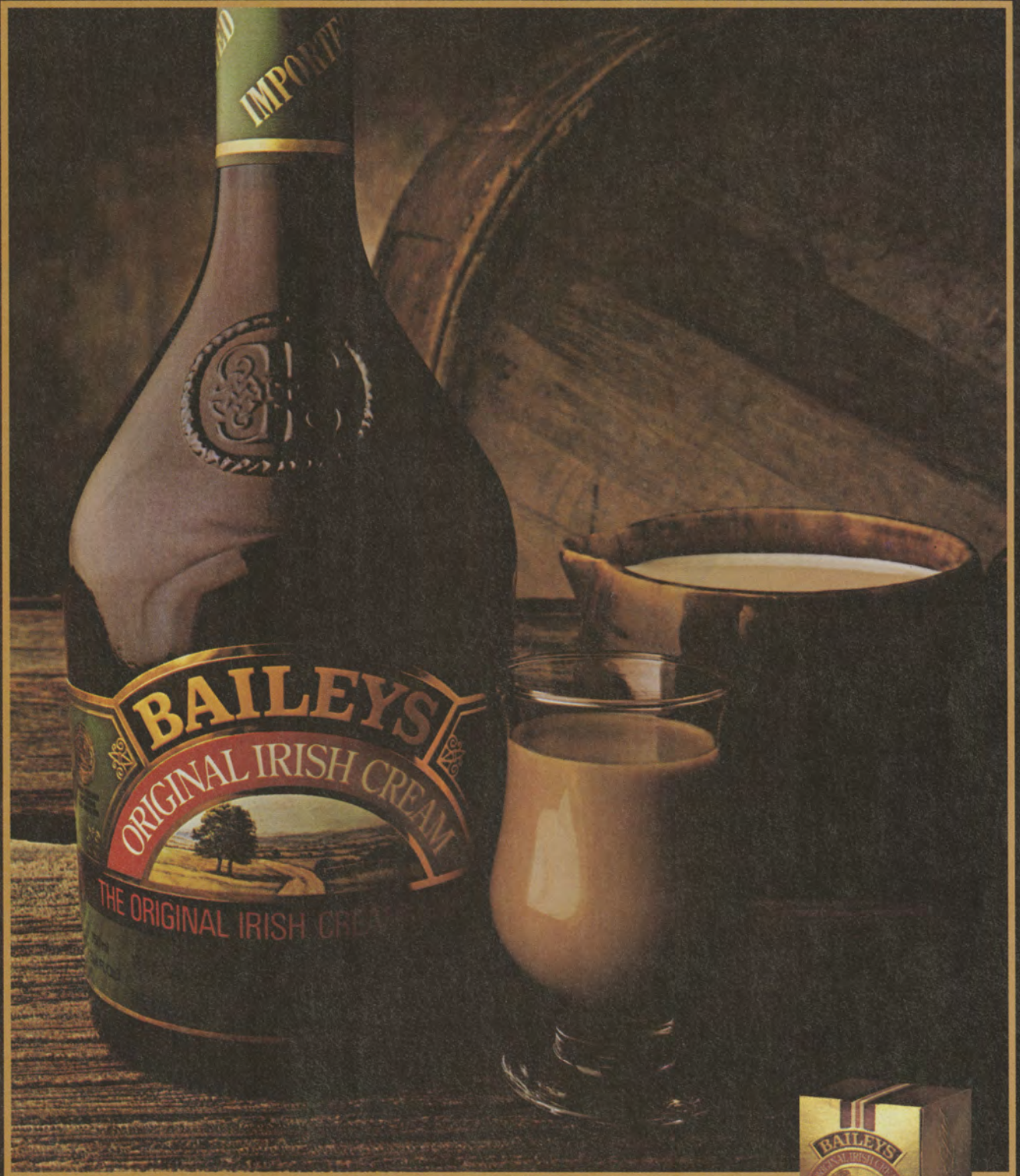
As they stood, the sketches could not be used as a libretto. Several scenes contained extraneous matter,

Berg was interested in the relentless progression of the plot.

colorful but unnecessary. Berg was interested in the relentless propulsion of the plot. The musical continuity between the 15 scenes finally selected, five to each of three acts, would be held to a minimum. There would be no overture. The large orchestra would have its majestic last say toward the end of the opera, after *Wozzeck* is dead. But, unlike Siegfried's Funeral March from *Götterdämmerung*, that last commentary would not be followed by a cataclysm. Quite the contrary: another little *Wozzeck* would be seen riding his hobbyhorse and singing: "Hop, hop! Hop, hop!" on the way to taking a look at his dead



Alban Berg dressed in his soldier's uniform, 1915.



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Alban Berg in 1932 leaning out of the window of his Vienna residence over a portrait of himself painted by his teacher, Arnold Schönberg.

mother. As the French put it, "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!"

While Berg worked on his opera, the spoken scenes saw a number of performances. A new edition restored the name to "Wozzeck." The composer preferred the harsher sound of "Wozzeck," which he used to chilling effect, particularly in the scene with the doctor who makes it a point to stress the second syllable with the sharpness of a needle jabbing into his poor victim's arm. Critics brought the subject to the attention of an ever-widening public. Berlin's Alfred Kerr wrote: "Wozzeck is the doormat everyone steps on; the target of the captain's taunts, the doctor's guinea pig, the drum major's punching bag, and Marie's dummy. He is at the receiving end of the action of others, without ever acting himself. The one time he defends himself, he does not kill his rival, but the woman he loves; not his enemy, but his own heart!"

It is, of course, his very passivity which excites our passion. Incredible

though it seems, defenselessness becomes the wellspring of *katharsis*. Loneliness, the most common of human afflictions, is its close kin. It tortures not only Wozzeck, but everyone around him: the captain, a groveling underling spouting philosophical platitudes; the doctor, whose pathetic search for fame is in itself an *aberratio mentalis*, feeding on the likes of both Wozzeck and the captain; the drum major, who feeds on the likes of Marie on his way to an early death of cirrhosis of the liver. The Swiss

**Wozzeck's very passivity
excites our passion.**

playwright Max Frisch put it well in a memorable speech on Büchner: "We all feel the knife at our throat."

Much of Büchner's continuity is more like "discontinuity." Characters ostensibly speaking to each other actually speak past each other, engaging instead in confused monologues, not

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listening to their partners. Instead of resorting to time-honored operatic forms, such as arias, duets, ensembles, accompanied recitatives, Berg hit upon another solution in order to safeguard a formal structure without which his opera might have suffered from rambling inconsistencies. He borrowed instrumental devices associated with earlier periods of music, such as the variation-form, the sonata, the suite and the passacaglia.

Known mainly for its avant-garde orientation, Schönberg's *Gurrelieder* was one of the most erudite musical assemblages ever, thoroughly at home in music history, mastering the most recondite theoretical techniques to perfection. Berg's solid grounding in composition technique allowed him vast freedom of expression, especially in the use of popular musical forms — the off-stage band introducing the drum major or the waltz ensemble on stage in the garden scene. Rather than allowing them to lighten the oppressive atmosphere, their distortion actually heightens it, because we hear it through the ears of the characters on stage rather than through our own.

The composer was well aware that the theoretical sophistication of his score might be used to spin a cocoon of mysticism around it. He was worried lest this might interfere with its enjoyment by an untutored audience. Time and again he warned against making the complexity of the score a fetish, demanding that the technical aspects be totally disregarded by audiences attending a performance. "From the first opening of the curtain," he said, "no one in the audience should ever be aware of the inventions, fugues and passacaglias of which the formal framework consists!" Few professionals could identify such technical devices at first hearing anyway. The dramatic impact of the whole work is so overwhelming that few listeners could get lost in such striking details.

Occasionally, Alban Berg might have profited from greater experience in the routine of everyday operatic practice. The musical difficulties of the score are compounded by unnecessary difficulties of notation that make reading score and orchestra parts difficult. Berg likes the use of very small note values, 32nds and 64ths, in slow bars, which makes timing entrances a chore. The score suffers from an affliction typical of the newer Vienna school, including Mahler: a surfeit of verbal instructions, footnotes and explanations of mainly academic interest. While the composer may go to great lengths to insure dynamic and rhythmic precision, he may on occasion leave the conductor widest latitude in using his own judgment.

For the projection of the text Berg uses three distinct manners of verbalization: legitimate singing, spoken dialogue, and the in-between technique called *Sprechstimme*, a way of speaking used by Schönberg, which observes a prescribed cadence with the pitches only approximated, to the accompaniment of a delicate instrumental texture. Whereas legitimate singing and stage speech are based on tried and true techniques, *Sprechstimme* depends to a large extent on a singing actor's inborn vocal equipment. Recent advances in electronics may bring us closer to a solution, but in the meantime, every performer will have to make his own peace with the problem.

Büchner's and Berg's message has lost none of its urgency.

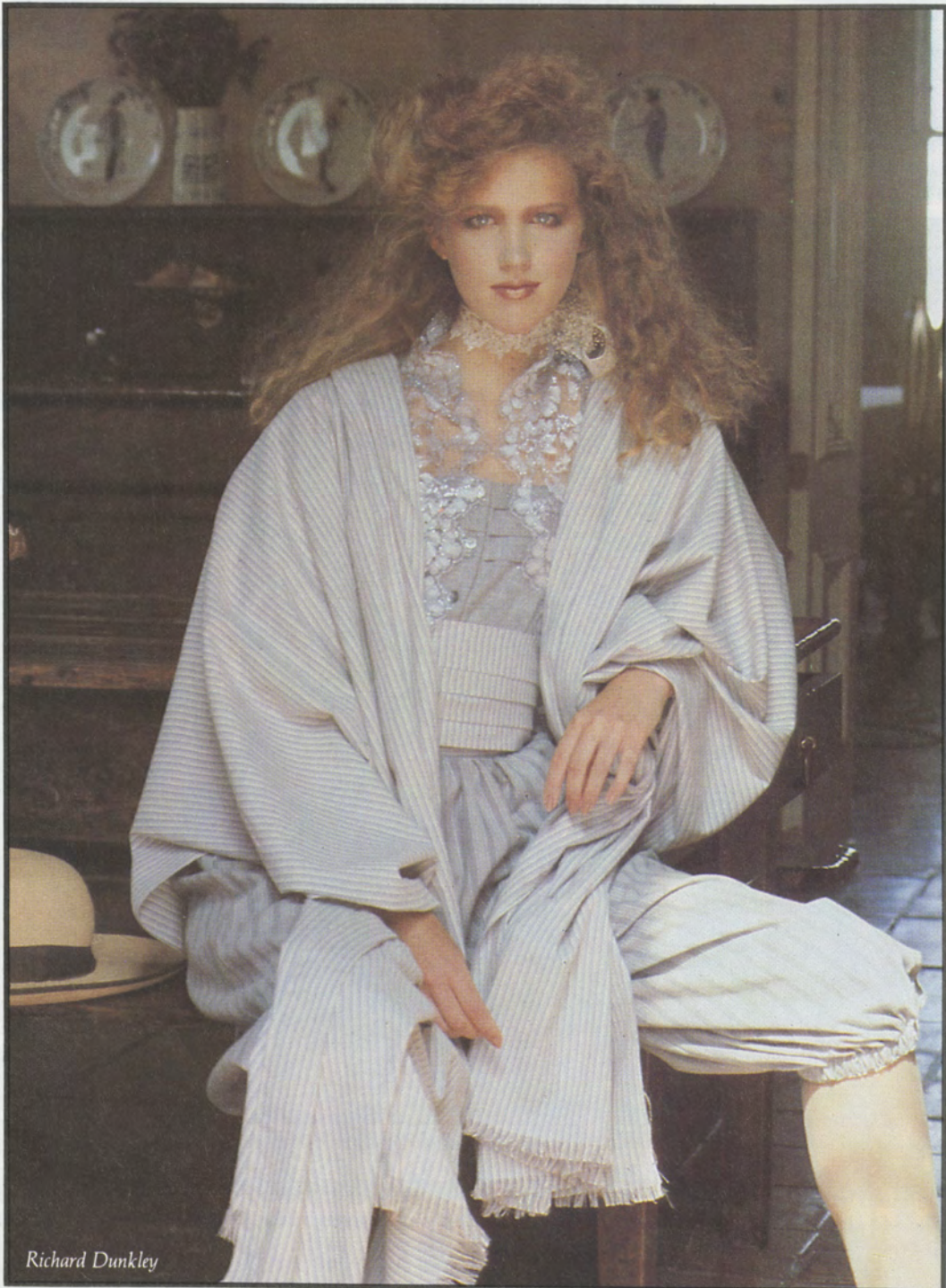
For all his preoccupation with theory, musical form, performance technique and the like, Alban Berg was by no means a recluse, but a thoroughly modern Viennese of the 1920s and '30s. He took a lively interest in films, radio, automobiles, jazz and other phenomena up for public debate in those days. An avid soccer fan, he hardly missed a Sunday afternoon game of one of Vienna's top-notch teams. After that, he and Mrs. Berg might have grabbed a quick bite of supper and then attended the opera or a concert. His tall, handsome presence was a familiar sight to many of us music students who followed a similar Sunday routine.

Three hundred years after the rise of the first great genius of opera, Claudio Monteverdi, *Wozzeck* returns to the principles that had once breathed life into his works. Through all the meanderings of taste and style, Büchner's and Berg's message, uttered in the most sophisticated way available to our time, has lost none of its urgency. As the world's population grows, so does the number of *Wozzecks* among us. With every advance in civilization and science their plight seems to grow worse. All pious protestations to the contrary, man's inhumanity to man has not abated, and we may stand more in need of *katharsis* than our ancestors ever were. Few works of the musical stage can provide it more powerfully than *Wozzeck*. Büchner and Berg might well rate the claim Goethe ascribed to one of his dramatic heroes, the great poet Torquato Tasso:

While other men are silenced by
their woe,
A god bade me reveal all that I
suffer. ■

WALTER DUCLOUX is Director of Opera & Orchestra at the University of Texas at Austin.

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Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*

Büchner transformed a real-life murder into a prophetic play called "the first wholly successful tragic representation of the common man on the stage."

By BARRY HYAMS

In Leipzig's marketplace on August 27, 1824, Wolfgang Johann Christian Woyzeck was beheaded for murdering his mistress. Ten years later, in a medical journal in his father's library, Georg Büchner read "The Woyzeck Case," written by Johann Christian Clarus. It reviewed the investigation by which Clarus had rated the felon "psychopathic" but legally responsible. Clarus judged Woyzeck's crime one of uncontrolled passion, jealousy and weak will, and counted the execution "a moral warning to the young of the dangers of laziness, drink, gambling and licentiousness." Apparent to this day has been the futility of his warning.

Its effect on Büchner, however, was profound. Transforming "The Woyzeck Case," reported by Clarus as a crime against society, into a denunciation of society's crime against Woyzeck, Büchner wrote what Carl Mueller has since deemed "the first wholly successful tragic representation of the common man on the stage." The play swept the high and mighty from the arena they had dominated since Aeschylus and replaced them with the lowly, the helpless. After the passage of 50 years, threads out of Büchner's drama began to weave themselves into the works of playwrights, from Hauptmann, Wedekind and Ibsen down the decades to Brecht, Beckett and Miller, until a century and a half later, *Woyzeck* is referred to as "the first modern tragedy . . . the first real tragedy of low life."

Büchner's concept of tragedy evolved out of personal experience from which he formulated his view of history. The same year he read of Woyzeck, he wrote *The Hessian Courier*, a proclamation of the "Society for the Rights of Man," an underground organization he founded. The tract sent forth a clarion call, borrowed from the French Revolution and foreshadowing Marxism, to the 700,000 in his native Hesse who were oppressed

by the Grand Duchy's 10,000 aristocrats and bourgeoisie. "Peace to the huts!" it cried. "War on the palaces! You are nothing! You have nothing! The rich take the grain and leave the peasant the stubble. His sweat is the salt on the rich man's table."

Büchner printed *The Hessian Courier* on July 31, 1834, and on that very day it was brought to the notice of the police through the treachery of a fellow Society member. The conspiracy dissolved; several in the circle were jailed; Büchner went into hiding. He



Georg Büchner (1813-1837).

wrote of his disenchantment to his parents: "All the excitement and screaming of individuals is only the idle work of fools. They write but no one reads them; they cry out but no one hears; they act but no one helps them."

An intense study of the French Revolution completed his disillusionment. Robespierre had announced, "We rule by iron those who cannot be ruled by justice," and Büchner perceived how a cabal of fanatics manipulated the rebellion and precipitated a

welter of horror, and how the merchant deputies aborted the uprising. In 1793 alone, Robespierre's "iron" claimed almost 20,000 heads, some accused of "starving the people," others for "depraving public morals," and still others by clerical error. Preparing herself for the fatal blade, Mme. Manon Roland apostrophized the crippled revolution, saying, "Oh, Liberty, what crimes are committed in your name!"

Despondent, Büchner confided to his fiancée, Minna Jaegle, "I feel as if I had been annihilated by the fatalism of history. I feel crushed beneath [it]. I find in human nature a terrifying sameness, and in the human condition an inescapable force granted to all and to none: the individual only froth on the wave; greatness sheer chance; the splendor of genius a puppet show, a ridiculous struggle against an iron law, the recognition of which is the greatest achievement, the mastery of which is impossible."

Discovering this "iron law" for himself, Büchner saw individual man, helpless to change conditions, as the victim of heartless social factors. In literature and the theater, however, the writer, he affirmed, could be not simply an historian but one who recreated history "by placing us directly in the life of an age instead of giving us a dry account of it, and by presenting us with characters instead of characteristics, living figures in place of descriptions. His task," Büchner concluded, "is to come as close as possible to historical events as they really happened. His story must not be any more nor less moral than history itself. After all, the good Lord did not conceive history to suit the reading habit of young girls."

Looking at life, Büchner saw it as a futile exercise, inharmonious with nature. He expressed this partly as boredom, a leitmotif in all his plays, starting with his first, *Danton's Death*. In it Danton longs for relief from his ennui following a series of grisly events he helped perpetrate. "Pain,"



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"J.C. Woyzeck meets his death as a repentant Christian, at the Marketplace in Leipzig, August 27, 1824," in a contemporary engraving.

he sighs wearily, "is the foremost proof of the non-existence of God."

Büchner's comedy, *Leonce and Lena*, reiterated the theme more directly. "What people won't do out of boredom! They study, pray, love, marry and multiply out of boredom. Some even die out of boredom."

And at the very opening of *Woyzeck*, the Captain, as he is being shaved, exclaims: "Easy, Woyzeck, take it easy! You're making me dizzy. You'll finish up early, and what'll I do with 10 minutes on my hands? Use your head, Woyzeck. You've got 30 years to live. What are you going to do with that horrible stretch of time? I get upset when I think it takes a whole day for the world to turn around just once. What a waste of time! And where does it get us?"

"The first modern tragedy."

This chord, struck in 1836, echoed in the postwar 20th century in the black comedies of Arthur Adamov and Eugene Ionesco and, modulated into another key, was heard again in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting For Godot* when Didi observed: "We wait. We are bored. No, don't protest; we are bored to death, there's no denying it . . . Come, let's get to work. In an instant all will vanish and we'll be alone once more in the midst of nothingness."

Büchner, a writer of despair, paradoxically came from what may be

called a happy family. Even more remarkable was the fact that his entire creative life spanned a mere two years.

The year 1813 was momentous. A week after the birth of Giuseppe Verdi, October 17 ushered Georg Büchner into the world in Goddelau, a town near Darmstadt, the political seat of Hesse. Two days later, 200 miles to the northeast, Napoleon was defeated at Leipzig, where, in May, Wagner had been born.

Büchner was the eldest of six children. One brother, Wilhelm, became successful in industry and a member of the Reichstag; the youngest, Ludwig, became a philosopher and author of *Force and Matter*; and sister Luise became a novelist and feminist. Their father, Karl Ernst, had been a doctor to Napoleon's armies and remained a Francophile. He was also a free-thinker, while his wife, the former Louise Caroline Reuss, was a deeply religious woman who loved poetry and folksongs, feelings she imparted to her eldest son. In 1816, his position on the rise, the doctor moved to Darmstadt, where his family lived quietly and contentedly.

Büchner obtained his early education at the Ludwig Georg Gymnasium. Aged 12, his literary precocity manifested itself in an essay, "On Friendship," and, shortly after, his extreme, patriotic sentiments expressed themselves in "The Heroic Death of 400 Pforzheimer" who had died for posterity in a bygone age. "Germans of today," it read, "are not worthy of such ancestors. Germany is fascinated by

foreign 'trash,' degenerate and childish, and must reform."

He displayed his independence of mind in his "Essay on Suicide." Young Cato's self-destruction, he said, was "a grand and moral action which no religion founded on morality can oppose." Again anticipating 20th-century attitudes, he maintained that the "suicide of the ill is not suicide but a victim of illness. And psychic illness is no less genuine than consumption of fever."

His father hoped he would follow the family tradition and train to be a physician, as were his grandfather and uncle. In 1831, at the University of Strasbourg, Büchner, not yet sure of his calling, studied science, zoology and comparative anatomy, uncertain whether to be a scientist or a philosopher.

Büchner saw life as a futile exercise, inharmonious with nature.

Strasbourg, refuge from the repressive German states, simmered with insurgency. The previous summer, Paris had replaced Bourbon Charles X with the Orleanist constitutional monarchy of Louis-Philippe; and Büchner, while living in the home of Protestant minister Johann Jaegel, frequented meetings of student associations at which he ingested the antidote to the nationalistic fervor of his adolescence. In his address to the Erwinia Club, he attacked the ultra-conservatism of the German governments and the jingoism in the universities, particularly the "somewhat shrill" Heidelberg and Giessen.



The title page from the original edition of Büchner's *Danton's Tod* (1835).

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Minna Jaegle, Büchner's fiancée.

Secretly he became engaged to Minna Jaegle, who was three years older than himself. They did not announce their betrothal until 1834. They never married.

Deciding to try medicine, Büchner enrolled at the University of Giessen. An attack of meningitis interrupted his studies, but after a month's convalescence at home, he returned to Giessen. There he met Pastor Friedrich Weidig, who introduced him to revolutionary politics, and edited his *Hessian Courier*. The pastor died in jail, a suicide; some say he was murdered.

Upon the imprisonment of several more Society members, Büchner laid low for two months. In mid-January 1835 the investigating authorities ordered him to appear for questioning. Intending to escape, he financed his flight by writing *Danton's Death* in six weeks, and Karl Gutzkow arranged for its publication. To support himself further, Büchner translated Victor Hugo's plays *Lucrèce Borgia* and *Marie Tudor*, which were also published. These three were his only works to appear during his lifetime.

A warrant for his arrest was issued in June, but by then he was back in Strasbourg preparing a dissertation for the Society of Natural History "On the Nervous System of the Barbel Fish," one of three papers that earned him membership in that prestigious association. They led to a position at the University of Zurich, where he lectured on the cranial nerve system.

Between the start of 1835 and the end of 1836, in addition to these papers and *Danton's Death*, Büchner wrote *Leonce and Lena*, the novella *Lenz*, *Woyzeck* and *Pietro Aretino*. On February 2, 1837, he fell ill, supposedly of typhus. On February 19, aged 23 years and 4 months, he died. In delirium just before he expired, he said, "There is not too much suffering in

our lives. There is too little, for it is through suffering that we reach God. We are death, dust, ashes; how should we complain?"

Of his brief existence, wracked by internal storms, George Steiner said: "Büchner's early death exceeds that of Mozart and Keats. He died as his talent was beginning to unfold at a stage in life when Shakespeare was writing a few love lyrics; while Keats went to the heights of his genius and was declining when he died."

Shortly after Büchner's death, Karl Gutzkow printed in his journal *Lenz* and parts of *Leonce and Lena*. He wished to publish the author's collected works, but the Büchner family assigned the task to a former schoolmate. It never materialized.

In 1850 Büchner's youngest brother, the philosopher Ludwig, issued an edition consisting of the complete *Leonce and Lena* and many letters. He omitted *Woyzeck*, however, because the good doctor thought the play "cynical and treating of trivialities." In a fire that destroyed the Büchner home, many unpublished letters and papers disappeared, and at that point, Büchner lapsed into obscurity.

Twenty years later, novelist Karl Emil Franzos, on the trail of *Woyzeck*, tracked it down in the family house to find it in a state of deterioration. The calligraphy of the manuscript was "microscopically small" and "most

How Büchner intended to end the play is unknown.

illegible." To restore it, the pages had to be treated chemically. What Franzos found was an uncompleted draft containing duplicate scenes in different forms, out of sequence, unnumbered, without separation into acts. Deciphering the manuscript as best he could, he published it in 1875. Two years later, preparing a comprehensive edition of Büchner's works, Franzos applied to Minna Jaegle for letters and any other papers of her dead fiancé she possessed.

Minna, then a spinster of 67, wrote: "I have the honor to reply to you that I feel no moral duty whatever to make the said papers public. Some of them concern me personally. Others are incomplete abstracts of notes . . . I would be obliged to you, esteemed sir, if you permit this explanation to suffice for the future."

Unable to sway her, Franzos published his famous edition in 1879. A year later, before she died, Minna burned all she held of Büchner's writings, and presumably the flames con-



Ludwig Büchner, who edited the first edition of his brother Georg's works, omitting the *Woyzeck* sketches.

sumed his diary and the draft of the play, *Pietro Aretino*.

Prior to the Franzos anthology, the Vienna *Neue Freie Presse* printed a version of *Woyzeck* in its issues of September and October 1875; and in January 1877, the Berlin weekly, *Mehr Licht*, did likewise. Subsequently, Paul Landau offered another version in 1909; George Witkowsky published an edition of *Woyzeck* in 1920; two years later came the Fritz Bergemann edition of Büchner's works; and finally, to supplant its predecessors, the Werner Lehmann edition appeared in 1967.

Nevertheless, *Woyzeck* resisted definition and remained an enigma, virtually the product of editors and theater producers. It underwent bowdlerization and was subject to the purposes and tastes of stage directors. The scenes varied in number from 26 to 29. For his opera, Alban Berg, working with the Franzos text, ordered the scenes according to the Landau edition, reducing them to 15 and changing the spelling of the title to *Wozzeck*. Besides the opera, the play exists in four separate versions. The presentation at Cologne's Schauspielhaus in September 1962 blended several, together with interpolations by the director. One commentator expostulated: "In the whole of German stage literature there is no work which permits so many, and so different, interpretations."

How Büchner intended to end the play, for example, is unknown. One draft had *Woyzeck* with his child back in the apartment, dripping wet from the pond after disposing of the murder weapon. When Franzos inserted a stage direction, *Ertrinkt* (drowns) — which A.H.J. Knight termed "willful" — directors took to terminating the play with *Woyzeck's* suicide. Among

continued on p. 77

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PROFILES



JANIS MARTIN

Sacramento-born soprano Janis Martin, in her 12th season with the San Francisco Opera, sings Marie in *Wozzeck*, a role she has performed at the Metropolitan Opera, Covent Garden, La Scala and the Paris Opera. She began her operatic career as a mezzo-soprano in the Merola Opera Program and made her War Memorial debut in 1960, portraying more than 20 roles here (including Margret in the 1962 production of *Wozzeck*) in the ensuing four seasons. In 1962 she won the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions and sang mezzo-soprano roles with that company for three seasons. Miss Martin's first major Wagnerian assignment was Venus in *Tannhäuser* with the San Francisco Opera in 1966. She made both her European debut at La Scala in 1967 and her Paris Opera debut in 1968 as Venus. Subsequent appearances in the Wagner repertoire have included Brangäne, Senta, Eva, Elisabeth and especially Sieglinde, heard here in 1976, and Kundry. She was widely acclaimed for her interpretation of Ortrud in *Lohengrin*, which she performed here for a career first in 1978. During the 1979 season she was heard locally as the Mother in the San Francisco premiere of Dallapiccola's *Il Prigioniero*. Miss Martin is also associated with the role of Tosca, which she has sung in Chicago, Berlin, Munich, Zurich, Cologne, Miami and San Francisco during the 1976 season. A member of the Deutsche Oper Berlin since 1971, she has appeared at all the major opera houses in Europe and the United States. Her most recent assignments include *Erwartung* at La Scala and with the Vienna Philharmonic, both under Claudio Abbado, Adriano in *Rienzi* in Berlin, and her first Isolde with the Zurich Opera earlier this year.



NELDA NELSON

Following her triumph in the title role of John Eaton's *The Cry of Clytaemnestra* during the 1981 Spring Opera season, dramatic mezzo-soprano Nelda Nelson makes her San Francisco Opera debut as Sonyetka in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* and sings Margret in *Wozzeck*. She created the role of Clytaemnestra in her husband's opera at Indiana University and repeated it at the work's New York premiere with the Brooklyn Philharmonia. She has also portrayed Ida in Eaton's *The Lion and Androcles*, seen on national television in 1978, and Gabrielle in his *Danton and Robespierre*. Miss Nelson made her New York City Opera debut the following year as Dido in Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and in 1980 first appeared with the Houston Grand Opera as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*. She made her European opera debut as Rosina in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* in Barga and Florence in 1973. The following year she was a winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Auditions, received a Fulbright Scholarship to study in Rome and made a concert tour of South America and Mexico. She has been heard in concert extensively in Southern California and the Middle West and in such European music capitals as Vienna, Salzburg, Munich, Heidelberg, Rome, Naples and London. Under the baton of Eve Queler she portrayed the title role in *Tancredi* with the Opera Orchestra of New York in 1978 and the Detroit Chamber Orchestra in 1979. Recent engagements include the title role in *Carmen* and Prince Orlovsky in *Die Fledermaus* with the Peoria Civic Opera.

SIR GERAINT EVANS

A favorite of San Francisco Opera audiences since his American debut as Beckmesser in *Die Meistersinger*



in 1959, Sir Geraint Evans returns as both director and protagonist of *Wozzeck* for his 17th and valedictory season at the War Memorial. He portrayed the title role in Berg's opera during its premier presentation here in 1960 and its revivals in 1962 and 1968. Evans made his American debut as stage director with the Company in 1970 with *Falstaff* and returned in that capacity for *Peter Grimes* in 1976. Among his outstanding interpretations here have been Gianni Schicchi, Figaro in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (performed in four successive presentations of the opera), Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Pizarro in *Fidelio*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, Falstaff, Captain Balstrode in *Peter Grimes*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* and the title role in *Don Pasquale*. Sir Geraint began his career as the Nightwatchman in *Die Meistersinger* at Covent Garden in 1948. Since then he has sung at all the major opera houses of the world and at the Salzburg, Glyndebourne and Edinburgh Festivals. In 1960 he became the first British singer in 35 years to appear in a title role at La Scala, when he was invited by Herbert von Karajan to perform Figaro in Mozart's opera. Named a Commander of the British Empire in 1959 in recognition of his services to music, he was knighted 10 years later. In 1980 he received the Fidelio Award for service to music by the International Association of Opera Directors and last season was also the recipient of the San Francisco Opera Medal in recognition of his years of outstanding artistic service to the Company. Recent engagements for Evans include two Donizetti characters for which he is now famous: Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore* at Covent Garden and Don Pasquale in Seattle and Portland.

PROFILES



RICHARD LEWIS

Distinguished English tenor Richard Lewis sings the Captain in *Wozzeck*, a role that is his alone in San Francisco. He was featured in the premiere of the Berg classic at the War Memorial in 1960 and its subsequent revivals in 1962 and 1968. Among the 16 leading tenor roles he has performed with the Company since his 1955 American debut as Don José in *Carmen*, are Troilus in the American premiere of Walton's *Troilus and Cressida*, Tom Rakewell in *The Rake's Progress*, Alwa in *Lulu* and Captain Vere in *Billy Budd*. Assignments in the standard repertoire include Lt. Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, Bacchus in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Des Grieux in *Manon*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* and Herod in *Salome*. Lewis is a mainstay of the Royal Opera at Covent Garden and has a long association with the Glyndebourne Festival Opera. A noted concert soloist, he has been a member of the Bach Aria Group and has appeared with every major American orchestra in annual tours of this country. Chosen by Stravinsky to perform the *Canticum Sacrum* in its Venice premiere under the composer's baton, Lewis has participated in many other notable firsts, including the world premiere of Klebe's *Alkmene* to open the new Deutsche Oper Berlin, the premiere of Bliss' *Beatitudes* to rededicate historical Coventry Cathedral, and of Tippett's *King Priam* at the subsequent Coventry Festival; world premieres at Covent Garden of Walton's *Troilus and Cressida* and Tippett's *Midsummer Marriage*, the world premiere at the Edinburgh Festival of Nono's *Sul Ponte di Hiroshima* and the American premieres of Schönberg's *Moses und Aron* and Strauss' *Intermezzo*. Lewis holds the title of Commander of the British Empire for his service to music.

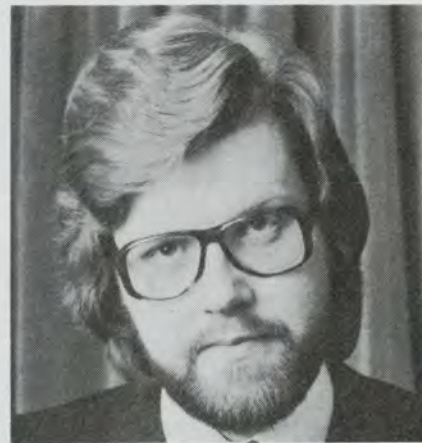


JEAN COX

American heldentenor Jean Cox makes his San Francisco Opera debut as the Drum Major in *Wozzeck*. A member of the New England Opera Theater under the direction of Boris Goldovsky, he studied for a year and a half in Rome on a Fulbright Scholarship, then sang with the German opera companies of Kiel and Braunschweig. In April 1976 he made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Walther von Stolzing in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, in which role he was heard on the Met nationwide broadcast as well as on the company's spring tour. He has portrayed Siegfried in the Ring cycle at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Otello in Pittsburgh and the title role of *The Tales of Hoffmann* with both the Houston and San Diego Opera companies. Other engagements include appearances in New Orleans, Ottawa, Toronto, Vienna, Paris, Munich, Hamburg, Stuttgart, Cologne, Milan, Rome, Palermo, Naples, Barcelona, Lisbon, Brussels, Geneva, Zurich, Stockholm and Mexico City. Cox's repertoire of over 60 roles includes Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Manrico in *Il Trovatore*, Riccardo in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, the Duke in *Rigoletto*, Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Des Grieux in *Manon Lescaut* and Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*. A guest of many of the world's great music festivals, he has appeared at the Bayreuth Festival for 10 consecutive years, at the Flanders Festival and at the Bregenz Festival in Austria.

RODERICK KENNEDY

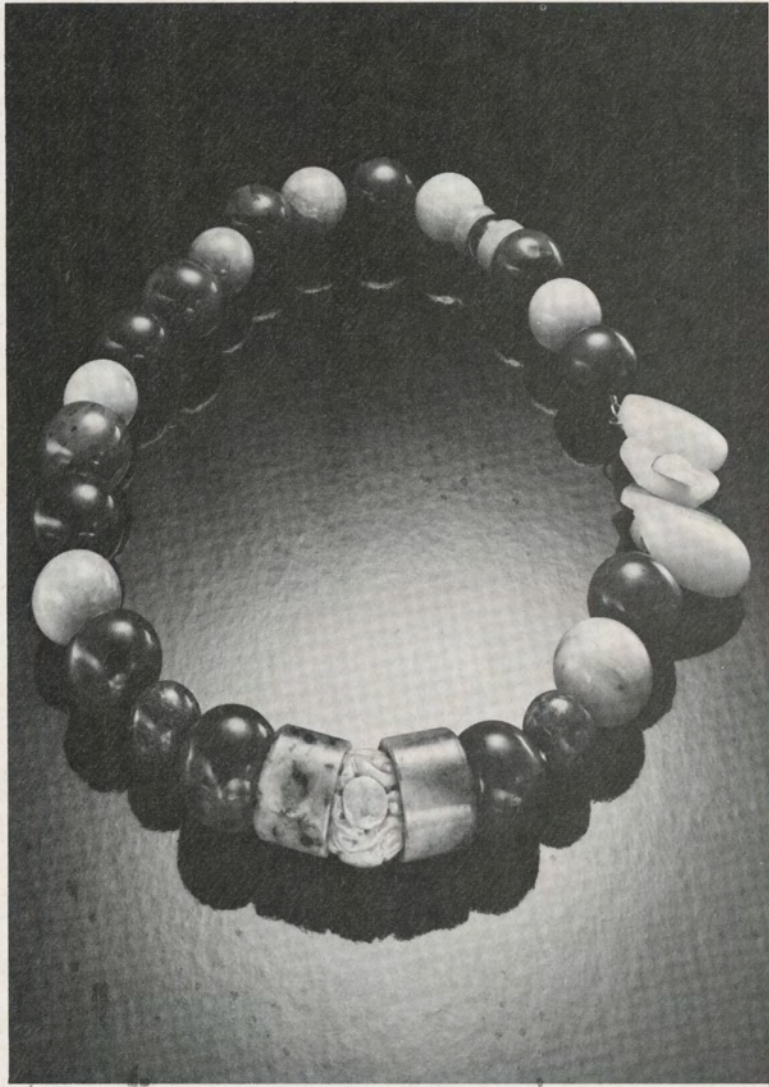
English bass Roderick Kennedy makes his American debut as the Doctor in *Wozzeck*. He made his solo debut in the 1973 British premiere of Vecchi's *L'Amfiparnasso* at the Edinburgh Festival, and since 1976 has been singing at Covent Garden, where he appeared in the



world premiere of Tippett's *The Ice Break*. He has also toured with that company to La Scala, Milan, Japan and Korea. Other companies with which Kennedy has appeared include the Welsh National Opera, for which he portrayed Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (televised by the BBC); the Dorset Opera, where he was seen as Ramfis in *Aida*, Timur in *Turandot* and Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*; the English National Opera, where he has sung the roles of the Monk in *Don Carlos*, Angelotti in *Tosca*, the Mayor in *The Thieving Magpie*, Monsieur Presto in *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* and Fasolt in *The Rhinegold*; and Scottish Opera, for which he portrayed Colline in *La Bohème*, Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* and Collatinus in *The Rape of Lucretia*. In 1980 he appeared at the Aldeburgh Festival as Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; at the Wexford Festival as Gualtiero in Puccini's *Edgar*, the High Priest in Spontini's *La Vestale* and Zoroastro in Handel's *Orlando*; and at the Edinburgh Festival as the Doctor in *Wozzeck*. Last July he made his Glyndebourne debut as Don Fernando in *Fidelio*. Kennedy's recordings include Offenbach's *Robinson Crusoe* and *La Traviata*, in which he sang the role of Doctor Grenvil under Riccardo Muti.

JONATHAN GREEN

After winning critical raves for his portrayal of the title role in Kurka's *The Good Soldier Schweik* with Spring Opera in 1980, tenor Jonathan Green made his San Francisco Opera debut last fall as the First Priest in *The Magic Flute*, the Shepherd in *Tristan und Isolde* and Beppe in *I Pagliacci*. A frequent performer with the New York City Opera, he bowed there as Don Basilio in *The Marriage of Figaro* in 1977 and sang 12 other roles that season. Highlight-



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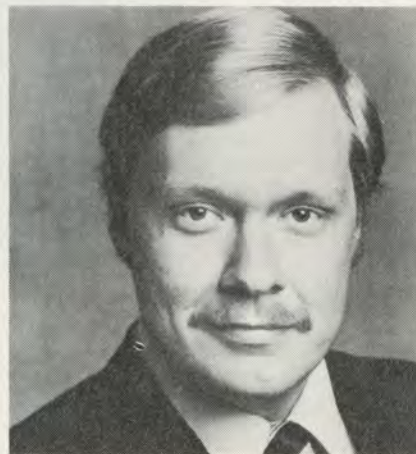
ing the following season were performances as Lippo Fiorentino in Weill's *Street Scene*, telecast last year over PBS, the creation of the role of Raymond Pocket in the world premiere of Dominick Argento's *Miss Haversham's Fire*, both with NYCO, and a debut with the Cincinnati Opera as the Abbé in *Adriana Lecouvreur* and as Goro in *Madama Butterfly* with the Milwaukee Symphony. The last role served for his Lake George Opera Festival debut in 1980 following an appearance in Offenbach's *Monsieur Choufleuri* at the Spoleto Festival U.S.A. Other engagements during the 1980-81 season included *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Falstaff* with the Opera Company of Philadelphia, and *Manon* and *La Belle Hélène* with the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. This summer at the Spoleto Festival U.S.A. he repeated *Monsieur Choufleuri* and added Gluck's *L'ivrogne corrigé*, which he also performed at the Spoleto Festival in Italy. Green's fall season assignments are Mitrane in *Semiramide*, the Teacher in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, Vicomte Cascada in *The Merry Widow*, Don Arias in *Le Cid* and the Fool in *Wozzeck*.

GARY HARGER

After two years of touring with Western Opera Theater in such roles as Alfredo in *La Traviata*, Eisenstein and Blind in *Die Fledermaus*, Nemorino in *The Elixir of Love* and Romeo and Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*, tenor Gary Harger made his San Francisco Opera debut this summer in *Die Meistersinger* and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, and portrays the Shabby Peasant in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, Pritschitsch in *The Merry Widow*, Andres in *Wozzeck* and Normanno in the student and family matinee performances of *Lucia di Lammermoor* during the Fall Season. This year with Spring



Opera he was heard as Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*. Harger began his career as an apprentice with Santa Fe Opera. In New York he appeared as Ernesto in *Don Pasquale* and Captain Dick in *Naughty Marietta* for Eastern Opera Theater. Other New York credits include Belmonte in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* for the Bronx Opera, Pedrillo in the same work for the Chautauqua Opera Association, and Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* for the Brooklyn Lyric Opera. Originally trained as a musical theater performer, he has starred in numerous musicals across the country and was featured in the original cast of the Tony Award-winning musical *Shenandoah*.



KEVIN LANGAN

Following a variety of roles during his debut season with the San Francisco Opera last year, including the Old Hebrew in *Samson et Dalila*, Pietro in *Simon Boccanegra* and Count Lamoral in *Arabella*, bass Kevin Langan sang Masetto in *Don Giovanni* and the Night Watchman in *Die Meistersinger* during the first Summer Festival and returns this fall as the Old Convict in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, Zuniga in *Carmen*, the

First Traveling Artisan in *Wozzeck* and the King in *Aida*. At Indiana University he performed over 15 leading roles such as Figaro and Dr. Bartolo in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Sarastro in *The Magic Flute*, Daland in *The Flying Dutchman*, Méphistophélès in *Faust* and Pimen in *Boris Godunov*. A protégé of the late Walter Legge and soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Langan made a highly acclaimed recital debut in London's Wigmore Hall in 1979. Recent engagements include Sarastro with the Opera Company of Philadelphia and the Opera Theatre of St. Louis under Julius Rudel. Langan was a member of the Merola Opera Program in 1979 and 1980 and was awarded the Leona Gordon Lowin Memorial Award in the Grand Finals of the 1980 San Francisco Opera Auditions. This summer he was a soloist in the Stern Grove concert conducted by Kurt Herbert Adler. Langan will make his New York City Opera debut next year as Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*.



THOMAS WOODMAN
Baritone Thomas Woodman, recently heard in *Die Meistersinger* and *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*, sings four roles this fall: the Porter in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, Raoul de St. Briche in *The Merry Widow*, the Moorish Envoy in *Le Cid* and the Second Traveling Artisan in *Wozzeck*. He made his Company debut last fall in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *I Pagliacci* and portrayed Prince Paul in the 1981 Spring Opera production of *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*. Woodman sang the title role in the world premiere of Henry Mollicone's *Emperor Norton* in a series of Brown Bag Opera performances given in San Francisco this spring. As a member of the 1980 Merola Opera Program, he was heard as the Count in *The Marriage of Figaro* and as Mr. Gedge in *Albert Herring*, and received a Merola

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Award in the Grand Finals of the San Francisco Opera Auditions. The young baritone made his professional debut with Central City Opera in 1979 in *The Merry Widow*, conducted by Kurt Herbert Adler. Other credits with that company include *The Barber of Seville*, *Mollicone's The Face on the Barroom Floor*, Cadman's *Shanewis* and Susa's *Black River*. With the Connecticut Opera he has appeared in *La Traviata* and *Madama Butterfly*. A 1980 Metropolitan Opera Council Finalist, Woodman is an Atlantic Richfield Affiliate Artist in the San Francisco/Affiliate Artists-Opera Program.



WOLFGANG RENNERT

German conductor Wolfgang Rennert, who made his American debut with the San Francisco Opera in a highly acclaimed interpretation of *Arabella* during the 1980 season, returns to conduct *Wozzeck*. He has also led *Arabella* at Covent Garden, in Cologne and for an RAI recording. Brother of the late Günther Rennert, he studied with Clemens Krauss and in 1953 began a long association with the Frankfurt Opera, first as house conductor, subsequently as assistant to Georg Solti and finally as deputy musical director. In 1967 he was appointed chief conductor of the Gärtnerplatztheater in Munich and since 1971 he has been a regular guest at the Berlin State Opera and the Royal Opera, Copenhagen. With the former he has conducted *Oberon*, *Falstaff*, the Ring cycle, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Otello* and *Salome*; for the latter, *Prince Igor*, *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Tannhäuser*, *Die Meistersinger*, *Falstaff*, *Salome* and *Parsifal*. With the Vienna State Opera Rennert has led *Jenufa*, *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Der Rosenkavalier* and for the Munich Festival has conducted *Salome*. His repertoire in Cologne includes the

two last-mentioned operas, in addition to *Wozzeck*, Henze's *We Come to the River* and *La Forza del Destino*. Other engagements include *Die schweigsame Frau* in Dresden and *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre* in Venice. He has appeared at the Salzburg, Munich, Athens and Osaka festivals and has led concerts with the Royal Philharmonic, the London Philharmonic, the Konlige Kapel, Copenhagen, the Berlin Staatskapelle and the Monte Carlo Orchestra. In 1980 Rennert was named general music director and opera director at the National Theater in Mannheim. Recent assignments in Mannheim include new productions of *Elektra*, *Luisa Miller* and *La Clemenza di Tito*, the Ring cycle, *Parsifal* and *Der Rosenkavalier*.



LENI BAUER-ECYSY

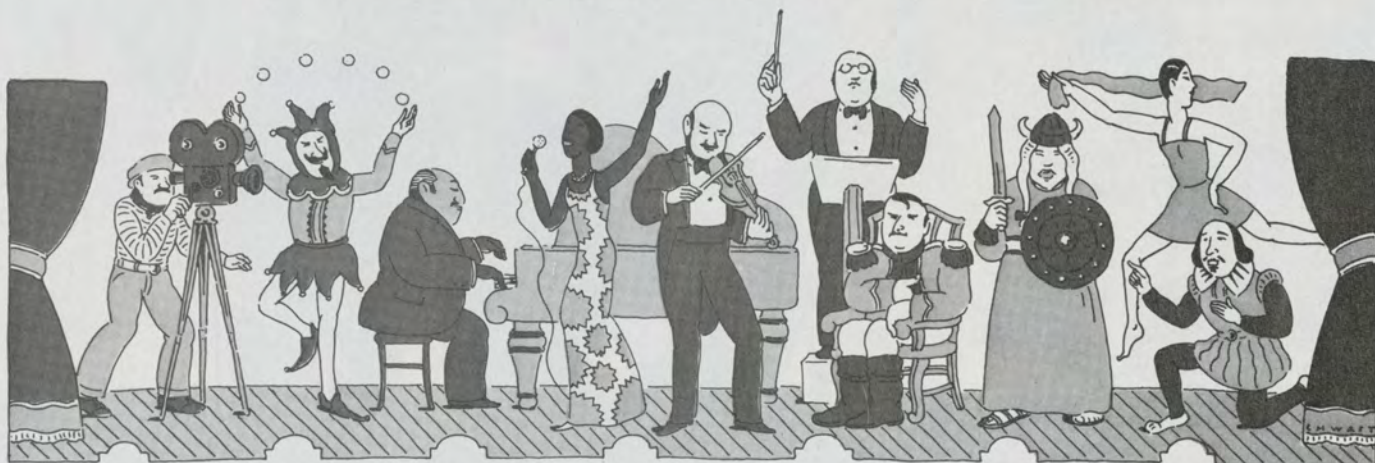
Leni Bauer-Ecsy, one of Europe's most sought-after designers, is responsible for the stage settings for this season's revival of *Wozzeck*, with which she made her San Francisco Opera debut in 1960. Her long association with the Company includes credits for *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1961), *La Forza del Destino* and *Capriccio* (1963), *Der Rosenkavalier* (1964), *Lulu* (1965), the American premiere of *The Makropulos Case* (1966) and *Jenufa* (1969). Miss Bauer-Ecsy's list of engagements includes all the major German opera houses: Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, Stuttgart, and the festivals of Salzburg, Edinburgh and Vienna. She has been involved in several important premieres, including the Stuttgart Opera's production of *The Rake's Progress*. Recent assignments include Offenbach's *Orphée aux Enfers* in Stuttgart and the Munich Festival staging of Janáček's *From the House of the Dead* and Verdi's *Falstaff*, both directed by the late Günther Rennert.



THOMAS MUNN

In his seventh year as lighting designer/director of the San Francisco Opera, Thomas Munn is responsible for the lighting designs for *Manon*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, *Carmen*, *Wozzeck*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Aida* and *Die Walküre*. He also created additional scenic design for *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. Audiences saw his lighting designs for *Lear*, *Don Giovanni* and *Die Meistersinger* during the first Summer Festival and in 1980 for the new productions of *Samson et Dalila* and *Don Pasquale*. In 1979 he won an Emmy Award for the new production of *La Gioconda*, which was seen internationally on television. That year he also designed the scenery for *Roberto Devereux* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. In past seasons he has created special effects for the Company's productions and served as supervising set designer for *Adriana Lecouvreur*, *Faust* and *Billy Budd*. Since 1976 he has designed the lighting for nearly all of the new productions of the San Francisco Opera, including the world premiere of Imbrie's *Angle of Repose*. Munn created the scenery and lighting for *Macbeth* and *Lulu*, and the lighting for *Don Quichotte* with Netherlands Opera. He is currently theater lighting consultant for the Muziektheater in Amsterdam, due to be completed in 1984. In 1980 he designed the lighting for the Washington Opera Society's productions of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and early next year will create the design for the world premiere of Robert Ward's *Abelard and Heloise* for the Charlotte Opera Association. Munn has designed numerous regional productions in addition to his work in television, film, ballet and legitimate theater throughout the country.

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Wozzeck



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Geraint Evans, Roderick Kennedy



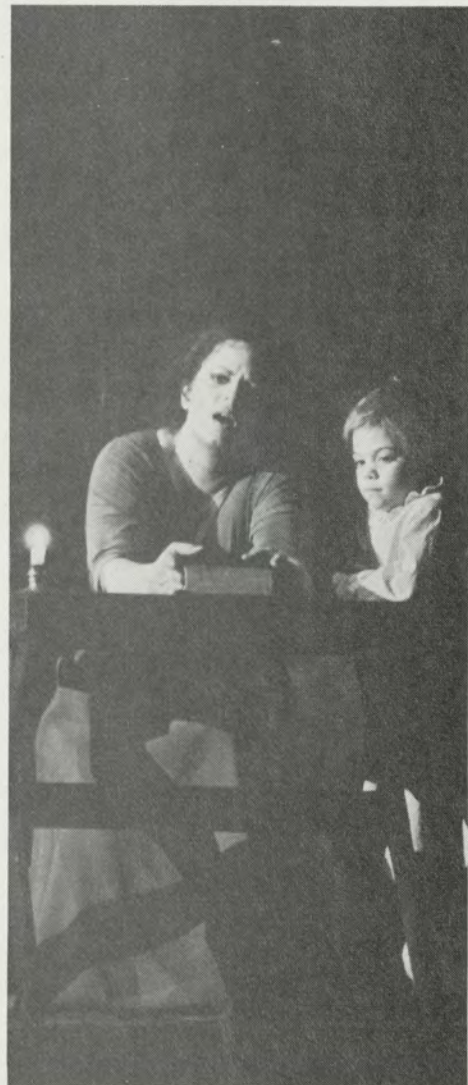
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Wozzeck

(in English)

Conductor

Wolfgang Rennert

Stage Director

Sir Geraint Evans

Assisted by

Virginia Davis Irwin

Set Designers

Leni Bauer-Ecsy

Richard Mason

Costume Designer

Leni Bauer-Ecsy

Lighting Designer

Thomas Munn

Chorus Director

Richard Bradshaw

Musical Preparation

Martha Gerhart

James Johnson

Prompter

Susan Webb

Assistant Stage Director

Preston Lovell Terry

Stage Manager

Gretchen Mueller

San Francisco Boys Chorus

William Ballard, Director

Girls Chorus San Francisco

Elizabeth Appling, Director

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*First San Francisco Opera performance:
October 4, 1960*

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1 AT 2:00

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6 AT 8:00

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Latecomers will be seated after Act I.

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*The performance will last approximately one
and one-half hours.*

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Wozzeck

Geraint Evans

Captain

Richard Lewis

Andres

Gary Harger

Marie

Janis Martin

Margret

Nelda Nelson

Marie's Child

Kahlila Kramer

Doctor

Roderick Kennedy**

Drum Major

Jean Cox*

1st Apprentice

Kevin Langan

2nd Apprentice

Thomas Woodman

Fool

Jonathan Green

Stage Pianist

Philip Eisenberg

Soldiers, townspeople, children

**American opera debut

*San Francisco Opera debut

TIME AND PLACE: Late 19th century; a town in Germany

ACT I Scene 1 The Captain's room
 Scene 2 Marshland
 Scene 3 Marie's hut
 Scene 4 The Doctor's examination room
 Scene 5 Street outside Marie's hut

ACT II Scene 1 Marie's hut
 Scene 2 Street outside the barracks
 Scene 3 Street outside Marie's hut
 Scene 4 A beer garden
 Scene 5 The barracks

ACT III Scene 1 Marie's hut
 Scene 2 Marshland
 Scene 3 A tavern
 Scene 4 Marshland
 Scene 5 Street

WOZZECK IS PERFORMED WITHOUT
INTERMISSION

The scenes are connected by musical interludes. It is requested that applause be reserved until the end of the performance.

SYNOPSIS

Wozzeck

ACT I

Scene I — *The Captain's room* — The Captain is being shaved by his aide Wozzeck. He mocks Wozzeck's simple intelligence, and chides him for having a child born out of wedlock. He says that Wozzeck has "no moral sense" — but he cannot explain what "moral sense" is. Wozzeck says that he is a "simple soul" and that he is too poor to have morals or — to be happy.

Scene II — *Marshland* — Wozzeck is cutting sticks with his friend Andres, who tries to cheer him with a song. But Wozzeck is full of dark forebodings.

Scene III — *Marie's hut* — Marie stands at the window with her child and Margret, watching the military band march past. It is headed by the Drum Major, who greets Marie. Margret taunts her and Marie pushes her out of the room. Alone with the child — Wozzeck's child — she sings it to sleep with a lullaby. Then Wozzeck appears, still full of dark presentiments. She tries to interest him in their child, but he rushes off distractedly. Marie, alone with the child again, breaks out in sudden anguish.

Scene IV — *The Doctor's examination room* — For the Doctor, human beings are material for clinical experiment. He is trying out experiments in dieting on Wozzeck, who thereby earns a little extra money for Marie and the child. The Doctor is angry with Wozzeck's behavior. Wozzeck tries to explain how miserable he feels and how the world seems dark around him. But he cannot enlist any sympathy from the Doctor, who continues to consider him merely as "a most absorbing case."

Scene V — *Street outside Marie's hut* — Marie stands admiring the swaggering Drum Major. He makes advances to her, and, after a struggle, she gives in.

ACT II

Scene I — *Marie's hut* — Marie is admiring some earrings when Wozzeck enters and asks her where she got them. She evades his question. He brings her the money he has earned from the Captain and the Doctor. She thanks him and then, when he has gone, she is overcome with remorse.

Scene II — *Street outside the barracks* — The Captain and the Doctor engage in a grotesque

conversation. The Doctor, still full of his experiments, frightens the Captain by suggesting that he, too, will form excellent clinical material. Wozzeck enters and they both taunt him with insinuations that Marie has been unfaithful. Wozzeck, very distressed, warns them not to make fun of him.

Scene III — *Street outside Marie's hut* — Wozzeck accuses Marie and threatens her. She wards him off.

Scene IV — *A beer garden* — Apprentices, soldiers and servant girls are dancing. Two drunken apprentices engage in "philosophical" reflections while Wozzeck watches Marie dancing with the Drum Major. At the height of the gaiety, the village idiot enters and says that he smells blood. This inflames Wozzeck's imagination.

Scene V — *The barracks* — The soldiers are sleeping but Wozzeck is haunted by what he saw at the dance. The Drum Major enters, very drunk, and beats Wozzeck, who sinks down exhausted.

ACT III

Scene I — *Marie's hut* — Marie, full of remorse, seeks consolation in the Bible. She breaks off to tell a sad little tale to her child; then, thinking of Mary Magdalene, she implores God's mercy.

Scene II — *Marshland* — As the night-dew falls and the moon rises red, Wozzeck stabs Marie.

Scene III — *A tavern* — A wild dance is in progress. Margret sees blood on Wozzeck's hand. Wozzeck rushes out in terror, pursued by the cries of the company.

Scene IV — *Marshland* — Wozzeck, searching for the blood-stained knife, wades into the pool and is drowned. The Captain and the Doctor, passing by, hear noises, suspect that someone is drowning, but do nothing about it.

Scene V — *Street* — Marie's child is playing with other children. At the news of the murder, the children run off to see; Marie's child, too young to understand, merely pauses in his play, then runs after the others.

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Wozzeck

What it Sounds Like and Why

"... I have been spending these war years just as dependent upon people I hate, have been in chains, sick, captive, resigned, humiliated... were it not for this, the musical expansion might never have occurred to me." (Alban Berg on *Wozzeck*, August 7, 1918)

By MICHAEL STEINBERG

To try to imagine a *Wozzeck* by Debussy is odd. The more curious, or possibly surprising, thing is that it can be done. The last pages of Act IV of *Pelléas et Mélisande* and his great Nijinsky score *Jeux* show us that Debussy had a vocabulary for passion, for outbursts of feeling long suppressed; moreover, *Pelléas* is the one opera before *Wozzeck* whose pacing suggests that its composer could have done justice to the lighting, as it were, of Büchner's play, lighting that is at once nervous and ruthlessly revealing. (Mussorgsky in the 1868-69 version of *Boris Godunov*, a version that Edward R. Reilly characterizes as "still too radical for many modern audiences," suggests possibilities in this direction.)

Inevitably, to speak of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* is to speak of Büchner's *Woyzeck*. Berg's most brilliant pupil, the philosopher and musician Theodor W. Adorno, wrote:

The gesture with which Berg approached *Wozzeck* was that of rescuing something lost, something newly remembered. What Berg composed was nothing but that which ripened in Büchner during the many decades of oblivion... The music says: as strange, as truthful, as human as I am, so strange, truthful and human is that which you have forgotten, which you have never even experienced, and in presenting it to you I sing its praises... What is modern in the music throws into relief what is modern in the book, the more so because the book is old and was denied its proper day in the light. Just as Büchner did justice to the soldier Wozzeck, tormented, confused, and in his dehumanization "objective" beyond his own person, so does the composition desire justice for the book. The passionate

care with which the tiniest comma in the texture has been thought out reveals how closed is the open in Büchner, how finished the unfinished.

Berg pondered hard the question of how to render justice to Büchner, and thus to Johann Christian Woyzeck/Franz Wozzeck. (He made his first, tentative sketches almost immediately after seeing a performance of the play in Vienna in May 1914 and, after a considerable interruption for



Alban Berg (1885-1935).

military service, completed the orchestral score in the spring of 1922.) He also pondered effectively, and even the unwelcome and costly interruption was, in its way, fruitful. A composer from Berlin, five years younger than Berg, Manfred Gurlitt by name, was working on a *Wozzeck* opera at roughly the same time, and it was produced about two years after Berg's. (I have never seen it or heard it, nor met anyone who has, but the piano-vocal score is to be found in many American libraries.) Gurlitt's intelligent and, in its way, daring response

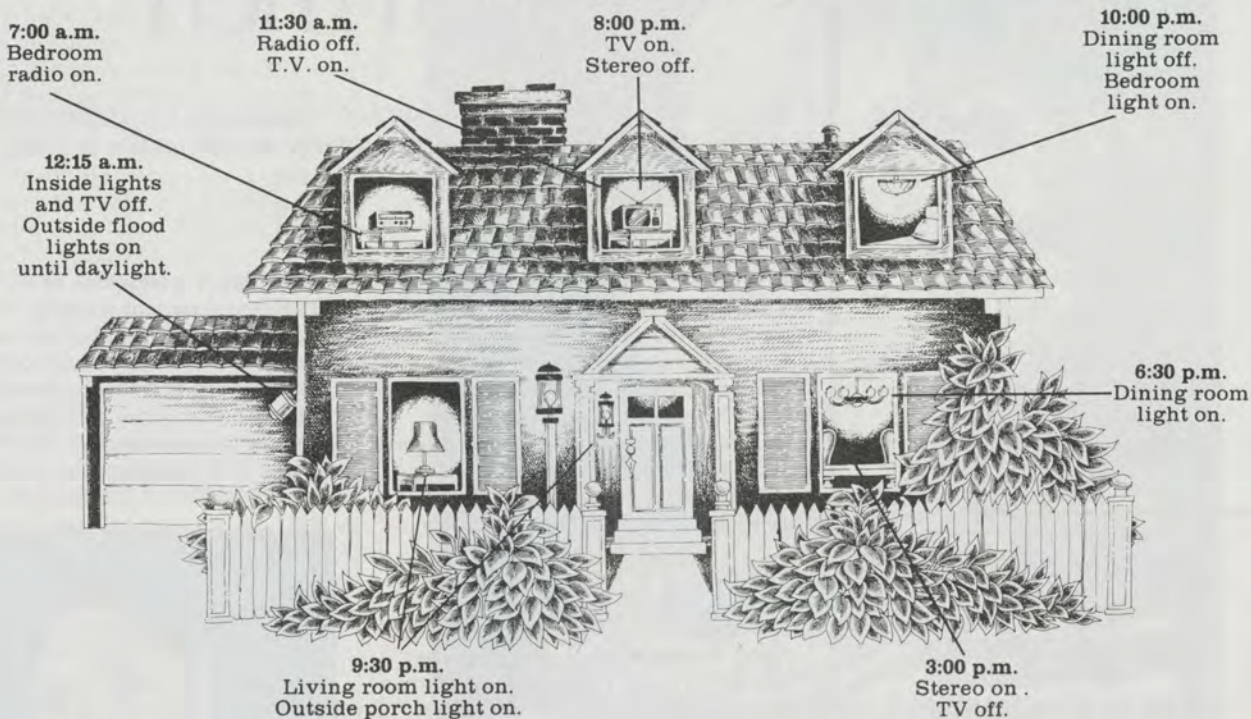
to Büchner's staccato dramaturgy was to write a series of musical scenes, separated by silence and not ordered into larger structural units — in a word, acts. He tried to produce the musical counterpart of what he found in Paul Landau's edition of *Woyzeck*. Berg's more intelligent, more daring response was to draw — of course — on music's power to generate atmosphere and portray character, but also on the peculiar way music speaks to human memory. The perception of musical form depends on a well-functioning memory — which need not be a *conscious* function — and Berg heightens the potency of Büchner's drama, paradoxically, by seeming to deny its broken form. By using transitions and a rich network of musical cross-reference, he sharpens our sense of what is happening on the stage.

The critics' cliché about the two most famous Schönberg pupils used to be that Webern represented the extreme of cerebration and "mathematically" imposed order, while Berg wrote from the heart. Of course Berg wrote "from the heart" and, as George Perle's recent discoveries about the genesis and the secret program of the *Lyric Suite* show, more so than his most anti-intellectual fans ever suspected. He would, however, have been thoroughly offended by any view of his work that minimized what his formidable brain contributed. (He also had plenty to say about criticism that rested on an imagined heart-head dichotomy.) Quite as much as his beloved and trying teacher, as much as his brilliant, naive and humorless fellow-pupil, as much for that matter as Josquin and Bach, Beethoven and Bartók, Berg delighted in the fact that games have rules and that without the rules they are no fun.

Opera composers — to repeat something obvious — assume many of the functions that in spoken theater are left to directors and, to some

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extent, performers. The composer goes far in determining pacing and emphasis, the distribution of light and shade. Indeed Berg, with his highly specific musical gestures and his precisely timed cues for lights and curtains, goes farther than virtually anyone else, both here and in *Lulu*.

Even more striking is Berg's resourcefulness with the orchestra. He asks for a large one — woodwind and most brass by fours and fives, ample percussion, celesta, harp and "at least 50 to 60" strings. He described *Wozzeck* as "a *piano* opera with outbursts." (I have always liked that because one might equally describe

Berg drew on the peculiar way music speaks to human experience.

Wozzeck himself as a *piano* character with outbursts.) Like his hero, Mahler, Berg uses his orchestra not as something with which to produce an overwhelming sonorous force, but as a pool from which to draw with finesse and fantasy ensembles of many kinds of weight, character and color. The few times he unleashes a *tutti* — the close of Act I with its empty stage after Marie has gone into her room with the Drum Major, the two crescendos on a single note immediately after Marie's death, the great elegy for *Wozzeck* himself — the effect is overwhelming. Most of the time, though, and not least out of sheer practical concern for transparency, Berg prefers to find for each scene, or section of a scene, a sound that "places" it with the same certainty that sets, clothes and lights do for the eye. The first conversation between the Captain and *Wozzeck* is set against a background of what one might call enlarged chamber music with a changing series of *obbligato* groups (five woodwinds for the Prelude, harp and percussion for the Pavane, flutes with celesta in the Gigue, etc.); the scene at the center of Act II in which *Wozzeck* confronts Marie with the evidence of her infidelity is accompanied by an ensemble of 15 players that, in the sort of "in" reference always popular in Berg's world, replicates exactly the scoring of the Chamber Symphony No. 1 by Berg's teacher, Arnold Schönberg. After the *tutti* interlude that follows *Wozzeck's* drowning, Berg gives point to the indifference of the epilogue with a background for a "weightless" orchestra with few winds, prominent celesta and harp, and muted strings without basses.

His most obviously theatrical sonic resource is in sounds from out-

side the pit. In the second scene, *Wozzeck* sees "a fire that rises from earth into heaven" and he hears a terrifying sound "like trombones," while his untroubled buddy *Andres* hears only the drumming from the distant barracks. We hear the brass of *Wozzeck's* hallucination from the pit, but the drums are "real" drums heard from a long distance, offstage. In the next scene, the Drum Major leads a real band, offstage, though the march it plays is as crooked as the houses in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919); when Marie, in a rage at her neighbor *Margret*, slams the window shut we suddenly hear only the passionately vibrating strings of the pit orchestra. The tavern where *Wozzeck* observes Marie dancing with the Drum Major sports a little band with fiddles, clarinet, accordion, guitar and bombardon, that plays reeling and lurching *Ländler* and waltzes; the low dive where they discover blood on *Wozzeck's* hand and arm has only an out-of-tune upright on which a pianist pounds out the obsessive rhythm of a polka at a wild and unreal speed, and later accompanies *Margret* and her folk song with aimless, drunken dissonance. Berg creates powerful tensions by playing his "normal" and "special" orchestras off against each other — for example, in the Act II scene between *Wozzeck* and Marie, when the pit orchestra begins to intervene at *Wozzeck's* "There! That's where he stood!" and when, the stage empty, with a swirling upbeat, *fff* for all the strings, it wipes the little Schönberg chamber ensemble out altogether; or, more simply, the interactions of stage band and pit orchestra in the tavern scene.

This is all familiar stuff. We remember the bugles that remind Don José of his duty, *Scarpia* slamming the

Berg does not want you sitting there ticking off the Baroque dances . . .

window of the Palazzo Farnese to shut out the sound of *Tosca* and her unlikely madrigal, the onstage dance orchestras in *Don Giovanni* and the one just around the corner in Act III of *Der Rosenkavalier*; perhaps also the pianist in *Fedora* whose pseudo-Chopin provides so sweetly sinister a background for political conspiracy. Berg remembered it, too. Just before the curtain rises lazily to reveal the tavern to our eyes, the orchestra sets the scene for our ears with an allusion to one of the *Rosenkavalier* waltzes (a sleazy sound of solo violin and celesta with bassoon and harp), and moments later, just before the fiddles and clari-

nets stumble into their *Ländler*, the accordion launches confidently into a bit of the *Don Giovanni* minuet.

Other sorts of operatic and musical reference abound in *Wozzeck* as well. I have mentioned the moving orchestral elegy that comes between *Wozzeck's* death and the epilogue that works much like the great orchestral music after Siegfried's death in *Götterdämmerung*. Heroic gestures are of course replaced by pathetic ones, and among the ways Berg achieves this is by giving us, not a march, but a grotesquely slowed, melancholy waltz. The texture of fugue evokes many associations — organ, church, "learned" music among them. When at the beginning of Act III Marie looks for consolation in the Bible, her half-singing of the last scriptural passage she seeks out, the one about the Mag-

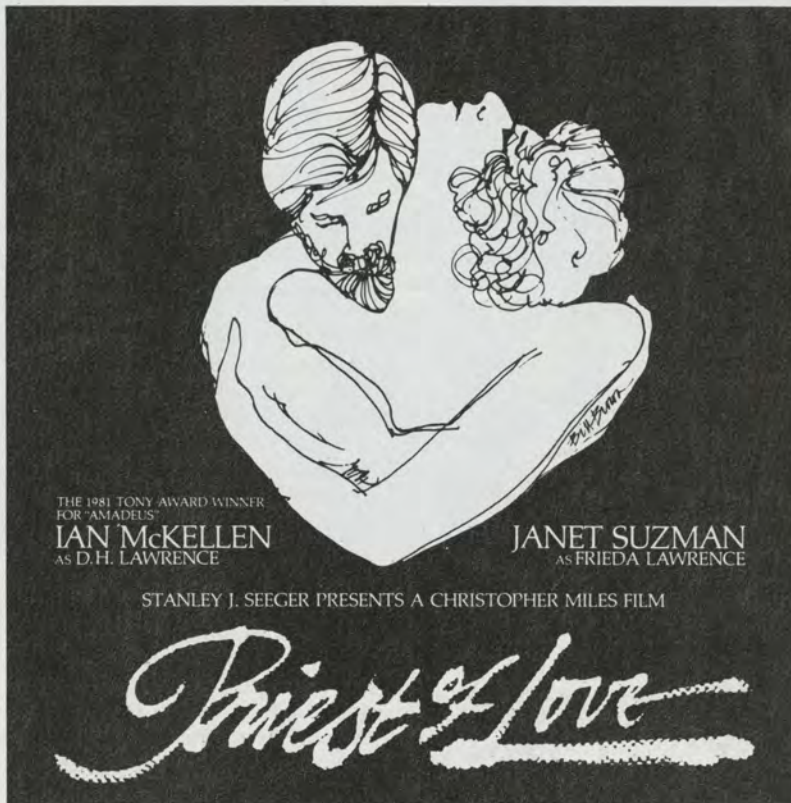
Berg described *Wozzeck* as "a piano opera with outbursts."

dalene washing Jesus' feet with her tears, is picked up by a series of solo string instruments who turn it into a fugal exposition. The moment Marie stops reading, the moment she leaves the world of quotation and exclaims in her own words, "Savior, I would like to anoint your feet," Berg starts a new fugue, but on a much more intense, "subjective" theme. Earlier, in the second scene of Act II, when the Captain and the Doctor join in tormenting *Wozzeck* by dropping hints of Marie's liaison with the Drum Major, the scene unfolds as a spacious triple fugue. Nothing could convey the chilling cruelty of the encounter more tellingly.

The two passages just mentioned, Marie struggling with the words of the Bible and the encounter on the street of the Captain, the Doctor and *Wozzeck*, also give an idea of the range of vocal techniques in the opera, a range that goes from speech, through the not-quite speech, not-quite-song *Sprechstimme* Schönberg first used in *Gurrelieder* (Berg cites *Pierrot lunaire* and *Die glückliche Hand* as the models to consult), to normal, full song. When, for example, Marie is in her found world of quotations, whether reading the Bible to herself or telling a "once upon a time" tale to her little boy, she uses *Sprechstimme* (Berg even specifies from moment to moment whether the passage should lean more towards speaking or singing); when she leaves that world and the thoughts and words are her own, she sings.

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Our ear is educated in the opera's first scene to pay attention to such differences. The Captain sings his compulsive babblings about this and that; twice, inane moral ecstasy and sheer muddle propel him all the way to high C. Wozzeck has nothing to say to this rubbish; his minimal responses, distracted and polite, of "Jawohl, Herr Hauptmann!" are always on a monotone D flat. Only when the Captain has nagged him about having fathered a child without benefit of clergy does Wozzeck suddenly become verbally and vocally eloquent (the Captain, his vocal territory invaded, goes for a moment berserk and his voice cracks on his high A flat). In the cruel fugue when the Captain and the Doctor bait

Operatic and musical references abound in *Wozzeck*.

Wozzeck, the Doctor's madness is frighteningly brought home to us when he backs away from normal singing but makes his contribution to the fugue in several bars of maniacal humming. (The Doctor, by the way, is a portrait from life of one of Büchner's professors at the University of Giessen.)

Berg once autographed a photo of himself, appending a quotation from *Wozzeck*. What he chose was a plain C-major triad from the first scene of Act II when Wozzeck turns over household money to Marie, his pay plus the extras he has earned from the Captain and the Doctor. (Musically the chord, held for eight measures by muted violins and violas, is a kind of *fermata* just before the upbeat to the recapitulation in the sonata form.) The last minute was highly charged emotionally. He has seen new earrings in Marie's hand, and she has obviously lied to him about them. The sweat on his baby's forehead has evoked one of the outbursts that break from time to time through his *piano* personality: "Nothing but toil under the sun, sweat even in sleep. We poor people!" Suddenly he returns to *piano*, to coping, to the everyday needs of food and clothes and rent, and how heart-stoppingly the C-major chord marks that change for us.

In a context of music outside tonality, these visits to another harmonic world are always moving — the "Beethoven Ninth" open fifth A-E, which we first hear when Marie is deep in thought at the end of her cradle song and which we shall learn to associate with her death (we hear it, for example, just after that event, and again in the epilogue when one of the children tells the little boy, "Hey, you,

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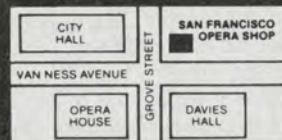
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your mother's dead"); the pathos-filled F minor of Marie's "once upon a time" bedtime story; the D minor of Wozzeck's "funeral waltz."

The association of the strange, open A-E with death is one of many examples of Berg's use of leitmotifs in *Wozzeck*. Leitmotifs do not want to be explained; that is, they only work when they are placed with sufficient clarity and are of sufficiently vivid character that they do not need to be explained or catalogued. They, too, speak to memory and reward a certain persistence of investigation and friendship, of listening. Then, one day the sounds and sights of *Wozzeck* are lodged in your mind so that, when you hear the great orchestral elegy near the close, you take in not only the broad gestures whose import is so unmistakable and so gripping, but the music evokes for you, as precisely as though you were watching a movie, a last parade of all those who shaped, nourished, twisted and ultimately destroyed *Wozzeck's* life.

No task in his life engaged Berg more deeply than that of proving himself adequate to the challenge thrown to him by Büchner. He drew on every musical resource he could find; not least, he drew on his own life. On August 7, 1918, the war nearly at an end, having been removed after the breakdown of his health from active duty to a clerical post at the War Office, Berg wrote to his wife: "... I

The music evokes for you, as precisely as though you were watching a movie, a last parade of all those who shaped, nourished, twisted and ultimately destroyed *Wozzeck's* life.

was plodding on without any intention of working [when] I found that the musical expression for one of *Wozzeck's* entrances, which I had been trying to get for ages, had suddenly come to me. There is a bit of me in his character, since I have been spending these war years just as dependent on people I hate, have been in chains, sick, captive, resigned, humiliated. Without this military service I should still be as healthy as I used to be... Still, were it not for this, the musical expression might never have occurred to me..." ■

MICHAEL STEINBERG is artistic adviser to the San Francisco Symphony, and his writings regularly appear in the program book of that orchestra.

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1981 OPERA PREVIEWES

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

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD PREVIEWES

SAN FRANCISCO OPERA GUILD AUXILIARY

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

MARIN

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

LE CID

James Keolker 10/8

WOZZECK

Dale Harris 10/22

DIE WALKÜRE

Henry Holt 11/19

NORTH PENINSULA

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

WOZZECK and LE CID

Arthur Kaplan 10/12

DIE WALKÜRE

Henry Holt 11/16

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PIEDMONT ADULT EDUCATION OPERA PREVIEW SERIES

Previews will be held at the auditorium of Piedmont High School, 800 Magnolia Avenue, Piedmont, at 7:30 p.m. on two Tuesday and ten Monday evenings. Lectures will be given by San Francisco Opera Magazine editor Arthur Kaplan and Opera Education International director Michael Barclay. Series registration is \$45; \$40 for Piedmont residents. Single tickets are \$5.00. For further information call (415) 653-9454 or 658-3679.

WOZZECK

Michael Barclay 10/5

LUCIA

Michael Barclay 10/12

AIDA

Arthur Kaplan 11/2

DIE WALKÜRE

Michael Barclay 11/16

IL TROVATORE

Arthur Kaplan 11/23

JUNIOR LEAGUE OPERA PREVIEWES

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

WOZZECK

Michael Barclay 10/14

NAPA OPERA LECTURE SERIES

For the ninth year there will be a ten-week course called ADVENTURES IN OPERA in Napa. The course, which accompanies the Saturday and Sunday series at the San Francisco Opera, will be held on Wednesday nights from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 1917 Third Street, in Napa. Ernest Fly will again teach the course. Cost for the entire series will be \$18.00. Individual lectures will be \$3.00. For further information, please call Mr. Fly at (707) 224-6162.

CARMEN 10/7

WOZZECK/LE CID 10/14

LUCIA 10/28

AIDA 11/4

DIE WALKÜRE 11/11

IL TROVATORE 11/18

OPERA EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL PREVIEW SERIES

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

LE CID

Arthur Kaplan 10/7

WOZZECK

Michael Barclay 10/20

LUCIA

Michael Barclay 10/29

AIDA

Arthur Kaplan 11/5

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WOZZECK

Dale Harris 10/23, 10 a.m.

LUCIA

Donald Pippin 10/26, 7:30 p.m.

AIDA

James Keolker 11/6, 10 a.m.

DIE WALKÜRE

Henry Holt 11/19, 7:30 p.m.

SOUTH PENINSULA

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

WOZZECK

Dale Harris 10/20

LUCIA

Donald Pippin 10/27

DIE WALKÜRE

Henry Holt 11/10

CHABOT COLLEGE LECTURE SERIES/OPERA FOR EVERYONE

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

THE MERRY WIDOW 10/1

CARMEN 10/8

LE CID 10/15

WOZZECK 10/22

AIDA 10/29

DIE WALKÜRE 11/5

IL TROVATORE 11/12

BANK OF AMERICA PREVIEW SERIES

Previews will be held at the Bank of America, 555 California St., San Francisco, in the A.P. Giannini Auditorium, at 12:05 p.m. The series is open to the public at no cost. For further information, please call (415) 953-1000.

LE CID 10/8

LUCIA 10/27

AIDA 11/6

IL TROVATORE 11/19

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Eleven illustrated previews will be given by Jan Popper, professor of music emeritus, UCLA (8/31 to 10/5), and Natalie Limonick, professor of music, USC (10/12-11/16). All previews on Mondays (except Tuesday, 9/8) at 7 p.m. in the auditorium of the UC Extension Center, 55 Laguna St. (at Market), San Francisco. Series \$65, pre-registration advisable; single previews \$7 at the door if space is available. For more information, please call (415) 642-4111.

LE CID 10/5

WOZZECK 10/12

LUCIA 10/19

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IL TROVATORE 11/16

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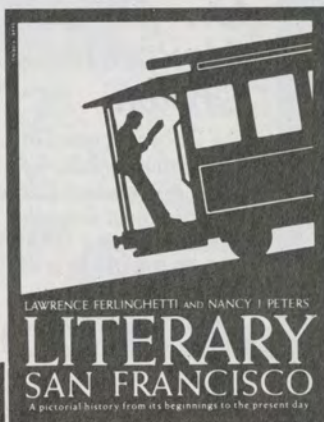
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Geraint Evans

An Artist for All Seasons

The director/protagonist of *Wozzeck* reflects on a long and distinguished career and on some of his most famous roles.

By ARTHUR KAPLAN

Relaxed and anticipating a well-earned rest and vacation following a series of performances as the loveable charlatan Dr. Dulcamara in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Geraint Evans was in expansive good humor as he welcomed a visitor into one of those antiquated dressing rooms that crowd the labyrinthine underground corridors of Covent Garden early this spring. It is there, at his performing base, that the internationally celebrated baritone will bid farewell to the opera stage in 1983, the 35th anniversary of his professional debut as the Nightwatchman in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* with the Royal Opera in 1948.

Evans nearly faced premature retirement a few years ago when a major health scare caused him to cancel a series of performances, including an eagerly awaited San Francisco appearance as Claggart in Britten's *Billy Budd* in 1978. "I'm getting better, thank God for that," says the ruddy-complexioned, robust-looking singer, his wide, handsome face brightening into a smile. By following his doctor's orders, cutting back a little on a busy schedule and eliminating a few overly taxing roles, he has been able to resume a more-or-less normal pace.

The Welsh singer returns to San Francisco for his 17th and valedictory season as director/protagonist of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, a role he owns at the War Memorial. Evans made his American debut with the Company as Beckmesser in the 1959 production of *Die Meistersinger* and has since performed 17 other roles here, including all his signature roles: Falstaff, Figaro, Leporello, Papageno, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Captain Balstrode in *Peter Grimes*, and the title roles in *Don Pasquale* and *Wozzeck*.

The role he has sung most frequently both in San Francisco and around the world is Figaro. In addition to nearly 300 performances of the Mozart/da Ponte classic at Covent Garden alone, he has portrayed Figaro in all the major opera houses of the world and at the festivals of Glyndebourne, Salzburg and Venice.

"There was a period when I asked not to do it at Covent Garden because

Figaro. Just after that I went to Salzburg to do a new production of *Figaro* with Fischer-Dieskau as the Count. I took a look at the words in the third act confrontation between Figaro and the Count [over Marcellina's legal claims on Figaro which would prevent him from marrying Susanna], which is the end of the opera, in a sense. Neither of them really wins; it ends in a forceful stalemate. I had an idea and



Geraint Evans in the tavern scene of *Wozzeck* (1968).

I began to lose the feeling for what it was all about. I was getting a little stereotyped, so I went to Mr. Webster [David Webster, then director of the Royal Opera] and said, 'You must release me from Figaro next season.' He said, 'Good idea. How about doing the Count?' So I did the Count instead, and that gave me a new insight into

I said to Dieter, 'Let's try this out.' We sent the rest of the cast away and I boomed out at him the words "Perchè no? Io non impugno mai *quel che non so!*" (Why not? I never call into question things I don't know anything about!) The next morning we showed Sellner [the Salzburg director] what we'd worked out and he said 'Great!'

ROBERT CAHEN PHOTO

I've kept it in ever since.

"Just because you've done so many performances of a role," he adds, "doesn't mean it ever becomes fixed. To keep it fresh, you've got to look for new things . . . different movements, different feelings. But I don't like gimmicks in *Figaro*. I'm very dedicated to Mozart and like to keep to the feeling of da Ponte and Beaumarchais." The only time Evans ever pulled out of a production resulted from a disagreement with a famous director over *Figaro* because of basic differences in interpretation and what he felt were "gimmicks."

Evans' dedication to Mozart forms a cornerstone of his career. His very first performance was as Don Alfonso in the Guildhall School of Music's production of *Così fan tutte* during his student days. "I didn't know why then, but there was something about singing Mozart that I liked very much. I loved listening to Wagner for the romanticism and intense feeling, but there was something very fresh about Mozart. And, believe it or not, it doesn't matter how many times you sing it; it's still fresh. It's like champagne. Sometimes the champagne doesn't bubble, but more often it does."

Aside from Don Alfonso, which he still performs, Evans also used to play Guglielmo in *Così*, a role he

"No matter how many times you've sung Mozart, it's still fresh."

thinks back on as one of the most enjoyable. The other two Mozart characters with which he remains closely associated are Papageno in *The Magic Flute* and Leporello in *Don Giovanni*. The Evans interpretation of Don Giovanni's servant as a mean and rapacious scoundrel is justly renowned and very individualized. "It's the most serious role in the opera, in a sense. I never clown that part at all, never. Leporello's not a very nice person. I feel he's a coward; he wants to be just like Don Giovanni, but he doesn't have the guts."

"I'll always remember what Fritz Busch said to me when I first met him at Glyndebourne in 1950 when I went there to sing Guglielmo. After working with me for a while, he came up and said, 'Evans, you're a good boy. What you must do is to stick to Mozart for a few years. When you can sing Mozart — and I think you can sing it very well — then you can sing anything.' I always carry that in my mind. You can't cheat in Mozart. It's good therapy, like going back to your exercises. I always love going back to Mozart after singing other roles, even Falstaff."

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Photographs taken in rehearsal for the 1981 production of *Wozzeck*.
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Verdi's "fat knight," which Evans performed three times at the War Memorial (the 1970 performances also marked his first directorial assignment in this country), he considers the "great role" of his career. "The Verdi *Falstaff* to me is so much like Mozart in its lightness and humanity. It's not like other Verdi operas where you stop and start; there's a continuation, a phrasing from beginning to end."

When I mentioned being fortunate enough to catch one in his final series of performances as Falstaff at Covent Garden in 1978 under Solti, Evans beamed. "Yes, it came off well.

Evans considers Falstaff the great role of his career.

It seemed to get better and better with every performance. I was very glad because I wanted to finish it on the top note, as we say. I'm gradually putting the parts aside. It was very sad, in a way, but necessary. Falstaff was getting the better of me, physically. I was carrying between 25 to 30 pounds of costume an evening. I was warned that I must cut down on the costumes, but I said, 'How can I cut down? If I can't do it as I'd built it up over the years, than I'd rather leave it.'

"I'd always worn this padding from my ankles to the base of my neck, as I felt it should be worn, for Falstaff. It was padding designed by Osbert Lancaster that I developed at Glyndebourne. It was originally made of kapok, but when foam rubber was invented, I took a tailor's dummy and built padding round the tailor's dummy as a sculptor would mold his work. By the time I was finished, I had a bosom, a pear-shaped belly and a bottom. My legs were goodness knows how thick to correspond to the rest of the body. For many years Falstaff was played with a basket in the middle of the torso instead of at the bottom. With my padding you felt that this was a real man from his head to his toes. I was very lucky to do Falstaff first with Carl Ebert and Vittorio Gui, a marvelous theatrical conductor. Between them they molded me — stripped me down and built me up. Then I did it with Franco Zeffirelli, first at Covent Garden and then at the Met."

Falstaff is one of the many comic roles which Evans has made his own. When it is suggested that in all of his comic interpretations there is more than a hint of the serious, he readily concurs. "If I don't get a sympathetic feeling from the audience in the third act of *Falstaff*, then I've failed; if I don't get that same feeling for poor Beckmesser at the end of *Meister-singer* after this man has tried so hard

and has fallen on his face, humiliated, before hundreds of people at the *Fest*, then I have failed. And I'm as serious as can be playing Papageno, for instance. With Papageno, I'm a child of nature; I'm naive. I say things that young kids say — 'out of the mouths of babes,' you know. The comedy must come out of the situation."

Sir Geraint is a self-proclaimed perfectionist, never completely satisfied with what he has accomplished, always seeking to polish, to refine, to get to the core of a characterization. "I always work with the music first. With Falstaff, for instance, I learned the notes first and then went back to my schooldays and reread Shakespeare. Then I spoke to a few experienced Shakespearean actors. All of this to give me a few ideas, the background, the anchorage of it all. Then you bring some of your own ideas, some of your own interpretation into it, having analyzed the play and the music itself."

Sometimes it comes easier with certain roles than with others, and Evans admits that all of his portrayals have not been equally successful. "I'll always remember doing Kezal in *The Bartered Bride* in San Francisco. I'd never done it before and Lotfi [Mansouri] was directing. I was enjoying it, but after the dress rehearsal I felt I had failed. I said to Lotfi, 'I don't feel I'm at grips with this part. I've been trying to delve into what the character is, what his feelings and background are.' And Lotfi said, 'I think that's the trouble, Geraint. I think you're trying too hard; you've got to play this part on the surface. There's no depth to it.' That was a very good warning. It served me well with *Dulcamara*, for example," he smiled, pointing to the colorful costume, designed by Beni

"The comedy must come from the situation."

Montresor, which he was about to don for the evening's performance.

With *Wozzeck*, one of the roles that has especially marked Evans' career, the first time around was perhaps the best. That was in the premier production of Berg's seminal work during the 1960 season at the War Memorial. "I'd made my debut in San Francisco the year before, and Adler approached me about doing *Wozzeck*. I thought, 'Oh, my God, what a challenge!' So I said yes. I don't think I'd even looked at the score, but I had heard it and sat in on the rehearsals under Erich Kleiber at Covent Garden. I was terribly intrigued then, but I never thought I'd be doing it. I thought I wasn't capable of doing it.

JOAN MIRÓ

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Adler persuaded me, really. And I must say the first time in San Francisco was a great experience. Paul Hager's production is still the best one I've ever done. There was something so straightforward and basic, something virgin about it. There was a certain amount of stylization, of course, but it was clinical. And Marilyn Horne sang every note of Marie's music as pure as you can wish to have it. Back in 1960 there were only two performances scheduled, but they had to add an extra one. At the final performance I know that there were so many people from the universities who wanted to come.

"You musn't think of *Wozzeck* as an opera."

"*Wozzeck* is a theater piece; you mustn't think of it as an opera. It's drama with music to illustrate the earthiness of it all. Once you accept this, it can really hit you. I find it extremely moving."

The intensity of the Berg work makes tremendous demands on all the performers, but most especially on the protagonist. Evans, whose intensity of performance is legendary, requires a special concentration for the role. "*Wozzeck* is still a tremendous challenge for me. When I perform the role, I divorce it from everything else for a few weeks before and after. The concentration is essential. I will not have anyone in my dressing room before the performance. And I need the stage cleared for several minutes before the show starts. I've got to get into the mood of the piece; I've got to have lived so many years as *Wozzeck* before the curtain goes up.

"One of the greatest experiences in all opera happens to me during *Wozzeck*. I sit at the table and stare into space for about four minutes doing nothing, absolutely nothing. I try not even to blink my eyes and I use mental telepathy. It's very exciting and has a terrific strength — everything going on around you and you don't move a muscle. If you're tense, the tension creeps right over you and you get so stiff that you can't move afterwards."

Although the current *Wozzeck* production represents Evans' first official directorial assignment with Berg's opera, he slyly confesses to "half-directing" it once. "The poor director had never done it before, and I don't think he realized what it was all about. So I quietly helped him out. Why not? All opera is teamwork. The better the other person, the better I am."

Because he's such a perfectionist and a natural-born teacher (he has conducted master classes for the San



A classic study of the deranged Wozzeck from the San Francisco premier production in 1960.

Francisco Opera and on television in Britain), Evans finds it hard to sit back and simply tend to his own role. "I can be a bit of a nuisance to my colleagues," he says with an engagingly sheepish smile on that extraordinarily expressive face. "I'm afraid I can't help making suggestions even when I'm not directing. I say to myself, 'No, I mustn't say that; I must keep my mouth shut.' But I get so involved that I clean forget and say, 'Why don't you try it like this?' I do it with the best of intentions, but some of my colleagues make fun of me and say, 'Oh, there he goes again.'

"In the early days we'd say to each other, 'Go out into the auditorium and have a look and see how I'm doing this or that.' I remember when Jon Vickers was doing *Peter Grimes* for the first time. I was doing *Balstrode* again and Tyrone Guthrie was directing. Jon said to me, 'Go out and tell me if you think this is the right move.' So I went out front and said, 'It's fine, Jon, but don't come down too far because you're out of the stage perspective,' or something like that. And I asked Jon, 'Is it better that I lean against the pillar along the quayside or stand upright and watch?' He went out into the auditorium and I

tried it both ways. He came back and said, 'You lose a bit of strength if you lean; stand solid.' Or we'd say to each other, 'Hey, you want to watch that note there; it sounds a bit open.' We were helping each other out, but can you imagine that being done today?

"Being a perfectionist has driven me up the wall many times, especially regarding myself. I get so frustrated when I can't do something the way I know it should be done. As a director I'm lucky to be able to see a picture

"All opera is teamwork."

while I'm on stage, especially since I'm up there singing as well. For instance, when I did *Peter Grimes* in San Francisco, I hardly ever left the stage, except for two instances in the big chorus scene during the piano dress rehearsal. Occasionally you have to check on a lighting effect, but that's all. And I have the advantage over the other directors. When I'm on the stage performing and something goes wrong, I can possibly do something to correct it."

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MARGARET NORTON PHOTO

Evans signing autographs in his dressing room for students following the 1968 production of *Wozzeck*.

Late in the summer, during the chorus rehearsals in San Francisco, Evans demonstrates his ability to carry off his double duty with great skill. One can see that he has his eye out for "the right picture," as he would say. But he is always there singing and acting his role so that the chorus members can react to a live performer and not to a vacuum. His instinct for detail is uncanny. Nothing escapes his notice — from the cheek-to-cheek dance style which he demonstrates with a blushing baritone, to the way the tavern waitresses carry their beer pitchers. He's a veritable whirlwind of activity, yelling out instructions, rearranging chorus groupings, waving his arms to quicken the dance movements, all the while never missing a cue as the hapless *Wozzeck*.

"To keep it fresh, you've got to look for new things."

"Even though I like directing very much, I've done so many operas with so many different directors that I wonder if I can really divorce myself from those experiences and bring a fresh outlook to it. Oh, I've had a few good ideas for directing certain operas that have never been tried. If I can develop all the best things I've seen or performed with the best directors, then I can't go far wrong."

Although Evans enjoys directing and molding a production, his biggest satisfaction is in performing. Of the roles he never got around to singing, there are two he especially regrets. "Towards the end of the war in Hamburg I went to see *Tristan und Isolde* with Bockelmann singing his last performance as Kurwenal. Afterwards I heard Paul Schöffler in the role and I

thought, 'Oh, what a marvelous part! I'd love to do that one day.' Well, it never happened. Another part I've been asked to do quite a few times is Baron Ochs in *Der Rosenkavalier*. But there it was a question of 'When can I start learning it? . . . better leave it for now,' and I've never done it. But you can't do everything.

"I've been asked by one or two very well known people to act in the straight theater, as we call it. The other day, for example, I was even asked to portray various aspects of Falstaff — taking the Elgar Falstaff and the Verdi Falstaff and comparing them with the Shakespearean Falstaff in various scenes on television. But I don't know. I was a bit scared. I thought about it very hard, but perhaps I'm too much a coward. I'd been asked to perform at Stratford and at the Old Vic. Several people have tried to encourage me. John Gielgud was one. And Tyrone Guthrie said to me, 'You ought to go on stage; you've sung long enough. Don't misunderstand; you've sung marvelously, but you've gone as far as you can go with singing. Go on to straight acting.' But I thought to myself, 'Each man to his job, let's face it.' I was brought up in this profession; I know nothing else.

"I regret that I won't be coming to San Francisco anymore. It's been 21 years, and I've had a marvelous time. I'm very grateful to San Francisco. The sad part is that I've gotten to know so many people over the years. So many families have brought me into their homes and I've seen the children grow up and coming to the opera. That's the important thing. I've been asked to come to a university in America. But I want to be home for a while. I think I'll go and play with my boat a bit, down on the West Coast of Wales." ■

Georg Büchner's *Woyzeck*

continued from p. 40

Büchner's notes, however, was a sketched courtroom scene for *Woyzeck*'s murder trial in which the dramatist evidently intended to satirize justice and the social order.

In 1913, in Munich's Residenz-theater, *Woyzeck* received its very first performance, about which the *Munich Post* rhapsodized, "Only on the stage is revealed the complete magic of language of those hurrying sentences which are condensed into a red mist of mood which plunges the whole heavens into flames." On May 5 of the following year, Alban Berg witnessed a performance in Vienna, where *Woyzeck* fared poorly but mesmerized the composer into spending the next 10 years creating his opera.

Not until after World War I did *Woyzeck* burst on the international scene in multiform presentations, among them Max Reinhardt's version in Germany, Ingmar Bergman's in Sweden, and one at Yale University. Some idea of the diverse approaches may be gleaned from one of the six productions at the 1969 Ruhr Festival, where *Woyzeck*, interlarded with *Leonce and Lena*, lasted four hours,

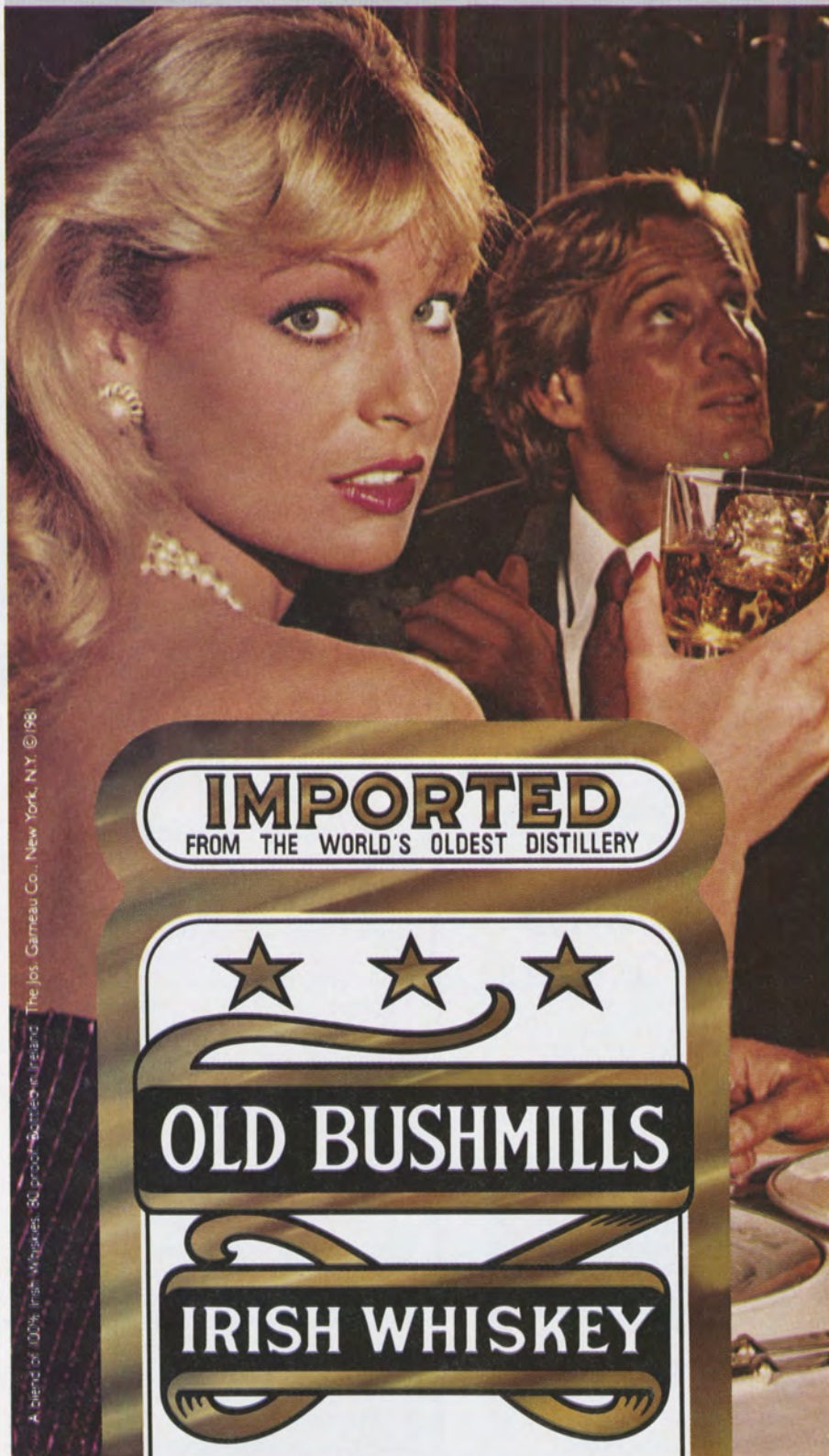
In 1913 *Woyzeck* received its first performance.

the plays' conclusions playing simultaneously. In 1972, the Krefeld-Monchengladbach Companies coordinated Büchner's *Woyzeck* with Berg's *Wozzeck* in one "mammoth" show.

Generally commended as the forerunner of everything from social realism and psychological irrationalism to expressionism and existentialism, the play portrays the suffering of an individual, his pain and degradation. *Woyzeck* is regarded as the victim of a society that mocks and scorns him and drains his manhood. Haunted by terrifying hallucinations, he endures poverty, humiliation, the infidelity of his mistress, the brutality of her Drum Major lover. Propelled to violence, he strikes back by murdering his faithless mistress and by suicide — or execution.

Some see *Woyzeck* as the embodiment of revolutionary condemnation of the establishment that martyrs this feckless man, who, in the words of Carl Mueller, is "capable of greatness of mind and soul and feeling except that he is kept from the realization of this by the millstone of environment hung about his neck." Stanley Kauffmann dubbed *Woyzeck* "a Hamlet of the lowborn," it would seem inappro-

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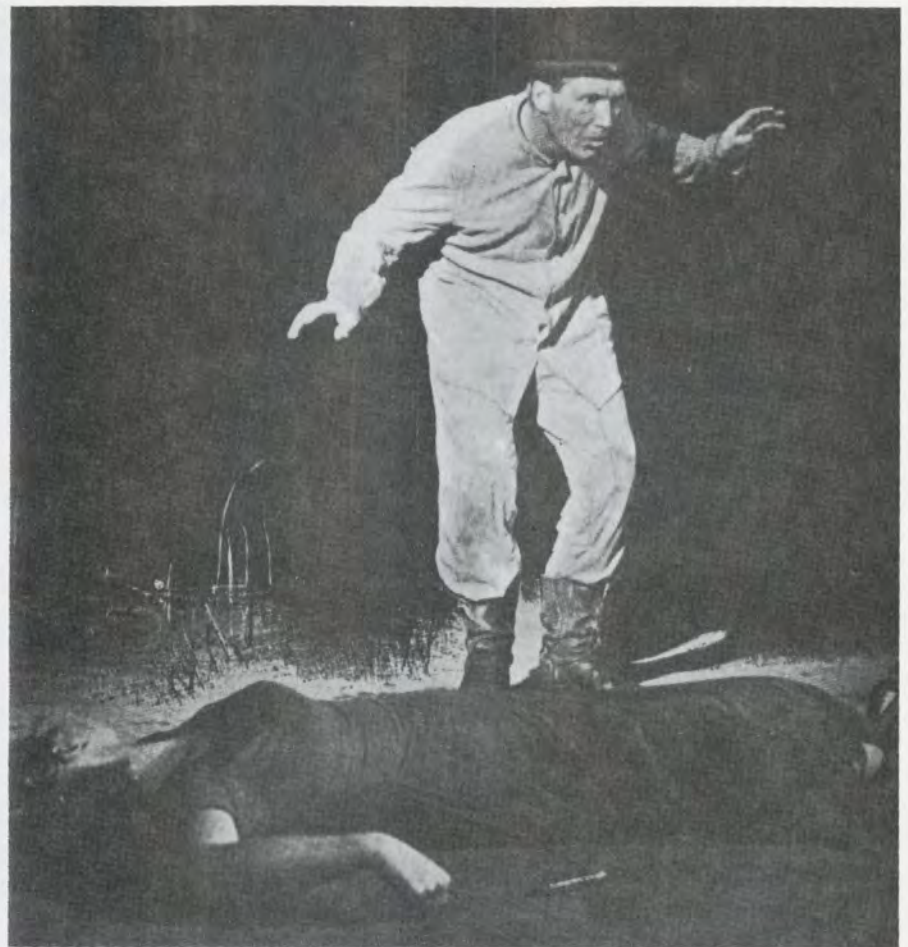
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The scene of Marie's death in *Woyzeck*, from a production at the Munich Kammerspiele.

priately, for with all his virtues *Woyzeck* is inarticulate.

"*Woyzeck's* powers of speech fall drastically short of the depth of anguish that is the crux of the play," said George Steiner. "*Woyzeck's* agonized spirit hammers in vain on the doors of language." Steiner points out, however, the anomaly of Alban Berg's operatic version. "Superb both as music and drama, it distorts Büchner's principal device. The music makes *Woyzeck* eloquent; a cunning orchestration gives speech to his soul. In the play, that soul is nearly mute, and it is the lameness of *Woyzeck's* words which conveys his suffering."

This quality of the play has evoked prodigious praise. "A universal symbol of human suffering, a psychological masterpiece!" was the way Frankfurt greeted the performance at its Schauspielhaus. "*Woyzeck* is a work of art structured and composed to the very last detail." (Franz Mautner) "The events are linked together with an almost perfect logic. The theme develops with an economy and inevitability seldom found in the work of any dramatist." (A.H.J. Knight) "As a drama of social criticism, *Woyzeck* has never been, and very likely never will be, superseded. Its power lies in the fact that its problems are, in addition

to being specific, universal in time and place." (Carl Mueller)

But the very extravagance of applause for a work of many hands invites a closer examination of the validity of Büchner's "iron law of history" as expressed in *Woyzeck*, and of his concept of tragedy. He, himself, felt that "with the exception of Shakespeare (I am not worthy to untie his shoelaces) all writers stand before [history] and before nature like schoolboys." For Büchner, suffering in this life stamped the passport to redemption in the next. In his novella, *Lenz*, he summed up his aesthetics, saying: "God did not create the world to have man recreate it and try to make it better than it is. God must certainly have made it as it ought to be." Büchner replaced the fatalism of Greek tragedy with inexorable determinism, making of mankind hapless marionettes worked by the strings of history.

Except for the brevity of his life, Büchner might have broken out of the orbit of pessimism characteristic of his age, and gone on to a positive humanism. For in *Woyzeck* he went beyond protesting against society's injustice; he rebelled against the very process of life, its pitilessness, its emptiness, its existential quandary. He had not yet

perceived that being condemned to exist suggested that mankind was condemned to be free. Instead, focusing a lens closely on the "little man," Büchner altered the outlook of drama toward tragedy, shrinking it to its minimal dimension, his antihero no longer noble in stature or action.

The authoritarianism of the German states impressed Büchner with the seeming helplessness of the individual in a heartless system; and so long as the belief persisted that irrational, unmanageable elements determined events, man was no more than a cog in the implacable machinery of the universe. His "little man" whittled everything down to insignificant size. Tragedy lost its dimension. Misery and misfortune were noteworthy only in the aggregate. When in the 20th century man was atomized, to achieve magnitude he leaped from earth into space.

Pierre Laplace, the astronomer and mathematician who died the same year as Büchner, said: "God is a hypothesis of which the rational mind has no further need, so God took the

Woyzeck is the victim of a society that mocks and scorns him.

astronomer at his word and withdrew from the world. And for that reason, if God is dead, tragedy, too, is dead."

Nevertheless, human dignity and honor, tenderness and compassion endured. Büchner notwithstanding, man, not God, fashioned human history, though this earth creature tends to blame all that goes wrong on divine cause and attributes all progress to his own ingenuity. Contrary to Büchner's contention, man's presence on earth has changed what nature provided, though in doing so he has not always heeded the injunction to improve it, not destroy it — and himself with it. In *Woyzeck*, Büchner's "iron law of history" represented man's abdication, his forfeiture of will, the dwarfing of his spirit, and his helplessness and resignation before the forces he himself set in motion.

Speaking of tragedy 70 years prior to Büchner, Gotthold Lessing declared, "We are moved by the misfortunes of those whose circumstances most closely approximate our own; if a king moves us, he does so as a human being rather than as a king." Two centuries later, Arthur Miller and Robert Bolt rejected Büchner's "iron law." To them, tragedy was the expression of the soul's capacity for grandeur.

One counterpart of *Woyzeck* may be found in this century's *Death of a Salesman*. Like *Woyzeck*, Willy Loman felt the external world crushing his

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life, and he, too, was beset by hallucinations. But unlike Woyzeck, he protested without violence toward another. Loman's last desperate act was directed at himself.

Said Miller: "It is a sign of our time that the protagonist in contemporary tragedy is reduced to an object whose will is subjugated by external forces, his life a vale of suffering, incapable and in the end pointless. The alternative view, which today is regarded as polemical bull, is that the individual in whom the impulse to be human is expressed by his will to prevail, even in defeat or death, thereby invests his existence, however brief, with meaning."

Willy Loman had more in common with Thomas More in *A Man For All Seasons* than either had with Woyzeck. Thomas More eschewed heroism but would not surrender his integrity, his individuality. Forced in the end to choose between his conscience and Henry VIII's "convenience," he found he could not help but "be human [so] then perhaps we must stand fast a little even at the risk of being heroes."

To Büchner, that *must* was "one of the words with which man was baptized and damned. The saying (Matthew 18:7): 'For it must needs be that

In Berg's opera the music makes Wozzeck eloquent.

offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!' is gruesome. What is it in us that lies, murders and steals?"

At More's trumped-up trial, the playwright had him address the court: "What you have hunted me for is not for my actions but the thoughts of my heart. It is a long road you have opened. For first men will disclaim their hearts and presently they will have no hearts. God help the people whose statesmen walk your road."

In Bolt's view, the Common Man (Büchner's "little man") opportunistically bent with the times and ultimately was the executioner of the Uncommon Man. For Eugene O'Neill, tragedy resulted "from seeing somebody on stage facing life, fighting against the eternal odds, not conquering, but perhaps inevitably being conquered."

In the last analysis, the measure of tragedy was really nothing grandiose. "It is simply," said Arthur Miller, "whether the person, the protagonist, is worthy of our grief."

In *Woyzeck*, the irreconcilable conflict between man and society provided no redemption for its victim. Büchner made his antihero represent man's cosmic confrontation with natu-



Klaus Kinski as Woyzeck in Werner Herzog's film version of the Büchner play (1978).

ral and inescapable oblivion, despairing of his ability to oppose social forces, to have any impact on the course of events, even through his tragic death. Woyzeck does not perceive nor attempt to understand how he was victimized. He only reacts to his misfortune, violently, savagely. Nothing changes. Perhaps that illustrated Büchner's thesis that change came only by might: a nihilistic force for murder and self-destruction when exercised by an individual, and, by implication, a purgative force when exerted by a class.

According to Alfred Schwarz, *Woyzeck* drew no distinguishing line between the uncompromising reality of nature — the accident of life, the inexorability of death — and the contradictions within manmade society that divested the individual of his value and degraded him. Immediately prior to the murder, Woyzeck describes himself in his minimal stage: "Friedrich Johann Franz Woyzeck, militiaman, fusileer, second regiment, second battalion, company D; born the Feast of the Annunciation, July 20; today I am 30 years, 7 months and 12 days old." Thus stripped and reduced, Woyzeck is deprived of moral choice, the assertion of human will that separates him from the animal. Büchner substituted nothing for "the accursed *must*."

Shakespeare, whom he "adored," first exclaimed in *Hamlet*, "What a piece of work is man!" And in *King Lear*, after inquiring, "Is man no more than a poor, bare, forked animal?" Shakespeare reunited the aged monarch with his beloved, faithful Cordelia, "who redeems nature from the general curse."

Woyzeck exemplifies less the universalism attributed to Büchner

than it reflects the ethos of his time and place, the incongruity of Kantian idealism and moral law in the embrace of political repression and militarism. Büchner's revulsion took the form of vestigial *Sturm und Drang*. In *Woyzeck* he was ahead of his time, bequeathing a repugnance for the ugliness of a ruthless society for later generations of playwrights to ponder. One may ruminate with George Steiner on the heights he might have scaled had he not been cut down in youth. He had early reached a high plateau of discernment and empathy and achieved a lasting perception of art.

"A universal symbol of human suffering."

"It is not for us to ask," he wrote, "whether it is beautiful or ugly. The feeling that that which has been created has life stands above both of these considerations and is the only criterion in matters of art . . . Since [events] in life move and constantly change, art seizes the pregnant moment to fix it . . . but of course one cannot always hold eternal beauty fast and put it in museums and reduce it to notes. One must love humanity in order to be able to penetrate into the real being of each person; no one should be too insignificant, no one too ugly. Only then can one understand humanity."

In that sense, *Woyzeck* approaches the plane of a masterpiece.

BARRY HYAMS is the author of *Hirschhorn: Medici from Brooklyn*, E.P. Dutton's biography of the late Joseph Hirschhorn.

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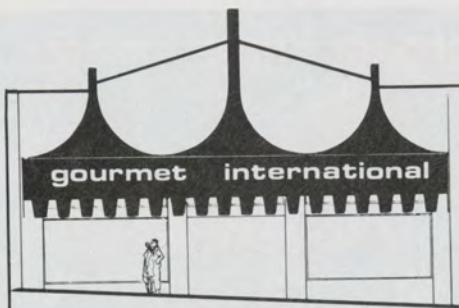
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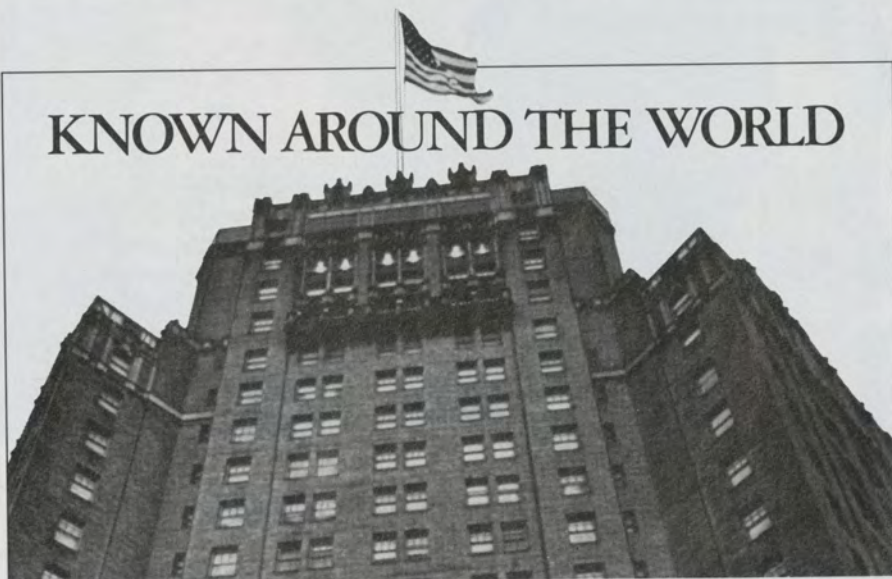
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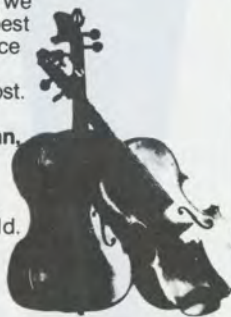
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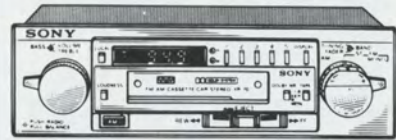
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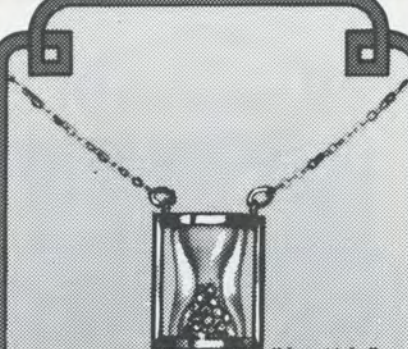
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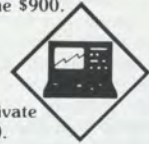
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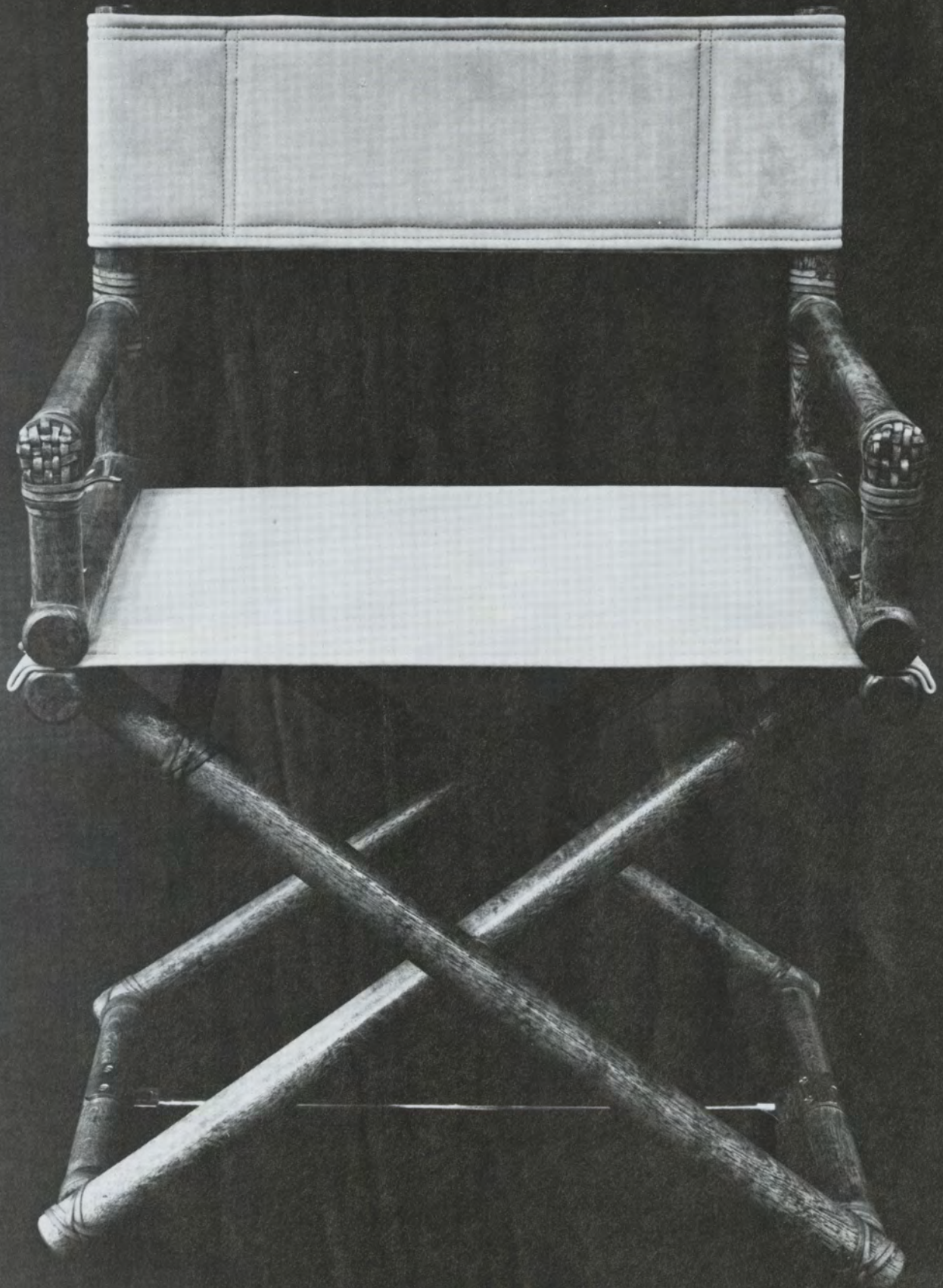
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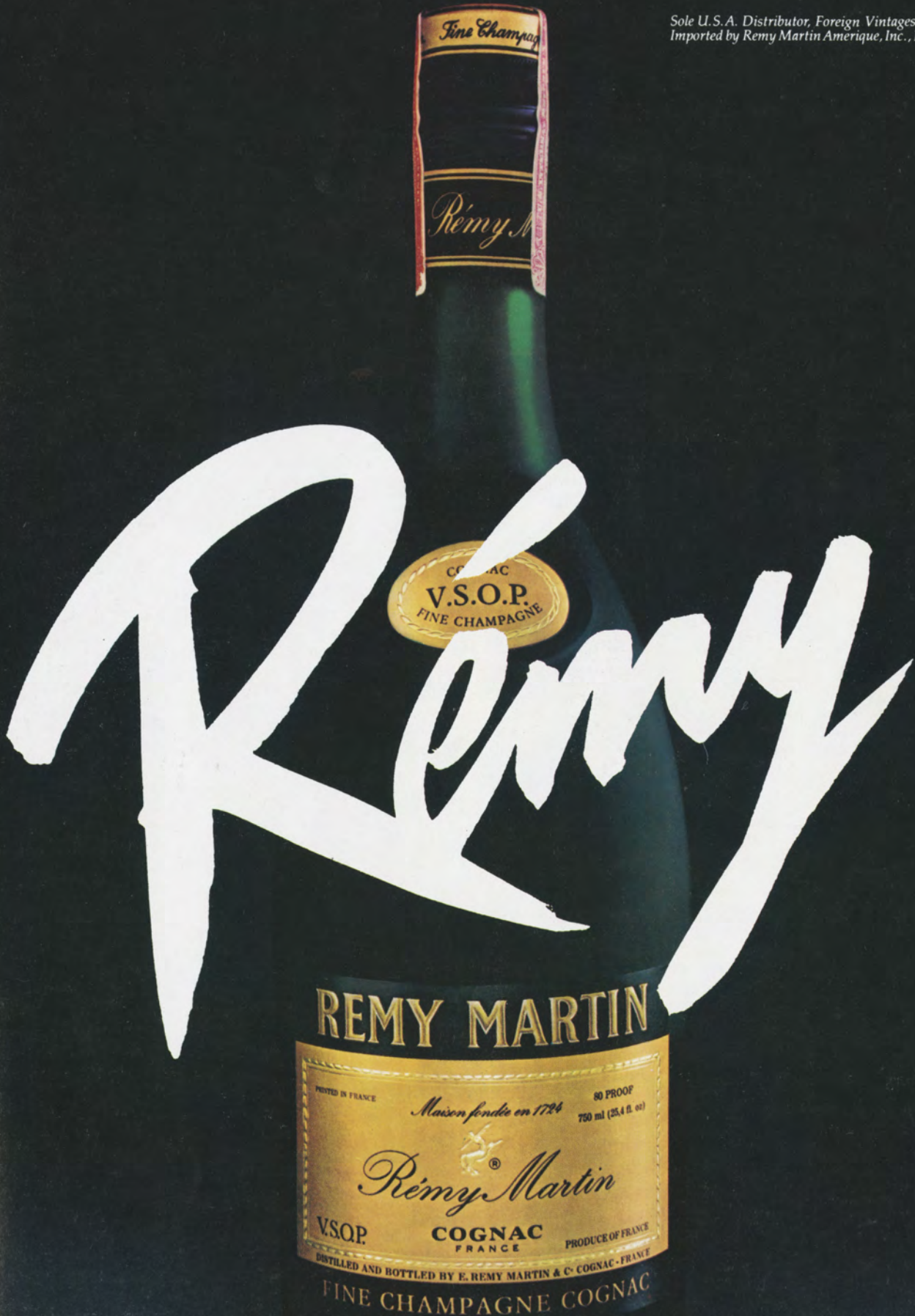
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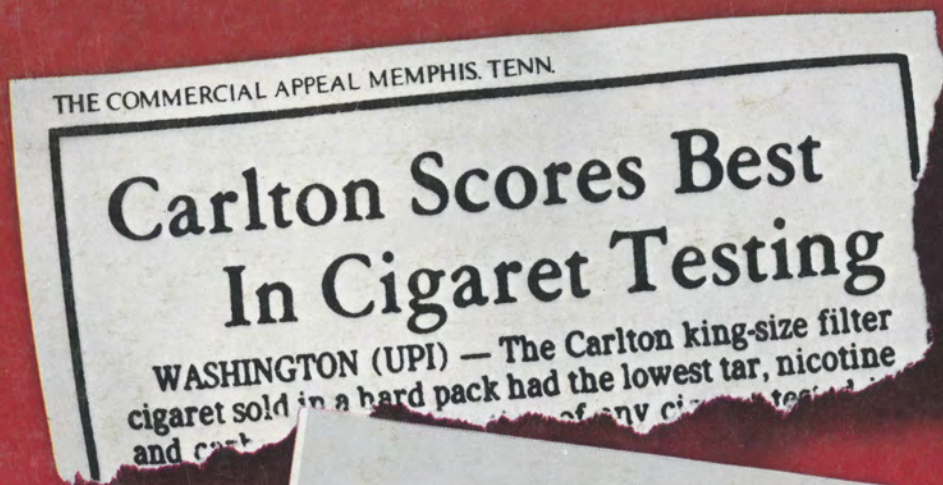
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